CHAPTER III

TRUTH AND BEAUTY AS HARMONY.

§ 1. THE ORIGIN OF THE THEORY:

In our study of truth and beauty as imitation, we found that this view suffers various contradictions. We found that if we accept imitation as the test of truth and beauty, it at once creates an unbridgeable chasm between the knowing mind and the thing to be known, and the mind that experiences beauty and the object that possesses beauty. And it reduces mind to a state of tabula rasa. Moreover, if the notion of imitation is pressed to its logical conclusion it ceases to be imitation in the sense in which it should be understood, but it comes to express that the same principle is manifested both in the original and in the image. Further, we do not find in advanced sciences, like higher mathematics any actual object corresponding to it.

We also found that the view that truth and beauty are only instruments cannot serve as either the criterion of truth or of beauty; for it reduces both truth and beauty to mere functions; it reduces them to changing concepts as it denies any lasting value to either. Further, we noted, that this theory reduced both the intellect and the imagination to the state of being just subservient to our practical interest and thus denies the scope of our pursuits of truth and beauty just for their own sake; which pursuits are essential preconditions of all philosophical knowledge and aesthetic experience; which,
again, is disinterested intellectual pursuit and imaginative experience.

These logical and aesthetic difficulties suggest to us another theory—a theory which in its different forms of applicability serves as the criterion of both truth and beauty. The errors, the imitation, and instrumental theories of truth and beauty commit, are due to the fact that they search the nature of truth and beauty somewhere outside the nature of the thinking and imagining mind. But in fact "truth is the object (goal) of thinking"¹ and in the same way beauty is the object of imagination and hence the nature of truth and beauty must be sought in the nature of thought and imagination respectively. The imitation and the instrumental theories neglect the very source of truth and beauty and try to find them elsewhere: in the correspondence between the object which is outside the copying mind; and the instrumental theory searches them only in the practical effects of things. So, in order to find the nature of truth and beauty we should analyse the nature of cognitive situation and imaginative activity. We shall first analyse the cognitive situation and follow the suggestion of this analysis and then proceed to see whether an analysis of our imaginative activity leads us to a similar position.

§ 2. THE ANALYSIS OF THE COGNITIVE SITUATION AND THE ILLICITATION OF NEGATION:

Whenever we have conflicting impressions of a thing, we at once judge that all these impressions as such cannot be true; either all of them are false or all except one are false. We noted in our chapter on the imitation as truth and beauty that the object of knowledge cannot be outside our knowing consciousness. We receive various stimuli from objects and these stimuli (and objects thereby) will become part of our consciousness. Sometimes there will be conflicts among these very stimuli themselves, or there will be contradiction between our old stock of knowledge and the new piece that tries to be a part of it. In such cases we become keenly conscious of the nature of truth and we dismiss the conflicting impressions or ideas as false. In other words we say that self-contradiction is the mark of falsity.

Now the question arises: If self-contradiction is the mark of falsity, can we say that the nature of truth is merely negative? Can we define truth as that which is not contradictory? Can there not be, in our mental field ideas without contradicting the others, but simply co-existing?

But in fact there cannot be anything like a mere negative principle. Nor can there be anything like passive co-existence. If two things exist side by side, each without contradicting the other, still they are occupying different spatial points and from the point of view of spatial
relation, they are consistent with each other. Truth, then, is not merely negative. When we use the concept of contradiction to describe the nature of falsity, we may use the concept of consistency as the description of the nature of truth. As a tentative definition, we may say that truth is that which is self-consistent. Though we cannot fully understand this definition at this stage, we will gradually come to know its nature and wider implications with a number of examples and by trying to answer some of the criticisms levelled against this definition. But before that, we have to make our position justifiable when we say that since contradiction is the mark of falsity, consistency can be the mark (or nature) of truth. This raises a fundamental question: can we infer a positive principle from a negative one?

The answer to this question may be found in the analysis of the nature of the negative judgment. In a judgment that is not Y, a certain predicate is suggested to the given subject or reality and the suggested predicate is not accepted by the latter. Now the question arises: in virtue of what, the subject does not accept the suggested predicate? We may say that the subject X has a character M which is not compatible with Y. By this we do not mean that the character M is explicitly known in all cases of negative judgment. In fact in almost all the negative judgments that we make, we really do not know the real feature that makes the predicate incompatible with the subject. When I say that the building over there is not the university college I need not know which building it is; I am
saying it is not the university college, because I know the shape, size, appearance etc., of the university college and since I do not find any of them in the given subject -- the yonder building -- I say it is not the university college. It is wrong to thrust in all cases the burden of finding the positive feature or character on the shoulder of the man who makes the negative judgment. But here our enquiry is not about any one particular negative judgment but about the form of negation and whether there can be negation without some affirmative basis. Hence whether the character "M" is explicitly known to me or not, nevertheless it is there. And in all negative judgments, this positive character is indispensable; or, we may say, a positive character is logically an indispensable condition by which negation takes place.

But this does not mean that we are reducing negation to the state of affirmation. In affirmative judgment we are able to attribute the content directly to the real itself, for the content in fact belongs to the given reality. But what the negation begins with is an attempt on the given reality, it is an attempt to qualify it in a certain way. "And in the consciousness of this attempt is implied not only the suggestion that is made but to subject to which that suggestion is offered."² While in affirmation the predicate or the content is accepted by the subject without directly implying any negation, in the case of negation some

affirmation is directly implied. No doubt, as Spinoza said, in a sense all affirmation is determination which is another form of negation. But in the act of affirmation itself negation is not directly and immediately implied. For negation is the negation of something that is suggested, "as, so to speak, a candidate for a place in a judgment already framed." Hence "in the scale of reflection negation stands higher than mere affirmation. It is in one sense more ideal, and it comes into existence at a later stage of the development of the soul." This gives us a clear answer to the question whether affirmation is prior to negation or negation is prior to affirmation. Affirmation does not presuppose negation. Even when we accept the dictum of Spinoza, an act of affirmation denies the other contestant qualities; i.e., affirmation is first made and consequent to it or posterior to it the negation (of the other contestant predicates) is implied. But negation presupposes some affirmation. But as we have already noted, that which the negation presupposes is only a suggested affirmation and not a real affirmation. For the negate a real affirmation is to deny some content which actually belongs to the subject; The function of the judgment, whether negative or affirmative, is to say what content really belongs to the given subject. Affirmation directly does this function. But negation negates an inappropriate or false candidate and thereby serves as a critical test and paves the

way for another affirmation. After the negation is made, another affirmation might or might not be actually made; but the negation itself very implicitly suggests the possibility of a genuine affirmation.

Here a question may be asked: All cases of affirmation either implicitly or explicitly involve some selection. When I say the rose is red, out of a number of colour qualities I have selected one colour namely 'red' and affirmed it of the given subject. Does not the selection of the one deny the others? For, to select is to affirm the selected and to reject the others. Therefore, the question may be pressed, whether even affirmative judgment does not presuppose the idea of a negative relation.

This question is only another way of putting the dictum of Spinoza. In fact all affirmation presupposes the idea of a negative relation; it does so because the predicates that are actually there are too many for the given subject. In all judgments, the subject is reality, but in every judgment only a part of the reality is taken, and we cannot affirm of that part all the predicates which belong to reality in its entirety. Hence the arising of the idea of a negative relation. But as Bosanquet says: "The fact seems to be that affirmation presupposes the idea of negative relation in general, while negation presupposes the idea of a corresponding affirmative relation in particular." What negation presupposes is only the idea of a corresponding

affirmative relation as judged true.

Thus in the beginning, affirmation is not only prior to negation but it serves to make the negation possible. But negation also has its place in knowledge. As reality becomes for us an articulated system, the value of negation also becomes greater and greater and finally its value stands on a par with that of affirmation. Thus in the developed stage of reflection affirmation and negation are like the two edges of the same knife; and each involves the other.

In this sense all genuine negation may be called significant negation as distinguished from what Bosanquet calls bare negation. A judgment, such as 'soul is not red' or 'virtue is not hot' is not a negative judgment in the genuine sense of the term; for, here the suggested predicates not only do not belong to the subjects, but they are not qualified to stand at least as candidates for that subject. But in the judgment 'this book is not black', the negated predicate may not be accepted by this book, but it may be accepted by another book. It is qualified at least to the extent it can stand as a possible predicate. The difference between a significant negation and a bare negation is, the former yields or positively suggests some fresh piece of knowledge while the latter does not suggest any. That is to say, when we say 'the rose is not black', at least this tells us what the rose is not; in this sense, every judgment is an act of making our idea specified with

as much of pointedness as possible. In this example, black, white etc., say N predicates can stand as possible candidates for rose. And our negative judgment more definitely located the problem by eliminating at least one unacceptable candidate. One may give a different interpretation even to a bare negative judgment as 'the soul is not red' and say that colour cannot be applied to the soul as it is incorporeal etc. But in this case it becomes a significant negation. We must note the significance is nothing but the meaning which is a matter of how we understand a thing.

Negation in other words means otherness or difference. The question whether negation is absolute in itself or whether it is relative to something or things is basically a question whether reality is one coherent whole or it is simply a name that stands for an innumerable disuntary pieces of existence. Reality is a system (of course as we understand it with our discursive thought), but it is not a system of bare identity but one which actively unites various aspects. These aspects are distinct from one another; i.e., they exclude or negate each other. But this negation is simply the negation of a certain content which is offered to reality in a certain relation; and what is negated is that relation in which the given content is offered. It is negated in that relation, for there is some other content which rightly stands in that relation. Negation in this scheme serves as a regulator maintaining each content's right place and preventing any content from standing in the wrong relation. Thus the idea of negation as Bosanquet
maintains involves the idea of a whole. Negation in its completest significance has a greater advantage over affirmation. While all affirmation is a determination which means exclusion, negation can serve as a higher affirmation but without being a determination. It is in this sense that the Upaniṣads describe Brahman in negative terms.

Summarising our discussion of this section we may say that negative judgment negates a suggested predicate to the subject and hence it presupposes an attempted affirmation. All significant negation (and in logic that is the only negation with which we are concerned) marks a development in our knowledge. Negation stands in a higher place in the scale of consciousness. Further, negation implies a whole and its function is as important as that of affirmation.

To return to the main line of the argument of this chapter: we found that contradiction is the nature of falsity and, we argued that, hence consistency (or coherence) is the nature of truth. The objection that we set before ourselves was: can we pass on to a positive principle from the truth of a negative principle? And now, we can conclude that consistency or coherence can be accepted as the nature of truth. In the words of Bradley, "our standard denies inconsistency, and therefore asserts consistency."\(^3\)

§ 3. MEANING OF COHERENCE: EPISTEMIC & AESTHETIC:

In the preceding section we saw the validity of holding that coherence is the nature of truth and that coherence

---

7. See, Principles of Individuality and Value. p.44.
8. Appearance and Reality. p.139.
is implied in the principle of contradiction with the help of which we can find out falsity. This is because coherence is the very nature of the development of our thought. When our cognitive activity is obstructed by any sort of inner rift, it tries by the force of its own inherent nature to overcome the rift and thus it exhibits in its purposive ideal the nature of coherence. Though we have not clearly studied the nature of coherence as yet, we shall for the present divert our attention and see whether a similar, if not the same, activity can be found in the working of the imagination. Before embarking upon this, we will do well to say, in order to clear the possible misunderstanding, that we do not equate the function of the intellect with that of the imagination. We maintain that both of these activities fulfil distinct purposes and hence there is much difference in the details of their activities. But what we want to show is, just as we saw that a certain imbalance is felt whenever our cognitive activity is disturbed by self-contradiction or contradiction with other pieces of knowledge (in fact both of these are the same from the point of view of knowledge as a whole), so also our imaginative experience gets disturbed if there is an inner contradiction within its activity. We have also to note here that imaginative experience is not altogether a new kind of experience completely divested of the nature of intellectual experience. If it were not a fact, our attempt to discover the similarity between the two forms of experience would not be wise. The fact is, just as in any strictly logical (or scientific) thinking, much of imagination then we are ordinarily aware
of will be active, so also in imaginative (i.e. aesthetic) activity, the intellectual elements are there in a different form. But postponing the details of this observation for treatment in a later chapter (Ch.VIII.) we shall now concentrate on our main question: Can we find anything in aesthetic experience corresponding to contradiction in intellectual experience, and does this contradiction imply a positive aesthetic criterion as contradiction in intellectual experience does imply in its sphere? Our answer is, yes to both the questions.

Most briefly and tentatively we may describe aesthetic experience as imaginative experience. But this imaginative experience which we speak of in aesthetics should be distinguished from various other types of our mental activity, which are loosely called imaginative in ordinary language. Thus even day-dreaming and random remembrance of some bits of past experience are also called imagination. But in aesthetics, imagination stands for an activity governed by definite conditions, it being unique by virtue of the medium in which or through which imagination functions; and it also stands for a particular form of the activity. Thus we find certain distinction between a lyric and a short story, a fairy tale and a modern drama. But despite these distinctions, the standard with which we always evaluate each of these is the presence of consistency of imagination.

Every work of art stirs our imagination and sets it in its creative course and the mode in which our imagination should take place is also directed by the work of art itself. Thus when we read a tragedy or a novel, or listen to a
musical composition, etc., the tone of our imaginative development is determined by a unique particular mood and it at once creates a logic of its own. And as long as this tone and mood are maintained, our experience continues uninterruptedly. But when there is any obstruction in its course, we are at once disturbed and the unity of our aesthetic experience is broken. But the imagination which is set in motion looks forward for a consistent course of development, whose force is dimly felt by the force at its starting point.

To take examples: when we are witnessing a modern drama, if a fairy kidnaps the hero or the heroine; when we are witnessing a fairy tale the prince drives a motor car, we are disturbed. When a Rāga is being sung by a good singer, the tonal movement develops with a balance of its own. In the start the tabalji gives us a certain balancing form of time structure and unconsciously our imagination works in accordance with that structure. But if in the middle, he produces any beat which cannot be reconciled with the original structure, a trained ear gets rudely disturbed. We say that a certain picture is a failure because it has not maintained the equilibrium in its volume or harmony in its colour scheme. In all these cases the failure indicates a certain inconsistency (or contradiction which is a more appropriate word). Here we experience the inconsistency because the mode of the experience demands consistency and its demand is not fulfilled. But the consistency demanded in the aesthetic experience is not the same as that demanded in the intellectual activity.
Our point is: whenever imagination gets disturbed, it is due to certain inconsistency, inconsistency with its starting point, with its own self-created rules. Imaginative activity is a purposive activity, its purpose being its own satisfaction in a play of harmonious development. Every aesthetic experience starts when the imagination is stirred up, but the stirred up imagination develops in a certain way, reaches an acme and subsides in the end in a way consistent with its start and the course of its development. And the whole process is governed by its own principles and if there is anything inconsistent within itself, then alone we are conscious of the wrong. Just as our sense of falsity in thinking makes us to reflect on the nature of truth, so also our sense of imaginative disturbance or "imaginative contradiction"—which may be called ugly—makes us reflect upon the nature of beauty. To put the same fact in a different way: the awareness itself of ugliness dimly implies the nature of beauty.

In the previous section we dealt in some detail with the question whether we can infer an affirmative principle from a negative one. Here also the same kind of question may be asked. But we need not dwell on this question because it is by following the logical principle—that a negative principle implies an affirmative one—that we held that coherence can be the nature of truth; and by the same kind of reasoning, we can say that coherence can also be the nature of beauty.

Here a word with regard to the terminology. The word coherence is constantly used in logic and it is not so
prevalent in the terminology of art-criticism. And because intellect has certain peculiar conditions of its own, which cannot be found in imagination and imagination has certain peculiar conditions which cannot be found in intellect, when we say that coherence can be the test of beauty, it should not create the confusion that we are ignoring the distinctive features of both the activities. The terms used in art-criticism are harmony, unity, wholeness etc. So, generally we shall use the word 'harmony' in the aesthetic context while reserving the word 'coherence' for the epistemic context. But even if the words are interchanged in our usage, it does not do any harm as long as we are conscious of the distinction that we recognise between the two activities.

We shall now proceed to explain the nature of these principles—coherence and harmony—in some detail; and, for the sake of clarity of exposition and discussion, we shall treat them separately, keeping in view the distinction between the two. We may begin with epistemic coherence.

§ 4. NATURE & CHARACTERISTICS OF COHERENCE: EPISTEMIC:

In the beginning of this chapter we remarked that if a correct view of the nature of truth can be formulated, it must have its base in the very nature of our thinking. All valid thought is governed by one fundamental principle, which we have called the principle of coherence. In the words of Prof. Joachim, coherence may be described in the simplest possible manner, as 'anything is true which can be conceived.'

It is true because, and in so far as it can be conceived. Conceivability is the essential nature of truth." In this description, the word conceivability must be understood in all the strictness of its meaning. It may be said that it is possible to conceive such mythical creatures as mermaids or such fantastic ideas as that the people on the opposite side of our globe are hanging down from the earth. But this is a very loose way of understanding the word "to conceive". Any imaginary idea that springs up in one's mind is not to conceive it in the logical sense of the term. In fact, though it is possible to imagine a mermaid, it is impossible to conceive it logically. For, the internal structure of the body of a fish and that of a human head are simply incompatible. If we start with the head of a human creature, it is impossible to conceive and build up a body other than human. In the same way, if one does not have any knowledge of the principle of gravitation and the meaning of space etc., one may mistake his up-side-down men as conceivable. But for a man with the knowledge of these rudiments of science, it is impossible to conceive it. To conceive in the strict sense of the term is to function with thought so that any sort of self-contradiction is avoided or overcome.

When we use the word "conceive", we should avoid the associations that the word thinking has gained in the middle ages. Failing to note their own implications, our textbooks on logic make the distinction between inductive and deductive thinking, and define the former as thinking on the basis of facts and the latter as thinking on the basis
of certain assumptions. But this distinction though done for the purpose of study, gives the impression that there can be inductive thought apart from the deductive and vice versa. But no fact is purely deductive or purely inductive: Even the most theoretical higher mathematics should refer to facts at their roots and a science that follows purely empirical method also assumes certain general principles. The point we have to note in this connection is: When we say that a thing which is conceivable is true we mean that a factual falsity cannot be correctly conceived.

We may also say that a thing which can be conceived does or should exist. When Descartes said "to think is to exist", he was perhaps dimly anticipating a theory of truth the full implication of which he did not realize. To think is to think about or on something and this something may be an immediate (present) fact of experience or a past fact which is also of experience. Anyway, to think is to reflect upon experience. If the present thought or experience conflicts with our past thoughts or experience, it is the inner need of our thought to remove the conflict and to organise our own experience into a system. In this way conceivability means systematic coherence which can also be described as a significant whole. The best example of such a whole can be found in any system of reasoned knowledge like a branch of science or a system of philosophy. Every science sets before itself the task
of organising a certain aspect of all the phenomena of nature into a unitary system so that all the phenomena of that aspect can be explained in terms of one basic principle. Even if a science makes use of more than one principle, the other principles can be derived from or explained in terms of one basic principle. In this way the object of scientific thinking is to construct a system.

Constructing a system means to organise the mass of materials and to interpret their significance in such a way that there should not be any inner inconsistency in our interpretation. The operating of this ideal of one unitary principle can be found in any system of knowledge. Even history, which we commonly do not call by the name science, is based on this ideal of self-consistency in interpreting the wildly conflicting suggestions of the materials and documents that are unearthed. History is nothing but an attempt to enter into a past world which is reconstructed by the mind of the historian. The various methods that the historian employs, like the Chronological method, the method of reading the inscription etc., are all different devices to bring the greatest possible consistency in one's account of the past.

Here we may put a relevant question the answer to which will make our account of truth more clear. We have said so far that conceivability or being a self-consistent system is what our thought aims at. Granting that thought always aims at building up a self-consistent system, what guarantee is there for us to say that the self-consistent system of thought in itself constitutes truth? In other
words, can mere consistency be the nature of truth? There may be some self-consistent pieces of experience like a dream, where within the dream world, all that happens is possible or like a fiction where within the world created by the author, everything that occurred is possible. Further, it may be asked, is the nature of self-consistency advocated by the coherence theory the same as that which was advocated by the syllogistic pattern of formal logic? For the syllogism of formal logic, whatever be the material on which thought functions, it should function in a certain fixed form and the syllogism itself is not concerned with the truth or otherwise of its major premise—i.e., the material truth of the argument. It is only when we correctly reduce the given argument to the syllogistic form, that it can exhibit whether the argument is valid or invalid.

But here the question arises: who should reduce the argument to the correct syllogistic form and who should test the material validity of the major premise? This is a lifeless conception of consistency, "the analysis of low-grade thinking." In fact all thinking is a living process. It is true, credit should be given to formal logic when it emphasises the common feature exhibited by our thought and tries to show a common pattern of our thought. But along with this merit it perhaps unconsciously committed the error of holding that the

unity as an abstract common feature can be found in the actual process of thinking by stripping it of its concrete differences. In fact syllogism is not the only valid mode of reasoning. As sciences advance and the scientists develop newer and newer methods of discovery, different forms of thinking develop. What we emphasise is, coherence which we are speaking of is not the bare self-consistency of formal logic and it is not limited to any definite form of thinking. Nor is it possible for us to make any abstract pattern of coherence and show, "lo, this is what we mean." Coherence is what we find in any developed stage of thinking where all the parts of our knowledge harmoniously imply the given proposition and the given proposition also harmoniously, but may not be explicitly, suggests the other parts. In this sense our knowledge is an organised, individual experience, a significant whole, "self-fulfilling and self-fulfilled." "Its organization is the process of its self-fulfilment, and the concrete manifestation of its individuality." 11 In this connection we have to understand the phrase "self-fulfilling and self-fulfilled" as that our knowledge and its organization (in fact both are one) is not a finished product which will not change any more, but it is a living and a developing whole. In the same way when we describe it as a whole we should not understand it as a whole with various fixed and determinate parts; for in this sense,

again, the coherence might be wrongly understood as a finished and unchanging pattern. In genuine coherence the parts are only relatively distinguished; but as knowledge develops the so called parts vanish and new distinctions will arise. "The coherence—if we call it a 'form'—is a form which through and through interpretes its materials; and they—if we call them 'materials'—are materials which retain no inner privacy for themselves in independence of the form." 12.

The examples of a consistent dream and a fiction warrant us to note a new character of coherence. We shall not speak about the consistency of the fiction, for it is a fiction and as such its field lies outside the function of thought proper. 13 Within itself a dream may have consistency. But it is not consistent with the other phases of our experience, either before or after. Floating in the air above our earth freely with this physical body and without any scientific device is possible in a dream; but it contradicts the principle of gravitation which governs all other such situations of our experience. It may be asked whether our waking experience itself is false and the dream experience true. What is the standard with which we can decide the claims of the two? In fact the standard of deciding between the claims of the two, must be within the nature of thought itself and it cannot be

12. Ibid. p. 77.
13. It is the consistency of imagination that we find in a fiction. Whether it has in any way any relation with the consistency of thought proper, we shall see in Chapter VIII.
brought from outside. Among the two, which is more inclusive? To accept the dream as true is to deny the truth of the entire of experience of all our life. Hence we decide that the knowledge which includes within itself the greater parts as against the lesser is true. And further, it also tries to include the lesser parts in such a way that the opposition between the two is overcome. Truth is a whole, and it cannot be understood without, implicit or explicit, reference to the whole. When the scientist decides, for example, between two conflicting hypotheses, he prefers that hypothesis which will explain and include more facts than the other does. In this way, the attempt of every science is to grow as wide and inclusive or comprehensive as possible. Within the aspect with which a particular science deals, if it consistently includes all the facts, it is true. But its truth is limited to its field only. Mechanics or Thermodynamics which is true of physical field cannot be applied to psychological field. If another science develops which includes both the physical and the psychological fields, that new science will be accepted by the scientists and two different principles which were limited to their particular fields will be discarded. Inclusiveness, then, is another mark of coherence. "Perfect truth---- must realize the idea of a systematic whole. And such a whole 'possesses' essentially the two characters of coherence and comprehensiveness."\[14\] In fact,  

Italics ours.
as Bradley asserts "the two principles of coherence and comprehensiveness are one." This assertion may be explained as follows:

When we take any object, we find that it does not satisfy us if we take it only as it comes to us. We are forced to go outside that first character in which the thing comes to us, and we will ask "What, Why and How?" Hence we must take our first object as included with something else in some wider reality: Thus there is a demand for comprehensiveness.

If we want to know the object itself and not something else, how shall we join it with its conditions beyond itself, but which nevertheless come to us? We should treat them as different; but here a contradiction arises. Hence what you want is connection and implication, where the object is its own self as contributing x to a reality beyond itself. That now is coherence and comprehensiveness is one. "The growth of knowledge consists in getting the conditions of the predicate into the subject. The more conditions you are able to include, the greater is the truth."  

The tendency of knowledge or thought is to carry us beyond any given piece of itself by exhibiting a character which throws light upon further and different contexts, and receives light from them. Truth which is comprehensive is described by the idealist epistemologists as

15. Ibid. p.223.
16. Footnote to p.227 in Ibid.
Individual. It is individual because it does not depend upon any other external condition. Individuality consists in self-dependence, or containing all the necessary proofs within itself. It is this inclusiveness that gives the nature of individuality to coherence. Bosanquet argues that the ideal of truth is to render experience free from contradiction and with this goal truth grows more and more inclusive. He calls this quality of truth "Concrete Universality." But he clearly makes the distinction and says that the word universality must not be mistaken for a class name. Concrete universality does not depend upon the number of subjects which share a common predicate as class names stand for, but it implies the number of predicates that can be attached to a singular subject. "It is the degree in which a systematic identity subordinates diversity to itself, or, more truly, reveals itself as the spirit of Communion and totality, within which identity and difference are distinguishable but inseparable points of view."19

§ 5. NATURE & CHARACTERISTICS OF COHERENCE: AESTHETIC

Before we can see in detail whether the essential nature of coherence can be seen in any work of art, we may very briefly recapitulate our discussion about coherence. We noted that if we search the nature of truth within the nature of our thinking itself, we should accept the nature

18. See, The Principle of Individuality and Value. Ch.II.
of thought (needless to repeat 'valid thought') as the nature of truth. Now, valid thought exhibits the marks of (1) Freedom from contradiction which can be expressed as significant consistency; (2) Inclusiveness or comprehensiveness; therefore (3) a whole, which makes it (4) Individual. We may further note that the various terms that we used throughout our discussion like, significant, consistency, inclusiveness or comprehensiveness, being a whole, individuality—are just different ways of describing one and the same principle namely the principle of coherence.

Now, we may come to the most important part of our enquiry: whether we can explain a good work of art in terms of the description that we gave to coherence as a logical principle? or, to put the matter in a different way: What is the nature of aesthetic experience? Just as we did in explaining the nature of logical coherence, here also we may start with the possible description of aesthetic experience. Our description is: Aesthetic experience is the imaginative integration of experience. Now, what do we mean by the phrase "imaginative integration of experience"? We may explain this by taking ordinary facts from life. Suppose on one side of the table there are a dozen books piled up and in the centre a lamp is kept and the other side of the table is vacant. It becomes rather hard for us to appreciate the arrangement. At once we say that it looks all right if six books are put on the other side, with the lamp in the centre. We say that it looks all-
right before we actually see whether the arrangement will be so. While choosing our cloth we know the tie of which colour will suit the coat even before we actually knot it. This points to the fact that imagination, left alone, will develop or integrate experience in a way, according to a certain principle of its own. In this process of integration the original materials of experience will undergo a qualitative transformation. And as the result of this, the whole of the new product (product, not in the mechanical sense) will gain a significance or value which we call beauty.

We may take another example. Suppose a man is sorrowful due to the death of his beloved. Here sorrow is a particular emotion possibly of irrecoverable loss. But it may not mean anything to other persons. If the same sorrow is imaginatively integrated, it results into an aesthetic experience or a work of art. But the sorrow retaining the quality of a particular man's sorrow cannot become integrated. The case of this man who lost his beloved—this sorrowful moment can be integrated if it is taken in a wider context in which the other incidents and events etc., emotionally contribute to make this moment intenser. That is, with this moment as the centre, a story or a profound tragedy may be written; or a musical note may be composed; or a fine lyric may be written. But in this case, the original sorrow—the particular sorrow in a particular man's particular moment—is left behind and a great many new things are included. Consequently it is stripped of its particularity. And it is by stripping of its par-
-ticularity that it gains an enduring value. Says Bosanquet: ".... Say you are glad or sorry at something, in common life your sorrow is a more or less dull pain, and its object—what it is about—remains a thought associated with it. There is too apt to be no gain, no advance, no new depth of experience promoted by the connection. But if you have the power to draw out or give imaginative shape to the object and material of your sorrowful experience, then, it must undergo a transformation. The feeling is submitted to the laws of an object. It must take on permanence, order, harmony, meaning, in short, value."\(^\text{20}\)

In this connection we may take three characteristics that Bosanquet mentions\(^\text{21}\) of the nature of aesthetic experience: (1) Stability (2) Relevance and (3) Commonness or Community—each of which we may explain briefly.

Our particular emotions or feelings are momentarily passing phases. The sorrow of the bereaved cannot remain even for the same man with the same intensity all the time. It becomes stable or gains permanence only when it is imaginatively integrated: i.e., when it is made more inclusive both in extent and depth. But in this process of making it inclusive, imagination is governed by a definite principle which sees to it that unnecessary feelings or extraneous elements do not creep in. When the sorrowful moment of the man's life is developed into a story, only

\(^{20}\) Three Lectures on Aesthetics. p. 7-8.
\(^{21}\) Ibid. p. 5. Bosanquet uses the word 'feeling' where we are using the word 'imagination'. But the real connotation of his word does not differ from that of our word 'imagination.'
such incidents are supplied which and which alone significantly contribute to that moment. "The aesthetic value of a work of art as an integration of feeling is as independent of any artist's subjective idea of what he wanted to do when he was making it, as the cognitive value of a scientific description of fact is independent of a scientist's idea of what he wanted to find when he started observing." 22

If the principle of relevance is transgressed, it results in imaginative imbalance. And lastly, the work of art gains universality of appeal because in the process of the transformation of the emotion of the moment, the entire tone of the creation has become universal: the new emotional tone which is achieved is the basic tone which every individual is capable of feeling, provided certain preliminary training is given. It is in this sense that we ascribe objectivity to works of art.

Here we may diverge a little to observe that these three characteristics—stability, relevance and universality or objectivity—are common to logical coherence also. The simplest and the most rudimentary example of coherence is a judgment where a predicate coheres with a subject. Our experience which is a passing stream is evidently momentary. But our thought "catches" this experience and holds

it and preserves it. This act of preservation takes place in the form of a judgment—an unit of thought, which is also the simplest case of coherence. Now, when this thought develops, it is governed by certain relevancy which may be described as the "Universe of discourse" (we shall note about the nature of this relevancy in detail in a later chapter i.e., Ch.V.). And it universal in the sense—given the material and the point of view—all sane human minds will reach the same conclusion if they think without any error. Without entering into the question, how is universal or necessary judgment possible? We will just note what our discussion points to: our experience is one whole and both thought and imagination, which are the powers that arise from within the experience itself, try to preserve the value of experience. But each preserves it in its own way and the value of each is called distinct. But in doing so each exhibits the same characteristics in the value it preserves: Stability, Relevancy and Commonness or Universality or Objectivity.

Coming to the main line of our discussion, we may note that our description of aesthetic experience as the imaginative integration of experience bears all the characteristics which the logical or intellectual coherence exhibits: significant consistency, inclusiveness, being a whole and individuality. We find these characteristics being similar in both the epistemic and imaginative integrations of experience, because the principle that governs these two forms of integration is the same: Coherence. To put it more clearly: Aesthetic and epistemic (imaginative and
cognitive) integration of experience is governed by two different forms of one and the same basic principle. Therefore both these forms of integration aim at the same kind of realization. But these realizations are determined by certain conditions of their own. Thus, the whole that thought aims to reach is one and one only with regard to the same given facts from the point of view it looks at. Thus if two hypotheses conflict with each other, we are sure that both cannot be true. The ideal of thought in its highest aspiration is to reach one all-inclusive system, one coherent whole which includes all knowledge. But imagination cannot claim this. For, imagination is more autonomous than thought in its nature. What a poet imagined and wrote at one time is complete, it is a whole exhibiting the marks of inclusiveness etc., and it cannot in any way be taken account of in the next imaginative creation of the same poet. As Collingwood says, a poet may sing today that his mistress is a paragon of all virtues and tomorrow he may write that she is the incarnate of all venom and jealousy. As long as both the poems fulfil the demands of imaginative integration, both are aesthetically successful, provided both are taken as two different poems. Thus imagination can create wholes without number. Though it is possible for us to classify world's literature into works of love theme, the theme of patriotism and of jealousy or of suspicion, etc., etc., (in a way such classification has no basis in the spirit of art) each story is different from the other. What is true in the case of literature is equally true of other forms of art like sculpture, paint-
-155-

-ing, music etc., as long as each work of art that we consider is genuine and unique. The point we have to note is, coherence which governs beauty has the possibility of infinite forms while the coherence of logic arms at one ultimate all-inclusive whole.

That the aesthetic and epistemic criteria are basically one and the same principle expressed and conditioned by distinct spheres of our experience will become more clear when we analyse in the next chapter the meaning of some of the most general concepts used by the critics of all the forms of art; concepts like, form, unity, harmony, rhythm, balance, contrast, proportion etc. But before that we may very briefly see the views of some critics and artists about their conceptions of beauty.

Says Tagore: "What in common language we call beauty which is in harmony of lines, colours, sounds or in grouping of words or thoughts, delights us only because we cannot help admitting a truth in it that is ultimate". Because "it helps us to integrate desultory facts in a vision of harmony and then to translate it into our activities for the very joy of its perfection." 23 "Through our sense of truth we realise law in creation, and through our sense of beauty we realise harmony in nature." 24 Here, it is unnecessary to repeat that Tagore recognises that both truth and beauty are two distinct modes in which we realise nature (experience). And he explicitly says that beauty is harmony and he also

23. Contemporary Indian Philosophy. p.35.
says times without number in all his poems and other writings that truth is the finding of unity in all creations. In fact we should recognize that emotion is more powerful than intellect in directing and determining the activities of man and when our life becomes emotionally discordant, the coherence which we reach through thought cannot give lasting solution to our life. So the coherence must be sought to be realized in another manner. "Through art we secure an imaginative realization of tendencies to think and act and feel, which because incompatible with each other or with the condition of our existence cannot find free play in real life."25 "In order for the health of the mind to be restored, the contradictory fact must somehow be reconciled with the mind's presupposition, and the rationality of existence reaffirmed."26

In fact, the synthesis that logical coherence can reach is very much limited in its scope and applicability. For it has to verify itself at every step with the facts. But the synthesis of harmony of art experience is more free than that of logical coherence. The incompatibles in the real life can be made compatible in art. "Hamlet is a great and a mysterious character, who is at once mad and the sanest of geniuses, at once a procrastinator and a vigorous man of action, at once a miserable failure and the most adorable of heroes. The character of Hamlet, like the appearance of his successive impersonators on the stage, is

26. Ibid. p.31. Italics ours.
a matter of make-up". Is it not the art of Shakespeare which has synthesised these glaringly antagonistic qualities? It is this synthetic or integrated picture of experience that art imaginatively presents to us. Whenever there are opposing forces set in society and life, which cause a kind of spiritual disquiet and moral disturbance, it is the business of the artist to make these forces cohere and show harmony and equanimity.

We shall not spend much time in quoting the artists and art critics. It is quite clear by now that both epistemic and aesthetic coherence fulfil the same purpose in different but not mutually exclusive spheres. The business of coherence is to reconcile, synthesise and to bring harmony—harmony of thought in one case and harmony of emotion in the other. In this harmonization it gains the value of permanence, universality and objectivity. In both the spheres the principle exhibits the same marks of inclusiveness, freedom from contradiction and so, being a whole.

While concluding this section, we may ask a question: Is our description of epistemic and aesthetic coherence an adequate definition of what we mean as the nature of truth and beauty? Or what is the precise definition of coherence—in its basic form—in one pithy statement? But we confess we cannot give in one proposition a precise definition of

27. J. Dover Wilson: What happens in Hamlet? Quoted from H. Read: The Philosophy of Modern Art. p.120.
what we mean by coherence in the two spheres of our experience. All the description of it that we noted only goes to explain or illustrate certain marks of the principle operating in the two forms of our experience. To offer a definition of a thing is to treat that thing as a finished product or an unchanging abstract pattern. But as we noted earlier, coherence is a living and developing whole in which the parts are not fixed as determinate constituents. There is not any one definite and fixed form of coherence to which all thought should conform itself; nor is there any one definite and fixed form of harmony which is the inevitable mode of all works of art. In any given situation, the situation seeks its coherence depending upon the facts and the nature of the data; and so also in any aesthetic experience, how emotions are imaginatively made harmonised and the form it takes, depend upon the nature, intensity of emotions and the whole content of the aesthetic experience. So coherence can only be described, it is implied in all our thought and aesthetic experience; it is implied something which should be "cognitively felt" if such a phrase is permitted to mean a sort of apprehension of a governing principle.

With regard to epistemic coherence, Dr. Ewing writes:

"...it is wrong to tie down the advocates of the coherence theory to a precise definition. What they are doing is to describe an ideal that has never yet been completely clarified, but is nonetheless immanent in all our thinking.

It would be altogether unreasonable to demand that the moral ideal should be exhaustively defined in a few words, and the same may be true of the ideal of thought. As with the moral ideal, it may well be here that, while formulae are helpful, they can provide no stereotyped account, and that the only adequate approach is one...... namely a study of what our thought can do at its best by means of numerous examples."

And what is true of epistemic coherence is equally true of its aesthetic counterpart; for the forms of the works of art are never supplied to artists readymade. All that we can do is to observe whether some basic features of the principle are found in any work of art; and beyond that this principle is something which can be "known" by experiencing it.

§ 6. COHERENCE: A CHARACTERISTIC OR A TEST?

At this stage we have to make two points clear: when we say that coherence is the nature of both truth and beauty, do we mean that it is the nature of mere truth and beauty or of reality also? (2) Can we make a distinction between the nature of truth and beauty on the one hand and their test on the other? And if we can make such a distinction, is coherence the former or the latter?

We may deal with the first question first. When we say that coherence is the test of truth and beauty, we also imply that it is the nature of reality. To make a distinction between the essential nature of these two values on the one side and reality on the other is to imply
that there can be truth or beauty without any reference to reality. First we shall consider the question in its relation between truth and reality and then we shall consider the relation between beauty and reality.

It is true, the function of truth is to qualify reality ideally and hence it cannot itself become the subject of the judgment i.e., truth itself cannot become reality. We do not give existential status to truth. But if the essential nature of the subject is different from that of the predicate, how can the latter qualify the former? And in virtue of what common characteristic the predicate can belong to the subject? Again, when we seek coherence in thought, what we actually mean is that we must think in such a way that our thought coheres with the actual nature of existence. The real implication of the law of contradiction is, we should not attempt to qualify reality with a content which belongs to it and a content which does not belong to it in the same respect, in the same relation etc. In other words, we should not think that which does not exist. Metaphysically, contradiction is something which does not exist and epistemologically it is something which is not true. So coherence is not only the nature of truth but the nature of reality. But here it should be noted that we are not reducing reality to a mere relational net of intellectual coherence. But what we are maintaining is: as long as we are trying to understand the nature of reality in terms of thought, we have no other means of peeping into the nature of reality.
than to work out the essential suggestions of the fundamental nature of our thought.

Now, the answer that holds good in the case of the relation between epistemic coherence and the nature of reality holds with equal cogency in the case of aesthetic coherence and the nature of reality. Epistemic coherence gives us a clue to understand the nature of reality while aesthetic coherence helps us to experience or feel imaginatively the nature of reality. Here we may make our answer more clear by putting a question: What do we mean by reality? Is it totally outside our experience? It cannot be, for in that case we cannot give an affirmative answer to this question and suddenly we find ourselves in the difficulties which we found in the preceding chapter. Reality is experience. It may not be your or my experience of this or that particular moment. But it cannot be totally outside the experience of individual persons. The individual's experience is always limited and when we as individuals are conscious of this fact, we want to transcend this limitedness. And the process of transcending may be done either by thought or by imagination. Therefore the very purpose of coherence, either epistemic or aesthetic, is to realize reality. How, then, can the nature of coherence be different from what it aims at realizing? We saw above that in the epistemic application of this principle, to say that the nature of reality and that of this principle are different is absurd. And so will be the result in the case of its aesthetic counterpart also. As Tagore admirably expresses: the standard of reality is "its perfect revelation
in a perfection of harmony" and "it is hurt when there is a consciousness of discord—because discord is against the fundamental unity which is in its centre." 30

The second question that we set before ourselves was: can we make a distinction between the nature and the test of truth and beauty? And if we can do so, is coherence the former or the latter or both? At the outset we will reply that such a distinction cannot be made. For a test implies a standard and the standard can be nothing but the essential principle that governs all genuine cases of whatever we are going to test. And this essential principle is only another phrase to speak its nature. But we shall deal with this question briefly laying emphasis on the epistemetic coherence.

Dr. A. C. Ewing who makes such a distinction accepts coherence as the criterion of truth but holds that it cannot serve as a test of truth. 31 His argument is: A judgment is at once different from and yet dependent for its correctness on the object judged. We may adopt any metaphysical view regarding the ultimate nature of knowledge and reality, but we are forced to admit either openly and consciously or implicitly and unconsciously that whether the judgment is or is not true is determined by its conformity to or discrepancy with the character of that about which we judge. "If a judgment bears a certain relation to its object, it is true, if not it is false, and since

30. Contemporary Indian Philosophy. p.36.
this relation requires a name it has been called correspondence----a true judgment is true of something other than itself----and judgments cannot be true merely of other judgments." Further, Dr. Ewing holds that it is "safest to give up any attempt to explain what correspondence is in terms of any other relation and simply to treat the relation between a true judgment and its object as unique and unanalysable----."33

We need not dwell longer on the aforesaid position of Dr. Ewing. However we may recall what we noted in our criticism of the imitation theory of truth and beauty. We may agree with Dr. Ewing and with realists in general that every judgment speaks something about an object as if the object were different from the thinking mind.34 But when we are seriously discussing about the test of truth, our test of truth must not depend upon an as-if-thing but it must be a measuring rod that practically serves us. Correspondence as a test of truth presupposes that the corresponding object must be known in order that we can see whether it tallies with the judgment. When we already know the object, we know it either correctly or incorrectly; if we know it correctly there is no necessity of seeing again whether it corresponds to knowledge. And also, how do we know that we know it correctly? On the other hand, if we know it incorrectly, in virtue of what special qualification can the act of correspondence set our incorrectness

32. Ibid. p. 201.
33. Ibid. p. 201.
34. The critical realists also hold like this. See Essays in Critical Realism. (c. on Three proofs of existence by Santayana.)
right? And how do we know that our knowledge is incorrect?

All these contradictions arise because we ignore the actual nature of our knowing. To see an object is to judge it as seeing and to verify it again is another act of judging it and to verify each of the detail are cases of making as many number of judgments as we verified. So all that we can search for is whether our earlier judgment corresponds to the later ones. But the use of the word coherence is more natural in this context than to stick up fondly to the word correspondence.

Further, Dr. Ewing knows the difficulty of identifying the relation of correspondence either with external or with internal relation. So he "safely" (to use his own word) proposes to call it unique and unanalysable. This proposal is, we may note and pass on, another aspect of the "as if" which is the main argument for the independent existence of objects.

So far as I know, there is no thinker who has made a similar attempt to accept harmony as the nature of works of art and art experience and at the same time to propose imitation as the test of beauty. Yet, as the aesthetic counterpart of our criticisms of Dr. Ewing's position, we may note that one cannot logically hold that harmony can be the nature of works of art but to see whether a work of art is beautiful, coherence cannot help us and we have to take help from some form or other of the theory of imitation. But we need not dwell long in answering this position except by referring to an earlier chapter which has already dealt with the theory of beauty as imitation.
In conclusion what we maintain in this: We shall not make a distinction between the nature and the test of either beauty or truth. We may make this distinction only if it is necessary for understanding the concepts of truth and beauty in a greater analytical detail. But we should remember that the "test" implies a standard and this standard must be an ideal. And there must not be any discrepancy between the ideal of the standard and that for the sake of which the standard is employed. We maintained that coherence is the nature of truth and beauty and we further maintain that when we test the truth or beauty of any concept or work of art as the case may be, we just try to discern whether the nature of these values is there or not. Judgments may imply, in fact they do imply, an object judged. But to accept this is not to reglapse into an old theory that relegates the test of truth and beauty outside the ideals of thought and imagination respectively.

§ 7. SOME CRITICISMS ANSWERED:

So far we have made our position clear with regard to the principle of coherence. But for a clear understanding of the meaning of the principle in the spheres of thought and imagination, we will do well to set it against some criticisms and try to answer them. In answering them we will naturally make our position more clear and thereby we will strip off various associatory meanings and implications which we did not actually mean. Even the principle does not require them as its essential features. Just as we found that though in their basic nature the logical
coherence and aesthetic harmony are the same, yet they are distinct in their respective ideals and the fulfilment of these ideals. Hence the criticisms that are levelled against the principle in its different spheres of applicability also differ in their mode of attack. Yet, even in the criticisms we find similarity in the critical position and, we shall observe, our answers to the criticisms also are similar, though not identical. First we shall deal with one of the criticisms levelled against this principle in epistemology and then consider its aesthetic counterpart, before we proceed to consider the other criticisms.

The first and the foremost criticism against coherence as the nature and the test of truth is that its ideal of absolute inclusiveness is something impossible for any human being to achieve. For, life is short and knowledge is great and the coherence view says that anything less than the whole is not true. And further, the nature of the system also in our knowledge changes as new and new facts are discovered. In the first case it is not possible to have any knowledge full and genuine and in the second case even truth changes as our idea of system also changes. So the acceptance of this principle leads us to scepticism in the one case and relativism in the other.

These criticisms have some gravity in them but the adverse conclusions which they draw are due partly to the oversweeping way in which they take the principle of coherence, which the principle itself does not claim and partly to the failure to understand the clear position of coherence.
It is true that truth absolute is something which we with our limited human intelligence cannot fully grasp. But it does not prevent us from working with anything less than the absolute truth. In our daily life we are doing with such knowledge. When the village farmer predicts the coming of the rain and the metereologist also does the same, certainly there is all the difference between the two as there is between commonsense knowledge and scientific understanding. But that does not prevent the village farmer from calculating and predicting. Sometimes his expectations may go wrong because of certain marginal conditions. We may illustrate the same with another example: that 2+2=4 is a mathematical fact, the fullest truth of which is not grasped as yet by even the most illum­inated mathematician. For, as the knowledge of the nature and the interrelations of the number system grows, greater and greater significance can be found in the statement 2+2=4. But who on earth can say that he has grasped all the truth of mathematics? Yet even the ordinary people know that 2+2=4 as mathematicians do, though there is difference between the degrees of knowledge of the two.

The fact is: the ideal of absolute system or all-inclusive knowledge does not prevent the smaller piece of knowledge to contain the nature of the ideal truth. However limited our knowledge of the number system be, even in our ordinary knowledge of mathematics, we know that 2+2 will necessarily result in 4, for we know that the number system is such that it cannot be otherwise. To this extent we appreciate the significance of the whole.
The whole, in fact, does not lie somewhere outside the particular pieces of knowledge. It lives and makes the parts to live because the parts are partial wholes and the whole is the fulfilment of the parts.

Again, the way in which we understand the meaning of the whole must be explained more clearly. The whole is not a totality in the physical sense. What do we mean when we say that the principle of relativity is a greater whole than the principle of gravitation? In this example, the former can explain (i.e., include within itself) a greater mass of materials or facts or instances than the latter. But how many particular facts have we tested to prove the relatively greater truth of the former? Does it mean that in the former we have put together a greater number of facts and in the latter a lesser number? Scientific truths consist in their possibility of explaining a wider range of phenomena and in this sense even the confirmed scientific truth does not claim to have actually tested all the particular facts. And this possibility consists only in the fact that the nature of the whole is exhibited in all the particular instances and it is sufficient to analyse and understand clearly some particular instances to know the nature of the whole.

Further to the charge that coherence reduces our knowledge to a state of relativism, our answer is affirmative and we admit it. We admit it, because the nature of human knowledge itself is limited. If we take the history of sciences we observe that one system held to be indubitably true is surpassed by another system and that,
in turn, by one other. It does not mean that the previous systems were completely false, but it only means that they were lesser wholes than the later systems and hence were relatively less true. The coherence theory does not claim that our present system is the system and so the truth. It takes a healthy critical view in holding that as our knowledge advances, the present system may be found to be inadequate and it might be replaced by a still more comprehensive system. Our knowledge of truth in fact does change, and it is relative to the extent of the universe it can include within itself. But it does not mean that truth itself is changing and is relative. When Newtonian system gave place to Einsteinian system, the truth itself did not change, but what we believed to be true was changed into a new belief.

It may be asked here: If we say that truth itself does not change but our knowledge of truth changes, why should our knowledge of truth change? It shows that our knowledge of truth was really not knowledge of truth. So truth is something which is beyond the grasp of our knowledge. Is not this position agnostic?

Again this objection is based on a misunderstanding of what we said so far. When we said that our knowledge of truth changes, it does not mean that our previous knowledge is necessarily false. Newton's system is absolutely false any more than Einstein's system is absolutely true. In fact, both are true, the one exhibiting the ideal of truth—systematic inclusiveness—to a greater extent than the other. If the position of coherence is
charged with agnosticism, what about that of correspond-
dence which claims to verify an object which is by hypo-
thesis totally external to the mind? But the weakness
of the opponent is not the proof of our strength. In
fact the strength of coherence is genuinely positive, but
it never overestimates itself. The history of science
shows that we are on the way to a greater and greater sys-
tem—i.e., to a greater degree of knowledge. While sup-
porting the belief in scientific advance, the coherence
theory refuses to believe that this advance has reached
the end of the road.

"It is absolutistic without dogmatism, and rela-
tivistic without countenancing despair,"35 despair by
claiming to have known the full truth but miserably falling
down because of the impossibility of verification.

We have seen that criticism of unattainable ideal
and relativism cannot be validly maintained against the
epistemological coherence. But as criticisms, though based
on misunderstanding, they can be made against the aesthe-
tic coherence also. One may argue: Since beauty is the
imaginative integration of experience, what is it that
puts a boundary to the development of imagination? Imagi-
nation may start from any given moment, and it may develop
in both ways—toward before and after that moment. In
the example of the death of a man's beloved, the beginning
of the tragic story may begin from his marriage or from

the first day of his love with the tragic heroine or even from his birth. The seed of tragedy may lie in his parentage as in the case of Romeo and Juliet. The death of the heroine may not be the end, for some portion of the story is left incomplete till we know what happens to the hero. But what about the other characters like the mediator, the friends of the hero and the heroine, the servants and even the porter who once carried the luggage of the hero's father when the latter was quite young? In this way where is the end of the story? And how can we mark that the integration of imagination has reached its completion? In other words, does beauty take into account or depend upon the magnitude of the theme or does it not? Like the epistemological coherence, should it not be of the highest magnitude or all inclusive?

The question is really relevant: But we have to point out that though it is possible to develop a story in several ways, the principle of relevance should determine the development of imagination. In Indian poetics it is called *aukitya* which comes from the root *uchha*, which means to suit (Monier's Sanscrit dictionary) but its real implication is: all the elements that exist in the body of a work of art should harmoniously suit with the central *rasa* of the work. In a sense no story is complete and no theme is complete. It is possible to carve a 580 feet high Gomatheswara image than the 58 feet one which is at Shravana Belagola. The only thing is, proportion must be maintained whether it is a 580 feet
one or a 58 feet one. In judging a work of art why it should limit itself to so much only is an irrelevant question and the only relevant question is whether the given work of art maintains its proportion or unity. The concepts of unity, action, time, etc., which we shall study in a little detail in a later context (Ch.IV), are there to determine the limit or the end of the development of imagination in a work of art. The concept of unity is another way of speaking the aesthetic coherence.

Says Pepper: "Most of the works we think of as the greatest are also physically pretty big. The greatest fiction is among novels rather than short stories; the greatest poetry is among epics and dramas rather than sonnets; the greatest pictures are among oils, temperas, and frescoes rather than miniatures; the greatest architectures among tombs, temples and cathedrals rather than domestic houses. Bigness is aesthetically important and to obtain aesthetic bigness a certain amount of physical bigness is likely to be necessary." 36

But the same author goes further and asks: "As between a highly integrated jewel box, however, and a poorly integrated cathedral with a lot of scattered chair, which is the better? When degree of organicity and amount of aesthetic material vary inversely, how does one adjudicate between the standards?...... You already have seen that one object has aesthetically utilized its small amount of aesthetic material to the greatest advantage, and the

other has failed to make the most of the large amount of positive aesthetic values that it has.  

The difference between the epistemic whole and the aesthetic whole is this: there can be only one epistemic whole in a particular field of knowledge, while such a limitation is not there in the aesthetic field. Physical magnitude is an essential indicator of the greater probability of the truth or otherwise of an epistemic whole. But in the case of works of art such a consideration is quite secondary if not totally irrelevant. One may prefer an epic to a lyric because of the width and depth of the former. But this does not mean that the lyric is not beautiful. Each is beautiful or otherwise in its own right and the extent of its magnitude is determined by its own inner principle of harmony.

§ 8. DOES COHERENCE MOVE IN A CIRCLE?

We shall conclude this chapter by treating the theory of coherence both in its epistemic and aesthetic aspects against another criticism. The criticism is: this principle suffers from arguing in a circle. It runs as follows: It may be a scientific system or a work of art, it consists of various elements or parts like a, b, c, etc., upto n. On the coherence theory the truth or the beauty of a rests on b and that of b on c and of c rests again on a. When a's truth or beauty is to be proved, it appeals to c— i.e., by implication it takes b or c to be already proved — i.e., they are already true or beautiful. In

37. Ibid. p. 80–81.
this way all the elements owe their validity to a similar convenient fallacy. Or if it may be said that the truth of a consists in its reference to b, c, etc., and that of b, c, etc., to a, this is a case of argument in a circle. Hence, it is argued, however alluring the principle of coherence may appear, in the end it results in this hopeless fallacy.

This criticism, we have to observe, is itself based on an assumption which both the epistemic and the aesthetic coherence expressly rejects. The criticism takes it for granted that the elements in a system can be independently true. When it is argued that a is proved true by referring to c, what the coherence theory means is, a is true because of a's relation to other elements and other elements' relation to a. Because a, b, c, etc., are related in a certain relation, they form a whole and it is as members of this whole or unity that a is true or beautiful and b is true or beautiful etc. When a appeals to c, it is not to c as such that it appeals but as c the member of a whole in which a is also a member. The truth or beauty of any one member does not consist in its isolation but in its being a member of the whole. A is not used as a test for c and then c is not used for a. The theory only says that truth or beauty is a claim of neither when taken independently, but of the system of which all are members. This can be observed in the construction of theories in the field of historical and archaeological research, the available evidence in law courts and in every
piece of everyday thinking. Says Prof. Stout: "The more connected and consistent is the testimony of a witness in a law court, the more likely are its separate statements to be true----- The law of gravitation is confirmed by its application to explain the motion of projectiles, the course of the planets, the tides, the common pump etc. On the other hand, the fact that these phenomena can thus be connected within a coherent system corroborates our view of each of them severally. Nor is there anything exceptional or mysterious in the conception of mutual support. We cannot make one card stand up on end; but if we take two we may prop them against each other at an angle so that each prevents the other from falling."

A line taken by itself is neither beautiful nor otherwise. It is only in its relation to the other lines, that this one line becomes significant--i.e., beautiful. If all the lines in a picture are taken away--i.e., if their mutual relations are severed--no line is beautiful. The same principle is true in the case of music, sculpture architecture or literature. We shall study this fact once again in a later context (Ch.IV). But what we have to note is, just as truth is a claim of no judgment totally severed (if it is ever possible) from other judgments of the systems, so also no part can claim beauty when it is away from the whole. The fact that it is a "part" itself implies a whole.

But when we say that truth or beauty consists in the whole in which everything is constituted with equal importance, we should not understand that a change in the one reflects on every other thing in the whole system. With regard to the logical coherence, Blanshard takes the example that when he saw Mount Washington he was wearing a straw hat. But would the Mountain have appeared different if he had not put on a straw hat? The answer is quite obvious. No doubt, everything is concerned with everything else in the universe. But there is such a thing as the same universe of discourse which we should note when we consider the interrelation between things. Tuberculosis is a fact, the existence of bacilli is a fact and that Miltiades commanded Marathon is also a fact. But a medical scientist who is interested in finding out the cause of tuberculosis is interested in a certain kind of bacillus than who commanded Marathon. There is such a thing as special connection and all things are not related in the same way. Marathon has a special connection and it has a number of possible suggestions to a particular universe of discourse—i.e., history.

In this way, when we say that truth consists in the interrelation between facts or judgments, it is not between any judgments taken arbitrarily but only between certain judgments, one having some relevancy with the other. All scientific truths rest on such special connections. In their conception of cause, sciences recognise the relevancy of conditions. Though Mill said that cause is the sum total of the conditions, when he pointed out that
common sense mistakes the most important condition as the sole cause, he also implicitly recognised the degrees of relevancy. Without a recognition of the degrees of relevancy, our conception of causation will become so wide and diffuse that it ceases to be precise to give us a notion of causation; and hence its very purpose will not be fulfilled.

The same thing is true, of course, in a slightly different form in the case of an aesthetic whole. In a novel, the hero might have drunk two glasses of water instead of one. Though this shows how thirsty he was, which may imply the distance he has traversed—still, even if it is said that he drank a big glassful of water, it would not make much difference; but certainly it would make a great difference if it is said that the hero married another girl because of, say, his avarice. In science there is such a thing as the universe of discourse. But an aesthetic whole is a case of strict universe of discourse determined by the sense of relevance. Hence on this point we can not go far comparing the two—epistemic and aesthetic wholes.

The importance of coherence in both our cognitive and imaginative activity can be seen by observing that it is not merely the nature and the test of truth and beauty, but the basic principle which a priori governs all our thought and imagination. Whatever the other methods we devise in our pursuit of truth and beauty, all of them are devices to find out whether there is coherence in that form of experience.
It may be noted that critics may rebel against this theory, but even this rebel itself presupposes coherence. For, why should they disagree? It is because their meaning of experience does not agree with ours; in other words they find that there is incoherence between their meaning of experience and ours. And when they rebel against a work of art, it is because the import of the work of art does not harmonise with what they expect from it. So when it comes to the last question, the only alternative that remains is to say, "believe in coherence or deny the values of truth and beauty." For, not to believe in any form of coherence is to reject the inner structure of the development of thought and imagination. It may be asked whether this clear cut argument in the form of "either this or nothing" is logically valid. As Bosanquet argues, the ultimate appeal in proving anything is always the disjunction—this or nothing—the appeal to which is inseparable from the principle of coherence, or is even the same as that principle viewed from a different angle.

The ultimate principle cannot be proved with positive arguments. Their ultimacy can be known by applying them to all the other particular cases and, we may note, even the smallest judgment that we make is implicitly based on its coherence with all our previous experience. Even such a cognitive act such as my seeing a rose implicitly calls on the where, the when, under what circumstances, etc., etc., of my perception. That is, the cognition that

I see a rose is synthetic and at the same time analytic; it analyses something out of the given experience. All interpretation, we may say, is a form of analysis, and analysis presupposes an order according to which the analysis may take place; which is to appeal to the coherence behind it.

In the same way, even our semi-aesthetic (but mistaken for a genuine one) judgment like "she is beautiful", implies that her physiognomy, colour, etc., are quite agreeable, where agreeable is a loose word. Strictly speaking "proportionate" should be used. And if another man disagrees and says that she is not beautiful, obviously he implies (but he may not be conscious of his implication) that there is no proportion or harmony between her height, muscular development etc.

Coming back to the epistemic coherence: when all the encountered particular facts are proved by an ultimate principle, if more positive proof of the principle itself is demanded, we confess we cannot give it. For to give a proof is to assume that there can be a principle higher than that, which in this case is not only impossible but if pressed further leads to the fallacy of infinite regress. Hence, the argument that it involves the fallacy of what it is known as affirming the consequent does not arise. One may throw the argument into the form: If the principle is valid, its consequences will be correct. Now by accepting the coherence theory, no doubt, the consequences do follow and we accept them. But can we thereby infer the validity of the antecedent?
Such criticisms are tenable only under the presupposition that the given consequences may follow from any other unknown antecedent than the given. But, as we have seen, in this argument coherence is the only antecedent and there is no possibility of any other antecedent. In such case the common fallacy of affirming the consequent and denying the antecedent does not arise.

It may be objected that the consequences that follow (i.e., the particular cognitive and aesthetic instances of finding coherence) are too numerous and diverse that that the theory can be interpreted so as to cover all possible arguments and thus making its significance too loose and therefore nothing. To which as an answer we may recall that coherence is not a set; rigid, pattern like the syllogism or the fixed model kept for the beginners in the art-schools; but it is only how valid thought works and how creative imagination develops in different circumstances. We do not refuse to call water by its name because it also takes "numerous" forms when put in different vessels. This objection, instead of finding fault with the theory, indirectly throws light on its universal nature.

As Dr. Ewing thinks, the theory "provides a wider and sounder view of logic than one which restricts this subject to inference capable of being put in definite symbolic form." And we may add that it provides a wider and sounder view of aesthetics than any which restricts this subject either to imitation or instrument or whatever other new "ism" and school.

In conclusion of this chapter we may again use two quotations from Dr Ewing: "If we are to aim at giving a rational account of our knowledge we must strive, if possible, to bring it under one principle, and the coherence principle is the only conceivable one which could serve this purpose."\(^{41}\) It is impossible to state the theory "in a way which will emphasise all sides in due proportion for all readers....... We may still well raise a cry of 'Back to the coherence theory' in face of the irrationalistic and excessively pluralistic tendencies of the present day."\(^{42}\) And by substituting a few aesthetic terms in the place of logical terms, we may once again advance this quotation in defence of aesthetic coherence.

\(^{41}\) Ibid, p.247.  
\(^{42}\) Ibid, p.250.