Chapter II

POETRY (OR DRAMA) - WHAT IT IS?
So far we have tried to indicate our particular approach to the subject matter of our study and explain our point of view with regard to some of the general principles involved therein. We have so far tried — and will henceforth try — to limit our discussion only to the essential points and refuse to enter into the various details, however tempting they might be, so that we may succeed in confining ourselves to the main road leading to our ultimate objective.

Now, it is incumbent on us to deal with some of the foremost ideas on poetry or drama viewed from the standpoints of both Eastern as well as Western aesthetics or criticism of poetry or drama. It is beyond doubt that some of these ideas do really reveal some or other essential quality of the thing to be defined i.e., poetry or drama and to that extent serve an essential purpose. We shall now deal with some of the most famous among them from the viewpoints of both the East and the West and try to have an idea about the true nature of the thing before we can proceed further. Poetry or drama has been variously defined or described by various poets or dramatists themselves and by others i.e., critics of poetry or drama. We take up some of the most famous statements on poetry or drama and see what light they can possibly throw upon the subject. It should, however, be realised that poetry or drama, or for that matter, any art or any such fundamental thing, can hardly be defined perfectly. At best it may be defined or
Wordsworth, himself a poet of great distinction and one of the great poets of nature — though all poets are, in a sense, poets of nature, some are so in a special sense — defined or rather described poetry as 'emotion recollected in tranquillity.' This well-known brief statement has a far reaching significance, and, if analysed, will unfold a vista of meaning some of which will be certainly found as essential. In this connection, we may remember that among the famous English poets none is more akin to Sanskrit poets than perhaps Wordsworth or Shelley. One of the vital reasons for this, regarding Wordsworth, will be found to be the fact that, according to him, poetry is emotion in a certain form, so to say. In other words, it may be said, emotion of a certain kind is the essence of poetry or is poetry. This would appear to be almost a close translation of the famous Sanskrit definition of poetry, viz. 'Vākyāṁ rasātmakaṁ kāvyamā. And 'rasa' has been translated as 'emotion' or, better, 'sentiment'. Though these two statements may not exactly have the same meaning, both of them undoubtedly point to the same thing as the essence of poetry. If we would ultimately adhere to the above-mentioned definition of poetry, then Wordsworth's definition also would, more or less, hold good.
The other part of the definition — the adjectival clause in it viz., 'recollected in tranquillity' — is no less important. Certainly, Wordsworth seems to say, all emotion is not poetry; it must be 'recollected in tranquillity'. The qualification points both to the process as well as the thing called poetry. Both are inter-related and the process is a part of the thing so processed. The Sanskrit equivalent of this part of the definition is also not hard to seek. If we understand by the word 'emotion' not 'rasa' but 'bhāva' or feeling, then certainly the definition signifies a transition from pure emotion to that which is 'recollected in tranquillity'. It is almost a parallel statement of the fact that 'bhāva' is transformed into 'rasa' in the mysterious process of poetry or appreciation of poetry as described in the context of the Sanskrit definition. Hence it seems that a great modern poet as Wordsworth of the West defines poetry almost in the same manner as some of the great Sanskrit critics of poetry of the East have done. This resemblance, we believe, is not without its significance and must tend to attract our attention toward the very essence of the thing called poetry.

In this connection, we would like to expand the idea further related to the phrase 'recollected in tranquility'. The phrase is not without its proper Sanskrit equivalent — viewed even in details. We have, in the explanation of the phenomenon called 'rasanispatti' or the suggestion or manifestation
of 'rasa', a term 'Vigalita-vedyantara' etc. Now, this 'Vigalita-vedyantara' or "where anything other than the object of 'rasa' has, as it were, melted away" seems to hold a certain affinity with the said 'recollected in tranquility'. Though they may not exactly mean the same thing, they certainly point to a similar or analogous state of the mind or soul. It must be remembered here that while the definition of Wordsworth primarily refers to the creation of poetry, the Sanskrit definition primarily refers to its appreciation rather than its creation. But, as indicated earlier and, in particular, with reference to the pregnant word 'sahrdaya', the creation and the appreciation of poetry are not, in their essence, different from one another, but are rather of the same kind, differing only in degree. This is, of course, true granted that the appreciation is proper and true, where the critic, rather 'sahrdaya' is at one with the poet and his poetry and can therefore enter into the very heart of the poet and his poetry.

To take another equally important and significant definition of literature and therefore also of poetry to a large extent from the West, Matthew Arnold, himself a poet of no mean order and certainly one of the foremost English critics, observed 'literature is, at bottom, criticism of life'. To say the least, this is an equally formidable, if not more formidable, 'definition' which has been variously discussed and interpreted by poets and critics. Wordsworth's definition also
has been variously explained and understood, but Arnold's definition has been inevitably made an object of greater confusion and misunderstanding. Because the latter tends to penetrate into the core of the matter in relation to man and his life, it has provoked a greater controversy and debate and consequent approval or disapproval. Literature, poetry or art must necessarily be related to man and his life. There cannot be any misgiving on that score. But what is the precise nature of that relation is a hot point of dispute. In fact, every concept of literature, poetry or art has its particular idea of that relation. Arnold's statement — whether it is intended as a definition or not — says, 'at bottom' i.e., in the ultimate analysis, 'literature is the criticism of life'. Now, the keyword in the statement is, apparently, 'criticism'. But what is meant by 'criticism'? Certainly poetry is no essay or treatise, but art of a specific kind and with a specific form. To put it in the simplest words possible, literature, as conceived by Arnold, is that form of art which is, in the ultimate analysis, a 'criticism of' or reflection on life. In other words, it is the outcome of an impact between man and his life or rather his surrounding i.e. nature and his fellowmen. But this concept is not limited to literature alone, but to the other forms of art as well. It would, therefore, be more proper to say, 'Art is, at bottom, criticism of life'. We think Arnold meant precisely that and hence he said, 'at bottom' i.e., it is a feature
common with all the arts. And poetry, as a form of literature, assumes this great quality, according to Arnold.

Now, it will seem difficult to find a proper equivalent of this concept of art as being 'criticism of life' in anything found in the Sanskrit critical literature. Rather, it may seem, from a comparative analysis of the Sanskrit definition of poetry pinpointing 'rasa' as its soul and this attempted definition of art by Arnold visualising as its essence 'criticism of life', that the two are rather opposite in nature and significance. At the outset, however, it is revealing to note that while the Sanskrit definition revolves on the key-word 'rasa', the English definition revolves on the supreme word 'life' or the key phrase 'criticism of life'. From this basic difference — if it is, indeed, a difference in concept — follows the whole edifice of the two definition-structures together with all their respective significances. For example, while it may be held — as it has, in fact, been held and emphasised by the Western critics of Sanskrit literature including critical literature — that the essential concept of poetry as established by the Sanskrit critics is rather subjective in nature, 'rasa' being a mere emotion or sentiment of the mind as opposed to the concrete life of man. Similarly, it has been claimed by the Western critics that, as opposed to such Sanskrit literature or oriental literature in general, Western poetry or
art is, in its essence, rather objective in nature than subjective, and is, therefore, one with life. Now, this acclaimed and assumed superiority of Western poetry or art over the Eastern is a constant sore to the feeling heart of the Eastern artist or art-critic. It is not infrequent among modern Indian poets or critics themselves that this seems to be the truth. This is a vast subject, however, and of a most controversial and fundamental nature fit for an entirely separate treatise, and we see no reason to justify us to enter into it in our present context. We would not be, however, content to leave this question to its pronouncedly bitter contradiction without an attempt to probe a little deeper and perhaps give some hint towards a solution.

To begin with, while the Sanskrit critics have 'rasa' as the soul of poetry, their Western counterparts do not say 'life' is its soul, rather, they say, literature is, at bottom, 'criticism of life'. Now, what is this 'criticism of life'? As we have seen before, to put it simply, 'criticism of life' is equivalent to 'reflection on life', as we may say it in common use. That is to say, it is the outpouring of the mind of man resultant to its impart with his surrounding i.e., nature and other men. We have also seen that this is not the peculiar characteristic of literature alone but of all arts in general. Now, what is the conception of 'rasa' according to the Sanskrit critics? We have Bharata's classic definition of 'rasa' as 'Vibhavahubhayabhisamayogi nasanispati' and we have multifarious interpretations — all
interesting and in part true, some ingenious and finally Abhinavagupta's and Mammaṭa's brilliant and convincing. We do not intend to enter into them or elaborate those revealing processes which must invariably accompany the suggestion or manifestation of 'rasa'. We, however, propose to view the matter critically in the modern light and see how far it is comparable to the Western concept of 'criticism of life'. The word 'rasa' like any such key word, is essentially intranslatable. It has, however, been rendered as 'emotion' or 'sentiment', rather 'poetic sentiment' viewed, of course, in the aesthetic context. In other words, it is an expression for the aesthetic emotion or sentiment of joy or delight produced by a work of art. Indeed, the 'Upaniṣad' has 'raso vai saḥ' which means He i.e., God is, indeed, joy. So, in the Vedic context, 'rasa' may be said to be an equivalent for spiritual delight. And to the extent that aesthetic delight is held to be akin to spiritual delight, viz. 'Brahmāsvādasahodara,' 'rasa' in the aesthetic context, means aesthetic delight. Joy or delight — for both the words seem to be suitable, but perhaps appropriately in slightly differing contexts i.e., while joy is the core, delight is its excrescence — if then it is aesthetic and so akin to spiritual, is 'rasa,' which may, therefore, be more properly rendered as poetic sentiment in the particular and aesthetic delight in general.

Now, this 'rasa' is suggested or manifested by a work of art or poetry. But how it is so suggested or manifested? Here the subject and the object come into play and the resultant effect
is 'rasa'. On the objective side, the particular work of art or poetry has an essential quality of suggestion or 'dhvani' or 'vyahjanā' by the force of which it so happens. But what happens in the subject? The poet or artist on one side and the connoisseur or critic of poetry or art on the other is the person in whom the 'rasa' is manifested. But how? This process has been amply and admirably discussed and elaborated in the various interpretations, especially in the interpretations of Abhinavagupta and Mammaṭa. Without entering into those thorough-going processes we would touch upon only one essential point. We have indicated earlier that 'bhāva' or a basic feeling is transformed into 'rasa' or poetic sentiment by the peculiar power and process of suggestion or 'dhvani' or 'vyahjanā' when accompanied by its proper 'vibhāvas', 'anubhāvas' and 'vyahbicāribhāvas' i.e., its basic and excitant causes, so to say, external manifestations, and subordinate feelings, respectively. In this connection, it may be interesting to note that, Eliot's famous concept of 'objective correlative' as 'the formula' of a 'particular emotion' has a striking resemblance with Bharata's definition of 'rasa'. But, without going into such digression, the question persists - how? Granted that these material ingredients of 'rasa' have a peculiar or unique power of suggestion, as brilliantly and convincingly propounded by Abhinavagupta, etc., how the mind of the 'sahārya', in whom 'rasa' manifested, acts in this particular context? The answer is: by the power or efficiency of 'bhāvakatva śṛttī' i.e., imagination or

1 Eliot - Selected Essays. Hamlet- P 145
imaginative appreciation which is inherent in the mind of a 'sahādaya'. It is this that enables him to rise above the particularised and individualised forms of those materials as well as his own particular or individual self through the process of 'sādhāraṇākṛtī' or universalisation and thus attain to a transcendental state of the mind or soul where a particular poetic sentiment or 'rasa' (of the recognised 8 or 9 'rasas') reigns supreme and becomes one with bliss. So it appears that while suggestion or 'dhvani' or 'vyākhyāvṛtti' in the object is the efficient cause or power (as it were) of the manifestation of 'rasa', 'bhāvakatva vṛttī' acts as a similar force in the subject. These two vital powers meet at a point and give rise to that thing of wondrous joy and bliss called 'rasa'. So it comes to this: a particular poetic sentiment is manifested in wondrous joy and bliss and hence the well-known Sanskrit saying goes, 'rasa sārasācmatkāraḥ'.

Now, we have to tackle our main problem: how to relate the well-known concept of poetry as 'criticism of life' with the theory of 'rasa' (together with 'dhvani') of the Sanskrit critics. In this connection, we have to admit, we believe, granted that the basic conception of 'rasa' and 'dhvani' is worthy of acceptance, the enumeration of the 'rasas' as either 8 or 9 in number need not be considered absolute or sacrosant. They may as well be taken as illustrative rather than exhaustive. Indeed the later addition of 'sānta' as the 9th 'rasa' shows that the original enumeration was not complete. And like the number of fundamental particles
in physical science they may be further extended or, which may be of more vital importance, their common basic nature and essential characteristic may be probed and thus their unity and connection shown. Regarding the latter we may perhaps mention that as 'upamā' or simile or, again, as 'atiśayokti' or hyperbole, has been regarded by some as the basis of all 'alaṅkāras' or imaginative moods in poetry, so either 'adbhūta' or marvellous or 'sānta' or quietistic may perhaps be taken as the basis or essential nature of all 'rasas'. For example, to the extent that the 'Bhāvas', etc. are all transformed into their 'alaukika' equivalents it may be said that 'adbhūta' or marvellous is its essential nature; similarly, since 'vigalita-vedyāntara' is the nature of the state of 'rasa' and joy or 'ānanda' is its essence it may be equally looked upon, in its true nature, as 'sānta'. And the phrase 'recollected in tranquillity' in Wordsworth's definition, as discussed by us earlier, says so much. Some at least of the 'vyabhicāri-bhāvas', if not all, may well be imagined as 'sthāyi-bhāva', given the proper circumstances and conditions and hence capable of being transformed into new 'rasas'. We think if the vast area of modern literature is perviewed the limited number of 'rasas' as enumerated by the Sanskrit critics will be found inadequate and new 'rasas' have to be formulated. On the other hand, all the enumerated and possible 'rasas' may be found to tend to merge in one common and unified 'rasa', whatever that may be.1

1 Details are to be found in V. Raghavan's 'The Number of Rasas'.
However, these speculations or theorisations apart, we are to determine whether there is any connection between the concept of 'rasa' and 'criticism of life'. After this brief exposition of the concept of 'rasa' (together with 'dhvani') we think we should recall our earlier observation that while the 'rasa' theory certainly seems to be more subjective than objective, the concept of 'criticism of life' seems to be more objective than subjective. It is possible to accept this statement after this brief probe into the nature of the two concepts as before any such probe. But there certainly must be some connection between these two viewpoints since they both relate to one and the same thing. Doubtless, man is the centre of everything — at least of his every endeavour. If in his poetic endeavour he is the centre, on his one side is his life and on his other is his 'rasa' or emotion, as it were, resultant on his impact with this life. Now, while the emotional concept of poetry puts emphasis on his emotion, the criticism concept lays stress on his life. These are apparently two opposite viewpoints both meeting at him and his poetry. His 'emotion' is certainly born of his life and his life is related to his 'emotion' as its background. In this mutual, reciprocal relationship, the nature of poetry may be determined either with reference to both or to the more essential of the two. If the latter is preferable, as the logic of definition requires, the emotional concept would appear to be preferable to the criticism concept. Though the latter is also a valuable and valid conception as deep as life and is hard to be ignored, the former appears
to be a better definition of poetry, in so far as the said 'criticism', after all, tends to be emotional than the 'emotion' tends to be critical. Both the 'definitions' are, however, wider than necessary in the context of poetry and apply to all arts generally. It is, therefore, necessary, in our present contexts, that they should be understood with the limitation that the 'emotion' or the 'criticism', as the case may be, is expressed or created in words.

We have been so long trying to correlate two famous English definitions of poetry with the Sanskrit definition of poetry viz., 'vākyāṁ rasātmakeṁ kāvyam'. And in trying to grasp the essential nature of 'rasa' as interpreted by Abhinavagupta, etc. we have naturally stated the importance of 'dhvani' or suggestion in the phenomenon of 'rasa'. But hitherto we have tried to avoid any controversy between the 'rasa' theory and the 'dhvani' theory and any mention of the relative importance of the two. In effect, however, we have assumed, as it will appear from the preceding paragraphs, that 'rasa' is the soul of poetry while 'dhvani' is the power or process by which 'rasa' is suggested or manifested. We have not said as much in so many words, but we seem to have made such assumption. Or, it may be said, we have made no such assumption, but simply have accepted the principal theory of poetry i.e., the 'rasa' theory for exposition and comment and in that context mentioned the phenomenon of 'dhvani' after Abhinavagupta, etc. Which-ever way it is, we think we should now take up the issue for a
brief review and comment before we pass on to our next point.

We do not propose to enter into details or nice distinctions of logic as exhibited by the well-known Sanskrit critics in this matter. We shall simply try to find out the essential difference between the two concepts and arrive at a correct view of these two conflicting and contending rivals for being regarded as the soul of poetry. At the outset, it appears that 'dhvani' or suggestion is a fundamental quality of poetry. It is as essential in poetry as imagination is essential in the connoisseur or critic. In fact, as stated earlier, suggestion and imagination are the two powers or powerful forces by which poetry is appreciated or, in the words of Sanskrit critics, 'rasa' is 'abhivyakta' or manifested. While the one is an essential quality of poetry, the other is an essential quality of the connoisseur or critic. That much is clear. But if it is so, it must be at once accepted, if either 'rasa' or 'dhvani' must be regarded as the soul of poetry, then it must be clearly 'dhvani' and not 'rasa' which is the soul of poetry. For, to state again, while 'dhvani' is in the poetry, 'rasa' is in the connoisseur or critic and to that extent outside poetry. This would appear to be a rather easy and simple solution, but let us probe deeper. While 'dbhavyāloka' states 'Kāvyasyāttma dhvaniriti the budhah yah samānmātapūrvah', 'Sāhitya-darpanā' has 'vākyām rasāt-makahṁ kāvyam'. This is the opposition in its clearest possible terms. But the opposition takes a more complex term when Abhinavagupta himself clearly states that 'rasadhvani' is the best and
The highest kind of dhvani and all poets should wholeheartedly try to aim at it and achieve it. The dhvanikaras do not, however, expressly state that rasa is the soul of poetry as that would be clearly against their initial assertion that dhvani is the soul of poetry. But, in effect, they seem to accept such a view of poetry. Their arguments seem to lead them inevitably to such a proposition, but they refrain from stating it expressly, wisely as some think. It cannot be, however, denied that they have left this much to be reconciled between their initial contention and the logical conclusion of their brilliant arguments. They may, however, be justified if we interpret them as stating that dhvani is certainly the soul of poetry, while rasadhvani is its best kind. To undertake to define man and good man is not the one and the same thing. If animality and rationality constitute the essential nature of man, something more must be added to this so that it may constitute the essential nature of good man. In other words, dhvani is the basic minimum of true poetry and in this view a piece of composition without dhvani but having delightful vācyārtha and lakṣyārtha must be reckoned as poetry only in a secondary sense; while rasadhvani would constitute good poetry and not just poetry. It is a better and higher kind of poetry and therefore every poet should strive to achieve it. But mere dhvani i.e., vastudhvani and alaṅkāra-dhvani without rasadhvani would just constitute poetry. While the minimum is essential, the other is desirable.
The arguments stated above are certainly arguments that may justify the 'dhvani' theory of poetry which asserts that 'dhvani' or suggestion is the soul of poetry. But the traditional weight of the 'rasa' theory seems to be too heavy to allow the 'dhvani' theory to tilt the scale against itself. First, 'rasa' is the most basic conception in this context and down from the Vedas themselves through the great dramatic theory of Bharata to the main body of criticism of Sanskrit poetry 'rasa' is the most prevailing conception regarding the soul of poetry. Its dominant force cannot be denied and if appears it must be given its due place in any proper conception of poetry or drama. It seems historically and traditionally, if not also aesthetically, 'rasa' must be regarded as an essential element in the concept of poetry. Further, our previous arguments in favour of 'dhvani' viz., that while 'dhvani' is a power in poetry, 'rasa', like its cause, as it were, i.e. 'bhāvakatvā' is in the poet or critic will not be found, on further consideration, to be absolute. For, without going into abstruse logical or metaphysical questions, it may be observed that by the same mode of arguments both 'rasa' and 'dhvani' may be said to be in poetry. We should remember, in this context, that both 'rasa' and 'dhvani' have been understood by the Sanskrit critics in a number of senses and it has been held by them that both are in poetry, in fact, the one or the other of them is the soul of poetry, while the appreciation, enjoyment or suggestion or manifestation of which is in the poet or critic. In fact, it would appear, the
interpretation of the term 'rasa' as 'rasyate iti rasah' i.e., that which is enjoyed is 'rasa' is the most substantial interpretation signifying 'rasa' as the substance or soul of poetry, while 'dhvani' may be better construed as only 'dhvananamiti dhvaniḥ' i.e., the phenomenon of suggestion or manifestation is 'dhvani'. So, in this view, while 'rasa' is the noumenon, 'dhvani' is the phenomenon or rather its phenomenon. To put the idea in a Sanskrit kārikā of our own it may be said, Kāvyātmano rasastattvam vyāpāro dhvanyamānataḥ. And to borrow the words of Shakespeare with slight alteration, we may say, 'rasa' is the thing where you can catch the soul of poetry within. So, while both 'rasa' and 'dhvani' are in the poetry, 'vāsanā' and 'bhāvakatva' are in the poet or critic. And according to the dictum 'saktiśaktimataoravedah' 'dhvani' may be regarded as the power by which 'rasa' is manifested and therefore may be regarded as one with 'rasa', to take an extreme view; 'vastudhvani' and 'alaṅkāra-dhvani' being taken as 'dhvani' only secondarily from this point of view, or, in the way of Viśvanātha to be impregnated with some 'rasa' or other even in themselves. So far, in brief, as aesthetics is concerned; any further probe into the matter will lead us inevitably into the borders of metaphysics.

Whichever way the truth lies, it is doubtless, however, that both 'rasa' and 'dhvani' should be given major importance as opposed to other concepts of poetry, viewed in the light of Sanskrit poetics and they should be invariably taken into account when a piece of poetry is to be properly interpreted, understood...
and enjoyed. Since, as it has been indicated above, the two are linked each to each, as it were, by an inseparable relation, both of them have to be taken into equal account, as it were, so that the full force and meaning of poetry may be adequately apprehended. And as we have seen in the preceding paragraphs, 'dhvani', or, its Western equivalent, suggestion and 'rasa'; or, its western equivalent, the consequent emotion or the emotional effect have to be kept in full view in the context of appreciation of poetry or art. Both the process as well as the processed result are vital for poetry and its enjoyment. This dualism is inseparable for us, finite as we are; in the infinite, they certainly meet at a point. This is the most valuable jewel that Sanskrit poetics has to offer out of its huge mass of aesthetic speculations and theorisations. And here the East and the West seem to meet at one point. For the West also has not yet been able to advance further in this direction beyond the concept of suggestion and emotional effects, which have been variously described as significance, suggestive symbolism or symbolic suggestion, symbolic overtone or undertone, poetic or atmospheric symbolism, imaginative suggestion, atmosphere, etc. and the resultant feeling, emotion, impression, state of mind, etc. We have desisted from entering into nice distinctions between some of these concepts and others and their equivalents in terms of the varieties of 'dhvani' and 'rasa' which deserve to be a fit subject for a separate and interesting treatise in themselves.

Here we shall say nothing of Mahimabhaṭṭa’s 'anumitivāda'.
in the context of either 'rasa' or 'dhvani' — a notable challenge, no doubt, to the supremacy of 'dhvani', in particular beyond saying that in the realm of aesthetics it must at once be accepted by all concerned as a basic tenet that where imagination reigns, logic is indeed a poor and pale substitute for its kingly majesty and sovereign sway. As the experience of every poet or critic or even any ordinary connoisseur will show, imagination and intellect must be regarded as two fundamentally different functions and powers, belonging though to the same mind, and to try to view one in term of the other would only seem to be foolish and futile and indeed eyeless and erroneous to the extreme to all concerned. Let no pernicious logic make its stealthy trespass into the blazing highway of towering imagination, which alone can give us eternal delight, strengthen us into our very core and can raise us to the level of all-seeing gods. Logic is thus a taboo in the hoary world of glorious imagination and let us not unwarilyly invite logic to justify its own unreal supremacy over the supremely sovereign imagination in matters aesthetic.

So far we have discussed some of the important and vital concepts on poetry both Eastern and Western (and drama - poetic drama, in particular, included); but have not tried to distinguish between poetry and drama or have not said anything particularly relating to drama. We do not, however, intend to enter into a detailed discussion on the drama. Whatever we have so far said on or about poetry is automatically applicable to drama — only
in a greater degree and to an intenser extent. That much is obvious enough, as the drama is the highest form of poetry with a more heightened effect — in particular, when poetry is 'emotion recollected in tranquillity', and drama is 'representation of action or state' — 'Avasthānukṛtirnātyam'. So all our thoughts and deliberations on poetry are true with regard to the drama as well with a keener and intenser edge and with a truer and profounder significance. And more so with regard to poetic drama, as it is so called, as poetic drama is more akin to pure or undramatic poetry than other forms of dramatic literature. And, it is to be remembered, the two main pillars of our present study are 'Sākuntala' and 'Hamlet' both of which are the two best specimens of poetic drama. We shall, however, consider some fundamental and vital Western concepts on the drama and try to correlate them with the concepts of the Sanskrit dramatics and see a measure of truth between the two.

Aristotle, the great Greek philosopher and thinker on poetry and drama, has profoundly influenced, even up till now, all Western thinking on Aesthetics. He has propounded in his famous 'Poetics' his theory on poetry and drama, and tragedy in particular, and in that latter connection he has put forth his idea of Ἐμαθάρσις or 'purgation'. This idea of Ἐμαθάρσις, like many of his fundamental and thought-provoking ideas, has been variously translated; but 'purgation', whatever it may mean, seems to be a better rendering than any other. This idea of 'purgation', which
is apparently a medical term, means, according to Aristotle, that tragedy, in which connection the term is used, purges the soul of the reader or spectator of the emotions of pity and fear and thereby affords a pleasurable emotional relief and affects a healthy emotional balance. Volumes have been written on this concept of 'catharsis' or 'purification' as an effect of tragedy, which has been itself defined, in substance, as a serious representation of life, by way of action, having this particular effect. As indicated earlier, this vital concept of 'catharsis' has been variously interpreted by poets, dramatists and critics of the West and it has been regarded as meaning from a mere 'purification' of the soul of the tragic emotions of pity and fear to a refinement, purification and even ennobling of them as well as such other emotions of the soul or the mind. As stated earlier, this has a special reference to tragedy implying, as some interpreters think, that the concept may also be applicable to comedy, the emotions to be purged being, however, essentially other than pity and fear. We have not gone into the details of various interpretations of this particular concept or the corresponding phenomenon. But this, in substance, is the concept of Aristotle's 'catharsis'.

Now the question to us is naturally this: how to correlate the idea with the corresponding idea, if any, of the Sanskrit critics — the concept of 'rasa' to be precise. At the outset, it is clear that this has a certain correspondence with the idea of 'rasa'. For the Aristotelian principle expressly names
the two emotions of pity and fear, both of which are regarded as fundamental for tragedy. In this connection, it is to be noted that neither the one nor the other of the two emotions is alone sufficient to produce the desired tragic effect — both of them are necessary, each having a kind of relation with the other. These emotions of pity and fear have their clear equivalents in ‘karuṇa’ and ‘bhayaṇaka’-rasaś in so far as the terms signify equivalence. It is to be seen, however, whether the emotions of pity and fear have an exact equivalence in ‘karuṇa’ and ‘bhayaṇaka’-rasaś. It may be said, without going into the details, that such an exact equivalence between them may be generally granted, remembering that each, in its turn, may be an ‘anga’-rasa’ while the other is ‘anga’ and vice versa. In this way their mutual interpenetration may also be explained. It thus comes to this that in a tragedy of Aristotle’s conception the emotion of pity and fear are vital for its effect, which means, in terms of Sanskrit poetics, that ‘karuṇa’ and ‘bhayaṇaka’ are its principal rasas. Thus, so far as the particular emotions are concerned, the Aristotelian conception seems to have an exact parallel in Sanskrit poetics. But it must be immediately remembered that Sanskrit literature has no tragedy in the modern sense i.e., with an unhappy end. We shall have something to discuss about this particular point as we proceed further. For the present we think it will suffice to say that the conception of tragedy has undergone many changes since its earliest vogue to its modern usage. For example, in early Greek dramas a play with a great amount of suffering and
pain but ultimately ending happily was also regarded as a tragedy along with those ending unhappily. This idea gradually changed into our present notion of tragedy necessarily ending unhappily, the early Greek example being known, in modern terms, rather as tragi-comedy than as either tragedy or comedy. However, to come to our point, Aristotle himself held to this early conception of tragedy, though he considered the latter example i.e., a play ending unhappily as the best or perfect case of tragedy provided, of course, it fulfils the other vital conditions thereof. In this sense, the 'Sākuntala', which is one of the objects of our study, is very well a tragedy and not a comedy as it is generally known or tragi-comedy as it should be called in modern times. Apart from our particular example, to put it in general terms, in this view of the early notion of tragedy Aristotle's theory of 'Catharsis' seems to have an exact equivalence in Sanskrit poetics, though not put in express terms.

Aristotle does not expressly state the significance of his idea of 'Catharsis' in the available portion of his 'Poetics'. His own idea, according to able commentators, seems to be centering on the idea of 'purgation' and its natural and logical consequences, which possibly include refinement, purification, ennoblement and thus come as near as possible in his time to the modern ideas of dignity of man, freedom of the soul and reconciliation or even exaltation. These latter ideas have developed principally from the great tragic dramas of Shakespeare down to some of
the essentially modern tragic masterpieces. But, to come to our point, the phenomenon of 'vatharsis' has a clear resemblance to the phenomenon of 'rasa,' as already indicated. It may be seen, however, that the idea of 'vatharsis' or 'purgation' seemed to have emphasised one particular aspect involved in the whole complex phenomenon of 'rasa,' and this emphasis seems to point to the truth of our earlier observation that 'śānta' like 'adbhuta' may perhaps be considered as the basic or 'maula' 'rasa' underlying all the 'rasas.' We do not, however, intend to enter into such speculative discussion, profoundly important, though that may be for its own sake. Another vital question in this connection will naturally be that while Aristotle has expressly mentioned the emotions of pity and fear, Sanskrit poetics has its well-known 8 or 9 'rasas.' Did Aristotle mean that pity and fear are the only two emotions most relevant to tragedy, others being less important? If so, why has he not mentioned other emotions in connection with at least his comedy? But alas! his proposed treatise on comedy is not available to us. If it was written, it is now lost for us. So what about the other emotions? If he has not mentioned them, he has not excluded them either; and according to some interpreters, he has hinted at their possibilities. For example, though this may not be very pertinent in the present context, he has mentioned the emotion of pleasure — rather a rational & enlightened pleasure — as the end of art, poetry or drama. Incidentally, this Aristotelian concept also exactly tallies with the concept of
Sanskrit poetics in so far as they emphasise joy as the prime end of poetry — 'sadyaḥ paramārvṛtaye'. In any case, however, it must be recognised that, while he was too engrossed with tragedy, Aristotle emphasised and expressly mentioned, to put it in the terms of Sanskrit poetics, only two 'rasas', while he neglected or did not mention the other 'rasas'. But Sanskrit Poetics, in its more elaborate and extensive sweep, if not also in its profounder grip, mentioned as many as 8 or 9 'rasas', which at least sufficed for the entire volume and all the kinds of current Sanskrit poetry. If it may be found that the number is not wholly adequate to the requirements of modern literature, it certainly is not the fault of Sanskrit poetry, as it could not justly be expected to cover all possible and future developments in poetry. So, in this respect, Sanskrit poetics, nearer to us than Aristotle's as it is, is certainly more satisfactory than the latter.

Before we leave Aristotle we may mention, in this connection, his idea of poetry or art. Aristotle, it may be said, virtually defined art as 'imitation of nature' and poetry as 'imitation of nature in words (rhymed words)'. From the same standpoint his definition of drama, which has already been stated in substance by us, comes, to state in still briefer terms, to 'imitation of life'. Now, this all-important 'imitation of nature', or 'imitation of life', which runs through his conception of art, poetry and drama has been variously understood by his interpreters even more than his concept of 'katharsis'. So put it,
however, as briefly as possible, the difference between the con-
tending interpretations of 'imitation of nature' hinges on a
single substantial difference in interpretation i.e., whether
this 'imitation' is real or ideal. In other words, if this
'imitation' is of a real nature, it means one thing, and if this
'imitation' is of an ideal nature, it certainly means the other.
So, the conflict ultimately revolves on the fundamental question
of the ideal-real correlative. And it naturally leads us at once
to the arena of metaphysics. It seems clear, however, from his
'Poetics' that this 'imitation', according to Aristotle, is of an
ideal rather than a real nature, understood relatively. In this
connection, we may mention another important idea in Aristotle's
aesthetics, i.e., that this 'imitation' is of a nature in terms
of the general rather than of the particular. We do not intend
to try to elaborate these ideas here. But these key concepts of
Aristotle with regard to art, poetry and drama (including tragedy)
should best be remembered, although in their substance, in the
context of our present discussion. It could have been very inter-
esting, however, and profitable too, to compare these ideas with
the canons of modern Western criticism as well as with those of
Sanskrit poetics. For example, to take only the key concepts
already touched upon in this chapter, what is the relation among
'emotion recollected in tranquillity', 'criticism of life', 'imi-
tation of nature', 'imitation of life', 'catharsis' and our 'rasa-
nispatti'? We refrain from entering into any attempt at a synthesis
of these conceptions besides what we have already discussed as we think all this is not particularly necessary for our present study. But we may perhaps state that we believe our concept of 'rasanāspatti' stands yet unassailable and supreme, and it can substantially incorporate and harmonise all other notions of poetry or art in its all-embracing fold. That is, however, a fit subject for another separate and important study. For the present, we think we shall do well to keep these fundamental and key concepts of art, poetry and drama in our minds before we begin to study the two greatest poets of the East and the West, Kālidāsa and Shakespeare, as these concepts, howsoever synthesised, must help us, in one way or other, in properly evaluating the poetry of both.

Before concluding this chapter, we should like to mention some of the ideas of poetry or drama of no particular critics or even of ordinary poets but of Kālidāsa and Shakespeare themselves, which they had occasions to express in their creations. As we have indicated in our Special Introduction, we would like to put more emphasis on such ideas of creative minds rather than on those of dissecting minds, as in matters of 'dharma', 'śruti' has distinctly a greater authority than 'smṛiti'. As indicated in that part, we would rather regard, to borrow a potent idea from the 'Dhvanyāloka', these creative ideas as 'vyangya' as opposed to the latter which we would regard as 'guṇābhūta-vyangya'. Hence we would generally give more weight to the words of the poet himself rather
than his critics. The poet is certainly the greater authority — the poet who knoweth thus — ya evaṁ veda — and who knoweth thus knoweth best — ya evaṁ veda sa veda. In this context, we may, perhaps, be allowed to cite a couple of dicta of our own, viz., Kāvyāṁ kāvyasajātiyaṁ bhāṣyaṁ jñeyam tatchyathā / tasmād bhāṣyaṁ samākṣipya kāvyāṁ kāvyaṁ bodhayet // Kāvyāṁ pramāṇaṁ kavyaṁ pramāṇaṁ na bhāṣyamagryaṁ na ca bhāṣyakāraḥ / kāvyasya tattvam niḥitaṁ guhāyāṁ guhāhṛtam tad hṛdayaṁ kavīnām //

If it be so, how much authority the words of poets like Kālidāsa and Shakespeare themselves should command may well be understood.

Kālidāsa had no occasion or did not possibly think it necessary to say much on poetry as such besides giving an indirect and significant hint revealing the heart of poetry in his 'vāgar-thāviva sampṛktau' — as already touched upon by us. But he has expressly stated in his 'Mālavikāgnimitra' the nature and the uses of a drama. Though well-known, it is well worth quoting:

'Devāṃśāṃ manantanti munayaṁ kāntāṁ kratuñcākṣusāṁ rudrpranvedamūmā-kṛtavyatikare svāṅge vibhaktāṁ āvidhā / traigunyodbhavamatra lokācaritaṁ nānārasaṁ dṛśyate nātyaṁ bhinnarucerjanasya vahudhīpyekāṁ samāṁadhakam // It is said in this pregnant verse, that the drama is called by the sages (or thinkers) an enchanting visual sacrificial rite, as it were, of the gods themselves, where the affairs of the world (or of the people), as born of the three-fold qualities of knowledge, action and ignorance, evoking the manifold emotions in the minds of spectators, are represented, and thus it alone is the delighter in manifold ways of the hearts of people of various
tastes, etc. A thorough probe into the significance of this single verse will, we believe, reveal the secrets of the drama in their entirety and those will exclude none of the principal western or modern ideas on the drama and will rather embrace them all—including, we would like to assert, tragedy itself which is regarded as the highest form of drama according to the Western critics. It may be noted we have so far left out the second foot from our consideration. It has been traditionally explained as indicating the difference in the dances included in the drama as 'tāṇḍava' and 'lāsya'. But, though not at all intended by the poet, the line may well be taken as indicating the division of the drama into so-called comedy and tragedy, symbolised by Umā, the delightful and Rudra, the terrible respectively. We know it sounds presumptuous to explain it that way. We, however, intend to say that the verse, as it stands, is so all-inclusive in its sweep that it does not leave any particular kind of drama out of its fold, although it may not actually mean this, not being so intended by the poet himself. In other words, here is a case of a piece of poetry which signifies much more than the poet intends and, to that extent, it transcends its possible significance as laid down by the poet himself. However, even leaving out this second foot, we may say, the verse is an universally valid statement on the nature and uses of the drama.

Next, let us turn to Shakespeare, who had occasion to describe in one of his rarely self-introspective moods, the nature
and purpose of drama. Let us quote these well-known lines from 'Hamlet': "... whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." This famous phrase of Shakespeare, which is the key to the whole idea, viz., 'to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature' at once reminds us of that equally famous Aristotelian phrase 'imitation of nature' briefly touched upon earlier. The two phrases apparently seem to say the same thing. Even the interpretation of the Aristotelian phrase as 'imitation of nature in the ideal' seems to be indicated by the Shakespearian words 'as 'twere.' Whatever may be their respective interpretations, Shakespeare seems there to substantially reproduce poetically the idea of Aristotle expressed philosophically. In fact, however, Shakespeare puts forth his own idea of drama which almost exactly tallies with Aristotle's. Besides, if this Shakespearian phrase is closely examined it will be found, we believe, that this has almost an exact parallel in the Kālidāśian verse explained above. The very terse words viz., 'lokacaritam dṛṣyate' mean nothing else than what is meant by the Shakespearian phrase 'to hold the mirror up to nature.' Incidentally, the words of Dāṇḍin in his Kāvyādarsā, viz., 'ādarsām prāpya vaṁmayam,' almost exactly tally with Shakespeare's. 'Traigunyodhavām .... nānārasam' in the Kāli- dāśian verse means the same thing as the words of Shakespeare beginning with 'to show virtue ....' mean. Thus this much less
known verse of Kālidāsa in his 'Mālavikāgnimitra' does actually possess the same importance in revealing the nature and uses of drama as the famous, pregnant words of Shakespeare quoted from his 'Hamlet'.

We shall now conclude this chapter with another famous quotation from Shakespeare regarding the nature and the process of creation of poetry itself. These are the lines from 'A Midsummer Night's Dream': 'The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling;/ Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;/ And as imagination bodies forth / The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen / Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing / A local habitation and a name.'/ Here we find in only six lines a complete picture, as it were, of the process of creation of poetry, and in that process they suggest something about the nature of poetry as well. It may be mentioned here we have also tried, in our Special Introduction, to find out the nature of poetry from the process of its creation. Shakespeare alone could describe, in his rare introspective mood, precisely and vividly the process of poetic creation. 'The poet's eye' mentioned here is, of course, the eye of his imagination. 'A fine frenzy' reminds us of Plato's divine madness'; and though the phrase was apparently coined by him for indicating scorn, Shakespeare really refers to the poet's irrepressible passion. "From heaven to earth, from earth to heaven" — in this, the sequence may be essential, as the poet starts with 'divine madness', sets
out to describe life on earth, and makes it one with heaven in
his joyous creation. These 'From heaven to earth, from earth
to heaven' are pregnant words possibly carrying more meaning than
meets the ear. Aristotle's ideal-real correlative is surely to
be found in this double-edged blazing phrase, and something more.
And it will definitely include all kinds of poetry, if we may say
so, both idealistic and realistic, so to say, as well as ideal-
realistic. The words are all-embracing, and we shall do well to
remember them further. The rest of the lines speaks of apparently
the same thing as Aristotle's idea of the universal in the
particular — to expand the idea further, the abstract in the
concrete, and as Tagore used so often to say, 'the infinite in the
finite'. So, three key ideas stand out clearly in these lines of
Shakespeare, viz., (1) the 'divine madness' of the poet, (2) the
ideal-real correlative in poetry, and (3) poetry as the universal
in the particular. It is revealing to note that these profoundly
beautiful lines of Shakespeare, surely expressing his personal
experience of creating one of the finest and greatest kinds of
poetry, almost echo the ideas of Aristotle and Plato howsoever
interpreted.

The idea of 'Sakti' or 'pratibha' i.e. the poetic imagination
as the cause of creating poetry in Sanskrit poetics almost
exactly corresponds to this. It is true it has not been so
poetically expressed or the three prime concepts as mentioned
above have not been so expressly stated in one and the same place
in Sanskrit poetics—though they have been severally indicated by the concepts of 'śakti', 'upadeśībhūta lokacarita' and 'sādhāraṇī-kṛtī'; the significance of the Shakespearian lines has already been either suggested or indicated by the ideas of Sanskrit critics in their own way. But one of the finest verses of critical poetry — which may be called poetry on poetry — in Sanskrit critical literature and one of the most well-known is:

`Apara kāvyasaṁsāre kaviṁ kaḥ praśāntiḥ / yadasmīl rocāte kiṁcit tadasya parivartate //` (Of the various versions of the verse we prefer this one) This verse declares unerringly and with a sublime poetic imagery the absolute freedom of the poet as a creator in the realm of poetry where he alone is the lord, governor and arbiter. It is profoundly interesting and perhaps not a little ironical that, while the Sanskrit rhetoricians laid down rule after rule for the guidance of the poet, this single streak of divine light, as it were, in the form of this golden verse, upholds the inviolable freedom of the poet as 'Vedānta' upholds the freedom of the soul. This key verse coupled with the lines of Shakespeare quoted above constitutes the gospel, as it were, of the poet and the art of poesy. However, this is no place for us to discuss these questions in details. What we have briefly discussed in this chapter and in the former will, we believe, throw sufficient light to help us in properly studying the two greatest specimens of poetry of the East and the West viz., Kālidāsa and Shakespeare.