CHAPTER VIII

AESTHETIC TRUTH AND "EPISTEMIC BEAUTY"

§ 1. THE PROBLEM STATED:

In the previous chapter we considered at length our theory that one and the same principle serves as both the logical and aesthetic criteria; but due to the distinct spheres in which it operates, the principle exhibits certain peculiar characteristics which distinguish one of its form from the other. Throughout we are maintaining that discursive thought and imagination are not totally different faculties, but they mark the distinct functions of one mental life. In the teleological process of mind, whether discursive thought forms the first stage or the creative imagination does it is a question which we shall touch upon in a later context of this chapter; but presently we should accept the implications of our position: If discursive thought and creative imagination form the distinct stages of one continuous purposive mental life, imagination also should give us some form of truth, even though it cannot be the truth of discursive logic. And conversely the question arises: Is not discursive thought characterised by the nature of beauty even though it cannot be exactly pure aesthetic experience? In this chapter we will discuss how far and in virtue of which factors and conditions can we accept these conclusions.

There is a mistaken view with regard to the nature of aesthetic experience. It holds that in aesthetic
experience, it is only the feeling that matters or it is in essence merely emotional experience. That it is emotional we do not dispute. But when the theory holds an extreme view that it is merely emotional in nature, we will discover that it is false to both psychology and aesthetics; it is false to the former, for psychologically speaking emotions or feelings are only states of our consciousness in the sense we are aware of something and the awareness is accompanied by the states of emotion. Sometimes emotions may overpower so much that we may lose our clear knowledge of the state of affairs of the moment. Emotion may have this after-effect. But why do we become emotional or what is the origin of our emotion? It is certain awareness which makes us emotional. To take a concrete example; a man receives a telegram which conveys the demise of his beloved and on reading it he becomes overpowered with sorrow. That he becomes sorrowful is a fact, but it is the news that made him to become so.

In the aesthetic experience also the psychological process is the same. A certain picture or drama or piece of music is presented before us. We become aware of what is presented; in a certain sense (which we will explain presently) we will understand it, and then have the experience. But here the distinction between understanding the given and having the experience is not one of temporal before and after. We do not first listen to the music and then have the mood. The listening to and become ourselves into that mood are identical, in point of time, but
we can make a logical distinction and say that the listening is antecedent to getting that mood.

To come back to our starting point: we should note that truth or logical coherence is a principle of the understanding; it functions in the realm of meaning. So, to ask the question how far aesthetic experience contains truth is to ask, how far aesthetic experience is related with the world of meaning or to what extent meaning plays a role in aesthetic experience. By meaning we understand what we take a thing to be, in other words, concept. The question is how far and in what manner concepts play their role in aesthetic experience. Let us turn to an analysis of this problem.

§ 2. PLACE OF PERCEPT & CONCEPT IN THOUGHT & IMAGINATION.

We shall start with an analysis of the nature of our cognition in its simple manner. There are, to begin with, two forms of cognition: through perception and through inference; or through percepts and concepts. The distinction between the two is, whereas concept is the function of pure intellect, percept is the function of the intellect plus the sense organs. In other words, perception may be further analysed into pure sensation and fused concept. We may speak of a free concept in the sense we may have a concept without reference to any perception in particular, like civilization, virtue, etc. But we can never speak of a pure perception in the sense of pure sensation. Pure sensation is an abstraction, a logical construct which is
not a fact of concrete experience. So we may make a
distinction only between a pure concept and a concept with
or submerged in percept (Let it be remembered that, a per-
cept can never exist without a concept).

That there are other forms of cognition we do con-
cede. But let us see to which class in the distinction
that we made above, aesthetic experience belongs. It can­
not belong to the class of pure concepts; for in that
case geometrical figures would be more beautiful than the
paintings of Nandalal Bose. Nor can it belong to the
class of percepts; for in that case, any thing that we see,
hear, etc., in our everyday business would be beautiful.

Here we will do well to pause for a moment and note
the view in this regard of one of the most influential wri­
ters in the twentieth century on aesthetics, Croce's.
Croce distinguishes² intuition, which is for him the same
as aesthetic creation, from conceptual cognition on the one
side and bare sensation on the other. For him intuition
is a character, an image or an individual physiognomy, which
is independent of space and time. Croce admits that pure
sensation is only a logical fiction, but it is what can be
called matter of our intuition. Though pure matter cannot
be known, it is the content that fills in the form of our
intuition.

Now, for Croce, intuition is different from percep-

1. See H. Read: "Greek Vases do conform to exact geometric
   laws, and that is why their perfection is so cold and
2. See Aesthetic. Ch.I.
-tion. For, the question of logical validity applies to perception whereas intuition is on a logically lower level than perception and perception takes place in space and time while intuition is independent of them. Further, it is space and time that give form to perception. Since intuition is independent of space and time the form that it has is not either spatial or temporal. Intuition is not intellectual in the sense it has nothing to do with conception. E.g., "The impression of a moonlight scene by a painter; the outline of a country drawn by a cartographer; a musical motive, tender or energetic...... may well all be intuitive facts without a shadow of intellectual relation..... The philosophical maxims placed in the mouth of a personage of tragedy or of comedy, perform these the function, not of concepts, but of characteristics of such personage; in the same way as the red in a painted face does not there represent the red colour of the physicists, but is a characteristic element of the portrait."^3

We do not dispute with Croce that intuition is not the same as intellectual knowledge. But when Croce holds that it is completely independent of intellectual knowledge or concepts, he has to account for the form of intuition. As he himself declares, space and time cannot be the forms of artistic intuition; nor can concepts be. Then, what is it that gives form to intuition? Croce's answer is, it is intuition itself. For him, intuition, form and expression—all these three—mean the same. Now, what is this form? It is intuition. What is intuition? It is

3. Ibid. p.2.
form. In this way the answer becomes circular. In his attempt to keep the distinctness of aesthetic intuition, Croce gives it quite a unique nature, that it is independent of intellect and perception. That aesthetic intuition is unique is indisputable. But that its uniqueness demands it to be completely independent of intellect and perception is an unnecessary and untenable assertion. The right view is, though aesthetic intuition is distinct from conception and perception, it contains the elements of both these two, but blended in a new fashion that these elements are freed from their respective inexorable bonds: Strict adherence to the logical coherence in the case of concepts and determination by common space and time in the case of perception. But we cannot say that in this blended state, all conception and its consistency, all perception and its space and time are lost. Though space, time, conceptual consistency etc., are all made use of in aesthetic intuition, these principles can be applied in the act of artistic creation in an infinite ways. Whereas when we are strictly at either the pure intellectual level or in the perceptual level there is only one way of relating or organizing the contents of the experience.

That aesthetic intuition or beauty consists in the blending of both concept and percept does not mean that there is a rule which can be consciously followed in achieving this blending. The blending should be perfect in the sense both the percept and the concept should become indistinguishably one, both losing their peculiarity and losing themselves in a new living whole. Now, we have to
explain in detail the special nature of the fusion of the two, at the same time pointing out its difference from concept and percept.

§ 3. AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE, A BLENDING OF THE TWO:

W. T. Stace proposes a definition of beauty in which he tries to determine the relation of aesthetic experience with other forms of knowledge. His definition runs as follows: "Beauty is the fusion of an intellectual content, consisting of empirical non-perceptual concepts, with a perceptual field, in such manner that the intellectual content and the perceptual field are indistinguishable from one another; and in such manner as to constitute the revelation of an aspect of reality." 4

In this definition we are specially concerned with the "empirical non-perceptual concept" and how it is fused with a perceptual field. We are aware already of the distinction that we made between a pure concept and a concept fused in a perceptual field. Thus we have pure concepts which in the Kantian terminology may be called categories, which are a priori—i.e., independent of but a necessary pre-condition of all our cognitive experience. Here we are not concerned with the number of the categories enumerated by Kant or about their details. But it is sufficient if we note that we can make a distinction between pure concepts and concepts which are submerged in perception. Thus, when I use concepts like house, table, man,

4. The Meaning of Beauty, p. 43.
etc., these are concepts which are essentially perceptual: they are perceptual because they have a reference to the perceptual field. But the empirical non-perceptual concepts cannot be found in perception, because in them the intellectual construction has taken its completeness. E.g., concepts like civilization, evolution, harmony, progress etc., are empirical non-perceptual concepts. They are non-perceptual because evolution is a concept which has no perceptible object to directly refer to. Yet they are empirical, because they refer to the process or the ways of the behaviour of things. So here are some concepts which speak of the truth of empirical things which cannot be perceived. Again here we are avoiding the fallacy of pure empiricism. Evolution is a truth which cannot be arrived at by pure empirical method; still it is empirical because it is a principle describing the way in which empirical things change and move. We may describe it in the phrase of Bosanquet as the concrete universal. Now, such concepts—empirical non-perceptual concepts—are peculiar possession of man. Animals may have perceptual concepts. When a dog recognises a stranger as a man and another dog as a creature of its own species, how can it recognise them unless it has concepts of man and dog? But it is an extravagance of generosity to grant the concepts of evolution or harmony to the canine animal.

Here one can pause and ask: Are not these so called empirical non-perceptual concepts, the concepts of sciences? The answer is, yes, they are. Concepts like gravitation, civilization etc., are concepts of science. By our per-
-ception we can have the experience of weight or heaviness, but it is only the intellect which reflects and creates the idea of gravitation. Therefore it is described as non-perceptual, but that it is empirical is granted. In the same way all abstract value concepts like honesty, sacrifice, heroism etc., are intellectual concepts. Stace describes the value of these concepts: "this....... class of empirical non-perceptual concepts is not only the peculiar possession of man, but constitutes also the whole wealth of his intellectual life. The whole of life, politics, religion, and morality, fall into this intermediate region. All those conceptions which constitute the criticism of life, our intellectual reaction upon the world, fall here. And by the possession of a greater wealth of empirical non-perceptual concepts, we distinguish the cultured and intellectual man from the ignoramus and the boor."

Now, many of us have these concepts in our head, but never realizing them as facts of experience. Gravitation is an intellectual formula, but never a fact of experience to be felt or seen by perception. So are concepts of civilization, evolution, courage etc. Is it not possible to embody these concepts in actual perception? It is possible, and when they are actually embodied, the result is beauty or a work of art. The artist with his faculty of creative imagination concretises these abstract intellectual concepts in the media which are perceptible.

5. Ibid. p.53.
These concepts are not poor in their applicability and power; they are sweeping. Gravitation is the power that controls the whole of our physical universe; evolution is the principle that directs the whole course of organic beings which of course are nourished by inorganic forces also. Concepts like love, sacrifice, or even cruelty are sweeping. But unless they become facts of our concrete experience, they cannot move us and we cannot feel them with their arresting vividness and brilliance. That is why beauty is described as "the fusion of an intellectual content, consisting of empirical non-perceptual concepts, with a perceptual field."

Here we should not lose sight of the right direction and think that this fusion is the result of a conscious attempt. It can never be so. The poet who describes the elemental force of the wind (Shelly) or the painter who presents the eternal peace of the Buddha or the composer who embodies in tune the spirit of kindness with the feeling of helplessness and resigned submission (Hāga Bhairavi) are not and need not be experts in the methods of mystic practice or physicists who know the exact force and cause of the fury of the wind; nor need they be psychologists or moralists or religious experts to analyse and understand the nature of the ideas contained in the particular Rāg. Were it so, only an expert physicist could write "An Ode to the West Wind", and the author of the "Varieties of Religious experience" could carve a stone image of Dhyānī Buddha. The work of art embodies a uni-
versal truth or a non-perceptual concept which is not necessarily derived from following the methods of science. After all, how did the scientist form concepts such as gravitation or evolution? It was in a flash of intuition that the concept occurred to his consciousness in a purely conceptual relation. The same truth, nay an infinitely greater number of truths, may occur intuitively to the consciousness of the artist. But when it occurs, it occurs so already in the embodiment of a perceptual medium or field. Here the concept and the percept are never thought of as different or distinct from one another. They are one, born as one and only works of art can be born and be in this state of indissoluble union, so that, what would have been a mere concept which could not be related with a percept, is now not only related with the percept but is concretised. In this concretised form its value is infinitely enhanced and it becomes brilliant in its revelation.

Here we are not saying that the concepts contained in a work of art are superior to concepts expressed in a thought-relation by the scientist; nor are we asserting that the value of art is superior to the value of science and philosophy. All that we are trying here to show is the position of artistic intuition in relation to what we usually classify as percepts and concepts. We have said that only in art, the dualism between the non-perceptible concept and percept can be overcome and because the non-perceptible concept becomes embodied in a percept, it is described as empirical non-perceptual concept. In art,
since the concept and the percept become one, the question whether this percept has an external object which causes the stimulus of the percept (in the ordinary physical sense) does not arise. For, it is only when the concept is treated as distinct from percept or when the percept is distinct from the percipient mind that the question, what caused the percept? arises. But in art experience since both are one, the percept also equally belongs to the mind as the concept. Let it be remembered that we are referring only to aesthetic experience and not to the physical photograph or the physical sound. We may say that as long as we treat the photograph as a photograph hung on the wall, it cannot be a work of art and in so far as the sound variation is considered as a fact of audition we are not listening to music. It is only when our consciousness or imagination (call it by any name) becomes one with colours and lines, that we will have the experience of visual art and in the same way it is only when the sound variation becomes a melody—the tonal movement of our own consciousness—that we will have the experience of musical art.

To return to the question we set to ourselves in this chapter: Can a work of art contain any truth? Now, if by truth we mean the consistency of meaning, the work of art has some truth, because it has some meaning which is consistent within itself. But the criterion of consistency in the logical sense cannot be applied here. It means then, that there is truth in a work of art but that it is not the truth of the kind we get from the
standard of logic. What kind of truth is it? Before we enter into that question, we will be benefitted to consider what does perhaps the greatest modern European aesthetician—Kant—say with regard to the relation between the logical function of the mind and its imaginative function.

§ 4. AESTHETIC JUDGMENT: KANT:

In the scheme of Kant, the understanding is logically prior to the intuition, and the concepts actually belong to the understanding. But the understanding itself is not the whole of "the family of the supreme cognitive faculties". Nor is it understanding plus the faculty of intuition; but reason which is at the basis of all these faculties. Now, the understanding itself is not directly related with reason. It is the faculty of judgment (which is aesthetic judgment) that mediates or serves as a "middle term" between the understanding and the reason. This faculty of aesthetic judgment is not a special legislation just as understanding or intuition is. The intuition gives legislation to the phenomena in the sense that it makes the phenomena appear in space and time; the understanding also legislates the phenomena in making them to appear to us in the form of the categories. But since the faculty of aesthetic judgment does not refer to or represent the phenomena, or point to an object which is thought to exist there in space and time, it is not a faculty or special legislation in the sense in which understanding and intuition are set it has "a special principle of its
own to be sought according to laws, though merely subjective a priori. And "this principle even if it has no field of objects as its realm, yet may have somewhere a territory with a certain character for which no other principle can be valid."

Kant holds that even in the faculty of aesthetic judgment, concepts are made use of. Kant admits that aesthetic experience is bound up with pleasure and that it is due to the freedom which is found in the play of imagination. But mere pleasantness is not the proof of aesthetic experience. A thing "which pleases without a concept would be counted as pleasant," but not as an aesthetic experience. That is to say, concepts which are the elements of the understanding or the discursive logical faculty are necessary in aesthetic experience. Then, what is the difference between the understanding which functions with concepts and imagination or the aesthetic judgment which also requires concepts? In the case of the understanding in the concepts are governed by the inexorable laws of the categories—the categories of quality, quantity, relation and modality. But in the aesthetic judgment they are free to come into relation with each other in any manner the particular act of aesthetic judgment requires. Because the aesthetic judgment need not answer the other determining conditions as the understanding should, "the cognitive powers, which are involved by this representation, are

here in free play, because no definite concept limits them to a definite rule of cognition."

In the teleology of Kant there is the definite aim of conquering or determining the noumena; and the faculties of understanding, aesthetic judgment and reason (if the latter can be called a faculty) represent different degrees or stages in our attempt to determine the noumena. The first can succeed in determining only the phenomena; the second, though it cannot determine the noumena, at least makes it determinable; while only the reason can complete the conquest. In the words of Kant himself: "The understanding, by the possibility of its a priori laws for nature, gives a proof that nature is only cognised by us as phenomenon and implies, at the same time, that it has a super-sensible substrate, though it leaves this quite undetermined. The judgment, by its a priori principle for the judging of nature according to its possible particular laws, makes the super-sensible substrate (both in us and without us) determinable by means of the intellectual faculty. But the reason by its practical a priori law, determines it; and thus the judgment makes possible the translation from the realm of the natural concept to that of the concept of freedom."  

It is necessary for us to pause for a while and reflect on the implications of Kant's view. The aesthetic judgment uses concepts; it makes the super-sensible substrate determinable "by means of the intellectual fac-

It is intermediary between the highest form of reason—i.e., to determine the noumena—and the understand. Now, let us ask the question of our basic interest: Can there be any element of truth in the aesthetic judgment? The fact that the "intellectual faculty" is made use of in the aesthetic judgment implies that there is an element of truth. Here we have to distinguish the meaning of the term truth in its different spheres. When we are in the sphere of the understanding, by truth we mean the truth of nature or the phenomena. But when we are in the sphere of aesthetic judgment, by truth we cannot mean the truth of the phenomena. But here a question arises: Merely because the aesthetic judgment refers to something other than the phenomena, can we say it is false? or can we say it is "a-true" thereby meaning that the concept of truth cannot be applied to it. But this makes us limit all our philosophy and knowledge to the realm of nature, the sphere of science or to what Plato calls the third level in his illustration of the Line in the Republic. If we accept that philosophy aims at a higher truth than sciences do, we have to grant that the aesthetic judgment gives us a glimpse (however momentary and limited it be) of that higher truth. We are not belittling the value of logical truth. Nor are we saying that logical truth should change its nature. We are merely only painting out that in philosophy we mean by truth something more than what the scientist means. And our profounder conception of truth recognises the value of the merely logical
or scientific also. But there are other ways of knowing truth, aesthetic truth being one of them. The aesthetic truth need not and is not opposed to the logical truth. The opposition arises only when one is confounded for the other or when any one claims more than what it is actually not. Right from the beginning we have been insisting that the same principle of coherence is both the logical and the aesthetic criteria in its different forms. Now, we go a step forward and ask that if the same principle is the principle of truth in one of its forms how can it completely divest itself of that nature in its other form? If the nature of one form is totally and ipso facto absent from the other, both of them cannot be different forms of one and the same principle. But we saw that they are two forms of one basic principle. And so we hold that the nature of truth (by which we mean the cognitive elements) are present in aesthetic experience.

If aesthetic judgment is different in nature from the logical judgment and yet if it claims some form of truth, is it a universal truth that it claims or a particular truth? Here we should be clear about a possible confusion. Truth, whether it be at the level of the understanding or imagination, must be universal if it is worth its name. So the question arises: Is the aesthetic judgment universal in its scope or is it purely individual and subjective? Kant says, it is universal, but it is subjectively universal. It is universal because the beautiful to me should
should be beautiful to you and to all others in so far as all of us are human beings having the same faculty of judgment (provided the faculty is trained properly). But it is subjective, in the sense it does not refer, like that of the understanding, to anything in the nature. It governs itself while the understanding governs nature.

Now, in virtue of which nature does aesthetic judgment gain universality? Kant says that when we take away all our personal interest from our aesthetic experience (then only it can be called aesthetic experience), it becomes universal. In this sense aesthetic experience is objective, by which again is meant universality. Now, how is universality possible even in sciences or in the sphere of the understanding? That $7 + 5 = 12$ is universal when and only when the thinker becomes purely a thinking mind with regard to this problem, undisturbed by any other extraneous consideration. In this sense the aesthetic judgment is no less universal than that of the understanding and hence the kind of truth that it contains is also as universal as the truth of the understanding. It is needless to say that universality is another form of necessity.

§ 5. A SEMANTIC APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM: I. A. RICHARDS & G. K. OULDEN:

An attempt has been made to effect a separation of intellectual content from art from the point of view of the analysis of language. Dr. I. A. Richards who propounds this view draws a distinction between the scientific and
the emotive uses of language. He writes: "A statement may be used for the sake of the reference, true or false, which it causes. This is the scientific use of language. But it may also be used for the sake of the effects in emotion and attitude produced by the reference it occasions. This is the emotive use of language." The same distinction is maintained in a different language by Dr. Richards in his another work in corroboration with G. K. Ogden: "......a two-fold division is more convenient, the division between the symbolic use of words and the emotive use. The symbolic use of words is statement; the recording, the support, the organization and the communication of references. The emotive use of words is a more simple matter, it is a use of words to express or excite feelings and attitudes." Again, "The functions under consideration usually occur together but nonetheless they are in principle distinct. So far as words are used emotively no question as to their truth in the strict sense can directly arise." The conclusion at which the authors of the "Meaning of Meaning" arrive is: Poets and Literary people are solely concerned with the evoking of emotion and they need not in the least bother about the truth or the falsity of their expression in the intellectual sense: In the same way the business of the scientist is to free himself completely from the emotional level and the emotive use of language. Thus there need be neither

12. Ibid. p.150.
trespass into nor any claim for the mutual spheres of
either the scientist or the poet.

This view of the authors is clear cut and at once
acceptable to commonsense when it is specially ready to
pacify the quarrel, which is needless of course, between
the artist and the scientist. But as Collingwood points
out, this distinction between words assumes language to
be a dead material like a stone or a chisel which can be
"used" either emotively or symbolically as we please.
That is to say, using the language is only a craft; one
who is well-trained, having the greatest mastery over lan-
guage and its vocabulary can be a better poet than others.
To press this argument further, then the linguist and the
editors of dictionaries can prove themselves to be artists
and poets. "The technical theory of art is intimately con-
nected with, nay, it is another form of, the technical th-
eory of art which we considered in an earlier context (Ch.I
§ 9)." In fact, language is a living function and its bu-
siness is to express, to express the person. Now, can we
make a water-tight compartment in the man himself—between
the purely intellectual and the purely emotional? Now that
the influence of the faculty psychology is over, we should
clarify ourselves and note that after all emotion, if it
is searched for itself, nowhere exists. It is always an
accompaniment of something. To quote from Collingwood:
"An emotion is always the emotional charge upon some ac-
tivity. For every different kind of activity there is a

different kind of emotion...... The emotional charges upon sense-experience, felt as they are at a purely psychical level, are psychically expressed by automatic reactions. The emotional charges upon thought-experiences are expressed by the controlled activity of language.

Taking next the distinction within thought of consciousness and intellect, the emotions of consciousness are expressed by language in its primitive and original form; but intellect has its own emotions too, and these must have an appropriate expression, which must be language in its intellectualized form. 14

The point we have to note is, there is no activity of ours which is totally devoid of emotional tinge. When Archimedes solved a problem, why should he have cried and run shouting along the street from his bath tub. Any new discovery in the scientific field will be a matter of thrill for fellow scientists. It is true that these thrills and emotions are different in quality from the emotions of a sensuous experience. But the fact that there is emotional accompaniment to all intellectual activity cannot be denied. The scientific symbols have a peculiar fate. When they are invented, they are done so to serve the purpose of certain abstract "unemotional" idea. But when once it is incorporated into a system of thought, it becomes a language and gains some emotional charge with it, however weak the charge be. After all symbols are invented with the intention that they should not only simplify and promote the progress of our thought in an easier

way but with an implicit recognition that it should be understandable to others—may be a coterie of specialists. That is, it becomes a common language and hence it cannot completely retain its original ideal of being "abstract and non-emotional". It becomes so because it is no longer purely arbitrary but it is already a part of a system in which the rest of the members have some or more of emotional accompaniment.

We should note further that all statements or sentences have some referents; every sentence, scientific or poetic, asserts some truth, some fact, some referent. The difference between scientific writing and a poetic (or artistic) writing is this: the referent of the former is connected with a very wide range of facts and system of facts; while that of the latter is connected only within that universe which is specially defined for and by that poem or novel etc. The fact that sentences in literature make us more easily emotional than those in a scientific treatise do is due to this: that the referent or subject of literature itself pertains to human matters, human wishes, desires etc.,; while the referent of the sentences in a scientific treatise are not primarily human. To take an example: the word "heart" in a poem refers to human wishes and aspirations and attachment whereas in biochemistry it is nothing more than a biochemical formula. So the variation in emotional intensity is due to the referent of the language and not to the language itself as Dr. Richards and Ogden think. Still the formula of the biochemist is not without any emotion for him.
In a sense the referent of the poet is abstract; i.e., he has to express the inner side of man's behaviour which is peculiarly individual. At every step he has to invent new phrases and new ways of expression to express what he intends to. That is, he has to invent various symbols. But a good poet can easily invent symbols which become at once understandable to the reader. A scientist may also in the same way invent new symbols which can be at once understandable to the students of science. Nothing prevents a good scientist to have this capacity and many scientists have it. And in so far as they can have it, they also have something of a poet in them.

We shall reassert our original position that art or poetry is not purely emotive devoid of any cognitive content, for no experience can be completely bereft of cognition. Now we should consider in more detail the nature of this cognition and value.

§ 6. ART EXPRESSES "DEPTH MEANING":

When we say that art contains a form of cognitive content, we mean that the work of art makes certain cognitive assertion and it holds that this assertion is true. There are critics who concede that art does assert something cognitive but it has no right to claim that this assertion is true. For example, every poem or novel or drama expects the listener to grant certain presuppositions and ideals etc., which are taken as right or true within its universe of discourse; like gambling
should be accepted as a royal virtue in reading the Mahabharata and polygamy as not an indignant social system in appreciating the character of Dasaratha. These various presuppositions are affected by the poem or the story. In the same way a number of characters, each character in different context, assert different things which may be, if taken mutually, contradictory with one another. No doubt, all these things are assertive but they cannot claim that they are all true. For, if what one work of art asserts as true is granted in the logical sense of truth, the assertions of all other works of art must be false, because each work makes its own assertion in its own way.

Here we may put a Counter argument and ask: Since the philosophy of Hegel is opposed to that of Russell or the Sankhya is opposed to the Jaina, both are false or at least one is false. In this way there is no philosopher who agrees in every detail with another philosopher. It is said that since philosophy is intellectual, its assertion or denial can be argued out so that we can reach a common agreement. But when philosophical standpoint differ, the theories of thought, logic, the meanings of implication and inference and the definitions of truth and error will be radically different. Each philosopher has his own logic which straight away takes him to the conclusion and which is devised as a shield to defend him from the onslaught of his opponents. The fact that there are a countless major and minor philosophers shows that as yet a perfect philosophy agreed upon by all is not reached.
But one may say that such a perfect agreement is reached in science, since science is essentially a collective intellectual enterprise. How far science is a collective enterprise is a financial and administrative problem with regard to the setting up of the laboratories etc. But that science moves in perfect agreement with all is not wholly true. Because even in science we find many times, rival hypothesis advocated by different scientists till the evidences become so abundant that they favour one hypothesis disproving all others; or in the light of the evidences found out, later on a new hypothesis may be formed ruling out all the old ones. Science has not yet reached that stage where only one theory is possible in every essential aspect. Further, if it is granted that all the scientists have reached complete agreement its reason is obvious: when the axioms and the validity of the method or conducting experiments are accepted, there need not be any difference in reaching the conclusion. When compared to the profundity of the subject, the subject matter of science is simple, so simple that the intellect can grasp it completely. But with regard to philosophical problems, we are at a different plane, with a different kind of subject matter.

Now, the assertions of different systems of philosophy differ from each other while those of science (granting so) do not differ. But can we thereby deny any truth to all philosophy? No. The same difficulty that arises in philosophy, we find in the assertions of each work of
Each work of art not only makes some assertion but believes and demands us to believe that the assertion is true. The assertion of truth of one work of art need not conflict with that of another. Unexamined suspicion is a flaw which destroys not only our beloved and kith and kin but us also is the assertion that is made in Othello. But it does not contradict the assertion that hasty credulity is equally fatal—the assertion of Lear. Both are true. But serious contradiction may arise when two works of art assert two different theories which are logically contradictory to one another. But we should remember that a work of art as such can neither admit within it nor weave any theory. We have already noted that in aesthetic experience the concept and the percept become indistinguishably one; and here we may observe that in this state of oneness a "theory" cannot live. If a theory or a set of principle is taken consciously for picturization, to that extent it ceases to be a work of art. Didacticism is a grave artistic defect and that is the reason why allegories are not considered genuine form of art though they may have certain artistic excellences.

So far we are maintaining that every work of art asserts something and that it asserts it as true. Now, what is the nature of this assertion? It is not any way a logical assertion. And a work of art cannot directly make any statement, universal or particular in the logical sense. We will find some light on this matter in what Prof. Dewitt Parker calls "depth meaning". Let us explain
this concept in his own words:

"Many poems and some works of plastic art possess what I like to call 'depth-meanings'—meanings of universal scope underneath relatively concrete meanings or ideas. Thus in the following line of one of Frost's little poems

Nothing gold can stay.

The word "gold" has its usual surface meaning, but underneath that is its depth meaning, precious; so in addition to saying that nothing can endure, the poet is saying that nothing valuable can abide—a more universal statement." 15

Now, if we accept the concept of Parker—there is no reason why we should not—we have to recognise that literature has a referential meaning at its surface and a depth meaning at its bottom. Parker is quite moderate in saying that "many poems and some works of plastic art possess what I call 'depth meaning'," We may go a little further and ask: can there be art befitting its name and dignity without any depth meaning of the kind we are speaking of? After having traversed all these arguments we cannot accept the view that painting and music are the pure pleasures of the relation in the colour-scheme and in the sound-variation. Nor can we be allured by the view that poetry is the pleasure of the rhythmic flow of words. Every great poet is great because of the truth that he imaginatively comprehends, and the other excellences—like diction, metrical exactitude etc.,—are parts of his imaginative activity. Says an eminent English Critic:

"Truth! there can be no merit, no craft at all without that. And further, all beauty is in the long run only fineness of truth, or what we call expression, the finer accommodation of speech to that vision within". The latter part of the quotation from Walter Pater appears as though it were an English echo of the famous couplet from Kālidāsa:

"Vāgarthaviva sampṛktāu vāgarthapratipattaye
Jagataḥ pitarau vande pārvatiparamesvarau",

Even Kālidāsa recognised that there must be artha—the meaning; and can there be meaning without a sense of truth?—being one with the mode of expression in a work of art.

When we say that works of art assert some truth it does not mean that that truth must be consistent with logical truth. We have already made this point clear. We may in this context express it again in the words of A.J. Jones: we cannot "test morality with litmus paper or measure a soul with a screw". The scientist "has to realize that his instruments cannot measure the imponderable". So we should not try to test the aesthetic truth from the standards of sciences.

In order to illustrate what we are maintaining, we may quote some poems which make the point clear:

Life is real! Life is earnest
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

---(Longfellow).

17. In Search of Truth. p. 117. (Thomas Nelson Ltd., pub-
Is not the poet passionately asserting a certain truth about life, about the eternity of the soul, a robust spirit of optimism even amidst the fleeting nature of physical things? On this account this piece is not a bad poem, but its excellence consists in this passionate assertion itself; and we cannot say that it is neither true nor false because it is "poetry".

Again,

"Dreamt I today the dream of yesternight,
Sleep ever feigning one evolving theme,—
Of my two lives which should I call the dream?
Which action vanity? which vision sight?"

---(George Santayana: Poems, "Dreamt I today the dream of yesternight."

Is it not a clear assertion and a statement of the basic problem of the theory of knowledge?

See the problem of the one and the many, the basic philosophical question:

"Flower in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
Little flower—but if I could understand
What you are, root and all, and all in all,
I should know what God and man is"

---(Alfred Lord Tennyson)

The problem of time and change is seen by the poet:

"Time goes, you say? Ah, no!
Alas, Time says, we go;
Or else, were this not so,
What need to chain the hours,
For youth were always ours?
Time goes, you say— Ah, no!"

---(Pierre De Konsard)
The problem of human freedom is reflected upon by Sophocles in Antigone,

"Past, present, and be,
All bow to thy decree;
All that exceeds the mean by Fate
is punished, Love or Hate." (Lines 613-16)

"Religion has her claims, 'tis true,
Let rites be paid when rites are due
Yet is it ill to disobey
The powers who hold by might the sway
Thou hast withstood authority,
A self-willed rebel, thou must die".  (Lines 872-77)

See how another poet asserts the survival of ethical values even through the swaying power of death:

"The garlands whither on your brow;
Then boast no more your mighty deeds:
Upon death's purple altar now
See where the victor-victim bleeds.
Your heads must come
To the cold tomb
Only the action of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in their dust."

--(James Shirley: Death the Leveler).

In this way there is no branch of philosophy which is not expressed by literature. Again we have to guard ourselves against a possible misconception, that since literature embodies in its depth-meaning the philosophical problems, it is not philosophy-made-easy. The truths that literature embodies are more lively and at once clear in their vision and brilliance, they are more concrete

than what philosophy finds out. But on that account we cannot say that literature feeds on philosophy. Literature will be definitely influenced by the philosophy prevalent in its age and the reverse of the case is also true. In spite of the mutual influence, art keeps up its distinct nature when it asserts truth.

So far we have observed some examples in order to see how great philosophical truths were contained in works of literature. Could the Divine Comedy be great without the Augustinian philosophy it embodies? Could the Mahabharata be great without the Vaishnava theism and the Upanisadic idealism contained in it? Let us grant that the Divine Comedy has its own philosophy and it is not a pale and passive copy of another system; in the same way the Mahabharata is a world by itself having its own philosophy. Yet it is its own philosophy—its depth of vision or the darśana—that makes it great. By philosophy we shall not mean mere metaphysics or what is implied or can be proved by the principles of ratiocination. Philosophy in the context of art is that in virtue of which the art is what it is.

It may be asked in this connection whether even non-verbal arts like music, painting, sculpture etc., any contain philosophy? Can we say with equal confidence that even these arts are what they are in virtue of the philosophy that they embody? As an answer to this question we shall not enter into great detail but only quote the view of two great critics, one on sculpture and the other on music. In his famous essay on the Dance of Shiva,
Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy explains the significance of the image of Natarāja (bronze, 12th Century, Madras Museum) thus:

"The essential significance of Shiva's Dance is threefold: first, it is the image of his rhythmic play as the source of all Movement within the Cosmos, which is represented by the Arch; Secondly, the purpose of his Dance is to release the countless souls of men from the Snake of Illusion; Thirdly, the place of the Dance, Chidambaram (in Madras State), the centre of the universe, is within the Heart.

"...the grandeur of this conception itself... (is) a synthesis of science, religion and art. How amazing the range of thought and sympathy of those rishi-artists who first conceived such a type as this, affording an image of reality, a key to the complex tissue of life, a theory of nature, not merely satisfactory to a single clique or race, nor acceptable to the thinkers of one century only, but universal in its appeal to the philosopher, the lover, and the artist of all ages and all countries. How supremely great in power and grace this dancing image must appear to all those who have striven in plastic forms to give expression to their intuition of life!

"...In the night of Brahma, Nature is inert, and cannot dance till Shiva wills it. He rises from His rapture, and dancing sends through inert matter pulsing waves of awakening sounds, and lo! matter also dances appearing as a glory round about Him. Dancing, He sustains its
manifold phenomena. In the fullness of time, still dancing, he destroys all forms and names by fire and gives new rest. This is poetry, but nonetheless, science." 19

Now, can a man who does not possess this sublime conception appreciate this image of Natarāja as a work of art? It is a truism to say that one can "enjoy" the beauty of the image without caring for the magnificent conception it concretely embodies.

We shall end this section with a quotation from Morris Weitz, which explains the significance of Beethoven's last quartet, opus 135. Weitz writes: "Many critics, even the composer himself, find in it the assertion that life is good or that affirmation of life is the answer to doubt, perhaps it is too much to find in the music, but what one does find is the sequence of musical doubt and affirmation. The fourth and final movement begins slowly and is characterised in this beginning section by irresolution and hesitation within the musical sounds; this is followed by an allegro section in which all the musical doubt and irresolution give way to musical materials that are completely affirmative in their expressive character. Now, if we accept musical hesitation and affirmation as transparent symbols, we may say that this fourth movement embodies the contrast between doubt and affirmation, in which the latter comes after the former, as a kind of reply to it. But this is a musical reply, and the whole movement is at most an analogue of the claim

Before going to make a summary of the special nature of aesthetic form of cognition, we may conclude this section by observing that all great works of art are what they are because of the great truths they embody and affirm. This statement is true not only with regard to the great arts of the ancient and medieval times both in the East and in the West, but it is true even today. If the medieval and ancient arts affirmed a certain truth, a certain view of reality and supreme values of life in their great epics, magnificent temples and cathedrals; in contemporary times we are affirming our view of truth and value in constructing gigantic bridges and wonderfully arranged space-ships. And we are considering these as arts. Here the question is not whether what our ancestors believed was true or what we believe is true. It is a subject for metaphysics proper. But what we should note is, the arts of both the times—the ancient and the modern—are there because of their philosophies. In the words of an eminent art critic: "It is not that I am saying that the works of men, Hindu or Christian, are good because their is this or that philosophy and religion behind them. I am saying more than that. I am saying that because there is this or that philosophy and religion behind them that they are there at all—that it is to this or that philosophy and religion that such works owe their very existence, their very being." "The fact that today in England we spend more time and treasure

erecting buildings for the conduct of commerce and less
in erecting churches does not prove that we have neither
religion nor philosophy, but simply that our religion and
philosophy are different."²¹

§ 7. THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES
OF AESTHETIC KNOWLEDGE

As a sort of recapitulation of all the discussion
we did so far—from the chapter in which we started com­
paring the harmony theory of beauty with the coherence
theory of truth—we will do well to state in a brief way
the distinctive features of aesthetic knowledge. We
said in an earlier context that beauty is the imaginative
integration, truth the intellectual integration, of expe­
rience. Now, the truth that we find in the context of
the discursive thought is itself discursive and relatio­
nal, because it is in the very nature of our thought to
make distinctions between the knowing mind and the known
object, the subject and the predicate, the thing and the
quality etc. But in the aesthetic experience, as long as
we are having the experience, the object of beauty and the
experience of beauty are indistinguishably one. As long
as I look at the temple tower and know that I am looking
"at" it, I am only looking at it and not aesthetically
experiencing it. But when I aesthetically experience it,
the tower is not different from my experience. It is
true that this oneness of experience will last for a very

²¹ Eric Gill: Art and Reality, an introductory essay to
Mulkraj Anand: The Hindu view of Art. The whole
essay can be read with very much profit.
few intense moments: but it is these moments that really stand for art experience. In a sense we may recognise the degrees of artistic purity in different forms of art like sculpture, architecture, music etc. What is the art in which there will be the least possibility of the difference between the experient and the experienced object of beauty? Schopenhauer considers music as the purest form of art because it is the most "objectless" art. And all other arts, in fact, aspire to reach the state of music within their own special media.

Further in aesthetic experience there is no difference between an object and a quality. This difference along with the relation that bridges the difference is vital to the very nature of discursive thought; while the very nature of beauty consists in the perfect fusion of the non-perceptual concept with a percept. Yet there is something in it analogous to the relation. But this relation is not the one that is necessitated by the division which is logically prior to the relation, but it is there being determined by the very form of the work of art, expressing itself in the forms of harmony, rhythm and balance.

Since this relation is or is determined by the very form of the work of art, it does not refer to anything beyond its own universe. Therefore every art experience is individual and the question of verifying what it asserts within its own universe from an external standard is not admitted. Yet the work of art asserts something and
and the proof of the assertion is assertion itself which is aesthetic experience. This self-completeness is absent in any logical assertion. For, in logic all our assertions are conditioned by the mode, the quality, the quantity and other conditions which themselves are conditioned by other conditions. But one may persist and ask: Is the truth of the aesthetic experience verifiable from the practical point of view? We can say that it is an absurd question; for even the conclusions of discursive thought are not verifiable from the practical point of view. How can we verify practically that the problem of the relation between things and qualities leads us to a bundle of naughty contradictions? For the "practical" point of view, the analysis of a thing by thought at the philosophical level is as much a mystery as the truth-assertion in a work of art.

There is a sense in which aesthetic knowledge can be considered superior to the purely epistemic knowledge. There are certain problems like the problem of evil, the problem of the tragedy of really good men etc., which cannot be satisfactorily solved by logical analysis. The analysis of logic may be argumentatively sound, but it cannot convince us, it cannot make us reconcile ourselves with the existence of these facts of life. But all the ugliness of our practical life, its horrors and tribulations are made bearable and even the worst of the cruel will find our sympathy only in the aesthetic experience. Though we grant the distinctness of the ethical and the
aesthetic spheres, we should recognise that beyond a certain height each tries for some justification from the other.

So where logic fails to justify certain moral phenomena, morality seeks its justification in art. Hence we may say that "the aesthetic experience is above all other types or forms of experience or knowledge, it is that to which the others lead up, in which they are resolved, and in which they find their reality. It is the unification and reconciliation of them. Its features and functions are those which are attributed to the absolute, immediacy, the fusion of relations, self-subsistence or individuality, the character of a universe, the synthesis of subject and object, subject and predicate, appearance and reality, the one and many, truth and error, good and evil."22

§ 8. AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE AND REALITY

The description that we gave of the nature of aesthetic knowledge appears that it is the description of the nature of reality taken en masse. And because of this similarity one may be tempted to identify reality with aesthetic experience. Many persons including some philosophers like Schelling and some overenthusiastic artists and art critics have done so. But we cannot in our regard

and appreciation for art, lose our critical sense and make such a hasty identification. In fact this problem is a complicated one; for even to say that reality is nothing but aesthetic experience, we should know the nature of reality and the arguments which make us believe that reality is this and nothing else; and to say that reality and aesthetic experience are distinct, the knowledge of the nature of reality is quite necessary. Since this is a problem too big for us now to divert to, we will take it on the basis of what we discussed earlier (Ch. III & V) that the nature of reality exhibits the nature of the ideal of coherence. Now, it should be observed that though thought aims at complete coherence, it cannot as such realize the ideal of perfect coherence. For the ideal of coherence is to become one individual complete whole. But though thought aims at it, because of its discursive nature, it cannot realize the complete oneness which is the consummation of coherence. Whereas the same is realized in the aesthetic experience. We have to recognize that in the idealistic thought, truth, beauty and goodness are values and reality is at the ground of all these values and hence the inner nature of all these values is conceived in terms of one single principle. And it follows that this principle must have its ground in reality. It is true that beauty realizes the nature of this principle more completely than truth; but only because this, we cannot identify beauty with reality. Reality is beautiful, it is also true and good. But it is so in the sense that it is the
ground of all these.

In the Indian tradition music is considered to be nādabrahma and literature śabdabrahma and in the same way each art is called Brahma in terms of its medium. These words drive home the truth we are trying to express. Music reveals to us the Brahman in the form of Nāda and literature reveals to us the Brahman in the form of Śabda. But Brahman is beyond these forms.

There is another difficulty which we have to recognise: If Reality or Absolute is identified with beauty, we are reducing reality to a pluralism of the worst kind; for, we have a number of works of art; and we cannot reduce all works of art into one. How can Macbeth of Shakespeare be identified with Sakuntala, though both are works of art? Each aesthetic experience is a self-complete moment, without having any relation with the other. Yet each exhibits or reveals the essential nature of reality. Hence "actual aesthetic objects are only types of absolute or partial revelations of it." 23

§ 9. CAN INTELLECTUAL KNOWLEDGE BE BEAUTIFUL?

We shall complete this chapter by briefly referring to another question we asked in the beginning: Is discursive thought characterised by the nature of beauty? The answer to this question has been explicitly suggested in many contexts. Beauty has been distinguished from perception and both these are distinguished from concepts.

When a non-perceptual concept becomes indistinguishably fused with a percept, the result is beauty. But pure thought is concerned with concepts and their interrelations; so thought cannot retain its essential nature when a concept becomes fused in a work of art. In fact a concept cannot consciously enter and make home in a work of art. Further, while pure thought is relational, discursive and dual, beauty is non-relational (in the discursive sense of the term), unitary and of the nature of oneness. Hence the truth of pure thought cannot be beautiful in the aesthetic sense of the term.

Yet we find some similarity. When a scientist visualises before himself the whole expanse of the highest law of a science, like that of gravitation or evolution, this picture—which is undoubtedly a scientific picture has something of the nature of beauty. But it is only a matter of similarity between the two. When a scientific theory is concretely visualised before the mind of the scientist, this visualisation itself is imaginative. Here we have to distinguish between the creative imagination in art and in science. In art, imagination stands neither for idle fancy nor for sweet recollection but for the integrating principle of our deepest feelings and emotions. While in science though we say that imagination plays a great role in framing the hypothesis, it is only a flash of suggestion by the facts; in it, there is a sudden movement of inference, a discovery of a universal.
Moreover the concepts of science are of the understanding and so they are determined at every step. They lack the freedom which is essential for the aesthetic imagination.

Yet we hear the mathematicians saying: "the beauty of numbers". What do they mean by it? Is it a feeling of equilibrium and harmony when they visualize the whole scheme of numbers as far as they can do? If the adjective "beauty" can be applied to numbers in this sense, it can be added to any science when it is clearly visualized. But it is a loose way of using the term "beauty".

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