
UNIT 1 THEORY OF AESTHETICS - ANCIENT

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1.0 OBJECTIVES

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

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 Greece 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 Euripides. 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.

1.2 SOCRATES ON ART AND ARTISTS

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.

1.3 PLATO'S THEORY OF IMITATION

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.

1.4 ARISTOTLE'S DOCTRINE OF KATHARSIS

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 is 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.

1.5 PLOTINUS ON INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

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

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.

1.7 KEY WORDS

- 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

Contents

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2.0. OBJECTIVES

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

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 19th-20th 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.

2.2. ST.AUGUSTINE AND PSEUDO DIONYSIUS

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.

2.3 ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

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 Psuedo-Dionysius

.....

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

.....

2.4 RENAISSANCE MOVEMENT

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.

2.5 TRANSITION – RENE DESCARTES

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

.....

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

.....

2.6 LET US SUM UP

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.

2.7 KEY WORDS

Ex nihilo: creation of God

Ex material: creation of human

2.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 3 THEORY OF AESTHETICS - MODERN

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3.0 OBJECTIVES

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

3.1 INTRODUCTION

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*.

3.2 EARL OF SHAFTESBURY (1671-1713)

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 were 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.

3.3 JOSEPH ADDISON (1672-1719)

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.

3.4 HUTCHESON (1694-1747)

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)

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', Burke 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*.

Sublime	Beautiful
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

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.

3.8 KEY WORDS

Fancy:	imagination
Internal sense:	sense of beauty and harmony
External sense:	sense of empirical perception

Uncommon: new

3.9 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 4 THEORY OF AESTHETICS - POSTMODERN

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4.0 OBJECTIVES

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 18th 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 18th – 20th 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 20th 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 20th century thinkers
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4.1 IMMANUEL KANT

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

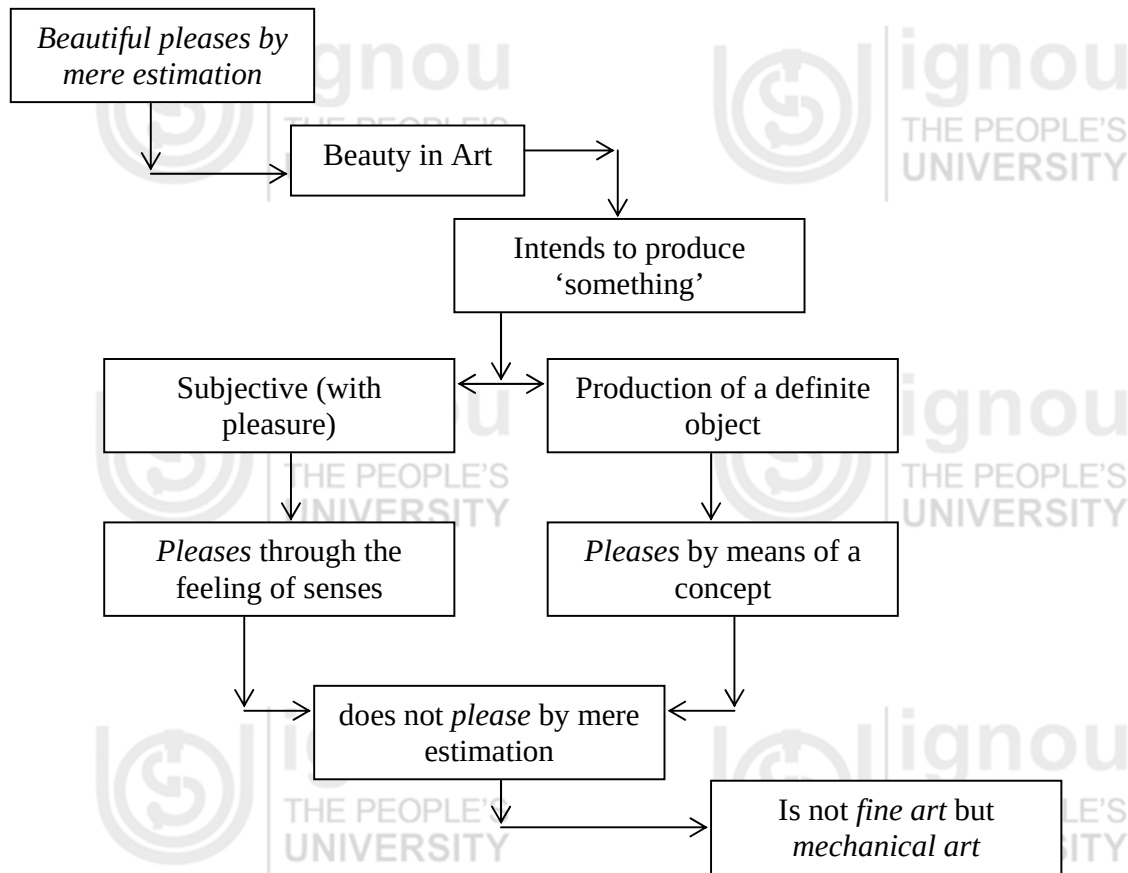
Kant enters as it were to the next phase of his analysis beginning with the question as to 'What is Art?' He provides his answer,

- 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.

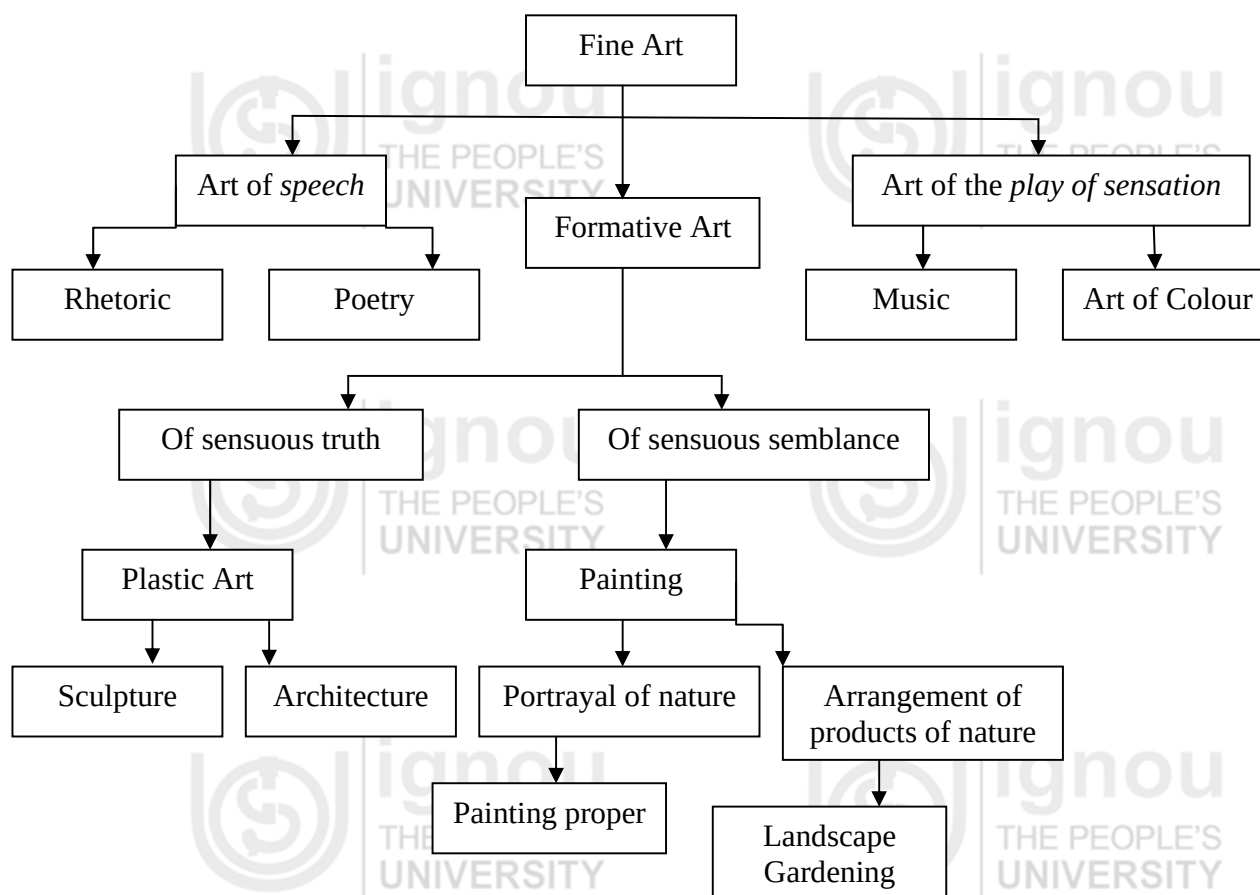
He remarks there is no science of the beautiful but only a Critique. Again, there is no elegant science but only a fine art. He defines fine art as "Fine art, on the other hand, is a mode of representation which is intrinsically final, and which, although devoid of an end, has the effect of advancing 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.

4.2 HEGEL

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 it 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

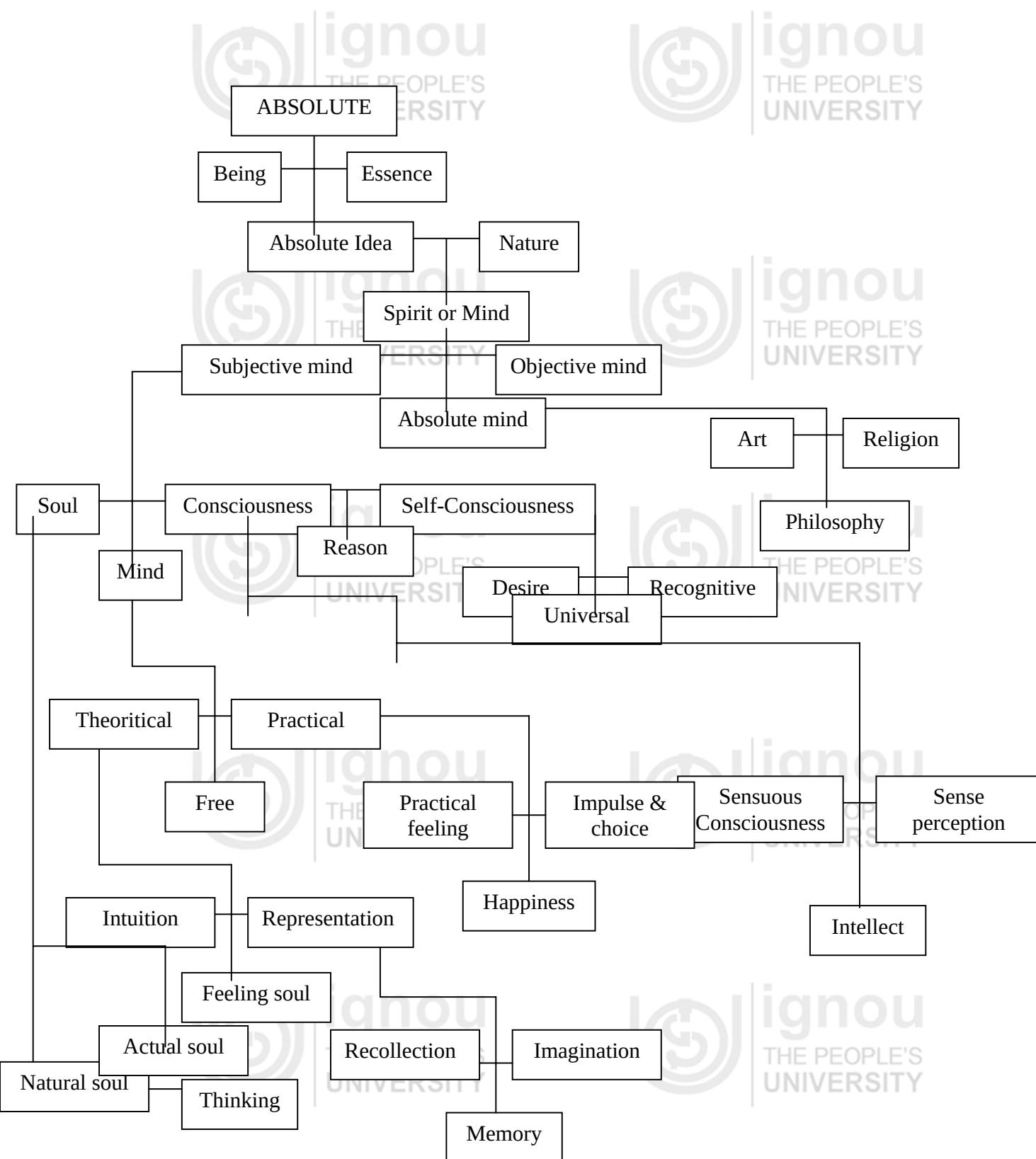
For Hegel, the beautiful is when the mind sees the *Absolute* shining. The first of the triad where Absolute manifests is Art, Religion and Philosophy. Art constructs sensuous images of the

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.

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- 2) What is Philosophy of Art for Hegel?

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4.4 AESTHETIC THOUGHT: A HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The Hegelian thought serves as a window to the rise of a great turn witnessed in the 20th 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 17th and 18th 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 17th 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 18th 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 17th 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 18th 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.

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

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 20th 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.

4.6 20TH CENTURY AESTHETIC THINKERS

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 20th 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 20th 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 18th 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 20th 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 20th century who influenced the aesthetic thought.

4.8 KEY WORDS

Taste

Genius

Aesthetic Judgement

Intuition

4.9 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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