

Indira Gandhi National Open University  
School of Interdisciplinary and  
Trans-disciplinary Studies

**MPYE – 011**

**Philosophy of Art (Aesthetics)**

**Block 1**

**INTRODUCTION**

**UNIT 1**  
**Philosophy of Art**

**UNIT 2**  
**Rasa – Definition, Nature and Scope**

**UNIT 3**  
**Aesthetics – Definition, Nature and Scope**

**UNIT 4**  
**Aesthetic Object**

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## BLOCK INTRODUCTION

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Aesthetics is the systematic study of understanding beauty and its manifestation in art and nature. A beautiful object or event brings forth immense joy. Philosophy is interested in analyzing the true characteristics of beauty in identification with several theories of art. For this analysis is seriously concerned with the value dimension of human experience. An object of aesthetic experience is concerned with two important human potentialities viz., cognitive and practical, art criticism and art experience. Beauty emerges from nature and art. In nature beauty is 'given' and in art it is made. The ideal of beauty pertains to its nature or character. The constitution of ideal beauty forms the subject matter of aesthetics which comes under the realm of philosophy. The relation of beauty to the meaning of life, its relation to other human values, the evaluation of aesthetic ideal in the context of other values etc., constitute the study of beauty through meta-aesthetics which is really an extensive study of aesthetics. The characteristic features of beauty arising out of art and nature are studied in aesthetics while the significant features of beauty arising out of nature and art are studied in meta-aesthetics.

**Unit 1** briefly explains the nuances of beauty and the understanding of beauty as studied in Philosophy of art. 'Philosophy of art' is the branch of philosophy known as 'aesthetics.' Under philosophy of values there are a few distinct subjects as axiology, aesthetics, ethics, and religious philosophy. These subjects come under applied philosophy. The unit introduces to the students the subject matter of philosophy of art.

**Unit 2** speaks of *rasa* as understood in Indian traditional aesthetics. Bharata in *Natyasastra* says that dramatic presentation's main purpose is to give 'Rasa,' Aesthetics sensation in the aesthete which later leads to moral improvement. He further justifies that dramatic presentation gives pleasure to those who are unhappy, tired, bereaved and ascetic.

Basically, aesthetics involves two issues: (1) definitions of art and (2) responses to art. **Unit 3** shows the general connection between aesthetic recipient and aesthetic experience on the basis of their inseparable bonding, which begins with the very act of approaching art in general. introduce the concept 'Aesthetics' and explain certain concepts relating to it in terms of its nature. Effects are made to to have a basic understanding of the concept called Aesthetics; to comprehend the nature of Aesthetics; to identify the three approaches of Aesthetics; to be able to understand aesthetic recipient and aesthetic experience; to understand the scope of Aesthetics.

**Unit 4** is about the aesthetic object. The Aesthetics not only speaks about art and art judgment but also explains what art is. Aesthetics is neither epistemology nor ethics. To comprehend the essences of Aesthetics one has to understand: Sense of beauty, How to characterize beauty, The qualities of beauty, Relationship between mind and emotion, Idea, theory and technique of presentation. Oscar Wilde rightly defines Aesthetics as, "Aesthetics is a search after the signs of the beautiful." The objective of Aesthetics is the perfection of sensible cognition of "beauty". " In Indian context, 'Beauty' is the experience of unity of sensuous and aesthetic as well as religious spiritual experience; it is an experience of totality.

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## COURSE INTRODUCTION

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“A thing of beauty is joy for ever,” says Keats. A beautiful object or event brings forth immense joy. Philosophy is interested in analysing the true characteristics of beauty in identification with several theories of art. For this analysis is seriously concerned with the value dimension of human experience. The person who becomes wonder-struck and develops the sense of ‘awe’ on perceiving the work of art and the events of nature, his attention is arrested and promotes a kind of self-forgettable joy and gets absorbed in them. As beauty in nature is obtained from particular parts of nature and not universal, changeable, alterable, impermanent, non-constant the enjoyment or delight arising out of natural beauty is non-stable, man has resorted to enjoy beauty in art. Keats and Hegel consider beauty as truth in sensuous form. Schopenhauer treats music as an intuitive grasp of ultimate reality. Santayana refers to beauty as an eternal divine essence suffusing a material object. Tolstoy conceives beauty as a quality of perfecting a material object. Goethe indicates that an art object is a sensuous embodiment of a spiritual meaning.

**Block 1** introduces the discipline of aesthetics as the systematic study on the world of arts. Three broad approaches to aesthetics have been taken, each distinguished by the types of questions it treats as foremost (1) the study of aesthetic concepts, often specifically through the examination of uses of aesthetic language (ii) the study of states of mind – responses, attitudes, emotions - held to be involved in aesthetic experience (iii) the study of objects deemed aesthetically interesting, with a view to determining what about them makes them so.

**Blocks 2 and 3** enumerate various theories of aesthetics from both Indian and Western traditions. The historians of aesthetics have propounded different theories of aesthetics, which in fact, are really or are really representing the different standpoints from which they have seen or studied “Beauty” at different periods of time. The earliest theories have been grouped into (1) hedonistic (ii) rigoristic and (iii) moralistic or pedagogic, they represent a study of the problem of aesthetics from the point of the end of Art, of what the products of Art aim at. From the point of view of the spectator, there are other three theories (i) confused cognition, (ii) inference and (iii) mysticism. These show the nature of experience, that a work of art arouses in the spectator and the means of knowledge, which are employed by him in the acquisition of such experience. These theories have been propounded in the West on the basis of architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry and drama. These theories have been propounded in the West on the basis of architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry and drama. But the Indian aestheticians do not recognize sculpture and painting as independent fine arts, as does Hegel in his Philosophy of fine art. Hence the number of independent fine arts from Indian point of view is three and not five, as envisioned by Hegel.

**Block 4** deals with the Applied aesthetics which is a process, its practice, its an experience and many other things in between. It encompasses the shared historical and social resources an artists uses to sustain mutual engagement in action, the production and reproduction of specific ways of engaging with the world. Applied aesthetics are used by designers, artists, educators and many other people. In a general sense, applied aesthetics is an umbrella term for creative problem solving, learning in doing, art is practice, and responding to the needs or experiences’ of a situated community.

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**UNIT 1      PHILOSOPHY OF ART**

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**1.0 OBJECTIVES**

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‘Philosophy of art’ is studied and discussed under the branch of philosophy known as ‘aesthetics;’ one among the normative subjects besides logic and ethics. Under philosophy of values there are a few distinct subjects as axiology, aesthetics, ethics, and religious philosophy. These subjects come under applied philosophy. The unit introduces to the students the subject matter of philosophy of art.

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**1.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Aesthetics is applied to the systematic study in a philosophical way of understanding beauty and its manifestation in art and nature. ‘A thing of beauty is joy for ever; its loveliness increases and perishes into nothingness’ (Keats). A beautiful object or event brings forth immense joy. Philosophy is interested in analyzing the true characteristics of beauty in identification with several theories of art. For this analysis is seriously concerned with the value dimension of human experience. The person who becomes wonder-struck and develops the sense of ‘awe’ on perceiving the work of art and the events of nature, his attention is arrested and promotes a kind of self-forgettable joy and gets absorbed in them. In this context what takes place is ‘appreciation’ or ‘worth-assigning awareness.’ Hence aesthetic experience is a distinct type of human experience when compared to other experiences.

In the opinion of C.J. Ducasse, “Art is the language of feeling. So its essence as an activity is expression, not the creation of beauty. What the artist really aims at is objective self-expression. Transmission of feeling is neither the essential intention nor the necessary effect of a work of art. Finally art is expression in the special sense that it is both free or spontaneous and yet not quite undetermined.” This citation implies that an object of aesthetic experience is concerned with two important human potentialities viz., cognitive and practical. The former deals with the

knowing aspects, while the latter with the pragmatic aspect. Again the term 'aesthetics' has a two-fold perspective. First art criticism and secondly art experience. The former is concerned with the merits or demerits of particular works of art, i.e., a kind of intensive investigation into a chosen area of beauty. In this process, aesthetics becomes a science than a philosophy. Beauty emerges from nature and art. In nature, beauty is 'given' and in art it is made. The ideal of beauty pertains to its nature or character. The constitution of ideal beauty forms the subject matter of aesthetics, which comes under the realm of philosophy. The relation of beauty to the meaning of life, its relation to other human values, the evaluation of aesthetic ideal in the context of other values etc., constitute the study of beauty through meta-aesthetics, really an extensive study of aesthetics. Aesthetics is to be understood in terms of 'what beauty is;' meta-aesthetics is to be known through the ideal of 'why we pursue it?' The characteristic features of beauty arising out of art and nature are studied in aesthetics while the significant features of beauty arising out of nature and art are studied in meta-aesthetics.

As beauty in nature is obtained from particular parts of nature and not universal, changeable, alterable, impermanent, non-constant the enjoyment or delight arising out of natural beauty is non-stable, man has resorted to enjoy beauty in art. It is clear that men are dissatisfied with beauty found in nature, but they cannot ignore the ideal of perfect beauty, which is immanent in their consciousness, which is also not associated with ugliness. Since philosophy of art is directly connected with the joyous, delightful enjoyment of beauty it is quite obvious that treat aesthetics as a 'process' and not an end product, an inquiry, an kind of conversation among earnest minds. Any theory of art or art-history for that matter is not keen on the practice of an art such as giving training in the craft of painting, of sculpture, of architecture. However, the above components of artistic creations may stimulate and inspire the artist. From the historical perspective the goal of art is concerned with enjoyment and appreciation, waxed and waned through intervening ages. But from the philosophical point of view the work of art depends on the objects available in nature and events created by the imagination of the artist.

Scholars on aesthetics are of the view that aesthetic attitude is characterized by detachment, psychic distance or disinterestedness. These terms imply that in the process of appreciation of art should not be intruded by the practical as well as personal concerns. This does not mean that the appreciator of art should forego intimate rapport, emotional participation and identification with the artistic object leading to aesthetic enjoyment. The major function of the objects of fine art is to embody an aesthetic vision and elicit an aesthetic response especially in the spheres of dramas, paintings, sculptures, symphonies, poems, dances etc.

There are five alternative views concerning the themes and meanings expressed in aesthetic objects: eternal forms (formalism), suchness, a unified experience, feelings and existential possibilities.

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## **1.2 FORMALISM**

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Form is generally interpreted to mean unit in variety. Art object is expressed through and embodied in concrete form. Again, the term 'form' indicates the internal relations of the aesthetic object, which has a complex of different but interrelated parts. "The theory of formalism maintains that the art object is 'pure form' and that its formal excellence alone determines its

aesthetic quality. This interpretation is particularly congenial to the proponents of abstractionism in art. The claim that formal excellence is a sufficient condition of aesthetic quality is open to question, that it is a necessary condition is not debated.” Further from the point of view of the ingredients of ‘formal excellence,’ aesthetic evaluations are objective rather than subjective.

As far as the nature and meaning of aesthetic objects are concerned, they express eternal forms, which are also known through imitation or representation as held by Plato and Aristotle. “They were not advocating the naïve idea that artists strive to mirror natural objects as exactly as possible. Rather, the artist seeks to represent the essential nature (essence) of objects, the rational forms on which they are patterned (Plato) or which are inherent in them (Aristotle). For Plato, objects of art are twice removed from the eternal forms, since they are only images of copies of the forms; that is natural objects are imperfect copies of eternal forms and works of art are only ‘imitations’ of natural objects.” It is also believed that aesthetic objects represent an ultimate reality that is eternal, perfect and complete especially in the forms of truthfulness, goodness and beautiful.

Keats and Hegel consider beauty as truth in sensuous form. Schopenhauer treats music as an intuitive grasp of ultimate reality. Santayana refers to beauty as an eternal divine essence suffusing a material object. Tolstoy conceives beauty as a quality of perfecting a material object. Goethe indicates that an art object is a sensuous embodiment of a spiritual meaning. Hinduism observes that the aesthetic objects give intuitions of the ultimate as pure being. Intuition and perfection indicate the epistemological and moral implications in the expression of aesthetic objects. This leads the process of knowing and judging goodness.

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### **1.3 SUCHNESS**

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This view is held by the Eastern philosophies and religions since the Western thought has predominance of science (cognitive and theoretical aspect of reality) and technology (a highly practical activity). The Eastern religions characteristically accept, appreciate and celebrate aesthetic experience, which is complete in itself. According to Suzuki, “Zen naturally finds its readiest expression in poetry rather than philosophy because it has more affinity with feeling than with intellect; its poetic predilection is inevitable.” This view envisages an Eastern perspective to a Western audience. Aesthetic objects are to be understood in terms of the expression of suchness. Artistic expressions do not represent nature, but are natural in themselves in their spontaneity. Suchness is an awakening to the present instant as the only reality. This approach has been critically evaluated as that suchness cannot be applied to future events especially cruelty, war, disease etc.

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### **1.4 A UNIFIED EXPERIENCE**

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This view refers to the expression of aesthetic objects. The theory of art as promulgated by John Dewey pertains to the development of common experience, which involves a constant interaction between the living beings and their involvement in the environmental conditions pertaining to actions as well as inactions. In the words of Dewey, “Art is... prefigured in the very process of



living... It is the living and concrete proof that man is capable of restoring consciously and thus on the plane of meaning, the union of sense, need, impulse and action characteristic of the live creature. Form, as present in the fine arts, is the art of making clear what is involved in the organization of space and time prefigured in every course of a developing life-experience” The above view remarks that our experience becomes aesthetic when we resort to the pervasive, integrated quality of an experience. It becomes an experience, which is complete and unified in itself, indicating its quality of wholeness.

Again to quote Dewey, “The task [of the philosopher of art] is to restore continuity between the refined and intensified forms of experience that are works of art and the everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognized to constitute experience. Mountain peaks do not float unsupported they do not even just rest upon the earth. They are the earth in one of its manifest operations... [so] in order to understand the aesthetic in its... approved forms, one must begin with it in the raw; in the events and scenes that hold the attentive eye and ear of man; arousing his interest and affording him enjoyment as he looks and listens; the sights that hold the crowd – the fire-engine rushing by;... the tense grace of the ball player (as it) infests the on looking crowd...(one has also to consider those) who are happily absorbed in their activities of mind and body... the intelligence mechanic engaged in his job, interested in doing well and finding satisfaction in his handiwork, caring for his materials and tools with genuine affection, is artistically engaged.”

Science provides us only instrumental meaning by taking the objects out of isolation by informing the causes and effects. But art, since it provides with direct expression of meanings, such meanings cannot be translated into ordinary language. The artist enlarges and unifies the quality of the perceiver’s experience by way of his imagination in a wholesome manner. Anyhow, the work of art, according to this theory, cannot be viewed as the intention of the artist, but the unified quality of experience which evokes perception. The art object becomes the vehicle of complete unhindered communication. It enables us to overcome our blindness by vividly sharing the meanings. However the question remains, “Is the net cast by a unified experience’ ambiguously all-inclusive?”

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## 1.5 FEELINGS

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The theory, which upholds the view that aesthetic objects express feelings in known as expressionism, which can be understood in three different dimensions:

- a) Since the composer exhibits his personal feelings, he is said to be sad.
- b) The music creates a sad feeling in me
- c) In addition, the music itself is sad.

All the above expressions are not mutually exclusive alternatives. Altogether, the feelings may be aroused by the artist, caused by the object and experienced by the observer. This view is mainly maintained by Croce who had interpreted art as an expression of the artist’s state of mind. A movement called romanticism has exemplified the personal emotion of the artist through his artistic creation. First the artist develops a deep-rooted feeling in him and communicate those feelings and emotions so as to stimulate same kind of experience by the spectators which act

mainly is concerned with love of nature which is a manifestation of the spirit. Sublimated sexual impulses, primordial images, the unconscious state etc, are experienced artistically through the feelings of the artist in his work. Susan Langer and Ernst Cassirer hold that art as the creation of forms that articulate the very structure of human feelings. However human feelings cannot be arrested through statements by an art object. It is merely a symbolic representation and in this sense a major role of art is to clarify the subjective side of human life. In the presence of aesthetic objects we are subjected to expressing our emotions in a variety of ways like sadness, joy etc. According to George Santayana beauty is objectified pleasure. This approach poses the following questions; Whether our feelings indicate the intentions of the artist? Whether they indicate the art object itself? Whether they point out our emotional state then? Whether they refer to the meanings and expectations we project on top the aesthetic object?

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## **1.6 EXISTENTIAL POSSIBILITIES**

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This view maintains that aesthetic objects express the existential possibilities that an art object is a pure possibility. It is not a representation of form or essence; rather it is a presentation of a possibility felt and imagined by the artist. The art object is more than an imagined possibility; it is itself the presence of the possibility. The art object in its finished state is not an expression of fullness, but a thrust of spontaneity from lack of being. The art object refers to the existence of the enactment, utterance or feeling of an individual. It is truthful in its content and essence and not abstract kind of truth and it does not need any kind of empirical test. Art assists human beings to taste the human existence in a manifold way with clear and complete meaning.

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## **1.7 RELATION BETWEEN ART AND EPISTEMOLOGY**

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Since aesthetic perception involves intuition, the instant awareness enables to grasp the qualities of the art object. According to intuitionism, the observer develops direct awareness of the aesthetic object which results in the intuitive knowledge about the nature of the object presented by the artist. Language and literature are the best sources to depict human nature through aesthetic appeal such as love, pathos, joy, good, evil etc. to know more about human conditions, the novelist, poet and the dramatist are of immense help. Susan Langer maintains, “that the arts express truths about human emotions, but she explicitly states that these truths are not translatable into propositions subject to empirical test. No knowledge claim is put forward in her view that art clarifies human emotions. The latter statement coincides with the view that art provides, not knowledge, but a sense of disclosure, insight, and heightened intelligibility. The above argument of Langer makes a skeptical approach of the intuitionism that the artists furnish a vivid acquaintance with human realities and possibilities, but without any knowledge about them. The view of the existentialists that art presentations are ‘true’ when they emanate perfect and authentic feelings is also refuted here that they do not produce any knowledge. The critics of this knowledge theory in art are of the view that the function of art is to offer new interpretation leading to the expansion of awareness.

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## **1.8 ENJOYMENT OF BEAUTY IN ART**

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Since the nature cannot provide a permanent and abiding aesthetic experience because of calamities, human aspirations etc., man resorts to enjoy beauty in artistic creations, which offer the solace that lacks in nature. Man's imaginative attitude and skilful exercises are reflected in the creation of art, but not in the absence of natural base. Hence, there cannot be extreme idealism nor extreme realism as well as abstractionism and imitationism. As the artist transcends the realm of the actual world and rests in the world of imagination, there is no imitation of the actual world. However, the actual materials of the world serve as the basis for the execution of his work and hence the artist has to work within the ambit of the real world. Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Judgement* introduces the theme of aesthetics within the mental framework in the form of a judgement. Any judgement to have an aesthetic appeal Kant stipulates two criteria, viz., beauty with a kind of freedom which is unique and disinterestedness. They have certain formal conditions.

According to Clive Bell, aesthetic judgments should have something in common; otherwise we may not call them aesthetics. "Either all works of art have some common quality, or when we speak of works of art we gibber."<sup>6</sup> This view indicates a narrow theory about the meaning of words. One and the same word may give different kinds of meaning and represent a number of different things, provided the definite characteristics which those things all share. Bell is of the opinion that every work of art has something in common worthy of the name. "Only one answer seems possible, significant form. In each, lines and colours combined in a particular way, certain forms and relations of forms, stir our aesthetic emotions. These relations and combination of lines and colors, these aesthetically moving forms, I call 'significant form'" Just opposite to the view of Kant who treated men as ends in themselves, and meant by that men must be treated and respected as autonomous agents with an inalienable right, Bell has developed a different view. If men are seen as ends in themselves, they would be known as a combination of colors and lines or patterns. In the same way work of art will also be seen as a pattern and not as a representation or as something with some function or relation to men or other living organisms.

Again, as the work of art is a product of ideal, or mental construction of the artist, the firm belief is that there can be no ugliness in a work of art. The material medium on which the art is created may look beautiful or ugly, but as such art is neither beautiful nor ugly. Also in the long run the physical structure of the art may be eroded or dwindled, but the significant structure of the art remains the same, since it is based on the will as well as the imagination of the artist. Since the artist has the right to select his things and materials according to his skill and fertile imagination, the work of art remains as harmonious whole. For instance, a drama, a painting, a sculpture or music may appear to be organized in parts or patterns; they reveal unitary appeal to the audience when they enjoy the manifestation of artistic taste through them. Thus, the beauty of art is constant, consistent, unchangeable and immortal. The ontological categories of real or unreal cannot be applicable to the works of art, but the works of art are treated as class by themselves since they pave the way for entertainment only rather than intellectual interrogation. As the work of art is pure and devoid of ugliness, it becomes steady for ever and does not produce pain. Hence art produces higher pleasure than the natural beauty.

The pursuit of art is not based on instinct even though it is spontaneous both for creation of art and its appreciation. Neither planned effort nor deliberate choice play a vital role in the process of creation and enjoyment of art. Hence people are prone to declare 'art for art's sake.

According to one view art activity is the manifestation of play of impulse, or the effusion of surplus energy. Another view refutes this theory that it would denounce art from the perspective of human value. As dissatisfaction prevails in the pursuit of art in nature, man naturally gets satisfied in the artistic creation since he longs for the ideal of perfect beauty. For the creation of art the significant factor that is required at the initial level is the inspiration which is based on spontaneous, self-forgetful and detectable experience. In the vicinity of nature, the artist forgets himself and his imagination flows to convert the natural beauty into artistic beauty. In this sense the artist is placed above the common man who lacks the ability of imagination, inspiration artistic skill etc, and place below the enlightened persons who see and enjoy beauty in the flora and fauna of the earth. The creative genius in the artist enables him to convert the nature enjoyable more through his marvellous ideas. The appreciator must stoop to the level of the artist, i.e. he must have a similar heart that of the artist to appreciate his creation.

Regarding the content and method of art presentation, it will be interesting to note that both of them are the two aspects of the same phenomenon. The former refers to the theme or the subject matter of art creation, especially the theme causing emotional appeal in the mind of the appreciator. The latter is the mode of communication or transmitting the content. Only when there is a proper blending of the content and method, there would be the fulfillment of enjoying beauty in art. Between the content and method, the content is the foremost element while the method is secondary and is subservient to the content. If method predominates in any work of art, it will lose its significant aspect. The method is actually a means to serve the purpose of communicating the content. The content of any work of art is predominantly situational as well as emotional since the content cannot go beyond human life. But the emotional and situational themes of art must be not actualized but idealized. Then only the appreciator will develop a kind of detached attitude in appreciating the central theme of art. If it is not idealized, then it becomes personal and will culminate in developing a kind of distaste for art. The main objective of art creation is to evoke a kind of interest, self-forgetful joy and delightful experience in the appreciator. However, the method of appreciation will undergo change corresponding to the change in the content.

According to Croce any aesthetic work especially the work of art must be internal or intuitive; non-internal or external type of art is no longer a work of art. However the insists on the inseparable nature of intuition and expression. To put I precisely, art is intuition-expression. He has frankly identified intuitive or expressive knowledge with the aesthetic or artistic fact, taking works of art as examples of intuitive knowledge and attributing to them the characteristics of intuition and vice-versa. He also wants those who contemplate on artistic creations to set aside theory and abstraction, but to estimate their attractive native through direct intuition. There are a few implication from this hypothesis of Croce:

- A) Knowing a thing implies the expression to oneself which is a necessary togetherness of intuition and expression. Any aesthetic expression is essentially is nothing but an inner clarity or shaping which is involved in intuition itself. All works of art such as painting, drawing, singing etc., are cases of merely practical or willed activity. The physical work of art which is outer like literature, music etc., evoke a kind of external stimulus in the minds of the audience or readers, enables the artist to resort to outer expression since it causes kind of aesthetic experience in the form of intuition expression.

- B) None can consider any work of art as representing a symbol of some meaning since it is an inseparable unity of intuition and expression. Actually a symbol is different from its meaning in everyday language.
- C) In the opinion of Croce, if any work of art is an instant result of intuition-expression, it would be wrong to evaluate its merit on the basis of general laws or genres of art, rather one must straightaway proceed to study the art's finished work itself. The several kinds of work of art are not true species, with genera and sub-species. But it resembles a kind of family likeness.
- D) Artistic expression has a secondary value, as it is the outcome of outer activity, however having its root in the spiritual or inner activity called intuition. In his own words, "The aesthetic fact is altogether completed in the expressive elaboration of impressions. When we have achieved the word within us, conceived definitely and vividly a figure or a stature, or found a musical motive, expression is born and complete: there is no need for anything else. Croce here emphasizes that we should not confuse true aesthetic expression with a practical activity. For the genuine work of art arises and completes in the mind itself. The aesthetics are expected to share or recall the real work and hence there is only pragmatic value rather than aesthetic appeal for the observers of the work of art.
- E) Croce propounded a new theory of beauty which is a 'successful expression, or rather, as expression and nothing more, because expression when it is not successful is not expression.

In spite of Croce's profound views about aesthetic work as having intuition expression formula, there arise certain difficulties in making his ideas to have universal command or general acceptance. There is also a problem in 'forming' and 'making' if we rely upon intuition as having formed expression. Where exactly do we find that intuition? We also cannot totally ignore the symbolic representation as well as meaning attributed to work of art like music.

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## **1.9 BEAUTY AS MEANT BY DIFFERENT THINKERS**

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### **R.G. Collingwood**

Collingwood considers art as imagination and expression instead of intuition and expression. His views on art may be summarized as follows; "the essential function of art is to express emotions, not to arouse or describe them. The artistic expression of emotions is also to be distinguished from merely giving vent to them. Positively, it is clear and highly individualized projection of emotions. It is also creation. But creation is not to be taken as the manipulation of some external material in accordance with a set of method or technique. Art is not the same kind of making as craft. This difference may be clearly seen (partly) by reflecting that the true locus of artistic creation is imagination, not the outer world of performance and artifacts." The central problem for Collingwood regarding aesthetics is whether art is an expression of emotions. This is not a philosophical theory or definition of art, but familiar to every artist and to those who have some acquaintance with the arts. In aesthetics, one has to carefully think what kind of expression of emotion has been really depicted.

According to Collingwood, there is a difference between what makes the expression of emotion and the actual arousal of it as in the case of a father angrily scolding his mischievous child. This will not arouse the same emotion in the child, but the child will understand the kind of emotion that is being expressed, anger. Similarly when a person arousing emotion on others may not have the same experience in himself, like a salesperson who tries to attract the buyers of his products. However, the man who seeks to arouse a kind of emotion in the audience knows well in advance, what this emotion is. This Collingwood regards an expression as an activity of which there can be no technique.

He also insists to distinguish between expression of emotions and their mere description, since description involves generalization. Also emotions vary from individual to individual depending upon its precise nature pertaining to a particular situation. Hence the aim of art is different from craft according to him, for craft is conceived in general terms. To quote him, “the artist proper is a person who grappling with the problem of expressing a certain emotion, says, ‘I want to get this clear’ He does not want a thing of a certain kind, he wants a certain thing. This is why the kind of a person who takes his literature as psychology, saying, ‘how admirably this writer depicts the feelings of women, or bus drivers...’ necessarily misunderstands every real work of art with which he comes into contact and takes for good art... what is not art at all.”

In the opinion of Collingwood, art is not only an expression but a kind of creative, imaginary making, also not the making of an artifact nor a craft. Art cannot be construed as a mere transformation of the raw material from one thing to some thing based on a fixed plan with a plan with a preconceived end. It is a voluntary act of procreation. It is spontaneous achievement with creative genius, deliberation and responsibility in his mind. He also distinguishes imagination from make-believe in explaining a work of art. For ‘make-believe’ is always opposed to reality and vice-versa. Imagination is not necessarily tied down to the unreal like the make-believe system. Again make-believe is determined by aversion and desire, while imagination is indifferent to them. Collingwood’s contention is the art-work is based on an imaginary object internally. Art is totally a imaginary work which is total or comprehensive.

The critics of Collingwood question the nature of emotion and the purpose of creating art by every artist. For in the case of instrumental music, art is nothing to do with emotion. Regarding the expression of emotions, the critics point out that an emotional experience is a wholly indeterminate one, which is purely psychological without having any awareness of the objective situation. It would be a cumbersome task to express our emotions in perfect language, even though we may have an awareness of the same. Collingwood speaks of generic features of emotion rather than its specific significance. The critics also point out his biased tendency against the perceptual elements in arts; for he firmly underestimates them. They also disagree with the distinction of artist from a craftsman.

### **C.J. Ducasse**

Ducasse in his famous work, *The Philosophy of Art* refers a vigorous and analytical style of argument. The significant element of his notion of ‘aesthetic art’ may be summarized as follows: “Art is the language of feeling. So its essence as an activity is expression, not the creation of beauty. What the artist really aims at is objective self expression. Transmission of feeling is neither the essential intention nor the necessary effect of a work of art. Finally, art is expression

in the special sense that it is both free or spontaneous and yet not quite undetermined. Before, however, we set out to explain the various ideas implicit in this summary of Ducasse, we would do well to bring out what he means by aesthetic art. The term, aesthetic, he rightly points out, has been used in quite a few different sense; loosely as synonymous with 'beautiful' in the etymological sense, to mean the generally perceptible as when Kant titles the first part of his *critique of pure reason* as 'transcendental aesthetic.' and again, 'as an adjective intended to differentiate feelings obtained in the contemplation of things which are meant to be mere designs, from feelings obtained in the contemplation of other things, such as dramatic entities...' Therefore, in so far as there is no one firmly establishes sense; in which the word aesthetic is used in the language of the plain man. Ducasse feels justified, in putting his own meaning on the word, and decides to use it to signify; 'having to do with feelings obtained through contemplation.'

According to Ducasse, aesthetic art has been characterized as the 'conscious objectification of one's feeling.' He distinguishes it from fine art, which produces something beautiful. But art is merely conscious objective, self-expression i.e. critically controlled objectification of self. In his own view, "strictly speaking, pictures, statues, and the like are not art at all but works of art; and art is not a quality discernible in them but an activity of man, - the activity namely, of which such things are the products." It also involves the language or expression of feeling. Like the art of putting our meaning into words, art is putting of a feeling into an object created ad hoc., i.e. giving a concrete shape to the feeling leading to contemplation. Through this type of explanation, Ducasse avoids the excesses of Croce and holds that his theory of art has a value of expression in terms of an external, observable object. However, his association of art with language seems to be misleading. Language, properly used can offer meaningful statements, but not to good works of art. His idea of feeling is also does not suit to the idea of emotion since both are psychologically at variance. Emotion is nothing but the strengthened or vibrant feeling.

### **John Dewey**

John Dewey considers art neither as luxury nor as an intrusion into life, but simply experience. To quote Dewey, "This task (of the philosopher of art) is to restore continuity between the refined and intensified forms of experience that are works of art and the everyday events, doings and sufferings that are universally recognized to constitute experience. Mountain peaks do not float unsupported; they do not even just rest upon the earth. They are the earth in one of its manifest operations... [so,] in order to understand the aesthetic in its... approved forms, one must begin with it in the raw; in the events and sense that hold the attentive eye and ear of man, arousing his interest and affording him enjoyment as he looks and listens; the sights that hold the crowd - the fire-engine resting by;... the tense grace of the ball-player (as it) infests the on looking crowd... (one has also to consider those) who are happily absorbed in their activities of mind and body... The intelligent mechanic engaged in his job, interested in doing well and finding satisfaction in his handiwork, caring for his material and tools with genuine affection, is artistically engaged." To put it more precisely, the task of the philosopher of art, according to Dewey, is to restore the link between art and everyday experience. 'Experience' for Dewey is not merely a subjective pole, but refers to the whole transaction of explicit manifestation, contrary to the views explained by Croce and Collingwood.

An art product or a work of art, according to Dewey is a fusion of sense and meaning since the artist has engaged artistically in the product of art. Aesthetic experience is no more private and psychical exclusively than any other kind of experience. Several aesthetic predicates like beautiful, poignant, tragic, etc., express the original character of the things themselves and not mere projections of subjective states. Experience is not individualized, but occurs continuously since it is unconsummated and divided. Aesthetically an experience consists of an inner unit and order, moves towards fulfilment, agreeable and satisfying on the whole, which is basically emotional. For the emotional states are conditioned by parts of an inclusive and enduring situation that involves concern for objects and their issues. To quote Dewey, "A work of art elicits and accentuates this quality of being a whole and of belonging to the larger, all inclusive, whole which is the universe in which we live... Somehow, (it) operates to deepen and to rise to great clarity that sense of an enveloping undefined whole that accompanies every normal experience... This fact... is the explanation of the feeling of exquisite intelligibility and clarity we have in the presence of an object that is experienced with aesthetic intensity. It explains also the religious feeling that accompanies intense aesthetic perception. We are, as it were, introduced into a world beyond this world, which is nevertheless the deeper reality of the world in which we live in our ordinary experiences. We are carried out beyond ourselves to find ourselves.... (the) enveloping undefined whole is felt as an expansion of ourselves."

The above citation will give the entire gamut of the outlook of aesthetic experience developed by Dewey. An art product is a work of art only potentially so long as it does not so quicken others' experience, which as a formed substance leading to the work of art in actuality and is perceived as formed in terms of an experience.

### **George Santayana**

He names his work on aesthetics as *The sense of beauty*, since it plays a vital role in life than the aesthetic theory in philosophy. "We must learn from our study why, when and how beauty appears, what conditions an object must fulfil to be beautiful, what elements of our nature make us sensible of beauty, and what the relation is between the constitution of the object and the excitement of our susceptibility." In his view the sense of beauty is to complete in the living context of our experience of beauty and artistic expressiveness rather than reflecting upon in the abstract. In his another work *The Realm of Essence*, Santayana explicitly states that beauty is indefinable. "The beautiful is itself an essence, an indefinable quality felt in many things which, however disparate they may be otherwise, receive this name by virtue of a special emotion, half wonder, half love, which is felt in their presence."

Santayana maintains that judgement of beauty is immediate, unmediated and non-relational. Art is different from science, since the latter is related to truth, a fidelity to fact, while art is for entertainment, stimulation of our senses and imagination. Reasoning really sub serves the aesthetic by way of satisfying our understanding. Again Santayana distinguishes aesthetic values with other kinds of value like moral, social, economic etc. beauty may be good, it cannot lead to moral obligation. He insists that our practical reason compares, combines and harmonizes all our interests but each value coming under its domain is unique and distinct. Aesthetic pleasure, in his opinion is objectification, a pleasure of ours, though regarded as a quality of things. However, it is an agreeable state of experience since there is the assigning a locus in the object. As elements of beauty, the materials of beauty are sensations of bodily welfare and surplus



energy caused by instincts etc., another element is form which is agreeable in several respects which temper the unpleasantness and commotional power of adversity and unrighteousness since forms are the types which we come to form as a residuum of everyday experience. He describes music, sculpture, literature, poetry, as the individual arts.

### **Susanne K. Langer**

Langer treats art as an expressive form. The ability to express or articulate or project the subjective factor of our experience distinguishes art from other things. "The essential function of art is not to give vent to the artist's own feeling, nor even to evoke any emotion in the contemplator, but to so 'express' the life of feeling that art lovers in general, nay, even artists themselves, may come to know a little more about 'vitality in all its manifestations from sheer sensibility to the most elaborate phases of awareness and emotion.'" In other words, the essential value of art is not affective or predominantly subjective but cognitive. Art is a vehicle of knowledge of the life of feeling." Like other philosophers of art, Langer considers 'expression' as the central concept of his aesthetical theory. 'A work of art is an expressive form created for our perception through sense or imagination, and what it expresses is human feeling.' The major concepts in his theory are 'form' 'expression, 'feeling,' 'creation' and 'perception.'

The form of an work of art is the moral effect of it and it also represents the whole work of art as a form itself, which requires in art making and art contemplation. But form need not be an essential factor in literary art. Art in expressed in a certain form according to Langer. They are expressed in the forms of symbol, sign and signal, image, experience etc. Art Symbol is presentational or non-discursive leased pm the principle of construction. Feeling in art is concerned with the subjectively felt realties, i.e., everything that can be felt especially from sensation, pain, comfort, excitement and repose including complex emotions and intellectual tensions. However, non-verbal or non-representational work of art may not evoke any kind of feeling. Regarding creation Langer is of the opinion that art-work is the expressive forms created for our perception. Finally, artistic import and intuition constitute the contemplation of the created art in a form with expressiveness with several meanings each one is unique and distinct. According to Langer, poetry contains the discourse, which creates and projects an illusion besides image, semblance of virtual life or personal and immediate experience as well as forms of feeling.

### **L.A. Reid**

Reid treats art as an embodiment of creative aesthetics from the perspective of constructive and critical. By the word 'creation' Reid means that which was earlier unknown to the artist, but gradually manifests through his creation. He prefers to use the word embodiment instead of expression, as the key concept of aesthetics, since the works of art give definite, or more or less material, shape to the artist's idea or vision. Art is the creative aesthetic embodiment which has an individual form. Language in art, according to Reid, is the excitement in ideas of the artist which moves him to proceed further. "A poet has a freedom in the selection and manipulation of his subject-matter (in exactly the same way as a painter freely selects from the features of a landscape) to which the philosopher or the scientist has no right. It is ideas-as-he-feels-than (ideas as values) that 'get into' the poem. As with the painter, his emphasis, his style, is affected by the rhythms and pulsing of his feeling. In the writing of philosophy and science (on the other hand) the quality of style is primarily subordinate to the clarity of ideas." However, critics state

that that art cannot be regarded as a kind of expression but better may be called embodied meaning.

### Check Your Progress I

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) How do you understand Beauty?

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2) What are the views of different philosophers on 'rasa'?

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## 1.10 LET US SUM UP

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Besides the above philosophers of art we come across Aristotle, Leo Tolstoy, John Hospers, Clive Bell, E.H. Gomrich, T.M. Grane, David Hume and Magaret Macdonald discussing about poetics, art, the language of emotion, art and emotion, artistic representation and form, artistic representation, artistic greatness, of the standard of taste and some distinctive features of arguments used in criticism of the art respectively.

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## 1.11 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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**UNIT 2****RASA - DEFINITION, NATURE AND SCOPE**

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**Contents**

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Definition
- 2.3 Nature
- 2.4 Scope
- 2.5 Poetry as Emotive Meaning
- 2.6 The Validity of *Rasa* as a Theoretical Concept
- 2.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.8 Key Words
- 2.9 Further Readings and References

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**2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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The objective of this unit is to learn the literary theory from the concept of '*Rasa*.' It would therefore be appropriate to explain the meaning and scope of the term. It is also very important to know that in the Indian context, the concept of *rasa* is central to all discourse about literature. It can also be seen as a pervasive influence in the theories of painting, sculpture, drama and dance in addition to poetry. Hence, it is necessary to understand how and why the concept of *rasa* dominated the critical scene in India.

Thus by the end of this unit, you should be able:

- to have a basic understanding of the concept
- understand it as a general theory of literature
- it's study in relation to other theories
- it's emergence as the major literary concept
- it's pervasive influence in arts

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**2.1 INTRODUCTION**

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As a general theory of literature, the *Rasa* doctrine (*rasa-vada*) is based on the premises that literary works (as verbal compositions) express emotive meanings and that all literature is typically emotive discourse or discourse that has to do with the portrayal of feelings and attitudes rather than with ideas, concepts, statements of universal truths, and so forth. It also raises a host of philosophical questions. What kind of entities are the emotions, what is their objective or ontological status. How are they recognized? How do they get expressed in words? These and other related questions will have to be considered seriously.

In the history of Sanskrit literature the concept of *rasa* has been developed in detail and in a multifaceted way. It has remained central to all literary discourses. The term '*rasa*' may not find a good equivalent in English, but in its basic sense means 'aesthetic relish'. Though a specific attitude is required to appreciate *rasa* yet it is not a conditioning by experience that the Behaviorists forge. Experience of *rasa* is also in terms of an inner process that occur in the individual while going through a literary piece or performance. Hence, this aesthetic relish is not concerned with mere linguistic behavior in an empty way but communicating a distinct eternal

flavor or mood such as tragic, comic, erotic and so forth. A distinct role is given to what can be referred to simply as the common human emotions treated in the poem termed as *Bhavas* and the art of emotion or *rasa* that emerges from such treatment. While it is believed that in the history of Sanskrit poetics, perhaps no other concept has given rise to so much controversy. It appears to be a truth to an extent since the author of *Rasagangadhara* who tries to review in detail the diverse shades of expert opinion centering round *rasa*, is driven to confess at the end that the only common point that *emergesis* : ‘*rasa* is felt’ , as that which is invariably connected with the highest joy and partaking of beauty in the world.

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## 2.2 DEFINITION

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The term *rasa* in the Vedic literature derives from the root ‘*ras*’ which means to taste, sweet juice, sap or essence for instance , ‘*raso vai madhu*’ (*Shatapatha Brahmana* vi.iv. 3-27) ; ‘*raso vai sah*’ (Taittiriya Upanishad. 2.7.2.) etc. The classical interpretations of Bharata’s famous ‘*Rasa-Sutra*’ explains it as : “ Emotions in poetry came to be expressed through the conjunction of their causes and symptoms and other ancillary feelings that accompany the emotions” (*Natyashastra*. 6.31). Bharata here stipulates four necessary conditions that must be present for an emotion to become manifested: (i) causes (*vibhavas*, (ii) symptoms (*anubhavas* , (iii) feelings (*vyabhicharin*), and (iv) their conjunction (*samyoga*) (*vibhava anubhava vyabhicharisamyogat rasanishpattih*. NS 6.32.). A reading of *Natyashastra* (NS) will show that Bharata never indulges in the metaphysical discussion about the aesthetic response of the man/woman of taste. He recognizes how it varies from individual to individual. It is not justified to estimate *rasa* with a set of general arguments by citing experimental results and not by revealing the basic ideas in the foundations of emotional sensitivity.

Causes (*vibhavas*): The causes of an emotion are those that generate or excite the emotion or are the occasion of that emotion. In Sanskrit , the cause is designated by the term *vibhava*, a word synonymous with *karana*, *hetu*, *nimitta*, all of them meaning ‘cause.’ It is also called a *vibhava* because knowledge of an emotion through words, physical gestures , and involuntary psychic symptoms (sweating, trembling and so forth) expressive of that emotion.

This is again of two kinds, the first is the primary cause or the object of emotion (internal object in modern terminology), which is defined as “that, resting on which, as its object , emotions like love are born’. The Sanskrit term for this is *alambana-vibhava*. This may be a person, scene, object or thought that excite a person’s emotion and appears to him in a certain light or under a certain description. It is not however, the case that the mere presence of the object will necessarily excite an emotion in a person. It will not, unless the object is ‘intended’ by that person as an object of his feeling and he is moved to think of it under a certain description.

Second is the exciting cause (*uddipana-vibhava*). The object of an emotion is the generative cause of that emotion because, although it is the object to which the emotion is directed, it is also the reason for that emotion. That is to say that the emotion will not possibly arise in a person without the actual presence or thought of that object. But the object in itself is not sufficient for the emotion to develop unless the circumstances are also appropriate. For example, love between two young people grows into a full-blown passion when conditions, such as privacy, moonlight, a pleasant climate and so forth are present. So, under the exciting causes are included all the attended circumstances that enhance the feeling. Familiar examples of these would be the

'atmospheric' setting in Edgar Allen Poes' 'The Fall of the House of Usher', and the images of sterility, dryness, agony and death in Eliot's 'The Waste Land'. The objects simply help the emotion to exhibit itself and therefore, are called 'causes' in a secondary sense.

### **Expressions and Symptoms**

Emotional states will become objects of discourse only when they are expressed in an overt or visible way, in speech, action or gesture. In the works of Charlton, "The idea of any emotion is...in general bound up with the idea of how it is manifested..." Hence, the conjunction of the symptoms with the causes is of utmost importance in any discourse about the emotions. The Sanskrit word for the behavioral expression is '*anubhava*' which means etymologically, 'that which follows or ensues from the feeling (as its effect)'. *Anubhava* is that which 'makes the feeling apprehensible'. The expressions, the words, actions or gestures are in one sense the effects of their emotions and appear after emotions. But from the point of view of the observer, they are the indicative signs of the emotions, motions, changes in appearance, and actions that point to the emotions. Through them, the emotions which being internal conditions, must otherwise remain unknown, are made known or objectified.

### **Ancillary Feelings**

When a feeling is being expressed in a poem as a primary mood, other feelings that normally accompany it are called its ancillaries. No feeling, however basic, appears in its severest purity of form but attracts other emotions as well. Thus, if love-in-union is the emotion being treated, it will attract a host of other feelings, bashfulness, infatuation, agitation eagerness, pride, vacillation and others. These ancillary feelings are called *vyabhichari* or *sanchari-bhavas* (transient or fleeting emotions) because they come and go at will in association with the principal emotions and help stabilize them. Without the reinforcement of the fleeting emotions, no emotion can be developed into an enduring mood. Poetic organization consists, not only in developing an emotion into a sustained mood, but also in developing an emotion into a sustained mood by exhibiting an entire emotional sequence of alternating stands.

### **Their Conjunction**

As Abhinavagupta points out, it is only when the full paraphernalia of objects, expressions and accessory feelings is present that the composition will be most effective. For this reason, the dramatic presentation has been regarded as the best form of entertainment. Therefore, in it , a whole situation is elaborated with a picture- like vividness. In a written composition, however, this picturesqueness results from the verbal descriptions, and the appropriate actions have to be realized.

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## **2.3 NATURE**

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Although, *rasa*, as originally propounded by Bharata was purely an aesthetic concept, it has through the centuries, been absorbed into theological discussions and consequently become strongly tinged with one or the other metaphysical trend. Bharata's commentators themselves sought , from time to time , to give a metaphysical twist to the *rasa* theory. *Rasa*, according to Bharata is the first known formulator of the relishable quality inherent in an artistic work which according to him, is its emotive content. Every work, poem or play is supposed to treat an emotive theme and communicate a distinct emotional flavor or mood, such as tragic, comic and so forth. In this sense, one can speak of the *rasa* of a work and also, since there are many such

moods of poetic or dramatic 'moods' or 'emotions', of *rasas* in the plural. A distinction is also made between the common human emotions, treated in the poem which are termed '*bhavas*' and the art of emotion or '*rasa*' that emerges from such a treatment, the assumption being that the raw stuff of the emotions presented as undergone by characters in a play or by the speaker of a lyric poem is transformed in the process into a universalized emotion and rendered fit for a contemplative enjoyment. In the second sense in which the term is understood, *rasa* is relishable experience occasioned by the work in the reader or spectator which may be referred to as the '*rasa* experience'.

The *rasa* theory states that the aim of poetry is the expression and evocation of emotions and that a poem exists for no other purpose than that it should be relished by the reader. Aesthetic experience is this act of relishing or gestation (*rasana*). The idea that poetry expresses emotions and moves us is not of course new to Western criticism. It is implicit in Aristotle's 'Poetics', in the Greco-Roman rhetorical tradition generally, in Longinus particularly, in Romantic expressionistic aestheticians down to Croce, and in such modern critics as Richards and Eliot. But the Western prejudice against emotions in poetry, too, is as old as Plato and the Puritans. Traditionally, Western criticism has reflected a division of loyalties between the opposite principles of '*dulce*' and '*utile*', so much so that a complete aesthetics of the emotions was not possible unless it was also justified by moral, cognitive or philosophical values. This is true even of Aristotle. In the Indian tradition, on the other hand, one finds a more consistent and systematic theorizing about poetry in terms of the emotions and an attempt to explain the whole area of poetic semantics as well as aesthetic psychology centrally from the standpoint of emotions.

The emotive theory was not by any means the only theory to be advanced by the classical Sanskrit critics. Sanskrit poetics had its school of metaphor (*Alankara*), which thought of figurative or deviant expression as the special characteristic of poetic language and its school of style (*Riti*), which believed that a special arrangement of words, of phonetic and syntactic features, constituted the essence of poetry. Then there was this influential school, that of suggestion (*Dhvani*), led by Anandavardhana, and his commentator Abhinavagupta. This school argued that poetic indirection was a special, supernumerary activity of words, outside both literal and metaphoric functions. However, these two critics were also responsible for developing Bharata's doctrine of emotions, which Bharata himself applied mainly to dramatic literature, into a unified theory of poetry. At their hands, the concept of *rasa* became the central criterion of poetic semantics, it subsumed even the principle of suggestion.

The *rasa* theory implies that there are a number of specific emotions, each with its distinct tone or flavor, and not an anonymous aesthetic emotion or a host of nameless emotions. As Bharata said, "Drama is the representation of the mental states, actions and conduct of people" (*Natyashastra*. 2.112). Thus, Bharata lists as many as forty nine emotional states (*bhavas*), of which eight are primary or durable states (*sthayin*), with their corresponding *rasas* or aesthetic moods ; thirty-three are transitory states (*vyabhicharin*); and eight are involuntary expressions, like tears, horripilation, trembling, and so on , which are also thought to be mental states even though they appear as physical conditions. The eight basic emotions are erotic love, comic laughter, grief, fury, heroic spirit, fear, wonder, and disgust or revulsion. Only these basic emotions can be developed into distinct aesthetic moods, whereas the other , transient emotions come and go according to their affinity with the durable emotions. Later commentators, however, added a ninth emotion to Bharata's list of eight basic states, namely subsidence or serenity (*shanta*). The final number of basic emotions in the *rasa* tradition is therefore taken to be nine.

**Check Your Progress I**

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What is Aesthetic relish?

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2) What are the premises of *rasa* doctrine?

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**2.4 SCOPE**

Sanskrit poetics also avoids the pitfalls of the various transcendental revelatory theories associated with Romanticism and traceable largely to neo-Platonic doctrines. Theorists in this tradition believe that the artist has a vision of reality hidden behind the appearance of things and makes the revelation of this vision the object of his art. The trouble with this view is that the critic has no means of knowing this vision of ultimate reality except through the work itself and that when he does come to know about it, he cannot ascertain whether it has been faithfully reproduced or embodied in the work. The Sanskrit critics speak of art as an object of enjoyment rather than as a medium for transmitting inspired versions of ultimate reality. Although for them art occasions a supernal delight, its matrix is common stuff of human emotions. Aesthetic experience is simply the apprehension of the created work as delight, and the pleasure principle cannot be supported from aesthetic contemplation. This delight is regarded as its end and as having no immediate relation to the practical concerns of the world or to the pragmatic aims of moral improvement or spiritual salvation. Sanskrit theory is thus opposed to a didactic, hortative view of literature. Abhinavagupta declares that poetry is fundamentally different from ethics or religion and that the principal element in aesthetic experience is not knowledge but delight, although poetry may also lead to the expression of our being and enrich our power of intuition (NS 2.115).

The whole problem concerning the language of poetic emotions centers on the question, Can emotional qualities be tested as they are normally taken to reside in the subjective experience of the writer or reader? The answer to this question hinges on our being able to describe the connection between the work of art and the feeling in the work of art itself and, in a sense, make it testable. The approach in the light of Wittgenstein's logic seeks to avoid the dangers of both expressionist and affective theories by locating feelings squarely in the work of art itself instead of imputing them to any actual person, artist or observer. It does not evaluate the work either by inquiring whether it has faithfully expressed the author's alleged feelings or by examining its effects on the minds of the audience. The feelings we find in the poem or play are objective qualities present in the work. They are not the feelings of anybody in particular; they are just feelings defined by their objects and situational contexts. The language of feeling is not then a private language; it is more a system of symbols, a language game that is understood by those who have learned its conventions and usages.

This objective emphasis is, in fact, quite congenial to the Indian theorist. The *rasa* theory itself, as formulated by Bharata in his *Natyashastra*, deals with the emotions in an entirely objective



way. In his famous *rasa-sutra* (formula), Bharata explains how emotions are expressed in poetry: “Emotions in poetry come to be expressed through the conjunction of their causes and symptoms, and other ancillary feelings that accompany the emotions”. Here Bharata stipulates three conditions or situational factors that must be present together for an emotion to become manifested : (i) that which generates the emotion, which includes (a) the object to which the emotion is directed (i.e. , the intentional object, *alambanavibhava*), for example, Juliet, and (b) other exciting circumstances (*uddipanavibhava*), for example, youth, privacy, moonlight etc.: (ii) the overt expressions (actions and gestures) that exhibit the emotion, called *anubhavas*, for example, tears, laughter etc. : and (iii) other ancillary feelings, such as depression, elevation, agitation etc. that normally accompany that emotion. The object, thus set forth by Bharata, of representing the various emotions in terms of their attendant conditions make the poetic situation very much a public situation.

Bharata’s commentators, were careful to point out the emotions treated in poetry are neither the projections of the reader’s own mental states nor the private feelings of the poet: rather, they are the objective situations abiding in the poem (*kavyagata*), as its cognitive content. The sorrow presented in the Ramayana is to be taken not as the personal sorrow of the poet but sorrow itself in its generalized form and identified by its criteria. If it were only a feeling personal to the poet, it would not attain the status of a poem (*shlokatva*) and would not be fit for the reader’s contemplation. It is further stated that the possibility of the poetic emotions being objectified in the work is dependent on their representation in words. *Rasa* is apprehended as residing in the work, in the situational factors presented in an appropriate language.

That poetic emotions have their ‘life in the poem’ and arise only in relation to their formal representation in the poem is also the conclusion of T.S. Eliot. Speaking of Ezra Pound’s poetry, Eliot says that Pound’s verse is always definite and concrete because “he has always a definite emotion it. Feelings and passions, Eliot further argues, are not merely subjective but objective and public. Bharata’s *rasa-sutra* affirms as much. Emotions exist and are manifested in inalienable association with their causes and circumstances. As they are known in life by their objective signs, so also are they apprehended from the language that describes them. It would therefore be wrong to bring the charge of subjectivism or naïve emotionalism against the *rasa* theory.

A critic may pose a problem as follows: Meanings and ideas are of course objectively present in the work; they can, for instance, be adequately and most often unambiguously specified. But since there can be no equally sensitive control of emotional response we are here in the realm of the subjective. This difficulty is fully appreciated by the *rasa* theorist. Hence, Bharata and following him, Anandavardhana set up an elaborate logic of the emotions and a body of criteria for situation appraisal, *rasauchitya* (propriety in the treatment of emotions), based on public norms and standards (*lokadharmi, lokapramana*). It must not be forgotten that what the Sanskrit critics are talking about are not the elusive inner happenings of the Cartesian theory but ‘meanings’ of emotive situations and behavior as they enter into human discourse. Emotions in poetry are as objective and public as ‘meanings and ideas’ are and can be specified as adequately as the others can be.

The Sanskrit critics however do not wish to banish the affections from the poetic experience. Nor do they entirely dispense with mental concepts. Bharata whose approach to aesthetics was more practical than philosophical, assumed that the emotions expressed in poetry are the emotions felt by the poet and shared by the audience. But Shankuka, an early commentator on Bharata, saw the difficulty implicit in Bharata’s formula for emotional expression and stated that emotions,

being mental states cannot be directly known or expressed; the knowledge of them is made possible only by their perceptible causes and effects which are their logical signs, not of intrapsychic states themselves.

Abhinavagupta too, recognizes this distinction between inner mental states and their conditions and signs and points out that, while these signs serve to manifest or make known the emotions, they are not identical with emotions themselves. The two belong to two different orders of existence (the one is physical and insentient and the other mental and sentient), and they are apprehended by different organs of perception. Both Shankuka and Abhinavagupta agree that emotions are mental entities that are not identical with their natural expressions or with their verbal representations. Thus, they both assume that they are logically and epistemologically prior to their outward manifestations while at the same time they admit they can become known to others only through their external signs.

In Sanskrit criticism, there is a lively debate on the nature of poetic truth. In his commentary on Bharata, Abhinavagupta sums up many views on the nature of dramatic representation and argues against the prevalent theories of imitation and Illusion. Bharata defined drama by the term 'anukarana', which may be translated as 'mimetic reproduction': "Drama is a reproduction of the mental states, actions and conduct of people". Abhinavagupta's predecessors, Lollata and Shankuka, who commented on Bharata's work, understood dramatic representation in mimetic terms and held that aesthetic perception is illusory cognition (*mithyajnana*), although it does produce real emotions in the spectator.

The connection between the imitation and illusion theories is obvious. An imitative reproduction of the real, whether in the medium of paint, words, or physical gestures, cannot be the real thing: consequently, the response evoked by it is based on illusion. Abhinavagupta argues that drama, and by extension all poetry (*kavya*), is not an imitation but a depiction or description in words (or enactment in the case of theatrical performance) of the life of the emotions that in turn, arouses the latent emotive dispositions of the actor or spectator and causes him to reflect on the presented situation with a degree of sympathetic identification.

### Check Your Progress II

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Can emotional qualities be tasted?

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2) How will you explain Bharata's *rasa*-sutra?

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## 2.5 POETRY AS EMOTIVE MEANING

The best definition of literature is perhaps contextual and one that takes into account the nature of the literary situation and the purpose and motivation of the sentences employed in it. It is easier to define the nature and type of a discourse by its context than by its linguistic form. It is in these terms that the *rasa* theory conceives of the nature of literature. The purpose of literary discourse is, according to this theory, neither the statement of universal truths nor the prompting of men to action but 'evocation'. Bhattanayaka, a staunch defender of the *rasa* doctrine as well

as a critic of *dhvani* theory, distinguishes the poetic from the other forms of literature, such as the Vedas, scientific, ethical and historical texts, by its evocative aim (*bhavakatva*). In poetry, both words and meanings directly contribute to the aim of *rasa*-evocation and are subordinated to that activity.

Abhinavagupta agrees with Bhattanayaka that the function of poetic language can be said to consist only in evocation. Pleasure alone is the primary end of poetry: the instruction provided by it is but a remote aim. Poetry too, he declares, is in this sense essentially enactment, although language is its sole medium and mode of presentation. Bharata had stated that “no poetic meaning subsists without *rasa*”. According to his etymology, *bhavas* (emotions in poetry) are so called because they bring into being (*bhavayanti*, evoke) corresponding aesthetic moods. They are an ‘instrument of causation’. Therefore, Abhinavagupta concludes that ‘*rasa* is the fundamental aim and purport of poetry.’ Anandavardhana too says ‘Where *rasa*, in its various forms, is not the subject matter of discourse there no manner of poetry is possible.’

There is no poetic theme that is not infused with *rasa*, no object that does not become the cause of an emotion. Even as all themes and ideas become poetic when infused with *rasa*, all elements of language viz. figure, meter, rhyme and all such verbal and phonological devices must also derive their efficacy from a *rasa* context by contributing to the evocative function. They do not rest in themselves since they can be understood only through *rasa*, which is the final resting point of all poetic discourse.

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## 2.6 THE VALIDITY OF RASA AS A THEORETICAL CONCEPT

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Bharata’s *rasa* doctrine was commented on in diverse ways both before and after Abhinavagupta, and many reformulations and mutations of it appeared in the course of its history. Valid criteria for evaluative judgments can be formulated only on the basis of permanent or necessary properties, which all literature must possess and not on the basis of non-necessary properties, such as complexity, irony and so on. *Auchitya*, translated as ‘propriety’ is understood by the Sanskrit writers as the harmonious adaptation of the poetic means like the language, figure, image and so on to the poetic end. This end is conceived by the *rasa* theorist as the evocation of *rasa*. While, thus, the final ground of reference in poetic criticism is evocation of aesthetic moods, the only criterion of beauty is appropriateness, the idea that, in poetry good and bad is to be determined on the ground of appropriateness and inappropriateness and that merits and faults do not obtain abstractly but depend on many inter-related factors, such as suitability of language to theme, tone, context and so forth. All writers, from Bharata down, assumed decorum to be a central regulative principle. Bharata treats ‘*auchitya*’ in relation to the problems of drama and stage presentation. Anandavardhana also considers propriety an imperative but he is emphatic in stating that the sole consideration in deciding the propriety of form and matter is the end of delineating the *rasas*, to which all other features must be subordinated.

In modern times L.A. Reid says that what art embodies are emotive values, which can be perceived as objective qualities of the work, ‘not facts or ideas as such’ many Continental theorists down to Croce had a stake in the emotionality of art, including music. But they were for the most part thinking either of the artist’s self-expression or of the reader’s or viewer’s response. For instance, Eugene Vernon focuses on the artist’s character and genius, whereas Tolstoy, with his ‘infection’ theory focuses on the communicative aspect. Kant’s theory of disinterested delight as being characteristic of aesthetic attitude has a parallel in Abhinavagupta’s aesthetics. But his philosophy of taste is response oriented, although judgments of taste are taken

to be valid interpersonally, whereas the emphasis of the *rasa* theory is object centered. Susan Langer is undoubtedly one of the prominent aestheticians who have accorded a central place to 'feeling' in the philosophy of art. Her theory of art and literature should be of great interest to the Indian theorist not only because of certain affinities to the *rasa* concept but because she makes a particular mention of that concept in the context of her discussion of the dramatic form.

Bharata, in his *Natyashastra*, assigned specific emotional or suggestive values to musical note (*svaras*) and melodic patterns or '*jatis*' (later called *ragas*) when they were used in stage presentation for evocative purposes. But there is no suggestion in Bharata that the musical notes by themselves express any particular emotions. A *raga* is so called because, etymologically. It produces a mood, albeit in a vague way, or is colored by it. Any given *raga* may be adapted to a variety of moods. A *raga* can become the vehicle of a mood when it is employed in an expressive context, when, for instance, a lyric is set in a *raga*. Therefore, melody is related to the meanings of the song, not as an expresser (*vachaka*), but as a suggestor (*vyanjaka*). Both Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta recognize that musical sounds too can be suggestive of *rasa* in this way.

The great emphasis placed on *abhinaya* or gestural enactment is a clear indication of the influence of the *rasa* concept on Indian dancing and on play-acting as well. Bharata dealt with both dance and drama, and so both these arts were for him natural adjuncts of the theatre and vehicles of dramatic expression. The relation of *rasa* doctrine to the arts of painting and sculpture is, however, more intimate since these arts are understood by the ancient Indian writers as being essentially representational. According to the *Vishnudharmottara Purana*, painting and sculpture, like expressive dance, 'reproduce all that is the object of experience'. They employ the same eye-expressions, hand-gestures and body postures that are found in dance. Even as one speaks of the dramatic emotions (*natya-rasas*), one can also speak of the *rasas* expressed in painting or sculpture (*citra-rasas*). Emotion (*bhava*) is thus accepted as one of the criteria of painting, together with symmetry, similarity, proper disposition of colors, and so on.

### Check your progress III

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What is the Scope of *rasa*?

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2) Reflect on the Validity of the concept of *rasa*.

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## 2.7 LET US SUM UP

A brief profile of the major concept of criticism in Sanskrit literature viz. the theory of *rasa* together with a meaningful discourse, wherever possible is given. The Nature, Scope and other related areas have been discussed within the permitted space. Also, an attempt to introduce in a comparative light, the views and critical thinking in the West is made to enable students for their own further studies.

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**2.8 KEY WORDS**

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*Rasa*: Relishing, taste.

*Dhvani*: Suggestion

*Alamkara* : Figuration

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**2.9 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES**

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**UNIT 3      AESTHETICS: DEFINITION, NATURE AND SCOPE**

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**Contents**

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Definition of Aesthetics
- 3.3 Nature of Aesthetics
- 3.4 Three Approaches to Aesthetics
- 3.5 The Aesthetic Recipient
- 3.6 The Aesthetic Experience
- 3.7 Scope of Aesthetics
- 3.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.9 Key Words
- 3.10 Further Readings and References

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**3.0 OBJECTIVES**

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The main objective of this Unit is to introduce the concept 'Aesthetics' and explain certain concepts relating to it in terms of its nature. By doing so, we expect to understand the scope of aesthetics. Very basically, aesthetics involves two issues: (1) definitions of art and (2) responses to art. For example, when we consider why a particular painting was created, purchased, displayed, and liked, we are considering a set of aesthetic designations and the nature of aesthetic responses. Further, this chapter proposes to show the general connection between aesthetic recipient and aesthetic experience on the basis of their inseparable bonding, which begins with the very act of approaching art in general.

Thus by the end of this Unit you should be able:

- to have a basic understanding of the concept called Aesthetics;
- to comprehend the nature of Aesthetics;
- to identify the three approaches of Aesthetics;
- to be able to understand aesthetic recipient and aesthetic experience
- to understand the scope of Aesthetics

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**3.1 INTRODUCTION**

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The term 'aesthetics' is essentially derived from the Greek word *aisthetikos*, meaning "esthetic, sensitive, sentient", which in turn was derived from *aisthanomai*, meaning "I perceive, feel, sense". The modern usage of the term "aesthetics" was appropriated and coined with new meaning in the German form *Ästhetik* (modern spelling *Ästhetik*) by a German philosopher called Alexander Baumgarten in 1735.

Philosophers did not start to use the word 'aesthetics' until eighteenth century. Later it began to emerge as a term describing the whole area of feeling, as opposed to reason. A disagreement on the relation between emotion and reason is one of the oldest problems in philosophy. Aesthetics arose as an attempt to offer a constructive account of the role played by emotions and feelings in the human life. When the fine arts were advanced to an important place in culture, a particular kind of feeling was especially associated with art, so that gradually we have come to use 'aesthetic' as a generic term not only for certain special feeling but all our relations to art as well. In that sense aesthetics is not restricted to post-eighteenth century philosophy. Philosophers use

the term ‘aesthetics’ to refer to a discipline of reasoned discourse like ethics or epistemology. The subject matter of aesthetics may be an intuition, feeling or emotion, but aesthetics itself is part of philosophy and is open to the same demands for evidence and logically controlled argumentation that characterize all philosophy. In that sense aesthetics should be able to account for all the phenomena of its field, though there may be many different theories that compete with the discipline.

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### 3.2 DEFINITION OF AESTHETICS

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Aesthetics (also spelled esthetics) is broadly defined as the philosophical study of the nature of art, beauty and taste. To define its subject matter more precisely is, however, immensely difficult. Indeed, it could be said that self-definition has been the major task of aesthetics over the decades. Here, we are acquainted with an interesting and puzzling realm of experience: the realm of the beautiful, the ugly, the sublime, and the elegant; of taste, criticism, and fine art; and of contemplation and sensuous enjoyment. It is our assumption that similar principles are operative and similar interests are engaged in all these phenomena. If we are mistaken in this impression, we will have to dismiss such ideas as beauty and taste as having only peripheral philosophical interest. Alternatively, if our impression is correct and philosophy corroborates it, we will have discovered the foundation for an influential philosophical aesthetics.

When we speak of an aesthetic theory in philosophy, we are trying to give explanatory account of fine arts and beauty. A theory for example, claims that all form of art is an imitation or mimesis. Plato was the first to use the word ‘imitation’ in relation with poetry in his *The Republic*, and considered art as mere imitation of real life and of no serious use or quality. Later Aristotle defended imaginative art as something that helps human beings to get away from unnecessary emotions, offers useful purgation of *Katharsis*. Today, the theory of *Katharsis* is considered as one of the greatest contributions to aesthetics.

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### 3.3 NATURE OF AESTHETICS

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It is one of the most difficult tasks answering the question ‘what is aesthetics’? Aesthetics is that philosophical country whose borders of investigation are known as experiences of beauty and appreciation of art. This territory of beauty and art has been visited numerous times by brave explorers, the aestheticians, who have given accounts more or less detailed, but always enthusiastic, of their discoveries. The charges against the aestheticians mainly are twofold: (1) that they attempt the impossible, in that beauty and art are indefinable (2) that they attempt the futile, in that, even were a definition possible, it would be of no aid to the appreciation of an art work. So an examination and reply to these two charges will reveal to us the nature and objectives of aesthetics as a field of study and investigation. Aesthetics must definitely, be based on observations about art, about the ideas and feelings that art produces and about the specific interpretations that art communicates. Thus aesthetics depends on facts from art history, on observations about perception and how we know through our senses, and on reflections on the language that we use to talk about both art and our responses to it. Yet aesthetics is not same thing as art history or criticism. Aesthetics reaches beyond art to nature and perhaps to the nuances a larger picture of sensory awareness.

<b>Check Your Progress I</b>
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**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Define aesthetics?

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2) What problem you encounter while trying to understand the nature aesthetics?

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### 3.4 THREE APPROCHES TO AESTHETICS

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The central theoretical term of the first approach is 'beauty'. Edmund Burke in his famous treatise *On the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) attempted to draw a distinction between two aesthetic concepts. His distinction between the sublime and the beautiful was extremely influential, reflecting as it did the prevailing style of contemporary criticism. By studying the qualities that these concepts denoted, Burke analyzed the different outlooks that are directed toward them. Burke is important because he explained the opposition of beauty and sublimity by a physiological theory. He made the opposition of pleasure and pain the source of the two aesthetic categories, deriving beauty from pleasure and sublimity from pain. According to Burke, the pleasure of beauty has a relaxing effect on the character of the body, whereas sublimity, in contrast, tightens these characters. Thus, by applying the ability of his imaginative theory, he could distinguish the beautiful and sublime: "The ideas of the sublime and the beautiful stand on foundations so different, that it is hard, I had almost said impossible, to think of reconciling them in the same subject, without considerably lessening the effect of the one or the other upon the passions" [113-114]. Burke's use of this physiological theory of beauty and sublimity makes him the first English writer to offer a purely aesthetic explanation of these effects; that is, Burke was the first to explain beauty and sublimity purely in terms of the process of perception and its effect upon the perceiver.

The second approach is related to a philosophical study of certain states of mind; responses, attitudes, emotions that are held to be involved in aesthetic experience. In the seminal work of modern aesthetics *The Critique of Judgment* (1790) Immanuel Kant located certain salient features of the aesthetic in the faculty of "judgment," whereby we take certain position toward objects, separating them from our scientific interests and our practical concerns. The key to the aesthetic realm according to Kant lies in a certain "disinterested" attitude, which we may presume toward any object and can be articulated in contrasting ways. *The Critique of Judgment* begins with an account of beauty. The initial issue is: what kind of judgment is it that results in our saying, for example, 'That is a beautiful sunset'. Kant argues that such aesthetic judgments or 'judgments of taste' must have four key distinguishing features. First, they are 'disinterested, which means, we take pleasure in something because we judge it beautiful, rather than judging it beautiful. Second and third, such judgments are both 'universal' and 'necessary'. This means roughly that it is an intrinsic part of the activity of such a judgment to expect others to agree with us. We debate and argue about our aesthetic judgments – and especially about



works of art -and we tend to believe that such debates and arguments can actually achieve something. Indeed, for many purposes, 'beauty' behaves as if it were a real property of an object, like its weight or chemical composition. But Kant insists that universality and necessity are in fact a product of features of the human mind (Kant calls these features 'common sense'), and that there is no objective property of a thing that makes it beautiful. Fourth, through aesthetic judgments, beautiful objects appear to be 'purposive without purpose' (sometimes translated as 'final without end'). An object's purpose is the concept according to which it was made (the concept of a vegetable soup in the mind of the cook, for example); an object is purposive if it appears to have such a purpose; if, in other words, it appears to have been made or designed. But it is part of the experience of beautiful objects, Kant argues, that they should affect us as if they had a purpose, although no particular purpose can be found.

The third approach is based on the philosophical study of the aesthetic object. An aesthetic object is an object or an event which focuses on the aesthetic interest or an aesthetic experience. We might say further that aesthetic objects are objects like paintings, symphonies, plays, flowers, sunsets and so forth. In principle an aesthetic object can be any sensible object in the world. This is because any sensible object in the world can be approached to or experienced aesthetically. This approach reflects the view that the problems of aesthetics exist primarily because the world contains a special class of objects toward which we react selectively and which we describe in aesthetic terms.

The existence of such objects forms the major phenomenon and our aesthetic experience should thus be described according to such concepts and the meaning of aesthetics should be determined accordingly. The normal group considered as prime aesthetic objects are mainly works of art. All other aesthetic objects (landscapes, faces etc) tend to be included in this class only because, and to the extent that, they can be seen as art. If we adopt such an approach, then there ceases to be a real distinction between aesthetics and the philosophy of art. Much of recent aesthetics has been similarly focused on artistic problems, and it could be said that it is now orthodox to consider aesthetics entirely through the study of art. The third approach to aesthetics does not require this concentration upon art. Even someone who considered art to be no more than one manifestation of aesthetic value - perhaps even a comparatively insignificant manifestation - may believe that the first concern of aesthetics is to study the objects of aesthetic experience and description and to find in them the true distinguishing features of the aesthetic realm.

### Check Your Progress II

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Explain the three basic approaches to aesthetics

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2) Explain Edmund Burke's distinction between the sublime and the beautiful?

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3) Explain the four certain salient features of the aesthetic in the faculty of “judgment,” by Kant?

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### 3.5 THE AESTHETIC RECIPIENT

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Who is at the receiving end? Who’s the receiver of aesthetics? Only a certain section of people have aesthetic interests and aesthetic experience. These interests produce and appreciate art, employ concepts such as beauty, expression, and form. But which factors help these people connect themselves with the so-called aesthetic realm? This question is not something new. Even Plato was asked this question. But, coming to modern times, one can see that this question on aesthetics received its most important elucidation in the philosophy of Kant, who argued that it is only rational beings who can exercise judgment or the faculty of aesthetic interest. Kant also argued that if not exercised in aesthetic judgment one’s rationality is incomplete. It is worth pausing to examine these two claims.

Who are the rational beings? The people whose thought and conduct are guided by concrete reason could be called rational beings. They deliberately take decisions about what to believe and what to do; and who affect each other’s beliefs and actions through argument and persuasion. But what’s reason? According to Kant, reason has both a theoretical and a practical employment. A rational person finds both his/her conduct and thought inspired and limited by reason. Morality, enshrined in the categorical imperative, which enjoins us to act only on that maxim which we can at the same time will as a universal law, is the guiding law of rational conduct. Here practical reason plays its own role. For a rational being, the satisfaction of the demand of reason is more important. He lives responsive to the law of reason. For him, every rational individual is being made by reason and by morality. The rational being, he recognizes, must be treated always as an end in himself, as something of intrinsic value, and never as a mere object to be disposed of according to purposes that are not its own. Reason has its own merits. It makes people capable to see things intrinsically valuable. But it is not exercised only practically or only in our dealings with other reasoning beings. It may also be exercised contemplatively toward nature as a whole. In this case, practical considerations are held in abeyance, and we stand back from nature and look on it with a disinterested concern. Such an attitude is not only peculiar to rational people but also necessary to them. Without it, they have only an impoverished grasp of their own significance and of their relation to the world in which they are situated through their thoughts and actions. This disinterested contemplation and the experiences that arise from it acquaint us, according to Kant, with the ultimate harmony that exists between the world and our faculties. They therefore provide the ultimate guarantee, both of practical reasoning and of the understanding, by intimating to us directly that the world answers to our purposes and corresponds to our beliefs. Disinterested contemplation forms, for Kant, the core of aesthetic experience and the ultimate ground of the judgment of beauty. He thus concludes (1) that only rational beings have aesthetic experience; (2) that every rational being needs aesthetic experience and is significantly incomplete without it; and (3) that aesthetic experience stands in fundamental proximity to moral judgment and is integral to our nature as moral beings.

How important is Kant among modern philosophers? Some followed him, sometimes some ignored him. However they rarely have ventured to show that aesthetic experience is more widely distributed than the human race. Take a cow for an example, that in staring at a landscape it is moved by the sentiment of beauty? What in a cow's behaviour or mental composition could manifest such a feeling? A cow can be uninterested, but it cannot surely be disinterested. But a rational person can be disinterested because for him disinterest is the most passionate form of interest. Only while analyzing such considerations one comes to understand that how deeply in human nature the aesthetic impulse is embedded, and how impossible it is to separate this impulse from the complex mental life. It's this mental life that distinguishes human beings from animals. This condition must be borne in mind by any thinker seeking to confront the all-important question of the relation between the aesthetic and the moral.

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### 3.6 THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE

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In his book, *The Shadow of the Object: Psychoanalysis of the Unthought Known*, Christopher Bollas defines aesthetic experience as a kind of *dejavu*, "an existential recollection of the time when communicating took place primarily through this illusion of deep rapport of subject and object". Can we really tell apart a faculty, an attitude, a mode of judgment, or a form of experience that is distinctively 'aesthetic'? And if so, can we attribute to it the significance that would make this philosophical endeavor both important in itself and relevant to the many questions posed by beauty, criticism, and art?

Western philosophers have always been interested in the nature and appreciation of art, and also more importantly on the psychology of the artists/individuals. Plato argued that aesthetic experience involved the apprehension of the good in nature. Starting with David Hume and Immanuel Kant, modern thinkers tried to explain aesthetic experience in psychological terms. Hume argued that aesthetic experience was associated with sensitivity to the association between a perception and a feeling. The particular aesthetic feelings were those of refined pleasure, delight, awe, admiration, joy and so on- in other words affects and passions considered to be of special, positive value. Hume believed that certain type of experiences, those possessing beauty, attained higher qualities in the formal expression of these feelings. Taking their cue from Kant, many philosophers have defended the idea of an aesthetic attitude as one divorced from practical concerns, a kind of "distancing," or standing back, as it were, from ordinary involvement. The classic statement of this position is Edward Bullough's "Psychical Distance' as a Factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle," an essay published in the *British Journal of Psychology* in 1912.

What kind of distance is exactly envisaged? Does distance imply a lack of practical involvement? If such is the case, how can we ever take up an aesthetic attitude to those things that have a purpose for us - things such as a dress, building, or decoration? But if these are not aesthetic, have we not paid a rather high price for our definition of this word - the price of detaching it from the phenomena that it was designed to identify? Kant's own formulation in this regard is considered more satisfactory. He described the recipient of aesthetic experience not as distanced but as 'disinterested', meaning that the recipient does not treat the object of enjoyment either as a vehicle for curiosity or as a means to an end. He contemplates the object as it is in itself and "apart from all interest." In a similar spirit, Arthur Schopenhauer argued

that a person could regard anything aesthetically so long as he regarded it in independence of his will - that is, irrespective of any use to which he might put it. Regarding it thus, a person could come to see the idea that the object expressed, and in this knowledge consists aesthetic appreciation (1819; *The World as Will and Idea*).

An instance of such a view is the popular theory of art as a kind of “play” activity, in which creation and appreciation are divorced from the normal urgencies of existence and surrendered to leisure. “With the agreeable, the good, the perfect,” wrote Friedrich Schiller, “man is merely in earnest, but with beauty he plays” (1794-95; *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*). Such thoughts have already been encountered. The problem is to give them philosophical precision. They have recurred in modern philosophy in a variety of forms - for example, in the theory that the aesthetic object is always considered for its own sake, or as a unique individual rather than a member of a class. Those particular formulations have caused some philosophers to consider aesthetic objects as though they were endowed with a peculiar metaphysical status. Alternatively, it is sometimes argued that the aesthetic experience has an intuitive character, as opposed to the conceptual character of scientific thought or the instrumental character of practical understanding.

The simplest way of summarizing this approach to aesthetics is in terms of two fundamental propositions:

1. The aesthetic object is an object of sensory experience and enjoyed as such: it is heard, seen, or (in the limiting case) imagined in sensory form.
2. The aesthetic object is at the same time contemplated: its appearance is a matter of intrinsic interest and studied not merely as an object of sensory pleasure but also as the repository of significance and value.

The first of these propositions explains the word aesthetic, which was initially used in this connection by the Leibnizian philosopher Alexander Baumgarten in *Meditationes Philosophicae de Nonnullis ad Poema Pertinentibus* (1735; *Reflections on Poetry*). Baumgarten borrowed the Greek term for sensory perception (*aisthēsis*) in order to denote a realm of concrete knowledge in which content is communicated in sensory form. The second proposition is, in essence, the foundation of taste. It describes the motive of our attempt to discriminate rationally between those objects that are worthy of contemplative attention and those that are not.

Almost all of the aesthetic theories of post-Kantian Idealism depend upon those two propositions and try to explain the peculiarities of aesthetic experience and aesthetic judgment in terms of the synthesis of the sensory and the intellectual that they imply - the synthesis summarized in Hegel's theory of art as “the sensuous embodiment of the Idea.” Neither proposition is particularly clear. Throughout the discussions of Kant and his immediate following, the “sensory” is assimilated to the “concrete,” the “individual,” the “particular,” and the “determinate,” while the “intellectual” is assimilated to the “abstract,” the “universal,” the “general,” and the “indeterminate” – incorporations that would in modern times be regarded with extreme suspicion. Nevertheless, subsequent theories have repeatedly returned to the idea that aesthetic experience involves a special synthesis of intellectual and sensory components, and that both its peculiarities and its value are to be derived from such a synthesis.

This idea at once gives rise to many paradoxes. The most important was noticed by Kant, who called it the 'antinomy of taste'. As an exercise of reason, he argued, aesthetic experience must inevitably tend toward a reasoned choice and therefore must formulate itself as a judgment. Aesthetic judgment, however, seems to be in conflict with itself. It cannot be at the same time aesthetic (an expression of sensory enjoyment) and also a judgment (claiming universal assent). Yet all rational beings, by virtue of their rationality, seem disposed to make these judgments. On the one hand, they feel pleasure in some object, and this pleasure is immediate, not based, according to Kant, in any conceptualization or in any inquiry into cause, purpose, or constitution. On the other hand, they express their pleasure in the form of a judgment, speaking "as if beauty were a quality of the object," and so representing their pleasure as objectively valid. But how can this be so? The pleasure is immediate, based in no reasoning or analysis. So what permits this demand for universal agreement?

However we approach the idea of beauty, we find this paradox emerging. Our ideas, feelings, and judgments are called aesthetic precisely because of their direct relation to sensory enjoyment. Hence, no one can judge the beauty of an object that he has never encountered. Scientific judgments, like practical principles, can be received "second hand" or through secondary assessment. It would seem to follow from this that there can be no rules or principles of aesthetic judgment, since the pleasure we get is subjective in the perception of the object and cannot be talked about it by any grounds of proof. It is always experience, and never conceptual thought, that gives the right to aesthetic judgment, so that anything that alters the experience of an object changes its aesthetic significance as well. As Kant explains, aesthetic judgment is "free from concepts," and beauty itself is not a concept. Such a conclusion, however, seems to be inconsistent with the fact that aesthetic judgment is a form of personal 'judgment'. When we describe something as beautiful, we do not mean merely that it pleases: we are speaking about it, not about us, and, if challenged, we try to find reasons to justify this view.

In short, the expression aesthetic judgment seems to be a contradiction in terms, denying in the first term precisely that reference to rational considerations that it affirms in the second. This paradox, which we have expressed in Kant's language, is not peculiar to the philosophy of Kant. On the contrary, it is encountered in one form or another by every philosopher or critic who takes aesthetic experience seriously, and who therefore recognizes the tension between the sensory and the intellectual constraints upon it. On the one hand, aesthetic experience is rooted in the immediate sensory enjoyment of its object through an act of perception. On the other, it seems to reach beyond enjoyment toward a meaning that is addressed to our reasoning powers and that seeks judgment from them. Thus criticism, the reasoned justification of aesthetic judgment, is an unavoidable upshot of aesthetic experience. Yet, critical reasons can never be merely intellectual; they always contain a reference to the way in which an object is perceived. In modern times, Sigmund Freud viewed aesthetic experience as sublimation of forbidden sexual desires, a displacement and transformation of libido that denied direct expression, is allowed discharge in alternative, culturally valued ways. This act results in aesthetic pleasure. The close link between art and regressive processes and fantasies seems to support the sublimation approach. From this view point, symbolism, a fundamental component of most forms of aesthetic expression, is the same process as that occurring in dream work, and thus opens art to psycho-analytic interpretation.

**Check Your Progress III**

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Explain the concept 'aesthetic recipient'?

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 .....

2) Explain the concept 'aesthetic experience'?

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**3.7 SCOPE OF AESTHETICS**

Aesthetics is broader in scope than the philosophy of art, which comprises one of its branches. It deals not only with the nature and value of the arts but also with those responses to natural objects that find expression in the language of the beautiful and the ugly. A problem is encountered at the outset, however, for terms such as beautiful and ugly seem too vague in their application and too subjective in their meaning to divide the world successfully into those things that do, and those that do not, exemplify them. Almost anything might be seen as beautiful by someone or from some point of view; and different people apply the word to quite disparate objects for reasons that often seem to have little or nothing in common. It may be that there is some single underlying belief that motivates all of their judgments. It may also be, however, that the term beautiful has no sense except as the expression of an attitude, which is in turn attached by different people to quite different states of affairs.

Moreover, in spite of the emphasis laid by philosophers on the terms beautiful and ugly, it is far from evident that they are the most important or most useful either in the discussion and criticism of art or in the description of that which appeals to us in nature. To convey what is significant in a poem we might use such terms as ironical, moving, expressive, balanced, and harmonious. Likewise, in describing a favourite stretch of countryside, we may find more use for peaceful, soft, atmospheric, harsh, and evocative, than for beautiful. The least that should be said is that beautiful belongs to a class of terms from which it has been chosen as much for convenience sake as for any sense that it captures what is distinctive of the class. At the same time, there seems to be no clear way of delimiting the class in question - not at least in advance of theory. Aesthetics must therefore cast its net more widely than the study either of beauty or of other aesthetic concepts if it is to discover the principles whereby it is to be defined.

At a very basic level aesthetics involves the knowledgeable appreciation of art, an enquiry toward art for purposes of examination, refinement, and elaboration. To some degree, the study of aesthetics is applicable to all age groups and all levels of readiness simply because aesthetics, despite its seemingly esoteric character when part of formalized philosophical systems, is the study of how humans relate and give meaning to a particular type of phenomenon (art) in their environment.

**Check Your Progress IV**

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What is the scope of aesthetics?

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### 3.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have tried to give a basic idea about aesthetics, by giving a definition, which becomes clarified in the process of the course. To investigate on the nature of aesthetics, we closely examined the three major approaches to aesthetics. We have also elaborately considered certain concepts like 'aesthetic recipient and 'aesthetic experience''. Finally we conclude the unit with a short consideration of the scope of aesthetics.

### 3.9 KEY WORDS

**Aesthetic Object:** An object or an event which focuses on the aesthetic interest or an aesthetic experience.

**Aesthetic Judgment:** sensory contemplation or appreciation of an object, not necessarily an art object.

**Katharsis:** The experience of useful purgation in art.

**Rational Being:** human being capable of using the capacity for consistent and valid reasoning.

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**UNIT 4      AESTHETIC OBJECTS**

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**4.0      OBJECTIVES**

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The Aesthetics philosophy not only speaks about art and art judgment but also explains what art is. In philosophy Aesthetics is an autonomous entity as it harmonizes with sense that is the etymology of Aesthetics. Art is free from moral or political purposes. Aesthetics is neither epistemology nor ethics. To comprehend the essences of Aesthetics one has to understand: Sense of beauty, How to characterize beauty, The qualities of beauty, Relationship between mind and emotion, Idea, theory and technique of presentation. Oscar Wild rightly defines Aesthetics as, “Aesthetics is a search after the signs of the beautiful. It is the science of the beautiful thought which men seek the correlation of the arts. It is, to speak more exactly, the search after the secret of life.”

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**4.1      INTRODUCTION**

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Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy. Aesthetics deals with beauty, art and taste. It binds creator and the observer. It could be defined as “Science of sensory and sensori-emotional values. Aesthetics is called judgment of sentiment and taste. Some scholars have defined Aesthetics as “Critical reflection on art, culture and nature.”

Aesthetics in Indian context is, “Science and philosophy of fine arts” covering poetry, music and architecture. When Aesthetics is looked as science it is the technique of art. When looked as philosophy, “It is philosophy of fine art because the experience that a work of art arouses in an aesthete is accounted for in terms of different schools of philosophic thought in India and also because the authorities on three arts, poetry, music and architecture.....” It is the blend of creative language and the Aesthetics pleasure.

Ancient art and beauty largely started in eight great ancient civilizations – Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, China, Mayan, Greece, Persian and Rome. Each civilization came out with unique

understanding of art and style. Each civilization represented its culture, tradition and philosophical comprehension when they came out with the theory of Aesthetics. At the time of Greek civilization, art saw adoration to the human physical 'Form' the art work depicted – musculature poise, beauty and anatomically correct proportion. Greek philosophers in the beginning felt that the Aesthetic objects were beautiful in themselves. "Plato felt that beautiful objects incorporated proportion, harmony and unity among their parts. Similarly, in *Metaphysics*, Aristotle found that the universal elements of beauty were order, symmetry and definiteness." Aesthetics became a part of philosophy when Plato attacked educational value of art form in "Republic". Aristotle wrote about art in his work 'Poetics'. Aristotle defended art as universal truth which can be readily understood, unlike, for example, history, which deals with a particular fact. He further said from art one can experience moral truth. Such understanding can be important to development of morality.

Greek has a great influence on Western Aesthetic thought. Starting from 17<sup>th</sup> century to early 20<sup>th</sup> century Western philosophers moved from past understanding to "modernism". Philosophers gave importance to "Beauty" as the most important key to Aesthetics experience. So, they argued that 'art' is absolute beauty. According to Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's opinion, Aesthetics is a science of sense experience, a younger sister of Logic. So, beauty is the perfect experience that the sense can experience. Immanuel Kant says "Aesthetics is the subjective judgment of beauty but similar to human truth as all people agree that "this rose is beautiful." As for Friedrich Schiller Aesthetic appreciation of beauty is combination of sensual and rational part of human nature.

Post – modern Aesthetics has various theories in defining art and beauty. Even though the older Aesthetic ideas of Aristotle's theory of 'beauty' and his theory of drama were respected, Kant made a differentiation between beauty and sublime. In early twentieth century understanding of beauty, art and aesthetic gained broader scope. In 1941, Eli Siegel an American philosopher started, "Aesthetic Realism" and said, "The word, art, and self explain each other: each is the aesthetic oneness of opposites." In 1990s Jurgen Schmidhuber came up with 'algorithmic theory' of beauty which takes up subjective view. This theory is parallel to algorithmic information theory and minimum description length. He gives two examples one of mathematics where a short and simple proof is used for description and another that of 15<sup>th</sup> century drawing of human face which expresses pleasure and beauty with minimal lines, like works of Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht Durer.

In theoretical Aesthetics, mathematical consideration like symmetry and complexity are relevant. This understanding is different from applied Aesthetics relevant in the study of mathematical beauty. Symmetry and simplicity are significant in the area of philosophy such as ethics and theoretical physics and cosmology to talk about truth beyond empirical consideration. Beauty and truth have been regarded as synonymous; this idea is reflected in Keat's poem "Ode on a Grecian Urn," – "Beauty is truth, truth is beauty."

Indian scholars from the beginning looked at Aesthetics as philosophy and they have examined the characteristics of art as 'philosophy of fine arts in terms of Aesthetics experience'. As an example to comprehend the Aesthetics experience, Shakuka has given an analogy of "*citraturaganyaya*" (the picture of horse logic). He explains: one, who looks at the painting of a

horse, knows that it is not a real horse but still understands it as a horse and at the same time he will not doubt whether it is a horse. When one looks at the horse painting it create delight and pleasure. This relation of the creator and spectator is the Aesthetics sentiment. It is strongly stressed in Indian Aesthetics that there need to be '*Sahrdaya*' between creator and spectator.

Japanese culture blends with Zen philosophy and art. Aesthetics is the way of life. It is highlighted in day to day activities - like gardening, flower arrangement and serving tea. Daisetz T. Suzuki in his book "Zen and Japanese Culture" writing on tea serving, "The character for "harmony" also "gentleness of spirit" (*yawaragi*), and to my mind "gentleness of spirit" seems to describe better the spirit governing the whole procedure of the art of tea." "Haiku", Japan art of poetry has deep meaning, a Zen master, Saigyō (1118 – 90) composed, "The wind – blown; Smoke of Mount Fuji; Vanishing far away! Who knows the destiny; Of my thought wafting with it?" In china and Japan letter writing is an art, brush and paint are used to draw a letter. Even in Islamic Aesthetics calligraphic art grew out of an effort to devote to the study of Quran.

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## 4.2 AESTHETICS IN ANCIENT GREEK

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Plato's contribution to Aesthetics is rich. He has given a lot of time in discussing about art and beauty in his dialogues. According to Plato the art of poetry is of greater evil than any other phenomenon, where as beauty is closer to greatest good. Plato's aesthetics is more an "exploratory Aesthetics". It is difficult to find any Aesthetics theory in his dialogues. In "Hippias Major" beauty is described as canonical Platonic form. Socrates asks Hippias to explain essence of beauty, the cause of all occurrences of beauty, and more in particular the cause not the appearance of beauty but of its real being. Socrates further says that Beauty is of not any Form, even though it bears close resemblance to Good but still Beauty and Form are distinct. In "Symposium" discussing beauty, Socrates quotes his teacher Diotima who taught him the subject of Love. She calls beauty the subject of every one's yearning for love. She further declares "the soul's progress towards ever - purer beauty, from one body to all, then through all beautiful souls, laws and kinds of knowledge, to arrive at the beauty itself." (210a – 211d) This suggests that work of art is a beautiful thing. She declares the task of the poet is to beget wisdom and virtue. To attain ultimate desire to attain beauty, the poet produces the verse.

In books 2 and 3 of "Republic" Socrates discuss the curriculum for the future guardians of the state. In book 2, the works of Homer is highly criticized for the images of Gods and demigods. He calls them blasphemous and setting a wrong example to the young learner. He further talks about the "style" (*lexis*), he insist that the verse should be in narration. It should be of only narration or '*mimesis*' are both combined. The critics feel that the explanation is a bit odd. In "Republic" 10, Plato comes up with three theories, first being 'mimesis like painting nothing but 'imitation of a appearance', so it is below truth, second poetic mimesis corrupt the soul, weakens the rational impulse's control over the person's other desires, and lastly as it does not have any good qualities it should be banned from a good city. Explaining the "imitation of appearance", Plato gives three examples, Form (furniture like - chair) made by a God, Individual things (furniture) made by humans, and finally paintings (furniture) made by artist. "If the Form is an object of knowledge, then human creation at least posses true opinion. Without being philosophers, they stand in the legitimate relationship to philosophical knowledge."

“*Ion*” the shortest of Plato’s dialogue can be looked at as the work of Aesthetics. “*Ion*” focuses on the artistic inspiration, and trigger questions about the inspiration of poetry’s merits. *Ion* is a performing artist of Homer. While talking, Socrates talks of ‘idiosyncrasy’, inspiration’, and ‘ignorance’. Socrates argues idiosyncrasy shows that *Ion* performing Homer, for *Ion*, Homer becomes of him. Socrates says that Homer is ignorant of all the important things that *Ion* claims him to know. By repeatedly performing Homer *Ion* had learnt all that Homer can teach him. So Homer’s global ignorance implies *Ion*’s ignorance too; but when it comes to choose between divine inspiration and drab brand of knowing nothing, *Ion* agrees to be called inspired.

Aristotle’s ‘*Poetics*’ is the earliest work on philosophical treaties that focused on literature. “*Poetics*” in Greek means “making.” Aristotle deals with drama - tragedy, comedy and satyr as well as lyrics, poetry, epic poetry and dithyramb. Aristotle distinguishes poetry in three ways – matter, melody and subject. Matter deals with language, rhythm and melody. The work of epic poem is centered on language alone. The blending of language, rhythm and melody is seen in Greek tragedy. The singing chorus and musical language are the part of performance. The subject according to Aristotle deals with tragedy and comedy to show human nature. Aristotle considers tragedy woven around serious, important and virtuous people, whereas comedy according to him; deals about unimportant, undignified and laughable people. He further says that tragedy is in embellished speech by different characters. It has the magnitude of pity, terror and catharsis of such emotions. “Embellished speech” has rhythm and melody in spoken verses. The importance of the play is in the plot that reveal action in logical and natural way.

Tragedy is in the situation where the hero is driven into a tragic situation. It can be of two kinds, wherein the hero goes to a tragic situation knowingly like in “*Media*” or unknowingly like “*Oedipus*”. To visual effect of a play depends on set, costume and props. When all these are met then the audience experience the Aesthetics pleasure. He writes, “The objects the imitator represents are actions, with agent who are necessary either good man or bad – the diversities of human character being nearly always derivative from the primary distinction, since the line between virtue and vice is one dividing the whole of mankind.” (*Poetics II*)

When discussing the techniques, he draws heavily from the topics treated in logic, ethics and psychological writing. He highlights poetry to be philosophical, universal much more important than history. He says that poetry has the capacity to look into the depth of human nature, and assesses how people behave in a situation, the test of character in a given situation makes a character virtues or vice. He further justifies that play is not for entertainment. A tragedy he says “learning, that is, figuring out what each thing is” (poetics) According to Aristotle watching tragedy teaches us about ourselves.

### Check Your Progress I

**Note:** Use the space provided below for your answers.

1) How does Plato define ‘Beauty’?

2) What is the difference between tragedy and comedy according to “Poetics”?

### 4.3 INDIAN AESTHETICS

While discussing Indian poetics, Indian scholars are aware how the language plays a primary role in creative art of poetry. Krishnaswami has rightly said, “The whole field of (Indian) poetry may be regarded as one continued attempt to unravel the mystery of beauty of poetic language.” The history of Sanskrit poetics started with a theory of Drama propounded by Bharata in his work “Natyasastra” It is the first encyclopedic work on – dance, drama and music. He deals with *Gunas*, 4 *Alankaras*, and 36 *Laksanas*. He is the first one to mention ‘*Rasa*’ as a technical requirement in dramas. The famous ‘*Rasa sutras*’ of Barata says “*Vibhavanubhavavyabhicarisamyogatanasaisampattih*” combination is possible through the combination of or integration of these - ‘*vibhava*’ cause and determinants of the rise of an emotion, ‘*anubhava*’ gesture expressive of what is going in the heart or the mind of the main character and ‘*vyabhicharibhava*’ transitory emotions, (*Barata Ch.VI, 31*)

There are two major emotional experiences in the worldly life – ‘*Sukha* or *Dukha*’. The Aesthetics experience is above pain or pleasure. Bharata in *Natyasastra* says that dramatic presentation’s main purpose is to give ‘*Rasa*,’ Aesthetics sensation in the aesthete and later lead to moral improvement. He further justifies that dramatic presentation gives pleasure to those who are unhappy, tired, bereaved and ascetic. Later on scholars watching the effect of drama on the audience said that audience realize through experience as the plot is generalized and they are able to recognize four ends of life – “*Dharma, Artha, Kama* and *Moksa*.” Bhama (6<sup>th</sup> c.) states, “*Kavya* (poetry) promotes *Pususarthas* – righteousness, worldly possessions, desire and salvation. *Kriti* and *priiti* are also in the sense of Aesthetics pleasure of *kavya prayojana* (the purpose on poetry).

Bhatta Lollata while commenting on *Natyasastra* says, “*Rasa* is the unity of a basic mental state in the midst of multiplicity of emotive situation, mimetic changes and transient emotions which are connected with the basic mental state in one way or the other.” According to him Aesthetics relationship is the unity of *satyaibhava* in the diversity of *vibhavas* etc. being supported, strengthened and brought to prominence by these very constituents of multiplicity.

Anandavardhana author of “*Dhanyaloka*” (theory of suggestion) probably occupies the most distinguished and central position in Sanskrit literature. Through ‘*Dhanyaloka*’, Indian poetics reached a turning point. It breathed new life to the earlier poetics theories with a new orientation. Later thinkers were greatly influenced by his work. Anandavardhana was a poet, literary critic and a philosopher. He took over the idea of ‘*Rasa*’ of *Natyasastra* and extended its scope to cover

the entire field of *Kavya* both poetry and drama. Ananadavardhana states, “The ways of expressions are infinite and there is no end to poetic individuations.” (I, 5 -6) Scholars are of the opinion that the literary language that is used may either delight or disturb the reader. It is the language that has the power to bring about ‘*Sahrdhya*’ (reader/spectator) of the fine taste and is sufficient for the Aesthetics experience.

Abinavagupta’s study on Aesthetics knowledge is unique and most realistic. He presents Aesthetics experience recognizing different levels such as sense, imaginative, emotive, kathartic and transcendental levels. Abinavagupta’s considers Aesthetics of two types - worldly pleasure and divine pleasure. Worldly pleasure is considered as lower compared to divine pleasure. To understand Brahma (the absolute being) and to occupy topmost status, ‘*Kavyananda*’ Aesthetics pleasure falls intermediate between the two.

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#### 4.4 MEDIEVAL THEORIES OF AESTHETICS

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Aristotle poetics was available in the medieval period and early Renaissance period through Latin translation of the Arabic version. This work had a great influence on philosophers. Aristotle poetics was translated by two Arabian scholars – one is by Abu Nasr Al Farabi and another by Averroes. Abu Nasr interpretation of ‘poetics’ endeavors a logical faculty of expression receiving validity in Islamic world, whereas Averroes commentary focused on harmonizing moral purposes of poetry and does not reconcile with Abu Nasr logical interpretation. It is Averroes version of ‘poetics’ that is accepted by the ‘West’ as it blends with their ‘humanistic’ view point. Medieval Aesthetics philosophy stands on classical thoughts and unifies with theology. Philosophers gave importance to Proportion, Light and Symbolism in the work of art. Especially these three predominantly gained importance in Architecture that too in Cathedrals. Light is to reveal colour and symbolism to reveal God. Three philosophers – St. Augustine, Pseudo –Dionysius and St. Thomas Aquinas were the great contributors to Aesthetics theories. St. Augustine and to Pseudo –Dionysius were greatly influenced by Plato and Neplatonism where as St. Thomas Aquinas was greatly influenced by Aristotle’s ‘Poetics’.

##### **Proportion, Light and Symbolism**

Medieval philosophers have explained Proportion, Light and Symbolism in great detail. Proportion is considered important in architecture and music. Aerial view of cathedral looks like a Cross. The shape has created a balance when seen within the Cathedral. Painting is to balance composition and Music to harmonize beauty. Philosophers emphasized that the notion of light is developed with the belief in God. God is light. Light allows the beauty of the object, especially illuminate colour that brings about the Beauty. The purpose of God is disclosed to mankind through four kinds of lights, “the light of skill in mechanical arts which discloses the world of artifacts; which light is guided by the light of sense perception which discloses the world of natural forms; which light consequently, is guided by the light of philosophy which discloses the world of intellectual truth; finally, this light is guided by the light of divine wisdom which discloses the world of saving truth.”

Pseudo –Dionysius writes, “What is Sun ray? Light comes from the Good, and light is an image of the archetypal Good. Thus the Good is also praised by the name ‘Light’, just as an archetype is revealed in its image.” Symbolism is to understand the deeper meaning in the text especially Bible. The main thinking of the time is that universe reveals God, His creation through beauty. Pseudo –Dionysius argues that it is natural to understand the appearance of beauty in the sign on ‘invisible loveliness’. St. Thomas Aquinas’s Aesthetics writing has great influence on 19<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> century thinkers and writers. His inspiration is seen in James Joyes and Thomas Mann’s writings. Umberto Eco (1986) writing on Medieval Aesthetics, has mentioned in his work, “Firstly there was metaphysical symbolism, related to the philosophical habit of discerning the hand of God in the beauty of world. Secondly there was universal allegory; that is, perceiving the world as divine work of art, of such a kind that everything in it possesses novel, allegorical and analogical meanings in addition to its literal meaning.”

### Check Your Progress II

**Note:** Use the space provided below for your answers.

1) How does drama affect the spectator, according to Bharata’s *Natyasastra*?

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2) What is the importance of – proportion, light and symbolism in ‘Medieval Aesthetics’?

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## 4.5 EIGHTEENTH CENTURY GERMAN AESTHETICS

Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten a German philosopher is the first one to introduce the word “Aesthetics” to describe art to that of older theory of “Beauty”. He derived the term from the Greek word ‘*aisthanomia*’, which he equated with a Latin word ‘*Sentio*’. He comprehended it to designate the outer, external bodily sense, as opposed to the inner sense consciousness. He not only took the classical sources but also extended it to logic and science. He took into account the basic rationalist and epistemological divisions between what is distinctly known on one side and on the other according to concept and reason what is known as sense. Understanding of senses went back to medieval discussion of the problem of universe. For example, the reference to the “Rose” not only refers to a particular rose but also to the universal type. His contribution helped latter on the development of Aesthetics. He concentrated on the affective side of perception. “Sensate representations are ‘marked degrees of pleasure or pain’ (1735:47) Stronger impressions are more poetic because their impressions are extensively clearer (1735:27)” He looks at the effect of Aesthetics quantitatively rather than qualitatively. He argues that the sense of pleasure is intrinsically precious but at the same time it is more effective in the contribution to a greater perfection of the discussion. Baumgarten considered aesthetic as science with its own logic. He said that sensate knowledge is the foundation of clarity and that Aesthetics must come to the aid of logic. “The Aesthetics is limited by its sensate representations and the imagination

must be restricted in order to avoid license, but within these limits the Aesthetics is a legitimate source of a kind of knowledge.”

Immanuel Kant wrote “Critique of the Power of Judgment”. He talks about three distinct characteristics on Aesthetics – experience of beauty, clearly natural beauty, second, sublime experience, once again it is nature’s sublimity and finally experience of fine art – each of these forms of Aesthetics experience finally leads to distinctive connections to morality. The judgment of beauty is a response to the perception of the Form of an object, for example painting, ‘the drawing is what is essential’. He further says while the “colours that illuminate the outline .... Can ... enliven the object in itself for sensation, but cannot make it ... beautiful” (CPJ 14, 5:25). Fine art according to Kant is a human production that requires skill and talent. He introduces his theory on sublime between pure beauty and fine art. He recognizes two forms of sublime: ‘mathematical’ and the ‘dynamical’. He says while experiencing of pain and pleasure, pain is due to the initial sense of limits of imagination followed by pleasure at the recognition that reveals the limitations of one’s own imagination. The mathematical sublime has a relationship between imagination and theoretical reason. When one looks at the vista of nature so vast, it triggers the effort to understand it as a single image bound to fail, but at the same time it gives the pleasure to have the imagination to formulate the idea of infinite.

Kant came up with six connections between Aesthetics and morality. 1) Object of Aesthetics experience can present morally significant ideas without sacrificing what is essential to the objects of Aesthetics response and judgment; 2) Aesthetics experience of dynamic sublime is nothing but to experience the power of one’s own practical reasons to acknowledge pure principle of morality and to overcome the hurdle that might arise in one’s way. 3) Consideration of the crucial aspects of moral condition is symbolized by beauty rather than the sublime. 4) He connects Aesthetics and ethics in his work, “Intellectual Interest” in the beautiful. 5) He states that Aesthetics experience is conducive to moral conduct. Analyzing beauty and sublime, he writes; “The beautiful prepares us to love something, even nature, without interest; the sublime, to esteem it, even contrary to our (sensible) interest” (CPJ, General Remark following 29, 5:267)”. 6) In “Appendix on the methodology of taste”, Kant suggest that by developing common standard of taste in the society, one establishes a stable polity on the basis of principles of justice rather than by force.

Friedrich Schiller followed Kant when he discusses ethics and Aesthetics. Schiller criticized and developed Kant’s ideas in both the areas. In his work “*On Grace and Dignity*,” Schiller points out the limitations of Kant’s work on account of human beauty. He says that Kant’s ideas are lacking while discussing the outer appearance when taken as the expression of moral condition. Schiller says there are two different moral conditions of human beings, grace and dignity. These two have different effect on the appearance of human beings. So, the idea of beauty according to Kant is lacking. In his other philosophical work, “*On the Aesthetic Education of Mankind*” Schiller says, “It is only through Beauty that a man makes his way to freedom.” Through freedom man achieves morality and external realization of political justice.

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#### **4.6 AESTHETICS JUDGMENT**

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One can say that a house, natural scenery, a person, symphony, a fragrance and a mathematical proof are beautiful. What characteristics do they have to share such a status? What is the possible resemblance between a proof with a symphony and what is the beauty that they share? Enjoying music and painting are two different experiences. Each art has its own language of Aesthetics judgment. One's capacity to judge Aesthetic value depends on ability to discriminate at sensory level. Kant gives two examples at personal and general level. He writes, "If he says that canary wine is agreeable he is quite content if someone else corrects his terms and reminds him to say instead: It is agreeable to me. Because, everyone has his own (sense of) taste. The case of 'beauty' is different from mere 'agreeableness' because, if he proclaims something to be beautiful, then he requires the same liking from others; he then judges not just for himself but for everyone, and speaks of beauty as if it were a property of things."

David Hume declares that Aesthetics judgment is beyond sensory discrimination. He states, "The ability to detect all ingredients in a composition, and also our sensibility, to pains and pleasure, which escape the rest of mankind." (Essays on Moral and Political and Literary, Indianapolis, Literary Classics 5, 1987). It is the combination of sensory, emotional and intelligence while judging the beauty of Aesthetics. Interpretation is at levels - taste and Aesthetics. Taste is the result of education, awareness and cultural values. So taste is learnt, whereas Aesthetics is philosophical notion of beauty. Judgment of Aesthetic value has many spontaneous sensory reactions – disgust, pleasure etc. These reactions are spontaneous to one's taste, values and some time cultural upbringing. To see a stain of soup on a shirt looks disgusting, even when neither soup nor the shirt is disgusting by itself. Aesthetics judgment is connected to emotions such as happiness, awe and delight. When seeing a landscape one may spontaneously show the emotion of awe and open the eyes wide, and experience increase in heart beat.

At times Aesthetics judgment can be conditioned to time and culture. In Victorian England, African sculptures were seen as ugly. As the time and intellectual cultural attitude changed, then they were looked as beautiful. Mary Mothersill, ("Beauty and the Critical judgment," in The Blackwell Guide of Aesthetics, 2004,) writes, "Aesthetics judgment might be seen to be based on the senses, emotions, intellectual conscious decision, training, instinct, sociological institutions behaviour or some complex combination of these depending on exactly which theory one employs."

### Check Your Progress III

**Note:** Use the space provided below for your answers.

1) What is the contribution of Baumgarten Alexander Gottlieb to Aesthetics philosophy?

.....  
 .....

2) What are the factors which decide Aesthetics judgment?

.....  
 .....

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#### 4.7 LET US SUM UP

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The objective of Aesthetics is the perfection of sensible cognition of “beauty”. “There is potential for beauty in the form of a work as well as in its content because its form can be pleasing to our complex capacity for sensible representation...” In Indian context, ‘Beauty’ is the experience of unity of sensuous and aesthetic as well as religious spiritual experience; it is an experience of totality. There is a connection between macrocosm and microcosmic body, internal and external sense organs, speech and vital air. K.D. Tripathi in his article, “From Sensuous to super sensuous some term of Indian Aesthetic”, writes “The traditional Indian art and aesthetic is an inquiry into the Indian view of time, space, direction, universal, substance or elements, numbers, relations and actions etc. is an imperative for the clear understanding of Indian art and aesthetic as in the inquiry into the nature of ‘Atman’.” Beauty is a freedom of expression and a boldness of sensitive human adventure in the pursuit of Truth.

In India, drawing of *Mandals* at the time of sacrifice is considered symbolic. They had a definite proportion, symbol and considered as energy. It has the unity of beauty, religious significance and sublimity. Aristotle justifies that literature is an art of imitation. “It is clear that the general origin of poetry was due to two causes, each of them part of human nature. Imitation is natural to man from childhood, one of his advantages over the lower animals being this, that he is the most imitative creature in the world, and learns at first by imitation. And it is also natural for all to delight in works of imitation.”(Poetics: translated by Ingram Bywater, 1- IV)

An artist depicts life and readers/spectators are influenced and inspired to imitate in some fashion, what they read, hear or see on the stage. But audiences avoid imitating comic characters. The comic characters are not morally bad but ludicrous, ugly but not painful or destructive. The critic says, “The social function of epic as an exemplar of good behaviour was easier for Aristotle to assume in classical Greece...” “Unity, equality, number, proportion and order are the main elements in Augustine’s theory of beauty.”(Beardsley – 99) Augustine in his aesthetic theories gives importance to rhythm. He believed rhythm originated with God. According to Pseudo – Dionysius, “For Beauty is the cause of harmony, of sympathy, of community. Beauty unites all things and is the source of all things.” He further sates, “This – the one, The Good, the beautiful - is in its uniqueness the cause of multitudes of the good and the beautiful.” (Pseudo – Dionysius, 77) St. Thomas Aquinas writes, “Beauty is that which gives pleasure when seen.” (St. Thomas I –II, 27.1) According to him knowing beauty is an action of mind. Knowledge occurs when the form of an object exists in the mind of the knower.

Baumgarten express, “Beauty is perfection perceived by means of the senses rather than by the pure intellect.” (Metaphysik 488 page 154 -5) he further states that the source of beauty leads one to recognize the different potential sources in the work of art; “The harmony of the thoughts insofar as we abstract from their order and the signs”, means of expression, “the harmony of the order in which we meditate upon the beautifully thought content,” and “the harmony of the signs” or means of expression “among themselves and with the content and the order of the content.” (*Aesthetica*, 18 - 20; Schweizer pp. 116 -117) Baumgarten strongly expresses that aesthetic is, “Wealth, Magnitude, Truth, Clarity and Liveliness.” Philosophers from ancient time to modern have defined and understood ‘Aesthetics Value’ and the meaning of ‘Beauty’ and

came up with theories and understanding. Awareness of Aesthetics values is dynamic, it is time and cultural oriented

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#### 4.8 KEY WORDS AND SENTENCES

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**Symmetry:** proper proportion

**Complexity:** state of being complex

**Embellishment:** decoration

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#### 4.9 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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**MPYE – 011**

**Philosophy of Art (Aesthetics)**



## **Block 2**

### **INDIAN AESTHETICS**



**UNIT 1**  
**Bharata on Rasa**

**UNIT 2**  
**Theories of Rasa**

**UNIT 3**  
**Indian Aestheticians**

**UNIT 4**  
**Abhinavagupta's Philosophy of Rasa**



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## BLOCK INTRODUCTION

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Indian tradition observes that the aesthetic objects give intuitions of the ultimate as pure being. Intuition and perfection indicate the epistemological and moral implications in the expression of aesthetic objects. This leads the process of knowing and judging goodness. Any theory of art or art-history for that matter is not keen on the practice of an art such as giving training in the craft of painting, of sculpture, of architecture. From the historical perspective the goal of art is concerned with enjoyment and appreciation, waxed and waned through intervening ages. But from the philosophical point of view the work of art depends on the objects available in nature and events created by the imagination of the artist. Art is different from science, since the latter is related to truth, a fidelity to fact, while art is for entertainment, stimulation of our senses and imagination. Langer treats art as an expressive form. The ability to express or articulate or project the subjective factor of our experience distinguishes art from other things. Art is a vehicle of knowledge of the life of feeling.” ‘A work of art is an expressive form created for our perception through sense or imagination, and what it expresses is human feeling.’ The form of an work of art is the moral effect of it and it also represents the whole work of art as a form itself, which requires in art making and art contemplation. But form need not be an essential factor in literary art. Art is expressed in a certain form according to Langer. Art Symbol is presentational or non-discursive leased pm the principle of construction.

**Unit 1** introduces the concept and theory of *Rasa* as propounded by Bharata Muni in *Natyasastra*. It is also aimed at making the students gain a basic understanding of the Bharata’s concept of *Rasa*; comprehend the meaning and significance of the other interrelated key concepts of *Rasa*-theory; and learn the intent and significance of Bharata’s theory of *Rasa*. Since various elements of theatre and the basic concepts of *Rasa*-principle are so interlinked it is not easy to understand one without understanding the others.

**Unit 2** takes the students to the world of aesthetic theories as propounded by various schools of Indian Aesthetics. The school of *Rasa*, instituted by Bharata, took its first steps towards developing into an influential tradition. Transcending beyond the boundaries of *Natya* the influence of *Rasa* spread to other art forms like Painting, Architecture and Poetics. The unit has an overview of the theories of *Rasa* propounded by: Bhatta Lollata, Sri Sankuka and Bhatta Nayaka.

**Unit 3** discusses how different aestheticians contributed to the development of Indian Aesthetics. Among the Indian aestheticians especially known as the *alankarikas*, we come across several of them emerging as Aestheticians after following certain metaphysical grounds. Similarly there are other aestheticians who first commence their profession as *alankarikas* and then proceed to some philosophical traditions. The unit speaks of Sri Sankuka, Mahima Bhatta, Bhatta-Nayaka, Anandavardhana, Rupagosvamin, Jagannatha, Abhinavagupta and Appayya-Diksita.

**Unit 4** elaborates Abhinavagupta’s *Rasa* and examine certain concepts connected to it in terms of its importance within the broader area of aesthetics. Further, this chapter proposes to illustrate the role of *sahrdaya* and his en route to the ultimate goal of experiencing *rasa*. By doing so, the students would understand Abhinavagupta’s contribution to aesthetics.

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**UNIT 1      BHARATA ON RASA**


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**Contents**

- 1.0 Objectives
  - 1.1 Introduction
  - 1.2 The Natyasastra – a Curtain Raiser
  - 1.3 The term *Rasa*
  - 1.4 The *Rasa* Sutra
  - 1.5 The Key Concepts of *Rasa* Theory
  - 1.6 Bharata's *Rasa* Theory
  - 1.7 Let Us Sum Up
  - 1.8 Key Words
  - 1.9 Further Readings and References
- 

**1.0. OBJECTIVES**

The principal objective of this unit is to introduce you to the concept and theory of *Rasa* as propounded by *Bharata* Muni in *Natyasastra* (hereafter NS). which is known to be one of the first, most comprehensive and luckily largely extant treatise on *Natya* Drama, Music and Dance. It is primarily aimed at offering an exposition of the principles and canons of theatrical presentation to the practitioners of these art forms, *Natya* was *Bharata's* prime interest but as the concept of *Rasa* was potent enough, it rose to the status of one of the most foundational concepts of Indian art and aesthetic tradition. This unit will make an effort to explain why *Rasa* is so important to *Natya* and how could it earn for itself, later, the status of the soul of theatre.

Since various basic concepts of *Rasa*-principle are so interlinked that it is not easy to understand one without understanding the others. This unit will introduce you to some such key concepts enabling you develop a comprehensive understanding of *Bharata's* theory of *Rasa*.

By the end of this unit, we are sure, you should be able:

- to gain a basic understanding of the *Bharata's* concept of *Rasa*
  - to comprehend the meaning and significance of the key concepts of *Rasa*-theory.
  - to know the elements and the process of realization of *Rasa*.
  - to learn the intent and significance of *Bharata's* theory of *Rasa*.
- 

**1.1. INTRODUCTION**

As you open Chapter I of NS which discusses the origin of *Natya* you find sage *Atreya* accompanied by some fellow sages visiting *Bharata Muni*. Normally introductions do not begin with questions but that could well be said about ordinary treatises. NS is no ordinary treatise and we see an extra-ordinary question-answer session begin in the beginning itself. More than just a question-answer session it appears as if a performance of a *Natya on Natya* has begun. The protagonist *Bharata*, responds to the queries of the sages almost like a personified tradition of *Natya*. Move further and you see him in multiple roles – sometimes he prescribes like a seasoned instructor, sometimes he comments like a true visionary and sometimes he elaborates a technique



like an experienced performer, while his detailed instructions are benefiting the practitioners of *Natya* his pregnant statements are throwing challenging art scholars to reveal the underlying aesthetic principles. *Rasa* is one such principle. When *Bharata* states – There is no *Natya* without *rasa*, he clearly reveals the significance he attaches to *Rasa*. The script has evidence of no such question being asked by someone but even if some one has asked *Bharata* - It there *Rasa* without *Natya*? He would definitely not have said No? The tradition that was established is a proof. *Rasa* was destined to cross over- forms, influence other media and become one of the most significant concepts of Indian Art and Aesthetics. Scholars know it that the *Rasa* theory is founded on a deep study of our internal stimuli, psychosomatic and behavioural patterns, expressions, gestures, attitudes, postures, bodily movements, language of humans, even colours, costumes, embellishment and music were not left out. *Bharata*'s entire endeavour was aimed at developing a semantic of emotive communication (Rekha Jhanji, 1985) through which live actors would reproduce this world to live spectators in a living theatre (Promod Kale, 1979)

In what follows we shall try to find answers to some very simple but significant questions viz.– What is *Rasa* ?, What constitutes *Rasa* ?, What is its nature ?, How it is produced ?, How it is related to its constituents ?, Does it happen to every body ? Besides, we will also be trying to see how and why Aesthetics and Art should move together.

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## 1.2. THE NATYASASTRA – A CURTAIN RAISER

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Even at the cost of repetition we say NS is one of the earliest surviving and most comprehensive practical treatise on *Natya*, primarily addressed to the practitioners. Written in Sanskrit, this encyclopaedic work is quite unique in many respects. In its presentational style and mythological content it appears to be closer to a *Purana*, in its prescriptive nature and practical approach (more so due to its own title) it effuses the credence of a *Sastra*. Above all the text itself refers to a fifth Veda – *Natyaveda*, created by Brahma by taking words from *Rgveda*, music from *Samaveda*, movements and make-up from *Yajurveda* and emotional acting from *Atharvaveda*. This *Natyaveda* was created so that it should be accessible to all the four varnas. On this ground many deem it to be a work based on divine revelation. Keeping several factors and elements like use of vocabulary, study of rhetoric and metrics, figures of speech, mythological references, references or allusions in the then contemporary works, review of contemporary dramatic literature, *arya verses* mentioned in NS, techniques and styles etc. many scholars have acceded that original compilation must have been accomplished not earlier than 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. and not later than 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. Scholars also largely agree that the extant versions of the text are reconstructed from some texts which might have been available in 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D.?

The issue of its authorship may not be of much philosophical significance but it is an issue which has really drawn the interest of many scholars. It is true that the text itself talks of a *Natyaveda* originally created by Brahma but since the referred *Natyaveda* is not available, nothing could be said about this mythological reference and thus *Brahma* is not accepted as the author. Alternative names of *Adi Bharata*, *Ṣatsahasrikara* also crop up in the researches but scholars largely agree that *Bharata Muni* could be the author or the compiler of this text. Authorities like *Adya Rangacharaya* maintains that *Bharata* may not have been the name of any one individual rather

the name could stand for the descendents of a clan or it could be a family name directly associated with the practice and promotion of stagecraft.

‘*Abhinavabharati*’- Abhinavagupta’s most famous, most elaborate and most respected commentary on NS, mentions some names of the scholars like Matr̥gupta, Bhattodbhata, Bhattalollata, Srisankuka Bhattatauta and Bhatta Nayaka, who attempted commentaries on NS, unfortunately none is extant (You will read more about some of these commentators in the following units.) The extant versions of NS have come to us through the great retrieving efforts of many eastern and western scholars. NS is a comprehensive treatise extending to 36 (also 37 in a few versions) Chapters. Starting from the origin of Drama to the construction of theatre. *Tandava Nr̥tya*, *Purva Ranga*, *Rasa*, *Bhava*, *Abhinaya*, stage walk, *Pravṛtti*, *Vritti*, Nature of Drama (*Lokadharmi and Natyadharmi*). The plot, *sandhis*, *siddhi* music, to descent of drama on earth, NS has it all. However, for our present concern we can refer to Chapters on *Rasa and Bhava*.

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### 1.3. THE TERM RASA

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The journey of the term *Rasa* in different worlds of tradition has been marked by some interesting excursions, some metaphysical highs and finally a confident entry in to the world of Art and Aesthetics. At the extreme end of the range of its connotation, *Rasa* stands for the Absolute (*Raso Vai Sah – Taittiriya Upaniṣad* (II-7)) and at the other extreme it stands for Soma Rasa-a divine intoxicant. In Ayurveda it stood for mercury (parad), in Kamasutra it was used to mean Eros/love/passion, In Samkhya philosophy *Rasa* figures when the evolutes of *Prakṛti* are discussed. Well aware of these diverse meanings *Bharata* very rightly picked up the concept of *Rasa* to stand as the very purpose of *Natya*, the very essence of *Natya* and the very touchstone of *Natya*. *Bharata* discusses *Rasa* in Chapter VI popularly called *Rasadhyaya* and here the first significant and a very poignant statement he makes is - There is no *Natya* without *Rasa* (NS, VI-31) and a little later he submits a very simple definition of *Rasa* – because it is enjoyably tasted, it is called *Rasa* (NS, VI-3) So one could say that for *Bharata* *Rasa* meant the essence of the play without which no meaning would proceed and if there is no *Rasa* no *Natya* will exist. *Bharata* may not have explicitly stated in NS but what he meant by the term *Rasa* could be the state of enjoyment, the aesthetic experience of the spectators.

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### 1.4 THE RASA SUTRA

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*Rasadhyaya* carries a quintessential aphorism which could well be said the blue-print of *Bharata*’s concept of *Rasa*. It states – “*vibhavanubhava vyabhicarisamyogad rasanisṭpattih*” (VI, 31) and its literal meaning is-“From the union of *vibhavas* (Determinant conditions) *anubhava* (consequents) and *vyabhicari bhavas* (ancillary emotions), *rasa* (aesthetic delight) is realised” This *Rasa* sutra, cryptic, yet subtle, spells out the recipe of the realisation of *rasa*. It states that different elements of *natya* like *vibhavas*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicari bhavas* conjoin to bring out *Rasa*. It is believed that *Bharata* has conspicuously omitted *sthayibhava* from this aphorism besides not spelling out anything concerning how the union of all the elements take place and finally after the union takes place how the *rasa* is realised.

Omission of *sthayi*, from the *rasa sutra* did inspire a lot of debate later but scholars largely seem to agree that it is *sthayibhava* only which finally evolves into a *rasa*. Besides the mention of three vital components of *rasa*, *Rasa sutra* also mentions two more terms ‘*Samyoga*’ and ‘*Rasa-Nispatti*’ which *Bharata* leaves to the wisdom of the practitioner. However, eventually both these terms turned out to be polemical and lead them to a productive *Rasa*-debate. It could well be said *Bharata* may not have given a theoretical elaboration of the *sutra* alright but he did compile one full treatise for the benefit of the practitioners to find out how the three elements i.e., *vibhavas*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicari bhavas* should conjoin to effectuate *Rasa*.

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## 1.5 THE KEY CONCEPTS OF RASA THEORY

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*Rasa* theory is built around some very significant key concepts. All these concepts represent vital elements of theatre contributing their own significant inputs to produce a *Natya* aiming at realising *Rasa* for refined spectators. A thorough understanding of these concepts will help us to understand the *Rasa* theory better. In what follows we will study some such key concept of *Rasa* theory.

1. *Bhavas* – *Bhavas* are called so because they become or bring into being (*bhavyanti*) and help convey the desired meaning. They enable the *natya* to realize its *rasa* to ensure that its poetic meaning has been conveyed. *Bharata* gives a lucid definition of *Bhavas*: “That which conveys the meaning intended by the poet through words, physical gestures and facial changes is a *Bhava*.” (NS VII/3). Broadly speaking *Bhavas* refer to all the elements like *vibhavas*, *anubhavas*, *vyabhicari bhavas* and *sattvika bhavas* but in the Chapter VII on *Bhavas* *Bharata* largely discusses *sthayibhavas*, *vyabhicari bhavas* and *sattvika bhavas* totalling to 49 in all. In a broader sense *Bhavas* mean the originating cause of actualisation and evocation of *rasa*. *Bharata* made a clearcut distinction between real life emotions (*Bhavas*) and emotions depicted in drama (*Natyabhavas*) *Natya* being an imitation of life, real *Bhavas* can have their counterparts as *Natyabhavas* as well.
2. *Vibhavas* and *Anubhavas* – *Vibhavas* are made of patterns of life and serve as cause or stimuli of emotions. Explaining its etymological meaning *Bharata* states – The word *vibhavas*....is synonymous with *Karna*, *nimitt* and *hetu*. As words, gestures and the representation of the emotions are *vibhayate* (determined) by this it is called *vibhavas* (NS VII/3). These are elements which produce a desired emotion and determine the nature of consequent representation of emotions. Like manhandling, dragging, insult quarrel or debate and similar factors will act as *vibhavas* to evoke in us a feeling of wrath (*Krodha*). These stimuli could be external, existing in the external world or internal existing in the mind. (See table of find out different *vibhavas* for different *sthayibhavas*).

*Anubhavas* are *bhavas* which ‘show up’ on characters after some stimuli (*vibhavas*) has had their impact. They include the bodily movements, attitudes and facial expression by which the feelings are expressed by the artist and made to be ‘felt’. To manifest a feeling of wonder, widely awake eyes, raised eye brows, constant gaze etc. are some of the *anubhavas* used by actors. *Anubhavas* are the outcome of *vibhavas* and make the spectators aware concerning the dominant emotions, theme of the play. They can be those behavioural patterns which represent the evocation of similar emotions in spectators. *Anubhava* is considered fact

constitute the real skill and art of the performers. *Bharata* talks of four types of *Abhinayas* (Histrionic representations) *Angika* (Bodily) *Vacika* (Verbal) a *Sattvika* (involuntary acting) and *Aharya* (Back stage inputs) Performers are directly involved with the first three types of *Abhinays*.

3. *Sthayibhava* (permanent emotions) – Human life has some fixed emotive patterns, universally present and integral to our life They are a set of eight permanent emotions, which are subtle in nature and depend on other elements for their representation. Etymologically *sthayi* stands of abiding and continuing and *bhava* means existent. These innate, enduring, assimilative and dispositional traits of human nature are dormant and when activated they develop into an expressive and distinct emotive pattern which get manifested through some minor transitory states, bodily movements and involuntary actions.

The eight *sthayibhavas* are - 1. *Rati* (love), 2. *Hasa* (laughter), 3. *Soka* (sorrow), 4. *Krodha* (anger), 5. *Utsaha* (enthusiasm), 6. *Bhaya* (fear), 7. *Jugupsa* (disgust), 8. *Vismaya* (astonishment)

Being universally present the artists use them as objectifying principles to give their art work structural unity by unifying other elements of the work through them. *Bharata* did not give any specific reason why are *sthayibhavas*, *sthayi*. Giving the illustration of a king and the subject he explains one may each *sthayi* is a king because of its position and rest of the minor *bhavas* are its subject. In other words *sthayibhavas* being subtle, they cannot express themselves, they gets manifested through these *vyabhicari bhavas* only. It is very interesting to learn that like (8) *sthayibhavas*, *Bharata* enlists a limited 33 number of *vyabhicari bhavas* only. At times *vyabhicari bhavas* serve multiple *sthayibhavas*. (See table-I). King *sthayibhavas* do share their limited *vybhcari* subjects with other king *sthayibhavas*. Today, when we categorises plays, stories and even films we refer to the dominant emotions they delineate. For example we talk of a tragic play, a comic story, a romantic poem or a horror film. We must accept that modern art- forms have gone beyond these eight *sthayibhavas* now.

4. *Vyabhicari Bhavas* (also called *Sancaribhavas*) – Besides these limited number of *sthayibhavas* *Bharata* talks of 33 transient, ancillary, temporary, fleeting emotions which do not just accompany *sthayibhavas* but represent, reinforce and re-echo them. These emotions are minor, temporary and transitory, they emerge and fade and in the process portray the dominant emotions. *Soka* for instance could be expressed through some of the following *vyabhicari bhavas* - *indifference, anxiety, delusion, weeping and change of colour* (here *sattvikabhavas* are acting as *vyabhicari bhavas*) (See table-I for more similar examples). By working out a calculated conglomeration, of course, based on a careful observation and analysis, *Bharata* has worked out a very brilliant schema for the manifestation of *sthayibhavas*. *Natya* is a mirror of life, *Bharata* holds, through these well worked out recommendations of combination of different *vyabhicari bhavas* to evoke a particular *sthayibhavas* *Bharata* tells actors precisely how it can be done. But he cautions actors also that he is not formulating absolutely exhaustive and closed set of combinations of these *vyabhicari bhavas*, rather he accords some good creative freedom to the practitioners of these art form.

It is quite interesting to note that *Bharata* allows, at times, some *sthayibhavas* also to perform a double role as *vyabhicari bhavas*. *Bhaya* is a *sthayibhava* but in the manifestation of *Soka* it acts as a *vyabhicari bhava*. (See table for more similar examples). The role of a *vyabhicari bhava* and their prescribed arrangement in the manifestation of dominant emotions could be likened to the role of a WORD in discursive language. Like words the meaning assigned to one *vyabhicari bhava* could also be altered according to a different context. There are some *vyabhicari bhavas* which appear for three or four *sthayibhavas*.

*Vyabhicari Bhavas*  
 1. Nirveda (discouragement), 2. Glani (weakness), 3. Sanka (apprehension), 4. Asūya (envy), 5. Mada (intoxication), 6. Srama (weariness), 7. Alasya (indolence), 8. Dainya (depression), 9. Cinta (anxiety), 10. Moha (distraction), 11. Smṛti (recollection), 12. Dhṛti (contentment), 13. Vrīḍa (shame), 14. Capalata (inconstancy), 15. Harṣa (joy), 16. Avega (agitation), 17. Jaḍata (stupor), 18. Garva (arrogance), 19. Viṣada (despair), 20. Autsukya (impatience), 21. Nidra (sleep), 22. Apasmara (epilepsy), 23. Supta (dreaming), 24. Vibodha (awakening), 25. Amarṣa (indignation), 26. Avahittha (dissimulation), 27. Ugrata (cruelty), 28. Mati (assurance), 29. Vyadhi (sickness), 30. Unmada (madness), 31. Marana (death), 32. Trasa (Fright), 33. Vitarka (deliberation)

5. *Sattvika Bhavas* – Some *bhavas* which are involuntary responses and manifestations which we employ to communicate our deeply felt emotions in a complex and deep emotional situation are termed as *Sattvika Bhavas*. While human beings undergo such states certain unconscious changes driven by hormonal discharges happen to them on which they do not have much conscious control e.g. blushing, tears, perspiration, horripilation. Darwin had quipped once that one can laugh when tickled but nothing can get a blush like this. *Bharata* talks of eight *Sattvika Bhavas* –

*Sattvika Bhavas* - 1. Stambha (paralysis), 2. Sveda (perspiration), 3. Romañca (horripilation), 4. Svarabhanga (change in voice), 5. Vepathu (trembling), 6. Vaivarnya (change of colour), 7. Asru (weeping), 8. Pralaya (fainting)

The poet, the performer and the spectators all share these *sattvika bhavas*. These expressions specially help the performers to achieve objectification while retaining their subjective nuances. *Bharata* clearly states – “The temperament (*sattvika*) is accomplished by concentration of the mind. Its nature (which includes) paralysis, perspiration, horripilation, tears, loss of colour and the like cannot be mimicked by an absent minded person”. (NS VII-93) Through these *bhavas* the performers ensure to convey the immediacy, vibrancy, candidness and subjectivity of the emotions. *Bharata* instructs actors to undergo a set of rituals to clear the minds from personal and worldly involvements and preoccupations so that the depiction of such emotions is as true to life as possible. Like our *sthayibhavas* they are also integral and innate to our emotional complex.

**Check your Progress I**

1) If we express the *Rasa*-sutra in a mathematical expression it will be like one of the four equations given below. Identify the correct equation.

- a) *Vibhava* + *Sthayi* Bhava + Vyabhicari Bhava = *Rasa*
- b) *Vibhava* + *Rasa* Bhava + Sattvika = *Rasa*
- c) Vyabhicari Bhava + *Sthayibhava* + Anubhava = *Rasa*
- d) *Vibhava* + Anubhava + Vyabhicari Bhava = *Rasa*

2) Differentiate the following:

- a) *Rasa* from *Sthayi* Bhava
- b) *Sthayi* Bhava from Vyabhicari Bhava
- c) *Vibhava* from Anubhava

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## 1.6 BHARATA'S RASA THEORY

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*Bharata* declares that *Natya* is an *anukarana* (imitation) of life and the entire enterprise of *Bharata* in NS is aimed at instructing the practitioners to 'recreate' or 'reproduce' life by putting up a production through their enactment and several other theatrical elements. All this is aimed to create an aesthetically relishable unique experience called *Rasa*. What is this unique relishable experience called *Rasa*? Let us see.

*Bharata* opens his *Rasadhyaya* by asking these questions "what constitutes *Rasa*?" "What are the *Rasas* expert speak?" and a little while after he introduces a simile drawn from the word of cuisine to explain what he means by *Rasa*, he explains, *Rasa* is said so because it is something to be relished. Like various condiment, spices, herbs and other food items are blended and cooked to prepare a delicacy which is ready for a relishable tasting, similarly performers produce *rasa* out of the union of *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicari bhavas*. What comes out after this unifying, creative, assimilative and engaging enterprise is an aesthetical state for the spectators to be relished and known as *Rasa*. *Bharata* did not elaborate much on *Rasa*, like a good chefs, he was more concerned with giving a good recipe for a good delicacy. Chefs do not talk of good flavour and good taste they are sure of it. So was *Bharata* of his *Rasa*. His recipe of allowing a prescribed union of *vibhava*, *anubhava*, *vyabhicaris* to arouse *sthayi* so well worked out that *Rasa* has to emerge to enchant the refined spectators. One can easily make out his *Rasa* is a state of mind, nothing like any mundane state it, a state of intense absorption which is emotionally charged and an essentially delightful savouring experience.

*Bharata* never attempted writing or even working out a formal theory of *rasa*. It is probably later thinkers, more so his commentators, who were rather amusingly inspired by the ambivalence of some of his concepts that they started looking for a theory of *Rasa* in an out of out practical treatise. In the *rasa-sutra* mentioned earlier you must have noticed how *Bharata* talks of the production of *Rasa*. The union of all the three vital ingredients untiedly awaken the *sthayibhavas* of the refined and involved spectators. The awakened *sthayibhava* gets metamorphosed in to *rasa* – an experience which is pure pleasure par excellence. For theoretical interest two problems of this theory are of great interest. i) How the *Rasa* is Manifested (*Rasa-nispatti*). ii) How the *Rasa* emerges from the union of the three vital elements of *natya* (*Samyoga*) of *Vibhava*, *Anubhava* and *Vyabhicari Bhavas*. As said earlier much of later commentators based their commentaries on answering these questions

Another issue of theoretical interest is what is the basis of *Rasa*? Nowhere *Bharata* seems to mention that it is the *sthayibhava* which is going to evolve into a *rasa* but when he likens *sthayi* to a king he makes his intent clear. Obviously out of all 49 *Bhavas* all *bhavas* cannot be portrayed, the artist has to focus some where. His observations were based on human psychology, modern psychology has so much to speak on these issues today, prompted him to select only those feelings which are more prominent, more dominant, more visible and more live in the world. Hence he considered only eight *sthayibhavas*. Since these *sthayibhavas* are just latent to human psyche they need to have external manifestations through certain minor and transient emotions. He gives a whole list of such transient emotions and even works out their prescribed combination to depict the desired *sthayi*. But even this depiction cannot achieve the desired goal of achieving *rasa* so he brings in the services of *sattvika bhavas*. These emotions lend vibrancy and truthfulness to the emotional depiction. Besides these emotional elements he had a lot many theatrical devices like costumes, stage, accessories, music, dance which he integrated into the theatrical rendering. *Rasa* is realized only when all these elements are set according to the prescribed cannons which are based on observations of the way of word.

Although referred as traditional this verse seems to sum up a *Bharata's* idea of *Rasa* in a very vibrant manner. “A meaning which touches the heart creates *Rasa*; the entire body feels the *rasa* like fire consuming a dry stick” (NS VIII/7). *Rasa* is what embodies *Natya*, *Rasa* is what the artists strive for and *Rasa* is a state of consciousness wherein the spectators have not only apprehended the import of the artists but also felt its experiential aspects in a blissful state.

### **Kind of Rasas**

*Bharata* mentioned eight *Rasas*, *Adbhuta*, four as major *rasas* and four are subsidiary *rasas* which come from their corresponding major *rasa* are considered. *Hasa* comes from *Srngara*, *Karuna* comes from *Raudra*, *Adbhuta* comes from *Vira* and *Bhayanak* comes from *Bhibhatsa*. Given below is a brief introductory account of the major *rasas* you may refer to the Table for a glimpse of the remaining for subsidiary *rasas*.

1. *Srngara Rasa* – *Srngara* is stated as the most important *Rasa* in NS. Since love is the most dominant feeling in life its representation in theatre, obviously, draws, a lot of attention. Based on the *sthayibhava* of *Rati* it is, set in beautiful surroundings to delightful music on beautiful location. It is depicted by men and women of healthy youth by raising eyebrows, side glance,

graceful steps and except laziness, cruelty and disgust all 30 *vyabhicari bhava* could be seen in action. It is of two kinds: *Sambhoga* (fulfilment) and *Vipralambha* (separation).

2. *Vira Rasa* - *Vira Rasa* has *utsaha* (enthusiasm) as its *sthayibhava* and it is normally associated with noble and brave individuals and their heroic deeds. Its stimuli include, determination, courage, justice, strength, bravers etc. and it is expressed through fearlessness, steadfastness, skilfulness, unrelenting nature. Its *vyabhicari bhavas* are self confidence, excitement, memory, self consciousness, self command. It could be acted out by throwing challenges, courageous deeds, showing boldness and expressing self confidence.

3. *Raudra* - *Raudra* emerges from the *sthayibhava* of *krodha* (anger) which is normally associated with evil persons of violent nature, who cause fights, its stimuli are harsh words, cruelty, spite provocation etc. It is acted through beating, hitting, dragging, bloodshed, inflicting pain and its emoted through red eyes, knitting of eyebrows, puffiness up of cheeks etc. Its *vyabhicari bhavas* include energy, cold-blooded animality, excitement, intolerance, cruelty along with sweating and stammering.

4. *Bibhatsa* – Emerging from the *sthayibhava* of *Jugupsa* (disgust) *Bibhatsa* is stimulated by listening or touching, even tasting, smelling or seeing, undesirable, loathsome, ugly things, in evil settings. It is represented by withdrawing the body, by leering, spiting and showing agitation, holding nose, hanging the head or walking stealthily. Its *vyabhicari bhavas* includes agitation, lots of memory, excitement, confusion, sickness, death etc.

<i>Vibhavas</i>	<i>Anubhavas</i>
1. <i>The season (spring) garlands, anointment. Putting on ornaments, company of dear ones, living in beautiful abodes, gardens, witnessing pleasant things, indulging in sports and games etc.</i>	<i>Playfulness of eyes and eyebrows side glance graceful steps and gestures etc.</i>
2. <i>Disfigurement of dress, decoration, queer behaviour, distorted speech, disfigured gestures, imprudence, greediness, mistakes etc.</i>	<i>Expanded lips, nose and cheeks, wide staring and contracted eyes, sweating or red face holding the sides etc.</i>
3. <i>Curse, pain, calamity, separation from dear ones, loss of wealth, death, execution, imprisonment, exile, accident and misfortunes etc.</i>	<i>Tears, crying, losing colour of face, drooping limbs, sighs, absent mindedness etc.</i>



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|---|--|
| 4. <i>Anger, boldness, insult, lies, injury, provocation, harsh words, cruelty revengefulness etc.</i>  | <i>Reddening of eyes, knitting of eyebrows grinding of teeth, biting of lips, puffing up of cheeks, rubbing of palms, etc.</i>   |
| 5. <i>Having a clear mind, determination, discipline, modesty, strength, bravery and brilliance etc.</i>  | <i>Display of courage, and steadfastness, boldness large mindedness, skills etc.</i>   |
| 6. <i>Hearing strange voices, seeing strange objects, fear of jackals and owls, deserted house or lonely forests, hearing about execution or imprisonment of dear ones etc.</i> | <i>Trembling of hands and legs, fast to and fro moving eyes, gooseflesh covering the body, pale face, breaking voice etc.</i>    |
| 7. <i>Hearing or seeing or feeling of undesirable, ugly and evil etc.</i>   | <i>Withdrawing body, nausea, leering, agitation face pinched, walking stealthily, holding nose etc.</i>                          |
| 8. <i>Sight of divine persons, fulfilment of desires, large assemblies, tricks and magic, entering beautiful temples or gardens etc.</i>  | <i>Unwinking and widening of eyes, words of appreciation, exclamations, joy, trembling stammering, thrilled body, tears etc.</i> |

Table depicting Rasas, their *Vibhavas* , *Anubhavas* , *Sthayi bhavas* , presiding deities and colours.

	Vyabhicari Bhava (also <i>Sthayi</i> in the capacity of Vyabhicari)	<i>Sthayi</i> Bhava	Presiding Deity	Colour	<i>Rasa</i>
1.	All vyabhicaris except indolence and cruelty. Also all <i>Sthayis</i> except fear and disgust.	Rati (Love)	Viṣṇu	Dark Blue	Srngara (Erotic)

2.	Weakness, apprehension, envy, weariness, indolence, inconstancy, sleep, dreaming, dissimulation.	Hasa (Laughter)	Pramatha	White	Hasya (Comic)
3.	Discouragement, weakness, depression, anxiety, stupor sickness, death, weeping (sattvika)	Soka (Sorrow)	Yama	Pigeon Colour	Karuna (Pathetic)
4.	Cold-bloodedness, energy, excitement, intolerance, deceit, cruelty, vanity, sweating and stammering.	Krodha (Anger)	Rudra	Red	Raudra (Furious)
5.	Understanding, poise, arrogance, vengeance remembrance excitement, horripilation and change of voice (both sattvika)	Utsaha (Enthusiasm)	Mahendra	Yellow wish	Vīra (Heroic)
6.	Death, fright, also perspiration, horrification, change of voice, trembling or change of colour (All <i>sattivikas</i> )	Bhaya (Fear)	Kala	Dark	Bhayanka (Terrifying)
7.	Intoxication, despair, Epilepsy, sickness, madness, death also fear ( <i>sthayi</i> )	Jugupsa (Disgust)	Mahakala	Blue	Bhibhatsa (Odious)
8.	Distraction, joy, agitation, also stupor, paralysis, perspiration, horripilation, fainting (all <i>sattivakas</i> )	Vismaya (Astonishment)	Brahma	Yellow	Adbhuta (Marvellous)

Table depicting Rasas, their *Vibhavas* , *Anubhavas* , *Sthayi bhavas* , presiding deities and colours.

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## 1.7 LET US SUM UP

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*Bharata's* NS, the oldest surviving practical treatise on stagecraft establishes *Rasa*, to be the desired objective of a production, performers and spectators. After introducing the concept of *Rasa* and its key elements the unit sketches out *Bharata's Rasa theory* which is largely based on the observations of the ways of the world and application of psychology of human emotions. It further delineates the process how *vibhava*, *anubhava*, *vyabhicari bhavas* conjoin together to produce *Rasa*, which went on to become one of the central concepts of Indian art and aesthetic.

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## 1.8 KEY WORDS

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**Anubhava** – (consequents/sensors) Response of emotions external manifestation, deliberate involuntary through which feelings are represented.

**Bhava** – (feelings/states/emotions/modes of being) A wider term referring to *Vibhavas* , *Anubhavas* , *Sthayibhavas* , *Vyabhicari Bhavas* and *sattvika Bhavas* .

**Natya** – (drama/play) Composite theatre of drama, dance and music.

**Rasa** – (flavour/taste/essence/integral/aesthetic experience/dramatic emotions) NS talks of eight such *Rasas*, realization of which is the objective of the performers and the experience of which draws spectators to theatre.

**Sattvika Bhavas** – (Psycho-physiological response/spirited modes) Certain involuntary consequents depicted by highly involved and concentrating actors, like sweating, weeping etc to create realistic effects in theatre.

**Sthayibhavas** – (permanent mood/dominant emotion/fundamental mental states) NS talks of eight of such dominant emotions which are universally present in all human beings.

**Vibhavas** – (determinants/indicators/stimuli) The causes (the human and the material) which determine the evocation of desired feelings in the audience.

**Vyabhicari Bhavas** – (transitory/complimentary/ancillary/states of emotions/inconstant modes)

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## 1.9 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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## UNIT 2: THEORIES OF RASA

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### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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The main objective of writing this unit is to make you see how the school of *Rasa*, instituted by *Bharata*, took its first steps towards developing into an influential tradition. Transcending beyond the boundaries of *Natya* the influence of *Rasa* spread to other art forms like Painting, Architecture and Poetics. More noticeable was its entry into the hallowed circle of Philosophical reflections. Hailing from the nurturing ground of a rich tradition of poetics-Kashmir three scholars of repute, each following a different philosophy, pursued one common goal-study *Rasa*. Bhatta Lollata took the lead in this direction followed by Sri Sankuka and Bhatta Nayaka. This unit makes an effort to outline their interpretations of *Rasa*-theory and highlight their contributions towards its advancement. We are sure after reading this unit you should be able to:

1. have an overview of the theories of *Rasa* propounded by:
  - a) Bhatta Lollata
  - b) Sri Sankuka
  - c) Bhatta Nayaka
2. have a basic understanding of the principle of *Sadharnikarana*.

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### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

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The rise of *Rasa* to achieve the status of a foundational concept of Indian poetics is a historical fact but how it happened is an area of interesting study. As an aesthetic principle *Rasa* gained an easy entry in to the world of Painting and Architecture but its tryst with sanskrit poetics had not been affable in its initial phase. Eminent Sanskrit poetic scholars and advocates of *Alamkara* school, *Bhamaha* and *Dandin* did take note of *Rasa* and also casually mentioned it in their expositions also but *Rasa* remained a stranger to the Sanskrit poetics for quite some time. May be it needed an equally potent concept of 'Dhvani' to do the honour of breaking the deadlock and also provide some missing links. Finally, it was Abhinavagupta who really paved the way for *Rasa* to gain a respectful entry into the world of poetics. However, much before all this happened Bhatta Lollata, Sri Sankuka and Bhatta Nayaka were taking different kinds of initiatives to obtain *Rasa* an entry into the hallowed world of Philosophical reflections. The threesome endeavoured to raise some significant issues, which *Bharata* had just touched, redefine some crucial key-terms and offer their own versions of *Rasa* Theory.

These three commentators, known as *Rasa* theorists had so much in common among themselves. - All the three hailed from Kashmir, all the three wrote their commentaries on NS, none of their commentaries is extant today and all the three got adequate mention in *Abhinavabharati*. All of them sharply focussed on two key terms of *Rasa* theory – *Nispatti* and *Samyoga*. While they were giving their interpretations they also raised many other significant issues. One by one we shall be introducing you to their expositions and step by step you will be able to see the ascendance of the influence of *Rasa*.

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## 2.2. BHATTA LOLLATA AND HIS UTPATTI-VADA

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In the early 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D., Bhatta Lollata a philosopher from Kashmir, a fervent follower of *Mimamsa* and known to be a contemporary of Bhatta Kallata, produced a commentary of *Bharata's Rasa* theory and earned the distinction of being the first to initiate philosophical reflections on it. None of his work is extant and whatever we know of him and his views on *Rasa* come to us through the writings of Abhinavagupta. (*Dhvanyaloka Locana* and *Abhinavabharati*), Raj Shekhar (*Kavya Mimamsa*) and Mammatta (*Kavyaparakasa*) As you are aware India had a strong oral-tradition and mostly the texts were orally passed from one generation to the next generation. It is nothing strange that none of his writings are extant but what must be kept in mind is most of his views come to us through the writings of Abinavagupta, who, in scholars like S K De's views, was one of his 'adverse critics.'

This first *Rasa*-theorists tried to give his interpretation to the *Rasa-sutra*, which apparently carried quite a few ambivalent issues. Being a *Mimamsaka* himself and in the absence of the idea of *Dhvani* (poetic suggestion) which took centre stage through the writings of Anandavardhana a little later tried he to extend the literalism to *Bharata's Rasa* theory and wanted to explain - what *Samyoga* stands for? What is meant by *nispatti*?, what is the significance of *Sthayibhava* in the realization of *Rasa* ?, how the two are related ? and what is the locus of *Rasa* ?

Lollata maintained that *Rasa* is an effect while *Vibhavas* are its direct cause. He held that *Rasa* is nothing more than an intensified and heightened *Sthayibhava* as a result of the combined effects of the play, the players and various theatrical devices. He further maintained that *Rasa* is located primarily in the characters. His *Rasa* is in fact real life *Sthayibhava* which is intensified, nurtured and heightened by *Vibhavas*, *Anubhavas* and *Vyabhicari Bhavas*. *Rasa-nispatti* (realization of *Rasa*) in Lollata's interpretation of *Rasa-sutra* becomes *Rasa-utpatti* (production of *Rasa*) or *upaciti* (intensification of *Sthayibhavas* culminating to *Rasa*). The imitation of the characters by actors who acquire this through their process of training and the other theatrical devices employed during the production of the play become a source of *Rasa* for the spectators. Lollata in his quest to learn more about the production of *Rasa* even spelled out the process and its stages, *Vibhavas* awaken, *Anubhavas* support and *Vyabhicaris Bhavas* strengthen the *Sthayibhavas* and enable it to attain the status of *Rasa* which then becomes relishable. The locus of *Rasa* and focus of attention are characters, the imitating actors come secondarily. The spectators are charmed by the grandeur of theatre and the performing skills of the actors and what they are enjoying are not their own permanent emotions but the *upacit sthayibhava* (intensified permanent emotions) of the characters and indirectly of actors. This communication happens through the actors and their acting skills. Lollata was probably echoing the views held by Dandin in the *Kavyadarsa* and also by the author of *AgniPurana*.

Before we critically analyse his interpretation of *rasa* which is mainly based on the points of criticism raised by of his predecessors Sri Sankuka, Bhatta Nayaka, Bhatta Tauta and Abhinavagupta, we highlight below some of his significant assertions and achievements.

### **Initiated the Philosophical Reflection on *Rasa***

Bhatta Lollata, the first *Rasa* theorists is also credited with the commencement of philosophical reflections on *Rasa* theory. He not only spotted the ambivalent key terms of the *Rasa* theory but also raised the issues of their philosophical significance. It was his critical comments which attracted scholars like Sri Sankuka and Bhatta Nayaka to forge ahead the critical tradition.

### **Brought the Spotlight on *Sthayibhavas***

*Bharta's Rasa-sutra* is conspicuously silent on the role of *Sthayibhava* in the realization of *Rasa*. Even if we presume that *Bharta* simply could not have missed *Sthayibhava's* contribution towards *Rasa*, he did not explicitly state how it is related to *Vibhava* and *Anubhavas*. However, Lollata was more explicit in focussing the spotlight on *Sthayibhava* and giving it the distinction of being a potential *Rasa*.

### **Rasas are innumerable**

*Bharata* talks of eight *Rasas*, in fact, initially he mentions only four basic *Rasas* out of which the remaining four emerge. Not even once the question regarding the number of *Rasas* is raised in NS. Lollata, however, clearly mentioned that the number of *Rasas* could be innumerable. He also might have been thinking the way Rudrata might have thought that *Rasas* are heightened *Bhavas* and there is no limit to the number of such *Bhavas*. Later on Abhinavagupta strongly criticised Lollata on this issue, and it is interesting to learn that himself did add the ninth *Rasa-Santa* to the existing tally.

### **Locus of *Rasa***

Lollata also raised the issue of locus of *Rasa* and stated that *Rasa* is primarily located in the historical characters e.g., Rama and *Dusyanta* and also manifested through various theatrical representations. However, Lollata is unable to explain how the actors are charmed by these representations.

### **Explained the Process and Meaning of *Rasa-Realization***

Lollata clearly mentions his three stage process of heightening of *sthayibhavas* and finally its intensification in to a full fledged *Rasa*. His *Rasa-nispatti* becomes *Rasa-utapatti* (production of *Rasa*).

### **Critical observation**

Sri Sankuka, Lollata's predecessor did not appreciate much of his efforts and based most of his theory on the criticism of Lollata's *Rasa*-theory. Abhinagupta articulates Sri Sankuka's demolition of Lollata's theory in the following eight steps:

- a) The cognition of *Sthayibhavas* is not possible without *Vibhavas* as *Vibhavas* are the *linga* through which the *Sthayibhavas* are cognized.

- b) While the *Rasa* is realised as a direct experience rather their knowledge is based on denotational meaning so how could *Sthayibhavas* be *Rasa* later, even when they are intensified.
- c) Sri Sankuka also questioned Lollata's standpoint that if *sthayi* or in its intensified state *Rasa* already exists then what is the need of working out various combinations of *Vibhavas* etc.
- d) Sri Sankuka believed that *Rasa* is in an absolute unitary state not allowing any variations. If *Rasa* is considered to be the intensified *Sthayibhavas* it will have to entertain the gradual process of intensification which is not possible at all.
- e) Sri Sankuka extends the same logic to prove the redundancy of the six varieties of *hasya Rasa- smita, hasita, vihasita, upahasita, apahasita* and *atihāsita*.
- f) Like *Hasya Rasa* Sri Sankuka pointed out that we will have to allow innumerable *Rasas*, due to ten states of *Kama*.
- g) On the same ground Sri Sankuka, questions the validity of *Soka* becoming and *Kaurna Rasa* because contrary to Lollata's principle *Soka* in fact wanes as it progresses whereas it has to intensify if it has to achieve the status of *Kaurna Rasa*.
- h) Finally *Sthayibhavas* like *rati, utsah* and *krodha* also do not attain intensification instead it is known that as they evolve further they eventually subside.

Notwithstanding these points of criticism - raised by Sri Sankuka we must accede that Lollata rightly deserves the credit of bringing the spotlight on *sthayi*, emphasizing its vital role in the *Rasa*-realisation. Of course he could not realize that aesthetic communication is not yet another kind of intellectual discourse, *Rasa* is also not a real life permanent emotion in its intensified state. Lollata's *Rasa*-theory has its own merits. He was the first thinker who drew the attention of later thinkers on the ambiguity of certain key terms in the *Rasa* theory. He did raise the issues of locus of *Rasa* and the experience of *Rasa* by the spectator. He might not have been successful in providing satisfactory answers to the key issues he himself raised but his predecessors seized the opportunities created by him.

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### 2.3. SRI SANKUKA AND HIS ANUMITIVADA

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A younger contemporary of Lollata, a 9<sup>th</sup> century AD Naiyayika from Kashmir was the second *Rasa*-theorist who guided the *Rasa*-debate to the next level. Almost exactly like Lollata none of his work is extant and all what we construe about his ideas is sourced from the writing of Abhinavagupta, Mammata and Hemachandra. Sri Sankuka literally demolished Lollata's *Rasa*-theory to advance his own arguments. In doing so he did try to answer some questions raised by his able processor and took the debate to the next level. Outrightly rejecting Lollata's central idea that *Rasa* as an effect is only an intensified *sthayi* caused by the *Vibhavas* belonging to the characters and also the performers, Sri Sankuka offered an improved version of *Rasa* theory with a view to bring back the *Rasa* to where it belonged, redeemed *Rasa* to become a unique experience meant to be savoured by the spectators, reinstated the significance of the performing skills of the actors and finally raised the status of the aesthete to be more proactive so as to be able to infer the *Rasa* from the presented *sthayi-Bhavas* and enjoy it too. He brought back the primacy of *bhava* in relation to *Rasa*. He further tried to establish the *Rasa*-realization to be a unique process of inference unlike any other accepted forms of cognition. You have already seen



how scathing was Sri Sankuka's criticism of Lollata's views now let us find out what new interpretation he offered to the *Rasa* theory and how tenable it itself was.

Sri Sankuka strongly criticised that *Rasa* is not a matter of production or intensification of *sthayibhavas*. Instead the *Rasa* is inferred. The *sthayibhavas* actually do not inhere in the actor but it is inferred to be the trained actor will his perfect rendering by means of blend *vibhavas*, *anubhavas* and *vyabhicaris bhavas* along unreal, creates an imitation of *sthayibhava*. The realisation of *Rasa* takes place when the audience infer the existence of *sthayi*. It is interesting to note that this type of cognition is unique, unlike any other accepted form of cognition. To expand his point further he offers an analogy of *citra-turaga nyaya* which stands for the analogy through which one can learn that the horse in the picture is actually called a horse.

His elaboration of *sthayibhava* and its relation of *vibhavas* etc. and *Rasa* are significant. He also raised another significant issue that direction cognitions of *sthayibhava* are not possible it can only be apprehended through its *vibhavas* etc. Unlike his processor he constantly talks of spectators and speaks of *Rasa* from the point of view and savouring of spectators. Besides he expects his spectators to be constantly ready to employ his ration faculty to infer.

### Significant assertions made by Sri Sankuka

1. Clarified the relationship of *sthayibhava* and *vibhavas* - Sri Sankuka clearly emphasised that only through *vibhavas* only the spectators infer a *sthayi* in the actor which is reality is not there.
2. The realisation of *Rasa* is a process of logical inference - For Sri Sankuka *nispatti* of *rasa* takes place in the form of an inference where the *vibhavas* are *anumapakas* and *Rasa* is *anumapya*.
3. Imitation of *sthayibhava* leads to *Rasa* - *Sthayibhava* are real life permanent emotions which are imitated by actors. Actors are trained in the art of impersonation and through their artificial renderings they imitate the *sthayibhavas*. Spectators finally enjoy *rasa* through the imitation made by actors.
4. The cognition of the inference is unique - Sri Sankuka uses an analogy of '*citra-turaga-nyaya*' to prove that cognition obtained from inference is unique and absolutely unlike is unique and absolutely unlike the commonly known forms of cognition.
5. Raises the status of the spectator - Bhatta Tanta and other later critics had serious reservation about his theory. Considering *Rasa* to be an imitated form of *sthayi* was totally unacceptable to them. The meaning Sri Sankuka wanted to assign to imitation was too restricted. Even his original idea of inference of *sthayibhavas* was also not tenable. Bhatta Nayaka pointed out that the inference was not possible because the character was not present before the audience. None the less the points he raised and the status of aesthete he elevated helped later thinkers to explore deeper and further on *Rasa*.

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## 2.4. BHATTA NAYAKA AND HIS BHUKTIVADA: THE CULMINATION RASA DEBATE

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Towards the end of 9<sup>th</sup> century A.D. the *Rasa* debate reached its culmination with the entry of Bhatta Nayaka – a Kashmiri scholar of repute. He was an accomplished Alamkarika and an ardent adherent of Samkhya philosophy. His work '*Hrdaya Darpana*', in which he is known to have demolished Ananda Vardhana's theory of Dhvani, is not available today but it has got some considerable mention and citation in *Abhinavabharti* and *Kavyaprakasa*.

In the on going *Rasa* debate earlier his processors Bhatta Lollata and Sri Sankuka had raised some significant issues in *Bharata*'s theory, pointing at inherent ambiguities and even asked some fundamental questions. Bhatta Nayaka changed the course of the discourse. On the strength of his arguments and doctrines *Rasa* scaled new sublime heights to claim its likeness to the mystic experience endowed with unalloyed bliss.

His greatest contribution came in the form of the principle of *Sadharnikarana*, (mostly translated as Universalisation/Generalisation/Transpersonalisation of emotions in Arts) which enabled poets, performers and aesthetes to create, manifest and enjoy the universalised emotional complex of artwork without any personal consideration. After *Rasa* and *Dhvani Sadharnikarana* was another foundational concept which later thinkers found hard to overlook. *Rasa* debate till then had seen two divergent interpretations which did generate some interest but engendered many questions too. Advocate of the first *Rasa* theory Lollata maintained that a theatrical situation *Vibhava* act as the efficient cause (*Karaka Hetu*) to produce *Rasa* which primarily emerged in the character and secondarily in the actors who were playing those historical characters. One could say Lollata's *Natya* was being played. The *rasa* was being realised too but it was not meant for the spectators.

Next *Rasa*-theorist started by strongly criticising his processor but offered a theory which did not convince many including Bhatta Nayaka. Sri Sankuka maintained that *Vibhava*, *anubhava* and *Vyabhicari Bhavas* conjoin to reproduce the *Sthayibhava*. Trained actors reproduce these unreal *Sthayibhavas* with their skills and theatrical devices for the audience to infer *Rasa* from the reproduced *sthai-bhavas*.

Bhatta Nayaka clearly saw both the theories were unable do justice to *rasa* and he was not even convinced of the power of *Dhvani* too. So he advocated a three function theory through which language, specially in poetry, accomplished its desired task. These three functions or as he called them *Vyapars* were-

The *adhibha*, the literal meaning of *adhidha* would have only incorporated its denotative function only but Bhatta Nayaka went a step further that his *Abhidha Vyapars* was also endowed with the capacity to indicate also. In the words his *Abhidha* did contain *Laksana* (indication) also. This first function enables the poet and artist to convey the ordinary meaning at the level of intellect only. II-*Bhavakatva* or *Bhavna vyapar* refer to the emotive meaning which normally defies its expression through *Abhidha and Laksana*. It is this power of our emotional complex which help *Vibhavas* etc. to become universalised/generalised (*Sadharnikrta*) and attaining the unique status to belonging to 'none' but still be relishable by one and all. It is this function which allows the artist to imbue general characteristics in a situation, character or feeling. Through this principle the personal affiliations give way to universal elements so that the aesthete relishes his aesthetic experience without any personal involvements. We shall read more about an off shoot of this principle in the form of *Sadharnikarana* a little later. III-The third *vyapara* is called '*Bhogikarana*' or '*Bhojkatva*' through which the aesthete relished (*Bhoga*) the unalloyed bliss out of the artistic creation of the artist. This is the final stage where the spectators simply enjoys the art-work, poem, theatre an immerse themselves in its *Bhoga* which has a predominance of

*sattva guna* in it. Elaborating further he clarifies that this state is neither like *anubhava* nor like *smarana* but it is a state where one feels totally immersed and totally expanded. Its blissful experience is so subtle that it is beyond description and beyond this world.

### **Significant assertions by Bhatta Nayaka**

#### ***Rasa* is a state of blissful consciousness**

Bhatta Nayaka becomes the first *Rasa* – theorist to highlight the sublimity, dominance of *sattva*, unalloyed nature and akinness to mystic experience of the highest order of *Rasa*-experience.

#### **Analysed the process of *rasa*-realization**

Talking of the three function of poetic language viz.1) *Abhidha* 2) *Bhavnavyapar* 3) *Bhojkatva*. He clearly laid bare how the process of realization of *rasa* take place. He clearly stated *rasa* is not just produced on inferred it in fact awakens as an aesthetic creation through the performance of these functions in the appropriate sequence.

#### **The doctrine of *Sadharnikarana***

The doctrine of *Sadharnikarana* which ensures that a poet has creatively de-individualised the emotions, shorn them of their pain-pleasure association and made them universal enough to be savourable by one and all. Abhinavagupta has quite a few problems in accepting Bhatta Nayaka's views irrespective of the fact he did endorse some of his thought and even adopted them in his aesthetic principles. Being a hard-core *Dhvani* advocate Abhinavagupta was very critical of Bhatta Nayaka's *Bhavnavyapara*. It was common knowledge that Bhatta Nayaka created his *Hridaya Darpan* only to demolish *Dhvani*. Abhinavagupta wanted to accept *Bhavana* only on the ground of it means '*vyanjana*' and he declared when a similar concept already existed what was the need of talking of a new concept.

Those who say that with Bhatta Nayaka the *rasa* debate rose to its culmination seem absolutely right. In fact it was Bhatta Nayaka and his three functions theory which answered any questions which were raised by his processor and also put the *Rasa* in the right perspective. Bharata has not talked much about the experiential aspect of *Rasa*. Bhatta Nayaka accomplished it to his best.

### A Comprehensive Table outlining and contrasting three Rasa theories

<b>Rasa-theorist</b>	<b>Rasa Theory</b>	<b>Philosophical affiliation</b>	<b>Idea of Rasa</b>	<b>Unique contribution</b>
<b>Bhatta Lollata</b> (Early 9 <sup>th</sup> century A.D.)	<i>Utpattivada</i> or <i>upaciti-vada</i>	<i>Mimamsa</i>	Intensified, supported and strengthened by <i>Vibhavas</i> , <i>Anubhavas</i> and <i>Vyabhicari Sthayibhavas</i> become <i>Rasas</i> .	The first to offer Philosophical commentary to <i>Rasa</i> -theory. Highlights the significance of <i>Sthayibhava</i> in <i>Rasa</i> -realization. Did not believe in restricting number of <i>Rasas</i> to Eight only. Raised the issues of communication of <i>Rasa</i> to spectators and difference between <i>Rasa</i> and <i>Sthayibhava</i> .
<b>Sri Sankuka</b> (Mid 9 <sup>th</sup> century A.D.)	<i>Anumitivada</i> or <i>Prativada</i>	<i>Nyaya</i>	Imitated <i>Sthayibhavas</i> of characters become <i>Rasa</i> . While actors reproduce, the spectators infer <i>Sthayibhavas</i> .	Advanced Philosophical reflection of <i>Rasa</i> to next level. Highlighted the role of actor's performance. Reiterated the primacy of <i>Sthayibhavas</i> in <i>Rasa</i> -realization. Maintained Actor to be active inferers than passive receivers.
<b>Bhatta Nayaka</b> (Late 10 <sup>th</sup> century A.D.)	<i>Bhuktivada</i>	<i>Samkhya</i>	<i>Sthayibhavas</i> experienced through <i>abhidha</i> and <i>bhavakatva</i> and relished as a transpersonalised and extrawordly bliss akin to Brahmananda is <i>Rasa</i>	Highlighted the real significance of Imagination ( <i>bhavanavyapara</i> ) as integral to aesthetic experience. Introduced the Principle of Universality of emotions ( <i>Sadharnikarana</i> ). Tilted later deliberation towards subjective aspect. Established <i>Rasa</i> to be essentially Blissful and akin to Brahmananda. Contributed significantly towards analysis of aesthetic experience.

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## 2.5. SADHARNIKARANA

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Bhatta Nayaka presented his doctrine of *Sadharnikarana* more than 600 years after *Bharata* had advanced his *Rasa*-theory. In between the first two *Rasa*-theorists seen to struggle hard in the absence of a 'missing doctrine'. This was one doctrine which even *Bharata* would have readily incorporated in his original *Rasa*-theory. This is one doctrine to which even an adverse critic like Abhinavagupta could not ignore. However, it is interesting to note that this doctrine is a kind of a corollary emerging from the second of the three *vyaparas* or functions or processes of poetry which one could accord to poetry. There are no denials Bhatta Nayaka will long be remembered for such a brilliant contribution to the advancement of *Rasa*-tradition.

In our day to today lives we live our emotions along with their associated personal considerations, may be with their pleasure, pain and other concerns. A tragic situation in our life does make us feel sad and yield us pain too. Similarly a happy situation does the opposite. Now, try to recollect an instance from your life when you watched a play or a film and encountered a tragic-scene. Did that tragic situation also yield you pain like your real life encounter? Your answer would definitely be no? But why? The doctrine of *Sadharnikarana* has the answer to this question. While going through the basic *rasa* theory presented by Bhatta Nayaka we learnt about three functions or *Vyaparas* ascribable to the language of poetry. The second function – *Bhavakatra* or '*Bhavn-vyapara*' provides the premise for the doctrine of *Sadharnikarana*. It is this power which enables the *vibhavas* in theatre to disassociate themselves from their worldly afflictions, personal egoistic considerations. Metaphors, figures of speech, absence of *dosa*, appropriate *gunas* in poetry and stylized movements, costumes, music, gestures, dance and other practioners to achieve *Sadharnikarana*. The process can be understood in this manner, a sympathetic spectator experiences the intensity of the emotions of the *vibhavas*, he ultimately forgets himself and identifies himself with the state of the *vibhava*. By doing so he is living the emotions but he is not being impeded by any associated affection. Such a feeling which is shorn of its association becomes a *type* which becomes an emotion having an eternal and universal appeal. But these *Sadharnikrit natyabhavas* (universalized theatrical emotions) do not loose their appeal, they do not become un-individualized, vague, devoid of their essential 'life and vibrancy'. These feelings continue to retain their concreteness but they have been emancipated from their personal and egoistic pleasure and pain giving associations.

It is interesting to note that *Sadharnikarana* emerges from the second function to poetry, which clearly indicates that after the aesthete has fully comprehended the denotation and indicative meaning to aesthete is now ready to insulate himself from the impact of feelings which might impede his aesthetic experience. At this second stage the doctrine helps the aesthete to break down the barriers of our psyche which do not allow the aesthetes to relive and relish the theatrical situation. On the strength of this principle the performer elevate the nature of *vibhava*, make it universally available and transform the *natyabhava* turning them into sharable common experience for one and all.

Students of comparative aesthetics will be familiar with some similar attempts made in the western world also. Thomas Aquinas' 'Reposeful contemplation', Kant's 'Disinterested satisfaction' and Edward Bullough's 'Psychical Distance' could be some close similarities. However developments happened much later in the western world. *Bharata* did not mention

anything akin to this principle in his NS but his entire enterprise takes into account that *Natyabhavas* are an imitation of our day to day *Bhavas* but all his efforts to develop conventions, evolve symbolic tools, employ dramatic accessories, use stylized costumes, use of music, dance, *purva ranga* rituals are indications that he wanted to theatrics situations to be objective situation with out loosing their immediacy and life.

*Sadharnikarana* as a principle aptly complimented *Rasa* theory and boldly answered questions like how and why a tragic situation is a relishable experience. Abhinagupta did raise some objection to this principle but finally he adopted into his own theory too. *Dhananjaya* the legendary another of '*Dasarupaka*' also readily accepted this principle. We can conclude by saying that if *Rasa* is the destination *Sadharnikarana* is the pathway. Bhatta Nayaka must get the credit for this achievement.

### Check your Progress I

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) While offering a new interpretation to *Rasa-theory* who emphasised the significance of acting? Name him and outline his *Rasa theory* in the space provided here.

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2) Whose *Rasa* theory is better known as *Bhuktivada*? Name him and state his central idea in the space provided below.

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3) Name the Kashmiri scholar who is credited with the distinction of being the first one to initiate the philosophical discussion of *Rasa-theory*. Outline his viewpoint in the space provided here.

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4) Define *Sadharnikarana*. State its central principle in the space provided here.

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This unit introduced you to three earliest *Rasa* theorists who laid the course of philosophical reflections of *Rasa* theory. First in the series, Bhatta Lollata, unlike *Bharta* himself, clearly stated that it is *Sthayibhava*, adequately intensified by *Vibhavas*, *Anubhavas* and *Vyabharibhavas*, which becomes *Rasa*. Subsequent commentator Sri Sankuka rejected Lollata's argument and declared that *Rasa* realization is not intensification but a process of logical inference. Finally Bhatta Nayaka stated that *Rasa* is *Sthayibhava* experienced through *abhida* and *bhavakatva* and relished as an extra worldly blissful experience by experiencing transpersonal feeling. In the end we introduced you to the principle of *Sadharnikarana* introduced by Bhatta Nayaka which stands for generalization of emotions and emancipating the artist and spectators from the personal and egoistic associations of feelings which might hamper the savouring of aesthetic delight.

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## 2.7 KEY WORDS

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**Abhidha** :The first of the three processes of language art to convey denotative and also indicative meanings.

**Anumiti** : Act of inference of *Sthayibhava* in the actor.

**Rasa-Nispatti** :(realization/manifestation/completion of *Rasa*) The process as to how the different elements of *Natya* conjoin and result in manifestation of *Rasa*.

**Sadharnikarana**: The process of de-individualising and universalising the emotional complex of an art work for a detached appreciation for one and all. (universalization/generalisation/impersonalisation/transpersonalisation of emotions)

**Samyoga** : (conjunction) Conjoining of different elements viz., *Vibhavas*, *Anubhavas* and *Vyabharibhavas* according to the canonical prescriptions with an objective to manifest *Rasa*.

**Utappati/Upaciti** :The production or intensification of *sthayibhava* to achieve realization of *rasa*.

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## 2.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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**UNIT 3** **INDIAN AESTHETICIANS**


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- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Concerns of Indian Aestheticians
- 3.3 Bharata's Contribution
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- 3.6 The Concept of *Dhvani*
- 3.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.8 Further Readings and References

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**3.0 OBJECTIVES**


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In the list of human values (*purusarthas*) known as *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (desire) and *moksa* (liberation), the concept of beauty did not occur. However in the Platonic conception of values beauty is included besides truth and goodness specially studied by aesthetics, logic and ethics. The non-inclusion of beauty among the human values paved the way for criticism that Indian Philosophy did not give adequate importance to aesthetics. However mere non-inclusion of the term beauty in the list of values does not mean that the Indian philosophers were not at all aware of the term beauty. In order to substantiate the metaphysical doctrines Indian Philosophical texts like *samkhyas-karika* and *pancadesi* draw parallels from art. Several Sanskrit works dealing with beauty especially from poetics and dramaturgy are technically called as *alankara sastras* and the aestheticians who did the job of making a critique of aesthetics are known as *alankarikas*. Samkhya and the Vedanta systems directly and explicitly discuss the issues of aesthetics from their own metaphysical perspectives, while other systems indirectly and implicitly refer to the subject matter of aesthetics.

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**3.1 INTRODUCTION**


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In the west, we come across two types of problems discussed in aesthetics. First, beauty as such as been derived from the objective side of the matter. It becomes a necessary pre-supposition that the recognition of beauty in the object enables us to understand the experience of the subject. Ancient Greek thinkers like Plato and Aristotle subscribe to this view of the objective side of beauty. The other view is that one can deny the unique feeling of pleasure being produced in the subject by the beautiful object. Thinkers starting from Croce treat the subject matter of aesthetics as exclusively a subjective phenomenon. For the aesthetic experience, leading to enjoyment of pure joy is exclusively a psychological factor. On the other hand, Indian aestheticians do not discriminate between the objective and subjective factors involved in the study of aesthetics. According to them, the subject matter of aesthetics is neither purely objective nor purely subjective. A kind of inseparable relationship prevails between the two. Indian aestheticians develop the idea of objective-side of aesthetic experience from the concept 'beauty'. Since the term, 'beauty' has reference to the objective aspect. For without an object, no significant quality can attract us. The expressions such as *sanndarya*, *ramaniyata*, *carutva*, etc. indicate the attractive aspects of beauty in the objects. However, the Indian aestheticians did not ignore the effects of the objects on our minds while enjoying the objects of beauty. Since the quality in the



object is felt as elusive, we have to acknowledge the major role played by the mind in receiving the impressions from the objects and converting them as sources of inspiration for aesthetic enjoyment. The term 'beautiful' indicates the psychological experience leading to grant pure and self-forgetful joy. The expressions such as *ananda*, *asvada*, *rasa* etc., refer to the subjective aspect of aesthetic experience. Since the ultimate objective of life is the attainment of *moksa* according to Indian thinkers, they developed epistemological, metaphysical, ethical and religious doctrines elaborately to reach the goal. Since the enjoyment of beauty offers temporary solace from the stress of ordinary life, Indian aestheticians regarded beauty as a pointer to *moksa* through the art object and art experience. Even truth, goodness and beauty, the major three values are the stepping-stones to the attainment of *moksa*.

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### 3.2 CONCERNS OF INDIAN AESTHETICIANS

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Through the inventions of *bhava*, *rasa* and *dhvani*, the Indian aestheticians have contributed immensely to the field of aesthetics. Especially the *santa rasa* and *bhakti rasa*, i.e. the experience of calmness, quietitude and pure love or devotion to God, are very much related to religion in India. Bharata, the forerunner of Indian aesthetics, in his *Natyasastra* has expounded eight *sthayibhavas* (permanent or abiding emotions) and their corresponding *rasas*, the emotions experienced by the audience. It was the firm belief of the Indian aestheticians that both art object and art experience point to liberation. Contemplation of artistic creation causes a kind of wonder, awful experience and makes the mind to a state of stillness, i.e. equivalent to yogic experience like *dhyana* etc. This kind of emotional type of art experienced by the aesthetics will culminate in moral reformation and in turn to salvation. The later *alankarikas*, the art critics, felt the necessity of including *santa rasa* and *bhakti rasa*, since they play a vital role in the pursuit of *moksa*. The former describes the nature of *moksa*, while the latter, the means to attain it. The inner peace, which annihilates the disturbance in the mind, is an essential pre-requisite for the desire for *moksa* (*mumuksutva*).

In spite of the opposition of including *santa-rasa* in the list of Bharata that this *rasa* cannot be portrayed in art as its theme, though it may be a basic emotion, *the Indian critics of art have accepted santa rasa as a separate rasa*. The *alankarikas* ensure that this *rasa* can be represented in art, but in different names. For instance, *Anandavardhana* calls this ninth *sthayibhavas* as *trsnaksayasukha*, which means the derivation of joy after the annihilation of desire. *Abhinavagupta* calls it *sama* which has several connotations such as 'tranquillity,' 'cessation of spiritual grief,' 'spiritual peace,' 'absence or restraint of passions;' etc. He also calls it in other names such as *atma jnana* (self-knowledge) and *tattva-jnana* (knowledge of reality). Other *alankarikas* also call this emotion with several names such as *samyag jnana* (immediate knowledge), *sarva-citta-vrtti-rasana* (the quietening of all the modifications of the mind), and *nirvises-citta-vrtti* (that mental form which has nothing particular for its object). However, all these expressions point to a singular meaning stillness of all emotions after the withdrawals of all temporal events. When a work of art, like a drama or a poem, depicts a situation characterised by this *sthayibhava*, the *rasa* produced is called *santa*, i.e. what relates to *santi* or peace. Further those works of art leading to calmness in the hearts of the audience are having certain educative value especially through literature, besides producing joyful experience like other works of rasa-centred arts such as *puranas*, *itihasas* etc.

When conjugal love, *rati*, leading to *srngara rasa* is extended to deep-rooted devotion to God, it becomes *bhakti-rasa*. *Bhakti rasa* is a kind of pleasant experience, which results from the appreciation of a work of art, which has for its theme the love of humans towards the divine. Rupagosvamin, an *alankarika*, influenced by theistic Vedanta called *bhagavati-nati* as its *sthayibhava*. Madhusudana Sarasvati, the advaita philosopher in his *Bhagavad-bhakti rasayana*, considers *bhakti* as a *rasa* having it *sthayibhava* in the name of *bhagavadakara-citta-vrtti*. This means the modification of the mind taking on the form of God.

Indian aestheticians had very much related religion and art to the extent that they emulate *santa* and *bhakti rasas*. Essentially the term 'religion' means a discipline which will dissipate all earthly desires and pave the pathway to liberation. Athetistic religions promote the religious fervour in the absence of God, but elevating human to the heights of divine through the efficacy of perfect living. The theistic religions firmly belief that by the grace of a Supreme God alone one can overcome painful existence and attain blissful state of existence viz., *moksa*. As far as art is concerned, it has wider themes besides religion. The artist whose intention is to portray the mysterious activities of Gods like Śiva, Rama, Krishna, kali, muruga and others, will take up the emotional themes as the material for his idealisation. For this purpose the scriptural sources are really resourceful for the artist. When the scenes of Ramayana and Mahabharata are staged through the artists showing the characters in person, the spectators are thrilled to visualize the divine drama and enjoy the presence of divinity through humanity culminating in religious fervour, moral reformation and above all aesthetic enjoyment. The literary merit of sacred scriptures are converted as works of art making an emotional appeal through the idealization of characters since they produce *santa* and *bhakti rasas*.

In the *Buddha-carita* of Asvaghosa, the life of the Buddha has been depicted and it has also been known through painting and sculpture causing the *santa-rasa* leading to spiritual peace. In Jainism too we come across the artists portraying life stories of the saints and their preaching as well. When the theme of the art is God-centred it leads to *bhakti-rasa*, thereby making religion more attractive and blissful. In the same manner several devotional utterances, when played with musical instruments, they become immensely appealing to the hearts evoking both devotional and aesthetic experience.

In the history of Indian philosophy of art the role of aestheticians may be classified as three major periods;

- a) The period of formulation – this period ranges from first century B.C.E to the middle of the ninth century C.E. Only during this period Bharata formulated the concepts of *bhava* and *rasa* and *anandavardhana* established the significant features of *dhvani*.
- b) The period of Consolidation – This period ranges from the middle of the ninth century to the middle of the eleventh century. In this period the aestheticians had hectic time to defend the concept of *dhvani* from the opponents.
- c) The period of Exposition – This period ranges from the middle of the eleventh century to seventeenth century. In this period a kind of relationship has been promulgated among the concepts of *bhava*, *rasa* and *dhvani*.

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### 3.3 BHARATA'S CONTRIBUTION

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Now we shall endeavour to have a study of the concept of *bhava* and *rasa* as formulated by Bharata, the pioneer author in the tradition of Indian Aesthetics, in his *natyasastra* which has enunciated two important concepts known as *bhava* and *rasa*. The former refers to the content of a work of art which is essentially emotional. The latter indicates the highest delightful experience produced in the mind of the appreciator. Only later a few *alankarikas* have invented the method of converting the *bhava* into *rasa* and named it as *dhvani*. In the *natyasastra* which has become a unique guide for the later artists, Bharata has considered drama as producing a variety of *rasa* since it incorporates other arts like dance, music, dialogue, gestures, etc. Abhinavagupta, the expert commentator of Bharata's work has given an excellent elucidation of the constituents of *rasa*.

Outwardly, the basic emotion which forms the major theme of the work of art is known as the *sthayibhava*, which has been considered as the material cause of producing *rasa* (*upadana karana*). There are three objective factors mentioned by Bharata which are termed as *vibhavas*, *anubhavas* and *vyabharibhavas* and these are responsible for transforming the *sthayibhavas* of the spectator into *rasa*. These three *bhavas* together regarded as the efficient cause (*nimitta karana*) of *rasa*.

In actual life an emotion directly affects the individual depending upon the situation, whereas in art experience, especially in witnessing a drama, or dance the emotion indirectly affects the audience. For the emotion is passed onto him in an idealised form and he is expected to exhibit only delightful, joyous experience. According to Bharata, the term *bhava* means 'to happen' (*bhavanti*) since it causes an emotion both in the character of an artist and in the spectator. The character directly exhibits the emotion, while the spectator indirectly apprehends the emotion and rejoices at it. If the emotion is personalized it cannot be treated as having an aesthetic appeal, but will cause an emotion experienced in ordinary life. *Vibhava* means the cause of an emotion which is excited and articulated. It enables the character to manifest the motion according to a given environment. *Vibhava* is of two kinds: a) *alambana vibhava* (human element in the situation, like hero) and b) *uddipana vibhava* (natural element in the situation like time, place, circumstance etc.)

The indication of an emotion (*bhava*) which is shown outwardly is known as *anubhava* which means manifestation or effect of an emotion. It refers to the physical changes made either voluntarily or automatically. The former is known as *non-sattvakanubhavas* which can be produced at will like movement of the eyes etc. Voluntary *anubhavas* are known as *sattvikanubhavas* which arise spontaneously like trembling or sweating. Bharata gives its list as eight in number: stupefaction, perspiration, hiccups, voice-change, trembling, change of colour, shedding tears and fainting. In this context it is inevitable to know the abiding and permanent emotions in art (*sthayibhavas*) as well as their corresponding *rasas* which are also mentioned by Bharata as eight in number:

<b><i>Sthayibhavas</i></b>	<b><i>Rasas</i></b>
Conjugal love ( <i>rati</i> )	<i>Sringara</i>
Mirth ( <i>hasa</i> )	<i>hasya</i>
Sorrow ( <i>soka</i> )	<i>Karuna</i>
Anger ( <i>krodha</i> )	<i>Raudra</i>

Fortitude ( <i>Utsaha</i> )	<i>Vira</i>
Fear ( <i>bhaya</i> )	<i>Bhayanaka</i>
Disgust ( <i>jugupsa</i> )	<i>Bibhasta</i>
Wonder ( <i>vismaya</i> )	<i>Abhuta</i>

A third variety of the constituent of *Rasa* is *sancaribhava* or *vyabharibhava* which means 'not to abide' or transitory mental disposition like anxiety, excitement, discouragement etc. which appear and disappear depending upon the situation. The spectator is also expected to have experienced the *sthayibhavas* at one stage or the other, so that as when the scene is shown in the play the emotion can be easily understood and enjoyed. The dormant basic emotion of the spectator gets manifested when stimulated. Another important subjective factor for the constitution of *rasa* is imaginative insight or fertile imagination known as *pratibha*. The presence of the emotion according to the situation is to be quickly apprehended so that delightful joy emerges instantly.

The Indian aestheticians develop a kind of dispute regarding the number of *rasas* based on their metaphysical bent of mind. The Samkhya for instance believe in the pluralism and the aestheticians owing allegiance to this system of thought treat that *rasas* are many since each one is so unique and produces a distinct kind of emotion in the audience in accordance to the *sthayibhavas*. Thus we have pleasurable and painful *rasas* and Bharata also gives eight kinds of *rasa*. But the vedantins, especially who subscribe to the monistic trend of metaphysics insist that the list of *rasas* given by Bharata is in correspondence to the list of *sthayibhavas*. If the definition of the term 'rasa' is that which gives a joyous delightful enjoyment, then there must be only one *rasa*. For the sake of understanding academically Bharata had enlisted eight kinds of *rasas*. He himself calls *rasa* in the singular term. Only in common life we have personal experience of a variety of emotion, whereas in art experience, especially in emotional themes whatever may be the emotion exhibited, the prime obligation of the observer is to show only happiness and should not, on any account react personally to the *sthasyibhavas*. For they become impersonal while getting transformed as *rasa*.

### 3.4 OTHER AESTHETICIANS

Among the Indian aestheticians especially known as the *alankarikas*, we come across several of them emerging as Aestheticians after following certain metaphysical grounds. Similarly there are other aestheticians who first commence their profession as *alankarikas* and then proceed to some philosophical traditions. Thus we have the following aestheticians turned philosophers:

- Sri Sankuka and Mahima Bhatta were much influenced by the Nyaya Schools of Indian philosophy known for its logic and epistemology.
- Bhatta-Nayaka was influenced by Samkhya System of thought known for its dualism and the theory of evolution.
- Anandavardhana was influenced by the Pratyabhijna school of Indian philosophy also known as Kashmiri Saivism.
- Rupagosvamin and Jagannatha were influenced by the Vedantic schools. These Alankarikas after a deep study of the structure and function of art intended to enter into the deeper problem of its meaning for life. Hence they were drawn towards one school or the other of Indian philosophy also known as *darsanas* to substantiate their aesthetic perspectives.

In the same way we come across several philosophers entered into the arena of art as the *Alankarikas* after understanding the nature and significance of art. The following are such thinkers who wanted to appreciate the nature of reality through aesthetic appeal:

- a) Abhinavagupta, a very great exponent of Kashmir Saivism contributed in a larger extent to the field of *Alankara Sastra*.
- b) Appayya-Diksita also became an *alankarika* after writing treatises on Advaita Vedanta.

Thus the Indian philosophy of art has gained momentum through the successful writings of both the *Darsanikas* and *alankarikas*, each class complementing the other. The relationship among these two categories of scholars is based on the fundamental issues, viz., character of art and its significance, but in fact both the questions are interconnected. Character of art resulted in the expounding of a distinct discipline known as *alankarasastra*, leading to the aesthetic of art. The discovery of *dhvani* is the unique contribution of the *alankarikas*. Regarding the significance of artistic beauty, the philosophers developed a theory known as the meta-aesthetics of art.

The philosophical commitment of the *alankarikas* has been reflected in their theoretical standpoints pertaining to *rasa* and *dhvani*. As soon as the constituents of *rasa*, viz., *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicaribhava*, the *alankarikas* in India with their philosophical bent of mind have endeavoured to expound several theories of *rasa*, especially from the perspective of the process of appreciation. Since the whole process culminates in *rasa*. The theory of *rasa* emerged due to the various commentaries to Bharata's *Natyasastra*. It was actually Anandavardhana who resolved the problem of the transformation of *bhava* as *rasa* by inventing a new concept called *dhvani*. The mode of communication of the emotional theme of art to the audience so that they develop a joyous delightful experience (*rasa*) is *dhvani* which suggests to the spectator regarding the type of emotion presented (*sthayibhava*). Rasa's theory comprehensively elucidates the process of appreciation with reference to the content of the presentation, the method of presentation, the preparedness of the appreciator to receive and estimate the motion and the nature of *rasa*. A theory of *rasa* promulgated by the Indian Aestheticians is the nature and interconnection among the above processes.

Bharata and Anandavardhana have contributed to a great extent to formulate the criteria of a theory of *rasa*.

- a) Idealization is the foremost criterion to enjoy the work of art based on the *sthayibhava*, transmitted through the constituents of *rasa*, viz., *vibhavas*, *anubhavas* and *sancaribhavas*.
- b) In order to distinguish between the content and emotion of an work of art it has to be recommended that the communication of the work of art is to be made in an indirect way as suggested by Anandavardhana.
- c) According to Bharata, the viewer must also recognize the basic emotion with regard to the nature and intensity of the artistic presentation. For *rasa*, the material cause is the work of art.
- d) A theory of *rasa* should explain the very nature of *rasa* itself. The problem is with reference to the relation between the artist and the audience. Before Anandavardhana Indian aestheticians did not focus much attention on this issue. It was he who contemplated seriously upon the content of the *rasa* type of art and its actual mode of transmission. Bharata explained the nature of *rasa* both of its nature and content

including the spectator's alertness for *rasa*. But what actually *rasa* is and how is it related to the person of the audience was developed in various theories of later *alankarikas*.

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### 3.5 ABHINAVAGUPTA'S CONTRIBUTION

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There are four major theories of *rasa*:

- a) The theory of generation (*utpatti*)
- b) The theory of inference (*anumitti*)
- c) the theory of enjoyment (*bhukti*)
- d) The theory of revelation (*abhivyakti*)

Abhinavagupta has made two commentaries on Bharata's *Natyasastra* in the name of *Abhinava-bharati* and *natya-veda-vivrti*. In these commentaries he has given an extensive treatment of the first three theories of *rasa* and undoubtedly his own theory also. Now we shall briefly present them.

#### **The generation theory of *Rasa* (*rasotpattivada*)**

This theory was propounded by an aesthetician known as Bhatta-Lollata. His view is called the generation of permanent emotion since it emanates from the original character. In his *kavyaprakasa*, Mammata, an *alankarika*, states that *Bhatta-Lollata* develops his theory of *rasa* from the generation of permanent emotion in the original character pertaining to nature and human elements in collaboration with physical expression and transitory emotions. The spectator secondarily is made to recognize the emotion expressed in the original character.

However, this theory has some defects. The other aestheticians point out that if the emotion leading to *rasa* is obtained from the original character, then the enjoyment will be of particular and personal in nature. But aesthetic enjoyment leading to *rasa* experience should be universal and impersonal in nature. Further there is no reference to the *sthayibhava* of the spectator in the *Bhatta-Lollata's* theory of generation. The spectator cannot whole heartedly enjoy the emotion exhibited through the original character.

#### **The inference theory of *Rasa* (*rasanumiti vada*)**

The spectator infers the presence of the emotion through the actor presented in the form of *bhavas* like human or nature. The role played by the actor is the cause for leading to *rasa*. The audience infers the presence of such emotion not in the actor himself but through the *bhavas* presented by him. Since Sri Sankuka and Mahima Bhatta were trained in the Nyaya school of Indian philosophy, the latter was influenced by the former in formulating a similar theory in an elaborate way in his *vyaktiviveka*. All the requirements of *anumana* are fulfilled in the process of *rasa* experience.

But inference is concerned with intellect and logic pertaining to language and not to be applicable to art experience. There is no inclusion of generalization of emotion, but only the emotion presented by the actor. However, the method of communication is indirect. Though this

*alankarika* has hinted at the emotion presented by the actor, he did not extensively explain the emotional status of the spectator.

### **The enjoyment theory of *rasa* (*rasa-bhuktivada*)**

This theory has been promulgated by Bhatta-nayaka, according to whom *rasa* is enjoyed by the spectator as pure joy with self-forgetful nature through the general character of the *sthayibhava* in the actual play or poem. If the emotion is of personal nature, then there cannot be uniform, but indifferent enjoyment to the emotion. Hence, he proposes this theory which clearly envisages that *rasa* or aesthetic enjoyment is possible only when the spectator or the reader keeps his mind clam and quiet without any practical interest. A mood of composure is essentially required and the situation must be idealised so that idealised emotion is shown through the actors. As far as the method of communication is concerned, Bhatta-nayaka has discovered a unique concept known *bhava-katva*, a special power in language that enables the reader or spectator to discover the presented emotion leading to delightful experience through the impact of generalization (*sadharanikarana*). This special power of language transcends space and time and produces idealised conditions of the emotions by exposing the circumstances as well as physical expressions.

However, the introduction of the concept called *bhavakatva* seems to be arbitrary. Since none of the *alankarikas* have recognized nor re-considered it. On the other hand, even if admitted this concept will be applicable only to the art pertaining to language and literature. Further this concept is applicable only to the generalised situation and not to generalized emotion. Again aestheticians have not recognized the existence of a *sthayibhava* in the spectator similar to the one that is shown in the play. Since he is committed to Samkhya theory of duality in Indian philosophy he could not appropriately explain the nature of *rasa*. Since *buddhi* is predominant in *purusa* to associate with *prakrti* to produce pleasure and pain. But the *sattva* nature of *buddhi* plays a role in producing aesthetic enjoyment known as *bhogakrtva* which means, 'the power to create enjoyment.' As a rebuttal to this viewpoint Abhinavagupta gives an alternative theory from the vedantic perspective that the potentially inherent pure pleasure in the self manifests as *rasa*.

### **The revelation theory of *Rasa* (*Rasabhiviyaktivada*)**

This theory has been developed by the chief exponent of Indian aesthetics, Abhinavagupta. According to this theory, *rasa* is manifested or revealed the moment all defilements of the self are annihilated and the blissful state of existence is achieved which is latent in the self and not brought from outside. He agrees with Bhatta-Nayaka that the *sthayibhava* has been presented as the theme of the artistic creation in a general and idealised form. With reference to the nature of *rasa*, he argues that there is an identity between the basic emotion of the artists and the fertile imagination of the appreciator. The artist suggests the emotion and the appreciator realises, apprehends and enjoys the same through his powerful imagination. Thus the manifestation of *rasa* is due to the total response from the qualified appreciator. The *vibhavas*, *anubhavas* and the *vyabhicharibhavas* that are shown in the stage through the characters of the actors become ideal in essence and he establishes an inseparable relation with the character affected by an emotion ideologically. Subsequently the spectator develops a kind of delightful emotional experience, which is not personal but impersonal marked by generalization. As the spectator is freed from his ego, he is free to appreciate the emotional presentation. When the *sthayibhava* of the audience

*rasa* is emanated. As the exponent of Kashmir Saivism (*pratyabhijna*), Abhinavagupta was able to fulfil all the requirements of the theory of *rasa*. The method of communication is *dhvani* or suggestion. Hence this theory has been recognized as a standard one.

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### 3.6 THE CONCEPT OF *DHVANI*

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The Indian aestheticians had discovered the concept of *dhvani* which suggests the hidden meaning of emotion especially the literary themes. Anandavardhana had recognized that *bhava* or emotion, is the perfect theme of literary works especially poems. In order to explain the mode of communication of the emotional content of a poem, the later *alankarikas* have discovered the concept of *dhvani*. Since *dhvani* involves language, the meaning of words becomes significant. There are two types of meaning viz., primary meaning (*mukhyartha*) and secondary meaning (*lakshyartha*). Each word has its specific and unique meaning and when conjoined in a sentence there is a very different meaning, a combined single meaning is obtained. When the primary meaning of a sentence is contradictory, then we resort to the secondary meaning. For example, the statement 'he is an ass' is contradictory since he refers to a human and 'ass' indicates an animal. How can a human being be an animal. Hence the secondary meaning, the behaviour of that person is similar to that of an ass. Similarly in the expression, 'there is a hut on the Ganges,' does not convey a proper primary meaning. For how can be a hut on the running stream of the river Ganges. Then we resort to the secondary meaning, there is a hut on the banks of the river Ganges. Aesthetically speaking what does this statement suggest? This question leads the *alankarikas* to discover a new kind of meaning, *vyangyartha* or suggested meaning. The secondary meaning is implicitly contained in the primary meaning or rather the secondary meaning is the sequel of the primary meaning. But the implied meaning or the suggested meaning is not directly obtained from the first two kinds of meaning. It is a totally new meaning.

The suggested meaning is a new derivation from the given statement. In this case the hut on the banks of the river Ganges is as cool and as holy as the river. Here the terms cool and holy are derived from the statement which are not directly or indirectly stated. In poetry we come across several instances of *vyangyartha* where the theme of the poem is emotion. One type of poetry is picture-like poetry (*citra kavya*). Here the method is direct presentation of emotion especially the object phenomena which involves only figure of speech. There is another kind of poetry which develops ornate description which contains *alankara* or figure of speech. This type is known as *gunibhuta-vyanjya-kavya* which falls between *citra kavya* and *dhvani kavya*. As this type of poetry cannot be identified with *dhvani* type of poetry since lesser amount of suggestive element is available. Only embellished description is used here. The fine variety of poetry is *dhvani* type which involves more suggestion as the major method (*dhvani* or *vyangyartha*). In order to describe the situation and the emotional content, poetry has to resort to the method of suggestion. Fact and images in poetry would cause delight when suggested in an implicit manner. This is considered as the best form of poetic method to cause *rasa* in the minds of the audience, by the Indian aestheticians.

The grammarians in Indian philosophy of language have introduced the concept of *dhvani* in language in connection with the *sphota* theory which links the words and their meaning. In the *dhvani-kavya* the method of *dhvani* is applied by the *alankarikas* in a three-fold way, a) that which suggests (*vyanjaka*), b) that which is suggested (*vyangya*) and c) the process of suggestion



(*vyanjana*). *Vyanjaka* is the primary meaning pertaining to the description of the situation. *Vyangya* refers to the *bhava* either *sthayibhava* or *vyabharibhava*. The process of suggestion or *vyanjana* indicates the suggestion of the emotion through the primary meaning. We have a kind of *dhvani* known as *vastu dhvani*. When the suggested element is a fact (*vastu*), when an image is suggested it is known as *alankara dhvani*. In the process of suggestion, if there is only primary meaning, then it is known as *abhidhamula dhvani*. In the case of secondary meaning, it is known as *laksanamula-dhvani*.

Even though *dhvani* has been recognized as a valid method of causing *rasa* by Anandavardhana, several Alankarikas and philosophers in India have criticised *dhvani* and substituted several other concepts in its place. Early poets, who were not aware of the notions of *bhava* and *rasa* have attributed the method of poetry to a) word, b) explicit meaning, c) excellence and d) figure of speech. Hence there is no need for *dhvani*. This view shows the ignorance of the importance of *bhava*. A few critics identified *dhvani* with certain aspects of expression. A few Alankarikas like Vamana and pratiharenduraja equated *dhvani* respectively with secondary meaning, (*lakshyartha*) and figures of speech (*alankara*). Some critics offered alternatives to *dhvani* like Bhatta-lollata, Sri Sankuka, Bhatta-Nayaka, Dhanika and Mahima-Bhatta. It was Abhinavagupta who cleverly argued against their view-points and established the significant role of *dhvani* in transmitting *bhava* into *rasa*. Mahima-Bhatta and Jayanta-Bhatta under the influence of Nyaya have reduced *dhvani* to inference. Ultimately Anandavardhana proves beyond doubt that the scope of *dhvani* is wider than language especially linguistic embellishment through words and figures of speech. He presumed that the concept of *dhvani* is applicable to all kinds of art creation and merely to literary art.

Indian aestheticians in consonance with the Upanishadic thought equated art with the highest reality, viz., Brahman. Thus we have, *Rasa-brahma-vada*, *sabda-brahma-vada*, *Nada-brhama vada*, *Vastu-brahma vada*.

*Rasa-brahma vada* is pertaining to the enjoyment of art appreciation as *rasa* in its peak experience. *Brahmanubhava* or experience of Brahman after the annihilation of the defilements leads to the enjoyment of unalloyed bliss. In the same way, the *rasa* experience leads to a self-forgetful joy.

*Sabda brahma vada* is an identification of sound or *sabda* with the supreme reality. The grammarians consider *sabda* as the highest phenomenon in the world from which words, sentences, meanings etc. emerge so that people can communicate with each other. In literary art, words, sentences and meanings are explicitly and implicitly used and hence the aestheticians treat art experience with *sabda brahma vada*.

*Nada-brahma vada* is an offshoot of *sabda brahma vada*. Since music is a part of *sabda*, when we listen to music we develop a kind of *rasa anubhava* leading to a kind of self-forgetful, joyous enjoyment similar to that of Brahman experience which culminates in *sat*, *cit* and *ananda*. *Ananda* aspect is blissful state of experience. Vocal music and instrumental music are equated with *nada-brahma vada*.

*Vastu-brhama vada* refers to the materials of the world which are used for construction as to enable human beings live safely with security and comfort. Since matter is 'given' to the human

beings by the Supreme Being it is called as 'vastu' and associated with Brahman. Construction is a two kinds: one, divine oriented like temples, etc, and the second, domestic oriented like houses, bridges, etc.

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### 3.7 LET US SUM UP

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We have seen in this unit how different aestheticians contributed to the development of Indian Aesthetics.

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### 3.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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**UNIT 4****ABHINAVAGUPTA'S PHILOSOPHY OF RASA****Contents**

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 *Rasa as Sui generis*
- 4.3 *Rasa Dhvani*
- 4.4 *Alaukika Rasa*
- 4.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.6 Key Words
- 4.7 Further Readings and References

**4.0. OBJECTIVES**

The main objective of this Unit is to introduce Abhinavagupta's *Rasa* and examine certain concepts connected to it in terms of its importance within the broader area of aesthetics. In the growth and development of Sanskrit literary criticism we distinguish two distinctive stages: the first is represented by the early writers on poetics who preceded Anandavardhana, and the second by later aestheticians like Abhinavagupta who made outstanding contributions to the revision of Indian aesthetics. Further, this chapter proposes to illustrate the role of *sahrdaya* and his en route to the ultimate goal of experiencing *rasa*. By doing so, we expect to understand some of the characteristic features of Abhinavagupta's contribution to aesthetics.

Thus by the end of this Unit you should be able:

- to have a basic understanding of Abhinavagupta's *rasa* aesthetics;
- to identify the role of *Bhavas* in producing *rasa*;
- to be able to understand the nature of *Sahrdaya* and his *Rasana*
- to comprehend the nature of *Dhvani* and *rasa dhvani*;
- to understand the concept of *alaukika rasa*

**4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The term '*rasa*' literally means taste or delight in, and is employed to denote the essence of poetry; the peculiar aesthetic experience that art gives us. The doctrine that *rasa* is the essence of art begins from first century A.D. with Bharata. "No composition can proceed without *rasa*," claims Bharata in his famous treatise on dramaturgy, *Natyasastra*. In the chapter called *Rasadhyaya* in *Natyasastra* VI Bharata explains: '*na hi rasadrte kascid arthah pravartate*' meaning "every activity (on the stage) is aimed at the creation or generation of *rasa*." He also sets forth his *rasa-sutra* : *vibhavanubhava- vyabhicari-samyogad rasa-nispattih*, that is, "out of the union or combination of the *vibhavas* (determinants), the *anubhavas* (consequences) and the *vyabhicarihavas* (transitory feelings) *rasa* arises or is generated". The ancient writers on dramaturgy invented an entirely new terminology to distinguish between the real life and the life depicted in the creative imagination. They however correspond to *karanas*, the *karyas*, and the *sahakarikaranas*. The *rasas* correspond to *sthayibhavas* (the dominant or permanent emotions). The *vibhavadis* are therefore called *alaukika* (nonwordly, extrawordly or transcendental.) Therefore *rasa* is applied both to denote the quality of taste and relish as experienced, as well as for the object of relish. In the context of art it stands for the aesthetic object as presented by the

artist through various techniques. It is the sum total of that aesthetic condition united by a persistent emotional quality. Primarily the Rasa School in Indian aesthetics gives importance to the experiential or subjective side of poetic sense. They hold the view that the essence of poetry to be a quality distinct from its determinants which are more commonly known as human characters, such as natural situations, actions or emotions. *Rasa* is realized when an emotion is awakened in the mind of a *sahrdaya* in such a way that it has none of its usual responsive tendencies and is occurred in an impersonal and meditative level. An emotion aroused in this peculiar manner is caused by demonstrations in art of those objects, which excite it in nature, such as natural situations, persons of known characters, their actions and physical expressions of emotions. These representations, through words in case of poetry and through both words and concrete presentations in case of drama, are generalized and so idealized aspects of objects masquerading as particulars. They are significant neither cognitively nor conatively, for they belong to a higher world. The representations have only emotive significance and the emotions appearing through their medium are not suffered in the ordinary or passive way but enjoyed very actively with coherent self-awareness and knowledge. The secret of this extraordinary mode of experiencing emotions lies in the dissolution of the practical and egoistic side of our self in the poetic attitude and the consequent appearance of the universal contemplative self. Emotions are latent in the self in their generalized form as dispositions connected with their general, not particular associations. So, when generalized objects and situations are presented in poetry, they awaken the generalized emotions, which are felt in an impersonal and contemplative manner. They do not relate specifically to any individual or any object. *Rasa* is realized when, because of the factors related above, the self loses its egoistic, pragmatic aspect and assumes an impersonal contemplative attitude, which is said to be one of its higher modes of being. *Rasa*, thus, is a realization of the impersonal contemplative aspect of the self, which is usually veiled in life by the appetitive part of it. As the contemplative self is free from all craving, striving and external necessity, it is blissful. This bliss is of a different quality from the pleasure we derive in life from contentment of some need or passion. Now it may be noted that *rasa* as realization of one's contemplative and blissful self is fundamentally one. But this realization is associated in poetry with an understanding by this self of some emotion in its generalized form. The gradual evolution of *rasa* theory spans several centuries, and contains several landmarks such as the *Natyasastra* of Bharata, but it is generally agreed that it was at the hands of the Kashmiri Saiva philosopher Abhinavagupta that it attained classical formulation in the eleventh century A.D. A high sensitivity and refinement of analysis in the development of the most complicated concepts of aesthetics and a tendency toward religious interpretation of those are characteristic of Abhinavagupta. He is also known as a philosopher of the Vedanta school.

In his two path breaking commentaries, *Dhanyaloka Locana* on Anandavardhana's *Dhvanyaloka* and *Abhinavabharati* on Bharata's *Natyasastra*, Abhinavagupta sets forth his theory of *rasa*. It is rightly regarded as his major contribution not only to Sanskrit literary criticism but also to Sanskrit aesthetics as a whole. Abhinavagupta primarily developed his theory from a close understanding and revision of the forms, techniques, and values of drama, poetry, music, and other related art forms of the theatre. Abhinavagupta in these two commentaries has discussed a series of questions relating to beauty and *rasa*: What is the nature of beauty? Whether it is subjective or objective or a combination of both? What are the true features of the sensitive spectator? Whether *rasa* is *laukika* (worldly) or *alaukika* (transcendental)? Another important question regarding *rasa* discussed by Abhinavagupta is about the *asraya* (location or seat) of

*rasa*. Could it be the poet himself or the character who plays the role of characters or spectators themselves? Further *rasa* is meant to provide sheer pleasure to the spectators or are also meant to give moral instruction? etc.

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## 4.2 RASA AS SUI GENERIS

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The starting point of Abhinavagupta's aesthetics is his repeatedly stated belief that the aesthetic perception as well as the pleasure which accompanies it creates an enjoyment which lasts only so long as the perception lasts. This enjoyment is self generative or *sui generis*. This uniqueness of *rasa*, Abhinavagupta maintains, is an unmistakable "datum of our consciousness." And because *rasa* is unique, its emergence cannot be elucidated using causal, inferential, or any other regular terms. In *Dhanyaloka Locana* (2.3.) Abhinavagupta held this doctrine that "There is no poetry without *rasa*." According to him, the *rasa* or aesthetic experience is not the experience of basic emotion (*sthayi bhava*) in isolation from situation, mimetic changes and momentary emotions, but in union with them. Abhinavagupta explains: "what is aroused...is simply the tasting; the form of existence...of this tasting, is called *Rasa*," by which he appears to mean that *rasa* is the perception of an entity containing beauty and does not denote anything distinct from that special brand of perception. Bharata mentions eight kinds of *rasa* such as the erotic, the comic, the pathetic, the furious, the heroic, the terrible, the odious,- and the marvelous are transformations of our natural human feelings of love, laughter, sorrow, anger, effort, fear, disgust, and surprise brought about by dramatic art. The question whether there is a ninth *santa rasa* apart from these eight has been a debatable point among medieval Indian aestheticians. Abhinavagupta, however, holds that there are several levels of aesthetic experience such as sense, imagination, emotion, catharsis, and transcendence. At the highest level of transcendence *rasa* experience is one of perfect repose and serenity (*sinta*) no matter what the emotion involved is. Therefore, at the transcendental level there is only one type of *rasa* which is one of unmixed bliss where the duality of subject and object disappears and the self is merged in the absolute giving rise to pure spiritual rapture. Such an experience is supposed to be out of this everyday life.

### Abhinavagupta on *Bhavas*

The foundation of all discussions on *rasa* is with the sutra formulated by Bharata. Though by *rasa* Bharata means only *natya rasa* other aestheticians apply it to poetry or creative literature in general. Abhinavagupta says that a refined reader gets *natya rasa* even when he 'reads' a play. Bharata defines *bhaava* as the basis of *rasa* as one which brings into existence the sense of poetry through four kinds of representation:

1. Imitation by speech (*Vancika*)
2. Imitation by costume (*Aahaarya*)
3. Imitation by gestures (*Aangika*) and
4. Imitation by psychic change (*Sautvika*)

Bharata does not explain *sthayibhavas* nor does he draw any distinction between *sthayibhava* and *vyabhicarihavas*. He point out that there are eight *sthayibhavas* and thirty three *vyabhicarihavas*. Abhinavagupta says that *sthayibhavas* are many coloured strings to which remain thinly tied the *vyabhicarihavas* having their parallels in stones of diverse hues. Just as the colour of the string reflects itself on the stones, the *sthayibhavas* reflect themselves on the *vyabhicarihavas*. As the stones of different shades tinge intervening threads with their attractive

hues, similarly *vyabhicarihavas* in their turn influence *sthayibhavas* and make them appreciable to the spectators. Abhinavagupta gives a clearer exposition of *sthayibhavas* than any other aesthician of his period. Everyone avoids contact with pain and tends towards experiencing happiness/pleasure. All desire to enjoy themselves, this is because of *rati* or delight. All people think highly of themselves and laugh at others. This is because of *hasa* or laughter. Everyone feels sorrow when he is deprived of the object of longing. This is *sooka* or sorrow. He is enraged at the loss of something close to his heart. This is *kroodha* or anger, when he realises his inability he becomes subject to fear. This is *bhaya* or fear. Then he resolves somewhat to get over the difficulties. This is *utsaha* or enthusiasm. He has a feeling of repulsion when he meets with repugnant objects. This is *jugupsa* or aversion. He may be filled with wonder on certain occasions. This feeling is *vismaya* or astonishment ultimately he wants to abandon something. This is *saama* or serenity. After describing these permanent mental states, Abhinavagupta distinguishes them from transitory mental states or *vyabhicarihavas*. These transient *bhavas* do not leave any *samskara* or impression in the mind. On the contrary, the permanent states like *utsaha* leave their impressions in the mind. Even amongst the *sthayis*, Abhinava chooses four viz., *rati* (delight), *kroodha* (anger), *utsaha* (enthusiasm) and *nirveeda* (disinterested serenity) born out of philosophical knowledge. Even these are subservient to one another. In accordance with the type of the drama one of the *sthayibhavas* would be principal and the rest of it would be subservient. The *sthayibhava* and *vyabhicarihava* constitute the external factors leading to aesthetic realization. *Vibhava* is not something in the mind of the poet or the reader. It represents the external factors of the experience. The word *Vibhava* stands for the dramatic situation. It is not the cause, but only a medium through which emotion arises in the actor. *Vibhava* arouses emotions in the reader in a manner quite different from that in which emotion arises in actual life. *Vibhava* is represented as having two aspects; one is *alambana*, the object which is responsible for the arousal of emotion or that on which the emotion depends for its very being. The other is *uddipana*, the environment, the entire surrounding which enhances the emotive effect of the focal point. All the physical changes which are consequent on the rise of an emotion and are in actual life looked upon as the emotion are called a *anubhava* to distinguish them from the physical effects of emotion which arise in real life. The physical changes and movements which follow the rise of an emotion are of two kinds, voluntary and involuntary. The voluntary physical changes are called simply *anubhava*, but the involuntary ones are called *satvika bhavas*.

### **Sahrdaya and His Rasana Experience**

Before going into detail about the experience of *rasa* it is necessary to think about the one who experiences it- the *sahrdaya*. The word *sahrdaya* literally means 'one who is of similar heart'. Abhinavagupta defines *sahrdaya* as "those people who are capable of identifying with the subject matter, as the mirror of their hearts has been polished through constant repetition and study of poetry, and who sympathetically respond in their own hearts-those people are known as *sahrdayas*- sensitive spectators." A poet communicates with a reader who has more or less a similar sensibility. He must be a *sahrdaya*, one who has the same mind, and the heart as the poet; like the poet, the *sahrdaya* also should be gifted. Abhinavagupta provides us with a detailed explanation of the process of aesthetic enjoyment by the *sahrdaya*. A play or a poem or a true aesthetic object raises the reader from the level of the senses to that of imagination. As a result the personality of the reader changes and he gets transported to higher plane. The point is that a true aesthetic object primarily stimulates the imagination of the poet through the senses. As his imagination is stimulated he concerns himself not as much with a sensibility present as with the

imaginatively grasped. The world created by the *sahrdaya* at the stimulation of the aesthetic object is his own. In it he meets with a dramatic personality which is the focal point on the whole. It is the ideal realized. He therefore slowly and gradually identifies himself with it. When *Vibhava*, *anubhava*, and *vyabhicarihavas* combine they produce *rasa* in the *sahrdaya*. We cannot qualify any person as *sahrdaya* at will. *Sahrdaya* should have a taste in poetry and a sensitive heart. He should also have a close acquaintance with poetical works. He is the one who has the capacity to identify himself with poetical or dramatic works and to experience the delight of cognitive tasting. The *sahrdaya* experiences *carvana* or cognitive tasting which is precedent to *rasa* experience. This cognitive tasting is different from ordinary cognition. As already pointed out the *sahrdaya* also should be a gifted person. Only an accomplished reader can fully appreciate either a play or a poem. A *sahrdaya* is one whose aesthetic susceptibility is on a par with that of the poet. According to Abhinavagupta, a *sahrdaya* must have the following qualities. A *sahrdaya* must have taste or *rasikatva*, *sahrdayatva* or aesthetic susceptibility, power of visualisation, intellectual background, contemplative heart, the necessary psycho-physical condition and the capacity to identify oneself with the aesthetic object.

*Rasa* sutra says that *rasa* is *nispati*, which is neither generation nor knowledge. According to Abhinavagupta the reference to *nispati* in the sutra is not to '*rasa*', but to *rasana* or to the powers of cognitive tasting whose object is *rasa*. In this way, the life of *rasa* is solely dependent upon *rasana*. *Rasana* is neither due to *pramaana vyapara* (means of knowledge) nor due to *karika vyapara* (verse). *Rasana* is not the effect of a cause. It is self generative, it is *sva samvedana siddhavat*; *rasa* experience is 'sui generis'. *Rasana* is not an object and it does not reside in any work or any mind. It is a dynamic process in which the mind enjoys equilibrium and peace. Abhinavagupta admits that *rasana* is a 'form' of knowledge. It is *boodha* or consciousness of itself, but it is different from other forms of knowledge usually recognised. The difference consists in its means, namely the *vibhava*, *anubhava*, and *vyabhicarihava*. These are different from other means of knowledge in common practice. So the claim of the sutra is that *rasa* is an extraordinary entity which is the object of *rasana* or cognitive tasting. Abhinavagupta also explains how a *sahrdaya* experiences the poetic delight. When a *sahrdaya* reads a poem or witnesses a play, the *sthayibhava* remaining in the form of a latent impression in his mind is awakened by the depicted *vibhava*. It is taken in its general form without specific connection. The generalization that takes place excludes the individuality of the character as well as the *sahrdaya*. This experience overcomes all obstacles producing *viita vigna pratiiti*. The generalised *vibhavas* and the rest call into play the latent *sthayibhava* in the spectator/reader and this also is understood in a general way. *Rasa* is something different from *sthayibhava* or permanent mood. *Rasa*, as we have seen is a process of enjoyment or relish brought about by commingling of *sahrdaya*'s sensibility and the *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicarihava*. It is neither *loukia* nor empirical, on the other hand it is *aloukika* or transcendental. *Rasana* is not an abiding state of mind but a process. "The realisation of *rasa* depends on the comprehension of *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicarihava*. This lasts only so long as cognition of these factors lasts and ceases to exist when these factors vanish". *Rasa*, Abhinavagupta observes is suggested by the union of the permanent mood with the *vibhavas* through the relation of the suggested and the suggestor (*vyangya vyanjaka bhauvu*) in the other words the *pratiiti* of *rasa* is nothing other than *abhivyakti* a manifestation through the power of synthesis, resulting in an extra-ordinary state of relish, known as *rasana*.

### Check Your Progress I

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Explain *rasa* as *Sui genres*?

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2) Explain how *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicarihava* create *rasa* experience?

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3) Who is a *sahrdaya*? What are his basic qualities?

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### 4.3 THE CONCEPT OF RASA DHVANI

Though it is Bharata who is credited with having originated the *rasa* theory it was Abhinavagupta who widened it into a systematic poetic principle. Anandavardhana was the chief exponent of the *Dhvani* theory but later Abhinavagupta made significant contributions to it. According to both Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, the language of great poetry is not explicit, but implicit and that the soul of great poetry is implicit *rasa* or *rasa* that is suggestive. According to Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, the language of poetry crosses the bounds of empiricism; it crosses the realms of both *abhidha* and *lakshana*. According to Anandavardhana, the category of poetry in which the suggested element is dominant is of the highest type. In such poetry the expressed sense subordinates itself to the implied sense. Abhinavagupta declares that there cannot be any poetry without a touch of the charm of the implicit. Abhinavagupta turned his attention away from the linguistic aspects and related abstractions while enjoying art, which had preoccupied even Anandavardhana, focusing his attention instead on the workings of human mind, specifically the mind of the reader or viewer of a literary work. The first step in Abhinavagupta's aesthetic scheme involved the recognition of the theory of *rasadhvani*. *Rasa* experience could not be understood as a theory of abstract linguistic structure. Rather, it only could be understood as a theory rooted in the way people respond to literature. In other words, *rasadhvani* had to be conceived in psychological terms. According to this system the reader becomes the central focus of literary criticism. The aim of *kavya* is to give pleasure, but this pleasure must not bind the soul to the body. Thus he attributed the state of tranquility or divinity to arts and considered *Santa rasa* as the ultimate *Rasa*. According to him the pleasure one derives out of a real work of art is no less than divine pleasure.



Abhinavagupta elucidates his concept of *Dhvani* in *Dhvanvaloka Locanam*. “To be a poem per se *rasa dhvani* is a must according to Anandavardhana”. For Abhinavagupta both *sabda sakti moola* (word) and *artha sakti moola* (meaning) plays a key role in *dhvani*. Abhinavagupta explains the word '*dhvani* in two different ways'. The first is *dhvanat iti dhvani*: that which sounds or reverberates or implies is *dhvani*. The second is *dhvanyate iti dhvani* or *dhvani* is what is sounded or reverberated or implied. This derivation explains *dhvani* as something which is implied. This is *dhvani* proper. This double derivation of *dhvani* is necessary to keep the two meanings apart to avoid confusion. The one suggests an agent or the power of suggester, the other is what is suggested. All the three types of *dhvani*, *vastu dhvani*, *alankara dhvani* and *rasa dhvani* come under '*dhvanyate iti dhvani*' or that which echoes. Abhinavagupta Gupta accepts the general three-fold classification of *dhvani* as given by Ananda. However he adds some other explanation to it. For him the *pratiyamana* or implied sense is described as two-fold of which one is *loukika* or the one that we meet in ordinary life and the other is *kavya vyaapaara gocara* or one which is met only in poetry. The *loukika dhvani* in poetry is two-fold; the one that suggests *vasthu* or some matter is called *vastu dhvani*. The other which suggests a figure of speech is *alankara dhvani*. In both instances the *loukika dhvani* is explicit. The form of *dhvani* possible in poetry is called *rasa dhvani*. According to Abhinavagupta this alone should be regarded as authentic *dhvani*. He holds that *rasa dhvani* alone constitutes the soul of poetry.

### Check Your Progress II

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Define *Rasana*?

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2) Explain *rasa dhvani*?

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### 4.4 ALAUKIKA RASA

Broadly speaking, there are two schools of Sanskrit aesthetics regarding the nature of *rasa*: whether it is *laukika* (of everyday life, worldly, normal, as in actuality) or *alaukika* (different from everyday life, extra worldly, supra-normal). Abhinavagupta in his commentary on Bharata's *Natyasastra* makes a categorical statement that all the *sthayins* when presented on the stage are pleasurable and that all *rasas* too are pleasurable. Further the view of Abhinavagupta that all the eight (or nine) *rasas* are pleasurable and that even sorrowful situations in actuality acquire pleasurable quality through the aesthetic treatment they undergo in a work of art, would certainly appeal to large majority of *sahridayas*. In the course of his discussion of the *sthayin* of the *santa rasa* Abhinavagupta clearly distinguishes between a *sthayin* and its corresponding *rasa*. One is *siddha* (already present and accomplished thing) the other is *sadhya* (to be affected, to be brought about). Then there is *laukika* and the *alaukika*; next is *sadharana* (common, ordinary), and *asadharana* (unique, uncommon).

Although there is no such clear distinction to be found in Bharata's text and although there is no prominent mention in it of the identity between *sthayins* of our everyday life and their corresponding *rasas* we do come across a few indications in Bharata's writing which lead one to assume that he believed that it is merely the *sthayibhava* of the world that is called *rasa* when imitated or represented on the stage; and that some *rasas* are pleasurable and some others sorrowful. Abhinavagupta states again and again that *rasa* is *alaukika*. The *pratiyamanartha* (suggested sense) is of two kinds *laukika*: bare ideas (*vastu*) and images (or *alamkaras*) may be suggested but they are at the same time *vacya* (expressible) also and *kavya-vyaparaika-gocara* or *vyanjana-gocara* or *alaukika* what can only be suggested; only emotion, in its essence, directly describable. It is not communicable like a fact or idea and image. *Rasa* according to Abhinavagupta is never seen in a dream *sva-sabda-vacya* – conveyed by the mere naming of the emotion (to be suggested). For the *rasika* (sensitive spectator) practical interests are of no significance when he goes to the theatre. He feels he would listen to and see something marvelous which is beyond his *locottara* (everyday experience), something worthy of his attention, something whose essence is from the beginning to the end, sheer delight. He would share this experience with the rest of the spectators. Engrossed in the aesthetic enjoyment of appropriate music, both vocal and instrumental, a man completely forgets himself and is aware then of nothing beyond the object or the situation portrayed by the poet or dramatist. His heart becomes like a spotless mirror. It facilitates *hrdaya-samvada* (sympathetic response) and *tanmayibhava* (identification). what he sees is divorced from space and time. His apprehension of *rasa* does not fall within the ordinarily recognized categories of knowledge like true knowledge, false knowledge, doubt, probability. He is so engrossed in what he sees and is so carried away by an overpowering sense of wonder that he identifies himself with the principal character and sees the whole world as the character saw it.

Abhinavagupta pointedly refers to some of the important steps in the aesthetic experience, the attitude of a true spectator, the generalized nature of what he sees on the stage, the extraordinary nature of the cognition of *rasa*, absence of any physical activity on the part of the spectator and the presence in him of a contemplative attitude. *Rasa* is nothing but aesthetic enjoyment and this enjoyment consists exclusively in a kind of knowledge or consciousness. If it were possible to convey *rasa* through words alone we would have been possibly forced to admit that *rasa*, like the denoted sense, *laukika*. But we do find that *rasa* is capable of being suggested by alliteration, gentle or harsh, which is devoid of any denoted sense. But in everyday life we never come across a thing which could possibly be suggested by *anuprasa*. This is therefore, an additional proof for the doctrine of the *alaukikatva* of *rasa*. Abhinavagupta's *alaukikatva* of *rasa* doctrine may briefly be stated as follows: "Objects in the world of poetry and drama have no place in the everyday world of our space and time. Owing to this lack of ontological status the question of reality or unreality does not apply to them. This however does not mean that they are unreal. They are drawn from life but are idealized. They however do not become false or illusory through idealization. A reader or spectator who mistakes them for real objects or views them as unreal or false is no true spectator- *sahrdaya*. The objects depicted in poetry or drama, assume a unique character which the spectator can describe as neither real nor unreal. To take a logical view of the things portrayed in poetry or drama or to adopt a strictly philosophic approach to literature would only invite ridicule. In a passage from *Abhinavaguptabharati* he says: *Rasa* is completely different from the permanent emotions like love, sorrow, etc., and it cannot be maintained, as Sankuka did, that *rasa* is the apprehension of the permanent emotion of somebody

else and that it is so called because it is an object of relish. For if it was so then why the permanent emotion of real life should be not called *rasa*? for if a non-existing (unreal) permanent emotion in the actor be capable of being the object of aesthetic relish, a real permanent emotion has all the more reason for being so capable. Therefore the apprehension of the permanent emotion of another person should be called only inference and not *rasa*. For what aesthetic relish is involved in this kind of inference.

These important passages from the works on literary and aesthetic criticism throw sufficient light on *alaukikatva*, a key term for Abhinavagupta. It would be evident to a careful student of these passages that Abhinavagupta uses the term *alaukikatva* with different shades of meaning. In one or two places this term is used to distinguish the process whereby *rasa* is achieved from other worldly *laukika* processes. It is achieved by the power of suggestion which is peculiar to poetry or creative literature and not by the commonly known processes *abhidha* (power of denotation) and *lakṣṇa*, *gunavrtti*, or *bhakti* (secondary usage). Occasionally he uses this term *alaukika* to point out the mundane and earthly things are completely transformed by the magic touch of the activity of the poet's creativity.

### Check Your Progress III

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What are the two different schools of Sanskrit poetics?

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2) ) Explain the concept of *alaukika rasa*?

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### 4.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have tried to outline Abhinavagupta's theory of *rasa* through defining certain concepts in his aesthetic canon. We started with the idea that *rasa* should be evaluated as self generative-Sui generis. We have also elaborately considered certain concepts like '*Sahrdaya*' and His *Rasana* Experience, '*Dvani* and '*rasa Dhvani*' etc. Finally we conclude the unit with an examination of the concept of *alaukikatva rasa*.

### 4.6 KEY WORDS

**Sahrdaya:** Sensitive spectator who is capable of enjoying *rasa*

**Dhvani:** Denotes the implied meaning in poetry

**Rasana:** Cognitive relishing by the spectator

### 4.7 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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Indira Gandhi National Open University  
School of Interdisciplinary and  
Trans-disciplinary Studies

**MPYE – 011**

**Philosophy of Art (Aesthetics)**



**Block 3**

**WESTERN AESTHETICS**



**UNIT 1**

**Theory of Aesthetics - Ancient**

**UNIT 2**

**Theory of Aesthetics - Medieval**



**UNIT 3**

**Theory of Aesthetics - Modern**

**UNIT 4**

**Theory of Aesthetics – Post-Modern**



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## BLOCK INTRODUCTION

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The Block is to analyse the original works of the philosophers to derive the development of Aesthetic thought to gain a general understanding of the Pre-Socratic thought. Socrates quotes his teacher Diotima who taught him the subject of Love. She calls beauty is the subject of every one's yearning for love. She further declares that the progress of the soul is towards ever – purer beauty, from one body to all, then from there to all beautiful souls. Love and different kinds of knowledge and finally arrive at the beauty itself. This suggests that work of art is a beautiful thing. Aristotle considers tragedy is woven around serious, important and virtuous people. Where as comedy according to him; deals about unimportant, undignified and laughable people. Collingwood considers art as imagination and expression instead of intuition and expression. His views on art may be summarized as follows; “the essential function of art is to express emotions, not to arouse or describe them. Art is not the same kind of making as craft. Collingwood's contention is the art-work is based on an imaginary object internally. Art is totally a imaginary work which is total or comprehensive. For Ducassee, Art is the language of feeling. Its essence as an activity is expression, not the creation of beauty. According to Ducassee, aesthetic art has been characterized as the ‘conscious objectification of one's feeling.’ John Dewey considers art neither as luxury nor as an intrusion into life, but simply experience. The task of the philosopher of art is to restore the link between art and everyday experience. An art product or a work of art is a fusion of sense and meaning since the artist has engaged artistically in the product of art. Regarding creation Langer is of the opinion that art-work is the expressive forms created for our perception. Reid treats art as an embodiment of creative aesthetics from the perspective of constructive and critical. Art is the creative aesthetic embodiment which has an individual form. Language in art, according to Reid, is the excitement in ideas of the artist which moves him to proceed further.

**Unit 1** reviews the growth of response of philosophers towards art and the artists tracing from the Pre-Socratic era. Beginning from the Pre-Socratic development of art forms, in this unit, an attempt is made to concretise the ideas of Socrates, theory of imitation of Plato, Aristotle's Doctrine of *Katharsis* and the contribution of Plotinus contrary to the earlier theories.

**Unit 2** presents the gradual change with regard to the concept of beauty under the influence of Scholastic Thought. It explains contribution of St. Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius; studies concept of beauty of Thomas Aquinas; appreciates the aesthetic thought developed in the Renaissance Movement and finally understands and explains the theory of Descartes on art and art experience.

The beginning of modern period raises many questions with regard to the experience of art. **Unit 3** traces the development in the field of Philosophy of Art from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. We shall briefly analyse the concept of *beauty* and the sense of *taste* from these original works of the 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, of philosophers like Shaftesbury, Hume, Burke, Addison and Hutcheson.

**Unit 4** presents the concepts in aesthetic thought that continues to influence till today. The two great thinkers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Kant and Hegel who devoted special treatise and delivered lectures on aesthetic, their works are taken up for discussion. The 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> centuries saw a great number of thinkers in the West who put forth views on aesthetics which also witnessed the



artists voicing out their opinions. At the end this unit enumerates some of 20<sup>th</sup> century thinkers on aesthetics.



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**UNIT 1      THEORY OF AESTHETICS - ANCIENT**


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**Contents**

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Pre-Socratic Artists
- 1.2 Socrates on Art and Artists
- 1.3 Plato's Theory of Imitation
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- 1.5 Plotinus on Intellectual Beauty
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- 1.7 Key Words
- 1.8 Further Readings and References
- 1.9 Check Your Progress

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**1.0      OBJECTIVES**


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The main objective of this Unit— is to review the growth of response of philosophers towards art and the artists tracing from the Pre-Socratic era. The approach adopted in this Block is to analyse the original works of the philosophers to derive the development of Aesthetic thought. Beginning from the Pre-Socratic development of art forms, in this unit, an attempt is made to concretise the ideas of Socrates with regard to arts, especially Poetry and his notion regarding the artists especially the Poets from the Dialogues of Plato. We shall then focus on the emphasis of the Theory of Imitation by Plato as found in Book III and X of *The Republic* followed by the breakthrough brought about by Aristotle in his *Poetics* through the famous Doctrine of *Katharsis*. The ancient period is marked by the end of the thought that emerged from Plotinus, post-Aristotle, in his *Enneads*.

Thus by the end of this Unit you should be able:

- to gain a general understanding of the Pre-Socratic thought
- to understand the foundation laid by Greeks beginning from Socrates
- to know the emphasis made by Plato in support of the theory of imitation
- to understand the response of Aristotle in his Doctrine of *Katharsis*
- to appreciate the contribution of Plotinus contrary to the earlier theories

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**1.1      PRE-SOCRATIC ARTISTS**


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The thought related to the philosophy of art of the West has its beginning in the Greeks. It is pertinent to imply that the aesthetic thought was highly influenced by the philosophical content of each philosopher. The study of Western Aesthetics is incomplete without knowing the metaphysical and ethical position of the respective philosophers. Here, we deal with only the aesthetic thought developed from the Greeks and its influence in different age with the presumption that the students have a considerable knowledge of Western Philosophy. We begin

with a brief note on the artists in the Pre-Socratic period which in fact formed the base later for Socrates and his followers to ponder and determine the characteristic of art and the role of artists.

The History of Greek records a high profile position of art in the form of poetry, drama, music and sculpture in what is classified as the Pre-Socratic period. Even though it is difficult to ascertain the nature of philosophy of art during this time, it is indeed amazing to see the classification of art forms in this era. Beginning from the two great epic poetry of Homer, viz., *Illiad* and *Odyssey*, many poets and dramatists have evolved during this period. Hesiod, a contemporary of Homer, wrote two major works namely *Works and Days* and *Theogony*. These are markedly in contrast to the heroic style of Homer. Greeks had classified the drama as tragedy and comedy and enacted in their well-structured theatres. Some of the Greek tragedies are written by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. The Greek comedies written by Aristophanes and Menander are well known. More than 15 works are attributed to Euripedes. During this period concepts like imitation and symbolism in the field of art has emerged. Only from the dialogues of Plato we get the development of ideas on the philosophy of art.

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## 1.2 SOCRATES ON ART AND ARTISTS

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Plato's dialogues are usually divided as early, middle and late, of which the early dialogues are considered as the record of thoughts of Socrates with his dialectic methodology. The middle dialogues are classified as beginning of Platonism. Based on the Socratic dialectics as found in '*Ion*', '*Euthydemus*', '*Greater Hippias*' and '*Gorgias*', we shall extract the idea of Socrates on art and the artist of his times.

'*Ion*' is a discussion on Rhapsody that takes place between Socrates and Ion, the Rhapsode. Socrates through his dialectic method brings out the idea that poets compose since they are inspired and possessed and not by art. He gives the example of a magnet that attracts things, "This stone not only attracts iron rings, but also imparts to them a similar power of attracting other rings; and sometimes you may see a number of pieces of iron and rings suspended from one another so as to form quite a long chain: and all of them derive their power of suspension from the original stone. In like manner the Muse first of all inspires men herself; and from these inspired persons a chain of other persons is suspended, who take the inspiration".

Socrates is of the view that the poet is moved by power divine and not by the rules of art. By this he derives that the poets do not bring out the work of art but work of God and that the poets are only interpreters of Gods. He places the spectator as the last of the rings who receive the power of the original divine (magnet) power that moves in suspension. The *rhapsode*, actors are seen as the intermediary links and the poet (here) as the first link. In the dialogue further he arrives that every art is appointed by God to have knowledge of a certain work thus the differences in art is brought out. From the differences in the arts it is arrived that one should have knowledge of different arts which is not possible. One without the knowledge of a particular art cannot have a right judgment of that art. In this dialogue, he arrives that the rhapsode is not an art but is a result of inspiration.

In the above two dialogues we get to know the position of Socrates with regard to the art form of poetry, rhapsody and rhetoric. Now, in the following two dialogues, viz., ‘*Euthydemus*’ and ‘*Greater Hippias*’ we find his idea on ‘Beauty’ and ‘beautiful things’. Socrates distinguishes, in the dialogue ‘*Euthydemus*’, the beautiful things perceived from the absolute beauty and observes that each of the perceived things has some beauty in it. ‘What is Beauty?’ is analysed in the dialogue ‘*Greater Hippias*’. Hippias responds to this question in three ways, that is, beauty is a maiden, beauty is gold, and beauty is to be rich and respected. Socrates response to what is beauty can be put in four ways, one that beauty is that which is appropriate, beauty is that which is useful and favourable, and finally he says, beauty is the pleasure that comes from seeing and hearing.

Socrates accepted the theory of imitation and applied it to the arts of painting and sculpture. For him, *mimesis* or imitation means ‘selective imitation’ which is a combination of beautiful points in different objects that are subject to perception. Socrates was the first to discover the symbolic element in various art works.

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### 1.3 PLATO’S THEORY OF IMITATION

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Plato, following the ideas prevalent in his times, did not add much but emphasized the theory of imitation and shaped in his work ‘*Republic*’ (classified under late dialogues), found especially in Book III and Book X. In Book III, the reasons for exclusion of the poets from the schools are elaborated. Music and Gymnastic, if rightly applied, were seen as builders of value in the young. In building an ideal state, Plato shows that young boys and girls who are show expertise in music and gymnastic are to be selected as rulers. The poets, musicians and dramatists were seen as those who bring about harmful effects on the young. In Book X, further reasons for excluding the poets from the state are detailed. The foundation for the Platonic view on art and the artists is the theory of imitation strongly proposed by Socrates.

Plato elaborates on the imitative principle in the art forms like poetry, painting etc., and thereby condemns art. The question as to what does art imitate, Plato states, art imitates the empirical objects which are copy of the Forms. Thus, art is an imitation of the imitation. The word *mimesis* or imitation is the key concept that brings out the relationship with art works. The artist is looked upon as one who imitates things and hence is a deceiver; at best an artist is concerned only to represent appearances and not reality itself. The artist is therefore said to be a collaborator in *eikasia*. The perceived things are already an imitation of their forms and art is an imitation of imitation which takes one away too far from knowledge.

Plato points out the irrationality of art at every stage. According to him, imitative art is confined to partial copying of the objects of the phenomenal world, and its products are the objects of sense-perception and arouse passion and feelings, which he categorizes as hedonistic like his predecessors. He concludes that due to the imitative and hedonistic nature, art does not strengthen the mind but on the other hand corrupts the mind. He declares the exclusion of art and artists in building an ideal republic. On analysis, we need to remember that Plato was not completely indifferent to art but in fact recommends art for satisfaction of sensuous desires which he mentions his work ‘*Laws*’. But he allows art only when it is strictly regulated. Thus, scholars classify the Platonic theory on art as ‘*rigoristic hedonism*’. So far, we find that the word ‘*aesthetics*’ has not been specifically identified.

Let us briefly summarize the Socratic and Platonic thought on art

- art is an imitation
- artists create based on inspiration
- art forms can be classified based on its function and purpose; tragic and comedy
- art is said to be useful
- art is meant for pleasure
- art with regulations is allowed in the ideal state
- else art is to be excluded from the ideal state
- art has symbolic element
- artists identified are poets, rhetoricians, rhapsode, dramatists, sculptors, musicians, painters.

We shall now see how these elements gets transformed in the hands of Aristotle and its impact through the medieval to modern period development of Aesthetic thought in the West.

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#### **1.4 ARISTOTLE'S DOCTRINE OF KATHARSIS**

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Aristotle, the pupil of Plato, in his *Poetics* and *Rhetoric*, reconciles his position on the function and end of art, especially poetry and drama. He therefore begins by examining the theory of imitation as propagated by his teacher. Aristotle has not dealt with the philosophy of art distinctly like other sciences. By his logical distinctions and rigid demarcation he deals with poetry and drama. We can gather some leading principles, especially in *Poetics* that forms the foundation of the development of all later theories of art. Therefore, we shall examine the work *Poetics*. He begins his *Poetics* with the proposition to enquire into the structure of the plot as a requisite to a good poem, then into the number and nature of the parts of which a poem is composed following the order of nature beginning with the fundamental principles.

Poetry, Drama and Music are conceived as modes of imitation. But they differ in three respects, viz., the medium, the object and the manner of imitation. The differences of the arts with respect to the medium of imitation are rhythm, tune and metre. The objects of imitation are men in action who are categorized with moral differences. Which follows that the representation must be either better than real life, worse or as it is. Thus the each of the modes of imitation will exhibit these differences and becomes a distinct kind in imitating objects that are thus distinct. The same distinction marks off Tragedy from Comedy. Comedy aims at representing men at worse, Tragedy as better than in actual life. A third difference is the manner in which each of these objects may be imitated. Thus, it can be concluded that the medium, the objects and the manner are the three differences which distinguish the artistic imitation.

Imitation is one instinct of our nature and second pertains to the rhythm. Based on this the definition of Tragedy is formulated first. Tragedy is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude, in language embellished (language into which rhythm, harmony and song enter) with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts (some parts rendered in verse and others with the aid of song) of the play; in the form of action, not of narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper *katharsis* or purgation

of these emotions. Tragedy is an imitation of action that presupposes personal agents with distinctive qualities both of character and thought. The most powerful elements of emotional interest in Tragedy are – *Peripeteia* or Reversal of the Situation, and Recognition Scenes – which are parts of the plot. Thus, every Tragedy must have six parts – namely, Plot, Character, Thought, Diction, Spectacle, Song. *Poetics* enjoined the Unity of Action for a successful tragic *katharsis*.

Plot – is the imitation of action. Plot here means arrangement of incidents or structure. Incidents and Plot are the end of Tragedy. Plot is the first principle, as it were the soul of a Tragedy. Character – is the virtues ascribed to the agents of action. It holds the second place in Tragedy. It reveals moral purpose, showing what kind of things a man chooses or avoids. Thought – is that where something is proved to be or not to be, or a general maxim is enunciated. Diction – the expression of meaning in words and its essence is the same both in verse and prose. A diction made up of rare terms is a jargon. It is the command for metaphor. This cannot be imparted by another, it is the mark of genius, for to make good metaphors implies an eye for resemblances. Song holds the chief place among embellishments. Spectacle has emotional attraction of its own. So far, the parts of the Tragedy which must be treated as elements of the whole has been mentioned. Now, Aristotle comes to the quantitative parts – the separate parts into which Tragedy is divided – namely, Prologue, Episode, Exode, Choric song; this last being divided into Parode and Stasimon and the Commoi. The Prologue is that entire part of a tragedy which precedes the Parode of the Chorus. The Episode is that entire part of a tragedy which is between complete choric songs. The Exode is that entire part of a tragedy which has no choric song after it. Of the Choric part the Parode is the first undivided utterance of the Chorus: the Stasimon is a Choric ode, the Commoi is a joint lamentation of Chorus and actors. Tragedy is then classified into two parts, Complication and Unravelling. Aristotle presents four kinds of Tragedy, the Complex, the Pathetic, the Ethical, and the Simple. Tragedy is an imitation of action that is complete, and whole, and of a certain magnitude. A whole is that which has a beginning, middle and an end. Beauty depends on magnitude and order, and hence a beautiful object must be composed of orderly arrangement parts.

Poetry is more philosophical and a higher thing than history; for poetry tends to express the universal, history the particular. Aristotle says, “The poet or maker should be the maker of plots rather than of verses, since he is a poet because he imitates and what he imitates are actions. A poet should speak as little as possible in his own person, for it is not this that makes him an imitator. The poet being an imitator, must of necessity imitate one of three objects – things as they were or are, things as they are said or thought to be, or things as they ought to be. The vehicle of expression is language with modifications of language. The standard of correctness is not the same in poetry and politics, any more than poetry and any other art. With respect to requirements of art, a probable impossibility is to be preferred to a thing improbable and yet possible. There are five sources from which critical objections are drawn. Things are censured either as impossible, or irrational, or morally hurtful, or contradictory, or contrary to artistic correctness. This censure attaches not to the poetic but to the histrionic art.”

Based on the above principles found in *Poetics* we shall now bring out the Aristotlean thought on art and art experience. ‘Art imitates nature’ is the famous phrase of Aristotle. He differentiates art as fine art and useful art. Fine art, he says, is a free and independent activity of the mind,

outside the domain both of religion and of politics, having an end distinct from that of education or moral improvement. In this statement, the intention to classify art as fine art and useful art is not found. But it cannot be concluded that it bears the sense that fine art is a copy or reproduction of natural objects. The word 'Nature' here significantly brings out the meaning of 'art' as useful art. Here, Nature means not the outward world of created things, but it is the creative force, the productive principle of the universe. In nature there is union of matter with constitutive form and that the knowledge of both elements is requisite for the natural artist. Thus, the word art is restricted to useful art. In its widest sense, like nature, art has certain ends in view. In the adaptation of means to culminate in those ends, art copies nature which is already hidden in the mind of the artist. While art in general imitates the method of nature, the phrase has a special reference to useful art, which learns from nature the end which is to be aimed at precisely. The character of the useful arts is to cooperate with nature, to complete the designs which the nature could not carry out.

Useful art employs the material of nature and helps nature in its effort to realize its ideal. Fine art sets practical needs aside; it does not seek to affect the real world in the sense of bringing out any kind of modification to the actual. Fine art, then, is a completion of nature in a sense not applicable to useful art; it presents only an image, but a purified image of nature. The end of fine art, according to the doctrine of Aristotle, is a certain pleasurable impression that is produced in the mind of the spectator. Aristotle identifies poetry, drama, music and painting as fine arts. He classifies architecture under useful arts.

Nature is subject to limitations that can best make use of the available material. Nature needs more assistance in carrying out its designs in the ascending scale of being. By means of the rational faculty of art, that is endowed to human being richly by nature, the human – the highest in the scale of beings, comes to the aid of nature. When nature fails, art steps in. Aristotle says in his *Anima* that "Nature aims at producing health; in her restorative processes we observe an instinctive capacity for self-curing".

'Imitation' as the common feature of the fine arts, including poetry, was first formulated by Plato. Aristotle as we mentioned earlier speaks of three-fold objects of imitation, viz., things as they were or are, things as they are said or thought to be, or things as they ought to be. By 'things as they are', are meant the characteristic moral qualities, the permanent dispositions of the mind, which reveal a certain condition of the will: 'things as they are said' are the more transient emotions, the passing moods of feeling: 'things as they ought to be' are actions in their proper and inward sense. An act viewed merely as an external process or result, one of a series of outward phenomena, is not the true object of aesthetic imitation. Art mainly seeks to reproduce an inward process, a psychical energy working outwards; deeds, incidents, events, situations, being included under it so far as these spring from an inward act of will, or elicit some activity of thought or feeling. On this principle, the entire universe is not seen as the raw material of art. Aristotle's theory in agreement with his predecessors show that the external world serves as the background of action, the emotional element inheres and heightens the interest. Thus the meaning of 'imitation' is spelt out at each stage refining the meaning in Aristotlean's scheme, by Butcher S.H. in his work titled *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, 'as a work of art is a likeness or reproduction of an original, and not a symbolic representation of it'; 'a work of art as

an idealized representation of human life-of character, emotion, action-under forms manifest to sense.' Thus, 'imitation' is described in the sense of creative act.

A study of the function of Tragedy according to Aristotle reveals that the word *katharsis* is just not about psychology and pathology, but a principle of art. In real life, the feeling of pity and fear contain melancholy and disturbing element. In the process of *katharsis*, the painful element of pity and fear of reality is purged away, tragedy exercises a curative influence followed by transformation of emotions. It thereby, provides a distinct aesthetic tranquility purified through the medium of art. The idea of *katharsis* reveals the expulsion of agony in mind. The expelling of pain is because of the faintness of ego.

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### 1.5 PLOTINUS ON INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

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Aristotle instructed the dramatist in his *Poetics* and further supplemented in *Rhetoric*, the technical aspects of the dramatic production was carried out by later philosophers. Following the tradition of Aristotle came Plotinus (AD 205-270) who concentrated in taking up the discussion on the end of art that is the art experience. The theory progressed by Plotinus is known from his work, viz., *The Six Enneads*. (They are called Enneads from the Greek *ennea*, which means nine, because each of the six book contains nine sections). In the sixth tractate of the first *Ennead*, Plotinus deals with 'Beauty'. In this section, he sets on an array of questions recalling the various ideas especially of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. The questions raised by Plotinus are:

In this connection, he states if the beautiful thing is essentially symmetrical, patterned then it would amount to say that only a compound can be beautiful and not a thing devoid of parts. Proceeding further, Plotinus questions as what is symmetry? Based on the Greek thought that beauty of the soul is all virtues, Plotinus wonders how symmetry enters here! He tries to extend his theory of beauty to the metaphysical intellectual being, which he claims as essentially the solitary. He arrives at a Principle that bestows beauty on material things. The process of material things becoming beautiful, he considers by communicating in the thoughts that flows from the Divine. The appreciation of beauty is spelt out by Plotinus as outcome of unification and harmony. Thus, one sees beauty in the realm of sense, images, fugitives etc. He advances in arriving at one taking delight by the sight of Soul without sensory perception. He takes the contrary to beauty as ugly and shows that a Soul which is said to be foisted upon by something descending into matter is ugly. The Soul cleared of the desires, in solitary, is freed from the ugly. The beautiful is the Soul that is heightened as the Intellectual principle.

According to Plotinus, the divine beauty emanates from the One. By 'emanates' he meant the overflow like light from the sun, to create the realm of Intelligence, and that in turn emanates into the world of soul. This emanation as a delightful higher creative principle or a kind of pollution of the lower is obscure. It is in the contemplation of the higher principle that the lower receives its forms. The aim is to direct the contemplation directly back to the One. In the eight tractate of the fifth *Ennead*, Plotinus discusses on the 'Intellectual Beauty'. The question he takes up here is how the Beauty of the divine Intellect and the Intellectual Cosmos may be revealed to contemplation. By differentiating a stone from a carved stone by an artist, Plotinus shows that the form brought out by the artist is by his participation in his art. Based on this, he says, the beauty therefore exists in a far higher state in the art, which is transferred to the material object.



Art is the seat and source of beauty is seen as more complete than its presence in the external. Here, Plotinus refutes the idea that art is an imitation of natural objects on the basis that the natural objects are themselves imitations. He states that art is not a reproduction of object seen but they go back to the Ideas from which Nature itself derives, they are holders of beauty and add where nature is lacking.

Plotinus now debates with regard to the beauty in nature. The sequence of his analysis can be enumerated as follows:

- 1) Idea which is primal, immaterial, firmly a unity is not Beauty
- 2) Ground of beauty cannot be Matter

Beauty is not in concrete objects but in the Soul or mind. The wisdom of the artist, says Plotinus, is in a making, where the artist goes back to wisdom in Nature which is embodied in himself. He concludes this section thus,

### Check Your Progress I

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

- 1) Trace the thought of Socrates on art and the artist from the Dialogues.

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- 2) Examine the theory of imitation emphasised by Plato in the Republic.

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## 1.6 LET US SUM UP

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In this Unit we have seen briefly the thought of ancient Greek with regard to art forms and artists tracing from the dialogues recorded by Plato. We find that Socrates does not give a significant position to the poets, sculptors or painters of his times. By his dialectic methodology he distances the role of art and the participation of artists in an ideal state. Plato does not differ from this and emphatically presents art as imitation and artists as imitators or rather flatterers. However, in certain lines in the *Republic* and *Laws*, we gather that Plato does consider the end of a regulated art. This is based on the metaphysical position regarding the Ideal, Form, Soul, Virtues etc., as debated by Socrates and imbibed by Plato. Aristotle follows Plato but debates on the imitative form of arts. By his classification of the Physical Sciences, Medicine, Psychology etc., he emerges with the tragic *katharsis* which he demonstrates in his *Poetics* displaying the order of Tragedy. By the time of Aristotle, an attempt is made to classify art forms, the role of artists, and the end of art. Plotinus in his *Enneads* reverts to the metaphysical approach of his predecessors and debates on the very concept of Beauty. He refutes the imitative theory developed up to the time of Aristotle and re-presents as the theory of Intellectual Beauty of the Soul. Till the thought

of Plotinus we mark as the ancient period of development of Aesthetics. We should bear in mind here that in this ancient period, while dealing with art forms, artists and the end of art, the word *aesthetics* has not been identified in the sense of how it is known today. As even we move on to the medieval and modern period, we will get to know the emergence of the word *aesthetics* in relation to art and specifically to art experience.

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## 1.7 KEY WORDS

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- Rhapsody:** enthusiastic, extravagant speech or composition.  
**Rhetoric:** art of persuasive speaking or writing.  
**Eikasia:** the lowest stage of knowing according to Plato's image of the line.  
**Katharsis:** the cleansing (purifying, purging) of feelings such as pity and fear by feeling them in the drama of tragedy.  
**Emanation:** different from imitation and evolution; overflow from the One.

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## 1.8 FURTHER READING AND REFERENCES

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**UNIT 2                    THEORY OF AESTHETICS - MEDIEVAL**

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**Contents**

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Medieval Aesthetic Thought
- 2.2 St. Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius
- 2.3 St. Thomas Aquinas
- 2.4 Renaissance Movement
- 2.5 Transition – Rene Descartes
- 2.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.7 Key Words
- 2.8 Further Readings and References

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**2.0. OBJECTIVES**

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The main objective of this Unit is to present the gradual change with regard to the concept of beauty under the influence of Scholastic Thought. It is in the work *Confessions* of St. Augustine that we find a different approach from that of the Greeks. Though influenced by Platonism and Neoplatonism, St. Augustine played a dominant role in defining the nature of art, a human creation differentiating from the creation of God. He influenced the later thinkers of the middle age. In *The Divine Names*, Pseudo-Dionysius refers to God as Beautiful. He greatly influenced later St. Thomas Aquinas who in his *Summa Theologica* takes up the study of the sense of beauty. A kind of divinity in the aesthetic approach felt in this Christian era was put to rest by the Renaissance Movement. The debates revolved around the nature of art and end of artistic productions. This paved a new path bridging the ancient and medieval into modernity. The shaping of the philosophy of art could be found in the work of Rene Descartes who employed his metaphysical position in determining his intellectual aesthetics. The contribution of Descartes with regard to artistic productions and experience is seen the transition from the medieval age to the modern period.

Thus by the end of this Unit you should be able:

- to understand the background of the emergence of medieval aesthetic thought
- to know the contribution of St. Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius
- to see the study of beauty of St. Thomas Aquinas
- to appreciate the thought developed in the Renaissance Movement
- to understand the theory of Descartes on art and art experience

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**2.1 INTRODUCTION**

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Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus have considerably influenced the thought of the middle age thinkers with regard to the aesthetic thought. Even though the word 'aesthetic' have not yet been associated with the art or art experience, we use it in the sense derived from the writers of the 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century. The middle age is found to be predominantly in the analysis of the notion of

beauty. The Socratic nature of the soul has given way in the Scholastic school of thought that places God as the absolute beauty and creation of God as the beautiful. Interestingly, we find followed by the Greek thought, the early writers of the middle age with its theological perspective carefully takes up the study of the concept of beauty. The aesthetic currents are found in the medieval period covering the early Christian era and the Renaissance. Setting aside the historical development, we shall deal with the original works of some of the important influential thinkers of the medieval period beginning from St. Augustine highlighting the concept of beauty included as a vital term in the study of Aesthetics.

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## 2.2. ST.AUGUSTINE AND PSEUDO DIONYSIUS

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### St. Augustine

The medieval age is marked by the beginning of St. Augustine. Highly influenced by the Platonist and Neo-Platonist thought, we find his views related to philosophy of art in his autobiographical work *The Confessions*. The study on art from the writings of St. Augustine is tedious since the ideas are strewn variedly, however, the crux of it is presented here.

By using the words *ex nihilo* and *ex material*, he distinguishes the creation of God and the human creation, that of the artists. He did not opine the imitation of nature of Forms as held by Plato. Augustine held nature superior, as creation of God that forms the material for the artists. Unlike Plato, he found a kind of truth in the poetic compositions. He considered False as that which tends to be what it is not. In this connection, he divides falsehood into two, one as the deception brought about by nature and two, the deception carried by the living beings. The deception by the living beings he further classifies as practical and deliberate illusions and deceptions only to amuse. He distinguishes the poetic or the artistic falsity as the deceptions for amusement. Hence, he does not favour the idea of Plato that poets are liars or flatterers. The intention of the artists, says Augustine is not to deceive.

He mirrors the view of Plotinus when he says God's beauty emanates to nature in the act of creation. Initially, he says, matter was formless 'without any beauty' and describes a hierarchy of beautiful things. He recognizes the evil in the line of beauty. Thus, ugly finds a place in the description of art by Augustine. For him, that which is ugly serves as the medium to bring beauty prominently and contrasts thereby contributing to the effectiveness of beauty. This can be achieved, according to Augustine, if the ugly is placed in right and proper relation to the beauty.

In his work *De Musica*, he maintains that rhythm originates with God. He explicates that rhythm is eternal which needs to be discovered. He emphasizes the need for enquiry into the nature to discover the eternal rhythm. Augustine claims that rhythm is like math; it can only be discovered by people. Rhythm is already determined in God, and human beings cannot invent it. In other words, rhythm can be discovered through an interrogation like in *Meno*, Socrates' questioning the servant boy. This is likened to the theory of recollection propounded by Plato. In the work *Of True Religion*, Augustine points out that the order is the key element of beauty and an orderly arranged is the beautiful.

### **Pseudo-Dionysius**

Dionysius, the Pseudo-Areopagite, is also known as Pseudo-Dionysius or Denis. He is believed to be a mystical theologian. His main work is titled *The Divine Names* consisting of thirteen chapters. In chapter four, he deals with the question concerning Good, beauty, love, jealousy, and that the nature of evil. In fourteen sections in this fourth chapter, Dionysius begins to define Good and gradually builds upon the nature of Beauty. Good, he says is the supremely divine deity is essentially Good that extends its Goodness to all things. He presents the cosmic order as the Goodness of the Good. He says, “The Good is Cause of the celestial movements in their commencements and terminations”. He terms Good as the Spiritual Light on the ground that It fills every mind with spiritual light, and expels all ignorance and error. When ignorance is removed, he says, the presence of the spiritual light functions as both perfecting and further turning each towards the true Being.

This Good, says Dionysius, is celebrated by the sacred theologians, both as beautiful and as Beauty, and as Love. He does not divide the beautiful and Beauty. The cause is Beauty that embraces the whole in one. He shows that the entire creation is segregated as participations and participants. That which participates in Beauty is called beautiful. Then, Beauty is the participation of the beautifying Cause of all the beautiful things. But, the super essential Beautiful is called Beauty, on account of the beauty communicated from Itself to all beautiful things in an appropriate manner. He sees the Beauty as the cause of the harmony. From a supernatural nature of all beautiful things, he considers beautiful existed prior uniquely in the Cause. The Cause is beautiful from which emerged everything. So he finds every existent thing as beautiful in its order and reason. He identifies the Beautiful with the Good, because, according to him, all things aspire to the Beautiful and Good. There is no existing thing which does not participate in the Beautiful and the Good. Thus, Dionysius shows the undivided, unitary relation of the Beauty and the beautiful.

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## **2.3 ST. THOMAS AQUINAS**

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In his voluminous work *Summa Theologiae*, St. Thomas Aquinas analyses the Divine Names as reasoned out by Dionysius. In doing so, he brings out his views on the sense of beauty. In the question on whether goodness has the aspect of a final cause, Aquinas highlights that goodness is praised as beauty and beauty has the aspect of a formal cause and hence goodness has the aspect of a formal cause. In this argument, we derive that Aquinas does not differentiate the Good and Beauty. In establishing the efficient cause, he reveals that the basic principle of goodness is its perfection. He arrives that beauty belongs to the nature of formal cause in the following manner:

1. Beauty and goodness in a thing are identical as they are based on the same Form
2. Goodness is praised as beauty
3. Goodness is logically different from Beauty
4. Goodness has the aspect of an end; Beauty relates to the cognitive faculty and the beautiful things are those which please when perceived.
5. Hence, beauty consists in due proportion; for the senses delight in things duly proportioned like every cognitive faculty
6. since knowledge is assimilation and similarity relates to form,

7. beauty appropriately belongs to the nature of a formal cause.

In dealing with the question 'whether god wills evils', he describes the view of St. Augustine according to whom out of all things is built up the admirable beauty of the universe, wherein even that which is called evil, properly ordered and disposed, commends the good. For him, God wills that appertains to the perfection and beauty of the universe. While Augustine positions evil in the line of beauty, Aquinas argues that it refers to the intermediary cause.

Aquinas takes up the argument on 'whether god can do better than what he does'. He resorts to the position of Augustine that each thing that God has created is good, and taken all together they are very good, because in them all consists the wondrous beauty of the universe. Beauty is the key element to substantiate that the creation of God is good.

Thus, we find in the work *Summa Theologiae*, St. Thomas Aquinas conducts a study of beauty drawn from the ideas revealed by his predecessors. To surmise, for Aquinas, the origin of beauty is sensuous that are capable of contemplation. He restricts this capacity to the sense of sight and sense of hearing. Hence, he defines beauty in Aristotelian terms as that which pleases solely in the contemplation of it. He identifies three prerequisites of beauty, viz., perfection, appropriate proportion, and clarity. The position of Aquinas typifies the approach to aesthetics adopted by the Scholastics.

### Check Your Progress I

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Trace the medieval thought on Beauty according to St. Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius

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2) What is the contribution of St. Thomas Aquinas in understanding beauty?

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## 2.4 RENAISSANCE MOVEMENT

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The middle ages in the grip of biblical ideas gave out a highly ascetic form of aesthetic theory that they identified in the order, the Divine Order. The role of art and artists gets diverted in this approach thus not adding much to what the Greeks have to say. But this does not mark the end of aesthetic consciousness, the movement classified as 'The Renaissance' offered a fresh breath to the world of art. Since the domination of Greek thought in the theories of art has not been done away with, the Renaissance movement too following the Greeks raising against the Scholastic thought involved in its own problem of art. Some of the Renaissance Thinkers especially with regard to Aesthetic thought were Durer, Fracastoro, Ramus, Castelvetro and others.

Renaissance Thinkers were engaged in solving the problems like,

1. What is the objective of art?
2. Does art promote morality?
3. What are the primary features of art?
4. What is an end of art?
5. Is art in nature or is it deceptive?

and many other questions that were analysed in the Greek and Scholastic period.

The Renaissance movement basically re-looked into the theory of imitation in the background of the nature of mind. They emphasized the faculty of imagination of the mind as the means of artistic production. With an attempt to get rid of the religious implication of God and philosophical implication of Soul, the Renaissance thinkers brought in the concept of artistic and poetic implications. They argued that mind serves as the mirror that has the capacity to reflect the external nature which was termed as the artistic imagination. Durer points out that this power of imagination is a gift of God and hence he developed the concept of genius. Further, the artistic imagination itself was defined as confined with the power of choice and determination which selects the “beautiful” parts of the nature and reproduces. This concept echoes the ‘selective imitation’ of Socrates.

Art, according to the Renaissance Thinkers, is entrenched with the principle of unity that arouses the emotion of the spectator. The metaphorical usages are seen as the exercise of the mind of the well-informed to tackle the hidden truths. The artistic pleasure derived from various art forms was seen as the achievement of overcoming pain and since pain is lost, the spectator joyously appreciates the artist. Fracastoro identifies this experience as a divine harmony. Thus the theory of imitation was replaced with the theory of verisimilitude.

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## **2.5 TRANSITION – RENE DESCARTES**

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Descartes, greatly influenced by the Scholastic thought took the inspiration from the Greeks too and brought out his theory of beauty. Based on the Aristotelian conception as found in the *Poetics*, Descartes sought to analyse the relation between pleasure and beauty. He unknowingly resorts to the prevalent idea of order and that the senses favour proportion. He followed the thought of Aristotle in his explication of passion and action. Descartes form as it were a transition from the medieval to the modern period. His theory of intellectual aesthetics is on his first principles of philosophy with regard to the concept of soul. His theory in terms of aesthetics can be divided as (1) imagination (2) emotion (3) joy which he draws from his philosophical disposition.

### **Imagination**

Descartes advocates ‘free imagination’ for poetic and dramatic productions. In the context of sense-perception, memory, hallucination, dream he discusses the free imagination of a poet. He differentiates poetic imagination from sensual perception. In sense-perception, he says, impressions are received in the brain from common sense which are called images. Imagination, on the other hand receives the common sense and also has the capacity to retain it for sometime. Memory is that which traces the past impressions on imagination. Descartes identifies three causal factors that prompts the imagination to function (a) the physical body (b) animal spirits

and (c) soul. His theory on the products of imagination prompted by soul through free will holds a special position in understanding the aesthetic principle formulated by him. He states that the free will that propels the imagination brings out new creations that do not exist in the natural world. Thus, he distinguishes the poetic imagination from the sensory perception.

### **Emotion**

Descartes holds that emotions are the attributes that rise by the intimate union of the mind and body. He asserts that emotions are felt by the soul. He identifies six primary emotions. They are wonder, joy, hatred, desire, love, and sadness. Wonder, explains Descartes, is the sudden jolt of the soul. The attention is fixed on something that is rare and extraordinary. The reason for the arousal of wonder is said to be the non-classification of the external object as either 'good' or 'bad'. Thus, he proves that primarily there are six emotions. The main features of theory of emotions as given by Descartes are:

1. Emotions are not uniform in all. It causes different emotions based on the impressions of every individual.
2. Emotions are not a direct product of the will. It is aroused through art forms and hence is indirect.
3. Emotions last as long as the cause of impact is present. They cannot be immediately balanced.

Descartes, further divides emotions into two types, one is the six primary emotions that are independent and original. The other is the dependent emotions like esteem, hope, fear, jealousy, pride, generosity etc. He mentions the external indicators of emotions and further classifies them as voluntary and involuntary emotions. The principal indicators of emotions, he considers as the various parts of the physical body like movement of the eyes and face, change of colour, tremor, lethargy, swooning, laughter, tears, grumble and sighs.

### **Joy**

The end of artistic production is termed as joy or aesthetic delight. Descartes arrives at this by the study of the sensory delight. Here too, he differentiates the joy derived by sensory perception and the joy derived from artistic productions. The source of artistic joy is because of the imagination, and it is seen as imaginative joy. The art forms like poetry or drama builds the imagination that arouses the emotion felt in the soul and hence there is imaginative joy. Descartes terms this as intellectual joy that is achieved by arts. In his section on *Passions of the Soul*, he states the pleasure derived from art is intellectual joy. This pleasure is due to the fact that the emotions which are aroused by the artistic works do not harm anyone but excites the soul by affecting it. Thus, the aesthetic experience, according to Descartes, is the experience of intellectual joy along with emotion.

Descartes analyses the aesthetic experience in poetry and drama. He holds the importance of language as the tool to arouse joy by poetry. The visuals of the drama, according to him, lead to the interior emotion in stages. He explains the experience of tragedy in drama as that which gives rise to pity. The pity from tragic drama, he says, is absent of bitterness due to the artistic nature of presentation. Hence, he differentiates the pity experienced in life from that experienced in a tragic drama. Contrasting clear thought, he classifies aesthetic experience as confused thought. The aesthetic thought of Descartes had a great influence on the later poetic productions and aesthetic thought.



### Check Your Progress II

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Examine the change brought about by the Renaissance Movement in aesthetic thought

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2) Assess the transition of Rene Descartes given out in his Intellectual Aesthetics

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### 2.6 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit we have analysed the growth of thought of art forms and art experience in the medieval age. Though not a complete departure from the Greek thought but influenced by Greeks, by the intervention of Christianity, the saints of the Church dominated the thought in the medieval age. Thus we find a theological approach to examine the philosophical disposition during this period. This has affected the thought on aesthetics too. It is hard to find specific contribution in the works of medieval philosophers to arrive at the growth of aesthetic thought. Since the focus is on determining the order of creation and the nature of the creator. In such debates, we extract the idea on concepts like beauty, good, harmony, rhythm etc that are identified as key elements in the field of philosophy of art. From the angle of art, the medieval age can be almost marked as a lull period that has very less to contribute to art experience. However, the writings in this middle age carry the fragrance of the Greek thought into the modern period and hence we derive various salient features on aesthetics pertaining to the is age. The rise of Renaissance can be seen as sort of relief to the artistic understanding that lays the foundation for ontological discussion of art in the modern period. The movement taken forward is fully realized in the contribution of Rene Descartes in his intellectual aesthetics. Thus, the medieval age plays a vital role in positioning the thought on aesthetics. This we have traced from the writings of St. Augustine, followed by Pseudo-Dionysius. Both of them influenced St. Thomas Aquinas. Thus, the scholastic thought diverges into determining the divine order as beauty. The debates raised on the nature of beauty are what we saw percolated into the Renaissance Thinkers and later realized in Descartes.

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### 2.7 KEY WORDS

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*Ex nihilo:* creation of God

*Ex material:* creation of human

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### 2.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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## UNIT 3      THEORY OF AESTHETICS - MODERN

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- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
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- 3.7 Let Us Sum Up
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### 3.0 OBJECTIVES

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The main objective of this Unit— is to trace the development in the field of Philosophy of Art from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. We shall briefly analyse the concept of *beauty* and the sense of *taste* from these original works of the 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Thus by the end of this Unit you should be able:

- to have a basic understanding of the development of concept of *beauty* in the work of Shaftesbury
- to differentiate it from the contribution of Addison
- to relate it with the ideas developed by Hutcheson
- to understand the approach of Hume
- to know the importance of sense of *taste* as thought by Burke

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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The aesthetic current was found dominant during this period especially in the writings of the British thinkers. The concept of beauty received special attention as a response to the earlier theories along with the changes the society faced. A new turn, as it were, could be found during this period that we mark as the modern period (part 1), where we shall bring out the essentials in aesthetic from the writings of some of the British thinkers. This unit comprises of an analysis of the compilation of letters of Earl of Shaftesbury that are put together under the title *Characteristics* followed by the idea carried forward by his disciples Addison in his series of influential essays *The Pleasures of Imagination*, in *The Spectator* and Hutcheson in his work *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (Treatise 1 – Of Beauty, Order, Harmony, Desing). While Addison tries to bring out the significance of the sense of sight (eyes) as the key factor for imagination based on which the pleasure of imagination is derived, Hutcheson concentrates on analysing the sense of absolute beauty in contrast to the relative one

and in determining the wisdom of cause from which evolved this beautiful effect. In the *Treatise of Human Nature*, David Hume turns the attention to the sense of *beauty* to that of *pride* and *deformity* to that of *humility* through his experimental method of reasoning. In the realm of art experience, the concept of taste was further analysed by Edmund Burke in his work *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* where he points out a stark distinction between the *sublime* and the *beautiful*.

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### 3.2 EARL OF SHAFTESBURY (1671-1713)

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The concept of art and beauty are found strewn in the religious and ethical treatises of Shaftesbury. He traces the development of art forms and the position of artists from the Greek civilization. In the Miscellaneous writings II chapter 1, Shaftesbury states that the arts and sciences were formed in Greece itself. The art forms like music, poetry was shaped and classified into several orders and degrees. He observes that the Greeks had set a standard for perfection with a high degree of correctness. The high standard was accomplished in poetry that aimed at a comprehensive language. This standard, Shaftesbury remarks is found in all the other art forms which included admiration of the performer and the masters and by and large there were art critics who were also honoured. Shaftesbury identifies the admiration the Greece had for music, poetry, rhetoric, and what is classified as plastic arts namely sculpture, painting, architecture etc. He shows that Greece as a nation had an original art of its own. This he calls it as self-formed arts. Thus, in this natural growth of arts very peculiar to Greece, Shaftesbury states the *taste* preferred would be the *sublime* and the *astonishing*. The rhetoric was found prevalent even in the common gatherings presented in highly poetic and figurative manner. The tragedy was greatly extolled and the *taste* has commonly known to be in a high degree of perfection. Gradually, notes Shaftesbury, a change in the *taste* of the Greece, they sought for simplicity and Nature. This *taste* continued for ages until the fall of the empire.

Shaftesbury compares this ancient growth of *taste* with that of the modern period of his own times by citing the example of the speeches delivered in the parliament. He wonders whether the modern period has fallen very low in *taste* or is it an improvement of being natural and simple. By the study of the growth of science and art in ancient Greece, Shaftesbury arrives at an important cause that led to such a development which he calls it as the love for one's own country. He necessitates an enquiry thus, "to discover how we may to best advantage form within ourselves what in the polite world is called a relish or good taste".

To philosophise, says Shaftesbury, is to carry the thought a step higher. The sum of philosophy is to learn what is just in society and beautiful in Nature and the order of the world. Accordingly, he states, that the respective conduct and distinct manners are regulated by one's rank and quality at the individual level and the other according to the dignity externally, in Nature. He concludes here stating, "The taste of beauty and the relish of what is decent, just, and amiable perfects the character of the gentleman and the philosopher. And the study of such a taste or relish ill, as we suppose, be ever the great employment and concern of him who covets as well to be wise and good as agreeable and polite."

Thus, in his treatise, he recommends morals in the sense of manners which is the foundation to advance philosophy. He considers that without the pre-establishment or supposition of a certain *taste*, the charm of the external world that is adopted as pleasure or entertainment cannot be accounted for. He shows that *taste* or *judgement* cannot be created by an individual into the world. That is to say, it is not innate but proceeds from practice and culture. He states that a legitimate and just *taste* can not be conceived but from a considerable hard work and pains of criticism. He considers that the performers and others are able to discover the true *beauty* worth of every object because of the examination undertaken following criticisms. Shaftesbury being an extreme moralist claims that more than the symmetries and proportions seen as the feature for beauty, it is the right and generous affection that is more beautiful. Thus, he opines that along with principles the *taste* governs the moral attitude. He does not accept the *taste* formed by exterior manners and behaviours but sees moral as its foundation. He struggles to establish that *beauty* is of inward sentiments and principles.

Shaftesbury addresses the Greek thought of *beauty* in proportions and symmetries. He shows that the *taste* cannot be just determined by the outward symmetry and order without acknowledging that the proportionate and regular state is truly prosperous and natural in every subject. He exhibits that the same external features (proportionate and symmetrical) is the cause for deformity and creates inconvenience and disease. By his study of the sculptures, he derives that the beauty of statues is measured from the perfection of Nature. Therefore, he considers *beauty* and truth are committed to the notion of utility and convenience, even in the apprehension of every ingenious artist, the architect, or the painter. A physician too, he states, comprehends that the natural health is the just proportion. This, Shaftesbury, admires as the inward beauty of the body. When the harmony is disturbed there is deformity internally and calamity externally. By raising a sequence of questions, he provides his proposition as *what is beautiful is harmonious and proportionable, what is harmonious and proportionable is true and what is at once both beautiful and true if of consequence agreeable and good*. Shaftesbury often connects the outward and inward beauty and truth and observes that on learning and knowledge, the manners and life depend that takes to the creation and formation of *taste* and hence it is not innate but wholly depends on manners, opinions, characteristics, times. Thus, the ultimate foundation of *beauty* as of morality is found in the principles of harmony and proportion, whether of the parts in relation to each other, or of the whole in relation to other wholes.

In the *Moralists*, Shaftesbury sets forth the three orders of beauty.

1. The dead forms, which bear a fashion, and are formed, either by human or by nature, which have no forming power, no action or intelligence.
2. The Forms which form; that is, which have intelligence, action and operation. Here is the double *beauty*, there is both Form and the mind.
3. whatever *beauty* appears in the second order of forms, or whatever is produced from that, all this is principally and originally in this last order of Supreme and Sovereign Beauty.

He opines to a kind of ascending order of *beauty* from the material objects to the Supreme Form, thus resonating the Platonic thought.

Shaftesbury expresses his view on the Fine Arts, in his two small pieces namely *Notion of the historical draught or tabulature of the Judgement of Hercules* and *Letter concerning Design*.

In the first piece contains some remarks on the requisites of historical painting in general. He lays down the rules for painting with the principles like unity of design, unity of time and action or the rule of consistency, thus maintaining verisimilitude and congruity. These principles he applies for the historical and mythological pieces and not for devotional art pieces. He concludes with a note on the concept of colors.

In the second piece *Letter concerning Design*, he predicts a rise of national school of art in England. He observes here that the art does not flourish by patronage and private persons but on the *taste* and *genius* of the people at large. He considers that the spirit of the people in a free state brings about improvement in *taste*. He believes that the factors that cause a fall in the progress of the arts could be climate, geography, wealth, leisure, temperament of the people, the characteristics of religious beliefs etc. According to him a flourishing state of art and literature usually accompanies a wide-spread deep interest in philosophy and politics.

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### 3.3 JOSEPH ADDISON (1672-1719)

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Addison, a disciple of Shaftesbury, sets to ponder on the concept of *beautiful* that are recorded in a series of essays titled *Pleasures of Imagination* (letters numbered 411 to 421) compiled in the work named *The Spectator*. He begins his analysis from the source from which the pleasures of imagination or *fancy* arise. He arrives at the sense of sight as the primary source that give rise to imagination from which pleasure is derived and thereafter he classifies the pleasure into two kinds as primary pleasure and secondary pleasure. The primary pleasure of imagination is originally from the sense of sight that proceeds from the objects that are directly perceived. The secondary pleasures of the imagination flow from the ideas of visible objects that are not actually before the eye, but are 'seen' through memories or from the absent and fictitious objects that are agreeable to visions. Addison then demonstrates the objects given to sight. In the survey of external objects he classifies the sources of pleasures of imagination into three, as what is *great*, *uncommon* and *beautiful*. In describing that which is *great*, he says, it means not only a bulk or large single object but the largeness of a whole view. The response to such a *great* object, he describes as, "...flung into a pleasing astonishment at such unbounded views, and feel a delightful stillness and amazement in the soul at the apprehension of them."

The *uncommon* he considers as that which is presented as *new*. He shows that mind delights at something unusual, is a kind of diversion that makes even the imperfections of nature pleasing. The *beautiful*, Addison sees as the culmination of both the *great* and *uncommon*. He says, "... there is nothing that makes its way more directly to the soul than beauty, which immediately diffuses a secret satisfaction and complacency through the imagination, and gives a finishing to anything that is great or uncommon."

Addison identifies *beauty* at two levels, one as a general *beauty* in the species. He shows that every sensible being has its own notion of *beauty* that is affected by the beauties of its own kind. In the second kind of *beauty*, he states, is found in the works of art and nature that arouses a secret delight and a kind of fondness for the places or objects in which the *beauty* is discovered. Addison remarks that among the several kinds of *beauty*, the eye takes delight in the colours.

In the next essay, Addison tries to assign a necessary cause of that which effects the imagination with pleasure. He states it is hard to determine the necessary or the final cause because neither the nature of an idea nor the substance of a human soul is known. But, Addison engages in a scheme of speculations to arrive at the agreeable part of the soul and categorising as that which pleases and displeases the mind without tracing the necessary or the efficient cause from where the pleasure or displeasure arise. In his speculative process, Addison shows that which is agreeable to the soul and pleasing to the mind is based on the *great, uncommon* and *beautiful*. In the *beautiful* too, he shows the pleasantness in the *beauty* in our own species followed by the *beauty* in nature that is consumed by the sense of sight in the form of colours.

In the following essay, Addison sets a standard of gradation in the *beautiful* in nature and art. Here he considers that even though in art, there is *uncommon* and *beautiful*, it is difficult to validate that there is *great* in art, whereas, in nature there is all the three, viz., *great, uncommon* and *beautiful*. He justifies this by stating that the poet loves nature that appears in the 'greatest' perfection and the poetic composition aims at bringing out the *great* that delights the imagination. By setting apart the work of nature from that of art, Addison does not completely isolate them, he shows that the works of nature is more pleasant when they resemble those of art. He discovers a double principle in pleasure, one that is from the agreeableness of the objects to the eye and the other from their similitude to other objects. Addison applies this double principle in the work of art also. The nature carries more value when it resemble those of art, likewise, the art is also at a greater advantage by resembling the nature because he states here, the similitude is not only pleasant but the pattern more perfect. Addison in this essay describes one such experience, "The prettiest landscape I ever saw, was one drawn on the walls of a dark room, which stood opposite on one side to a navigable river, and on the other to a park. The experiment is very common in optics. Here you might discover the waves and fluctuations of the water in strong and proper colours, with the picture of a ship entering at one end and sailing by degrees through the whole piece. On another there appeared the green shadows of trees, waving to and fro with the wind, and herds of deer among them in miniature, leaping about upon the wall. I must confess, the novelty of such a sight may be one occasion of its pleasantness to the imagination, but certainly the chief reason is its near resemblance to nature, as it does not only, like other pictures, give the colour and figure, but the motion of the things it represents."

In essay (No.415), Addison reverts to the main idea on the primary pleasures of the imagination by analysing the work of art, specifically architecture. He cites various examples of architecture in London, France and China and concludes that what pleases this imagination through architecture is that it is *great, uncommon* and *beautiful*. He then describes the secondary pleasures of imagination as that which proceeds from that action of mind which compares the ideas arising from the original objects along with the ideas received from statues, pictures etc. Addison demonstrates his failure in determining the necessary reason why this operation of mind is attended with so much pleasure. Here he talks about a single principle that derives pleasure from arts like sculpture, painting, description etc. In this analysis, Addison confines himself to those pleasures of imagination that proceed from ideas raised by *words*. The description through *words* brings about varied *taste* that itself proceeds from either *perfection of imagination* or *different ideas* with which one is acquainted with. He concludes here by stating that to accomplish a perfect imagination one is to be born with such qualities. In the following essay, he states that even a poet or a writer is to be born with this faculty in its full strength and vigour.

Addison brings out such faculties in poets like Homer, Virgil and Ovid and later he analyses the poem of Milton.

In the following essay (419), Addison analyses the problem of art that has been prevalent for centuries haunted with the question as how does the mind delight in various scenes of horror and terror either described in words or in visual art forms. In this process, as his predecessors, Addison distinguishes the tragedy faced in life as that from depicted in art forms. He wonders at the delight created by the poets and writers on horror by real, fictitious and fairy tale characters. He conveys the many ways of poet's imagination, "Thus we see how many ways poetry addresses itself to the imagination, as it has not only the whole circle of nature for its province, but makes new worlds of its own, shows us persons who are not to be found in being, and represents even the faculties of the soul, with her several virtues and vices, in a sensible shape and character."

Addison then contrasts two kinds of writers, one as described above who borrow their material from outward objects and combine them with their own pleasure, to other kinds of writers who follow nature more closely and take the scenes out of it like the historians, natural philosophers, travellers, geographers and so on. In the concluding essays, he shows in general the art of imagining and draws that imagination is capable of delivering a high degree of pain and pleasure both that are a delight in the artistic sense.

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### 3.4 HUTCHESON (1694-1747)

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Hutcheson, also a disciple of Shaftesbury presents his thoughts on the sense of *beauty* in his work titled *An Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (Treatise I: *Of Beauty, Order, Harmony, Design*). In eight sections of the first treatise, he begins by differentiating *perception* and *sensation*. He then takes up the concept of *beauty* as original and absolute followed by an analysis of the *beauty* of theorems. Then he analyses the relative or comparative *beauty*, reasons in relation to design, wisdom of the cause from which effects the *beautiful*, universality of *beauty* and concludes with an analysis of the internal sense in life and its final cause.

To begin with, Hutcheson tries to arrive at the conventional definition of the word *sensation*. He says, it is those ideas which are raised in the mind by way of interaction with external objects that is responded by the body. He makes a note of different senses like colour, sound etc. The different senses are combined and received by the mind where the simple ideas are conjoined as composition of a substance. He mentions that a substance can never be defined if the simple ideas are not gathered by the senses. Thus, any desire or aversion to an object, Hutcheson notices is founded upon an opinion of some perfection or some deficiency in those qualities that are perceived through the senses. He observes that many of the sensitive perceptions are pleasant and many painful and the cause for the same is indeterminable. However, he tries to arrive at the cause of such differences as due to the reception of the simple ideas by the mind or because of varied *fancy* or imagination entertained by different minds. Hutcheson frequently uses the word *fancy* in the sense of *imagination*. He states even the change of ideas, or opinion from the Country or acquaintance brings about a change in the imagination. Hutcheson advances in his



thought from that of Addison who regulated the rise of pleasure of imagination from the sense of sight that is specific to colours. Hutcheson on the other hand regards that pleasure of sense is that which is accompanied by simple ideas of sensation. He carries forward this thought by stating that the complex ideas of objects also enhances this sense of pleasure, that obtain names like Beautiful, Regular, Harmonious etc. So, delight is not restricted to colour alone, unlike Addison.

Hutcheson connotes the word *beauty* as the ideas raised in the mind and the sense of *beauty* is the power for receiving such ideas. Harmony, he defines as pleasant ideas arising from composition of sounds, a good ear and the power of perceiving this pleasure. All these put together, Hutcheson chooses to call the power of receiving the ideas as an *internal sense* and he reiterates that it is different from the perception of seeing and hearing which is a universal faculty that functions without even the sense of *beauty* and *harmony*. Thus, he classifies the powers of perception as the *external sense*. The *internal sense*, Hutcheson classifies as that which perceives *beauty* and in another order that which perceives the beauty of *theorems*, *universal truths*, *general causes*, *principles of action* etc. He defines *internal sense* as a passive power of receiving ideas of beauty from all objects in which there is uniformity amidst variety.

By further analysis, Hutcheson remarks that some objects are immediately given to the pleasure of *beauty*, and that we have sense fitted for perceiving it, and that it is distinct from that joy which arises upon prospect of advantage. Without this distinct sense of *beauty*, Hutcheson observes that one may be recommended with harmony, house, gardens, equipments that are convenient and fruitful but never as *beautiful*.

*Beauty* is either original or comparative, or the better terms, says Hutcheson, are absolute or relative. The Original or Absolute *beauty* he defines as that *beauty* which we perceive in objects without comparison to any thing external of which the object is supposed an imitation, or picture, where the *beauty* is perceived from the works of nature, artificial forms, figures. The Comparative or Relative *beauty* is defined as that which we perceive in objects, commonly considered as imitations or resemblances of something else. Hutcheson analyses these two forms of beauty in three sections of his first treatise.

### **Original or Absolute Beauty**

It is known that there are ideas of *beauty* and *harmony*. Now, the examination is with regard to the nature of quality in objects that excite these ideas. He enumerates the factors that bring about the ideas of *beauty* as:

- uniformity amidst variety
- grandeur
- novelty
- sanctity
- harmony

These, he observes these as the same foundation for the sense of *beauty* in the works of nature. Here, he concludes by stating that the pleasant *sensation* arises only from objects in which there is uniformity amidst variety.

This is unique to the theory of beauty propounded by Hutcheson where he deals with the beauty of theorems or universal truths. He lays down certain principles that govern the sense of *beauty* of theorems.

- Unity of infinity of objects
- Multitude of corollaries easily deducible

The delight in science or universal theorems, Hutcheson prefers to call it *sensation*, since it necessarily accompanies the discovery of any proposition and is distinct from bare knowledge itself. This echoes the idea of Aristotle in his ethical work thus, “we have certain natural Propensities to certain Actions, or to the Exercise of certain natural Powers, without a View to, or Intention of, obtaining those Pleasures which naturally accompany them.”

In the work of art, observes Hutcheson that are in the artificial structures, the foundation of *beauty* is some kind of uniformity, or unity of proportion. But he concludes stating that the underlying principle in the case of the original beauty is uniformity amidst variety.

### **Comparative or Relative Beauty**

All *beauty* is relative, says Hutcheson in the sense of some mind perceiving it, but relative is that which is apprehended in any object, commonly considered as an imitation of some original. This *beauty* he says is founded on conformity, or a kind of unity between the original and the copy. This does mean that there be *beauty* in the original along which is imitated, but the art makes it more beautiful even when it is void in the original. Hutcheson identifies the basic principle in the work of art as novelty and intention of the artist.

### **Cause and Effect**

In the following section, Hutcheson tries to show the connection between the cause that consist of design and wisdom which he infers from the *beauty* and regularity of effects. By way of inference he concludes that since regularity never arises from ‘undesigned force’ in an individual likewise regularity in the creation presupposes design in the cause. He traces that every effect flows from the intention of some cause. Hutcheson shows the impossibility in terms of the following objections:

- possibility by chance
- combination of chances
- combination of irregular forms,
- gross similarity by chance
- irregularities does not prove want of design

The next enquiry is conducted based on the *beauty* in effect thereby deriving design and wisdom in the cause. The main reason which Hutcheson cites is the observation of many useful or beautiful effects flowing from one general cause. He states, “This is certain, That we have some of the most delightful Instances of Universal Causes the Works of Nature, and that the most studious Men in these Subjects are so delighted with the Observation of them, that they always look upon them as Evidences of Wisdom in the Administration of Nature, from a SENSE OF BEAUTY.”

### Universality of the sense of beauty

Hutcheson through another series of questions arrives at the following propositions:

- sense of *beauty* is designed to give positive pleasure but not a positive pain or disgust.
- Deformity is only the absence of *beauty*, or deficiency in the *beauty* expected in any species
- Association of Ideas make objects pleasant and delightful, which are not naturally apt to give any such pleasures
- The casual conjunctions of ideas may give a disgust, where there is nothing disagreeable in the Form itself, like by some association with accidental ideas serpents, swine, insects are disliked commonly.

Thereafter, he reverts to the original position that the universal agreement of mankind in their sense of *beauty* is from uniformity amidst variety. He concludes derived from the examination of various experiences thus, “This Sense of Beauty universal, “if all Men are better pleased with Uniformity in the simpler Instances than the contrary, even when there is no Advantage observed attending it and likewise if all Men, according as their Capacity in larges, so as to receive and compare more complex Ideas, have a greater Delight in Uniformity, and are pleased with its more complex Kinds, both Original and Relative.” Thus, he lays the foundation of beauty in works of art as regularity and uniformity.

#### Check Your Progress I

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Explain “Beauty is inward sentiments and principles.”

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2) Distinguish primary pleasure and secondary pleasure according to Addison.

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### 3.5 DAVID HUME (1711-1776)

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*A Treatise of Human Nature*, is an attempt to introduce the experimental method of reasoning by David Hume. He takes up the discussion on *Beauty* and *Deformity* in the second book of the treatise titled *Of the Passions*. He establishes the concept of impressions and ideas earlier and extends the thought in understanding *beauty* and *deformity*. He first differentiates *beauty* of any kind as the source of delight and satisfaction in contrast to *deformity* as that which produces pain, either in animate or inanimate object. Hume identifies these opposite sensations as related to the opposite passions, thus *beauty* becoming an object of pride and *deformity* of humility as a result

of transition of impressions and ideas. The object of both these passions in the form of *beauty* and *deformity* is the self.

Hume tries to distinguish the *beauty* and *deformity* and arrives that *beauty* is that which is in order either seen in nature, or known by custom that gives pleasure and satisfaction to the soul. *Beauty* is thus different from *deformity* that has a natural tendency to produce uneasiness. Thus, the essence of *beauty* is pleasure and essence of *deformity* is pain. Hume logically presents that *beauty* provides a sense of security that is pleasant and in *deformity* there is the apprehension of danger, which is uneasy. He says, thus *beauty* cannot be defined but is discerned only by a *taste* or *sensation*. Based on this, he concludes that *beauty* is a form which produces pleasure in contrast to deformity which is a structure of parts that conveys pain. Since the determinant factor of *beauty* and *deformity* are pleasure and pain, which are sensation, then all the effect of these qualities also, Hume concludes must be derived from sensation. By a series of argument, Hume deduces that whatever is either useful, beautiful, or surprising, is an object of pride and it's contrary, of humility.

Further, Hume conducts two experiments based on which he derives,

- 1) an object produces pride merely by the interposition of pleasure; and that because the quality, by which it produces pride, is in reality nothing but the power of producing pleasure.
- 2) that the pleasure produces the pride by a transition along related ideas ; because when we cut off that relation the passion is immediately destroyed.

Thus, Hume positions *beauty* as contrast to *deformity*, one as the rise for pleasure and the other as that of pain, thus is the cause of pride and humility respectively.

### 3.6 EDMUND BURKE (1729-1797)

#### On Taste

In his introductory discourse *On Taste*, Burke begins with the proposition that the standard of both reason and *taste* is the same in all human creatures. He gives the reason that if some standard principles of judgement were not common in all then sufficient reason or passion cannot be maintained in the correspondence of life. But, he observes that unlike the standard examination on either truth or falsehood the sense of *taste* does not have a uniform principle. He further notes that this faculty of human seem not to be within the range of regulation of any standard. He explains the difficulty in assigning the principles to determine the *taste*. He claims that the term *taste* is not extremely accurate and does not attempt to define it the real sense. However, Burke explains that *taste* could be understood as, "I mean by the word Taste no more than that faculty or those faculties of the mind, which are affected with, or which form a judgment of, the works of imagination and the elegant arts. This is, I think, the most general idea of that word, and what is the least connected with any particular theory."

He engages in an enquiry to find whether there are any principles by which the imagination is affected which is so common. But he notes on the diversity of taste both in kind and degree that marks its indeterminate position. In this order of enquiry, Burke first categorises the natural

powers of human, as the senses, imagination and judgement. Based on the analysis of the sense he draws certain ideas:

- *Taste* cannot be disputed; only means that the kind of pleasure or pain experienced through *taste* of a particular thing cannot be disputed.
- There is a general agreement with the notion of naturally pleasing or disagreeable to the sense
- There is a difference between natural *taste* and acquired *relish*
- There is in all men a sufficient remembrance of the original natural causes of pleasure, to enable them to bring all things offered to their senses to that standard, and to regulate their feelings and opinions by it.
- To judge a new thing one finds there is the affection in a natural manner and on the common principles.
- The pleasure of all senses is the same in all (or different to a very small degree)

Burke then defines 'imagination' as a kind of some creative power to represent at pleasure the images either in order as received by the senses, or by combining the images in a different order in a new manner. This power, he calls as imagination. He then adds that his power of imagination cannot produce anything new absolutely since it is given to the disposition of the ideas as received from the senses. He shows that since the imagination is based on the reception by the senses, the same principle governs the pleasure and pain experienced through imagination. The difference between the pleasure or pain received through the images of imagination from that of senses is that the senses are given to the original objects whereas the imagination is drawn from imitative forms. By the analysis of the faculty of imagination, Burke draws the following ideas:

- The mind has naturally a far greater alacrity and satisfaction in tracing resemblances than in searching for differences: because by making resemblances new images are created, united, enlarged.
- The imagination is not set to advance in case of distinctions since the task itself is viewed as severe and troublesome. Based on this principle, Burke observes that Homer and other oriental writers were very fond of similitudes.
- Thus, pleasure of resemblance is a principle that caters to imagination. The comparison is carried out based on the principle of knowledge.
- The difference in knowledge marks the difference in *taste*
- The improvement of knowledge does not affect the *taste*
- The critical *taste* does not depend on superior principle in human, but upon superior knowledge.
- The *taste* belonging to the imagination, its principle is the same in all
- there is no difference in the manner of their being affected, nor in the causes of the affection; but in the *degree* there is a difference, which arises from two causes principally; either from a greater degree of natural sensibility, or from a closer and longer attention to the object.

In the analysis of the 'judgement', Burkes shows that works of imagination are not confined to the representation of sensible objects, nor to efforts upon the passions, but extend themselves to

the manners, the characters, the actions, and designs, their relations, their virtues, and vices etc. These come within the province of the judgment, which is improved by attention, and by the habit of reasoning. All these make a very considerable part of what are considered as the objects of taste.

Further from the above ideas on sense, imagination and judgement, Burke tries to redefine *taste* as that which is partly made up of a perception of the primary pleasures of sense, of the secondary pleasures of imagination, and the of the conclusions of the reasoning faculty concerning various relations, passions, manners or customs. While he states that the principle governing *taste* is common in all, the degree to which it prevails in every individual is different that depends on sensibility and judgement which is commonly called as *taste*. Burke considers that the cause of a wrong *taste* is the result of the defect of judgement that arises from a natural weakness of understanding or due to lack of proper direction. A judgement is considered better than others, Burke states, is a sort of conscious pride and superiority that arises from thinking rightly. But this is identified by Burke as an 'indirect pleasure', a pleasure which does not immediately draw from the object under contemplation. Burke concludes that *taste* is improved exactly as one improves the judgement, by expansion of knowledge, steady attention to objects and by frequent exercise. However, he determines that there is no proof that *taste* is a distinct faculty.

Burke then proceeds to explain the nature of pleasure and pain. He defines *sublime* as that which has the source in the ideas of pain and danger, which is terrible or conversant with terrible objects leading to terror. Burke then differentiates passion as that which belong to the society and that which belong to self-preservation. He considers the passion of society is only lust. By refuting the idea of Addison, he shows that passions leading to preferences within the same species are not from the sense of beauty but due to lack of choice amongst other objects. Burke calls *beauty* a social quality. The complicated passions in a society that branches into a variety of forms that serve as a linking chain in the society. Burke identifies three such principal links in this chain, viz., *sympathy*, *imitation* and *ambition*.

### **Sympathy**

Burke considers sympathy as the first passion that makes one enter into the concern of others. It is a kind of substitution that one sees in the place of another person and there is a partake of either pain as a source of sublime or as pleasure bringing about social affections. Burke states that it is by this principle that art forms transfuse passions that are capable of resulting in delight on wretchedness, misery or death. It is well known that a shock in real life is a tragic experience, and the same represented becomes the source of highest pleasure. He observes the effects of sympathy in the distress of the others and affirms that one has a degree of delight in the real misfortunes and pains of others. He draws from this tendency that terror is a passion which always produces delight when it does not press too closely, and pity is a passion accompanied with pleasure, because it arises from love and social affection. Burke then differentiates the effects of tragedy from art forms is that of pleasure derived from imitative distress. Burke shows that however real sympathy is superior to that caused by imitative arts. There is a difference between pain in reality and a delight in the representation.

## Imitation

The second passion of society, Burke identified was *imitation* or a desire for imitating and consequently a pleasure in it. Imitation is carried out without an intervention of the reasoning faculty. Burke considers imitation as one of the strongest links of society, since learning takes place by imitation. He then tries to lay down a principle which attempts to describe the power of the arts to imitation or to the pleasure derived in the skill of the imitator. "When the object represented in poetry or painting is such as we could have no desire of seeing in the reality, then I may be sure that its power in poetry or painting is owing to the power of imitation, and to no cause operating in the thing itself. So it is with most of the pieces which the painters call still-life. In these a cottage, a dunghill, the meanest and most ordinary utensils of the kitchen, are capable of giving us pleasure. But when the object of the painting or poem is such as we should run to see if real, let it affect us with what odd sort of sense it will, we may rely upon that the power of the poem or picture is more owing to the nature of the thing itself than to the mere effect of imitation, or to a consideration of the skill of the imitator, however excellent."

## Ambition

Burke observes that even though imitation is one of the great instruments in bringing the nature towards its perfection, yet it cannot be stopped with that, it necessarily is to be followed by another, thus leading to a circle of eternity that provides scope for improvement. This, Burke calls as the sense of *ambition*. It is passion to excel and this idea of being distinct itself is pleasant. Burke reminds the idea of Longinus, his observation of that glorifying sense of inward greatness.

Let us summarise the ideas of Burke so far,

- the passions which belong to self-preservation turn on pain and danger
- they are painful when their causes immediately affect
- they are delightful when an idea of pain and danger is not real
- this delight is not called as pleasure because it turns on pain and is different from any positive pleasure
- that which excites this delight is called *sublime*
- the passions belonging to self-preservation are the strongest passions
- Society is the final cause in relation to passions
- In society directed by the pleasure in object, the particular passion here is called *sympathy, imitation and ambition*.

Burke then continues his second part of inquiry, as to what things they are that cause in one the affections of the sublime and beautiful. He identifies the passion caused by the sublime as astonishment as the effect of highest degree. Astonishment he defines as that state of the soul in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror. The inferior effects are admiration, reverence and respect. Burke argues the 'terror' is the ruling principle of sublime. He observes that no passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting reasoning as fear. He identifies a necessary factor to make something terrible as obscurity. Burke quotes the lines

of death by Milton to point out the uncertainty, confused, terrible – but sublime. Further, he enumerates the other causes of sublime as - power, privation, vastness, infinity, succession and uniformity, magnitude in building, infinity in pleasing objects, difficulty, magnificence, light (colours), sound and loudness, suddenness, and intermitting.

Burke considers distinguishing the *beautiful* from the *sublime*. He defines *beauty* as that quality or those qualities in bodies, by which they cause love, some similar passion. And love, he defines as that satisfaction which arises to the mind upon contemplating anything beautiful, of whatsoever nature it may be, which is energy of the mind that hurries one on to the possession of certain objects, that does not affect as they are beautiful but by means altogether different. Burke at length argues that ‘proportion’ is not the cause of beauty and ‘deformity’ is not opposed to beauty. He then shows that fitness or utility is not the cause of beauty and even perfection cannot be considered as the cause of beauty. In this line of argument, he clarifies that proportion and fitness are not completely discarded in the works of art. In beauty the effect is previous to any knowledge of the use, but to judge of proportion the end is to be known for which any work is designed. Further, Burke argues that the idea of beauty cannot be applied to the qualities of the mind or to virtue. Having argued over what does not cause beauty, now Burke explains the cause of beauty.

He states beauty is a thing much too affecting not to depend on some positive qualities. Since the various features above mentioned are dismissed as the cause of beauty, here Burke says, “we must conclude that beauty is, for the greater part, some quality in bodies acting mechanically upon the human mind by the intervention of the senses.”

Burke traces the cause of beauty as,

- small objects
- smoothness
- gradual variation
- delicacy
- colour
- physiognomy
- gracefulness
- elegance and speciousness
- touch, sound, taste and smell

Burke concludes here bringing out the difference between the *sublime* and *beautiful*.

<b>Sublime</b>	<b>Beautiful</b>
Vast dimensions	Small objects
Rugged and negligent	smooth and polished
There is right line; when deviates often makes a strong deviation	No right line, deviate insensibly
Dark and gloomy	not obscure
Solid and massive	light and delicate

Thus, Burke opines the difference between the sublime and the beautiful.



### Check Your Progress II

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

- 1) Explain the sense of *taste* defined and redefined by Burke.

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- 2) 'There is sense of pride in beauty' – Comment based on Hume's thought.

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### 3.7 LET US SUM UP

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We have very briefly seen the development of thought with regard to the idea of *beauty*. By going through the essence of the original works of the writers of the modern period we find a sharp distinction from the thought as found in the medieval age. The beginning of modern period raises many questions with regard to the experience of art. Though the art experience still has not found a distinct position to be classified as a study on the Philosophy of art, we do find certain important concepts that have emerged in this period that laid the basic foundation for the second phase of modern era in the aesthetic thought of the German thinkers. Hence the contribution of the first phase of modern thinkers is valuable in building up the Philosophy of Art. We briefly surveyed the original works beginning from that of the Earl of Shaftesbury. Shaftesbury has not departed much from the development of art and artists of the Greece and is in a way stuck with the same determinants of that give rise to the notion of beauty. However his important contribution is to identify *taste* as a distinct factor that influences the notion of beauty in turn the art works and idea on artists. His two disciples, Addison and Hutcheson had considerably built upon the ideas of *taste*, *sensation* and *beauty*. David Hume though is not considered strictly to have given fresh understanding to the nature of art experience, but he has however brought it ideas of *beauty* in contrast to *deformity*. Burke does not opine to the view of Hutcheson or Hume with regard to deformity as absence of beauty and he builds up gradually on the notion of *taste*. He strictly distinguishes the *sublime* and the *beautiful* thus marking the beginning of new era on the understanding of art experience. The students are reminded here that we have still not arrived at the word 'aesthetics' and its relation to art experience.

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### 3.8 KEY WORDS

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<b>Fancy:</b>	imagination
<b>Internal sense:</b>	sense of beauty and harmony
<b>External sense:</b>	sense of empirical perception

**Uncommon:** new

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### 3.9 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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**UNIT 4      THEORY OF AESTHETICS - POSTMODERN**


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- 4.2 Hegel (1770-1831)
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- 4.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 4.7 Key Words
- 4.8 Further Readings and References

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**4.0 OBJECTIVES**


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The main objective of this Unit— is to present the concepts in aesthetic thought that continues to influence till today. The two great thinkers of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Kant and Hegel who devoted special treatise and delivered lectures on aesthetic, their works are taken up for discussion. We shall be acquainted with the arguments and reasons of Kant from his *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* followed by Hegel's *Lecture on Fine Art*. The 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> centuries saw a great number of thinkers in the west who put forth views on aesthetic which also witnessed the artists voicing out their opinions. It is difficult to deal with all of them and the impact of the movement in this unit so we shall summarise the thought from the ancient to modern as seen by Croce and the movement then taken forward by Croce in his *La Aesthetica*. We close this unit by enumerating some of 20<sup>th</sup> century thinkers on aesthetic.

Thus by the end of this Unit you should be able:

- to have a basic understanding of the contribution of Baumgarten
- to understand the thought of Kant and Hegel
- to understand the all-comprehensive character of philosophy of art in history
- to appreciate the contribution of Croce.
- to able to examine the works and development of ideas of the 20<sup>th</sup> century thinkers

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**4.1 IMMANUEL KANT**


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Alexander Baumgarten (1714-1762) in his *Reflections on Poetry*, introduced the term “aesthetic” as the name of a special science. He was a pupil of Christian Wolff, the Rationalist philosopher who had created the orthodox philosophy of the German Enlightenment based on the metaphysical ideas of Wilhelm Leibniz into a system. Baumgarten argued that poetry is cognitive that it provides insight into the world of a kind that could not be conveyed in any other way. At the same time, he held that the poetic insights are perceptual (“aesthetic”) and hence filled with the distinctive character of sensory and imaginative experience. He proposed a theory of the value of art as ultimately cognitive. In a few decades, Baumgarten’s coinage of

“aesthetics” in this sense took a philosophical diversion that formed the founding work of Modern Aesthetics (Part 2). Following the thought of Baumgarten next in line emerged the revolutionary break through provided by Immanuel Kant in his magnum opus *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*. We shall begin this unit with an analysis of the work of Kant.

Kant's *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* is divided into two sections. The first section is titled *Analytic of Aesthetic Judgement* and the second section is titled *Dialectic of Aesthetic Judgement*. Both the sections contain two parts each. We shall survey the two parts, viz., *Analytic of the Beautiful* and the *Analytic of the Sublime* of the first section.

### **Analytic of the Beautiful**

Kant arrives in stages which he calls *moment* at the nature of judgement of *taste*. He clarifies the term *taste* as the faculty of estimating the beautiful and what is required for calling an object beautiful is termed as *judgement of taste*. Kant engages in an enquiry into the *judgement of taste*. He categorises the first moment of judgement of taste as moment of Quality from which he derives that *the judgement of taste is aesthetic*. He rules out the possibility of judgement as taste as cognitive judgement or logical judgement. He confirms that it is *aesthetic* – that is its determining ground is subjective. He shows that both pleasure and displeasure from an object is the affection in the subject by that representation and this belongs to a separate faculty of discriminating and estimating, and it does not contribute anything to knowledge.

Kant then states that the delight which determines the judgement of taste is independent of all interest. He defines ‘interest’ as the delight which is connected with the representation of the real existence of an object. In the case of artistic representation, he considers that interest is not the determinant for judgement of taste. He goes a step further and says a judgement on the *beautiful* which is tinged with the slightest interest is partial and not a pure judgement of taste. Kant then enumerates the factors in delight that are coupled with interest – that is, delight in the *agreeable* and delight in the *good*, both of which he says involve a reference to the faculty of desire. Delight in agreeable depends on sensation; delight in good depends on a definite concept. He draws that the *agreeable*, the *beautiful* and the *good* denote three different relations of representations to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure and the corresponding expressions which indicate one's satisfaction in them are different. Like the *agreeable* is what *gratifies* a person; the *beautiful* what simply *pleases* one; and the *good* is what is esteemed or approved. Of these three kinds of delight, Kant shows that the taste in the beautiful alone is disinterested and *free* delight. He segregates thus the delight in these three cases as is related to inclination, to favour or to respect. He presents the idea derived so far as: “Taste is the faculty of estimating an object or a mode of representation by means of a delight or aversion apart from any interest. The object of such a delight is called beautiful.”

Kant then begins with his proposition that the beautiful is that which, apart from concepts, is represented as the object of a universal delight. It derives that the judgement of taste detached from all interest with a claim to subjective universality. He shows that with *agreeable* the axiom ‘every one has his own taste’ holds good but not with the *beautiful* since it would be equivalent to say there is no such thing at all as taste, that is, no aesthetic judgement capable of making a rightful claim upon the assent of all people. On the contrary, the *good* is represented as an object

of universal delight by means of a concept. He argues further that in the judgement of taste the universality of delight is only represented as subjective. He divides the *agreeable* judgement of taste as taste of sense and the judgement of taste in beauty as taste of reflection. Both are aesthetic judgements (not practical) about an object in respect of its representation on the feeling of pleasure or displeasure. Kant further classifies judgement of taste as singular judgements from the standpoint of logical quantity. That which is of sense is the aesthetic quantity of universality, that is, validity of everyone from the judgement of the agreeable. Thus, he says there can be rule to recognize anything as beautiful. The judgement of taste does not postulate the agreement of everyone, looking for confirmation not from concepts but from the concurrence of others. But this universal voice is only an idea which is contemplated in the judgement and hence is meant to be judgement of taste. From this, the definition follows, that the *beautiful* is that which, apart from a concept, pleases universally.

Kant presents the sole foundation of the judgement of taste as the *form of finality* of an object which is different from an end. Kant identifies two types of ends, subjective end and objective end. In both cases, the judgement of taste does not operate. He argues further that the judgement of taste depends upon *a priori* grounds placing it in the same stand as derived from the practical reason. He further shows that pure judgement of taste is independent of charm and emotion. He classifies aesthetic judgement into empirical and pure. The empirical aesthetic judgement is those by agreeableness and disagreeableness and is judgement of sense material whereas; the pure aesthetic judgement is those by which beauty is predicated of an object or its mode of representation and it is judgement of taste proper. He asserts therefore that the judgement of taste is pure only when it is not tainted by empirical delight. Kant cautions that such a mark is always present when charm or emotion has a share in the judgement by which something is to be described as beautiful. He argues at length that the judgement of taste is entirely independent of the concept of perfection.

In this line of argument, Kant identifies two forms of beauty, one he calls is free beauty and another as beauty which is merely dependent. Free beauty is described as those that is self-subsisting beauty which are not confined to any object defined with respect to its end, but please freely on their own account. For instance, the beauty of flowers, birds etc., Kant classifies under free beauty. The estimate of the free beauty is by pure judgement of taste. In cases where there is a presupposition of a concept of the end that defines a thing and consequently a concept of its perfection, is known as dependent beauty. Like beauty of a man, woman, child, building etc. Here, the judgement of taste is not pure.

In determining the ideal of beauty, Kant observes that there can be no objective rule of taste by which what is beautiful may be defined by means of concepts since every judgement from that source is aesthetic, that is, the determining ground is the feeling of the subject and not any concept of object. In arriving at a principle of taste a universal criterion of the beautiful is to be validated by definite concepts. Kant establishes the taste must be an original faculty. He says, taste is an idea that one must get in one's own consciousness, and accordingly form an estimate of everything that is an object of taste or as the critical taste and even as universal taste. He determines the ideal of the beautiful as,  
 "Hence this archetype of taste which rests, indeed, upon reason's indeterminate idea of a maximum, but is not, however, capable of being represented by means of concepts, but only in

an individual presentation may more appropriately be called the ideal of the beautiful.” Here he concludes that beauty is the form of finality in an object, so far as perceived in it apart from the representation of an end. Finally, Kant shows that beautiful is that which apart from a concept, is cognized as object of a *necessary* delight.

### Analytic of the Sublime

Kant begins by bringing out the similarities in the *beautiful* and the *sublime*.

- Both are pleasing on their own account
- Both presupposes reflection
- Both have the same of kind of judgement, that is singular

But, it is shown that both have striking differences.

<i>Beautiful</i>	<i>Sublime</i>
The object of enquiry is in the form of the object and this consists in limitation.	Is found even in object devoid of form but involves representation of limitlessness, with a final added thought of its totality.
It is a presentation of an indeterminate concept of understanding	It is a presentation of an indeterminate concept of reason
Delight is coupled with the representation of <i>quality</i>	Delight is coupled with the representation of <i>quantity</i>
Directly attended with the feelings of life, thus compatible with charm and playful imagination	It is a pleasure that arises only indirectly with no emotion or imagination, does not much involve positive pleasure as admiration or respect
Objects of nature as beautiful is an expression more perfect	Objects of nature as sublime is an inaccurate expression
The pleasure is of mere reflection	The pleasure is one of rationalising contemplation

Kant then analyses the nature of *sublime*, where he says the objects lends itself to the presentation of sublimity discoverable in the mind. Sublime, he says strictly cannot be contained in any sensuous form but only in ideas of reason. Even though an adequate presentation of reason is not possible, this inadequacy itself that admits sensuous presentation forms the basis for reason. In sublime, the mind is incited to give up sensibility and employ itself on ideas involving higher finality. He observes that the nature excites the ideas of the sublime chiefly by the signs of magnitude and power. He contrasts that the concept of sublime in nature is less important but with rich consequences when compared with *beauty*. Kant adds that the beautiful in nature requires an external ground, but in sublime it is the self with the attitude of the mind that introduces sublimity into the representation of nature. This is the principle remark that Kant identifies, which separates sublime from that of the finality of nature. Thereby the theory of sublime is an aesthetic estimate of the finality of nature with an imagination.

Based on this Kant draws the same principle to analyse the sublime as was seen in the judgement of taste. Since it is an aesthetic reflective judgement, the delight in the sublime must be as that of

the beautiful, viz., in *quantity* it is universally valid, in its *quality* independent of interest, in its *relation* subjective finality, in its *modality* necessary. Kant adds that division which is not required in the beautiful is the *mathematical* and *dynamical* which are founded in the sublime. Mathematical, he identifies as the mental movement combined with the estimate of the object and dynamical as the affection of the imagination.

After laying down the basic principles now Kant proceeds to define *sublime* at each level refining the definition.

- Sublime is the name given to what is absolutely great.
- That is sublime in comparison with which all else is small
- Sublime is that, the mere capacity of thinking which evidences a faculty of mind transcending every standard of sense.

Kant maintains that a pure judgement upon the sublime must not have object as the determining ground, if it is to be aesthetic and not to be blemished with any judgement of understanding or reason. While assessing the quality of delight in the sublime, Kant states that, “The feeling of the sublime is, therefore, at once a feeling of displeasure, arising from the inadequacy of imagination in the aesthetic estimation of magnitude to attain to its estimation by reason, and a simultaneously awakened pleasure, arising from this very judgement of the inadequacy of the greatest faculty of sense being in accord with ideas of reason, so far as the effort to attain to these is for us a law.” “...the object is received as sublime with a pleasure that is only possible through the mediation of a displeasure.”

In the discussion with regard to the dynamically sublime, Kant points out to the aspect of *might* in nature which challenges the strength, he remarks that this is improperly called sublime and it is only under presupposition of this idea within us that the idea of the sublime is attained with regard to that Being which inspires deep respect in us, not by the mere display of its might in nature, but more by the faculty which is planted in us of estimating that might without fear, and of regarding our position as exalted above.

In his general remarks to the exposition of aesthetic reflective judgement, Kant surmises, that In relation to the feeling of pleasure an object is to be counted either as *agreeable*, or *beautiful*, or *sublime*, or *good* (absolutely). Based on this Kant gives the brief definitions, “The beautiful is what pleases in the mere estimate formed of it (consequently not by intervention of any feeling of sense in accordance with a concept of the understanding). From this it follows at once that it must please apart from all interest.” “The sublime is what pleases immediately by reason of its opposition to the interest of sense.”

He draws from the above discussion that the reflection of aesthetic judgement is from the point of adequacy of reason, but there is no determined concept of reason, but it still forms a representation of the object as subjectively final, even in the presence of objective inadequacy of the imagination in its demand for meeting the reason. This is the lead to attend to the Transcendental Aesthetic Judgement which is pure judgement. He reiterates that the delight in the object depends upon the reference which we seek to give to the imagination, subject to the

free activity of the mind, since according to Kant, aesthetic finality is the conformity to law of judgement in its *freedom*.

### Deduction of Pure Aesthetic Judgement

Kant in the beginning lays the fundamental principle in the deduction of aesthetic judgement which is upon the objects of nature that is not directed to the sublime in nature but only to the beautiful. Kant sets into a search for Deduction of judgement of taste, that is, of judgements about beauty of things of nature, and that he considers will dispose of the problem for the entire aesthetic faculty of judgement. In order to distinguish the judgement of taste from all other cognitive judgements Kant illustrates and brings out the characteristic properties of *taste* as various peculiarities,

- The judgement of taste determines its object in respect of delight (as a thing of beauty) with a claim to the agreement of every one, just as if it were objective.
- Proofs are of no avail whatever for determining the judgement of taste, and in this connection matters stand just as they would were that judgement simply subjective.
- An objective principle of taste is not possible.
- The principle of taste is the subjective principle of the general power of judgement.

Kant then remarks, Deduction in aesthetic judgement does not have the determinant of necessity of having to justify the objective reality of a concept. Beauty is not a concept of the object, and the judgement of taste is not a cognitive judgement.

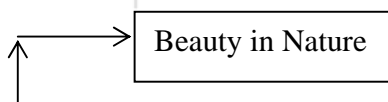
### Art

Kant enters as it were to the next phase of his analysis beginning with the question as to 'What is Art?' He provides his answer,

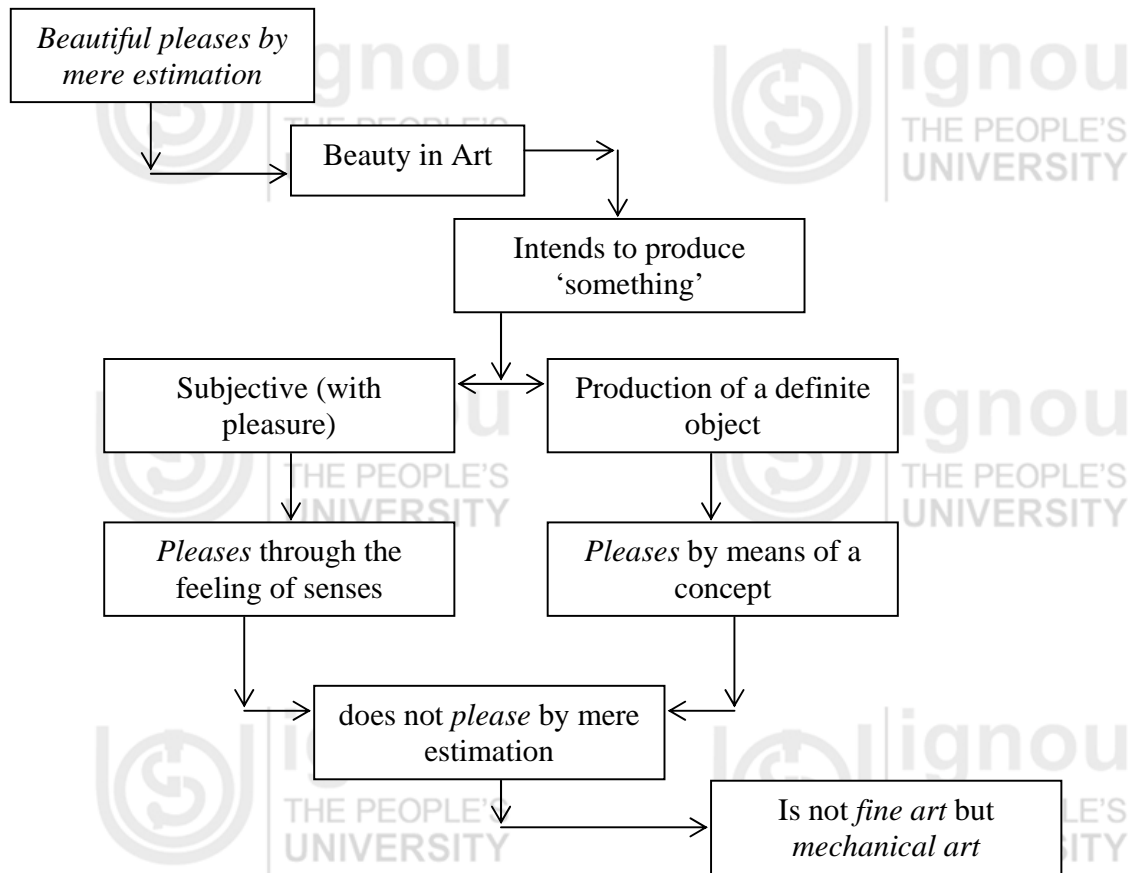
- Art is distinguished from nature and the product of these is referred to as work and effect respectively.
- Art as human skill is distinguished from science (as ability from knowledge)
- Art is different from handicraft. Art is called *free*, handicraft is industrial art.

He remarks there is no science of the beautiful but only a Critique. Again, there is no elegant science but only a fine art. He defines fine art as "Fine art, on the other hand, is a mode of representation which is intrinsically final, and which, although devoid of an end, has the effect of advancing the culture of the mental powers in the interests of social communication. The universal communicability of a pleasure involves in its very concept that the pleasure is not one of enjoyment arising out of mere sensation, but must be one of reflection. Hence aesthetic art, as art which is beautiful, is one having for its standard the reflective judgement and not organic sensation."

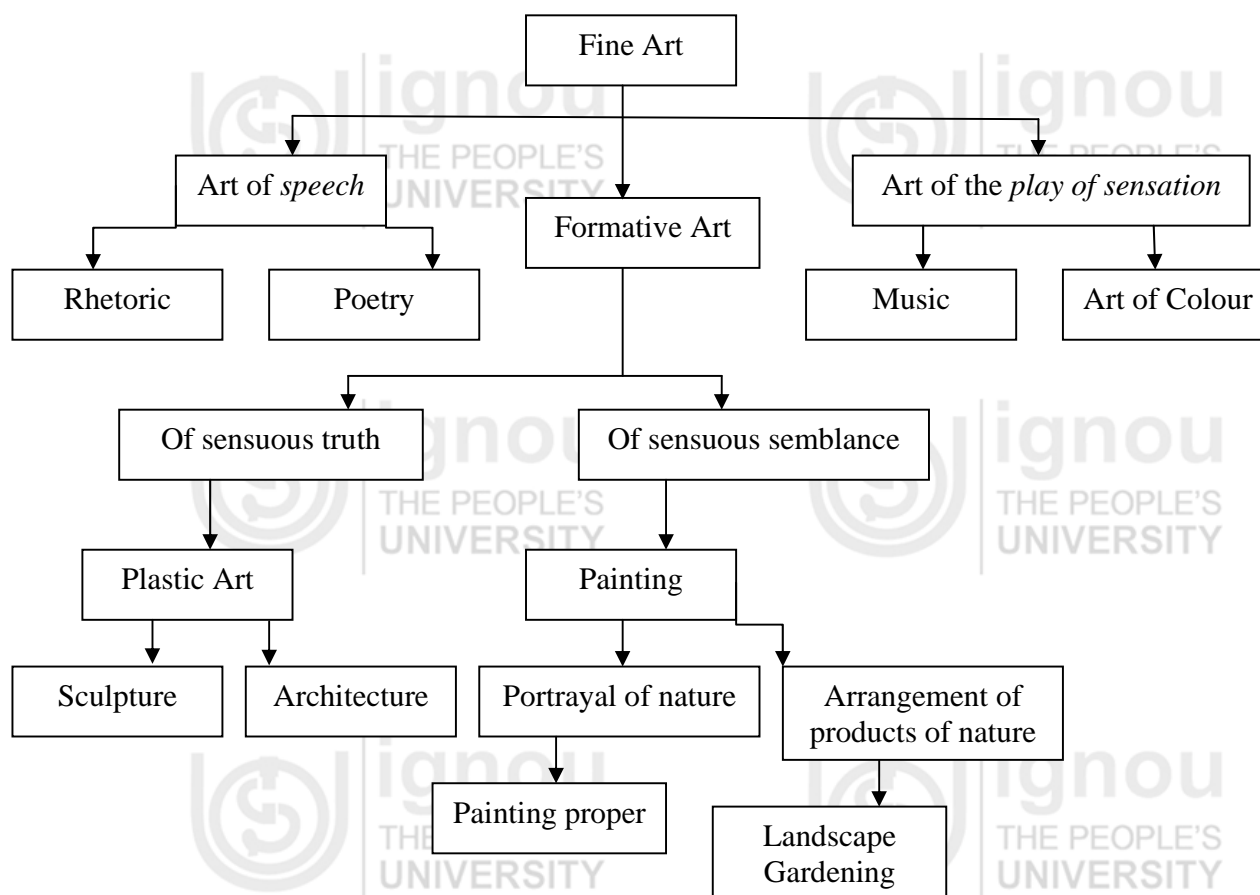
He then brings out the basic principle in determining a fine art - that a product of fine art must be recognised to be art and not nature. The finality of the form of fine art should appear as a product of nature, free without arbitrary rules.







Kant lays down the requisite for fine art, as *imagination*, *understanding*, *soul* and *taste*. Further Kant identifies three kinds of fine art:



In another mode of classification, Kant shows the possibility of the combination of fine arts in one and the same product. In his comparative estimate of arts, he places poetry as the foremost. Then in the descending grade comes art of tone and music. In the formative art, he gives priority to painting.

### Taste

Kant positions *taste* as the communicative tool of art. In order to prove this, he first defines sensation. “SENSATION, as the real in perception, where referred to knowledge, is called organic sensation and its specific Quality may be represented as completely communicable to others in a like mode, provided we assume that every one has a like sense to our own.”

In communication of *sense*, Kant shows the judgement with *taste* imputes subjective finality; which means the delight in the object, is universally communicable, without the mediation of concepts. Thus he arrives at *taste* as a kind of *sensus communis*. It is to be understood as idea of *public sense*. It is a critical faculty that takes account *a priori* of the mode of representation and judges with the collective reason of mankind thereby avoiding subjective and personal conditions.

## Genius

Kant derives that fine art is the art of genius. He defines genius,

1. that it is a talent for art not one for science
2. being a talent in the line of art, it presupposes a definite concept of the product as its end. Hence it presupposes understanding, in addition to a representation, i. e. of the intuition, required for the presentation of that concept. So there is a relation of the imagination to the understanding.
3. the imagination is represented by it in its freedom from all guidance of rules, but still as final for the presentation of the given concept.
4. the unsought and undesigned subjective finality in the free harmonizing of the imagination with the understanding of conformity to law presupposes a proportion and accord between these faculties that it cannot be brought about by any observance of rules, whether of science or mechanical imitation, but can only be produced by the nature of the individual.

## Relation of Genius to Taste

Kant draws the relation between genius and taste in art. He states, “For estimating beautiful objects, as such, what is required is taste; but for fine art, i. e. the production of such objects, one needs genius.”

Based on the above definition, Kant derives that if genius is taken as the talent for fine art then there requires a necessary differentiation between beauty of nature and beauty of art. While beauty of nature requires taste to estimate, beauty of art requires genius for its possibility. A beauty of nature, he suggests is a beautiful thing; the beauty of art is a beautiful representation of a thing. Fine art is seen as superior to nature since it can bring out the beautiful of things in nature that would be otherwise ugly or displeasing. Ugliness, Kant considers in art does not destroy aesthetic delight but is seen as artistic beauty that which excites disgust. Thus, he concludes here that beautiful representation of an object is only the form of presentation of a concept, and the means by which it is universally communicated. Kant opines that to give this form what is required is merely taste. Taste is according to Kant a critical faculty and not productive and this conforms only to the work of fine art.

In this background, Kant records his view on the artist, “..... the artist, having practised and corrected his taste by a variety of examples from nature or art, controls his work and, after many, and often laborious, attempts to satisfy taste, finds the form which commends itself to him. Hence this form is not, as it were, a matter of inspiration, or of a free swing of the mental powers, but rather of a slow and even painful process of improvement, directed to making the form adequate to his thought without prejudice to the freedom in the play of those powers.”

Thus, in the analysis of the beautiful and the sublime, Kant has taken a different position and brought in elements of *taste*, *genius* and other factors underlying his basic theme of *judgement* of aesthetic ideas.

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## 4.2 HEGEL

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Hegel argues his position regarding art, rather Fine Art, recorded as 'Lectures on Aesthetic'. In the very beginning he rejects the use of the very word 'Aesthetic' in the field of Fine Art. For *Aesthetics* he says stands for the science of sensation, of feeling that does not accurately reveal the science of the *beautiful* but it caters simply to the beauty of art. It can be seen as a new science or a branch of Philosophical discipline. Pointing out to such a drawback, Hegel prefers to set aside the word *Aesthetic* and he identifies his concept with regard to Art as the *Philosophy of Art*, and he says more definitely, the *Philosophy of Fine Art*. This is the prefatory remark found in the 'Lectures on Aesthetic' (a three volume work in German) that records the original ideas of Hegel. After Kant, this work of Hegel has opened up a new avenue in the thought of Philosophy of Art.

### **Aesthetics confined to Beauty of Art**

We shall now briefly survey the contents Philosophy of Art as found in the work of Hegel titled '*Lectures on Aesthetic*'. At the outset he shows that by the use of the terms 'Philosophy of Fine Art', the *beauty of Nature* is excluded. Hegel takes what we may call as an 'aesthetic leap' and states 'artistic beauty stands higher than nature'. He justifies this stand with his logic that beauty of art is twice-born. The elements in nature are not considered for their own sake and hence not beautiful but the same when processed through the human mind is perceived as beautiful. Hegel tries to show that since the elements of nature is seen beautiful through the human mind, the beautiful which is the art is placed higher than the nature. In this analysis, he arrives that the sense of beauty in nature reveals itself only as a reflection of the beauty which actually belongs to the mind. His main argument is that the realm of nature has not been arrayed or estimated under the aspect of beauty by the thinkers so far. Hegel's starting point thus is the beauty of art excluding beauty of nature.

### **Problem in Fine Art**

Hegel from the analysis of the History of development of thought on Art identifies two major issues to be addressed, Does Fine Art come within the fold of Scientific treatment? Is Scientific treatment appropriate to Fine Art?

### **Ontology of Fine Art**

Even before addressing the above two major concerns, Hegel first gives his position on the concept of art and establishes the ontology of art. Firstly, he clarifies his position on Art as which is *free* in its end as in its means. Art is capable of serving other aims even though it is not real. Hegel identifies Fine Art as a mode of revealing to Consciousness and leading to Divine Nature and thus places Fine art in par with Religion and Philosophy. He argues that fine art is the key to the understanding of wisdom of other nations. The attribute of art that is shared with Religion and Philosophy, Hegel claims as its peculiar feature to represent the highest ideas in sensuous forms. He considers mind as key element which generates work of art reconciling the finite actuality in nature and the infinite freedom of the mind. Secondly, Hegel deals with question of his predecessors that art is *unworthy* being only an *appearance* and hence *deceptive*. He rejects

the very idea of appearance and counter-argues thus, “Art liberates the real import of appearances from the semblance and deception of this bad and fleeting world, and imparts to phenomenal semblances a higher reality, born of mind. The appearances of art, therefore, far from being mere semblances, have the higher reality and the more genuine existence in comparison with the realities of common life.”

In this line of argument, Hegel finds the ontology of art. But he carefully then re-states that art is either in content or in form is not the highest mode in bringing the mind’s genuine interests into consciousness. He admits that only a certain grade of truth can be represented in the medium of art. He thereby distinguishes a deeper form of truth that is not available to be expressed through the medium of art.

### **Art requires Scientific Treatment**

Hegel presents the material required for artistic productions as a living creation, in which the universal is present not as law and maxim but with a sensuous phenomenon. Also, the artist is always surrounded by opinions and judgements from the external world. In such a context, a change which Hegel observes as from that of the Greek art and artists, he says, art remains as a thing of past. In the current works of art, Hegel finds what is aroused is immediate enjoyment and judgement in connection with the intellectual consideration. Thus, he presents his thesis here, “...the science of art is a much more pressing need in our day, than in times in which art, simply as art, was enough to furnish a full satisfaction. Art invites us to consideration of it by means of thought, not to the end of stimulating art production, but in order to ascertain scientifically what art is.”

### **Appropriate Scientific treatment**

Hegel objects the view that though art is a suitable subject for philosophical reflection in the general sense, but still it does not match a systematic and scientific discussion. He states this very idea is found in the earlier thinkers is because that there is a prevalent notion that philosophical considerations are unscientific. Hegel opines that the pursuit of philosophy can never exist without a scientific procedure. He holds that since Art involves the most complex presuppositions, partly of the content and partly of the medium, so the scientific instruments must be relaxed. Based on his Philosophy of Mind, he asserts that in the work of art the thought alienates itself thus belonging to the realm of comprehending thought thereby the mind and hence it subjects itself to scientific considerations. In fact, Hegel advances and states art is not the highest form of mind but receives its true ratification only from science. In this introductory passage, he concludes his thesis that neither is fine art unworthy of a philosophical consideration nor is a philosophical consideration incompetent to determine the essence of fine art.

### **Applicable Methods of Science**

In his attempt to identify a suitable scientific method in the field of art, Hegel identifies two contrary positions. 1) One is the science of art that focuses on the artistic productions that sketches out theories to govern criticism and artistic productions. 2) The other is the science that ignores the particulars of the art leading to an abstract philosophy of the beautiful. Hegel points

out that one is with an empirical starting that surmounts to universal criteria and rules with a formal generalisation as *Theories of Art*. He quotes the example of Aristotle's *Poetics*, Horace's *Ars Poetica*, Longinus's *Treatise on the Sublime*, etc., as the works of theorising art. Hegel remarks that the prescriptions set by these theorists based on which the work of art is to be produced has been less successful. He criticises the narrow range of art that these works confine them to. Hegel then directs his critical review of the *forming taste* set by his predecessors. He gives the examples of Home's *Elements of Criticism*, the writings of Batteux, and Ramler's *Introduction to the Fine Arts*, that tried to define *taste* which actually catered only to the external aspect of art. Based on empirical observation these theorists also added the psychological content into the principle of *taste*. Hegel observes that one judges work of art according to the measure of one's insight and feelings.

Hegel's approach is to first criticise the various definitions of *beautiful* not as a historical interest but to arrive at the modern views on what involves the *beautiful*. Hegel first assesses Hirt's definition of *beautiful* (in *Horen*, No.7, 1797) "*beautiful as the perfect, which is or can be an object of eye, ear, or imagination*". In his analysis, Hegel brings out the following criticism against Hirt's definition: "Hirt's definition, of course, gives no more precise information as to what is to be characterized and what is not, in the artistically beautiful, or about the content of the beautiful, but it furnishes in this respect a mere formal rule, which nevertheless contains some truth, although stated in abstract shape."

Further by analysing the definitions provided by Meyer, Goethe and others, Hegel observes that the work of art that departs from the theory of abstraction led to the recognition of a peculiar kind of art which is *romantic art* and hence it becomes necessary to apprehend in a deeper sense the nature of *beautiful* that could not be touched upon by these theories. Hegel then traces the concept of *beautiful* from the ancient Greek works onwards. He remarks that Platonic idea which was merely abstract was a mere beginning of the Philosophic study of beauty. He concludes that philosophic conception of the beautiful must contain the two extremes (mentioned above) reconciled by combining the metaphysical universality with the determinateness of real particulars.

Further Hegel takes up the discussion on the conception of artistic beauty. We shall analyse some important concepts that brought about a break-through in the history of philosophy of art. Hegel records his thought on need for a human being to produce a work of art as, "The universal need for expression in art lies, therefore, in man's rational impulse to exalt the inner and outer world into a spiritual consciousness for him: self, as an object in which he recognizes his own self,"

His other popular view is that the work of art presents itself to sensuous apprehension. At the same time he shows that it addresses the mind by which the mind is affected and finds some sort of satisfaction. This is reasoned out by Hegel that art is no way a natural product to possess a natural life. The very existence of art thus is because of the mind. In dealing with the question of the purpose of art, Hegel takes the stand from reflective consideration of matter and that the idea of art is to be apprehended in its inner necessity.

### **The Triad**

For Hegel, the beautiful is when the mind sees the *Absolute* shining. The first of the triad where Absolute manifests is Art, Religion and Philosophy. Art constructs sensuous images of the

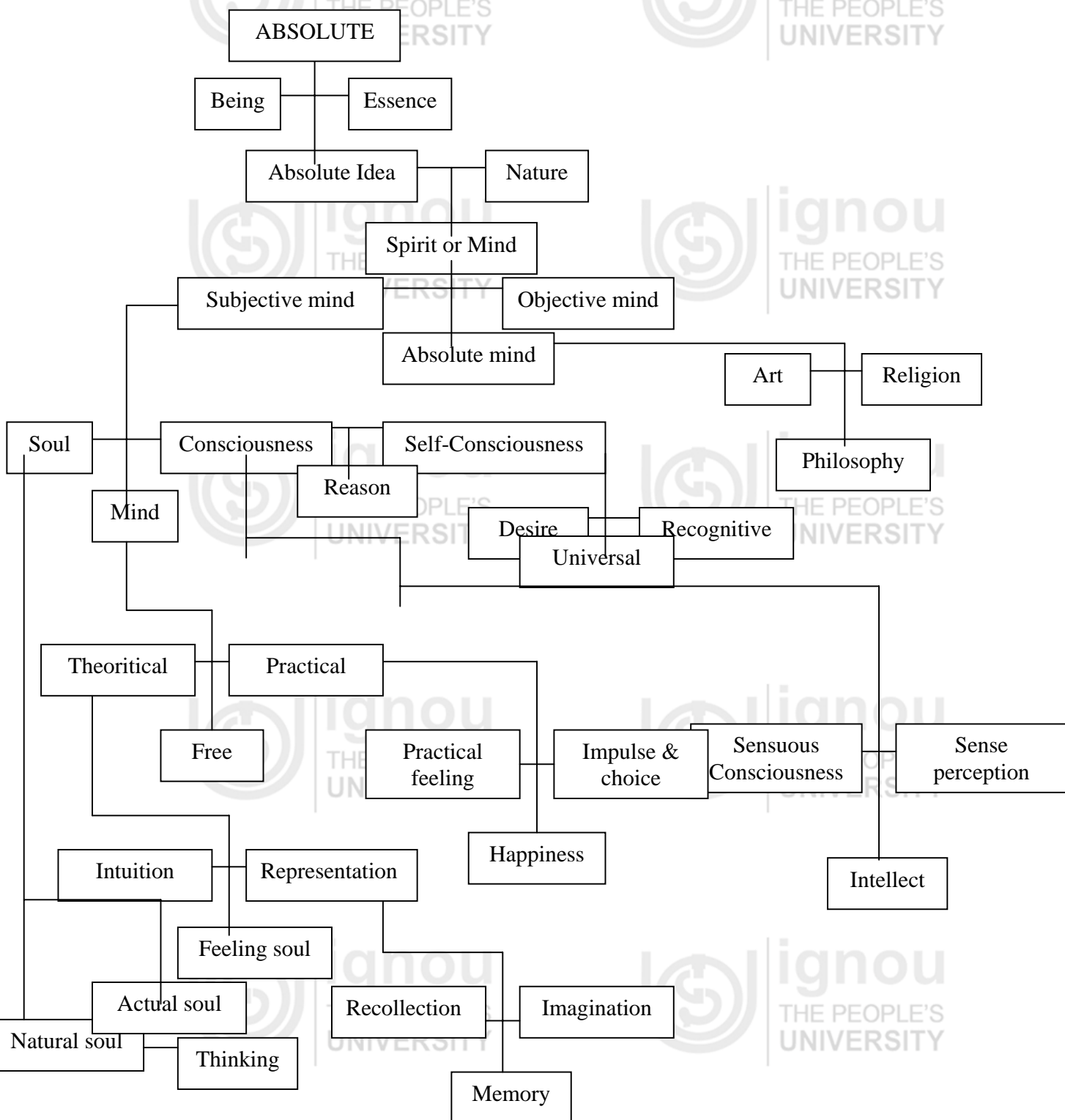
divine; religion forms super-sensuous conceptions of the divine; philosophy attains to absolute demonstration of the divine. The aim of art, according to Hegel is to represent in sensuous form the various phases of the Idea; that is, of the concrete creative principle of the world, viz., Spirit. Thus, art belongs to the sphere of the Absolute mind. The successive and interlocking triad forms an organized whole centering on the Absolute.

The Philosophy of Art according to Hegel is classified into three principal divisions : — 1. The first of these divisions is of a general character. Its purpose is to set forth the universal idea of the beautiful in art as the Ideal. The focus is also to trace inner relation of the Ideal to nature and the production of art.

2. The second of the division is a particular part the concentrates on the essential distinctions. This consists of various forms of art.

3. The third and final division has for its object the consideration of the individualization of the beautiful in art. Art progresses to the sensuous realization of its images, and develops into a system of the particular arts, with their divisions and subdivisions. The highest function of art, for Hegel, is bringing to consciousness the Divine, the spiritual truths and ideas through its modes and forms. Following is a graphic representation of Hegel's triads.









Hegel traces the development of art historically in three phases.

- 1) Symbolic Art, it seeks a perfect unity of the idea with the external form;
- 2) The Classical Art finds it, for the senses and the imagination, in the representation of spiritual individuality;
- 3) Romantic Art transcends it in its infinite spirituality, which rises above the visible world.

### Classification of Art

Hegel establishes a triadic relation while classifying various forms of art. He divides poetry into three, namely, epic poetry, lyric poetry and drama. Then he states that, drama or the art of acting, by means of facial expressions, bodily movements, postures, is the highest form of poetry since it uses human voice as the medium of expression. Drama represents to vision the poetical work. Hegel further substantiates his position of claiming drama as the highest form of art by drawing a synthesis, where the thesis is 'drama is elaborated both in form and substance, into a complete whole', the anti-thesis being 'since it combines in itself the objectivity of Epic and subjectivity of Lyric'. The epic narrates, according to Hegel, the greatest exploits and events in the history of the nation and the lyric presents the subjective life experience, which is concerned with individual emotion. Drama is an amalgamation of epic and lyric that combines action and emotion giving rise to self-realising individual. To communicate to this finite and changing reality a true independence and substantiality, to represent it in its conformity to the Idea, is the mission of Art. Hegel gives the example of fear and pity in depiction of tragedy. Hegel divides the types of dramatic poetry as tragedy, comedy and social play. Based on the Aristotelian tragic *Katharsis*, he states, tragedy is that it excites and purifies fear and pity. Fear is a resultant of confrontation with terrible and finite object and excited by the visualization of the ethical power. The object of fear is not a terrible external object presented on the stage, but it is the absolute, eternal ethical entity. In this mode of human mind, there is the identification of the subject with the object, in which the differences are overcome and mind revels in its freedom and infinity. This is the stage of Absolute spirit.

### Check Your Progress I

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

- 1) What is Art according to Kant and trace the basis of his classification of art forms.

.....  
 .....  
 .....

- 2) What is Philosophy of Art for Hegel?

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#### 4.4 AESTHETIC THOUGHT: A HISTORICAL SUMMARY

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The Hegelian thought serves as a window to the rise of a great turn witnessed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Benedetto Croce, an Italian Philosopher, carefully scrutinizes the origin and development of the idea of aesthetic and identifies a range of error in each thinker. He then proceeds to present his proposition with regard to aesthetic thus establishing a distinct ontological review not seen before. In this juncture, it is more appropriate to see the critical review of aesthetic thought from the Ancient Greece to culminate in Croce. This we shall present based on the 'Historical Summary' by Douglas Ainslie in his English translation of Croce's work.

##### **Ancient**

In Greece, the problem of art and artistic faculty arose for the first time after the sophistic movement, as a result of the Socratic polemic. The aesthetic problem as such arrived after Socrates. In Plato, one finds the negation of art. He stated the first aesthetic problem with the questions, 'is art rational or irrational?' 'In which region does it reside – soul or senses?' When Gorgias remarked that tragedy is a deception this further prompted Plato to ask 'what is the place of tragedy in philosophy and in the righteous life?'. He arrived that art was a shadow of shadow (imitation of imitation) and thus art belongs to the irrational, sensual sphere of the soul. Since art serves sensual pleasures and obscures the art and the artists should be excluded from the Republic. Plato observed that imitation does not arise to the logical or conceptual sphere but he failed to observe that there could be any form of knowledge other than the intellectual. Later, Aristophanes, Strabo and above all Aristotle dwelled upon didactic and moralistic possibility of poetry. Plotinus brought in the *mystic* view of art. The mystical view of Aesthetic reaches above philosophy. The dialogue in *Gorgias*, *Philebus*, *Phaedrus*, and *Symposium* on the *beautiful* is the cause for such a misunderstanding. The *beautiful* that occurs in the discourses of Plato has nothing to do with the *artistically beautiful*, nor with mysticism of the Neo-Platonians. Plato provides vacillating ideas on the *beautiful*, sometimes as Utilitarian, at times as Hedonist. In the *Hippias Major*, the dialogue begins with 'what is beautiful?' but is left unanswered. Thus, the *beautiful* is never identified with art, and the artistic fact is always clearly distinguished from beauty, mimetic from its contents. Aristotle too provides various definitions revealing his uncertainty. He was satisfied in his attempt to define Aesthetic as the science of representation and of expression than in his definitions of the *beautiful*. For him it was the synthesis of matter and form. Although Aristotle restated and re-examined the problem with marvelous acumen he failed to discern the true nature of aesthetic.

##### **Medieval**

In the middle ages, the attention diverted in the work of Pseudo-Plotinus was severely felt. God took the chief place of the Good. Aquinas following Aristotle distinguished beauty from good and applied the doctrine of imitation. The views emerging from the Church was either hedonistic with rigorist hypothesis. This implies that in the middle age the ideal state was celibacy, which means pure knowledge is discriminated from art. Duns Scotus was occupied with the problem of speculative grammar, Abelard defined sensation as *confusa conception* etc., such thoughts appeared in this period of dispute between thought and speech. The medieval period to

Renaissance age flooded with treatises did not provide an aesthetic science. The Renaissance of the Italy, France, Spain, England, and Germany closed with a sense of mystery yet to be revealed.

### Modern

The words 'genius', 'taste' was greatly analysed during this period of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. *Taste* was held to be a judicial faculty, directed to the beautiful, and thus to some extent distinct from the intellectual judgement. Baltasar Gracian, defined *taste* as a special faculty or attitude of the soul. The use of the word *taste* strictly in the aesthetic sense occurred in last quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century in France. The French definition was adopted by England, later by Italian and German writers. The words *imagination* and *fancy* also was primarily used in the field of art and thus attempts were made to define.

Haurte maintained that eloquence is the work of imagination, not of the intellect. Bacon identified poetry to imagination or fancy and assigned its place between history and science. While he called history as epic poetry, he termed science as 'parabolic' poetry. Hobbes described the manifestations of imagination and Addison explored the pleasures of imagination. He reduced the pleasures of imagination to those caused by perceptible objects. Du Bos of France held that feelings are the factors for the production of art. England followed with the idea of emotion in the work of art. Thus, terms like *imagination*, *taste*, *feeling*, *wit* etc., were almost used in the same sense. But, the divergence of opinion with regard to *taste* and intellectual judgement was made. Kant reinforced *taste* in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. But Voltaire and others opposed Kant's idea and took to intellectualism. Further, as regards to feeling or sentiment, there was a strong tendency to sensualism. The new words and new views of the 17<sup>th</sup> century have great importance for the origins of aesthetic, which demanded a theoretical justification for aesthetic but they were unable to provide it.

Shaftesbury observed taste as a sense of the beautiful, or order and proportion identical with the moral sense. Hutcheson identified 'internal sense of beauty' that lies somewhere between sensuality and rationality. The same view dominated the English writers of 18<sup>th</sup> century. The period of Leibnitz witnessed speculation on language with a determined intellectual attitude where grammar was held to be an exact science.

In distant land of Berlin, was the young Baumgarten who first coined the word 'Aesthetic' in the sense of a special science. According to Baumgarten, Aesthetic is the science of sensible knowledge. Its objects are the sensible facts. He held rhetoric and poetic as the special cases of aesthetic, which is a general science. He demarks Aesthetic from that of psychology and identifies it as an independent science, which gives the rule for knowing sensibly, and is occupied with the perfection of sensible knowledge, which is beauty. The contrary of this he considered as ugliness. He arrived that the judgement of sensible and imaginative representations is *taste*. But he could free himself totally from the monads of Leibnitz nor the scholastic thought.

Vico's *Scienza nuova* in 1725 is seen as the revolutionary idea on the nature of art and poetry. He discovered the creative imagination and showed that aesthetic is an autonomous activity. In the following period, the idealists of German philosophy brought out the romantic conception of art which was the conception of Schelling, Solger and Hegel. Later, aesthetic took the shape of

hedonistic, moralistic, utilitarian and so on. In the lengthy theories of aesthetic Croce finds certain errors which he claims to have addressed and thereby given rise to a new thought.

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#### 4.5 BENEDETTO CROCE (1866-1952)

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Benedetto Croce having pointed out the defects as it were of the row of aesthetic-philosophical thinkers presents his thesis in a series of articles in journal *La Aesthetica* (Italian) or *Aesthetics as Science of Expression*. His classification of the work 'Philosophy of the Spirit' in three volumes consists of the first on *Aesthetic*, second related to *Logic* and the third the *Philosophy of the Practical*. In *Aesthetic* he gives his line of argument by re-defining aesthetic in art revealing that which was overlooked by the lineage of his predecessors.

Croce begins with the classification of human knowledge into two – intuitive knowledge and logical knowledge. Intuitive knowledge is independent of logical or intellectual knowledge. He shows that the result of work of art is an intuition. He arrives at the following by a series of argumentative analysis:

- Intuitive knowledge is expressive knowledge
- It is independent and autonomous in respect to intellectual function
- It is indifferent to discriminations like
  - Posterior and empirical
  - Reality and unreality
  - Formation and perceptions of space and time
- Intuition is representation
- Is different from form from what is felt and suffered
- Is different from the flux of sensation
- Is different from psychic material
- Taking possession of this form is expression
- Intuition is expression
- Intuition is nothing but to express

Croce examines his finding that intuition or expressive knowledge is identified with aesthetic or artistic fact, by taking works of art as examples of intuitive knowledge and attributing to them the characteristics of intuition, and vice versa. He arrives at a general proposition that Art is an expression of impressions and not the expression of expressions. He explicates artist as one who have a greater aptitude, a more frequent inclination to fully express certain complex states of the soul and art for Croce is the achievement of very complicated and difficult expressions. He critically points out that the earlier theories of Aesthetic that could not convey the true nature of art, is because of its separation from the general spiritual life and made exclusive of the aristocratic circle. Croce declares that there is only one intuition that is Aesthetic, which is the science of intuitive or expressive knowledge. He considers aesthetic as the true analysis of logic. Croce by equating the word *genius* as artistic genius argues that genius is only a quantitative difference and not that of quality. While he criticises the genius of the romantic period, Croce states that the wanting factor of artistic genius is the reflective consciousness. He analyses some of the disputed concepts in the field of art:

- 1) The relation between content and form
- 2) *Interesting* as the Aesthetic content
- 3) Art as the imitation of nature so an appearance
- 4) Is Aesthetic a theoretical fact?
- 5) Art is *sentiment*
- 6) Theory of *aesthetic senses*

Likening to the Hegelian triad, Croce states that the old expressions must descend to the state of impressions in order to be synthesized in a new single expression. The function of art he says is liberating and purifying function based on the character of its activity. He shows that activity is the deliverer since it drives away passivity. He categorises an artist as both sensible or passion and serene.

Croce mentions that intuitive and intellectual forms exhaust all theoretic form of the spirit and now he identifies another form of spirit that is practical form which is the *will*. Understanding of things is based on theoretical form. Changes are brought about in the practical form, while by the former the universe is appropriated, with the latter there is creation. He identifies *will* that is able to act as a distinct moment of the aesthetic activity. He says that one cannot will or not will the aesthetic activity, however one can will or not will to externalize it, or better, to preserve and communicate, or not to others. He states that volitional fact of externalization is preceded by a complex of various kinds of knowledge which are known as *techniques*. Thus, there is an artistic technique which he defines as the knowledge employed by the practical activity engaged in producing stimuli to aesthetic reproduction.

Croce observes that the possibility of this technical knowledge, at the service of artistic reproduction, has caused the error of imagining an existence of aesthetic technique of internal expression, that tantamount to say, a *doctrine of the means of internal expression* which is inconceivable. The word *technique*, Croce states is at times used to designate certain defect or good in work of art. Croce then divides the collection of technical knowledge into groups entitling as *theories of the arts*. Stating that Art has no aesthetic limits, Croce shows that any attempt for an aesthetic classification of arts is absurd. He enumerates the kind of classification so far found in the tradition of writing arts:

1. Arts of hearing, sight and imagination
2. Arts of space and time
3. Arts of rest and motion
4. Oriental, classic and romantic
5. Art that can be seen only from one side – painting
6. Art that can be seen from all sides – sculpture

Croce also criticises the contrary view on the union of arts. Refuting various such ideas he arrives that art is independent with an intrinsic value with an existence. Croce then warns that the moment the intuition is expressed externally then it is to be confined with the concept of *utility* and *morality*. That is, there is the concept of *selection*, of *interesting*, of *morality*, of an *educational end*, of *pouplarity* etc.

In keeping with the above line of argument we now shall state the nature of art as given by Croce in another work *Essence of Aesthetic* (an inaugural lecture by Croce). He first takes up the question 'What is Art?' He defines art as *vision* or *intuition*. He then shows those factors that are denied by such a definition.

- a) It denies that art is a *physical fact* because physical facts do not possess reality and is supremely real. Physical facts, Croce identifies as construction of the intellect for the purpose of science. He derives that art cannot be constructed physically.
- b) Art cannot be a utilitarian act since utilitarian act aims always at obtaining a pleasure and therefore keeping off a pain, art, says Croce has nothing to do with the useful, pleasure or pain. He refutes the hedonistic aesthetic.
- c) Art cannot be a moral act. Art does not arise as an act of will and hence escapes all moral discrimination.
- d) Art is not of the character of conceptual knowledge. Conceptual knowledge aims at establishing reality against unreality on the other hand, intuition is non-distinction of reality and unreality.
- e) The concept of art as intuition excludes the conception of art as the production of classes, types, species etc.
- f) Croce reiterates that the above definition negates art as philosophy, religion, history, science or mathematics.
- g) Art as intuition = art as a work of imagination or expression.

Thus, Croce marks the beginning of Expressionism, the 20<sup>th</sup> century phrase, in the Philosophy of Art by proving that Aesthetic is *the science of expressive activity*.

In a lecture delivered before the Third International Congress of Philosophy, at Heidelberg, 1908 he outlines his theory of aesthetic lucidly. He shows that the theories of Aesthetic of centuries bring out five main aspects

- *Empirical Aesthetic*
- Aesthetic as *practicism*
- As *intellectualistic*
- Aesthetic as *agnostic*
- Aesthetic is *mystic*

He states that these five aspects are eternal stages for the search for truth. He establishes, raising above all these, the theory of art as pure intuition and expression as the actuality of intuition.

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#### 4.6 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AESTHETIC THINKERS

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The Philosophy of Art thus evolved as distinct branch slowly recognised by its ontological disposition by various philosophers. We now see, how the word '*aesthetic*' has taken shape and only after the Renaissance period it came to be associated with art and much later identified with the experience of art. However, to the present day, the word *aesthetic* is loaded with various connotations and it is the philosophical outlook that digs into its employment and application in

art by defining and re-defining it. Here, we shall just enumerate the bounty works by other thinkers who has made a mark of difference in the line of thinking on art and aesthetic. Some of the influential works of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are:

*The Sense of Beauty* of George Santayana, *Principles of Art* of R.G. Collingwood, John Dewey's *Art of Experience*, Alain's *System of the Fine Arts*, *The Aesthetic Point of View: Selected Essays* of M.C. Beardsley, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: a Philosophy of Art* (in Mass) by A.C. Danto, *Art and the Aesthetic : An Institutional Analysis*, by G. Dickie, *Languages of Art: an Approach to a Theory of Symbols* by N. Goodman, Heidegger's *The Origin of the Work of Art*, *Contemporary Aesthetic and the Neglect of the Natural Beauty* of R.W. Hepburn, J. Levinson's *The Pleasures of Aesthetics: Philosophical Essays*, Wollheim's *Art and Its Objects* and *On Art and the Mind* and other such works and articles.

### Check Your Progress II

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Trace the various views on representation of 'terror' in art forms.

.....  
 .....  
 .....

2) Bring out the essential contribution of any one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Aesthetic Thinker.

.....  
 .....  
 .....

## 4.7 LET US SUM UP

In our journey to the second phase of modern aesthetic thought we have to some extent justified the position of Kant and Hegel by analysing their original works. We consider both Kant and Hegel as the strong platform of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in whom culminates the ancient thought and from whom arises the modern thought. Kant we saw influenced by the work of Baumgarten presented his concept of *taste* and *judgement* in his *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*. In his precise division of work into the analytic of the beautiful and the analytic of the sublime he established his concept of *judgement of taste*. He laid the foundation in the classification of arts and built on the concepts of *genius* and *taste* in the field of art. Hegel in his *Lectures on Fine Art* showed the difficulty in the term 'aesthetic' and appropriated it in the scientific treatment. He employed the triad system of explanation on the role and position of art. He took further from Kant on the classification and ontology of art. In this unit, we marked Hegel as the stop-gap of thought of modern era and then proceeded to give a brief outline of the Historical Summary as seen by Croce. Croce the most influential thinker of the 20<sup>th</sup> century classified as *Expressionist* found 'errors' in the earlier theories and established his concept of *intuition*. We then briefly

enumerated the thinkers and their works (texts and articles) of the 20<sup>th</sup> century who influenced the aesthetic thought.

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#### 4.8 KEY WORDS

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**Taste**

**Genius**

**Aesthetic Judgement**

**Intuition**

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#### 4.9 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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Byrant, W.M.M. *Philosophy of Art: Being the second part of Hegel's Aesthetik*. Introduction by the Translator. New York: D Appleton & Company, 1879.

*Kant's Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*. Translated by James Creed Meredith. Oxford: 1911.

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Douglas Ainslie. Trans. *Aesthetic as Science of Expression and General Linguistic*. London: 1909.





## **Block 4**

# **AESTHETICS – ITS APPLICATION**

### **UNIT 1 Ontology of Art**

### **UNIT 2 Applied Rasa – Indian Perspective**

### **UNIT 3 Applied Aesthetics – Western Perspective**

### **UNIT 4 Art Experience**



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## BLOCK INTRODUCTION

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The 'globalization, though started in economic fields, it spread to several fields, gaining a interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary, multicultural status, termed with a "applied" prefix. Art and aesthetics is no exception. By applying one subject with several aspects, a gigantic house of knowledge came into being, multiplying its values, importance, statured like a big Bunyan tree, with its vast number of branches, twigs. Now, applied arts/aesthetics is the talk of day.

Applied aesthetics is a new branch of study, which seeks to apply the principles of aesthetics to cultural construct. Scholars on aesthetics are of the view that aesthetic attitude is characterised by detachment, psychic distance or disinterestedness. The major function of the objects of fine art is to embody an aesthetic vision and elicit an aesthetic response especially in the spheres of dramas, paintings, sculptures, symphonies, poems, dances etc. Applied aesthetics refer to "creative and social practices that address our ability to engage in this world as meaningful. In a general sense, applied aesthetics is an umbrella term for creative problem solving, learning in doing, art is practice, and responding to the needs or experiences' of a situated community." Aesthetic experience is no more private and psychical exclusively than any other kind of experience. An art product is a work of art only potentially so long as it does not so quicken others' experience, which as a formed substance leading to the work of art in actuality and is perceived as formed in terms of an experience.

**Unit 1** on 'Ontology of art' revolves round the problem of ontological status of work of art with respect to the two aspects i.e. form and content aspect of work of art. Ontologists of art seek to locate works of art in wider terrain, to say, where in our universe they fit in. Their governing questions, thus; "what kind of thing is a work of art?" A mere definition of art would lead to distinguish between art and non-art, but the work of art are of different kinds and have different ontological status.

**Unit 2** on 'Applied Rasa' affirms that Indian *rasa* theory is the richest tradition of dialectics and interpretations more than thousand years old. *Rasa* theory is ever new, as it deals with fundamental emotions of mankind which is deathless, dateless and exist till eternity. *Rasa* is philosophical to the core since it aims to attain the fore fold purusarthas of Kama, artha, dharma, Moksha. *Rasa* theory when it is applied to particular fields, say, drama, poetry etc, it is called 'applied *rasa*'.

**Unit 3** on Applied aesthetics from Western perspective describes how Aesthetics have been applied to several aspects study. Recent aesthetics in the fields of music, poetry, art criticism, information technology, mathematics, films, movies, television, video, plastic arts, Digital arts, Maps, Marketing, performing arts, literature, gastronomy, Website design, industrial designs etc. A discussion on these would be rewarding and would prove the value, importance of such a study.

**Unit 4** on 'Art Experience' tries to make a metaphysico-philosophical study of art. The title 'Art Experience' evokes a lot of problems, as to how best to interpret the two words, 'art' as well as 'experience' and to correlate the two and reach at a consistent meaning. It discusses 'art as an experience, rather than art-experience.'

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**UNIT 1      ONTOLOGY OF ART**


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**Contents**

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Etymological Meaning of ‘Ontology’ and ‘Art’
- 1.3 Ontology and its Relation with Metaphysics
- 1.4 Art as Process
- 1.5 Mimetic Theory of Art
- 1.6 Emotion Theory
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- 1.10 Performance Theory of Art
- 1.11 Institutional Theory of Art
- 1.12 Formalistic Theory of Art
- 1.13 Representation Theory
- 1.14 Art as Interpretation
- 1.15 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.16 Key Words
- 1.17 Further Readings and References

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**1.0      OBJECTIVES**


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Let us remember the words of the great philosopher who said, “all philosophy after Plato are footnotes of Plato”. It is about the beginning stage of civilizational history, when people had limited knowledge and the words ‘physics’ or ‘Mind’ used to be entailing several meanings. The knowledge was then discrete, scattered. But with the growth of knowledge, the different spheres of knowledge became compartmentalized and departmentalized. Further growth of knowledge led to unification, organization of the different departments and a fast return to ‘globalization’, the repetition of history, as it were. The ‘globalization, though started in economic fields, it spread to several fields, gaining a interdisciplinary, multi-disciplinary, multicultural status, termed with a “applied” prefix. Art and aesthetics is no exception. By applying one subject with several aspects, a gigantic house of knowledge came into being, multiplying its values, importance, statured like a big Bunyan tree, with its vast number of branches, twigs. Now, applied arts/aesthetics is the talk of day.

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**1.1      INTRODUCTION**


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In his paper ‘Ontology of Art’, Guy Rohrbaugh speaks about the basic question involved in this concept thus, “Ontology is the study of what exists and the nature of the most fundamental categories into which those existants fall. Ontologists offer a map of reality, one divided into such broad, overlapping territories as physical and mental, concrete and abstract, universal and particular. Such a map provides the setting for further philosophical investigations. Ontologists of art seek to locate works of art in wider terrain, to say, where in our universe they fit in. Their governing questions, thus; “what kind of thing is a work of art?”

In another paper on the “Ontology of art”, Amie L. Thomason says that the central questions related to this may be put in the form of these questions, “what sort of entities are works of art? Are they physical objects, ideal kinds, imaginary entities or something else? How are the works of art of various kinds are related to the mental states of artists or viewers, to physical objects, or to abstract visuals, auditory or linguistic structures? Under what conditions do works come into existence, survive or cease to exist?” These questions should not be confused with mere definition, of art, for ‘ontology’ does not concern with or is satisfied with definitions, but it concerns the various entities accepted as paradigm works of art of different genres. A mere definition of art would lead to distinguish between art and non-art, but the work of art are of different kinds and have different ontological status.”

The ‘ontology of art’ revolves round the problem of ontological status of work of art with respect to the two aspects i.e. form and content aspect of work of art. This has been explained by an example (discussed later in this paper) suppose that A has on the desk before him David Copperfield. Is David Copperfield therefore identical with this book that A can touch and see? Certainly not, for another lies copy on B’s desk. And a single work of art cannot be identical with two distinct physical things. The obvious conclusion is that David Copperfield, the novel, is identical with no physical thing. It is not a physical object, any more than is a piece of music, which is clearly distinct from its performances. Perhaps the same is true of paintings, architecture. All these problems are related to the various theories of art which forms the main subject of discussion within the broad head of Ontology of arts.

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## **1.2 ETYMOLOGICAL MEANING OF ‘ONTOLOGY’ AND ‘ART’**

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The expression ‘Ontology of art’ is an expression consisting of three words, eg Ontology, arts, and between these two words, we have a prepositional connective ‘of’. This entails that certain relation exists between the two words, ‘art’ and ‘ontology’. The question is, how to correlate the two; to accomplish this task, in the context of the world we live in, whereby man ranks higher to animals.

The words Ontology, metaphysics and philosophy are used in the similar sense, to relate to ‘beings’, ‘existence’ rather than physics or physical sciences. In this sense, the expression ‘ontology of arts’, means relating art to life, existence or being. In this sense, it means, applying art to life, existence or being. It is applied arts. The different forms of arts are nothing but the replica of the forms of being, it is expression of arts in its multi faced aspects as in music, poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture etc. Art has a lot of functions to perform, it is also used to apply judgement of value. Making judgements of value requires a basis for criticism. “At the simplest level, a way to determine whether the impact of the object on the senses meet the criteria to be considered art is whether it is perceived to be attractive or repulsive. Though, perception is always coloured by experience, and is necessarily subjective, it is commonly understood that what is not somehow satisfying cannot be art... (It) is often intended to appeal to and connect with human emotion. In the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the artist turned to the ideas of truth and beauty, Ruskin is a aesthetic theorist, who championed what he saw as the naturalism of J.M.W. Turner, and art’s role as the communication by artifice of essential truth that could only in found in nature. Art’s definition and evaluation became problematic since 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Richard Wollheim’s distinction of the three approaches, the Realist, whereby “aesthetic quality is an absolute value independent of any human view”; the objectivist, whereby “it is also an absolute value; but is dependent on general human experience” and the Relativist position, whereby “it is

not an absolute value, but dependent on and varies with, the human experience of different humans.” With the advent of modernism (19<sup>th</sup> Century) there was a radical break in the conception of function of art. In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century with the advent of post-modernism Clement Greenberg’s (1960) article ‘Modernist Painting’, defines modern art as “the use of characteristic methods of a discipline to criticize the discipline itself.” Greenberg applied this idea “to the Abstract Expressionist movement and used it as a way to understand and justify flat (non-illusionistic) abstract painting.” While “the realistic, naturalistic art had dissembled the medium, using art to conceal art; modernism used art to call attention to art”. After Greenberg several art theorists emerged, such as, Michael Fried, T.J. Clark, Rosalind Krauss, Linda Nochlin and Griselda Pollock etc. Greenberg’s definition of art is important to many of the ideas of art within the various movements of 20<sup>th</sup> Century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century. Novitz held that the various definitions of art is not a problem, rather “the passionate concerns and interests that humans vest in their social life” are “so much a part of all classificatory disputes about art” (1996) According to Novitz, “classificatory disputes are more often about social values and where society is trying to go than they are about theory proper.” Danto suggested a thought experiment showing that “the status of an artifact as work of art results from the ideas of a culture applies so it, rather than its inherent physical or perceptible qualities, Cultural interpretation (an art theory of some kind) is therefore constitutive of an objects art hood.” Sometimes art is perceived as belonging exclusively to higher social classes, this taking art seen as upper class activity, associated with wealth, the ability to purchase art, and the leisure required to pursue or enjoy it. Fine art and expensive good is taken as a matter of higher culture push. The opening of Museums during French Revolution indicates a cultural push.

‘Ontology of art’ by Gregory Currie (N.Y. 1989. St Martin’s Press) is the most imaginative, probing, lucid and sophisticated treatments of the ontology of art to appear in recent times. The book has two main thesis around which he organizes his discussion (i) Action Type Hypothesis and Instance Multiplicity Hypothesis. Currie says that “the appreciation of art works is the appreciation of a certain kind of achievement.” Thus he means to say that art is or art must be certain kind of achievement. Currie feels that an artist in composing or creating, discovers a certain structure of words of sounds of colours or whatever Currie calls features of the way which are relevant to what he regards as “fitting under aesthetic appreciation, the artist’s heuristic path. His proposal, then, is, that works of art are action types of the following sort; someone’s discovering a certain structure via certain heuristic path. Nor all action types of the sort are works of art; but all works of art are action types of this sort. Discoveries of the same structure via different heuristic paths are instances of different works, as are discoveries of different structure via heuristic path.” “Currie appears to assume that there is some sort of stable agreement among critics as to the considerations relevant to an appreciation and evolution of works of art.” Critics regard appreciations and evaluations abstract aesthetic appreciation and evolution as something of special sort. Currie does not do this; he uses the words “artistic” and “aesthetics” very much synonymously. There are some good critics who do not talk about the aesthetic features of works of art and about features that those works have by virtue of how they were produced but about very many other features as well. They speak about causal effects of works; most critics in the contemporary western world regard work’s evocation of anti-semitism as a demerit in the work. What is peculiar of Currie is that he says, “artistic appreciation and evolution as more uniform, fixed, and narrow in scope than its actually is. Nonetheless, evaluations of artistic achievement do enter into the discourse of almost all of us about the arts”. The remarkable fact about Currie is that he views works of art as just action types. He says,

“Distinct works possess the same structure”. In cases like that, “what differentiates the works are the circumstances in which the composer or author arrived at the structure”. It is essential to find a way of capturing this idea of circumstances in which the artist arrived at that pattern.

Currie holds that art needs strength and enrichment from other areas of philosophy. He tries to bring ideal from metaphysics and philosophical logic to bear on questions about the nature of arts (1989-1990). He has also shifted a step further in research on psychology, that art and mind are causally related. He says that art and mind are closely related but to agree on what the connection is, a different matter.

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### 1.3 ONTOLOGY AND ITS RELATION WITH METAPHYSICS

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It has been noted in the encyclopedia, that while the etymology of ontology is Greek, the oldest record of the word itself is the New Latin form *ontologia* which appeared in 1606, in the work of Jacob Lorhard (Lorhardus) and in 1613 in the *Lexicon philosophicum* by Rudolph Gockal (Goclenius) “The first occurrence of “ontology” as recorded in Oxford English Dictionary in 1721, which defines ontology as “Account of being in the Abstract”, though such an entry indicate that the term was already in use at that time. It is likely that the word was first used in its Latin form by philosophers based on Latin roots, which were themselves based on the Greek. The Concise online Oxford English Dictionary (Draft Revision Sept. 2008) gives as first occurrence in English a work by Gideon Harvey (1636/7-1702),. The concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions (1997) John Bowker gives the following note, (GK on being + Logus, reflection) Reflection in philosophy and metaphysics on what truly exists or what underlies appearance by way of existent reality. The term was introduced in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century when the study of the being, as being was also called *Ostosphia*. In the continuity of Scholasticism, ontology was the term applied to the study of the *properties of being*, as such, in contrast to special metaphysics which studies aspects of being open to experience. According to Webster’s Dictionary ontology is a “branch of metaphysics relating to the nature and relations of being – a particular theory about the nature of being or kinds of existence “Ontology (the science of being) is a word like metaphysics that is used in different senses. It is sometimes considered to be identical to metaphysics, but we really prefer to use it in a specified sense, as that part of metaphysics that specifies the most fundamental categories of existence, the elementary substances or structures out of which the world is made. Ontology will thus analyze the most general and abstract concepts or distinctions that underlay every more specific description of any phenomenon in the world e.g. Time, spaces, matter, process, cause and effect system.” Ontology is originally a branch of philosophy that deals with the nature and organization of reality. It tries to answer questions like, ‘what is existence?’

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### 1.4 ART AS PROCESS

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This point has a great bearing on the ‘ontology of Arts’, the whole philosophy or metaphysics or ontology is rather essentially growing advancing process. The ontology of art as essence of arts is never a closed system, since arts depicts life and life itself is a process, it is an expression, self-expression, an artist is giving expressions to his emotional exuberance, emotional outbursts, or a process of keeping pace with process of artistic expressive creativity into any form of art, poetry, painting, music etc. Life is lived in bits, in moments, from moment to moment, as such no final theory can depict life in its multifacetedness, in every moment, life is facing a new ebb and flow, like the dictum of philosophy, “You can not bathe in the same stream even twice in a moment”,



with every tick of watch, life proceeds to a forward march, so every piece of art has to undergo the process of pace with life's pace. That is the heart and soul of art, an artist tries to or may try to take an equal pace to run along with life, but art's pace may not run with equal pace with life, this makes art an un-ending shape, undending shades of art, poetry, painting, sculpture, music and so on. Hence there can't be one form of art. With changing life from moment to moment, various spheres of arts are created, so art is an unending job. Neither science is closed house nor is philosophy is, nor is art. A Persian poet has said, philosophy is like a book of which the first and last pages are lost and a philosopher's task is to search those lost first and last pages, which means, philosophic activity is never-ending search. William Shakespeare said in Hamlet,

“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy” Shakespeare holds that any philosophy is destined to be incomplete. The continuing advance of science and human experience inevitably leads to new words and ideas that require extensions to any proposed systems of categories. A. N. Whitehead's motto is the best guideline for any philosopher or scientist “We must be systematic but we should keep our system open.” Whitehead is proponent of Process Theory.

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### 1.5 MIMETIC THEORY OF ART

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The word 'mimetic' means (a) of or relating to an imitation, imitate, (b) using imitative means of representation. There are several theories of art. M.H. Abraham divides literary theory as Mimetic, pragmatic, Expressive and objective. H. Adams phases out the history of philosophy and literary criticism as *Ontological Epistemological, Linguistic* and *Socio-cultural*. The word 'Mimesis' is in use since Plato, but it is used by great theorists of Renaissance upto modern theorists too. Both Plato and Aristotle stick to mimetic theory of art, i.e. art as imitation but in different ways. The clue as to how to differentiate between Plato's views and Aristotle lies in the explanation of ontological dichotomies of the 'Universal' and 'particular'. Do the universals exist independently of individuals of whom they can be predicated or if they are merely convenient ways of talking about and finding similarity among particular things that are radically different? On this issue there are three main positions, realism, idealism and nominalism. According to the realists – universals are real – they exist and are distinct from particulars that instantiate them. This takes three forms – *Platonic realism (universalia ante res)* *Aristotelian realism (universalia in rebus)* Platonic realism holds that universals are real entities, and they exist independent of particulars. Aristotelian realism holds that universals are real entities, but their existence is dependent on the particulars that exemplify them. Nominalists deny that universals are real. The term 'nominalism' comes from Latin 'nomen' (name) also called "termism" as also for three forms. Some noted 'nominalists' are 'William' of Ockam, D.C. Williams (1953) David Lewis (1983) H. H. Price (1953) W.V.O. Quine (1961) The discussion cannot be more elaborated.

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### 1.6 EMOTION THEORY

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It is found in general, that art comes out of man's sincere and intense feelings and emotions. Art as emotion finds its greatest exposition in the works of Benedetto Croce (1866-1952) and R.G. Collingwood (1889-1943) Both were filled with subtle insight to write effectively; both believed in the mental nature of art; that before art is placed for display to the public, it remained in the artist's mind. Croce starts with 'intuitions', In him, "the intuition is the knowing of impressions and their transformation by the active imagination into unified images or organic wholes", here,

knowing and expression of those impressions are linked, were indivisible and could not be encompassed by intellectual criteria, Hegel's influence on Croce was great. In 1918, Croce included in intuition, "feelings for entire humanity: by mid-twenties", Croce, "included moral ideas." In 1936, he distinguished between art and non art, poetry and literature etc. Only intuition – expression was art, its externalization was secondary: externalization assists the communication of art, Collingwood continued. Art either has the emotions expressed (good) or repressed (bad) so that criticism is rather beside the point. It has been contended that art made no assertions, but simply is the unconscious being conscious. "The aesthetic experience, or artistic activity is the experience of expressing one's emotions, and which expresses them is the total imaginative activity...."

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### 1.7 INTUITIONIST THEORY OF ART

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Benedetto Croce and R.G. Collingwood's views are considered and termed as "The Croce-Collingwood theory of art". This does not mean that Croce's theory is either inferior or Collingwood views are flawed, but their contribution which is considered important lies in two factors (i) it describes the work as an intentional object (ii) though lesser in importances, it clearly describes one possible artistic process. Croce agrees that "language and aesthetics run parallel," he said, "Art must be language"; that "all the scientific problems of Linguistic are as those of aesthetics and that the truths and errors of the one are the truths and errors of the other". In the similar view, Collingwood's agreement with Croce is revealed by his statement that "we can answer the question" "what kind of thing must art be, if it is to have two characteristics of being expressive and imaginative? Negatively, both agree that art is not a craft, and positively, that as intuition and imaginative expression, art is language; both argue that work of art as expression may be described as intuitional or imaginary object". The work of art is not merely the physical object before the audience and nothing more. It is an intentional object it is an object about which no existence claims are made, and it is essentially the subject of one or more mental acts. In phenomenological terms, for every mental act (*noesis*), there is corresponding object (*noema*) toward which consciousness is directed. Art per se is nothing without some corresponding mental act or intuition that confers upon the object, internal or external, the name 'art'. The difference between the two lies in the vision of artistic process, though both agree in general way the internal work of art and its externalization. Collingwood's position is an advance on Croce's position, he holds that externalization may occur simultaneously with expression: whereas Croce does not allow for that possibility. Secondly, "because of the structure implied in the first advance," the audience has a greater potential for realizing the artistic intuition than is possible within the confines of Croce's theory. On the point of externalization, there is a difference between the two Collingwood makes some improvement in Croce's views. For Croce, "the externalized object can not be considered to be art. At the audience level, the audience must traverse three stages to reach the original intuition which according to Collingwood, permits closer tie between the audience and the work of art as experience as he has improved upon Croce's theory by (1) allowing the simultaneity of expression and externalization and (2) by eliminating the stringent and unrealistic ordering of production and reproduction found in Croce. Collingwood speaks of or assumes two different theories, of aesthetic experience, one for the artists, another for audience' "for the artist, the inward experience may be externalized or converted into perceptible object; though there is no intrinsic reason why it should be. For the audience, there is a converse process: the outward experience comes first and this is converted into inward experience which alone is aesthetic."

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## 1.8 PHYSICALITY/CONTENT THEORY

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The content theory adopts an opposite position of Croce-Collingwood views on art. This question is raised, is an artwork a physical object? This question breaks into two aspects, and needs dual analysis, about the physicality (or non-physicality) of artwork and its status (or non-status) as an object. Wollheim contends that, the formulation of a theory of status of work of art would address issues of physicality and categorization. According to Collingwood the artists create art so as to express, but the artist's emotion prior to expression is unanalysable, arts existence is rooted in the artist's mind, which cannot be seen or heard but something imagined." Dilworth supports the content theory which means that ontology of art are just physical object, lumps of marble, pigment covered canvasses, sequence of sound waves, or marks on pages... The physical object hypothesis as Wollheim calls it, has also been criticized from several corners in several ways, like Collingwood etc. Also J. P. Sartre holds that works of art are never 'real' objects, though unlike Collingwood, he does not think of works of art as "imagined activities, but rather as imaginary or 'unreal' objects, created and sustained by acts of imaginative consciousness, and existing only as they remain the objects of such acts." The question is, do we have solid arguments to show that work of art are physical objects? Should works of art be identifiable with mere lumps of matter that make them up describable purely in terms of physics? Normally, work of art have certain intentional, meaning – oriented, and/or aesthetic properties but the possibility of the plausibility of art being purely physical objects is dim and remote. It is suggested by scholars that it is impossible to deny all works of art are physical objects in either strong or weak sense. Wollheim and Wolterstorff accept that some sorts of art (painting, non-cast sculptures) are physical objects, but deny about all. In music, literature, or drama, there is no physical object. The option then left but to consider *some* or *all* works of art as abstract entities. Wollheim brings here the concept of 'types' and 'tokens' from C.S. Peirce's vocabulary. The types are (as distinct from classes or universals) of which copies performances are tokens. Wollheim identifies multiple works with types. In Peirce's term, there is difference between *type* and *token* sense of a word; in its token sense, a word is used to refer to a particular occurrence, in its type sense it refers to that of which tokens are occurrences. E.g. The word 'photograph' enjoys type-token ambiguity, since it can refer to either particular prints or that of which they are prints, viz. photographic works.. Peirce's pattern is a ambiguous, points out Wollheim. "What can be said of all well informed tokens of type can be said of the type as well"... Types are said to be both property-like in having token instances. and object-like, in serving as a locus for further predication and identification with other objects such as art work. It has been held that type-theory is really a family of views which share a common framework.

It is often agreed upon that multiple works are individuated, at least in part, by intrinsic qualitative and structural features. Kivy holds that in case of music, intrinsic features are all that matter. Some add extrinsic feature are all that matter. Some hold extrinsic features of tokens. This extension of extrinsic comes from recent 'contextualist' argument that historical contexts of a work's production can affect its aesthetic features. According to Walton (1970), aesthetic properties of a work depend on its genre, genre in turn, is determined by contextual features. Levinson holds that even in different contexts similar or exactly similar can be made.

Wolderstorff instead of appealing to historical features suggest that some of the identifying qualitative features of types are not descriptive but normative. Type-theory has been criticized on various counts. For example (i) types, like sets are abstract objects (2) Type theorists by explaining the distinction between regular and multiple works in terms of universal particular

dichotomy is forced to “identify multiple works with stable, inflexible, abstract items which do not stand with us in time as the singular works do” (3) if types are not susceptible to causal interpretation, it is difficult to understand how they could be created or destroyed. Levinson claims that types *exist* when tokens are *possible*, not *actual* as Aristotle holds. It is held that the types are not modally flexible in the way, for what is predicable of a type is necessarily predicable of it. D. Davies (2004) offer a twist on Currie’s idea that art works are event types. For the monist, Currie “the work of art is not a physical object produced, or a performance or even a structure that such objects and performance may share, but rather the way in which an artist arrived at that structure. Works are thus action-type, an individual’s arriving at a certain structure via a certain ‘heuristic’ by which Currie means that path which led the artist to that structure including both internal elements of the artists thought and external elements of art-historical context influencing the artist”. Dilworth holds that the propositional model to content-based artworks naturally leads to double content theory of art, which requires elaboration

John Dewey (1859-1952) took a somewhat broader view of artistic activity and stressed great works of art as examples of common human pursuit. There can be no one settled interpretation, but it arises from the interaction of artists with the medium, individual experiences with the cultural matrix it draws its life from the cultural life of the ‘community’.

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## **1.9 TRIPTYCH THEORY OF ART**

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This theory was explained by Adam Gazdalski (2006). He explains this by taking an ‘empirical-outsider problem’ by not asking to himself ‘what art is ‘but’ why is it we argue over it’s use? In the outsider’s view, three general values of art arise; the first being that of Mimetic theory, which says that art is merely imitation of something real, that artists *mimies* what he/she attempts to create. Secondly, art is the evocation of or stimulation of emotions and feelings in the viewer, which is termed Romantic view of by art historians. Third, is the view that design, is the principle aspect in art taking a Designer’s standpoint. He says that mimetic theory is the oldest theory and its first type of art was in ancient cave man painting on walls. Elements of high level thinking, like depicting emotions and a strong sense of design came only thousands of year later. The result was that today’s art is more sophisticated and requires a further greater sophistication to fully understand and appreciate it. “The truth of the matter is that this triptych definition of art is not the end of the line, nor will it’s line ever be complete. Hypothetically it is possible that some day humanity will develop a sense that surpasses that of ‘design’, or mimification or ‘evocation’. If someday that happens, these will simply be another contributing elements to the grand scheme of art, and in my opinion anyone who denies themselves knowledge of any aspect of art is simply limits themselves, as either an artist or viewer of art”.

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## **1.10 PERFORMANCE THEORY OF ART**

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David Davies wrote ‘Art as performance’, who is one of the chief exponent of this theory that the art works are not the products of generative performances but performances themselves. His aim is to “establish a secure conceptual foundation for the view of the arts and the art appreciation implicit in that recent literature which engages with late modernism. Jeanette Bicknell opines that performance theory may be said to be better than its competitors at making sense of the continuities and discontinuities between the traditional and late modern art. It is also meant to hold across the arts – applying equally to works in the visual arts, literary works, music dance etc.

Davies' performance theory is a result of his thesis at the university of Manitoba in 1979, whereby he has very finely argued for his contention, though it is not a work for 'philosophical neophytes' Gregory Curries account of art work as "action types") (in 1989 – An Ontology of Art) is closest to Davies. He has used certain specialist vocabulary, like, 'artistic statement', 'focus of appreciation' etc. It is remarked by Bicknell, "An art work itself a performance, specifies a focus of appreciation, to 'specify' a focus is both to make the focus specific and to make it inter - subjectively available. Those features of an artwork's provenance that directly relate to the goal of articulating an artistic statement enter into the identity of a work, and we have to decide which features "directly relate" on a case to case basis".

A common sense view of art embodies an ontology, an epistemology, (to appreciate the art work, it is both necessary sufficient to perceive it") and an axiology (value of art work derives from the value of experience we have it) Modern work challenge common sense views. Contemporary philosophers also reject that there is a single ontological category which can encompass all artworks, holding a pluralist view that some art works are artifacts, while others are "better understood as types or structures of some sort. "They favour what Davies calls" *contextualized* ontology, whereby a work's provenance is partially constitutive of it. Variations are defended by Levinson, Margolis, and Danto. An important aspect of Davies' methodology is that, anything treated in (institutionalized) artistic practice as "artworks" actually constituted art works". Davies has referred to Goodmen's views as expressed in his book "Language of Art".

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## 1.11 INSTITUTIONAL THEORY OF ART

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George Dickie is a leading figure besides others. This theory means "a work of art is an item that is incorporated in a certain way in the institutions of art, that is hanging in a gallery or museum. More precisely, a work of art is an object which has had conferred upon the status of a candidate for appreciation by someone acting on behalf of the art world "(Danto, Dickie) Dickie's account contains fruitful reflections on methodology, including a proposal for a classification scheme for theories of art. He draws a distinction between '*psychological theory of art*' and '*cultural theory of art*'. The former derives from distinctive innate mechanism embedded in human nature for the latter, art is 'collective invention of human beings and not something that an artist produces simply out of his or her biological nature as a spider does a web.'" "Cultural theories are said to mark a radical change in the way many of us now theorize about art." He differentiates between cultural kind and natural kind and puts emphasis on the former and hopes that cultural anthropologists can discover the underlying cultural structure of art. He says, "a work of art is an artifact of a kind created to be presented to an art world public", This statement epitomizes the cultural essence of work of art. He criticizes *S, Davies and Levinson's views of Art*: A natural kind theory (like food etc) holds that 'art' first emerged as a result of 'necessary and sufficient matrix for works of art'. The institutional theory is a cultural kind theory". He traces the history of institutional theory from 1969 upto Dickie's book, '*The Art Circle*' which according to him is the best account of institutionalism. He also raises the question of the concept of art as a evaluative notion which can be neutral to classificatory sense of art. The chief contents of his theory can be summed up thus; (i) institutionalism provides a way of speaking of mediocre and bad art. these alternatives does not (ii) Dickie does not favour, the phrase 'good art' is redundant (iii) he does not favour, it might turn out that only one of the two theories of art, although they are almost identical in every respect except that one is aesthetically just noticeably better than the other... Finally, in ordinary language 'work of art' frequently means "of highest value" Dickie argues... that traditional art work have value which no one thinks correct, the value they attributed

to all art works need not be aesthetic value. He concludes by reformulating institutional theory of art “a work of art in the classificatory sense is an evaluable artifact of (a) kind created to be presented to an art works public”. “Dickie’s views may be read with Weitz’s “openness” concept of the theory of art as well as the views of A.C. Danto who was having five subjects in mind while writing on art as closer to philosophy, his work is very important for the ‘Ontology of art.’”

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### 1.12 FORMALISTIC THEORY OF ART

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It envisages that all work’s artistic value is determined by its form - the way it is made, its purely visual aspects, and its artistic medium. Formalism emphasizes composition elements, like color, line, shape, texture rather than realism, context and content. It takes context, its reason of creation, historical background the life of the artist etc as secondary aspect. Formalism is an approach to understand art and it is traced back to Plato, Who argued that ‘*eidos*’ (or shape) of a thing included our perception of the thing, as well as those sensory aspects of a thing which the human mind can take in. ‘*Eidos*’ of Plato included elements of representation and imitation for the reason. The *eidos* is inherently deceptive and the thing itself cannot be replicated. Clive Bell who wrote a book in 1914, ‘Art’, distinguished between the thing’s ‘*actual form*’ and ‘*significant form*’. The true nature of a thing is ‘significant, or true inner nature of a thing, that recognition of a work of art as representational of a thing is a secondary importance. The structuralists hold that mental processes and social perceptions are more important and than the essence or ‘ideal’ nature of things. Things can be known as it is filtered through these mental processes. Later, word ‘form’ came to be used interchangeably with the word ‘structure’. It has been remarked in this connection that, while “formalist manipulated elements within a medium, structuralists purposely mixed media and included context as an element of aesthetic work”. While formalist focus on aesthetic experience, structuralists played down response in favour of communication. Structuralists focus on ‘grammar’ of art as far back as the work of Mared Duchamp. In many ways, structuralism draws on the tools of formalism without adopting the theory behind them.

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### 1.13 REPRESENTATION THEORY

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Many philosophers, ancient and modern have said “man as the *representational animal homo symbolicum*,” the creature whose distinct character is the creation and the manipulation of signs – things that ‘stand for’ or “take place of” something else. It is through representation that people organize the world and reality through the act of naming its elements. Signs are organized in order to form semantic constructions and express relations.” (Mitchell W 1955) Mictchell says, “representation is an extremely elastic notion (-1955), which extends all the way from stone representing a man to novel. It is associated with large fields. In literacy theory is covers aesthetics, (art) and semiotics (signs) it had evolved into a significant component of language, which is defined in three ways (i) to look like or resemblic (ii) to stand in for something or some one (iii) to present a second tune to re-present.

Etymologically from re-intensive prefix, *presentare*, to present to ‘place before’, to represent is ‘to bring to mind by description, also “to symbolize, to be embodiment of. “A representation is a type of recording is which the sensory information about a physical object is described in a medium. The degree to which an artistic representation resembles the object it represent is a function of resolution and does no bear on the denotation in of the word.”

Representation plays important role in literature, semiotics and aesthetics. Plato and Aristotole’s literacy theory takes literature as representation which may be verbal, visual or musical as being

natural to human beings. The ability to create and manipulate signs is typical of man; memesis is natural to man, Plato was more conscious to the use of representation and thought literature is representation of life, yet also believed representation create world of illusion leading man away from “real things”. Man is more imitative than animals since from childhood he learns by imitation. Aristotle discusses imitation in three ways e.g. the object, the symbol being represented (ii) Manner – The way the symbol is represented (iii) means the material that is used to represent it. The means of literacy representation is language. In the system of representation and communication, errors, false hood and misunderstandings are natural. The representation (in memory, in verbal descriptions in images) not only ‘mediates’ our knowledge (of slavery and of many other things) but obstructs, fragments and negates. C.S. Peirce held that logic is formal semiotic, it studies signs; he said all thoughts take time, all thoughts is in signs and sign processes (*semiosis*); sign is sign because it is interpretable. Logic has three parts, speculative grammar logical critic and speculative rhetoric or *methodentie*. There are three ways in which signs represent *icon*, *index* and *symbol*. Ferdinand de Saussure holds that semiotic examines the signs and types of representation that humans use to express feelings, ideas, thoughts and ideologies. In *semiosis* two things are fundamental, the signifier and signified. Saussure says tht signs are arbitrary relational and constitute our world. In many languages, writings systems, alphabet system “represent” spoken language, represent phonetic sounds as different sounds in the word ‘art, apple, gate margarine – ‘a’ letter sounding differently.

These theories of language signs etc play an important role in case of arts which expresses with the means of signs, symbols etc. A deeper analysis can be very informative but it is not possible to go into details.

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#### **1.14 ART AS INTERPRETATION**

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Oscar Wilde said, “It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances. The mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible. “This calls for the prove importance of ‘interpretation’ the interpretation of art, art theories art works etc. This also involves the question of value of art according to Aristotle, art has a certain value, because it is a therapy, it is useful, medically useful, in that it arouses and purges dangerous emotions, Nietzsche said, “There are no facts, only interpretations “and by interpretation, he meant “a conscious act of the mind which illustrates a certain code, certain “rules of interpretation. It is what is called hermeneutics.

Apart from these, there are several other theories of which mention may be made of a few, e.g. Art as history, art as experience, art of conceptual, art as literacy criticism art as creativity etc. In the context of ‘ontology of art’ Carl Matheson and Ben Caplan has also mentioned some other theories viz., Product theory, Decontextualized Product theory the Contextualized Product Theory, The Indicated Structure Theory art as Communication etc, a description of which is not attempted due to paucity of space at our disposal.

#### **Check Your Progress I**

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Define the ontology for aesthetics.

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 .....  
 .....  
 2) Explain various theories of art.  
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### 1.15 LET US SUM UP

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Both the words ‘ontology’ and ‘art’ have various meanings and are applied to several fields of study, as such ‘ontology of arts’ has its applicational aspects as questions of “applied arts”. Applied arts refers to the application of design and aesthetics to objects of function and everyday use. As distinguished from fine arts, while applied art incorporates design and creative ideals to objects of utility (such as a cup, magazine or decorative park bench) fine arts serve as intellectual stimulation to the viewer or academic sensibilities. In a creative context, the field of architecture and photography are considered applied arts. The fields of industrial design, graphic design, fashion design, interior design, etc. are considered applied arts. The term ‘fine arts’ was first attested in 1787, as a translation from French term beaux arts and designates a limited number of visual arts forms, including painting, sculpture print-making. The word ‘fine’ relates to purity of discipline and excludes visual art forms. It has been remarked that the term ‘fine’ comes from ‘the concept of Final Cause; or purpose or end, in the philosophy of Aristotle. The Final Cause of fine art is the art object itself, it is not a means to another end, except perhaps to please those who behold it. Applied art comprise two different types – standard mechanic-mode products which have had a particular design applied to them, to make them more attractive and easy-to-use; and individual aesthetically pleasing but mostly functional, craft products made by artisans or skilled workers. Artistic disciplines that are classified as applied arts, include industrial design, fashion design, interior design and graphic art and design (including computer graphics) as well as most types of decorative art (e.g. furniture, carpets, tapestry embroidery, batik, pottery, basketry, metal crock furniture, jewellery, mosaic art glass ware etc.). Illuminated manuscript also may be classified as applied art Architecture is also seen as applied art.

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### 1.16 KEY WORDS

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**Arts** - Wikipedia gives the following note on art. “Art is the product of deliberately arranging items in a way that influences and affects one or more of the senses, emotions, and intellect. It encompasses a diverse range of activities, creations, and modes of expression including music, literature, film, photography, Sculpture and paintings.”

**Aesthetics** – Arts is differentiated from aesthetics it has been noted in this regard, in Wikipedia, the meaning of art is explored in a branch of Philosophy Known as aesthetics and even disciplines such as history and psychology analyze its relationship with humans and generations.

**Applied art:** The term ‘applied art’ refers to the application of artistic design to utilization (resulting product) objects in every day use. The works of applied art are usually functional objects which have been ‘prettified’ or creatively designed with both aesthetics and function in mind; applied art embraces a huge range of products and items, from a tea pot or chair, to the walls and roof of a railway station or concert hall, a fountain pen or computer mouse.

The online dictionary defines applied art (n) “any type of art done with a practical application; the application of design and aesthetics to objects of function and everyday use.”



**Type of art:** Billy Sunshine says that there are many types and forms of art, music, poetry, gardening, photography, architecture and dance etc. According to Ethil Smith, “art is a non-verbal language of line and colour and movement, it is dreams and nightmares hammered into shapes and freed into abstract composition” Art exists in many types and genres. The types of art may be viz., (1) Abstract Art. The purpose of this type of art is to convey a feeling or sanction rather than simply depicting an image or scene. It was developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and 20<sup>th</sup> Century (ii) Impressionism (iii) Expressionism (iv) Romanticism (v) Pointillism – This type of art is a style made up of tiny dots of colour, that as a whole, produce a recognizable image. It arose in late 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Gregory Pierre Seurat, Vincent Gogh and Chuck Close are important names. (vi) Art Nouveau which is a French word and means “new art” (vii) Cubism – this type of art is based on the geometric appearance of objects in painting. Famous names are Pablo Picasso, John gris and George Branque. (viii) Realism is a type of art that focuses on what is seen and not altered by the artist’s emotion or other factors.

**Art and Skill** – “Skill is something you have and is able to do and art is beautiful work involving the skill that you have”.

**Artifact** –“is any portable object used, modified or made by human”.

**Object and artifact** – “An object is any normal object but an artifact is an object that is a symbol of art”.

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#### 1.17 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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**UNIT 2** **APPLIED RASA – INDIAN PERSEPCTIVE**


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- 2.0 Objectives
  - 2.1 Introduction
  - 2.2 *Rasa* in Tradition
  - 2.3 *Rasa* in Classical Indian Aesthetics
  - 2.4 *Rasa* in Contemporary Thinking
  - 2.5 Categories of *Rasas*
  - 2.6 Let Us Sum Up
  - 2.7 Further Readings and References
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**2.0 OBJECTIVES**

The word 'applied' means, to apply a theory to practical ends. theory precedes 'practical application'. The application of theory is also the test of the accuracy, the correctness and the utility of a theory. *Rasa* theory when it is applied to particular fields, say, drama, poetry etc, it is called 'applied *rasa*'. P. Patnaik says, "unless it can be applied, it has very little practical relevance. Then it usually stagnates, or dies, if it survives, at all, it does as a mere fossil. In most cases, a good literary theory has a double potential. It can lead to further theories to prove newer philosophical speculations..... But this not enough, it must have general application ability. Not merely that. It should be something that is not a matter of vogue. When interest have shifted, such a theory should be left nowhere. And finally it must be flexible enough to take the wear of time, to be malleable to interpretations and newer needs".

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**2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The problem of defining the term, '*rasa*' is owing to the different senses in which the term is used. The uses of the term lead to different meanings due to the various contexts, the various periods of time, or occasions. Theory of *rasa* deals with various emotions, since literature is related to life, and in life, emotion plays every dominant role. Secondly, *rasa* theory covers an entire literary process from its very conception in the mind of the artist to its final perception in the heart of the perceiver or reader. The artist's genius or "*pratibha*" "leads to an excellent text which has the capacity to transport the essence of aesthetic enjoyment – *rasa*". Each of these factors is indispensable and "it is this total world – view that makes up the lucid theory. Thirdly, the tremendous linguistic potential of *rasa* is the communicability of emotion which cannot be directly communicated. It can only be *suggested* through words or their equivalents. Fourthly, Indian *rasa* theory is the richest traditions of dialectics and interpretations more than thousand years old. *Rasa* theory is ever new, as it deals with fundamental emotions of mankind which is deathless, dateless and exist till eternity. *Rasa* is philosophical to the core since it aims to attain the fore fold purusarthas of Kama, artha, dharma, Moksha.

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**2.2 RASA IN TRADITION**

The word; '*rasa*' means essence, crux, flavor, taste, savour etc. The word '*rasa*' is used in Ayurveda, whereby essence of several plants, leaves etc are extracted for preparing medicine. According to traditions, mercury (also called *rasa*) after going through course of processing,

which is known in Sanskrit as Samskara, yields a *bhasma*” a sacred residue that may be used as a medicine. Processed mercury was used in alchemical attempts to convert base metals into higher metals. *Rasa Shastra* is said to have developed between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Century. The Buddhist sage Nagarjuna is considered to be the first to use mercury for its alchemic purposes, He is quoted as saying. “I am experimenting with the mercury to eliminate poverty from this world” – “*Siddhe rase Karisyami nirdaridyamyaham jagat*”. It is believed that mercury properly prepared balances all the there doses (humours of the body), has a soothing effect on the body, prevents old age and disease, it nourishes the vital parts of the body and gives strength to the eyes. It is said to be holy because it is said to be the semen of Lord Shiva. (Internet Encyclopaedia).

In a spiritual usage, ‘*Rasa*’ means ‘Divine Nectar – the taste of enlightenment. It also means the simple verb “to taste” (*Swada, aswada*), as in having an appetite for life (it is also called *Jivaisana*) In common speech, it is used to mean essence, the sap or juice of plants, juice of fruits, the best and finest part of anything, marrow, liquor, drink, as *somarasa*, juice of sugar cane, syrup, draught, elixir, potion, melted butter, milk, soup, broth, the essential juice of the body, serum, the primary juice called *chyle* (formed from the food and changed by the bile into the blood). It can also mean *Sarvad* the seminal fluid of Lord Shiva, or simply mineral or metallic salt or a metal or mineral in a state of fusion. *Rasa* also means flavor, of which there are six original kinds – Sweet (*madhur*) Sour (*amla*) Salty (*lavana*) Pungent (*Katuka*), bitter (*Tikta*) and astringent (*Kasaya*) *Rasa* can also be any object of taste, such as a condiment, sauce, spice, seasoning or it can mean to taste or inclination or fondness for love, affection, desire, charm, pleasure or delight, it is “delight in existence”.

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### 2.3 RASA IN CLASSICAL INDIAN AESTHETICS

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*Rasa* is relishable quality inherent in artistic work - its emotive content. It is “aesthetic relish”. Emotional flavor or mood may be tragic, comic, erotic etc. Many scholars use *rasa* to mean poetic emotion – Supra mundane experience quite distinct from ordinary modes of knowledge. According to Sanskrit critics, art is object of enjoyment rather than as a medium for transmitting inspired visions of ultimate reality. Aesthetic experience can not be separated from aesthetic contemplation. Aesthetic experience is simply the apprehension of created work as delight. This delight is its own end. It has no immediate relation to the practical concerns of the world or to be pragmatic aims of moral improvement or spiritual salvation. *Rasa* theory conceives the aim of poetry not discovering universal truths, nor promoting men to action, but “evocation.” *Rasa* evocation is subordinated to that of activity. No poetic meaning subsists without *rasa*. Elements found in poetry eg ideas images, figures, structural features etc. subservient to this function. The language of feeling or a motion is not a private language, it is more a system of symbols, a language game that is understood by those who have learned its conventions and usages. Emotions as treated in poem is not the private feelings of the poet, nor the projections of the reader’s own mental states. They are the objective situations abiding in the poem itself as its cognitive content, so *rasa* is understood as residing in the situational factors presented in an appropriate language. The reason why a poet selects or chooses a particular theme is that he sees a certain promise for developing its emotional possibilities and exploits it by dramatizing its details. The representational emotion or *rasa*, is the meaning of poetic sentence. The values a poem communicates are emotive, not cognitive, It is ‘evocative’.

Bharata in his *Natya Shastra* (6.35) said, “*Rasa* is the realization of one’s own consciousness as coloured by emotions. In *Dhvanyaloka* (1.4) it is said, “*Rasa* and emotion cannot be expressed directly through words, their essence being immediate experience, so they can be suggested by words. According to Viswanath in his *Sahitya Darpan* (3.35) “*Rasa* is identical with the taste of one’s own blissful self.”

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## 2.4 RASA IN CONTEMPORARY THINKING

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Radhakamal Mukherjee says that Indian Art has obviously “a religious and metaphysical aim.” It is not an adjunct of religion and metaphysics but belongs to traditional scheme of knowledge to the realm of Dance, Dramaturgy, (*Natya Shastra*) poetic, (*Alamkarashstra*) revealing and communicating the major moods and emotions of man (*rasas*).... The arts generate and consolidate moods, sentiments, and emotions (*rasa*) freed from the fluctuations of fleeting desires and impulses, focus and diffuse these in the minds and hearts of the people.”

Sylvin Levy has commented on the Indian theatre. He observed, “Indian genius produced a new art, the symbol and summary of which can be condensed in one brief formula: *the poet (the sculpture or the painter) does not express, but he suggests*. “Really speaking, suggestion is the soul of artistic interpretation, which has been emphasized by Anandavardhana. Mukherjee differentiates between European and Indian art thus “European art, rooted in the definition and perfection of finite forms and appearances, depicts and clarifies external phenomena. Indian art, together with Indian myth and legend, by which it is constantly inspired and replenished, suggests rather than depicts inner visions and experiences.” *Rasa* in Indian poetics is characterized as *alaukika* or that which does not belong to this world. According to Alamkara Raghava, “Aesthetic beauty cannot exist unless the heart of man of good taste is moved by impersonal delight by the fascination of the expression *rasa*” Jayadeva who wrote his book “*Candraloka*” said, “The enjoyable *rasa* or the aesthetic experience in poetry, drama and in any their art-work has to pass through the successive stage of *bibhava* etc and then only can it become the enduring sentiment (*Sthayibhava*)”

**Nine gods & Rasas** – The nine *rasas* are symbolized in the *Natya Shastra* as the several deities. For example, Visnu is mentioned as god of love, Pramath of merriment, rudra for fury, Yama of compassion, Siva, of fury, Kala, of terror, Indra of heroic energy, and Brahman, of wonder such is Bharata’s classification of the deities of nine *rasas*. According to Abhinava gupta, the nine basic *rasas* and aesthetic attitudes underlie man’s fulfillment of the four fold values (*purusharthas*) of life eg. *artha*, *kama*, *therma* and *moksa*. Prof. Mukherjee holds that no other culture of the world has shown such courage and sincerity, expressing the entire gamut of nine *rasas* or moods, emotions, rage, fury, terror, bewilderment and despair are embodied in the Indian murtis grandly, majestically, and powerfully in a transcendental and cosmic setting.”

### Susan L. Schwartz’s views

Schwartz says that there is religion at the back of all performing arts in India. The ageless mythology, the spirituality, spiritual goals, which have formed the narrative, structural and teleological goals of music, dance, drama since ancient times. The oldest texts, the Vedas, Upanisads, Puranas, Ramayan, Mahabharat all provide music, dance etc provided by the tradition. *Rasa* provides in India a fascinating study. Its goal is primarily performing arts coming

from oral transmission till Bharat wrote his *Natya Sastra*. Schwartz says, “Where taste, sound, image, movement, rhythm, and transformation meet, the experience of *rasa* is possible. In India, it has traditionally been the locus of great artistic and spiritual power, where art and spirit are one..... The term is offered as a lens through performance may usefully and creatively be viewed..... *Darshan* describes the visual culture of India, and *mantra* the oral/aural: *rasa* combines these aspects of the body’s experience and adds among other factors, the experience of emotional states and their potential to induce religious response” (p16).

### Number of *Rasa*

There is a great controversy with regard to the number of *rasas*. Some Indian aestheticians say, there is only one *rasa*, it may be *Srngara*, *Karuna* or *Santa*, Some say, there are only eight *Rasas*, some add with the above eight, the ninth, *rasa* eg *Santa* by way of later addition. This *Santa* is said to cover all the *rasas*. The eight *rasa* are the following erotic/love (*Srngara*) comic (*hasya*) compassionate (*Karuna*), furious (*raudra*) heroic (*vira*) terrifying (*bhayanaka*) disgusting (*bibhastha*) awesome (*adbhuta*).

Aristotle in his *Poetics* divided dramatic poetry into two, tragic and comic. There as a similar division in India too, e.g. *Sukhatmaka* (leading to happiness) and *dukhatmaka* (leading to sorrow) as Abhivanagupta has divided it. But in Aristotle’s *poetics*, there is binary division. In Bharata’s *Natya Sastra*, we have nine different manifestations. In Greek drama, tragedy does not admit possibility of comedy and vice-versa; in Indian drama some element being together is admissible. Though in erotic, there is possibility of separation, hence sorrowful but comic and terrifying at the time does not appear to be acceptable.

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## 2.5 CATEGORIES OF RASAS

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*Rasas* have been divided into two categories, primary or basic and secondary. The primary *rasas* are those from which secondary rates are derived. The primary *rasas* are - *Srngara*, *Raudra*, *Vira* and *bibhastha*. The secondary *rasas* are *hasya*, *Karuna*, *adbhuta* and *Bhayanaka*. *Natya Sistra* (VI-39) says, “The comic aesthetic experience comes from the erotic. The compassionate comes from the furious. The awesome comes from heroic and terrible from the disgusting.”

### *Srngara Rasa*

*Srngara* has been admitted by some not only one among the several *rasas*, but the only *rasa*. *Bhoja* in his “*Srngara Prakasha*” has spoken of *Srngara* as the only *rasa* and the others as only modification of these. Others add to the aforesaid nine *rasas*, three more *Vatsalya*, *Laulya* and *Bhakti*, making the number as twelve. *Bhatt Lollata*, holds *rasa* as innumerable.

King *Bhoja* in his book *Srngara Prakasha* admits *Srngara* as the only *Rasa*. In his another book. *Saraswati Kanthabharana* admits of twelve *rasas*. He recognizes (1) *Preyas* (ii) *Santa* (iii) *udatta* and (iv) *uddhata* in addition to eight *rasa*. According to him (i) *Sneha*, (ii) *Dhrti*, (iii) *Tattvabhinivesini Mati* and (iv) *Garva* are their *Sthayibhavas* respectively. According to *Bhoja*, *Srngara* is peculiar quality of *ahamkara*.

Three processes are involved in *Srngara* eg. Concentration, contemplation and full actualization of the potential – the actual *srngara* is to the potential what flames are to the fire. The first state is that in which mere potentiality for the arousal of an aesthetic emotion from an artistic presentation of it in drama or poetry. The second stage in which *Srngara* manifests itself in any one of the recognized emotions, such as *Rati* etc which develop to a climatic point because of relation with-situation, mimetic changes and transient emotions. In the third stage, the emotion that is the expression or manifestation of *srngara* changes into love and thus returns to original 'state of *Srngara*' *rasa* or *ahamkaras*, Bhoja holds every emotion rising to a climatic pitch turns into love. Critics have questioned Bhoja's views. Love-in union and love in Separation are the two states is discussed in *Natya Sastra* (VI-45) and is called *Sambhog Srngara*. Of the various *rasas*, erotic one arises from *Sthayibhava* of love. In the Indian tradition love is associated with optimism, that with the union of the lover and beloved happiness ensues in mutual love. *Srngara* is supposed to be in union. But there is also talk of love-in Separation, it is supposed that the separation would later result in the union. In both cases, i.e. love in union and in love in Separation, there is an implicit fear that some day, it may be that their union is reversed into separation, and the fear that separation may not turn into union even in later stage. But in love-in Separation there is a hope or feeling dominant that it will end in union. There is also an Indian belief that true love in this life will definitely bring union in the next life if the love is Pure and true.

### ***Hasya Rasa***

Bharata admits only four *rasas* as basic, and the rest dependent on those. *Hasya* arises from the "unbecoming emotion to ridicule, dissuade the spectator from letting the emotion rise in a wrong situation" *Hasya* is named as one of lesser *rasas* alongwith *Karuna*, *adbhuta* and *bhayanaka*. It finds lamentably negligible place in the *rasa*, *Hasya* is an integral part of the *Natya Sastra*. Laughter is the *Sthayibhava* or the dominant emotion in *Hasya rasa*. The determinants or *Vibhavas* of *Hasya rasa* are *Vikrta Vesa* (unseemly dress), *Vikrta-alamkara* (misplaced ornaments), *Dharstyia* (Impudence) *Laulya* (covetousness) *Kalaha* (quarrel) *Asatpracapa* (near obscene utterance) *Vyanga – Darshan* (displaying deformed limbs) *Dosoda-Harana* (Pointing out the fault of others) etc. In the dramatic performance it is displayed through the *Anubhavas* or consequents like biting of the lips, throbbing of the nose and the cheek, opening the eyes wide, contracting the eyes, perspiration, colour of the face, holding the sides and others. The *Vyabhicari Bhavas* or the Transitory states of *Hasya rasa* are lethargy, dissimulation, drowsiness, sleeplessness, dreaming, waking up, envy and other things.

*Hasya* is the *Rasa* of joy, with Humor as its most common expression. Humor is the very powerful tool against sadness, Fear and Anger. Incongruity is the essence of humor. For example, instead of putting spectacles on the eyes, if the same is kept behind the eyes or backside of eyes, e.g, in head, it is incongruous and lets other to laugh. If instead of wearing of shoes in the legs, if the same is kept on the head, it makes people laugh. Pure *Hasya* comes from the inner recesses of heart, it is the joy which has no reason, This type of *Hasya* is divine *Rasa*, an expression of divine bliss. The minute the intellect starts intervening real Humour is impossible. Then the innocent Humour becomes satire or Sarcasm.

*Hasya* is of two types – viz. *Atmasta* or self based on *Parasta* or based in others. When the actor laughs to himself, it is called *Atmasta*, when he makes another laugh it is called *Parasta*. The display of oddly placed ornaments, unseemly behavior, irrelevant words, faulty dress, strange movements of limbs etc make people laugh or create *Hasya*. This *rasa* is most common to women characters and persons of mean order. It has six distinct varieties which are *smit* (gentle smile) *Hasita* (slight laughter) *Vihasta* (open laughter) *uphasita* (laughter of ridicule, Apatrasite (obscene laughter) and *Apa-hasita* (Boisterous laughter). The superior types, the middle ones and the base ones have respectively two of these. *Smita* and *Hasita* belong to people of high rank, *Uphasita* and *Vihasta* to the ordinary people and *Apahasta* and *Ati-hasita* to the mean people. Humour is said to be contagious, when any one laughs to the full, the others also imitate in laughing.

### ***Karuna Rasa***

*Karuna rasa* is a very essential part of *Natya Sastra*. The dominant emotion or *Sthayibhava* in *Karuna rasa* is *Soka* or sorrow. The *Vibhavas* or determinants of *Karuna rasa* are curse, distress, down-fall, calamity, separation from dear and near ones, loss of wealth, murder, imprisonment, flight, dangerous accidents and misfortunes. Its presentation in the stage is through following *anubhavas* viz, discharge of tears, lamentation, parched throat and month, pallor for breathe, loss of memory and other similar things. The *Vyabhicari Bhavas* of *Karuna rasas* are dejection, or dejectedness, indifference, langour, anxiety, yearning excited state, illusion, loss of sense, sadness, ailments, lethargy, sluggishness, epileptic loss of memory, fear, death, paralysis, tremor, pallor in face, shedding of tears, loss of speech and kindred feelings. The *Natya Sastra* states that the *Karuna Rasa* takes its origin through different *Bhavas* either at the sight of death or murder, of dear one or when unpleasant words have an adverse impact. It may be presented on the stage through sighs, lamentations, loss of sense, weeping bitterly and other similar gestures.

The word *Karuna* is translated as compassionate. This is very important in the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. According to *Natya Shastra*, (VI. 40) *Karuna* or compassionate or pathetic *rasa* comes from the primary *rasa* of *raudra* or the furious, “The result (*Karma*) of the furious should be known as the aesthetic experience of compassion.” Here the word “*Karma* means, deeds, result, consequence. Thus *raudra* is the cause of *Karuna*.” *Karuna* is generated from certain causes or *Vibhavas* which are the consequences or *anubhavas* of *raudra*. Thus *raudra* is the source of *Karuna* says Prof. Patnaik (P. 122). *Natya Shastra* (VI. 61) says that *Karuna* arises from permanent emotion of sorrow. Some more features have been suggested like from the contact with misfortune (*Vyasana*) destruction (*upaghata*) and calamity (*Vidrava*). Prof. Patnaik asks “what about separation from dear ones, down fall, loss of wealth, and ‘calamity’? And in answer says “the answer lies in the last mentioned word ‘calamity’, since calamity is not caused by man, but by gods, the mother earth or nature or by ‘simply impersonal nature’. For instance Prof. Patnaika cities ‘Shivas Tandav dance or anger of Indra (thunder and rain) can lead to *raudra rasa* (p 122). There may be cases when disaster might occur due to man’s own mistakes which lead to disaster as in castes Greek tragedies, where we normally do not sympathize. If man’s mistakes weights higher than punishment for pride, there is no possibility of *raudra* (p 123). In the game of dice, if one loses his wife, who will be responsible and how *raudra* will arise. Patnaika says that “tragedy can be included within the categorization of *Karuna*” (P. 124). Tragedy may be man made or due to supernatural causes “The essence of tragedy is hope

(not in modern tragedy) and it is the loss of hope which is the essence of *Karuna* as *Natya Sutra* VI-38, holds “The compassionate (*rasa*) on the other hand, consists in all loss of hope of ever meeting again.” This differs from *vipralambh srngara* where there is reunion again.

It has been said that *Karuna rasa* is related to *Bhayanak* and *Vibhassa*, it is also related to *Virarasa*, to *hasya rasa* and *Santa Ras*. To quote Prof. Patnaika, “in the west, there is such a concept as the ‘comedy of the grotesque; “what this consists in the juxtaposition of the tragic and comic in such a way that neither is realized fully, the grotesque is associated with *hasya* and *bibhatsa*, we should not be surprised if they are combined. This possibility does exist, though no Indian aesthetic has affirmed it (p. 137).

### ***Raudra Rasa***

*Raudra* is one of the most important *rasa* in *Natyashastra*. The *Sthayibhava* or dominant emotion of it is *krodh* or anger. It takes its origin in the *Raksasas*, *Danavas* as well as very naughty being, with a regular battle as its immediate cause. Its outcome is though the *Vibhavas* or determinants much as *Krodh* (anger). *Dharsana*, (Violation of modesty) *Adheksepa*, (abuse) *Apamana*, (insult) *Anrtavacana* (uttering falsehood) *Vakpauruseya*, (Harshwords) *Dhroha* (animosity) *Matsarya* (jealousy) and kindred ones. The activities connected with it are beating, tearing, harassing, chopping of, breaking piercing, striking hurling missiles, shedding blood, seizing of weapons and similar activities.”

Abhinavagupta classifies *rasa* into *Sukhatmaka* and *dukhatmaka*, *sukha* creates pain, which is negative. Then should *raudra rasa* be considered as negative state and Prof. Patnaik says, “Since it is associated with *Vira rasa*, it can lead to good or destruction of the evil even as *Vira* can lead to *Karuna* or Sorrow and Pathos” (P 143) *Natya Sastra* VI. 66 says that “Such is *raudra rasa* in which words and actions are terrifying.” i.e. words can inflict pain and at the same time, manifest anger. This is the indication of *raudra*. The violation of principles of morality, or injustice or oppression and violation of social laws excites the wrath of all right minded persons. He wishes to ‘suck the blood’ of the violators or aggressors. Abhinavagupta says that heroes of *raudra Rasa* are of very irritable nature/temper, It is not only the demons who are of such nature, but we have the examples of characters, like *Aswathama*, *Parsuram* and *Bhima*.

The accompanying states of *raudra* are given in *Natya Sastra* VI 63 .”Correct perception (*asammoha*), dynamic energy (*utsaha*) panic, resentment, rashness, violence, violence, pride, sweat, trembling, horripilate, struttering (*gadgada*) and so forth. “Correct perception lead to *vira rasa* in order to do away with evil Abhinavagupta has related *utsaha* or dynamic energy, which the primary or *Sthayibhava* of *Vira* to anger or anger. At the point of anger, even a meekest man is thrown to act courageously and defy. Anger or *Krodh* takes away the rationality of man and man is ruined as the *Gita* says. A close look at *raudra* and *Vira rasa* would show that the primary state or *Sthayibhava* of the two are different. Anger is more or less blind, more or less, ‘correct perception’ “might be blocked in anger, hence man might go in wrong direction. *Raudra* is related to *bibhatsa* and *bhayanak* as well. The manifestation of the furious or *bhayanaka* is beating, splitting, crushing, ripping open etc. which have suggestions of blood and mutilation hence, it not only gives rise to fear but also disgust or *bibhatsa*”. According to *Natya Shastra* VI. 39, *raudra* and *Vira* are related “The awful experience comes from the heroic... The result of the



furious should be known to be aesthetic experience of compassion or *Karuna*.” Wherever, heroism is manifest, *raudra* will accompany as an accessory. Besides, heroic emotion is the source of the awesome. *Raudra* properly channelized in positive direction becomes *Vira-Raudra* is related with violence and destruction. The central emphasis in *raudra* is turmoil, fury and its consequence, hence it leads to *Karuna*. It is quite interesting to note that *anubhavas* or effects of *raudra* are similar to the affects or *anubhava* of *Karuna* i.e. tears, fear, trembling etc but this is not always the case, specially when fury of man, or God or nature is against an oppressor. Another interesting point of observation in case of *raudra* and *Karuna* is that reversibility is noticed. Injustice may lead to sorrow or suffering, hence *Karuna*. But if one does not give vent to sorrow and suppress, or fight it anger or fury may be manifested. Hence *choked Karuna will lead to raudra*. Anger involves lot of waste owing to excited emotional state and chokes wisdom or robs man of intellection. Fury leads to uncalled for devastation, hence leads to *Karuna*. Some times fury becomes important, when intermixed with disgust and contempt. When disgust rules, fury gets diluted automatically. When the psychological mechanism of fury becomes important, it tries to find outlet in the form of disgust.

### ***Vira-Rasa***

*Vira* or Courage is the *rasa* of fearlessness, self-assurance, determination, heroism, valour, and perfect control of body and mind. In the ancient times, the kings, warriors used to fight with rules of dharma, whenever faced by challenges and they fought to do away with unrighteousness with *Vir rasa* or courage. There is a difference between pride or arrogance and courage. For real *Vira*, ego must be kept under perfect control. The greatest courage is to let go the pride and admit our mistakes. Mastering courage needs training and patience. Neutral pattern is essential. The main aspect of *Vir rasa* is competition and competition has to be met with patience, courage and skill.

According to *Natyasastra* (VI. 67) it is laid down that “*Vira rasa* is properly acted out by firmness, patience, heroism, pride, dynamic energy (*Utsaha*), bravery might and profound emotions.” Basic qualities that qualify for heroism are ‘firmness’ and ‘patience’. The two complement each other.” “Dynamic energy gets its anchorage and outlet in patience and steadfastness when it is correctly channelized. The causes or the *Vibhavas* of *vira* in the *Natya Shastra* VI. 66 lays down, “correct perception, decisiveness, (*adhyavasaya*, political wisdom (*naya*) courtesy (*Vivaya*) and army (*bala*) eminence (*prabhava*) etc”. Though it is a fact that *vira* is generally generated in the face of some “arrogance, injustice or generated challenge, it is some provocation that necessitates the display of courage and strength. *Bala* means *shakti* and Skill in battle, as well as strength. *Vira* people are of noble character. In *Natya Sastra* VI it is said, “*Vira rasa* is a dynamic energy (or *utshaha*) which arises from various causal factors (*arthavasesa*) such as decisiveness, not giving way to depression, not being surprised or confused, “The *Vyabharibhava* or the accompanying states of *Vira rasa* are (VI. 66)... “happiness, attentiveness, pride, panic, violence resentment, remembrance’ horripilation.” Happiness and pride result from a sense of achievement. After achieving an end, man possibly becomes *Santa*, *Vira rasa* may lead to *bhayanaka* and *adbhuta*, After Mahabharata war, there arose sense of waste, world weariness or *Santa rasa*.

***Bhayanaka & Bibhatsa rasa*** – It seems to be quite odd to take these two as *rasas*, nor is much importance given to these *rasas* in the Indian Sanskrit text, say Mahabharat though in Western

literature they find importance. These two *rasas* are related, as such study of the one to the neglect of the other is not convincing. According to *Natya Sastra* VI. 41, “The sight of disgusting gives rise to the terrifying, *Bibhatsa* is considered primary and *bhayanaka* to follow it. There are several *Bibhavas* and *anubhavas* which are similar. Fear is the permanent emotion in *Bhayanaka*. It arises from such *Vibhavas* “as ghostly noises, seeing of Supernatural beings (ghosts) fear and panic due to the (cries) of owls (or howling to Jackals, going to an empty house or to a forest, hearing about, speaking about or seeing the imprisonment or murder of one’s relatives.” (VI. 68). While “pity or compassion (*Karuna*) gives *rasa* to *Soka*, *hasya* gives rise to *harsa* or laughter, *bhayanaka* creates fear. *Bhayanaka* only signals a future threat.

*Natya Sastra* VI. 72 enunciates that “*bibhatsa* has disgust as its permanent emotion. It arises from such *bibhavas* as discussing, hearing or seeing what is ugly, unpleasant, unclear and undesired. The views of contemporary French literary critic somewhat resembles with the views of *Natya Shastra* VI. 72. *Bibhatsa* is a two kinds *Ksobhaja* (that which arises from agitation and pure *udvegi* (that which is nauseating /*Bibhatsa* and *hasya* are related to *Yoga Shastra* and Bhartihari’s *satakas* works show that disgust lead to renunciation. The deformity which is found in *bibhatsa* is the cause or *vibhava* of disgusting is also found in *hasya rasa*, owing to incongruity (*Natya Sastra* VI. 48) *Bhayanaka* and *bibhatsa* are inimical though Prof. Patnaik cites that in the works of Kafka, they coexist. The *Vyabhicari bhava* or accompanying states of *Bibhatsa* and *bhayanaka* are similar (*Natya Sastra* VI 48-VI 68, VI-72, These may be compared to the concept of Albert Camus’ “Absurd, of which we do not have the space to elaborate.

**Santa Rasa** – Many scholars have questioned if Santa should, be treated a *rasa* or not. It has been argued that Santa is negation of emotion. So how can it have a *Sthayebhava* or permanent state? Santa implies ‘calm’ and equilibrium, a state of quiet or repose” (Patnaik p. 225). But the question is can one attain to the state with endeavors, or even without endeavors. Man lives in endless desires, it only when there is fulfillment of all desires, one can attain quiet and poise. There may be cases when due to endless desires and clinging to desires, that one becomes fed up, degusted or bored, then rejection of all, desires outright can be attained thus to the state of Santa. But it is not an easy affair. Another fact worth notice, is to desire end of all desires is none the less itself a very big desires, hence how can complete desire-less-ness be attained. According to *Natya Sastra*, Santa is one and unique *rasa*, such that all *rasas* arises from it and in the end, finally merge into it. According to Abhinavagupta’s *Abhinava Bharati* it is considered the original or the natural state of mind. In this context, it has been remarked that there is absence of stimuli, desires abate and lead to a calm. *Natya Sastra* says that the *Sthayebhava* of Santa is “*sama*” which leads to *moksa*, “arises from *Vibhavas* such knowledge of truth, purity of mind etc.” Out the four *purushartha*, the last ashram leads to renunciation ensues.

Realisation of Truth gives rise to ‘*Sama*’ purity of mind which lead ultimately to *Vairagya* detachment. According to Abhinavagupta *sama* lead to *Santa*. The world man lives in is full of diversities and the realization of the “oddity” leads to detachment, and Abhinavagupta says, “if one sees the whole world as lamentable” Santa arises. Buddha’s life proves it. He says that *Soka*, or Sorrow can lead to *Santa*, also from *Krodha* or anger, one can attain *Santa*. *Utsaha* or dynamic energy can also lead to *Santa*. There are similarities between *Vira* and *Santa*, because (i) The *Vibhavas* or cause of *Vira* is ‘correct perception, (2) The cause of *Santa* is knowledge of truth. In both cases, patience, ‘Steadfastness’, determination’ are *Vyabhicarabhava* or

accompanying states. These two differ in the fact in *Vira* pride plays the main role, in *Santa* ego is diluted for the realization of Supreme Self. Abhivanagupta also says that fear or *bhaya* may also lead to *Santa*. The fear that the worldly life would lead to *Santa* as we can see in Bhartrhari's *Satakas*.

### ***Adbhuta Rasa* or wonder *rasa***

From the dawn of human civilization, human beings have tried to understand everything and are trying still for more. The feelings of wonder comes when one recognize, one's own ignorance. It has been said by a scholar, "the greatest crime of science is to limit truth to its own limited understanding." *Adbhuta* is emotion of wonder. In *Natya Sastra* it has been said that it comes from *Santa rasa*, *Natyasatra* VI. 74, enunciates *adbhuta rasa* "it has for its permanent emotion wonder. It arises from such *Vibhavas* as seeing heavenly beings, gaining one's desired object, going to temple."

According to Abhinavagupta, *Vismaya* or wonder may also lead to *Santa*. *Brhadaranyaka* Upanishad IV.3.21; speaks that the realization of Brahman is compared to State of Union with one's wife, hence Rati or love can lead to *Santa* *Rati* has been considered *Sthayebhava* of *Santa*. As in *Yoga hatra*, so also? *Natya Shastra* also holds that *yama*, *Niyama*, *dharna* (concentration of mind) *upasana* (devotion) compassion for the whole creators may lead to *Santa*. These facts can be elucidated in the context of western literatures, in the works of Rilke, T. S. Eliot and many other as well a lot of works on Indian literature.

According to Dhananjaya, '*Sama*' as the *Sthayibhava* may be presentable in poetry but not in drama. That the basic mental state of *Santa* at its pitch is not presentable" (K.C. P. p. 238) to Abhinava, *Santa* is state of mind or *Buddhi*, a continuous flow of pure Sattva without Raja and Tama altogether, and comparable to *Asampragnata Samadhi* (for a detailed discussion vide comparative Aesthetics – K.C. Pandey.) Abhinavagupta has not highlighted this, but *Natya Sastra* VI 75 puts "one should know that all the following are *Vibhavas* of *adbhuta*: any speech that contains an unusual idea, any unusual work of art (*silp*) or any remarkable act (*Karma-rupa*) *Adbhuta* can be related to *Srngara* since in it both get the object of desire. According to *Natya Sastra* VI. 82, *adbhuta* is of two kinds – that which is divine and that which is born from joy. Joy comes from delight on fulfillment of desire In this regard Prof. Patnaik cities Haiku poems, T.S. Eliot's works etc (P. 209). It is a positive *rasa*; it is difficult to relate it to *Karuna* or *raudra*. *Adbhuta* relates to something extra ordinary while fear and disgust are negative states, laughter and wonder are positive ones."

### **Check Your Progress I**

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Explain the understanding of *rasa* in Indian tradition.

.....  
 .....  
 .....

2) Explain various categories of *rasa*.

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## 2.6 LET US SUM UP

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*Rasa* theory is the life-blood of Indian Aesthetics and a vast corpus in Sanskrit, Hindi and English literature, poetry, novel etc. are available which abundantly show how *rasa* can be applied therein. There are several research works like, *Applied Rasa* in Hemmingway's Novels, *Applied Rasa* in poetry of Coleridge, in Mahabharata, Ramayana, Bhagwata Purana etc. The efficacy of *Rasa* theory is also made abundantly clear in the Indian literature on Poetics, Alamkara *RasaMimamsa*, *Rasa Manyare*, *Rasa Gangadhar*, Dhwanyaloka, SahityaDarpan and lots more. Every *rasa* has its own merits as well its specialty. Thus only in doing any research work on any one of the *Rasas*, one can build up its own architectural design, a mental architecture, a mental sculpture, a mental fabrication. Suffice it to say that *Rasa* theory is unique work of men's mental feats to the highest pinnacle of glory, to say, the work of Man Divine or Divine Man.

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## 2.7 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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## UNIT 3      APPLIED AESTHETICS: WESTERN PERSPECTIVE

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- 3.0 Objectives
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### 3.0 OBJECTIVES

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“Applied Aesthetics is the application of the branch of philosophy of aesthetics to cultural constructs” Applied aesthetics seems to derive a new shape, an enriched stature, thus aesthetics is made ever moving, ever growing by additions of some sort at each step. Invigorated in strength, enriched numerously with precious additions and constructs, it compares well with *life* itself, which according to the Veda is ‘gigantic’, *Prano Virat*, it is ever growing, ever flowing like a river or stream, without a break to look back, or to beat a retreat, it is not like a stagnated pool of water, which gives foul smell; it is refreshed each moment, it always gives fresh look of novelty, poise, patience. By applying aesthetics to various aspects of life and nature, it aims is to make it more suited to enlarge it into gigantic Bunyan tree of knowledge and also to make it an interdisciplinary and multi-dimensional branch of study. As above mentioned, it is a philosophy though some have called it ‘a science of beauty’. The question is, should it be treated as ‘philosophy’ or ‘science’ or both. The answer would be; it is both, i.e. Science and Philosophy at the same time. It is philosophy, since it is rooted in ‘life’, in ‘being’, and ‘existence’. It is science, because it is growing and developing with every scientific explorations, it aims at a ‘systematic study’ of everything, since ‘science is a systematic study of anything’, which is the way, the word ‘science’ is defined.

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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Aesthetics have been applied to several aspects or department of study and a discussion on these would be rewarding and would prove the value, importance of such a study. Recent studies have gone to apply aesthetics in the fields of music, poetry, art criticism, information technology, mathematics, films, movies, television, video, plastic arts, Digital arts, Maps, Marketing, performing arts, literature, gastronomy, Website design, industrial designs etc. We may lay down some of these for illustration.

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### 3.2 WORLD OF MUSIC/APPLIED AESTHETICS OF MUSICOLOGY

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Before discussing these, one fact seems to be essential to mention. The different theories of aesthetics have been adopted by different aestheticians and in what they hold, their scheme or theory differs from other aestheticians. Mention of several names have been given in my earlier paper and here again, names of some such figures will come in this context right from the Socratic time till date. This is not meant to repeat their names, but to mention their theories as gleamed from their thoughts and works. Really speaking, a history of aesthetics ought to have

been a better option, but my concern is not that sort of study, I am not in a position to attempt for fear of transgression of my permissible limit of space.

Musicology is a vast area and involves lot of concepts and it is not possible to place many aspects of it in a short compass. Music is considered a great art and aesthetics too. It is different from noise or voice or poem, though all these come from the same organ of speech and all these are communicable. It has been observed in free encyclopedia, "Traditionally, the aesthetics of music or musical aesthetics concentrated on the quality and study of the beauty and enjoyment of music - Plaisir and Joissance

The origin of this philosophic subdiscipline is sometimes attributed to Baumgarten in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century followed by Kant. Through their writing, the ancient term 'aesthetics', meaning sensory perception, received its present day connotation. In recent decades philosophers have tended to emphasize issues besides beauty and enjoyment. Aesthetic is a sub-discipline of philosophy, however, many musicians, music critics, and other non-philosophers have contributed to the aesthetics of music."

### **Cultural Reconstruct**

It has been stated previously that aesthetic is 'cultural-construct', and so it is also believed very often, that music are culturally influenced, that the music's appeal seems to be dependent upon the culture in which it is practiced, as we find in case of "Beethoven's musical passages are sounded highly dissonant to his contemporaries do not sound dissonant to the listeners today." According to Adorno Theodore W, there is a physical background which defines sound being proper or improper. "Proper sound is perceived as gentle sound, while improper sound is more or less considered nice sounding depending on what the listener is used to listening to. "Harry Partch and Kyle Gann have studied and tried to popularize microtonal music and the usage of alternate musical scales. Modern Composers like Lamonte Young, Rhys Chattam and Glenn Branca paid much attention to a scale called just intonation".

The word cultural construct has been defined as "the idea that the characteristics people attribute to such social categories as gender, illness, death, status of women, and status of men is culturally defined."

The aesthetics of music plays paramount importance to compositional structure; while the other issues concerning the aesthetics of music include, lyricism, harmony, hypnosis, emotiveness, temporal dynamics, resonance, playfulness and colour.

### **As Historically Viewed – music continued**

Taken into historical perspective in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, music was considered to be out of the realm of aesthetics. William Hogarth wrote his treatise 'The Analysis of Beauty', he used the word, but he held that music's role is relevant, only in so far as it is in its proper accompanishment for the dancers. By the end of the century, "the topic of music and its own beauty came to be distinguished from cases in which music is a part of a mixed media, as it is in *opera and dance*. I. Kant was the most influential figure on the work of aesthetics, argued that instrumental music is beautiful, but ultimately trivial-compared to fine arts, it does not engage the understanding sufficiently and it lacks moral purpose". In order to display the combination of genius and taste that combines ideas and beauty, respectively, music must be combined with words, as in song and opera".

The 19<sup>th</sup> Century is called the 'era of romanticism in music', during which some critics and composers argued, that, "music should and could express ideas, images, emotions or even a whole literacy plot". In 1813, E.T.A. Hoffman contended that music was fundamentally the art of instrumental composition. Five years later, Arthur Schopenhauer, in his book "The World as

Will and Representation” argued on accounts of linking music and metaphysics, that instrumental music has representational capacities. Edvard Hanslick seriously countered this thesis and waged “war of the Romantics”. This resulted into division of aesthetics in two competing groups, the one group pleading for formalism (eg. Hanslick) who emphasized that the rewards of music are found in appreciation of musical form or design, while on the other side, Richard Wagner, etc the anti-formalists who regarded musical form as a means to other artistic ends. Later in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, took detached view of the classical / romantist disputes. He gave the auditory and optical sensation “equal billing in his aesthetics”. He wrote, “Complex suggestiveness, the awakening of the vistas of memory and association, and the stirring of our flesh with picturesque mystery and gloom, make a work of art romantic”. He stated that the “Classical brands these effects as coarse and tawdry, and prefers the naked beauty of the optical and auditory sensations, unadorned with frippery or foliage”.

In 20<sup>th</sup> Century, some scholars like the poet-Ezra Pound tried to bring Poetry closer to Hanslick’s ideas about the autonomous, self-sufficient character of music (Bucknell 2002). It was believed that music was pure because it did not represent any thing, or make reference to anything beyond itself. Albert Schweitzer is one of the dissenters of this view and has argued against the alleged ‘purity’ of music in a classic work of Bach. “Far from being a new debate this disagreement between modernists and their critics was a direct continuation of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century debate about autonomy of music.”

Igor Stravinsky, a most prominent composer in 20<sup>th</sup> Century defended the modernist idea of musical autonomy. He contends that the only relevant thing “is his apprehension of the contour of the form, for form is everything. He can say nothing whatever about meanings” (Stravinsky 1962,) Although it is the common phenomenon that listeners often look for meanings in music, but Stravinsky says that these are distractions from the musical experience.

The most prominent development of 20th Century, is that distinction has been drawn between ‘higher’ and ‘lower music as analogous to the distinction between art and popular music. Theodor Adorno’s distinction may lead to question of social life, since he has a Marxist leaning and “Capitalist mode of thinking are capable hearing beauty in dishonest terms”. Kivy’s work in 1970s was important to aesthetics. According to him, analytic philosophy pays little attention to the topic of musical beauty. Instead of this, Kivy emphasized on the “nature of emotional expressiveness in music. He spoke of “authentic performances of older music and argued that much of the debate was incoherent because it failed to distinguish among four distinct standards of authentic performance of music” (1995).

In 2004, Simon Frith said that “bad music” is a necessary concept for musical aesthetics. He held that there are two types of bad music. He gives three characteristics of bad music, inauthentic, (in) bad taste and stupid. His method is based in sociology. ‘Bad’ is ‘Keyword here, it suggests that aesthetics and ethical judgments are tied together here: not to like a record is not just a matter of taste; it is also a matter of argument, and argument that matters.”

Adorno was a Marxist and he was hostile to popular music on the ground that popular music is simplistic and repetitive and encourages a fascist mindset”. He held that whether good or bad it sounds to audience... music is genuinely good if it fulfills a positive political function. In tune with Adorno, Theodore Gracyk argues that ‘conceptual categories and distinctions developed in response to ‘art’ music are systematically misleading when applied to popular music” (1996). The Indian aestheticians also speak of *guna* or *dosa* as the two criteria for acceptance or non – acceptance.

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### 3.3 APPLIED AESTHETICS IN MATHEMATICAL DOMAINS

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It sounds almost odd to hear that aesthetic principles are somehow or other linked to mathematics, since mathematics discusses and plays with number games, while aesthetics concerns with beauty. So the question at once arises, what part has mathematics to play with beauty or reversely, has beauty anything to do with mathematics! At least, we know, as a student of philosophy, that Russell and Whitehead were mathematicians. *Principia Mathematica* is a great work not only for the mathematicians, but to the philosophy students. C.S. Peirce was an astronomer yet he is revered as a true philosopher. The Indian system of samkhya is a system far too enriched than any other philosophy including the lofty system of Vedanta, though, the word 'Samkhya' comes from the word 'Samkhya', which means number, so it may be deduced that number/or for that matter mathematics, has some relation with philosophy, and since aesthetics have been called both philosophy and science, there must be some common denominator to make initial beginning. It may be remarked that the concepts, such as, symmetry and complexity are used for analysis in theoretical aesthetics, but there is a difference between aesthetic considerations of applied aesthetics in general and that used in the context of the study of mathematical beauty. "Aesthetic considerations such as symmetry and simplicity are used in the areas of philosophy, such as, ethics and theoretical physics and cosmology to define truth, outside of empirical considerations." John Keats in his Ode on a Grecian Urn boldly made beauty and truth as synonymous, saying "Beauty is truth and truth beauty". Does mathematic speak of truth apart from beauty, so that the same may be applied so mathematics? It is pertinent, Reber R. Schwartz, N. Winkelman. P, wrote a paper entitled "Processing Fluency and aesthetic pleasure: Is beauty in the perceiver's processing experience?" (In personality & social Psychology Review 8(4) 364-382) held that, "the fact that judgments of beauty and judgments of truth are both influenced by processing fluency, which is the case with which information can be processed, has been presented as an explanation for why beauty is sometimes equated with truth, "The recent research found that people often use beauty as an indication for truth in mathematical pattern tasks. One may be reminded of Bacon's words, if you want accuracy do mathematics. Does this mean that mathematics is always going to truth rather than plead for fictitious things? Is it not a fact that while doing mathematics, one feels infinite joy after one solves the sum. Many of the mathematicians hold that they derive aesthetic pleasure from their works on mathematics, who describe mathematics as beautiful. Mathematics have been compared with music and poetry. Russell expressed his views or his sense of mathematical beauty in the following memorable words, "Mathematics, rightly viewed, possesses not only truth, but supreme beauty... a beauty cold and austere, like that of Sculpture, without appeal to any part of our weaker nature, without the gorgeous trappings of paintings or music, yet sublimely pure, and capable of a stem perfection such as only the greatest art can show. The true spirit of delight, the exaltation, sense of being more than Man, which is the touchstone of the highest excellence, is to be found in mathematics as surely as poetry" (The study of Mathematics) Paul Erosd expresses his views most emphatically by saying, "why are numbers beautiful? It's like asking why is Beethoven's Ninth Symphony beautiful. If you can't see why, someone can't tell you. I know numbers are beautiful. If they aren't beautiful, nothing is."

### **Mathematics, Beauty & Philosophy**

There are several mathematicians who hold, that the joy of doing mathematics is closer to discovery than invention. William Kingdon Clifford in his lecture to the Royal Institution titled "Some of the conditions mental development", said, "There is no scientific discoverer,, no poet, no musician, who will not tell you that he found readymade his discovery or poem or picture that



that it came to him from outside and that he did not consciously create it from within.” Does it not mean that beauty comes from within than fro without!

It is contended further, that the result of mathematics are or have no dependence on the world we live in. For example, the theory of the natural number is fundamentally valid without regard to the context. Some mathematicians go a bit further to truth and often become more a mystic than remain a mathematician. Pythagoras and his school believed in the literal reality of numbers: Seen from the modern perspective, his mystical treatment of numbers was that of a numerologist rather than mathematician. It turns out that what Pythagoras had missed in his world-view was the limits of infinite sequences of ratio of natural numbers – the modern notion of real number. “Galileo Galilei had said, “mathematics is the language with which god wrote the universe” Badiou believed that deep relation exists between mathematics, poetry and philosophy. He said ontology is mathematics. This is a pointer that mathematics is beauty too and philosophy besides.

The role of Mathematics is Vital in science, technology and engineering, but it is difficult to enjoy, appreciate mathematics in passive way. In mathematics there is no analogy of the role of the Spectator, audience or viewer. That’s why Russell calls it austere beauty of mathematics. Mathematics is a complete world within itself. It cares itself and leaves the world to care for itself.

There are also vital role of aesthetics in mathematical humour, mathematical joke, in music and art. There are many mathematical examples to show all that, which cannot at present be elaborated.

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### 3.4 APPLICATION OF AESTHETICS IN INFORMATION FIELD

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In 1970s, Abraham Moles and Freider Nake were the first to analyze *links between aesthetics, information processing and information theory*. It would be interesting to note that the word information might have derived from the word “Form”; might be, owing to the use of “form” in the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, both of whom believed in the unchanging rational essences or forms, which shape everything we know; also both believed that nothing could be understood without grasping its forms.” Aristotle differed with Plato, what he called ‘the Separation of the forms’. “Plato insisted that Forms were the true reality, that the world of appearances copies them. Aristotle held that Forms are never separated from things in this way. The one exception to this is the *unmoved Mover*. “Which is pure Form. It is the goal towards which all things strive. Literally the word ‘*information*’ *taking the form of something into one’s mind and letting that form shape the mind*. Jergen Schmidhuber (1990s) described about a algorithmic theory of beauty, which takes into account the subjectivity of the observer and postulates. According to him, “the aesthetically most pleasing one is the one with shortest description, give the observer’s previous knowledge and his particular method for encoding the data.” This relates to algorithmic information theory and minimum description length, as in mathematics’ formal language, Works of Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht were inspired by Jergen Schmidhber and they *distinguished between what is beautiful* and what is *interesting*. The former corresponds to the first derivative of subjectively perceived beauty. In such case,” the premise is that any observer continually tries to improve the predictability and compressibility of the observations by discovering regularities such as repetitions and symmetries and fractal self similarity.... (this) leads to improved data compression... this compression progress is proportional to the observer’s internal reward, also called curiosity reward.” (Schmidhuber’s

writings). In the world of arts and literature, it has been said “ brevity is the soul of wit”, quite in the same way, precision and brevity offers beauty to mathematics.

It has been widely acclaimed that aesthetics in information technology has focused upon the study of human-computer interaction and user-friendly devices and software applications. There is also one branch of aesthetics in this regard a term as “*software aesthetics*” is used often. Aesthetics useful in information technology since it is applied in act of designing software itself. A short and powerful code is called ‘beautiful’. Well programmed code in aesthetics, given right conditions, elegant code can run faster and efficiently and is prone to less error. Some men try to refer to and compare good design and ‘cost-saving’. But the question of ‘good design’ and ‘cost-saving’ and their interlinking would only imply, that cost would justify everything and, then the conclusion would be that one is doing business and have gone miles away from art, then art would become redundant. So some people ‘speak of the word’ user-friendly instead of any other. In fact, “no aesthetician makes ‘user-friendliness’ as canonical and necessary in a work of art. To base art on the ‘user-friendliness’ is only to devoid art from beauty. For Dijkstra, truth was primary, and beauty the automatic result.” May it be said truth idealized and practice is beauty indeed!

### **Application of aesthetics in Website Design**

The recent researches in aesthetics emphasize on user satisfaction and pleasure. Users are guided by several dimensions and factors of his choice etc, Lavie and Tractinsky mention about two main dimensions, one “*classical aesthetics*” and “*Expressive aesthetics*.”

### **Classical-Expressive Aesthetics**

Classical aesthetics was effective from the beginning to 18<sup>th</sup> Century. These notions emphasize orderly and clear design and are closely related to many of the design rules advocated by usability experts, “Expressive aesthetics is created by the designers’ creativity and originality and by the ability to break design conventions.” The two are clearly distinguishable. According to Moshagen and Thielsch, there are four core dimensions of website aesthetics, eg. simplicity, diversity, colours and craftsmanship. The first two are treated as “formal parameters of aesthetic objects of empirical aesthetics. Colours are very critical property of aesthetic objects. Craftmanship addresses the skillful and coherent integration of the relevant design dimensions. While simplicity is highly correlated to classical aesthetics as held by Lavie and Tractinsky, the other three factors could be treated as deeper differentiation of expressive aesthetics.

**Colour** – The role of colour in arts / aesthetics are important which require another long discussion, which can’t be included here.

### **Aesthetics and Cartography**

The word cartography means, the art and science of making maps, usually in geographical sphere. Cartography was once an art using pen and paper but today, computers rule mapping. Aesthetics in cartography relates to visual experience of map reading. It can take two forms; “responses to the map itself as an aesthetic object (eg. through detail, colour and form) and also the subject of the map symbolized, often the landscape (eg. a particular expression of terrain which forms an imagined visual experience of the aesthetic.” It has been said that aesthetics are not by-product of design “If it is taken that aesthetic judgments are produced within a certain social context, they are fundamental to the cartographer’s symbolization and as such are integral to the function of maps. While making aesthetic judgments the cartographers have to ensure that the content forms a clear expression of the theme (s). Antiques maps are generally considered valuable in aesthetics, which may seem to be deprived from their styles of ornamentation.”

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### 3.5 APPLIED AESTHETICS RELATED TO DIGITAL ART AND A HOST OF VARIED FIELDS

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The term “digital art’ is a word which forcing the present world people for clear and categorical acceptance; it is a by product of computer programming that raises some fresh questions as to what truly constitutes art. People working in this area have to justify (as their bounden duty), why to use computer rather than a traditional medium. Computer art has been in use for over 25 years and that a majority of the images are flooding our senses each day, through a wide number of different media are created digitally. These new developments in art-making tools have made a revolution in commercial art, photography, television, music, film etc. The digital art is now making inroads in the world of fine arts, which has started haunting the mind of people for a serious consideration, what the art has to offer”! what separates it from what has been and what are the characteristics that will determine what digital art brings to the unfolding contemporary art scene and the continuing history of artistic to expression?” what does this imply? Has all art now become dead, Is there no new artist to give profound art. Has artist failed to create anything “new and improved”. What people now are searching for, it is style. That style-makers have by now, created a sufficient number of broadly defined styles to fit all occasions and visual statements. Style is new tool of expression. Some great scholars have now realized that the most important thing about current digital art is not how it looks, but who is making it any why? In the present scene no Pop art which grew against “Abstract Expressionism” is an example of aesthetics of today’s two dimensional digital art, it grew after coldwar through 40s and 50s. The Abstract Expressionism which once served the purpose of incorporating the metaphysics of American Romanticism into modern style, but then subsequently art wanted a return to the real world and the return they chose “was not that of nature but post war mechanized and mediate world of mass communication, mass production and mass consumption.” Pop Art have harvested good returns and it has been providing a basic structure providing and supporting formation of a Digital Art aesthetics and computers have served the ends of any number of styles, genres, etc. The European Pop artists were connecting aesthetics to Social comment. Digital art was pressed into service in advertisement, photography, comic strips, mass media, prints, in business, in culture, POP Art, Photo-Realism, Installation, Conceptual, Environmental/Earth works, Video Art, visual art, writer, designer, film maker, musician, mass communication, digital imaging of software. These is a difference between *Pop Art* and *Digital Art*. While Pop Art used a similar *flat*, non-expressive representation to reflect on depersonalization in a consumer culture, Digital art represents a return to artistic passions in a culture where expressive appearance is valued over material truth. In a sense, Pop Art dealt with ideas observed in a culture of commerce and mass communication, while Digital Art Springs forth from the artists that are now living in the unfolding results of that culture.”

There has been lots of criticisms against Digital art itself, rather than on the role of aesthetics in the process of applying it to Digital art etc. The question is, what is style? In the above discussion the word ‘style’ has been used. The word ‘style’, it may be mentioned in relation to visual arts refers to the aspects of the visual appearances of a work of art which relate it to other works by the same artist or one from the same period, training location, “School” or art movement. This may involve all the elements and principles of art, and other factors, often very difficult to analyse precisely.

#### **Aesthetics in Visual art:**

The word “visual arts’ covers a very wide area, we have the whole art history to show its length and breath, it covers painting, sculpture, and architecture. Art history covers a survey of art

throughout human history, “classifying cultures and periods by their distinguishing features, it also includes art historians, museum curators, auction house, personnel, private collectors, and religious adherents. Some important writers of the field include Adams Laurie (his book Art Across Time/E.H. Gombrich (his Story of Art) Hugh Honour and John Fleming (his Visual Art: A History), Marilyn Stokstad (his Art history) David G. Wilkins, Bernard Schultz, Kathryn M. Linduff (Art Past, Art Present) etc. are works to be read deliberated and discussed.

#### **Film, Television and Video:**

These topics of various disciplines are also covered under applied aesthetics. The aesthetics of cinematography is said to be closely related to still photography. Sound recording, editing and mixing are highly important areas of films and are often closely related with the musical score. Art direction, costume design, make up, sets of shooting are all intertwined and are controlled, under the director’s guidance and sensibility. Montage or editing is one very important area unique to film, Video and television. “The timing, rhythm and progression of shots form the ultimate composition of film.”

#### **Aesthetics in The Sphere of Painting:**

Aesthetical consideration play important part is visual art i.e. related to sense of vision, for example in painting, sculpture, whereby not only sense of vision is important but also sense of smell, hearing and touch are considered essential. The form of work is subject to an aesthetic as much as the content. In painting, conventionally, there is three dimensional representation rather than a two dimensional canvas, so well understood that most people do not realize that they are making an aesthetic interpretation. This notion is the basis of abstract impressionism,” Some of the aesthetics effect in visual art include” variation, juxtaposition, repetition, field effects, symmetry/asymmetry, perceived mass, subliminal structure, linear dynamics, tension and repose, pattern, contrast, perspective, 3 dimensionality movement, rhythm, unity/gestalt, matrixiality and proportion.”

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### **3.6 APPLICATION OF AESTHETICS IN OTHER FIELDS**

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#### **In Marketing/Business**

Aesthetics play important part in business/marketing field, in aesthetic qualities of consumer product, by making of beautiful cover of the product, “trade dress”, in branding, in its commercial representation, in sophistication, colour harmony, stylishness, catchy jingles, slogans, craftsmanship, attentiveness, authenticity or the related perceived experiences, associated with product consumption, “Reputation of the producer also counts much. “Human curiosity, self gain or mental adjustment is what drives marketing development itself.”

#### **Application of aesthetics in food staff / gastronomy**

Importance of aesthetic of taste is an important aspect. The taste of palate also is related to smell, sight etc. which arouse question of aesthetic taste. When a dish is served to a person, the person sees the colour of food stuff placed on his table, he gets the smell and by these considerations in mind, the person feels that the food would be very tasteful and pleasing to the tongue. The smell of the spices, the colour of the vegetable or other items give a pleasant feeling and man relishes to enjoy the tasty food. Though it is well-known that too much spicy food, too much oily food, may not be good for the stomach to easily digest, but without caring for that, one is likely to eat more than his appetite. Even in case of water, one prefers a clean, white, odourless water. All these show the acceptability of food or water depends on the sight and smell, which are satisfying to aesthetic sense.

#### **Applicability in Neuroscience or Neuro aesthetics**

Neuro aesthetics was pioneered by Senir Zeki which is a cognitive science. Senir explains the “prominence of great art as an embodiment of biological principles of the brain, namely, that great works of art capture the essence of things just as vision and the brain capture the essentials of the world from the ever changing stream of sensory input.”

#### **Aesthetic consideration in urban living.**

It is generally said that half a population live in cities where one finds agreeable planned city. There are quite a good number of traits of a planned city, “ethnic and cultural variety, micro-climate that promote a diversity of vegetation, sufficient public transportation, public art, street art, clubs, parks, silvery street light, nice buildings, scenic geography (oceans or mountains etc.) public paces, musical variety in local radio, or street musicians, enforcement of laws that abate noise, crime and pollution.”

#### **Website Design Aesthetics and Credibility**

Website design influences user’s perception of site credibility. With it a related term is page *aesthetics*. If one sees the page which has credibility, in a few seconds, he feels satisfied, a content with higher aesthetic treatment is judged as having higher credibility.

#### **Aesthetics in Designs**

Design is a very broad meaning word and it covers designs of different spheres or aspects eg. industrial design, Architecture and interior design, fashion design, landscape design etc. Designers need many aesthetic qualities to improve the marketability of manufactured products. One special section of designers are employed by the companies for this purpose. The architectural designers use their own techniques for this. The interior designers also use their own techniques. Similarly, fashion designers/landscape designers have their own techniques to attract the attention of the customers in their way. Thus aesthetical consideration can not be lost sight of or ignored at any cost. In the era of designs specially which has become too sophisticated these days.

#### **Post Modern Aesthetics and Psychoanalysis**

The early 20<sup>th</sup> Century artist, poets and composers, have tried to broaden the existing notion of beauty, art, aesthetics. Eli Signal of America founded Aesthetic Realism (1941) saying “The world art and self explain each other: each is the aesthetic oneness of opposites”. Much discussion is still required on this aspect.

#### **Computational Inference of aesthetics**

Computer scientists since 2005 have attempted to develop methods to infer aesthetic quality of images, in which or whereby large number of manually rated online photograph were used to “teach” computers about what visual properties are of relevance to aesthetic quality. The Acquinic engine, developed at Penn State University, “rates natural photographs unloaded uploaded by users.” Besides this, a relatively successful development have been made with regard to *chess and music*. It calls for a discussion on Aesthetics and sports world.

#### **Aesthetic as applied to Ethics (Linking through Poetry)**

Ethics is paramount to aesthetics since aesthetic is the science or art (?) of beauty? Keats identified truth and beauty in his own terms. But, how many are the philosophers, who try to read Keats! It has been said as to why people do not read Keats, or for that matter poetry is stated by one Scholar thus “Perhaps... because poetry is branch of human thought that they can not colonise, so they despise it as meaningless” not Philosophy”.

It is may be said, “If our minds create our reality, the beauty is something we create that pleases in a positive influence... because our mind recognize it as something constant. Consistency lets us control our lives and helps us find purpose or truth. Could beauty be our link to real truth.

That would mean that we could study our brains reaction to something that is beautiful and we could find some strong link to truth. In other words, beauty is beauty for a reason.” Keats suggestion is that between truth and beauty there exists an equilibrium which outlives individuals; the truth of beauty is external and often overwhelming as a consequence. In a letter (Nov. 22, 1817), he said “what the imagination seizes as Beauty must be truth”, but “it also evokes a unity between truth and beauty which, because of our need to categorize all experience has become unutterable or was never utterable.” Of course, Keats seems to owe Aristotle's views. In Wordsworth, it is a contrast, as said by some he saw beauty and truth as something lost we have lost perfection. For Blake, “it is a fall which exists as a part of our being, is an engrained in human temperament as a urge to procreate”. But we are living in a world of discord and not even two person’s perception of truth, and by implication therefore of beauty are the same. Our way of thinking may go to hold that “all perception is relative, all kind of beauty perceivable is either consensual or physiological. That there is no ideal truth or ideal beauty or even mysterious unity of purpose between the two is therefore meaningless.”

#### **As related to Philosophy in general:**

In the philosophical context of India, the truth is beauty and goodness both at the same time. The three form a unity of truth-consciousness force-and bliss, it is sat, it is chit, it is also ananda; bliss, infinite joy. These three combined is the name of Absolute Brahma, such view is most comprehensive, all inclusive, It requires elaboration. In this regard, views of Henry David Thoreau, Santayana, Nietzsche Bosanquet are important which may be discussed in the light of aesthetic judgment which also requires a multiplication of pages in writing.

#### **In the Light of Ethical Theories**

The question of ethics seems to run into complication, because there is lack of agreement between people as to the fact that which behavior should be endorsed as moral values. In this regard, there are two theories (i) Deontological theory (ii) teleological theory. Deontological theory of ethics propose that people should use moral value, consistently regardless of the consequences. The other eg. teleological theory is in contrast to deontological theory of ethics, also called consequentialist. They consider the use of moral values to be dependent on the desired consequences. “Deontological theories of ethics are similar to inherent aesthetic theories in that they both consider value of art to be within an artistic experience, with little or no regard for the consequences of the experience. Inherent aesthetic theories consider a particular aesthetic perspective to be appropriate in all situations, while consequential aesthetic theories permit the adoption of aesthetic perspective according to the consequences that are desired. Teleological theories of ethics are similar to consequential aesthetics theories because they both consider consequences.” From the point of view of saleability, a thing may be thrown in the market, but for personal enjoyment, the artwork that are beautiful may be preferred.

#### **Applicability in literary fields Poetics/Rhetoric**

Aesthetic work on poetics/Rhetoric was first stated by Aristotle. Poetics is concerned with drama. At some point, Aristotle’s original work was divided into two, each ‘book’ written on separate role of papyrus. The first part focuses on tragedy, the second part is adduced to comedy. He distinguishes between the genres of “poetry” in three ways (a) their means – language, rhythm and harmony, used separately or in combination (b) their objects – agents good or bad (c) their modes of representation. After this, he defines tragedy which consists of six parts, (i) plot, (*mythos*) (ii) character (*ethos*). Under this, four types are included as good, consistent appropriate and consistently inconsistent (iii) thought (*dianoia*) (iv) diction (*lexis*) (v) melody (*melos*) (vi) spectacle (*opsis*). In definition of tragedy, he uses the words pity, terror, the catharsis of such

emotion. The catharsis concept is very important from the point of aesthetics and can be dwelt upon in detail separately.

### **Axiology, Ethics, Aesthetics**

Axiology has been said to be, “aesthetics plus ethics, it studies values, of beauty plus virtue respectively. Aesthetics may be *easier, but can show ethics’s value: ethics are aesthetics*”. All the great religions (monotheism, henotheism) and even most pagan ones involve axiology. It is contended that axiology helps to answer the question how are we to assess ‘values in life’. Axiology is a branch of science that deals with human values. It studies two kinds of values (i) Ethics throws light on what is ‘right’ and good in individual and social conduct (2) Aesthetics emphasizes the concept of ‘*beauty*’ and ‘*harmony*’. Natural science describes human behavior, axiology explains and measures the foundations of our thought process. To value is to set or fix priorities. Axiology measures person’s capacity to value. We have its branches like comparative aesthetics, comparative ethics and comparative axiology. There are also its two branches, formal aesthetics, and axiological aesthetics the latter focuses on the theory that no one person is alike. It is said that “Impeccable customer service, cutting edge treatments and educated medical professional is what you can expect at Axiology Aesthetics”.

### **Check Your Progress I**

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Describe how aesthetics is related to culture.

.....  
 .....

2) Explain the application of aesthetics in ethics.

.....  
 .....

### **3.7 LET US SUM UP**

Applied ethics is a very new branch of study and a very vast one, it is still in its infancy stage. Though at present stage, the walls of departmentalization of any subject is crumbling, opening up open-spaces, new vistas for the interdisciplinary study, but such study as intended at the country level has led to lots of complications both to the teacher as well as the students. This may lead to overstress to the students specially. But the broadening of the vistas of knowledge cannot be disregarded, far less stopped in the interest of knowledge in general, which is the clarion call of all and sundry also, which is the clarion call of philosophy.

### **3.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES**

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**UNIT 4      ART   EXPERIENCE**


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**4.0      OBJECTIVES**


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In this unit we try to make a metaphysico-philosophical study of art. The title 'Art Experience' evokes a lot of problems, as to how best to interpret the two words, 'art' as well as 'experience' and to correlate the two and reach at a consistent meaning. Is art experience meaningful? Is art really an experience? And if it is an experience, what kind of experience it is? How such experience can be differentiated from the experience which is gained in other fields of knowledge? Further, if art is not an experience, what it is, how is it realized or practiced and in what way? Is art something else, then what it is? Does art lead to an experience or does experience rewards us with art; this is also a debatable question.

Yet another way of dwelling upon the problem is, to explain it in the way that 'art is as an experience, rather than art-experience.' From the pragmatic perspective which includes "radical empiricism, instrumentalism, verificationism, conceptual relativity, a denial of the fact-value distinction, a high regard to science and fallibilism," 'art of experience' is a practical domain, of putting a theory into practice. So, it is related to practical arts, rather than a mere theoretical concern.

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**4.1      INTRODUCTION**


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The word 'experience' entails a lot of things when seen in the light of empirical school of thinkers and empiricist brands. Further, experience is a process, an ever growing affair, rather than any fixed affair, or a predetermined something. So there is always a possibility of change and becoming. Art is not a fixed product. 'Art experience' is something as realizable experience, rather than a theory. This is not like thesis, or anti-thesis, rather 'than a synthesis. It is not discursive, rather is unitive, synthetic, comprehensively compromising attitude. It is in its unitiveness that art leads to creativity. In the Indian context of Truth, beauty and goodness, the same truth, which means "uncontradicted in past, present and future" is also Beauty and goodness. It is the *sat-cit-ananda*, comprehensive whole, an Absolute Brahman. It is not that truth is differentiated from beauty or goodness; beauty differentiated and estranged from truth

and goodness; goodness alienated from truth and beauty. Goodness, beauty, truth all are combined, unified; turned into one comprehensive whole. The all encompassing one is not one or the other; not a quality of qualities. It is all, all in one, one in all, it is smallest of the small, the biggest of the big, it is without quality or quantity, but supersedes all measurements. It is, not this, not that, but it is realizable, here and now. The supreme one has been called 'Ananda', absolute Bliss, and blissfulness is realizable.

Similarly, art is a realizable experience yet undescribable, un-utterable. It is creativity, like the creator, who is a trinity of truth, beauty and goodness, as well as a trinity of creator, sustainer and destroyer, all in one. Creativity is not categorization. It is beyond all categories. It is beyond the boundaries of words, language. It is to be felt rather than explained through the medium of words. It is beyond 'habitation and name.' It is like an experience of deaf and dumb, who taste the palate, who enjoys its palate but cannot explain either the joy of it or the taste of it; not that it is without joy and taste. The taste is something un-explainable in words and language in this case. Does it mean that art is experientible, feelable, but not expressible to other, as it is merely a subjective affair, realizable by a person, but not to be got realizable or transferable to the other? Does it mean that it is not purposeful to others? If it is so, then does it not imply that art is unpurposeful and meaningless futility? These and other questions are relevant in this context.

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#### 4.2 DEFINITIONS OF 'EXPERIENCE' AND HISTORY

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The word 'experience' is used both in its noun forms and verb forms. Collins Dictionary notes its origin and history, that it comes, in late 14<sup>th</sup> century from old French, "experience" from Latin *experientia*, "knowledge gained by repeated trials, "from *experientem (nom- experiens) ,experiri* "to try, test" from ex- "out of it *peritus* "experienced, tested", The verb (1953's), first meant "to test, try; "sense of feel, undergo", first recorded 1580's. The Medical Dictionary defines it (noun). "The feeling of emotions and sensations as opposed to thinking; involvement in what is happening rather than abstract reflection on an event." It is also said to be derived from Latin "*experientia*, from *emperiri* to prove, related to Latin *periculum* peril. The Word English Dictionary in its noun form means the following, (1) direct personal participation or observation; actual knowledge or contact; experience of prison life (2) a particular incident, feeling etc that a person has undergone: an experience to remember (3) accumulated knowledge, especially of practical matters: a man of experience (4) (i) the totality of characteristics, both past and present, that make up the particular quality of a person, place or people (ii) the impact made on individual by the culture of a people, nation, etc, the American experience. (5) Philosophy: This in turn, may be compared to its other sense as (a) the datum, the content of a perception regarded as independent of whether the apparent object actually exists. (b) The faculty by which a person acquires knowledge of contingent facts about the world as contrasted with reason (c) the totality of a person's perceptions, feelings and memories. In its verb sense it means to participate in, or undergo as well as to be emotionally or aesthetically moved by; feel to experience beauty.

At other place, the definition of the word has been explained thus, (a) direct observation of or participation in events as a basis of knowledge (b) the fact or state of having been affected by or gained knowledge through direct observation or participation. (2a) practical knowledge, skill or practice derived from direct observation of or participation in events or in particular activity (b) as in the use as 10 years of experience (3a) the conscious events that make up the individual life (b) the events that make up the conscious past of a community or nation or human kind generally

(4) something personally encountered, undergone or lived through (5) the act or process of directly perceiving events or reality. Further, it has been defined “the effect upon the judgment or feelings produced by any event, whether witnessed or participated in; personal and direct impressions as contrasted with description or fancies; personal acquaintance; actual enjoyment or suffering”.

The other definition given is, “An act of knowledge, one or more, by which single facts or general truths are ascertained; experimental or inductive knowledge; hence, implying skill, facility, or practical wisdom gained by personal knowledge, feeling or action; as a king without knowledge of war. It entails, “an event as apprehended,” have first hand knowledge of states, situations, emotions or sensation, “undergo emotional sensation, “mental or physical states or experience”, “to go or live through”. Thus, in the verb experience” it means (i) experiences, sees, go through (ii) know, experience, live (iii) to receive, have get (physical experience, states, get nauseous, receive injury, have feeling (iv) feel (feel regret) (v) have- undergo, In its noun forms it entails – experience – to accumulate knowledge; the content of direct observation, or participation, an event, as apprehended, “a surprising experience.

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### 4.3 HIRIYANNA ON ‘ART EXPERIENCE’

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Prof. Hiriyanra has tried to explain the expression, Art Experience with the help of erudition in Sanskrit literature of the Upanishads, Vedas, Brahmans, the Puranas, the systems of Indian philosophy, Sanskrit literature on poetics, drama, Art criticism. In the field of art and aesthetics, he has taken up the views of Indian personalities like Udbhat Rudrata, Dandin, Vamana, Bharat, Bhatt, Nayaka, etc. The preliminary account of the reason of causing anyone a leaning towards art is “an attitude of mind which is quite impersonal”. This can be explained by an example, when one attains to an impersonal attitude of mind towards any art object, man takes interest in any art work in the beginning but afterwards, say for example, a show, cinema, he will then be aware of nothing beyond the object on the situation portrayed by the artist”, thus “forgetting himself altogether,” separating himself from what happened then or once.

The secondly Hiriyanra hints that probably as a consequence of such self forgetfulness, the contemplation of art yields a kind of spontaneous joy. Aesthetic attitude of “impersonal,” ranks higher than the everyday or common experience. The every day or common events are characterized by personal interests of some one kind or the other leads to mental tension. The Vedantic philosophy of India speaks about *Moksa* and experience of art can be compared to the Moksha. But he says that “the two experiences are of the same order and not identical” for the reason that “the former has limitations which are not found in the latter.”

Hiriyanra, says, “art experience” is transient”; “it does not endure.” It passes away sooner or later, depending upon “its continuance upon the presence of the external stimulus which has evoked it.” While the “ideal state” when once attained means the “rising once for all, above the narrow interest of routine life and the mental strain which those interests involve.” But this should not be interpreted in the way that the ideal state should be divorced from ‘social morality’ or that aesthetic experience should remain limited to self centered satisfaction. Prof. Hiriyanra distinguishes between art experience and the ideal state. The impersonal joy of art experience is “induced artificially from outside, while that of ideal stage springs naturally from within. But how this so happens, poses a big question and Hiriyanra takes his cudgel to justify this.

Art depends on external stimulus. The artist creates situations by his imaginations, not from the contemplation of the real. The situation which he creates is self contained and complete. It deals with whole, like the monads of Leibnitz wherein there can be no additions or alterations. The spectator merely sees or appreciates a particular figure in a drama without reasoning why such thing, have been shown as such. We do not attach value to the show, only see and go out from the place. The impersonal character is represented by the unreality of the incidents. One does not fear by fearful action of the artist represented on the stage, one knows that it is acting.

**The ideal State:** The ideal state is the result of combined pursuit of the values of truth and goodness. A person “possesses comprehensive view of reality as well as a spirit of complete unselfishness”, which requires hard efforts. He says, “The experience of art, like that of ideal condition, is an ultimate value. It is sought for its own sake and not as a means to anything else. Like the ideal condition, art experience is characterized by a unique kind of delight. It is superior to common experience but it does not last long. It passes off (when or as soon as) art stimulus is withdrawn,” while in ideal experience “No such lapse is conceivable.....is permanent.” “Art experience does not require philosophic knowledge or moral worth; it can be brought into being even in their absence.” He says that “aesthetic contemplation can lead to the same kind of exalted experience as that of ideal state, without all the arduous discipline – moral as well as intellectual – required for the latter, may appear to be an excellence of it.” Indian art critics have said that there is no match for the bliss of *moksa* of the yogin for art, who has to strive hard to attain that state and there is no match for it, nor that state can easily be attained. It is not possible for an artist to attain that state, since the ideal is always bound to be unreal; there is a complete lack of harmony between the world of facts and the world of ideals. To say this is not tantamount to pessimism or world-negation and no Indian thinker can stick to this way of thought. But art can be brought to a particular limit, to realize higher goals in the present life. Art can serve to secure at least, to portray, to escape from the imperfections of common life. It can easily serve as an ‘intimation’ to him to rising permanently above those imperfections. Hiriyana says, “art experience is well-adapted to arouse our interest in the ideal state by giving us a foretaste of that state. By provisionally fulfilling the need felt by man for restful joy, art experience may impel him to do his utmost to secure such joy finally.”

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#### 4.4 ART EXPERIENCE: A PRACTICAL APPROACH

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Prof. Hiriyanna’s exposition of art experience according to Indian traditions is a unique gift to the world of art and aesthetics. His interpretation has the stamp and seal of authoritative person, worth infallible acceptance. Whatever criticism men may throw on Indian philosophy, it has been widely held that philosophy in India is not a pastime, nor ideal game of fictitious fancy but a way of life based on knowledge of the self. Self-knowledge is a discovery not an intellectual assimilation. It is a pragmatic ethics to serve man to reach the highest goal known as *Moksha*, rather than only a request for knowledge (*Tattvajnana*). Truth has to be investigated not for keeping it or storing but for its practical application in life. Truth should be in conformity with every day mundane life. Barren truth without its applicability, would slip into dry logistics, empty of content, a casual affair to be experienced and thrown into mist of phantom of mind. Aim of practical ethics which is the favoured goal of Indian philosophy, aesthetics is also a field not divorced from philosophy and ethics. It is fully directed or fully aims at influencing life. This provides unique kinship between ethics and aesthetics, without even the least amount of neglect either of the two. It is a fact and not mere “vague surmises” that Indian works “parallels drawn

from art which imply a close relation of the beautiful to the good” and that “true was not unknown to ancient India.” The Indian aesthetic has its own history quite parallel to that of philosophy.

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#### 4.6 ART EXPERIENCE IN VEDANTIC CONTEXT

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In the Upanisads the Supreme Brahman has been called “*Anandam Brahma*.” *Ananda* is a *rasa* indicating a taste and it is a savour; an essence; a sap. Self and Brahma are one and identical. *Ananda* is bliss, celestial joy. When self or Atman is Brahman and are one, then self must also partake of the essence of *Ananda*, supreme joy. *Ananda* consists in the realization of harmony between the universe in one’s experience and not in being intellectually apprehended, since there can be no such thing as mediated *Ananda*. So long *Avidya* is there, the difference between the self and not self still remains and the real sense of harmony of all is not yet dawned. The man who has become *jivan mukta* attains the unity in variety and enjoys real *Ananda*. The man who has not reached that state of poise sees beauty in outer things and symbols. The real beauty lies in seeing through the ‘inward eye’. Outer beauty as it is called is transitory and it partakes of personal character. It has not reached transcendental stage. Sankara says, life is *avidya-kama-karma*, while *Ananda* is a stage of desire-less-ness, self-less-ness, *Ananda* or bliss is inward joy. While ever-recurring series of *Kama* and *Karmas* constitute life, the elimination of these can be had by removal of *avidya*. So long as finally *avidya*’s veil is not shed off, in some latent form it remains. The artistic attitude is one of “disinterested contemplation” and not of true enlightenment, while the attitude of saint is one of true enlightenment and not necessarily of passivity, but unselfishness.

The Vedantic theory of *rasa* experience indicates an attitude of detachment which one can have in the creations of art, which required the need and essentiality of rhythm, symmetry etc. The perfect knower, by knowing his self or atman knows Brahma “*Brahma-vit, Brahmaiva bhavati*.” This is a matter of higher state than the empirical plane. In the lower stage, one realizes the truth of art. In the higher plane, one fully realizes the truth of nature. A perfect knower enjoys perfect beatitude of unity in Nature’s diversity. Real enjoyment lies in identifying everything as one, *sarva-bhuta-hiteratah*, friendly to all or *Suhrid-Sarvabhutatma*. There is yet a close resemblance between the two attitudes, Hiriyanna says, “We may well compare the person appreciating art to a *jivanmukta*. He does indeed get a foretaste of *Moksha*, but not *Moksha* in fact, because it is transient, not being based on perfect knowledge.”

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#### 4.7 ART EXPERIENCE AND SAMKHYA

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Samkhya philosophy is dualistic realism. The two principles which makes Samkhya dualistic system, is the presence of two absolute principles of *Purusa* and *Prakrti*, each diametrically opposed to the other. While *purusa* or self is awareness, pure and simple, *Prakrti* is *Jada*, material. *Buddhi* is a term or principle or apparatus which help the two opposed principles to a point of mediation. The question arises, how *Buddhi*, itself a product of *Jada Prakrti* can serve as a connecting link between the two and how *buddhi* enables the *Purusa* to realize the ideals of both *bhoga* and *apavarga*. This is a complicated question, followed by yet another of the concept of the three *gunas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* which brings *sukha*, *dukha* and *moha*. Prof. Sangam Lal Pandey has remarked that Samkhya system is the basis of ‘Medical science or *cikitsa* science’ as well as aesthetics, moral science and liberation or *moksha* science. Since *Purusa* is a conscious enjoyer this concept found a deep basis for aesthetics. Bhatt Nayak was a great

philosopher and was deeply influenced by Samkhya philosophy. Samkhya speaks about pleasure and pain on the basis of *gunas* which leads to the point of experience. Though *buddhi* is of *Sattvic* nature, it should have always given rise to pleasure. But “the play of its acquired impulses coupled with the character of particular physical object acting upon it may reverse the result.” The result being the same thing may affect different people differently. What is pleasurable to one may be giving pain to other people. Ordinarily men live in secondary world and often ignore the intrinsic nature of things. The basic cause of this ‘predicament’ is due to mistaken identification of the *buddhi* with *purusa*. Until *Purusa* fully dissociates with *buddhi*, the mistake cannot be avoided or rectified. Without attaining discriminative knowledge of intrinsic disparateness of *purusa* and *Prakrti* no one can attain given *mukti* or *apavarga*. Though one cannot fully transcend *buddhi*, he can not become impersonal even for a while. He can by resorting to art, find temporary release from the natural world. The world of art is “no doubt like Nature, but being idealized it does not evoke own egoistic impulses. The world of art is not made of the three *gunas*. The “mind is thus enabled to assume self poise attitude of which the automatic result is a feeling of pleasure”. The artist’s function is to “restore equanimity to the mind by leading us away from the common world and offering us another in exchange.” This fact takes us to a conclusion that (1) while everything of the world is consciously or unconsciously related to the individual perceiver (*atman*) or some one else (a *tatastha*) but creations of art are wholly impersonal, ordinary man can not transcend personal relation, art by its “impersonalized forms offers best means for a temporary escape from the ills of life arising from such relations” (2) “Samkhya theory brings out clearly that aesthetic delight is the result of contemplating the imaginative and therefore impersonal creations of the poet.” (3) The work of art involves three *Vyaparas*, or processes – (a) *avidha* (b) *bhavana* (c) *bhogikarana*. The first recognized by all, but the remaining two are ascribed two works of art. *Purusa* is purely passive in Samkhya, all activities are ascribed to *Prakrti*. The chief functions of *Prakrti* are (1) to evolve things through pleasure and pain is derived (2) to enable *Purusa* to experience such pleasure or pain. (4) Aesthetic attitude is the attitude of *Samvit*, i.e. contemplation dissociated from all practical interest as shown by *Visranti*-‘composure’. The difference between artistic attitude and natural as well as spiritual attitude is that while “the former is not always pleasurable, the latter is neither pleasurable nor painful, art produces a condition of pure pleasure the expression *sattodreka* is an indication of the theory based on Samkhya philosophy.”

One most striking point of Samkhya is that, how *Prakrti* which is *Jada* is active, which gives movement, how the movement stops, how does it tries to work towards the *purusa*’s *apavarga*. These are philosophical questions which may not have immediate bearing on aesthetics or for that matter aesthetic experience, but the important thing in view of the present deliberation on aesthetics, is that Samkhya uses the word similar to “dancer or *nartaki*”. The word is “*Rangena Darsayitva*”, by showing dance. At least for our purposes of aesthetic the simile of dancer is important. *Prakrti* after showing her dance does not lead to more and more infatuation but to dispassion and detachment. This leads to what Prof. Hiriyanna has too much emphasized i.e. the impersonal nature of art and Samkhya offers such attitude by the acts of *Prakrti*. The words used in *Samkhya Karika* are “*Kaivalyartham Pravrttesca*,” and “*Bhokribhavat*.” Samkhya adopts theory of intelligent causation. It is a *jnana margi darsana*. Samkhya explains the principles of motion as Sankaracharya has said in his exposition and critique of Samkhya by different examples – which he has termed as *asmavat*, like iron and magnet (2) *payavat* – like milk flows from cow’s udder (2) *ambuvat* – like water flowing, (4) *andha* – *pungu vat* –lame and blind

cooperating each other. All these are symbolic of naturalism and Samkhya is a naturalism of *Prakrti*. Nature is fountain of all works of science, art, philosophy, aesthetics, etc, and Samkhya by resorting to naturalism has indirectly emphasized on nature but Prakrti's acting for the *apavarga* of the yet conscious *Purusa*, hints at the impersonal attitude of Samkhya.

The difference between Samkhya and Vedanta lies in the fact that Samkhya is said to be pessimistic. According to it, Nature gives pleasure or beauty but not always. Vedanta is optimistic that everything is beautiful, nothing is ugly since it is a corollary of *atman*. It derives pleasure from everything. It is *ananda-swaroop*. Sainly people are the greatest artists. The artist is endowed with peculiar eye and is always directed to open our eyes to what we miss. Both the systems Samkhya and Vedanta induce a mood of detachment. In the final terms, according to idealistic Vedanta "the artistic attitude is characterized by a forgetting, though temporary, of our individuality, while according to realistic Samkhya, it is due to escape from the natural world. According to the former art serves as a pathway to Reality; but according to the latter it is so to speak, 'a deflection' from Reality. The one reveals the best in Nature, while the other fashions something better than nature".

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#### 4.8 ART CONTEMPLATION

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Prof. Hiriyanna also uses another word in reference to art experience, which is art contemplation. He says, "The view of art contemplation entirely transforms the idea of aesthetic end." In art contemplation, there is no duality of end and means. No such dualism can any how be recognized. That, "there is only a single self justifying process of contemplation, which represents a progressive appreciation of the aesthetic object. The purpose is thus present throughout the process or is immanent in it, and if we look upon its culminating stage as the result, it is because that stage is marked by the repose of achievement. The value of art accordingly consists not in providing more delight for us, but in the totality of experience for which aesthetic contemplation stands. The feeling of pleasure is no doubt there but as an aspect of that experience."

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#### 4.9 ART EXPERIENCE AND MORALITY

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It is quite unwise to hold that art experience keeps morality outside its parameters. "The ethical value of good deed consists in the doing of it and in the right direction of the will involved in it." This hints towards the applied aesthetics or practical and pragmatic ethics, though this topic is a good topic for an elaborate study. This does not permit a space here, but one thing can be said, that Indian texts speak of truth, consciousness and bliss, goodness or beauty as forming a trinity. Whereby neither of the three can be separately understood but may be understood in an unity, that the good must conform to the standards of values, of morality. Since not to conform to goodness is to go stray and get entrapped in unethicity, ethicality is ingrained in aesthetic experiences, aesthetic contemplation, in aesthetic achievements.

#### Check Your Progress I

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Enumerate 'experience' in history.

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2) Explain art experience as contemplation of reality.

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#### 4.10 LET US SUM UP

In nutshell, the art experience is a unique form of experience. The art experience to be perfect must involve/consist in unselfishness, not only outer unselfishness, but spontaneous and genuine unselfishness, a stage lifted above personal and private self. The aesthetic experience consists in disinterested contemplation of beauty. That art experience yields pure and untainted joy without the least pain. Aesthetic experience is above common or everyday life. The idealists afford escapes from worldly concerns. Values prescribed by the Vedantists are *atmananda* and *rasanubhava*. Art experience is impersonal in full sense of the term. If it is not possible to attain perfect *ananda*, art experience provides *ananda*. "Art is a short-cut to the ultimate value of life by-passing logic." Aesthetics is 'a-logical.' Aesthetics presents a detached view of life without personal whims, tendencies and self interest. To transcend above self-interest is to work in a spirit of unity in diversity, unity and harmony with the rest of the creations of the world. It is one for all, all for one. It is a cosmic unification, cosmic harmony, a rise to the highest ideal stage of spiritual oneness, the happiness of all, "*Sarve Bahvantu Sukhinah, sarve santu Niramaya,*" it is akin to RigVedic dictum, *Aa no bhadra*, let noble thoughts come to all. It is upliftment of all and Sundry, a return to Sri Aurobindo's philosophy based on the Upanishads, to return to Swami Vivekananda's observations that nothing is Undivine; the divinity is ingrained in man; the only need is to awaken the divinity; to manifest divinity is us. Man is a conscious being, supremely conscious. There are degrees of consciousness and even a stone has some degree of consciousness, as a spark of the divinity. So the well-being of all is the well-being of everyone, singly, collectively or universally.

#### 4.11 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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