I.1 the Reemergence of Aesthetics

By and large, all civilizations display a sense of values by considering certain things to be valuable in them. Friendship, concern for others, loyalty to the collective to which they belong, respect for knowledge and other higher pursuits of life, etc., have enjoyed the status of values. However, three values are taken to be the fundamental values, namely, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. It is, therefore, not surprising that philosophers in different civilizational contexts have focused their attention on these values. In both western and eastern philosophical traditions one finds a serious engagement with these fundamental values.

The philosophical concern with beauty has taken into account beauty as it is found both in nature and human artifacts. As everyone knows, the philosophical engagement with art in the western intellectual tradition has a long history. However this history is a chequered one. Unlike Metaphysics and Epistemology, Aesthetics didn’t emerge with the inception of Philosophy itself, in the works of early Greek thinkers like Thales and his successors. This is because these thinkers concerned themselves exclusively with the first principle/s underlying Nature. As Greek naturalistic philosophies evolved, they developed a strong tendency to reject poetic discourse as a legitimate cognitive
enterprise. The poets of the times challenged this view. The bone of contention became the issue “Who has monopoly over Truth, the philosophers or the poets?” In fact, the philosopher Anaximenes seems to have said about the poet, Hesiod, “People think that this is the wisest man an earth but he doesn’t know the difference between day and night”. Aesthetics as a philosophical engagement with Beauty has its beginning in the controversy over who has monopoly over truth, philosopher or poets.

However, a detailed and somewhat systematic philosophy of Beauty is to be found in the works of Plato, who in spite of his high level of artistic sensibility shared the negative view of his predecessors regarding art as a creative human endeavor. His negative view of art is grounded in his metaphysical and epistemological doctrines. Even while recognizing the popular perception of art as an embodiment of creativity Plato made its creativity itself the target of his attack since the creativity involved in the production of art itself is responsible for its being removed twice from reality. Thus, the beginnings of philosophy of Beauty in western tradition are not only belated, as we just noted, but also are anything but positive.

As we shall see, the belatedness and negative thrust of its birth have been more than compensated by the rich work of Aristotle whose ideas in the philosophy of art laid firm foundations for the subject. Aristotle did not dismiss art as an inferior endeavor. However, his followers over centuries till the beginnings of modern philosophy in the 17th century relegated Aristotle’s works on art to the background, thanks to their exclusive valorization of his metaphysics and, in particular, his theology. At best their concern with art was confined to the religious and theological context. It is an irony in the
history of ideas that the periods which saw best work of art could not produce path working in the philosophy of art.

The condition of philosophy of art didn’t undergo any change for the better with the rise of modern philosophy in the 17\textsuperscript{th} century. Modern philosophers who set for themselves the epistemological project of providing new and firm foundations to knowledge didn’t have much to say about matters aesthetic. The idea of beauty or any of its cognate concepts didn’t figure in their scheme of innate ideas. The empiricists construed experience so narrowly that their epistemological canvas didn’t have any place for the aesthetic dimension of our experience. David Hume, the most consistent empiricist, no doubt, dwelt upon aesthetic experience but ensured that the aesthetic dimension of our experience remained outside the bounds of our cognitive endeavor and was dumped in the realm of the emotive. It was only Kant, as we shall see, who resuscitated the philosophical engagement with Beauty. Aesthetics, so revived by Kant, had its body enriched by Hegel who, however, provided art a metaphysical significance by taking art as an expression of Spirit in its process of self-realization as Absolute.

However, after Hegel work on aesthetics was continued only by those philosophers who were not part of the mainstream. The philosophical concern with art suffered a major set back with the rise of Positivism which dominated the first half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. Central to the positivist philosophy are two related tenets: fact-value dichotomy and the verification theory of meaningfulness. According to the positivists, aesthetic discourse has only an emotive significance as it is bereft of any cognitive content. But even after positivism collapsed the philosophical engagement with Beauty couldn’t come to full life. In fact, Aesthetics didn’t occupy a position in the mainstream of philosophy. For

However, significantly there is a revival of interest in aesthetics. The sustained attacks on the fact-value dichotomy and the related tenets like literal-metaphorical dichotomy-the vestiges of the past-are responsible for this revival in the Anglo-American world. The emergences of philosophical schools like phenomenology and Hermeneutics have added vigor to the vibrant growth of aesthetics. It is this changed fortune of aesthetics that has motivated this work.

After looking at the trajectory of aesthetics marked by periods of prolonged hibernation, it is necessary to take a glance at various problems which constitute the subject - matter of aesthetics.

### I.2 Aesthetics and philosophy of art

Before we proceed, a few words about the distinction between aesthetics and philosophy of art are in order. This distinction is drawn in various ways by various scholars. According to Stephen Davies, aesthetics maintains “that consideration of the aesthetic in art is adequate for art’s appreciation as art. Reflection on a work’s artistic properties is not relevant to its proper reception” (2006, 55), whereas the philosophy of art, denying this, “maintains that awareness of a work’s of artistic properties is crucial not only to understanding it but also to identifying it as the art work it is” (*Ibid*).
However, Davies himself adds a warning that not everyone made the distinction that he has made. But Davies is right in categorically stating that the term 'philosophy of art' is associated with a change that accrued in the middle of 20th century in the Anglo-American philosophers’ reflection on art. But he seems to be wrong when he asserts that such a change is to be traced to the transition from aesthetic functionalism to institutional theory that treats art objects as socio-historical products. This is because not all approaches in the philosophy of art fall into intuitional mode of understanding. According to one view philosophy of art can be taken to include 'aesthetics' which is a normative inquiry into the nature of beauty. Aesthetics seeks to identify the standards which should be met by in an experience to be aesthetic and a work of art to be beautiful. Philosophy of art is an epistemology of art in the sense it inquires into the nature of cognition of art object and the cognitive statues of aesthetic judgements. So construed philosophy of art incorporates aesthetics since to answer the epistemological questions regarding art one needs to presuppose adequate conception of standards of aesthetic experience and aesthetic success of works of art.

However, a more simple and convincing distinction between aesthetics and philosophy of art deems aesthetics to be wider field than philosophy of art and in fact the later is included in the former. According to this view, aesthetics is a normative inquiry into the nature of beauty both in nature and in art where as philosophy of art is that part of aesthetics which studies beauty in art and in that sense 'aesthetics' is an umbrella term which designates a field which has philosophy of art as one of its two parts, the other part being the study of beauty in nature. Obviously, the former is more epistemologically oriented than its counterpart in aesthetics. In fact, philosophy of art is taken to be one of
special epistemologies like philosophy of Science, Philosophy of Religion, etc, which are inquires into the nature and limits of specific kinds of knowledge. This conception of the relation between the aesthetic and the philosophy of art may suggest the idea that nature as the object of aesthetics experience and a work of art as an object of aesthetic experience may not have anything common experientially and in fact the two are distinct as the latter has a strong a epistemic dimension which the former lacks. This may not be convincing to many. However, Kant to a great extent overcomes this difficulty by relating art and nature when he says, “art can only be termed beautiful, where we are conscious of its being art, while yet it has the appearance of nature” (1952, 306, 167). As we shall see, Kant has shown that our experience of Beauty in nature is no less epistemically charged than our experience of Beauty in art even though the contention that attributed to him that aesthetic judgements are non-cognitive is highly problematic.

Before we proceed further, we may note that though philosophy of art as theory of beauty in art is one of the two streams of aesthetics whose other stream is theory of beauty in nature. Philosophy of art is more than aesthetics of art this is because philosophy of art deals with questions which are tenuously or at least less organically linked to the question of beauty in art some of such questions are as follows:

a) How is a work of art related to its medium?

b) Can a work of art be an object of knowledge?

c) Given that the purpose of art is both representation and expression, how are they related?

d) How is representation in art to be distinguished from non-artistic representation?

e) How is expression in art to be distinguished from non-artistic expression?
f) Is expression in art only expression of feeling?

g) What is the distinction, if any, between form and style?

h) What is the relation between form and content? Does it coincide with medium and subject matter?

i) Given that there are many arts, can we answer the question “what is art”?

j) What is the purpose of art? How to figure out the purpose of art so as to shed light on its relation to everyday life?

It is to credit of Kant that he not only addresses the question concerning the nature of beauty in art (in addition to the nature of beauty in nature which for him is the paradigmatic instance of beauty) but also some of the questions mentioned above or questions akin to them though answers may have an embryo form. In other words his philosophy of art is something more than aesthetics of art in short one can find in Kant an insightful study of (1) Beauty in nature, (2) Beauty in art and non-aesthetics dimension of art. Of course, in Kant's view extent of importance and hence, the extent of his engagement with them differs in degree.

I.3 Pre-Kantian Aesthetics: A Bird’s Eye-View

To facilitate our elaborate discussion of Kantian aesthetics and to place it within an intellectual tradition that has a long history it is necessary to take a birds-eye-view of the pre-Kantian philosophical engagement with Beauty. In this connection we discuss the views of Plato, Aristotle and Hume, whose works constitute mail stones in the history of aesthetics. However, it may be noted that there aesthetic engagement had an almost
exclusive focus on art with the result aesthetic and the philosophy of art almost completely coincided.

I. 3. A Plato

Plato’s Aesthetics is significant for a verity of reasons. First of all, the very idea of Plato that philosophy should attempt to arrive at definitions that represent the Essences which he called 'Forms' has been applied to the phenomenon of Beauty including and epically in Art. As Gordon Graham pointed out “Plato held that everything has an eternal unchanging ‘Form’ which the things we see around us mirror or imitate. In a similar way, it can be argued, philosophical aesthetics suppose that there is universal unchanging form called ‘Art’ which can be apprehended at any and every time” (2000, 182). Secondly, for the first time in the history of western philosophy, Plato worked out a fully fledged theory of art by placing art within his own frame work informed by metaphysics, an epistemology, an ethics and a philosophical anthropology. Thirdly, his theory of art has a strong bearing on the views of Tolstoy and Gombrich who took certain Platonic notions about art in certain directions not anticipated by Plato. Fourthly, Plato’s ideas about art have a parallel in the Aesthetic theory of Kant, which will be the focus of this study. Fifthly, as Iris Murdoch points out, “we may perhaps find a parallel to Plato’s attitude in the dignified Puritanism of Islam with its reservations about ‘figures’ and ‘objects’ and its rejection of role-playing theater” (1977, 71).

As noted earlier, Plato’s view of art was highly negative. Of course, he was aware of the impact art can have on our collective life. This is clearly brought out in his famous words in the Republic “When the modes of music change the laws of state shall change”.
But this didn’t dilute his harsh indictment of art and artists. According to Plato, an artist is no doubt capable of getting inspiration that results in the divine frenzy which makes works of art more than the products of techniques. It is not that Plato denigrates inspiration as a source of knowledge. As Elias points out “For Plato something like a divine visitation is indispensable, by all means, but the human science is hermeneutics–deciphering the oracle. Plato's *theoria* demands the ultimate rationality of the world-episteme is knowledge in the sense that its propositions are logically demonstrable and binding on all rational minds. But the poets, who merely transmit the massage of the Muse and garble it in transmission, disclaim responsibility for the outcome, and are a mixed blessing” (1984, 5). Moreover, the artists don’t know what they are talking about. Even when they express great truths, it is by mistake. The artistic representations are mimetic i.e. imitations producing illusions so as to induce false beliefs about reality, stirring emotions detrimental to reason. He is particularly convinced that the illusory nature of art is the result of deliberate deception and hence morally vicious. In the worlds of Elias “the poets (in all artistic media), like the Sophists and the rhetors, do not rise from the surface of appearance; they offer reflected images of appearance, not a penetrating illumination of reality – in Yeats' striking phrase, they are a mirror, not a lamp(1984:4). But construing art in terms of mimesis does not account for its creativity and Plato knew this and that is why he takes recourse to inspiration to which one can trace artistic creativity, though such creativity can be intellectually and morally damaging.

Plato's attack on art is based not just on his commitment to political stability which artists might subvert. It has deeper philosophical grounds. According to him, the world of
day-to-day objects, that is, the objects of ordinary perception, no doubt gives rise to problems and stir our intelligence to solve them. But these objects are not only unstable but also embody contradictions. A philosopher who should be a “spectator of all times and existence” cannot treat them as objects of knowledge, but must treat them as objects of opinion. He must transcend the world of particulars which are the objects of perception in favor of abstract, contradiction-free objects of thought. Art relies on perception and hence does not deserve the status of knowledge. In fact, it is twice removed from reality, vis-à-vis ordinary objects which are once removed from Reality which is constituted by forms. As Iris Murdoch says “the spiritual ambiguity of art, its connection with the ‘limitless’ unconscious, its use of irony, its interest in evil, worried Plato” (1977, 86). But Plato’s deep worry has its basis not only in his conservative political theory but certain conviction regarding Reality and Knowledge, and, equally importantly, a theory of man as well as a theory of morals. According to him human life is a pilgrimage from appearance to Reality, a journey from sense experience to an enlightened understanding of Reality and oneself by a contemplative engagement by mean of reason. Hence, reason is the essence of man and emotions either have to be gotten rid of or to be subordinated to reason. Art is detrimental to higher part of the soul because it gratifies the lower aspect of soul by feeding on our base emotions. Perhaps he meant that the relation between art and beauty is only contingent, that is, art was sought to be degraded on the ground that beauty is not constitutive of the essence of art. Hence those who valorize art are guilty of a category mistake. It is significant to note that some art theorists of today seem to accept Plato’s view but move in a reverse direction. According to them art has fundamental value, not because of its essential relation to beauty but to something else.
However, in the *Philebus*, Plato seems to locate art within the context of beauty. *Philebus* discusses the nature of pleasure. After attacking Hedonism, Plato attempts to show that the only the pleasure that is controlled by reason is good and true. The distinction between good/true and bad/false, pleasure is grafted on the distinction between pure and impure pleasure. In spite of his rejection of Hedonism, Plato eschews anti-hedonism according to which all pleasures are impure. Plato endeavors to show that at least some pleasures are pure, by relating some pleasures to reason which is defined in terms of measure, moderation and harmony. Pleasure is thus saved from total condemnation. Plato associates pleasure so circumscribed with beauty. He grants that at times art can embody a beauty. As Murdoch points out “The area of acceptable art where pure pleasure, true beauty and sense experience overlap is very small. Decent art must obey truth; and truth is expressive of reality … and is pure, small in extent, and lacking in intensity” (1977, 12).

From what has been said till now it is very clear that Plato’s view of art is, at deeper level, more nuanced and subtle in contrast to what strikes as negative without qualification. Perhaps he was aware that his claim that art as a whole is imitation does not hold for all arts equally as in the case of painting. He might have also realized that tracing all art to inspiration is off the mark because such a characterization is ill at ease with the fact of improvisation which every artist displays in his evolution; after all, “better inspiration” and “better intuition” don’t make any sense. However Plato continued to stick to his position that philosophy with its dialectic concerns Logos, whereas art, including and especially poetry, concerns Mythos. The former involves the narrative of demonstration and the latter involves the narrative of dramatization. The former triggers
reason and the latter stirs emotion. But this position of Plato is also qualified by him subsequently. As Elias point out “Plato’s writings contain and imply an acknowledgement of the indispensability of poetry” (1984, 1). Elias traces such a recognition by Plato to his realization that “where the logic of discourse is incapable of definitive demonstration, we fall back of necessity on poetry to persuade” (1984, 2). Elias elaborates his point by saying that Plato “was aware of the limitations of dialectic as applying demonstrable and irrefutable knowledge in any area including mathematics. Certainly the use of myth in the middle dialogues implies that at this period at least he was skeptical of the power of dialectic in the perennially insoluble problems of ethics and metaphysic” (1984, 34). Perhaps Elias means that Plato realized that all genuine knowledge is demonstrative and the credibility of the premises be established by myths, however indirectly.

All this shouldn’t give us the impression that Plato fundamentally compromised on his view of art which was basically negative. The distinction between good art and bad art which is valorized by scholars like Murdoch and Elias hides more than what its revealed, as we see. While making room for this distinction Plato places art within the limits set by his metaphysical, epistemological and ethical ideas. To the extent he sets such limits within which art gets a ‘no objection certificate’ from Plato it loses its autonomy. It has nothing to say on its own about reality; it epistemic status becomes derivative; and it cannot give rise to moral principles from within. It submits itself to the principles prescribed by philosophy in order to be on the side of virtue. Hence, central to the negative character of Plato’s stance on art is the derecognition of its cognitive and ethical and even aesthetic autonomy (as beauty for him is essentially related only with
reason). Thus, our characterization of Plato’s philosophy of art, the first systematic reflection on art, as negative must be construed only in the sense of rejection of its autonomy and recognition of its significance in its being subservient to something extra-artistic. Though Plato initiated a view of art that negated the autonomy of art, by making it an instrument for serving a higher purpose such a view is repeatedly supported by many subsequent thinkers. In fact, as Murdoch point out, “The Greeks lacked what Bosanquet calls the ‘distinctively aesthetics standpoint’, as presumably everyone did with apparent impunity until 1750” (1977, 7). This means Plato only systematically and elaborately adumbrated with a philosophical sophistication a view which was quite widely shared in his time. In his celebrated work, What is art? Tolstoy stresses the need to control art so as to make its emotional impact promote moral and spiritual life. Tolstoy replaces Plato’s philosophical aim by spiritual and indeed religious aim construed in a non-institutionalized Christian way. In fact, Tolstoy praises Greeks who, according to him, considered art good only when it served good ways. For Tolstoy the function of art is to communicate the highest religious perception of the age. Hence, art must be simple so as to facilitate moral clarity. Like Plato, he detested products of art that were complex and grand. Going by the criteria of purity, simplicity, truthfulness and unpretentiousness Tolstoy went to the extent of condemning almost all of his own works as bad. This was for the reason “complex or ‘grand’ art affects us in ways we do not understand, and even the artist has no insight into his own activity, as Socrates says with sympathetic interest in the Apology and airy ridicule in the Ion” (Murdoch 1977, 17). We end this discussion by noting that whereas for Plato beauty as an object of enrolling experience of the soul was
too important to be left to art, for Tolstoy art as the source of spiritually evaluating experience is too important to be subsumed under beauty.

I. 3. B Aristotle

Aristotle’s ideas on aesthetics worked out mainly in his Poetics but also in Politics and Rhetoric constitute a milestone in the history of the subject. This is due to the fact that Aristotle gives for the first time a theory of art, which was positive, systematic and elaborate. His significance is heightened by the fact that his position regarding the nature, status and value of art had a formative influence on the succeeding generations of aestheticians. It is said that his theory stands diametrically opposite to that of Plato even though he shared some of the crucial doctrines of Plato. Of course, it is generally thought that Aristotle’s views are a radical departure from those of Plato against whose doctrines of art Aristotle directly reacted. Although there is some truth in this widely shared characterization of Aristotle’s theory of art “the relation between the two is more complex and a qualified judgement is needed” (Halliwell 1992, 11) and unlike his successors in the field of aesthetics, Aristotle reflected on not one art but many arts like literary arts such as poetry, and non-literary arts like painting, sculpture, music, dance and drama. Like Plato he regards all of them to be mimetic. As we proceed we shall see where he departs from Plato in fundamental ways.

Aristotle’s theory of art can be said to address two central questions of Aesthetics, namely, “What is art?” and “what is the value of art?” At a certain level his answers to these questions get organically related. The most central concept that figures prominently
in his answer to the first question is ‘mimesis’”. This means that mimesis constitutes the essence of art. However, there are two conflicting views regarding Aristotle’s construal of the relation between art and mimesis. According to scholars like Norman Gulley, for Aristotle mimesis is unique to arts. These scholars maintain that, according to Aristotle, a work on medicine or natural science is not imitative and so is a work on history and therefore they are not works of art, even if they are in verse form (cf. Gulley 1979, 167-168). However, according to the rival view maintained by among others, Stephen Halliwell, Aristotle considers all undertaking which involved techne as mimetic, hence not only arts but even medicine and carpentry are productive processes which follow intrinsically rational principles that guide the imposition of a form upon the respective medium and the form is consciously conserved by the maker. However, only arts have a specific purpose of the production of representation or fictional rendering of the world. They may represent either an actuality, past or present or our conceptions of the world or our ideas about what ought to be. Both these rival interpretations have textual basis. If we accept the second interpretation Aristotle can stands far from Plato on the issue of mimesis because Plato attributes mimesis exclusively to arts. But the first interpretation brings Aristotle close to Plato. But this is only an apparent and not real proximity. This is because of the obvious reason that Plato has a negative view of mimesis and hence he debunks art, but Aristotle has a positive view of mimesis and hence he holds art in high esteem. As Graham says, “while Plato decried art because it did no more than repuduce the appearance of things, Aristotle made the activity of representing things the distinguishing character of what we call the arts” (2000, 93). The question is, “Why does Aristotle hold mimesis in very favorable light?”. First of all, if for Plato imitation is a
perversion of mind, for Aristotle it is a natural human tendency that can be traced to childhood. Secondly, imitation is a way of learning that brings us knowledge by getting a thing right in the simplest possible manner. More importantly, Aristotle recognizes certain epistemic features that figure in art as mimesis. And this the reason why mimesis in art cannot be reduced to imitation as conventionally understood. This needs some elaboration.

Aristotle, unlike Plato, maintains that the mimetic character of art is of a special kind because of which art productions possess an internal rational standard and goal which can be explained and justified in theoretical terms. Further, according to Aristotle, the images and characters one finds in a work of art are generalized images and characters and their generalized nature brings out the presence of universals, thanks to which all art necessarily involves cognition. After all, cognition deals with universals. If it is pointed out that it is difficult to accept the talk of universals in art because paintings, sculptures, poetry deal with particulars, one can say, as some philosophers have done art deals with concrete universals. The component of the universals is what makes art distinct from a historical narrative which deals with particulars. Further, because art can free itself from particularity, it can deal with both actual and possible worlds simultaneously. The cognition of the relation between the actual and the possible in a work of art is both a challenge and an achievement for an aesthetic subject. Further, the mimesis in art has a unitary character in so far as such a mimesis involves representation of unitary object. It is for these reasons that the mimetic character which a work of art possesses displays a capacity to invite interpretations in terms of broader concepts and larger conceptions which structure experience and understanding so much so that
Aristotle brings art, particularly poetry, closer to philosophy than to many other human enterprises.

We now come to Aristotle's answer to the second question viz., “What is the value of art?” Just as the concept of mimesis captures the essence of his answer the first question, the concept of catharsis occupies the central place in his answer to the second question. In fact both the concepts of mimesis and catharsis figure equally prominently in his definition of tragedy as an art form right at the start of his work *Poetics*: “Tragedy is the mimesis of a serious and complete action of some magnitude in language embellished in various ways in its different parts; in dramatic, not narrative, form, achieving, through pity and fear, the catharsis of such passions” (quoted in Pappas 2001, 16). So this means that catharsis is the aim of art. Hence catharsis in a literary or dramatic narrative must be presented appropriately and in right measure so as to arouse pity and fear in order to be poured out. Feeling pity will get solidified leading to sentimentality and fear of the misfortune of the character will lead to loss of faith in the moral order of the world. The question is, “What is catharsis?” The conventional answer gives a medical reading of this concept treating it as a medical equivalent to psychological purgation. But such a medical reading of catharsis is very much off the mark. No doubt, it appeals to us because we normally believe that pent up passions ruin our mental health. But Aristotle does not consider emotions in *quantitative* terms like the warmth of the body which if increases beyond a point turns out to be a symptom of disease or disorder; that is to say, he does not fix a degree beyond which if they go, emotions will be detrimental to health and therefore need to be released. In fact, according to him, frequent acts of purging out of emotions by expressing them of and on will only strengthen them. For example, those
who express their anger regularly will become more and more irascible. Further, the medical reading of catharsis entails that according to Aristotle the goal of art is to liberate as from passions and emotions. But this is inconsistent with Aristotle's valorization of temperance which consists in avoiding extremes. Hence, a proper reading of catharsis in the light of virtue of temperance must understand it as avoiding the extremes of celebrating emotions and becoming free of emotions. The latter extreme can be associated with the ideal man of Plato. This means that catharsis must be understood as a proper regulation of emotional life which requires training for calibration and fine tuning. This is the new reading of catharsis. Scholars like Nussbaum construe catharsis in terms of clarification of emotions. This non-medical reading of catharsis brings out the fundamental difference between Plato for whom emotions undermine reason and Aristotle who held that emotions when calibrated strengthen reason. It may be argued that catharsis cannot be equated with clarification because in the Politics Aristotle speaks of catharsis as relief, and “making soul settle down”. But this objection is weak because one gets a sense of relief and feels settled down when one become clear of confusions. There are scholars who strongly feel that catharsis understood either in medical terms or in non-medical terms cannot establish the cognitive states of art because catharsis even as clarification does not amount to understanding (cf. Pappas 2001, 18-19). This objection has some force because Aristotle's view of catharsis as aim of art puts him under aesthetic subjectivism which means that the function of art is not to reveal any characteristics of art object at all, but rather do something valuable to our psyche. However, this objection against Aristotle losses its force when we realize that catharsis, according to Aristotle, is not the only purpose of art. Aristotle does claim that, as Aldrich, who rises this objection,
points out, “We turn to art for a fuller contemplative realization of the terrible and pitiful condition of human life. Thus we do come into a sort of understanding not only of the objectified emotions themselves, but also of the nature of human enterprise in its cosmic setting. This understanding is “truer” than the sort that history and empirical psychology and sociology give us” (1963, 13). Though such an understanding is taken to be the purpose of art in addition to catharsis, there is nothing wrong if we can broaden the concept of catharsis to include such an understanding.

The clinical concept of catharsis has been broadened to include a clarificatory dimension by modern scholarship on Aristotle, as we have seen. There is nothing wrong if we can broaden it so as to provide a cognitive dimension in terms of understanding as has been suggested by Aldrich. Such a step reinforces the positive content of catharsis totally overlooked by a clinical interpretation of catharsis. At the same time, the cognitive dimension of catharsis in no way nullifies the emotive dimension of art experience which consists in eliciting responses in which emotions like pity and fear are balanced and integrated, such a position enables us to recognize both cognitive and affective significance in the Aristotelian framework.

The above discussion brings out the point that Aristotle's philosophy of art stands against aestheticism. His anti-aestheticism becomes even more pronounced with the ethical import of his theory of art. For him the field of operation for artistic representation is human behavior. As Gulley, summarizing Aristotle's view of ethics-art relation, points out “Aristotle’s point is that the aspects of human behavior which are fundamental for the artist's purposes are those which are capable of engaging our moral sympathy or antipathy in any way (1979, 169).
Aristotle's anti-aestheticism has to be understood in relation to his conception of beauty and its relation to art. No doubt, he rejected Plato's contention that beauty was too important to be associated with art. Yet, he does not consider beauty as constituting the essence of art. Nor is beauty unique to art. According to him, all living things have beauty because in so far as they have designs suited to the purpose of sustaining their life and promoting reproduction, different kinds of thing have different kinds of beauty. The beauty possessed by an art object is one of the kinds. Nor is it what makes a work artistic. Beauty for him is context-dependent without being subjective. As Pappas points out “Aristotle's beauty is real but equivocal … Aristotle tends to speak only in passing of beauty itself” (2001, 25). However, to quote Pappas again, “Even if Aristotle develops a philosophy of art independently of beauty, he does not belong among puritans wary of aesthetic experience” (Ibid). It is this elusive nature of the relation between art and beauty in Aristotle's framework that makes his aesthetics highly thought provoking and even provocative.

I. 3. C Hume

The discussion of David Hume's aesthetic views is necessary in view of the fact that he departed from the Aristotelian tradition that dominated the scene before him. The modern philosophers who preceded him didn’t engage in aesthetic reflection since rationalist confined themselves to metaphysics and epistemology and empiricists who preceded him were concerned with epistemology exclusively. Hume's philosophy sharpened the views of one of the most prominent aesthetician of his times, Alexander
Gottlieb Baumgarten according to whom the purpose of art is to produce beauty and beauty is an ordered relationship between the parts of a whole. Baumgarten understood beauty as that which gives us pleasure and thus arouses desire. The highest aim of art, according to him, was to imitate nature since it is only in nature that beauty is found in its pristine purity.

The normative approach in aesthetics attempts to deal with two questions namely, one, “How ought we to distinguish between art and non art so as to capture the essential nature of art?” and two, “What ought we to expect to get from art, that is, what to ought we recognize to be valuable in art?” Unlike his classical predecessors and his contemporary Enlightenment thinkers. Hume, following Baumgarten, responded to the first question and hence did not attempt a definition of art. Like Baumgarten he responded to the second question. Again, like Baumgarten he identified the value of art in its being a source of pleasure. Further, he construed the relation between art and pleasure it produces to be necessary i.e. non-contingent and thus the ability to give pleasure is constitutive of the very essence of art. Further, like Baumgarten, he identifies beauty with ordered relationship between parts of a whole. Bringing together these two points in the section “of Beauty and Deformity” in his Treatise of Human Nature, he says “beauty is such an order and constitution of parts as either by the primary constitution of our nature, (or) by custom, or by caprice is fitted to give pleasure and satisfaction to the soul”(quoted in Kenny 2007, 250). It may be noted that Hume draws a parallel between moral judgements and aesthetic judgements. They are akin to each other since both concerns what is pleasurable and what is not.
However such a pleasure does not have its locus in the objects. As he says, in his famous essay of 1957 entitled 'of The Standard of Taste', “The pleasure we derive from it, [i.e. a work of art] … is a matter of our sentiments, not its intrinsic nature” (1963, 238). Judgements about good and bad in art are not judgements at all, because “sentiment has a reference to nothing beyond itself, and is always real, wherever a man is conscious of it” (Ibid). Hence, “to seek the real beauty, or the real deformity, is as fruitless an enquiry as to seek the real sweet or the real bitter” (Ibid, 239). The diversity of opinions about works of art, according to Hume, decisively confirms his contention that aesthetic preferences are expressions of taste and not statements about objects. Hence, aesthetic judgements do not involve any knowledge of truth or falsity. Aesthetic and moral judgements are akin to each other because both concern what is pleasurable and what is not.

Before we proceed to look at how Hume seeks to ensure that he does not land into subjectivism and relativism, we may note his use of the word 'soul' in relation to the entity to which pleasure and satisfaction are fitted. Neither such a location nor the expression 'primary constitution of our nature' fits well with Hume's thoroughgoing empiricism. Unlike many of his contemporaries he refuses to acknowledge a distinctive faculty of taste for the simple reason that such a talk is organically linked to the notions of soul and mind that empiricism rejects. Equally strange is his contention that art and pleasure are necessarily related. No doubt, Hume acknowledged the difficulty in characterizing the relation between art and pleasure in purely contingent way. Yet, he is unclear about the non-contingent relation between them. After all, empiricism rejects any notion of necessity other than analytical necessity, associated with propositions which are factually empty. Hume has to maintain that. As we know Hume sought to jettison
causality of necessity by reducing the causality to regularity by showing that the necessity traditionally associated with causality has only a psychological and not a logical basis.

Hume cannot give such a psychologistic interpretation of necessity in connection with the necessary link between perception of a work of art and the production of pleasure that follows it. If Hume seeks to provide an account of necessity that is different from analytical necessity and pure regularity he has to compromise his commitment to empiricism. This will be self-defeating because of his commitment to empiricism that seeks to locate the value of art in pleasure, rather than in any thing transcendental. Since the latter option paves the way for rehabilitation of metaphysics. The major criticism against Hume's position comes in the wake of his attempt to overcome this difficulty. As we know, Hume traces the value of art to the pleasure it gives rise to. However, he realized that there is a need to distinguish between correct and incorrect aesthetic judgements since pleasure produced by a work of art may be sometimes due to lack of education and may even due to caprice. In other words, he was convinced, on the one hand, that aesthetic judgements being judgements of taste do not involve knowledge of truth and falsehood and hence possessed no truth-value; they are based on sentiments. He was, on the other hand, convinced that taste cannot be reduced to mere subjective preference because some works of art are in themselves superior to others. In other words, Hume seeks to make room for the objectivity of aesthetic judgement without invoking the idea of truth-value. Hume also knows that he cannot resolve this contradiction by taking resource to any \textit{a priori} aesthetic principle since such a move goes against his empiricist commitment. One finds in Hume's writings two ways of
overcoming this difficulty: a. the criteria of an aesthetic judgement's correctness should be established by identifying the features of a work of art which are most pleasing to the educated, refined and qualified connoisseurs; b. since human beings share a common nature and hence mostly they likes the same things, some particular forms or qualities, from the original structure of the internal fabric of the human mind are calculated to please, and others to displease (1963, 271). The deviant aesthetic responses made by people who favor non-beautiful things will eventually disappear. This strategy is significant because it links human nature with aesthetic experience and according to Hume this link is so strong that one can appreciate art only if one has a sound knowledge of human nature, and, Hume adds, the cultivation of artistic sensitivity increases our knowledge of human nature.

However, both the strategies fail. The first strategy implies that the judgements based on good sense of cultivated persons are sure guides for discrimination between good and bad works of art. But 'good sense' itself is an evaluative concept and therefore Hume actually replaces one normative concept by another. Further, Hume is guilty of circularity: a taste is good if it ranks works of art on the basis of the pleasure derived from the best art and the best art is that which provides pleasure to persons with good taste.

The second strategy fares no better. This strategy refers to commonalties of taste located in a uniform human nature. But there is no justification for moving from common taste to the standard taste. In other words, just because there are feelings shared by many or almost all the people whom they express in identical circumstances, it does not automatically follow that everyone is rationally bound to do so. In other words, if we
want to say that someone's judgements about a work of art is mistaken, we cannot make that mistake rest on human feelings about art because human feelings are just what they are and therefore our judgement about the mistake should be related to the art work itself. Further, our evaluations of aesthetic responses which concern 'ought', at least from Hume's perspective, cannot be based on the human nature as it is. After all, it is Hume who insists that 'ought' cannot be derived from is. To overcome this difficulty Hume must acknowledge a normative dimension to our understanding of human nature, but such an admission is ill at ease with his empiricist epistemology.

Further, there is a basic problem with Hume's identification of aesthetic experience with pleasure or agreeableness. Such a construal of aesthetic experience suffers from major defects. Even if we grant that Hume's conception of aesthetic experience is not too narrow because there is no aesthetic experience which does not involve pleasure, that is, all aesthetic experience involves pleasure, it does not follow that all experience of pleasure is aesthetic. For instance, a hot water bath an a cold day gives us a kind of pleasure which by no stretch of imagination can be considered as aesthetic. Thus Hume's characterization of aesthetic experience is too broad.

However it is to the credit of Hume that he brought to the center stage a problem that has remained fundamental for modern aesthetics. That problem concerns what we may call the 'subjective universality of judgement of the beautiful'. The problem is these aesthetic judgements are subjective in the sense they are about our feelings of pleasure or agreeableness. Yet, they are universal in the sense such judgements have validity for others as well. When I say “Taj Mahal is beautiful” I am claiming not only of my experience of pleasure, but also of the experience of others who see it. The question is
“How is it possible for a judgement to be both subjective and universality valid?”

However, it is very clear that Hume's solution to this problem is highly problematic. This is because he has to explicate the universal validity of aesthetic judgements either in contingent terms or in the terms of necessity. Hume's himself is dissatisfied with the first strategy. But his resort to the second strategy conflicts with his commitment to empiricism.

The overall purpose of the above discussion was to highlight the views of some of the pre-Kantian aesthetics so as to clear the ground for a detailed discussion of Kantian aesthetics which occupies the subsequent chapters. However it is in the fitness of things that before we enter the main bodies of Kantian aesthetics brief remarks are made regarding the overall significance of Kant's path breaking work in aesthetics which has remained a millstone in the history of the subject.

I.4 the Significance of Kantian Aesthetics

“Sensibility changes from generation to generation. But expression is altered only by a man of genius”-T. S. Elliot.

It is universally accepted that Immanuel Kant was a genius who changed expression in philosophy by providing a new lexicon for the subject. In doing so, Kant gave such a turn to philosophy that philosophy could never be pre-Kantian. The critical philosophy of Kant took philosophy in an entirely new direction. In this work an attempt is made to understand how Kantian philosophy provided a new idiom to our aesthetic discourse.
We may begin our discussion of the significance of the Kantian aesthetics by noting that Kant’s concern with aesthetics pre-dated his classic *Critique of Judgement* whose first part brings out his aesthetic theory in its full fledged from Kant’s aesthetic reflections began during the pre-critical phase of his philosophical carrier as evidenced by his 1764 work *Observations on the Beautiful and the Sublime*. However, Kant was not the first philosopher to engage in a deep reflection on problems of aesthetics even during modern period. Nor was he the first to build a full scale system of aesthetics. Yet he has been recognized as the father of modern aesthetics. Before we deal with some of the core issue of his aesthetics in general and philosophy of art in particular it is in the fitness of things to provide some reasons which account for the enormous significance acquired by the Kantian aesthetics.

First of all, the aesthetic system of Kant has a rich variety of core concepts figuring in it. The concept of taste, beauty, judgements of beauty, judgements of taste, sublimity, genius, aesthetic experience, aesthetic ineffability are some of them. The range of the concepts analyzed and illuminated speaks of the breadth of Kantian aesthetics. Secondly, the canvas of the Kantian aesthetics has an unparallel comprehensiveness as evidenced by his engagement with issues pertaining to the relation of art to the domains of morality and religion. Thirdly, Kantian aesthetics is organically linked to the central concepts of aesthetic education. In this connection if may be noted that Kant worked out a theory of aesthetic education different from the one provided by his romantic successors like Schiller, which set the trend for future philosophical work on aesthetic education. Though the romantic view of aesthetic education became more entrenched in the philosophical common sense of aesthetic of education such a view was worked out by its proponents.
only in and through their reaction to the Kantian theory of aesthetic education. Fourthly, Kant's aesthetics had a formative influence on the romantic philosophers of art, who nurtured the discipline of aesthetics in a way that the discipline continued to remain vibrant. Particularly important in this connection are Kant's ideas of sublime and aesthetic ineffability. Fifthly, Kant transformed the very notion of pleasure as an aesthetic category. It is true that the notion of pleasure in relation to aesthetic experience has always been central to philosophical reflection on art. However, the precise nature of that concept was not explicated. It has even been treated as primitive, that is, indefinable. If not, it has been defined in a manner that is logically questionable. For instance, as we have seen, Hume's explication of the concept of the beautiful in terms of pleasure or agreeableness was too broad and hence, could not identify the specific kind of pleasure which is uniquely aesthetic. This is the task which Kant sought to accomplish. The question whether his attempt was convincingly successful should not come in the way of recognizing the freshness which he brings to his effort. In other words, Kant redraws the logical geography of the concept of aesthetic pleasure which is the fountainhead of aesthetic reflection. Sixthly, Kant highlighted in a original way the relation between aesthetics and ethics “by showing how the very autonomy of aesthetic experience from external constraint, including didactic constraint by morality, allows it to serve as a palpable experience of the freedom that is the essence of morality” (Guyer 1998, 27). Seventhly, though he like his empiricist predecessors like Hume, Hutcheson and others, did consider taste as the core concept of his aesthetic theory “he is content at last not to offer an explanation of the grounds of the aesthetic in terms of the psychology of the individual subject” (Kirwan 2004, 2). Eighthly, Kantian aesthetics, exhibits the synthetic
or syncretic spirit of his whole philosophy. As we know, Kant's epistemology sought to
brings together rationalism and empiricism and his ethics combined together perfectionist
doctrine of duties advanced by Wolff and the doctrine of moral science put forth by
Adams Smith. Similarly in aesthetics he brings together, to quote Guyer again, “many of
the insights of both empiricists like Hutcheson and his British successors as well as
rationalists such as Baumgarten and Moses Mendelssohn, while seeking to place these
insight within a radically new … framework” (1998, 27). Finally, the post-Kantian
aesthetics which was inaugurated by Hegel and Schilling whose aesthetics was
metaphysically charged and still inspires many contemporary aestheticians emerged as
reaction to Kant's aesthetic ideas. As Kirwan points out “the metaphysical aspirations of
the aestheticians immediately succeeding Kant gave them a vested interest in embracing
the proposition that, from a non-metaphysical point of view, the aesthetic was
inscrutable” (2004, 4). Kirwan here has in mind Kant's contention that the supersensible
substrate of humanity in which lies the determining ground of taste is itself indeterminate
and therefore incomprehensible.

However the significance of the Kantian aesthetics outstrips the points mentioned
above, however important they may be. The crucial reason that explains the significance
of Kantian aesthetics lies in the central orientation or spirit of Kantian aesthetics. It is a
coin whose two sides are: (a) The basic nature of his inquiry and (b) The fundamental
problem which he sought to address. This needs some elaboration.

a) Like any aesthetician Kant focuses primarily on the nature of aesthetic
experience. But he approaches aesthetic experience in a novel way which is akin to the
way he treats the nature of knowledge in his Epistemology. As we know, modern
philosophers prior to Kant sought to answer the question “What is the nature of knowledge?” by answering the question “What is the source of knowledge?” Kant replaced the latter question by the question “How is experience possible?” In doing so he provided a new direction to Epistemology itself. By this question he meant “What are the a priori conditions of the possibility of experience?” Here by “experience” Kant does not mean hailstorm of impressions. He meant by “experience” “knowledge”. Thus “experience” and “knowledge” are equated in Kant's lexicon. Experience, according to Kant, is of three kinds, namely cognitive, moral and aesthetic which correspond to truth, goodness and beauty- the three fundamental values. Thus the application of Kant's question regarding the possibility of experience to the third kind of experience, results in the question “How is aesthetic experience possible?” This is to say “What are the a priori conditions of the possibility of aesthetic experience?” Thus Kant radically recasted the traditional question of aesthetic, namely, “What is the nature of aesthetic experience?” As we know, according to Kant, the philosophical explanation of the possibility of cognitive experience and hence identifying the a priori conditions of the possibility cognitive experience amounts to discovering the synthetic a priori principles underlying the cognitive experience. The same holds for both moral as well as aesthetic experience. Thus, the philosophical explanation of possibility of aesthetic experience and hence the identification a priori conditions of the possibility of aesthetic experience set Kant on the task of discovering the synthetic a priori principles underlying aesthetic experience. It is this uncovering the synthetic a priori principles underlying aesthetic experience that makes Kant's treatise on aesthetics a critique of aesthetic judgement.
It is, of course, true that Kant equates cognitive experience with knowledge. But he does not do the same with moral and aesthetic experience. This has led some people to trace fact-value dichotomy which was propagated in the twentieth century by the positivists to Kant. Whether this is correct or not it is difficult to decide since Kant does not unequivocally deny epistemic status to moral and aesthetic experience. However, he is very clear that moral experience and aesthetic experience do not belong to the same domain as cognitive experience. According to Kant, judgements of fact are anchored in cognitive experience which Kant calls objective experience, but moral judgements and aesthetic judgements concern moral experience and aesthetic experience which are not objective experience. So moral judgements and aesthetic judgements are not objective judgements and therefore either do not have cognitive status or do not have a cognitive status in the same sense in which judgements of facts have. But even so they have a universal validity just as the judgements of facts do. This enables Kant to come out with the second central problem which lends uniqueness to his aesthetic theory and contributes to his status as the father of modern aesthetics.

b) The second problem goes as follows; judgements of the beautiful are related to our aesthetic response which pertains to our feeling of pleasure. Since, like any feeling they are subjective and hence the judgements of beautiful are subjective. But yet they demand agreement of every one and hence acquire universality. Thus aesthetic judgements are both subjective and universal. The subjective universality of the judgements of beautiful is a paradox and this philosophical puzzle needs to be resolved by answering “How can they be both subjective and universal?” No doubt, Kant was not the first to recognize the puzzle nor is he first to resolve. In his own way Hume resolves
this problem. Hume construes the claim of universality by the aesthetic judgement to be theoretically, factual whereas Kant construes such a claim to be normative. In other words, unlike Hume, Kant grounds universality of the judgement of the beautiful in a kind of necessity whereas Hume provides the explication of such universality in purely contingent terms. It is this normative explication of the universality of aesthetic judgement that enables Kant to put forth the first distinctively modern conception of the beautiful. This is achieved by Kant in a manner that completely reflects the fundamental spirit of his philosophical system. It is Kant's conviction that aesthetic Judgement “has an a priori principle related to feeling in a way analogous to that in which the a priori principles of the understanding are related to knowledge of empirical fact and those of practical reason to desire. To prove this conjecture is one of the tasks of the third Critique” (Körner 1955, 176).

We end this chapter with some remarks on the way Kant's aesthetic theory in particular and his third Critique in general decisively contribute to the cohesiveness of his whole philosophical system. As all students of Kant's first Critique know, Kant tries to show that cognitive experience presupposes synthetic a priori principles which govern the application of categories and these principles underlie a conception of nature as a mechanistic system governed by necessity. It is also known that the second Critique attempts to demonstrate that if moral action is not an illusion we must assume that we are free. As Körner says, the first two Critiques of Kant together “show that the theoretically necessary principles, which apply to phenomena, and the particularly necessary principles, which refer to noumena, are logically compatible” (1955, 177). But it is not sufficient to show that natural necessity and moral freedom are merely logically
compatible, for the simple reason that when we act we find that our freedom realizes itself in nature through our actions. Hence, it is necessary to show that the compatibility is real, and not just possible, by identifying a connection between the realms of freedom and natural necessity. To quote Körner again “In the third Critique Kant sets out to show that reflective judgement has a priori principle which, among other things, also establishes the required harmony between nature and freedom” (Ibid). Thus, Kant's aesthetic theory cements the integrity of Kant's philosophical system as a whole. The above point can be articulated in another way. The first Critique concerned the mechanistically determined world which is the world of necessity and which is the subject-matter of objective empirical knowledge. The second Critique concerned the moral domain central to which is freedom. The third Critique seeks to bridge the gap between necessity and freedom i.e. the gap between the first and the second Critiques. As Crowther points out, “Kant's reasons for doing this are complex, as are the principles whereby the gulf between nature and freedom is bridged. In the most general terms, however, the key connecting term is that of teleology …[however] aesthetic factors play a decisive role in this teleological mediation between nature and freedom” (1996, 109). In other words, Kant's aesthetic theory provides Kant's philosophical system strong and profound sense of coherence and thus a unitary character which would have been otherwise lacking.