II. ART-FORMS AND CRÖECE'S EXPRESSIONISM
Groce commences his study of aesthetics by an analysis of the two types of activities that can be associated with the human spirit or mind: the theoretical and the practical. The theoretical activity is expressed through aesthetics and logic, while the practical through economics and morality. The two degrees of theoretical and practical are related to each other: the former of the two forms the basis of the latter. Thus without the aesthetic there is no intellectual activity possible while the aesthetic itself can be free of the intellectual. Similarly, the economic forms the basis for the moral. Furthermore, the theoretical and the practical activities are also similarly related to each other. Without the theoretical there is no practical activity possible, while the theoretical is independent and precedes the practical. The theoretical activity refers to cognition while the practical involves willing. Thus, knowing without willing can be possible but not vice versa. Coming to the analysis of these two activities of the human spirit, the theoretical activity must be analysed first, for on it depends the practical activity. Aesthetic and Logic embody the two types of knowledge: knowledge of the particular or of the intuitive kind and the universal or conceptual
Intuitive knowledge concerns itself with individuals, while the conceptual knowledge with intellection and aims at discovering universal principles. The primal solicitude of intuition is imagination and thus it defies any categorization in terms of concepts. Every intuition is unique and individual while a concept has universal application. At the outset, the nature of intuition requires an explanation. Croce defines intuition as "the undifferentiated unity of the perception of the real and of the simple image of the possible." This definition indicates that intuition employs for its execution both perception and imagination; sensation and perception form the raw material of intuition and yet it transcends them, the perceptual activity refers to the 'here' and 'now': it depends upon the existence of a perceived object, while intuition is not confined to the perceived reality, but that which can possibly be visualized by the human mind. Intuitions are distinguished from sensations for the former

1"Knowledge has two forms: it is either intuitive knowledge or logical knowledge; knowledge obtained through the imagination or knowledge obtained through the intellect; knowledge of the individual or knowledge of the universal; of individual things or of the relations between them; it is, in fact, productive either of images or of concepts." B. Croce: Aesthetic as the Science of Expression and General Linguistic, trans. Douglas Anslie. (London, 1965), p.1.

2Ibid., p. 4.
are coherent and unified wholes, while the sensations are isolated and disjointed; they are in a flux and therefore there is no possibility of unity and coherence.

Intuitions are free of space and time. This marks the distinction between intuitions and objects in the external world. The latter necessarily belong to a certain space-time reference frame, while an intuition of a colour or a mental state has no concern with space and time. Croce finally summarizes the nature of intuitive knowledge in the following manner:

"... intuitive knowledge is expressive knowledge. Independent and autonomous in respect to intellectual function; indifferent to later empirical discriminations, to reality and to unreality, to formations and apperceptions of space and time, which are also later; intuition or representation is distinguished as form from what is felt and suffered, from the flux or wave of sensation, or from psychic matter; and this form, this taking possession, is expression. To intuite is to express; and nothing else (nothing more, but nothing less) than to express."3

Thus it is clear that intuitive activity is the imaginative activity which shares with sensation and perception, the visualization of objects and events and yet it is more than mere sensation and perception, for, it is not dependent upon the existence of the object visualized. It is concerned not only with that which is present before the consciousness as perceived or sensed,

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3Ibid., p. 11.
but also that which can possibly be conceived by the correlation of sensation and perception.

Logical knowledge as contrasted to intuitive knowledge, aims at formulating universal principles. These principles are formulated in terms of definitions and thus Logic excludes from its domain the narrative and emotive expression; any forms of expression that do not involve universals. Formally, the aesthetic and logical knowledge are similar, but difference lies in their content. Both are theoretical disciplines and they work on the same fundamental postulate; in logic it is the principle of contradiction and in aesthetic it is coherence. Both emphasize consistency and unity. However, this does not imply an identity of the content of the two disciplines. Aesthetically, a system might be perfect, but it may be based on fallacious presuppositions. Croce's primal aim to analyse the nature of Logic and Aesthetic is to clearly mark out their different domains, and emphasize their relevance in their respective fields. And thus, for him, it is absurd to talk about Aesthetic as secondary to Logic.

"Those who first had some suspicion of the intimate connexion between Aesthetic and Logic and conceived Aesthetic as a logic of sensible knowledge were peculiarly addicted to applying logical categories to the new knowledge, talking of aesthetic concepts, aesthetic judgments, aesthetic syllogisms, and so on. We... do not recommend the application of Logic to Aesthetic, but the liberation of Logic from aesthetic forms." Ibid., p. 45.
or vice versa. This is evident from Croce's treatment of the history of aesthetics. He holds that the science of aesthetics has originated rather recently, for what has traditionally gone in the name of aesthetic thought is not really aesthetics, because it does not have an autonomous standing. It is either dominated by religion and morality or by science and philosophy.

The practical activity of the spirit as contrasted with the theoretical is concerned with the human will and action, while the theoretical activity is concerned with knowledge. "Man understands things with the theoretical form, with the practical form he changes them; with the one he appropriates the universe, with the other he creates it. But the first form is the basis of the second;.... A knowing independent of the will is thinkable, at least in a certain sense; will independent of knowing is unthinkable." The two degrees of practical spirit, economic and moral, stand to one another in the same as aesthetic and logic stand to one another. Economics concerns itself with ends and morality with rational ends. The latter is dependent upon the former, for, in order to will a rational end, one must first will an end while one can will economically and yet it may not be moral end. This shows that these four moments of the human spirit have to one

\(^{5}\text{Ibid.}, \text{ pp. 47-48.}\)
another the relation of regressive implication. Starting from the aesthetic activity, which is independent, all the other activities that follow are dependent upon the precedent activities. To these four activities correspond the four forms of creativity, art, science and philosophy, economics and ethics. In the context of the present inquiry, the first form of creative activity is the most relevant; therefore, the rest of this chapter would be confined to the analysis of the aesthetic activity and its various manifestations.

It has already been seen that the aesthetic activity is intuitive and intuition is the imaginative visualization of forms. Furthermore, it must be marked that intuition would be intuition only if it is expressive and since the term "expression" has various meanings, it is essential to clarify its meaning in the context of the aesthetic activity. Expression is the imaginative activity of the human consciousness that results in the formation of unified and coherent images. Man is confronted with a variety of impressions from the external world and these generate

6"... the spirit is thus conceived as consisting of four moments or degrees, disposed in such a way that the theoretical activity is to the practical as the first theoretical degree is to the second theoretical, and the first practical degree to the second practical. The four moments imply one another regressively by their concreteness. The concept cannot exist without expression, the useful without both and morality without the three preceding degrees." *Ibid.*, p. 61.
the imaginative activity in his mind. From the indiscriminate flux of impressions, a coherent unity of images emerges and this coherent structure is expression. To express is to bind the indiscriminate in terms of a set of clear cut symbols; these symbols are of varied kinds, verbal, auditory and visual etc. "... be it pictorial, or verbal, or musical, or in whatever other form it appear, to no intuition can expression in one of its forms be wanting; it is, in fact, an inseparable part of intuition." Thus it is clear that intuition and expression are essentially one, for intuition can only be possible in terms of an expression, manifested in terms of a set of sensuous symbols. Artistic creations are nothing else apart from these expressions or intuitions. In order to understand the nature of art, attention must be paid to Croce's analysis of the process of artistic creativity. It constitutes the following four stages:-

"... a, impressions;
   b, expression or spiritual aesthetic synthesis;
   c, hedonistic accompaniment, or pleasure of the beautiful (aesthetic pleasure);
   d, translation of the aesthetic fact into physical phenomena (sounds, tones, movements, combinations of lines and colours, etc.)."^^8

7Ibid., p. 8.
8Ibid., p. 96.
Art activity begins by the multitude of impressions that thrust upon the human mind. At this stage, the impressions are in a chaotic flux and they do not come to the level of man's awareness that characterises his conscious experience. Impressions are therefore, equivalent to passive sensations generated by any extraneous stimulant. These sensations are confused and ambiguous until they pass through the sieve of human imagination which sharpens their outlines and conjures them in organically related sensuous symbols. This unifying activity of the imagination which Croce calls expression or spiritual aesthetic synthesis, marks the second stage in the process of artistic creativity. It is the free activity of the human spirit — free from the intellectual, useful and the moral. Concepts may play a very important part in the formation of an expression, but expression as expression is primarily imaginative and not conceptual. To the extent that every expression is individual and unique it is not a totality of universal propositions and thus, it is not conceptual but intuitive. For the parts have to be seen in the light of the character of the whole. The constituent parts of an artistic creation, even though they happen to be concepts are dominated by its imaginative character. Art, according to Croce is complete at this level, for what is of primal importance is the free play of the imaginative faculties. The rest which follows this is merely practical; art, to be sure, is fundamentally a theoretical activity.
However, Croce's affirmation of the imaginative and mental character of expression does not imply that he is giving concessions for vagueness and confusion in the realm of art. For an expression is not an expression unless it is conceived in terms of a specific set of sensory symbols. "An image that does not express, that is not speech, song, drawing, painting, sculpture or architecture — speech at least murmured to oneself, song at least echoing within one's own breast, line and colour seen in imagination, and colouring with its own tint the whole soul and organism — is an image that does not exist."* This mentally conceived medium of expression has been emphasized by Croce, since according to him an artist is different from common people not because he has managed to master certain techniques, but because he is able to entertain coherent and well-defined images. His genius lies in his superior imagination; he can portray with clarity what others around him are vaguely aware of.10

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10."People think that all of us ordinary men imagine and intuite countries, figures and scenes like painters, and bodies like sculptors; save that painters and sculptors know how to paint and carve such images, while we bear them unexpressed in our souls. They believe that anyone could have imagined a Madonna of Raphael; but that Raphael was Raphael owing to his technical ability in putting the Madonna upon canvas. Nothing can be more false than this view." Aesthetic As the Science of Expression and General Linguistic, p. 9.
Between impressions and expression there is no causal relation. From a given series of impressions, no inference can be made about the expressions that may arise out of them. Therein lies the uniqueness of every expression; two people may be confronted by similar impressions, but their consequent intuitions would be entirely different. Thus, the process by which the impressions are transformed into expressions does not involve any specific purpose, that is why there is no inference possible. From the given impressions, an arbitrary selection is made by the human mind. Though expressions have no causal connection with impressions, yet the former are dependent upon the latter, for impressions form the basis for any expressive activity to be possible. It is this relation that holds between perception and imagination; man's capacity to imagine is limited by his perceptual experience. Thus, a blind man cannot intuit visual images, since expressions can only arise out of impressions. That which is already expression must revert to the level of impressions if it is to generate fresh expressions. For Croce denies any differences of degrees between various expressions -- there

\[\text{11}^{11}\text{... all impressions can enter into aesthetic expressions or formations, but that none are bound to do so of necessity.... Aesthetic expression is synthesis, in which it is impossible to distinguish direct and indirect. All impressions are placed by it on a level, in so far as they are aestheticized.} \text{ Ibid., pp. 18-19.}\]
are no categories like simple and complex expressions. Every expression is an organic whole complete in itself and unanalysable into any further constituents. However, Croce has not analysed the exact nature of this organic unity: whether all the constituent parts are equally important or some elements are more relevant than the others. That there is a possibility that the constituent elements of a novel and lyric may not be of equal relevance to the whole has not been marked by Croce. He seems to have taken the fact of unity for granted in artistic creations.

The third stage in the process of artistic expression marks the peculiar mental attitude that accompanies it; Croce calls it 'aesthetic pleasure'. Pleasure and pain, as generally conceived, are related to economic activity; extended to the field of art, pleasure acquires a different meaning. Croce being vehemently against all aesthetic hedonism, sensuous pleasure is for him not the end which an expression must fulfil. Thus, pleasure is not the pre-requisite of a good artistic expression, rather it is an accompaniment of the imaginative act. Furthermore, to mark the distinction between the general meaning of the term pleasure and aesthetic pleasure, Croce qualifies it in the following manner:

"The poet or any other artist affords an instance of purely aesthetic pleasure at the moment when he sees
(or intuites) his work for the first time; that is to say, when his impressions take form and his countenance is irradiated with the divine joy of the creator."

Aesthetic feeling of pleasure does not arise from any extraneous causes: moral, intellectual or pragmatic. A pure aesthetic response has no concern with the extra-aesthetic values of an expression. These are only accidental values. Thus, the aesthetic pleasure is a detached pleasure, detached from any external involvements, however valuable in their own realms they may be.

The last stage in the creative process involves the concretization of expression into an externalized artifact. At this stage, the practical activity becomes relevant to the aesthetic. This process of externalization presupposes a knowledge of the technical aspect of art; the practical skill of handling the material media like sound, colour and words etc. Further, as contrasted with expression, the process of externalization is willed. One cannot will one's imaginative activity, but one can will or not will to concretize it into an external object. Thus for Croce it is not an aesthetic activity in the proper sense of the term, it is economic and practical activity, while the pure expression is theoretical and has no concern with practice.

"The aesthetic fact is altogether completed in the expressive

\[\text{\textsuperscript{12}}\text{Ibid., p. 80.}\]
elaboration of impressions. When we have achieved the word within us, conceived definitely and vividly a figure or a statue, or found a musical motive, expression is born and is complete; there is no need for anything else. If after this we should open our mouths — will to open them to speak, or our throats to sing, ... this is all an addition, a fact which obeys quite different laws from the former... this... is a production of things, a practical fact, or fact of will." This practical process of artistic creativity has, however, the value of being an aid to memory. An expression that is not externalized is liable to be forgotten, therefore, externalization of artistic intuition is a practical device of preserving it against the hazards of forgetting. Thus the externalized artifacts are nothing but aids to preserve and regenerate expressions.

The communication of expressions is only possible if they are externalized, for so far as the image is at the

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13 Ibid., p. 50.

14 "Memory, as we say, abandons or betrays us in different ways. For this very reason, the human spirit devises expedients which succour the weakness of memory and are its aids.... And what else are those combinations of words called poetry, prose, poems, novels.... what else are these combinations of sound called operas, symphonies, sonatas; or those combinations of lines and colours called pictures, statues, architecture? The spiritual energy of memory, with the assistance of the physical facts above mentioned, makes possible the preservation and the reproduction of the intuitions produced by man." Ibid., pp. 96-97.
mental level it cannot be communicated to others. An artistic creation is communicated through the externally created artifact, which acts as a stimulant to generate a similar reaction from the onlookers. In the act of communication a similar expression is reproduced through the imaginative participation of the beholder. In the process of appreciation, the creative process is reverted. It starts from the physical stimulant or the created artwork, its perception gives rise to the particular expression, which is concretized in the art-work or the spiritual synthesis and this is accompanied by the aesthetic pleasure. Thus, the externalized creation which was of secondary value to artistic creativity becomes of primary importance for the purpose of communication. However, Croce does not give importance to the communicative aspect of art, for him it is optional. What is of more consequence, is the imaginative activity that precedes communication. The problem that still calls for discussion is the exact status of the art object according to Croce. The term art-object in common parlance refers to any artifacts created in terms of physical media such as sculpture, painting etc. For Croce, such externalized creations are merely practical measures to preserve intuitions. He does not give the status of art-works to these physical creations:

"... neither these voices and sounds nor the symbols of writing, sculpture and architecture are works of art; works of art exist only in the minds that
create and recreate them.\footnote{B. Croce, "Aesthetics", in 
Encyclopaedia Britanica, Vol. I, p. 267.}

Art object if it can be called an object at all, would be purely a mental creation. This emphasis upon the imaginative aspect of artistic creation as against its execution into a material medium had its impact upon Croce's concept of aesthetic judgement. Croce thought all aesthetic judgements to be intuitive. No rules can be given prior to the art work; it is the art work itself that embodies its norms of evaluation. If any criterion of evaluation can be associated with Croce's aesthetics then it is the criterion of coherence which implies that in an art work every element must contribute to the value of the whole. And since an art work is not an artifact created in a material medium but a mental image, its coherence too would be only imaginatively intuited and not physically demonstratable through any set of empirical qualities, and thus has only a contextual meaning. Croce reiterates these views in his criticism of those which he considers erroneous aesthetic theories. A few of these may be mentioned here.

Amongst the theories that have earned Croce's criticism, Aesthetic Hedonism takes a prominent place. The upholders of this theory equate beauty with the pleasurable. Aesthetic hedonism takes various forms like the theory of
play, theories of sexuality and sympathetic aesthetics. All these various forms of hedonism attempt to explain the aesthetic in terms of the non-aesthetic: qualities and categories that do not strictly come into the domain of art. Thus they are unacceptable to Croce because they do not have regard for autonomy of the aesthetic point of view.

Further Croce has criticized the imitation theory of art. He holds that art is not merely an effective duplication of natural objects. Even very accurate imitations of nature like the coloured wax effigies do not arouse an aesthetic response in the beholders. The success of an expression does not lie in creating an effective semblance of the external world, but in the free expression of the human spirit. For, the criterion of excellence emanates from the expression itself and not from natural objects.

Lastly, Croce has been very vehement in his condemnation of the so called "pseudo-aesthetic concepts" like tragic, comic, graceful and beautiful etc. evolved by the aestheticians of the past. It is not possible to apply these terms to the process of artistic creativity and to the various attributes of art-objects. These concepts are often misunderstood because they are not analysable in terms of any empirical categories. And the application of
these terms becomes difficult because of their multiple meanings. They seem to have a variety of applications corresponding to the various aestheticians who have used them. Thus Croce holds:

"... if an empirical definition of universal validity be demanded, we can but submit this one:—The sublime (or comic, tragic, humorous, etc.) is everything that is or shall be so called by those who have employed or shall employ these words."16

The above definition of Croce reaffirms his contempt for the employment of conceptual categories to illuminate art-objects. Similar to this is the categorization of various art-objects in terms of their material media e.g. painting, sculpture, music etc. This process of categorization is further extended in the various art genre and this gives birth to the various artistic kinds like landscapes, sonnets, sonatas, portraits, and so on. These attempts at categorization reduce the unique and individual art-object to abstract concepts. But these theories of artistic and literary kinds (as Croce calls them) overlook the fact that every art-work is unique and its very uniqueness proves that it has transcended the traditional convention and established fresh conventions for itself.17

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16 B. Croce, Aesthetic as the Science of Expression & General Linguistic, p. 90.

17 "From the theory of artistic and literary kinds derive those erroneous modes of judgement and of criticism, thanks to which, instead of asking before a work of art if it
However, Croce does admit that if not taken in the absolute sense these aesthetic categories can be useful to art-criticism. But when taken to be absolutely applicable to art-works, people forget about the art-work itself and start dabbling in a meaningless jumble of words.

Croce's dissatisfaction with the pseudo-aesthetic concepts, involves a prescription for a new style of art-history. He rejects the Hegelian art-history showing a linear progress of the symbolic, classical and romantic. For him the very idea of progress is absurd with reference to art-history.

"... art is intuition, and intuition is individuality, and individuality does not repeat itself. To conceive of the history of the artistic production of the human race as developed along a single line of progress and regress would therefore be altogether erroneous." 18

Thus, the idea of progress, if it can be entertained with reference to art-history can have only a limited be expressive and what it expresses, whether it speak or stammer or is altogether silent, they ask if it obey the laws of epic or of tragedy, or historical painting or of landscape... artists have, however, really always disregarded these laws of the kinds. Every true work of art has violated some established kind and upset the ideas of the critics, who have thus been obliged to broaden the kinds, until finally even the broadened kind has proved too narrow, owing to the appearance of new works of art, naturally followed by new scandals, new upsettings and — new broadenings." 18

18 Ibid., p. 136.
meaning — limited to a group of artists in a given space and time, attempting to give an aesthetic form to a particular subject e.g. the Madonna. If a single subject is chosen by a number of artists belonging to a certain period, then the idea of progress is understandable since all the artists within that specified period are working on the same subject. Thus Croce admits of cycles of progress in the history of every art form, progress and development take place when the cycle begins and ends up with it.

The last and one of the very important elements of Croce's aesthetics is his identity of Aesthetic and Linguistic. Linguistic like the aesthetic repudiates any a priori rules for its creation; every word is unique. Thus no translations can be possible in the real sense of the term since no two words can be identical. Similarly like art works no classification of language can be possible. Croce emphasizes the indivisible unity of expression, the classifications made by grammar are mere abstractions, they attempt to dissect that which is unclassifiable — the expression. It seems that by linguistic expression, Croce is not implying language in general but specifically the language of literature. For there are levels and levels of language, and not all types of linguistic symbols are unique, as Croce has repeatedly emphasized. This conclusion is well-supported by the following remark of Croce:
"Languages have no reality beyond the propositions and complexes of propositions really written and pronounced by given peoples at definite periods; that is to say, they have no existence outside the works of art (whether little or great, oral or written, soon forgotten or long remembered, does not matter) in which they exist concretely."19

However, it is still not very clear what exactly Croce means by Linguistic, for quite often it also seems that he is referring to language in general. For he concludes by saying that "Those linguists or philologists, philosophically endowed, who have penetrated deepest into the problems of language, find themselves (to employ a trite but effective simile) like workmen piercing a tunnel: at a certain point they must hear the voices of their companions, the philosophers of Aesthetic, who have been at work on the other side. At a certain stage of scientific elaboration, Linguistic, in so far as it is philosophy, must merge itself in Aesthetic: and this indeed it does without leaving a residue."20

19Ibid., p. 147.
20Ibid., pp. 151-52.