Chapter – II
Mimesis and Sadrīsya: A Comparative Understanding
Mimesis and Sadrisya; A Comparative Understanding

Plato, Aristotle and Mimesis, the Principal Theory of ancient/classical Philosophy on Art and Aesthetics

The principal subject matter of aesthetics emerges out of cultural moorings, works rooted in traditions, artistic creations, performance, appreciation, interpretation, criticism, judgement, and various other roles arts play in people’s lives and society. While artistic activity owes a lot to these factors, art also contributes a lot to the existing cultural traditions. For this they have to assume their independent status. To some extent they have to be independent and liberate themselves from the socio-historical and cultural contexts. The aesthetician, therefore, has to be both within and outside the institutions to understand, interpret and examine the art works. Classical, Medieval and Renaissance views related to visual culture have sometimes been characterised as being part of the history of aesthetics. Some of the major issues like beauty, of aesthetics discussed in earlier periods and reasonable study in the subject on the background as well as modern developments in this chapter. In the twentieth century, the term has come to hold an extremely diverse collection of particular issues, with no distinct central core. However, several often-taking place themes have been recognized recently.

Whichever approach to the ancient Greeks thought about the arts must commence by stressing on how different Greek conceptions of aesthetics were from some significant modern conceptions. The difference between Greek aesthetics and modern aesthetics lies in the fact that modern aesthetics generally poses itself as a sphere beyond the ethical and practical concerns. Unlike Plato it does not nurture any serious constraint to link arts to ethics and values.
emanating from virtuosity in a broad sense. But for the ancient Greeks, this was not the case in general. Poetry, visual art and music for them have an ethical role, in respect of their form as well as their content, and a citizen’s interest in them was implicit in pursuing questions about how best to live. For this, aesthetic innovations and their involvement in human actions and practical self-perceptions were never independent of their institutional roots. This approach was challenging for the civic institutions in which the arts were rooted; the major dramatic festivals of Athens were civic religious festivals where citizens used to gather. The trend in ancient Greece was to consider any concert or theatrical actions as occasions both for the moral education of the young and the collective examination of tensions and complexity in civic norms of fineness. For this outlook of the goal of art, aesthetic judgment was like Athenian social consideration, a democratic dealing; every citizen was encouraged to engage in aesthetic or ethical manifestation from this particular standpoint.

The two greatest aesthetic thinkers of ancient Greece, Plato (428-347 BC) and Aristotle (384-322 BC), established with their tradition that the function of art was to promote the ethical education of citizens and that formal and stylistic devices were adopted with that end in view. They shared a sense of the importance of aesthetic, and both regarded music, poetry, architecture, and drama as fundamental institutions within the body politic. They also agreed that most great art, and especially dramatic poetry, revealed a passionate attention on the variable and unstable things of this world and education of the beholder of arts to understand the right perspective of them. Despite their differences they accepted the value of one’s attachment to arts from this particular point of view. Plato’s Republic argues that,
“Since we desire citizens to believe that the good person is enough interested in him or herself for good living, we should exclude works that represent or arouse emotions such as grief, fear and pity, which presume that things beyond our manage to do spirit greatly”.¹ (Cooper David, Edit, 1952).

Aristotle’s Poetics reply in conflict that the reversals present in the great tragic plots and the pity and fear they arouse in their addressees are enlightening in a good sense, encouraging to a true considerate of the correlation between the good human life and the goods of fortune.

**Theory of imitation or Mimesis: Plato and Aristotle**

Plato highly recommends the banishment of poets and painters from his ideal Republic and in course of his argument provided an absolute theory of imitation along with false reasons for thoughts that damage both from the laws of morality and from the rational perception of the world. Plato admired the poets and was himself something of a poet. In his ideal state, he was sure that great arts, even some passages in Homer, be inclined to have an evil impact upon the young and sensitive, and in view of that he decided that they must be banned. Plato’s hovering between art and non-art and his proclivity to be anti-art in the context of his ideal Republic is ultimately for his too much of emphasis upon didacticism. Plato’s Republic argues that,

“for citizens to consider that the good person is enough interested in him or herself for fine live, should exclude works that represent or stimulate emotions such as grief, fear and pity, which assume that things outside our direct act strength of mind significantly”.² (Soroom, 1966)

The concept of mimesis underwent different transformations through the
discourses of many other Greek philosophers. But traces of the basic spirit of Plato’s contentions are somehow retained. For example, imitation is not simple or mirror like imitation in Aristotle’s aesthetics.iii (Pollitt. J, 1972).

The theory of imitation and the concern with the expressive and emotionally educative aspect of aesthetic experience were not strictly influential until the 17th century. From Aristotle’s standpoint, the moral effect of art on its audience is Catharsis. Though Aristotle applied this theory to tragedy only, but many since his day have applied it to art in general. According to him,

“Art acts as an emotional cathartic and reaches a ‘purification of the emotions’. Hence imitation of emotions has a purpose here. Certain emotions man would be comfortable without are generating during the way of daily life. Aristotle limited them to pity and fear.” iv (Alperson Philip, Edit, 1992), Art is the principal outfit that should help drive out these emotions. Beside observing works of art -Drama, Music, Sculpture or Painting, the receiver can work off these emotions rather than let them irritate inside him or take them out in objectionable ways on his fellow men. Art taps off these disturbed inner states rather than let them nurture off in man.

One more important purpose of mimesis in the sense of imitation, as Halliwell has observed in the his study of the aesthetics of Mimesis and particularly in the context of Aristotle, is ‘to situate the work of art in a context of cultural practices that grow out of certain human instincts and develop into institutions that involve communication between artists or ‘makers’ (such as poets and painters), performers (such as actors and musicians) and audiences (such as theatre audiences).’ v (Halliwell: 2002:153) Besides this there is also the notion of ‘likeness’ which comes close to Indian notion of Sadrisya. As
Halliwell notes, embodiment of likeness through artistic mimesis generates cognitive pleasure. This is ‘afforded by the contemplation of mimetic works’ and it is ‘accordingly a pleasure in the recognition and understanding of likenesses.’ vi (Ibid: 188). This notion of imitation or mimesis takes us beyond the stereotyped way of understanding what imitation is in aesthetic contexts. Also the philosophical meaning of discernment of likeness is more serious and deeper than what it may appear to be:

“The discernment of likeness means at its best an active and interpretative process of cognition – a perspicacious discovery of significances in the world or in representations of the world.” vii (ibid: 1986)

Principal Concept of Art and Beauty in Ancient India

There is a large body of literature which discusses arts, including visual arts in theoretical terms along with the technical matters in aesthetic contemplation. In and with references to the treatises on Music, Dance, Sanskrit court poetry and Drama including the literary sources- Vedas, epics, sutras, sastras, puranas and other puranas, the theoreticians proved that they are concerned with the aesthetic experience and also the method of approaching art works and performances. This reveals an understanding of how the ancient India approached the concept of art, beauty and aesthetics. Indian art progressed with recognition of philosophical states in the viewers, or with their representatives. KapilaVatsyayanviii (KapilaVatsyayan) observed:

“Classical Indian architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Literature (Kavya), Music and Dance evolved their own rules conditioned by their respective media, but they shared with one another not only the underlying spiritual beliefs of the
Indian religio-philosophic mind, but also the procedures by which the relationships of the symbol and the spiritual states were worked out in detail”.

Classical Indian art had the target to discover and unearth the idea behind sensuous appearance. The apparent reality of the empirical world is not the ideal world of true reality. With this distinction between the apparent and the real and the proposal to link them together in art works for realizing the truth beyond appearance, Indian art and aesthetics went beyond the purpose of art as only to represent nature. As A. K. Coomaraswamy points out, ‘Strictly no Indian sculpture has been shaped direct from a Living model, or any religious painting copied from the life ‘.¹⁸ Coomaraswamy A.K. (1927)

The Indian artists of the ancient schools not only conceived representation of nature as the aim of art in a certain important sense, but they were also critical about it in the sense of being specific about the nature of representation. Likeness or Sadrisya worked for them more as a cognitive apparatus than becoming an essence of art product. The ontology of art was in no way determined by it. On the contrary there was a general agreement over the apparent nature of the sensuous as more a vehicle of the transcendental or the real behind the apparent. His resources assume from his power of visualisation and his imagination, which desired to propose the idea following sensuous appearance. Thus, Indian art seek out to manifest what lies behind the phenomenal reality. The apparent in the form of representation sought to reach the type, or the Platonic Idea. Therefore, the images prepared are archetypal.

In classical Indian dramaturgy imitation is disclaimed to be the essence of any performance. In fact, the term used by Bharata to describe dramatic action is anukaranamand it has been generally translated as ‘imitation’. But
Abhinavagupta, in his commentary on Bharata’s work holds that natya or theatre cannot be an imitation ‘because the actor does not really imitate the actions Rama, Sita or Dusyanta, for they are not present before him.’ ‘Furthermore, if drama were an imitation, then the spectator would feel is a buffoon who mimics the behaviour of kings and queens. That would only end in a cheap comedy.’ (Jhanji: 1989:33). According to Abhinavagupta’s interpretation, what are imitated are not the emotions of the persons but the bodily symptoms of those emotions. As per Jhanji’s reconstruction of Abhinavagupta’s argument, ‘(1) Drama is not an imitation, because it projects either non-existent or historical personages whose actions cannot be imitated. (2) In drama actors do not mimic particular persons but personify types. Human experience here is generalized, so that various people can identify themselves with this experience and respond to it.’ (Ibid: 34) So far as the Sadrisya or resemblance between painting, sculpture and external world is concerned it cannot be a one-to one resemblance or resemblance based upon a one-to-one imitation because perceptions are normally culture-bound.

Silpasashtra elaborates the rules or the canons to follow in making the images, which represent general or ‘universal kind or forms. A single tradition of portrait painting was also not in evidence. Representation of ideal and symbolic forms was more important. ‘Imitation’ gathered a special meaning in this context. Coomaraswamy remarked, “the intimation of the Divinity behind all form, rather than the imitation of the form itself” (A.K.Coomaraswamy, 1956)

In Indian art, the ideal of beauty is a beauty of type, one that is formalized and rhythmic. Such an image is ideal from the Indian point of view.
According to the *Silpasastra*, an image to be beautiful must be in contemplative mood. This is regarded as the highest criterion of artistic beauty and excellence. In addition, to make the images contemplative it is necessary that the artist should also be of a meditative mood. The figures of Buddha’s of Sarnath of the Gupta period are among the finest examples of such images in contemplative, *dhyana* mood. This dhyana and yoga are features of Indian images are the most distinctive ones in Indian art and sculpture.

Two points of criticism that have followed in this wake are: (i) being canonical in nature, Indian art imposes upon itself severe restriction, and (ii) since the forms or images look similar, Indian art cannot lay claim to originality. However, one may respond to the charges by pointing out that notwithstanding the canonical nature of Indian art there is enough scope of freedom for the artist to give sensuous expression to the non-sensuous and ideal form of reality. As to the charge that there is no originality in Indian art, it can be said that there can be no original art just as there can be no new language for communication. In fact, Indian art is no slave to the phenomenal world that gave our sense. The Indian artist makes fullest use of the imagination, the faculty called *Pratibha* with the ideal form of reality.

The first one, the distinction of forms and appearances is also suggestive of the methodology used by the artist. This requires a process of severe mental discipline of intense concentration by which the artist has to ‘see’ and fix the form with his mind’s eye. Referring to this, Havell said, “It is the same way in Indian art and in all Oriental art inspired by Indian idealism. The artist, through a process of severe mental discipline, is taught to discriminate the essentials informs and appearances, and to see clearly with his mind’s eye before he takes
up brush or chisel.” xiii (Havell. E. B)

This is to reiterate the statement that the form may be executed as a painting or sculpture clearly and unambiguously described in the mind’s eye. Further, it is suggested that the forms and appearance are like the revelation of the divine or Sruti, while the remaining other principles, proportion, expression, beauty, resemblance, and use of material are like Smriti, the facts which are transmitted by tradition. The measurement and proportions are dealt with in various other Sastras. In the text Sukraniti, it is recommended that one should orient all the limbs in grace. In Maya-sastra, Pratimamanaor Laksanami.e feature of the forms give to the eyes the proportions of all limbs. According to Sukraniti, image making may be beautiful, as per the doctrine set by Silpasatra. Recognition of the fact that beauty and grace are from the heart of the artist rather than from subsequent practices is in a way to ascribe freedom to the artist. In all the canons, importance is given to the mind of the artist as the locus of the prime intention to make of art, so that the image making is resolved to help the parishioners in their worship. The feeling and beauty or grace related to the heart or mind of the artist. Passionate dedication on the part of the artist finds its expression in terms of feeling and beauty. On Niharranjan Ray’s interpretation, ‘It stands for the quality of fresh butter and likens it to the freshness of youth’. xiv (Ray Niharanjan, 1974,)

Sadrisya carries a sense of imitation, but this is for upholding a reference to incredible world of senses. Moreover, the representation must look familiar to the spectator for which Sadrisya works as a cognitive apparatus. But this must be distinguished from one-to-one copying or imitation. In painting the materials and medium like colour and others are recommended for projecting the richness
of the perceivable world and not simply for copying.

Sri Aurobindo presumes Sadrisya, as “The truth is the essence of the form”. Variety of Indian art formulates use of sex symbolism, the observation in general context of the true spirit of Indian thought that illustrates no distinction between sanctified and insolent. The relation of the individual to the God or the cosmic self is often visualized in terms of the obsessive worship of a female for her lover. The tangible embrace of the heavenly figures represent the absolute submission of the soul to God, like the ‘mithun’, erotic figures at Khajuraho. In the eternal world and of the experiences through physical means is subject to metamorphosis and fade away from this life, where the world ahead of which are in search and is more continuing in the nature. Indian artists idealize images rather than imitate from the physical world. Art, here, avoids the extreme polarities of high realism on one hand and dry abstractionism, on the other. Tagore rightly draws a distinction between reality and realism. As he says, “Art is the response of man’s creative soul to the call of the real ... and sums up that for the naturally introspective mind of the Eastern artist the real appears in its ideal form of fulfilment.”xv (Ed. Prithwish Neogy, 2005) Such art symbolizes ‘idealized forms and emotions’ that are at a distance from actually occurring emotions and their visible forms. The viewer of such art must cast his mind in a contemplative mood in order to be able to respond to the deeper significance of the created vision.

**Rasa and Bhava**

The concept of ‘Rasa’ was a serious concern for all poets, artists and writers of great treatises as an integral component of a fully developed aesthetic
system. In contemporary period, the term *rasa* is a mark of ‘flavour’ used to describe the aesthetic experiences in all the art activities. The *rasa* flourishes as an aesthetic concept in association with *bhavas* explicated in the Sanskrit text *Natyasastra*, a treatise attributed to *Bharatamuni*. In Chapters six and seven of it the discourses continue in describing eight *rasas* and associated *bhavas*. ‘*Natyasastra*’ claims that music, poetry, and dance reinforce humanity morally and spiritually by means of aesthetic experience or rasa. For *Bharata*, emotion is in the heart of drama and all art. Therefore, the feelings of a poet, an aesthetic taste, or an aesthetic delight passes through ‘*rasa*’ to the concerned reader or spectator. *Natyasastra*, the Sanskrit text consists of 6,000 *sutras*, or verse stanzas, incorporated in 36 or 37 chapters, some passages are in prose form as well. The Natyasastra elucidates a detailed theory of drama. Bharata refers to *bhavas*, the imitations of emotions that the actors perform, and the *rasas* and the emotional responses that they motivate in the audience. He argues that there are eight principal *rasas*: love, pity, anger, disgust, heroism, awe, terror and comedy, and that plays should blend different *rasas* but it remains principally under one. Each *rasa* experienced by the audience is linked with a specific *bhava* and is represented on stage. Therefore, it is sometimes referred to as the fifth Veda also. In this treatise, the most of the vocabulary and structure of Indian classical music and Indian classical dance also are defined. The study of body forms and movements also influenced sculpture and other arts in subsequent centuries.

The *Abhinavabharati* is an interpretation of *Bharata Muni*, an ancient Indian writer’s treatise *Natyasastra*, the dramatic theory. The great Kashmiri *Saivite*, spiritual leader and a yogi (950-1020), *Abhinavagupta*, wrote the
Abhinavabharati. In this colossal work, Abhinavagupta describes the rasasutra of Bharata in accordance with the theory of abhivyakti- expression, advocated in Andandavardhana’s (820-890) treatise ‘Dhvanyaloka’ aesthetic suggestion and the canon of the Pratyabhijna philosophy of Kashmir. According to Abhinavagupta, the aesthetic experience is the manifestation of the intrinsic perception of the self, such as of love and sorrow lodged in an object outside the self. It is also characterized by the bliss of the self. It is parallel to the spiritual experience as one surpasses the limitations of one’s empirical self-involving a process of universalization proceeding during the aesthetic contemplation of characters depicted in the work of art.

Abhinavagupta maintains that rasa literally means taste or essence. It occupied considerable space again in the Kashmiri aesthetician Andandavardhana’s ‘Dhvanyaloka’, Abhinavagupta brought the theory to its height, recognizes for the first time, and defined as the ‘universal bliss of the self or ‘atman’. For him ‘rasa’ is the aesthetic ecstasy in the appreciation of dance and drama, a kind of “realization of ultimate reality”. From this point of view experience of rasa becomes almost akin to Brahman realization. ‘Bhagavata Puranas’, inspires poetry and paintings, ‘Ragamala’ speaks of origin of aesthetic devotion, ‘bhakti’. Although there is philosophical diversity within India, an amazing level of negotiation between the nature and importance of aesthetics and aesthetic pleasure exists. Rasa is also an exceptionally valued and fundamental element of human experience. A further basic concept of Indian aesthetics is Kama, the exploration of love and enjoyment. It comprises refined aesthetic pleasure, sexual pleasure, and love, - a constant theme for Indian painting, poetry, and drama. Treatises like Vatsyayana’s ‘Kama Sutra’ discusses
the concept and the text records ‘sixty-four’ arts or ‘Kala’s.

Art, for the Indian mind, is capable to give a special kind of joy or *anandam*, and it is considered as *rasa*, an experience of special type, not taste in an ordinary sense. This kind of experience is most significant as it is measured at par with Brahman-realization or *Brahmasvadasahodara*. One with a sense of disinterestedness can only have access to this special kind of experience or *rasa*. The distinction between rasa-experience and ordinary experience makes it clear that art experience cannot be on the basis of any mirror-like copying or one-to-one representation. The theory of mimesis is questioned again from Indian point of view as well.

In contemporary time Sri Aurobindo emphasized the importance of art in human life. He said, “An integral part of human life, ‘the outward, and inner’ that arise in require of what he calls ‘artistic self-expression’ perfecting the aesthetic evolution of humanity.”

Had art been imitation alone it would not serve the purpose of it in nurturing and sustaining the social and cultural psyche of the people and the world as a whole.

There is a question of normative aspect of art as well from its non-mimetic viewpoint. It concerns not only what art does and can do, but also what it has to do for humanity. Ultimately, art experience reveals the truth that may bring a total change in our perception of life and the world.

Moreover experience of *rasa* brings about an emotive state of mind which is different from ‘actual arousal’ of that emotion. It is always experience of some actual experience i.e. meta-experience or second order experience which does not involve the human subject in actual suffering or pleasure or pity but it consists of experience of suffering or pleasure or pity without being in
suffering, empirical pleasure or actual pity. From this point of view it is transcendental. As K. C. Bhattacharya holds that it consists in feeling of feeling. In his words, “Consider... a feeling of which the direct object is another feeling, say, in separate mind. The feeling of a feeling is to be distinguished from the mere understanding of it as a fact, which may leave one cold. Neither should it be confused with merely having a like feeling on the occasion of another’s feeling. To sympathise with a person is to feel him feeling: only in this sense is his feeling the direct object of my feeling.” xvii (Bhattacharya: 1983:362). K.C. Bhattacharya’s position is quite in agreement with the traditional Indian standpoint that art object or performance is experienced by its observer. It is imperative to note that from the ancient period in Indian tradition a clear distinction is maintained between normal emotions, such as, grief, sorrow and the emotions created in poetry or art. For example actual grief is not enjoyable, but it is enjoyable as karunarasa by the reader or viewer. These are two different kinds of emotion, one is frequently dealt with in real life, and the other is experienced in art or poetry; the latter is in the nature of idealized emotion, ‘constructed’, and ‘created’, rather than actual, by the poet. What is noteworthy is that art cannot consist in copying or it cannot be mimetic in the sense of one-to-one correspondence from this understanding of aesthetic emotiveness because the transcendental nature of the experience of rasa will not have any direct object of which the art object or performance could be a copy or imitation.

Sadrisya or resemblance is to be understood in this sense from contemporary as well as classical Indian standpoint. This resemblance, which is not of the nature of direct copying, is necessary for inter-subjective communicability of art experience. From K. C. Bhattacharya’s standpoint xviii,
“Cognition here does not directly refer to the object to which a person is attached emotively and sympathizing with it. Here cognition takes place with a different subject, -- a second person; it refers to the sympathy or feeling of the first person and therefore it is freed from the mundanely situated object/event/state-of-affairs.” \textsuperscript{xix} (Biswas: 2007:121). Understanding such emotion is for eternity and a matter of bliss contrasting emotions in real life that are pleasing or painful depending upon the way such emotion are empirically related to the individual. This dissimilarity between actual emotion and aesthetically enjoyable emotion is the foundation of the nature of art its functions. Theorists in the ancient Indian tradition reflected on the nature of poetic or dramatic emotion as created by the poet or artist and experienced by the reader or observer. \textit{Sadrishya} or resemblance between the external world of objects / events / real emotions and art experience or art object is rather heuristic, methodologically relevant for understanding it, but its significance does not lie beyond this. Pleasure in imitation or experiencing the resemblance is limited. It is more a matter of satisfying one’s curiosity. But pleasure in enjoying an art object or art experience i.e. \textit{rasa} is infinite; it is \textit{anandam}. Every object of beauty is also a source of bliss or \textit{ananda}. Art is celebrated as vehicle of perfect and pure bliss. Therefore, the beauty in nature is not pure, but the beauty in art is ideal and pure, and this ideality is restructured by the thoughts of the artist or poet.

Rules and regulations for art creation is to reach this goal and not for remaining complacent with one-to one correspondence or imitation. The philosophy of \textit{Sadanga} or six limbs of art is explicated in Indian aesthetics for this purpose.
Shadanga or Six Limbs of Art

According to the interpretation by Abanindranath Tagore, the Code of Art and the fundamental rules, predominantly referred in Vishnu-dharmottara, 7th century treatise and Saint Vatsyayana’s Kama sutra, with finer points rules and canons for painting are,

“Rupabhedapramani Bhavalavnayyojanam Sadrishyamvarnakabhanga
ItiichitramShadangakam” xx (Abanindranath Tagore, 1942)

Rupa is form, Bheda means Difference. The study and practice of Rupabheda permit us to perceive and depict things as they are and as they become visually distinct. In the Mahabharata, Santiparva, Mokshadharma, Rupa is defined as follows, ‘harswa’ short, ‘deergha’ long, ‘sthula’ material, fat ‘Or massive, ‘chaturasra’ square or angular, ‘anuvrittyam’ rounded or circular, ‘sukla’ clean, pure and white, ‘Krishna’ black or sombre, ‘rakta’ red or radiant, ‘pi/a’ yellow and pale, ‘Nilaruna’ purple or mixed colours, kathina hard and harsh, ‘Chikkana’ sleek, shiny and smooth, ‘slakna’ slim, fine delicate, ‘picchila’ creepy, gliding or soft, and spreading like a peacocks tail, ‘mridu’ soft and tender, ‘daruna’ rough and woody, stony and terrible, eternal and varied forms, which our senses feel, perceive and observe. Rupabheda means the analysis and blend of forms set to us by our senses and mind. Our mind nurtures the true knowledge of forms in course of our experiences, indeed the forms in this external sense are in contact with the mind, and they appear as either beautiful or ugly for us. ‘Ruchi’ in every Rupa or form literally indicates the gleam of charm and all that stands before the mind, is with the quality of ‘Ruchi’; they appear to us as beautiful or pleasing.

‘Pramanani’ means proportion, which facilitates us to prove the
accuracy of proportion, determine, and the detachment and measures of objects, structural anatomy, perspective of the perceived.

‘Bhava’ is an expression, idea, sentiment, emotion, intention. In Art, bhava express through rasa or hypothetical forms of feelings.

‘Lavanya Yojanam’ means the blend of grace and artistic faculty. ‘Sadrisyam’ means likeness, similitude, resemblance, equality of forms and ideas.

‘Varnika-bhanga ‘means colouring, description with brush and pigment, brush strokes. The acquaintance of pigments and colour mixtures as well as the art of handwriting and brush strokes is an unavoidable prerequisite to any art creation and most difficult skill of all.

**Sadrisya and Mimeses; relations**

*Sadrisya* is a limb of *shadanga*, the Six Limbs of painting. Indian art tradition specifies that the features or parts of the anatomy of the divine mortal were to be reachable in a metaphorical rather than a naturalistic means. Clearly, the parts of the body are to be symbolized in the form of parts of animal and plants world. For example, the eyes of the enormous individual are compared with lotus petals, his curved brows with the arch of the Indian bow, and his face with ideal oval shape of an egg, the shoulders with the colossal domed head of an elephant, and the arms with its tapering trunk and the torso with the body of a lion. The postures too are described in terms of this kind of resemblance or *Sadrisya*. What is important is that Sadrisya is not simply likeness. Along with likeness distinctness is also indicated by it. Moreover, it is one of the requirements and not the sole feature any art form or art creation. Of course it is
an important feature of and basis of aesthetic experience.

Sadrisya’ the demand meaning is likeness, similitude, resemblance, equality of forms and ideas. Other forms quite unlike itself might have excited one form, which intimates other form, ideas or feelings as. The simile used by poets in poetry, pure similarity of forms and ideas. Consequently, one who produces no true simile or a disagreeable caricature, it look dead, empty and no notion on our mind. Therefore, for the purposes of similitude we have to depend more on the nature. Similitude or Sadrisyain poetry or art is not meant only to formulate one’s own experience and perceptions of things obvious and explicit by contrast but also to establish connection of one’s perception with other’s perceptions and experiences, to create similitude of thought and impressions. In poetry, for example, similarity of forms is less important; what is more important is connection of feelings and ideas. With a painter similarity of impressions on the canvas and impressions received by the viewer is more crucial. In short, it is communicability of forms, feelings and impressions is one of the purposes of making Sadrisya an integral component of art. Therefore, the proper its similitude is that of feelings and not of forms. According to Panchadashi, “Mind refined into the forms of things becomes the thing itself, as melted copper flowing into the mould assumes the shape and form of the engraved stamp”. The mind-‘Chitta’ acquire the ‘Rupa’-form, and becomes similar to the apparent form of things, and also ‘Rupa’ form in diverse facets, next into contact with the mind suits one with our ideas and experiences. In music, true similitude expresses through the notes of the musical instrument mimicking the sound in tune with the music of our mind. In painting also, we acquire appropriate similitude only when we compose our lines and colours
counter to what our mind sees or experiences.

Imitation has many a purposes and socio-cognitive functions which cannot be done away with from the total epistemological field. It serves the aesthetic purposes in certain procedural aspects of art creation and for the purpose of right representation not necessarily in a mirror-like fashion. Representation in art has different dimensions and it serves different purposes. It also assumes different shapes and forms. So far as modern Indian art is concerned, style, shape, type and nature of representation have taken it far beyond mimesis in its simplistic sense.
i Cooper David (Edit), 1952, A Companion to Aesthetics”, Blackwell Companions to Philosophy, Oxford.


v Halliwell, S., 1986, “Aristotle’s Poetics” Chapel Hill

vi Halliwell, S., 1986, “Aristotle’s Poetics” Chapel Hill

vii Halliwell, S., 1986, “Aristotle’s Poetics” Chapel Hill


ix Coomaraswamy A.K, ‘History of Indian and Indonesian Art’, London (1927)


