CHAPTER – 1

THE EVOLUTION OF WESTERN & INDIAN

AESTHETICS

‘Aesthetics’ or the ‘Theory of Beauty’ in Art and Literature has been one of the early pursuits of human mind. The idea of beauty naturally brings in the idea of aesthetics. A thing of beauty is not only a joy forever, but it is an invitation forever to explore the reasons for that joy. Since poetry and drama are the earliest arts, it was only natural that the science of aesthetics should be inspired by the thoughts about early poetry and drama. Butcher S.H. points out, “Aristotle’s Poetics is regarded not only as the treatise setting forth his theory of poetry and drama but also about the art in general.”

The theory of beauty need not be regarded as being confined only to Literary forms of Poetry or Literature and Drama but also applicable to other arts like music, dance, painting, sculpture etc. The Hindus first developed the science of music from the chanting of the Vedic Hymns. The Sama Veda was especially meant for music. And the scale with seven notes and three octaves was known in India centuries before Greeks had it. Probably Greeks learned it from Hindus. According to Swami Abhedananda,
"It will be interesting to know that Wagner was indebted to the Hindu science of music, especially for his principal idea of the 'leading motive'; and this is perhaps the reason why it is so difficult for many people to understand Wagner's music."  

Eminent Indologists and art critics like A.K.Coomaraswamy vouchsafe that the theory is capable of considerable extension even to the other Indian arts like painting. He points out, "It is true that this theory is mainly developed in connection with poetry, drama, dancing and music, but it is immediately applicable to art of all kinds, much its terminology employs the concept of colour and we have evidence that the theory also in fact applied to painting."

If literature is communication of a special kind, language is the means of that communication. The language of literature is emotive and it has a feeling of content. The major difference between Literary forms and other forms of art – music, painting, dance, sculpture is that they can exist without the use of any language. Poetry is considered to be more superior to other literary forms like drama, novel, short story, personal essays etc. So the language of poetry has to be different from the language used in other literary forms as it is in and through language that the poem comes into being. According to Mohit K. Ray, "It is the language that subsumes the meaning and the music, the denotation and the connotation, the symbols
and the images, the thought-content and the feeling-content, the sonic and the semantic.\textsuperscript{4}

A poem in addition to being an aesthetic object it is also a cognitive discourse and is governed by various aesthetic criteria such as harmony, intensity, depth, structural tension etc. According to Mohit K. Ray, "As an aesthetic object its meanings are immanent and intransitive rather than immediately referential as is the language of science. But at the same time it is a cognitive object and therefore, it is bound to say something; it is referential and it does reveal something of the external world."\textsuperscript{5}

The aim of all arts was regarded to be the attempt to delight the human mind but it is difficult to decide what constitutes the locus of literariness or the poesis of a poem. It is this question that has engaged the critical attention of Poeticians of the highest order both in the West and in India. If the European Literature is more than two thousand years old, the Indian intellectual tradition also dates back to the second century B.C. According to Mohit K. Ray, "In both India and the West great aestheticians have tried to examine the nature of literature, its ontology and the secret of its appeal. They have tried to define in their own ways the nature of poetry and what constitutes the poesis of a poem. The notion of literary universal and its timelessness implies that there must be affinities between the
western thinkers and the Indian thinkers down the centuries in regard to these problems."

The beginnings of Western aesthetics took place in ancient Greece simultaneously with literary creation which may be traced back to the earliest Homeric Hymns while a systematic presentation of its underlying tenets is said to begin with Plato and Aristotle. Indian literary criticism is often traced back to the earliest known works in Sanskrit like the Vedas and the Itihasas but the systematic exposition of the principles is said to begin with Bharata's Natyasatra. According to Mohit K. Ray, "Both Bharata and Aristotle are primarily concerned with drama and the theory of imitation that they espouse in the works – Natyasatra and Poetics – is immediately concerned with the nature of imitation expected in a successful drama which is also eminently applicable to poetry."

Indian poetics broadly developed into eight schools – Rasa, Alamkara, Riti, Guna/Dosa, Vakrokti, Svabhavokti, Aucitya and Dvani – corresponding roughly to the western theory of Pleasure, Rhetoric/Figures of speech, theory of Form, Oblique poetry, Statement poetry, Propriety and Suggestion. The central tradition of Indian aesthetics originating in Bharata, the first and the oldest known exponent of the dramaturgic school of rasa, enriched by Anandavardhana, an exponent of dhvani theory, Bhamaha, an
exponent of alamkara system, Kuntaka, the main proponent of vakrokti, Vamana, the most notable exponent of aucitya (propriety) codified by Mammata, Viswanatha and Jagannatha is a veritable treasure house of insights into problems related to creation, analysis and evaluation of works of literature. As in India it is the later critics in the west who are drawn to the detailed analysis of notions decorum or propriety. The classification of figures of speech and the categorization of different forms of poetry along with identification of the virtues and blemishes of poetic compositions which are non-substantial when compared to the concept of rasa but certainly not unimportant in the final evaluation of any poetical work.

In both Indian and Western systems then period of development covers more than two thousand years. In fact the very dialogue form used both Indian and Western works reveal the active involvement of different yet related systems in both the places. Poetics is aesthetics in relation to poetry or literature in general which concerns with the first principles of high aesthetics while Rhetoric is a practical art concerned with the study of how words and sentences operate in a piece of writing which deals with principles of derivative kind i.e with low aesthetics in both the systems. According to K.Ayyappa Paniker, “In both places literary criticism is seen as an activity integrally related to the weltanchauung of people concerned. Very often the
If Valmiki is the adi kavi or the first harbinger of poetic tradition in India, Bharata is traditionally regarded as the father of Indian dramaturgy whose earliest treatise is *Natyasastra* composed in 2\textsuperscript{nd} century B.C. The *Natyasastra* was used through the 1500 years of Sanskrit literary thought as the bedrock of literary theory considered as an additional Veda. The *Natyasastra* gives almost all the pivotal concepts of Sanskrit criticism which were to engage the attention of some of the best poet-critics and scholars of India for well over sixteen centuries. The *Natyasastra* is not devoted solely to the exposition of rasa but the fragment of the entire compendium and intervening centuries have altered both the concept of rasa as well as philosophic context within which it was originally couched.

In Indian poetics the earliest and possibly the most sustained school that identified the locus of literariness in the ornamentation of the figures of speech is Alamkara school. Bhamaha, the first important exponent of Alamkara School took it his task to enthrone alamkara in the place of rasa in the 6\textsuperscript{th} century A.D. The early history of Sanskrit poetics started with the theory of alamkara and developed into a system with Bhamaha. He has been
regarded as the father of Alamkaraprasthana in Sanskrit Poetics by his successors Abhinavagupta and Mammata.

In his time rasa were understood only as emotional elements in the theme and that is the reason why he is not vexed by problems as to how rasa or the aesthetic delight of the reader could ever be a figure of speech. According to K. Krishnamoorthy, "To the Indian analytical mind, discovery of new figures of speech was indeed the most preoccupation for several centuries. They are the devices for avoiding the obvious and achieving aesthetic form in respect of sound as well as sense by turns of expression as well as poetic conceits."9

Bhamaha and his successors, Dandin and Vamana called their treatises by name Kavyalamkara or Kavyalaksana i.e, the embellishment or hallmark of poetry which is later called as Alamkarasstra i.e the science of beauty. According to K. Krishnamoorthy, "The whole field of Sanskrit poetics or Alamkarasstra may be regarded as one continued attempt to unravel the mystery of beauty in poetic language."10

Dandin of 7th century A.D shows greater originality than Bhamaha in his treatment of alamkaras in his Kavyadarsha. He noticed that all figures of speech arise from the desire to describe something extraordinary and the limit is reached in atisayokti (hyperbole) when this desire would transcend
physical limitations. According to Bhamaha, "Figures of speech are those attributes of kavya which impart beauty to it and sentiment (rasa) imparts sweetness to poetry."\(^{11}\)

The alamkara in its fine manifestation has an affinity with the western concept of metaphor. Metaphor is generally regarded as the condensed verbal item in which an idea or an image or a symbol attains vividness and complexity through its inseparable association with their ideas or symbols or images that elevates the ordinary language to the condition of a poetic language. According to Mohit K. Ray, "The metaphor is traditionally believed to be a figure of speech, a linguistic device of ornamentation or decoration or what the Indian aestheticians would call an alamkar."\(^{12}\)

Aristotle in his Poetics and Rhetoric not only implied a sharp distinction between the uses of metaphor in prose and poetry but had also emphasized the energetic character of metaphor. He made a profound statement in his Poetics when he said that, "The greatest thing by far is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that can not be learned from others; and it is also a sign of genius, since good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of similarity in dissimilar."\(^{13}\)
Finally Dandin emerges as a foremost supporter of the pathway theory of poetry laying great stress on diction which was later described as style by his successors.

Dandin was later followed by Vamana of 8th century A.D who upheld the prime importance of the poetic diction or style in poetry. For Vamana, the word (sabda) and its sense (artha) constitute the body of which the soul is riti i.e in other words the riti is the soul of poetry. According to Mohit K. Ray, “Aristotle’s views that different types of words are suitable for different kinds of poetry contains in an embryonic form the basic ideas of stylistics which again has an interesting affinity with the theory of riti of Indian poetics.”

Vamana further dwelled on the importance of gunas which are essential in poetry as they go to make up the riti and their existence is vouched by their cognition as such by men of taste and that these excellences are not found in all cases of recitation but depend upon the presence or absence of certain well-defined characteristics. According to V.K.Gokak, “For our purpose, the sabda gunas may be said to indicate the predominance of the following features in the synthesis called style: inflections and affixes; lexis; syntax; rhythm; imagery. The artha gunas will indicate the predominance of vision, attitude, mood, thought, and theme.
Both the artha gunas and the sabda gunas reside in the same poem or work of art. But viewing them separably helps us to realise the composite nature of its style.”

After gunas, Vamana deals with the poetic figures or alamkaras as elements of subsidiary importance. According to Vamana, “What makes poetry acceptable, is the presence of charm and beauty. The riti and its constituent gunas come in as a sine qua non in the production of this beauty, but the poetic figures only contribute to its heightening.”

Vamana’s theory was superseded but it formed a definite stage which paved the way for neo-criticism of Anandavardhana. The Dhvanyaloka of Anandavardhana of 8th century A.D is with Bharata’s Natvasastra, the most central theory of literature in Indian tradition. Dhvanyaloka itself is a huge compendium of poetry and poetic styles, which refers to numerous views, scholars and poetic texts by way of illustration and the theory proposed by Anandavardhana is known by the name ‘dhvani’, which means the suggestive quality of poetic language. In order to accommodate all variant forms of poetic beauty, he was to dilute to some extent his dhvani accordingly, though always kept in mind that the hard core of dhvani is rasa in all its myriad varieties and nothing else. According to K. Krishnamoorthy, “Anandavardhana structures his whole theory to explain
how rasa in its very nature cannot be an alamkara or guna or any other alterior characteristic of poetic beauty, but only its inmost soul."\(^{17}\)

Anandavardhana structures his whole theory to explain how rasa in its very nature is the inmost soul. According to Anandavardhana, “Rasa is really a blissful state of mind which spurs on the creative genius of a poet at one end and delights the imaginative critic at the other end.”\(^ {18}\)

In the twentieth century, Anandavardhana’s theory which may be compared to the western theory of suggestion has found a new lease of life, mainly under the impact of western stylistics and structuralism. According to G.N.Devy, “He has the distinction of introducing in Sanskrit Poetics the semantics of poetic language; but more important is the contribution in terms of turning the focus of critical discussion from the outward linguistic style and poetic embellishment to the more complex issue of linguistic structure in poetry.”\(^ {19}\)

Kuntaka known as the originator of the Vakrokti School of Sanskrit literary theory occupies a place between Anandavardhana of the ninth century and Abhinavagupta of the later tenth century. Kuntaka was inspired by Bhamaha who stated that the whole realm of poetic expression was permeated with Vakrokti and developed the theory that Vakrokti is the
essence of poetry. According to Bhamaha, "It is Vakrokti which raises linguistic expression to the states of poetry."²⁰

Kuntaka was the foremost aestheticians of ancient India and was better known as the author of the work named Vakroktijivita. The work propounds a theory on the import and importance of vakrokti and occupies a unique position in the field of Alamkara Sahitya. Vakrokti is a mode of expression which becomes superior to the ordinary matter of fact expression by virtue of possessing a strikingness, which is an imaginative term of words and ideas. According to Kuntaka, "Poetic embellishment or alamkara is just another name of this Vakrokti or Vakrata. Since Vakrokti is the life of poetry, no poetry can occur without Vakrokti or so to say, without alamkara."²¹

Kuntaka’s theory of Vakrokti has interesting affinities with western analytical criticism and the concept of oblique style. According to Mohit K. Ray, "In western criticism when Aristotle prefers probable impossibilities to improbable possibilities he is actually pleading for a kind of obliquity."²²

Both the Indian Poeticians and the Western Poeticians believe that poetry, to be striking, calls for certain obliqueness in the use of language. Vakrokti is only a device to create the imaginative world of poetry and to induce an aesthetic rapture.
With Bharatamuni and Anandavardhana, Abhinavagupta of 10-11th century A.D was among the greatest in Indian aesthetics. He approached the problems of aesthetics from the historical, analytical, psychological, logical and philosophical points of view, and discusses, the ends of art and the theory of meaning. According to P.V.Kane, "Abhinavagupta was one of the most remarkable personalities of medieval India. He was a man of very acute intellect and was an encyclopaedic scholar. He had taken all knowledge for his province." \(^{23}\)

On one side Abhinavagupta expounds and elaborates the ideas of Anandavardhana and on the other hand his systematic tract of aucitya is important. Abhinavagupta takes his stand on the triple aspect of life of poetry – rasas first, then dhvani and then aucitya without rasa.

The concept of aucitya or propriety is actually touched upon by all the poeticians in one way or the other. It is discussed by the exponents of the schools of rasa, dhvani, riti, and others. However, it is Ksemendra who develops aucitya as a consistent theory and he is therefore regarded as the most important exponent of aucitya. According to Mohit K. Ray, "Decorum in poetry is propriety or what the Indian aestheticians call aucitya. In the western context as well as in the Indian context it means that in a good poem action should be appropriate or benefiting the character and there must be a
perfect correspondence between matter and manner, between subject and lexis. A mighty character must be described in a dignified manner and trifling matters must be treated with humbleness."24

Ksemendra discusses aucitya in a manner which is more catholic and universally applicable to all kinds of poetry and all schools of poetic theory in his treatise Aucityavicaracarca. Moreover his practical criticism that reminds one of the new critics in general and I.A. Richards in particular is of immense value. According to Ksemendra, "It is aucitya which constitutes the basis of the charm or aesthetic rapture underlying the relish of rasa. The alamkara and guna in poetry are justified by, and receive their true significance from this element of aucitya which can be called the soul of poetry."25

The two schools – Riti of Vamana and Vakrokti of Kuntaka could not make much headway. For a long time struggle continued between the Alamkara School and Dhvani School; Dhvani School survived. Rhetoricians like Viswanatha were responsible for establishing the Dhvani School on a firm footing and he speaks of himself as Dhvani Prasthapanaparamacharya, a great propounder of Dhvani School.

The work on poetics by Viswanatha known all over India is the Sahityadarpana and his arguments are mainly directed against the theory of
Anandavardhana. Sanskrit literary compositions are divided into two classes – Sravya (poems) and drishya (plays) and the work of rhetoricians prior to Viswanatha dealt with only one aspect of it. Rhetoricians like Anandavardhana dealt with sravya aspect but Viswanatha treats of both and all the essential tenets by the good poets are included in his work. Whatever is in his work is elsewhere; and whatever is not, is to be found nowhere else. Viswanatha giving an estimate of his own word says, “Oh scholars, looking at Sahityadarpana you may know all the essential tenets of rhetorics with ease.”

Jagannatha’s contribution to Sanskrit literary criticism is also of considerable value. His most important work on which rests his fame as great scholar and critic is Rasagangadhara which came to hold a high position like the Dhvanyaloka in the field of poetics. While Anandavardhana gives importance to dhvani, Abhinavagupta emphasizes that rasa alone is important element in a poem. Jagannatha while accepting the importance of rasa in a kavya, he feels that a kavya need not be denied that name merely because rasa is not prominent or is not the chief suggested element in a poem and this element may result from rasa, alamkara and conveyed either through dhvani or directly.
For a clear understanding of Indian aesthetics it is necessary to understand the principles of Grammar, particularly the projections of Bhartrhari, the great grammarian—philosopher whose linguistic speculations stand high above the linguistic speculations projected by all philosophers of the world. He introduces the concept of Sphota which refers to the idea of the word and distinguishes it from dhvani. He says, "Dhvani pronounced by our organs does not convey any meaning; it simply effects revelation of the Sphota or the idea of the word."27

Derrida's 'theory of deconstruction' is akin to the 'theory of Sphota' adumbrated by Bhartrhari and his followers in the area of philosophy of Grammar. Just as Bhartrhari differentiates the idea of the word from the comprehensible word Derrida differentiates the thought from expression, which remain unified with each other and the difference between the two is to be understood for the proper comprehension of the nature of the word and meaning. According to Bhartrhari, "All thought and language constitutes a complete whole, it is not possible to differentiate one from the other, and consequently the sentence is an individual whole incapable of being classified into different components."28
The theory of Bhartrhari is of profound importance not only for the linguistic speculations of Indian philosophers but also for the linguistic theory of the entire world, both East and West.

In the 5th and 4th centuries B.C Athens became the centre of literary activity in the west. Plato emerged as the first conscious literary critic who used the word ‘Imitation’, in his Republic in connection with poetry who considered it merely as mimicry or a servile copy of nature. Plato’s literary criticism, specially his views on poetry marks the culmination of a critical phase in the history of criticism in antiquity besides inaugurates a new phase in critical development.

Later Aristotle, the great disciple of Plato and the first scientific literary critic took the word ‘imitation’ from his master, Plato but breathed a new life and soul into it and interpreted it as a creative process that gives an idealized version of reality in his poetics.

The implications of later critic Aristotle’s writings cannot be understood without taking into account the various systems of Greek Philosophy just as the commentary on Natyasastra is based on the Pratyabhijna School of Philosophy. According to Wimsatt and Brooks, “The Poetics is a work of the type which Aristotelians have called acroamatic – to be interpreted only with the help of other larger works.”
Universalisation or depersonalisation is a concept dear to both Indian and Western Classicists. Aristotle is the first to use the ‘Katharsis’ in connection with tragedy but there is no corresponding theory in Plato though he accepts pity and fear as emotions proper to tragedy. The ‘theory of Katharsis’ enables Aristotle to demonstrate the healthy influence which poetry in general, and tragedy, in particular exercise over emotions. Classical Sanskrit aestheticians used the term ‘sadharanikarana’, first used by Bhatta Nayaka as quoted in Abhinavabharati by Abhinavagupta. For him the poetic experience is never personal or individual it is always universal. All personal experience is limited and the feeling of limitation is by itself a painful experience. But when it transcends personal limits and is universal i.e. become that common experience of all the receptive and responsive reader or playgoers, it is converted into a veritable pleasure i.e. pity and fear are both enjoyed because the feeling of universality is always pleasant. According to Wimsatt and Brooks, “The exegetes of Aristotelian catharsis have chiefly devoted their efforts to arguing the question whether the term catharsis, is a medical, Hippocratic metaphor implying the purgation or expulsion of something harmful, the emotions themselves or is a religious or moral metaphor implying the purification of aesthetic depersonalization of our usually selfish emotions of pity and fear.”
Around the first century B.C the centre of literary and cultural activity in the West shifted from Alexandria to Rome, the capital of Roman Empire. A fresh beginning was made with Horace, who lived between 65-8 B.C. With the Augustan era (31 B.C – 14B.C) there dawned a golden age of Poetry and Literary Criticism. It was an era of peace when distinction could no longer be achieved through war. There was an upsurge of nationalism and the literary men of Rome wanted to equal if not excel, the achievement of ancient Greece both in literature and criticism. The poetry and criticism of Horace was part of an Augustan classical movement back toward the high seriousness, if not the moral intensity, of Greek Classical art.

Horace stands out as the most influential of Roman critics who achieved results of lasting kind and was to the rank in stature with Aristotle. The poetry and criticism of Horace was part of an Augustan classical movement back toward the high seriousness, if not the moral intensity, of Greek classical art. The main thing assumed in the criticism of Horace is the normative value of literary species, the genre, kind or type and of the companion principle designated by the term propriety – in Aristotelian criticism, decorum in Latin. The ultimate reference for both genre and decorum was the Greek doctrine of ideas and forms either in the platonic or Aristotelian versions.
The most important name in the history of criticism next to Aristotle is Horace. Criticism which can give a rational account of itself was made possible by Aristotle’s philosophy; but it is the Ars Poetica of Horace which broadcast the seed of The Poetics over every literature in Europe. His main critical theories can be found in his Ars Poetica, a work which equalled Aristotle’s Poetics in its influence during Renaissance which mainly stresses the principle of decorum. Horace gave due consideration to notion of decorum or propriety just as the Indian critic Ksemendra who gave rise to the whole school of critical thinking based on the notion of aucitya (propriety). According to Mohit K. Ray, “Horace’s idea of ‘decorum’ has an affinity with Ksemendra’s theory of aucitya, his views on the aesthetic side of poetry, the nature of the pleasure aimed, at once calls to our mind the Indian theory of Poetry and Poetic Pleasure.”

A very reasonable corollary of the doctrine of decorum and genre has been a shift form the Aristotelian mimesis of nature to the fully classical and traditional kind of imitation. According to Wimsatt and Brooks, “one recent way of stating the matter has been to say that the decorum of Horace is something affectively and socially oriented towards the taste and standards of the aristocratic theatre audience of his day rather toward an Aristotelian or natural objectivity.”
With every new critic the number of figures of speech increases both in the West and in India. There are more figures of speech (alamkara) in the works of Horace than Aristotle just as the Indian critic, Bhamaha's Kavyalamkara, the first comprehensive study of alamkara system changed into Alamkarasastra in the course of a few centuries.

The next literary critic after Horace was Longinus. He was the Greek scholar who belonged to 1st century B.C. Longinus will apply equally well to the Indian counterparts. A certain technical conventionalism marks the rhetorical analysis of Longinus, a limitation through dealing with inherited concepts. He gave profound importance to the function of suggestion and asserts, "In the sublime poetry the function of suggestion is of paramount importance and when this function of suggestion is triggered into action it unfolds multiple meaning and implants sublimity in the document of literary art."33

Longinus's treatise On the Sublime is the most precious legacy of Graceo - Roman period to literary criticism in the modern age of great worth and significance. One of the most extraordinary features of the essay is the variety of criteria, the number of approaches to poetry, which it manages to include; not only the main three the transport of the audience, the genius of the author, the devices of rhetoric – but in passing the democratic idea that
great poetry is that which pleases all and always, and again a further variation on the subject object relation the most spectacular or operatic part of the essay, the idea of physical grandeur as the counterpart of psychic. According to Mohit K. Ray, “Longinus establishes himself firmly on the standards of classical Greeks, and, this position he maintains throughout the work. The special excellence produces an effect whose aim is not mere persuasion of pleasure but transport.”  

Longinus further examines how true sublimity can be acquired and points out that both nature and art are equally necessary in his treatise. According to Longinus, “Art is perfect when it seems to be nature, and nature hits the mark when she contains art hidden with her.”

Longinus used more figures of speech than Horace and also gave a due consideration to the notion of decorum. According to Wimsatt and Brooks, “As Horace has subdued the theory of poetic words to a decorum of urbanity, conversation, idiom and satire, Longinus heightened it to decorum of transport (strong emotions).”

Like Aristotle, he based his theories on existing Greek literature; he likewise aimed at a rational explanation of literary phenomenon; and his methods of theorizing are analytic, inductive, psychological and historical. In his practical criticism he makes use of both
the historical and comparative methods and everywhere stresses the emotional and imaginative appeal of great literature. It is his creative imagination which modifies, transforms and produces works of beauty. According to Mohit K. Ray, “He is an antithesis of Aristotle using like Plato, imaginative reason as well as his idealism and enthusiasm. Conspicuous for suggestiveness and for the number of aesthetic truths he revealed or made familiar, he stands as a reminder of some of the essentials of Literature and as a lasting and stimulating force in the field of literary taste.”

Longinus thus became a pioneer in the field of aesthetic appreciation of literature and is therefore regarded one of the greatest critics of antiquity. Longinus is the last of classical critics in ancient critical history in the West.

In 1453 the fall of Constantinople to the Turks compelled numerous Greek scholars to move westward with their rich treasures of ancient Greek and Roman art and literature. Theology was the main concern of the middle ages and the outlook of life was looked down upon with suspicion as pagan, sensuous, immoral and the standards of judgement was theocratic rather than literary and aesthetic.

When the revival of classical learning was awakening with great pace in the 15th century, there was much political conflict and bloodshed, in
England which is called 'War of Roses' in the British history. With the revival of classical learning literary theory and criticism received a new emphasis and there was a marked change from theocratic to secular.

The general awakening of translations into English, French and Italian were edited in large numbers and broadcasted all over Europe. Editions and translations of Aristotle, Horace, Plato and other Greek masters helped to bring on a renaissance of furious theoretical activity, an era of criticism which remains one of the most conspicuous in literary history.

The British classical revival in the Elizabethan era started with the chief representative Sir Philip Sidney, who inaugurated a new era in the history of English Literary Criticism through his treatise the Defence of Poetry or an Apology of Poetry. It is a kind of formal beginning of literary theorizing in England, and a brilliant enough one - written in the high enthusiastic style of the gifted amateur champion, headlong to out dazzle the lowness and myopia of professional and moral grumblers. The essay reflects and telescopes not only the continental criticism of the century but a certain amount of classical Greek and Roman as well.

Sidney's Apology of Poetry, is a work of genius, a rare and valuable, critical document which introduces Aristotelianism into England. According to Spingarn, "The introduction of Aristotelianism into
England was the direct result of the influence of Italian critics, and the agent in bringing this new influence English Letters was Philip Sidney.  

His _Defence of Poesy_ is a veritable epitome of the literary criticism of the Italian Renaissance; and so thoroughly it is imbued with this spirit, that no other work, Italian, French, or English, can be said to give so complete and so noble a conception of the temper and the principles of Renaissance Criticism. His treatise is the earliest attempt to deal with the poetic art, practically and theoretically. It is the key to an understanding of Elizabethan poetry and poetic theory. It is not only an illuminating piece of literary criticism but also a fine piece of creative literature. According to Mohit K. Ray, "Sidney believes in Plato's theory of ideas in his notion of the ideal forms of eloquence which is eternal, unchanging and objective in character, of which all forms are only imperfect copies."  

The function of poetry is to provide pleasure along with moral instruction is powerfully repeated by the Renaissance critics like Sidney. According to Sidney, "Poesy therefore is an art of imitation for so Aristotle termeth it in his word mimesis, that is to say, a representing counter feeling and figuring forth – to speak metaphorically a speaking picture; with this end to teach and delight."
Dramatic criticism in England began with Sidney and to him goes the credit of having formulated for the time, the general principles of dramatic art. These principles are those which, for half a century or more, had been undergoing discussion and modification in Italy and France, and of which the ultimate source was the *Poetics* of Aristotle. According to Spingarn, “Dramatic criticism in England was thus, from its very birth, both Aristotelian and classical, and it remained so for two centuries.”41

Sidney’s conception of tragedy is a mixture of medieval tradition and the concept of Aristotle, as interpreted by the Italian and French critics and he regards the function of tragedy as admiration and commiseration. According to Dr. Raghukul Tilak, “Sidney’s *Defence of Poetry* gives us almost complete theory of neo-classic tragedy a hundred years before the *Art Poetique* of Boileau; the severe separation of poetic forms, the sustained dignity of language, the unities, nothing lacking”42

Sidney’s earliest attempt is to deal with the poetic art practically and not theoretically. His judgements are based on contemporary literature and show ample of good sense and sound scholarship. His ultimate test is of practical kind i.e. the power of poetry should move to virtuous action. Sidney’s achievement as a critic was the early recognition of this fact that the first sign of literary appreciation is to feel.
The age of Sidney was concerned with the justification of imaginative literature and the understanding of the basic principles of art. With Jonson the study of the art poetry becomes an inseparable guide to creation; it is this element of self-conscious art which distinguishes him from his predecessors.

Ben Jonson presides over the early 17th century scene. The period that preceded was in general romantic in its tendencies, the age which leans towards a more strict, though servile classicism. According to Wimsatt and Brooks, "A far more severe classicism, squared off on the norms of objective ethical imitation, may be observed in Ben Jonson, next in line of the English men of the letters who have had notably critical preoccupations."^{43}

However most of his criticism is embodied in his Timber Discoveries, Made upon Men And Matter published four years after his death. He had great respect for the rules of ancients, he made a verse translation of Horace's Ars Poetica. Jonson like Sidney, has a high conception of the function of poetry, and the vocation of a poet. His views on the nature and function of poetry do not differ substantially from those of Sidney, but they seem more directly Aristotelian. According to Jonson, "Aristotle not
only found out the way not to err, but the short way we should take not to err."44

Jonson's conception of his art is essentially noble; of all arts it ranks highest in dignity and ethical importance. It contains all that is best in philosophy, divinity, and the science of politics and leads and persuades men to virtue with a ravishing delight. It therefore, offers to mankind a certain rule and pattern of living well and happily in human society. The greatest contribution of Jonson is that in an age of literary lawlessness he brought rules and principles. He had an acute sense of what is right and wrong in literature, his criticism is an expression of his massive commonsense. According to Raghukul Tilak, "In this sense he is the greatest critic of the age for he alone, had the power of correct judgement associated with a fine literary taste."45

After Ben Jonson literary activity in England suffered a serious setback. The energy of the people was spent up in the religious and political controversies. The sensuous and romantic Italian influence was replaced by French influence with the restoration of Charles-II to the throne in 1660 and thus began the era of Neo-Classicism which was to reign supreme in England for the next hundred years. The rise of scientific spirit and the new philosophy with their emphasis on rationalism, reason, clarity and simplicity
in thought and expression and the avoidance of all that was extravagant favoured the rise of Neo-Classicism.

The precept 'follow nature' is the chief centre of the Neo-classic creed. Emphasis was laid on correctness, good sense and reason; the function of the poetry was to instruct and delight; much thought was given to the style and diction of poetry; the need of decorum came into limelight; much thought was also given to the comparative superiority of rhyme and blank verse. The neo-classical critics added much that is essential to culture and fixed important truisms without which one can hardly begin today to discuss the art of literature.

John Dryden (1631-1700) was a great poet, a great dramatist and an original and discrimination critic who stands at the beginning of Neo-Classical era. He is the father of English Criticism who first taught to determine upon the principles the merit of composition. His formal criticism Essay on Dramatic Poesy is the unofficial manifesto of his critical creed, and an important landmark in the history of literary criticism in England. It contains his critical pronouncements, covering every day field of literary problem and every aspect. Drama, epic, tragedy, comedy, tragic-comedy, nature and function of poetry all receive due attention form him. According to T.S. Eliot, "The great work of Dryden in criticism is that at the right
moment he became conscious of the necessity of affirming the native element in literature.\textsuperscript{46}

Dryden in his treatise emphasized that poetry must delight but it must move to an appreciation of beauty. Like Aristotle, he considers delight is the chief, if not the only end of poetry, for it instructs as it delights. Instruction is secondary and delight, the first, the primary function of poetry and a bare imitation will not serve the ends of poetry. It is only such aesthetic delight that has the power to move, the power to transport, the power to affect the soul, and excites the passions and above all move to admiration. According to Dryden, “The soul is ‘moved’ and ‘transported’ to the appreciation of beautiful, and since the beautiful in human actions and passions is also ‘the noble’, ‘the good’, and ‘the moral’, an appreciation of beauty means an appreciation of the good and the noble also.”\textsuperscript{47}

In the western criticism they have developed certain concepts like historical and sociological approach which have not gained any special place in Indian aesthetics. The earlier English criticism was either theoretical or legislative. The critics were merely content to lay down the rules. It is Dryden who inaugurated the era of descriptive criticism. It is in his criticism that literary analysis, the dominant concern of the modern critic emerges for the first time. He states in his\textit{ Defence of the Essay}, “Hitherto I have
proceeded by demonstration;... having laid down, that nature is to be
imitated, and the proposition proving the next, that then there are means
which conduce to the imitating of nature, I dare proceed no further
positively; but have only laid down some opinions of the ancients and the
moderns, and of my own... which I thought probable."48

He is also a pioneer in the field of Historical Criticism who
shows a well-developed historical sense. He recognizes that the genius and
temperament differ from age to age, and hence literature indifferent periods
of history is bound to be different. He traces the decay of literature in the
Pre-Restoration era to historical causes and its revival, to the restoration of
our happiness. According to Dryden, "Literature is not static, but a dynamic
process, it is ever growing and changing and the rules and literary
judgements also must as a consequence, change accordingly."49

Dryden is regarded as father of Comparative Criticism in
England who recognizes that the temperament of the French and the English
differ and hence the literatures of the two countries are bound to be
different. He is the first in England to analyse English and Foreign plays and
examine their comparative merits and demerits. According to Saintsbury,
"He was the greatest man of letters of the time in his country as well as in all
Europe and his strong clear commonsense and faculty of arguing a point well-fitted him to the taste of comparative criticism.\textsuperscript{50}

Criticism in the early 18\textsuperscript{th} century does not differ substantially from Restoration Criticism, except that Neo-classicism grows more severe and stringent, and there is an expansion and diffusion of the critical temper. It accepts and consolidates the revolution that Dryden made, and advances it cautiously on many fronts. The great neo-classical critics Addison and Pope incorporated the radical intuition of historicism from Dryden.

Joseph Addison (1672-1719) represents neo-classical attitudes tempered by good sense, a large share of tolerance, and a positive good taste. The best criticism in Addison is contained in the papers which he contributed to The Tattler and The Spectator. It is to the The Spectator that should turn to discover Addison as a critic at his best.

Addison's views on 'imagination' constitutes a theory of the pleasures of imagination which has perhaps been over praised. Addison explains, "The pleasures of imagination, taken in the full extent, are not so gross as those of sense, nor so refined as those of the understanding. The pleasures of the imagination all proceed from the sight and that sight is a sense."\textsuperscript{51}
Addison’s purpose was to cultivate the taste of his age, not of a few, but of society at large, and he succeeded in his aim to a remarkable extent.

Alexander Pope (1688-1744) was much a greater poet than critic though he has written at length on criticism. His chief critical work *The Essay on Criticism* is a collection of ideas drawn from different sources and expressed neatly and pointedly. His views on the art of poetry are very much in the manner of Horace’s *Ars Poetica*. He has all the respect of a neo-classic for rules and the authority of the ancients. According to Wimsatt and Brooks, “As the classical idea of nature worked its way out in the aesthetic speculations of Pope and his contemporaries, it took on a certain highly significant local colorations. For one thing, the idea of the uniformity and universality of nature appeared now strongly re-enforced by Cartesian and geometric standards of clear reason, and by Newtonian concepts of a mechanically ordered universe.”

The important classical precepts of Pope are to follow the classical rules which have been derived from the ancients is to ‘follow nature’. According Pope, “The ancient rules discovered not devised, Are nature still, but nature methodized.”
Samuel Johnson (1709-1784) was the greatest and last literary critic of 18th century. His age witnessed the co-existence of dual trends in criticism one representing the old and the other illustrative of the new look. He belongs to the School of classic or Judicial Criticism as against the ‘Romantic’ or ‘Aesthetic Criticism’ of the next generation.

He is one of the greatest biographers of England and his popular book of the kind in the language; it is also a book of real and permanent value. It is one of the great monuments and landmarks of English literature in which he revealed his view of poetry and its nature and function. According to Johnson, “Poetry must give pleasure but must also have truth i.e. it must serve the purposes of life.”

Johnson belonged to classical school of criticism and as such he was an upholder of the classical theories and principles. He had no sympathy with that type of literature which provided an escape from life; rather he wanted that poetry must serve the purposes of life which should be conducive to goodness, correctness and morality. According to Johnson, “Poetry is the art of uniting pleasure with truth, by adding imagination to the help of reason.”

The Lives chosen were largely those with which he was intimately familiar and for most of whom he had a warm sympathy. A study
of Lives gives the clue to his main critical position and aims. His aim was to reintroduce sincerity into literature, to make it actual and moving and to rid it of artificial ornaments, conventions and far-fetched themes and wanted to wed poetry to life and use it for moral teaching.

It was quite early in his literary career that Johnson began to take interest in Shakespeare for mixing tragic and comic scenes. Tragic-comedy is nearer to life than either tragedy or comedy, and combines within the pleasure as well as instruction of both and in tragic-comedy the high and the low combine both for instruction and Pleasure. He also supports Shakespeare for violating the classical unities of time and place. Unity of action alone is essential, the other two unities arise from false assumptions and circumscribe the drama and lessen its variety. According to Wimsatt and Brooks, "The appeal to nature and reason has with Johnson a strong equalitarian orientation toward the common audience and their spontaneous vote. Though he believes that reason and nature are uniform and inflexible, such uniformity as he in fact discovers is often in the psychology of the persons whom the poet addresses, rather than in any norm beyond and superior to themselves."56

The publication of his Dictionary marks an epoch in the history of English. After the English took its place among the literary
languages of Europe, both foreigners and Englishmen could learn the
language like scholars and with understanding. In his Preface To The
Dictionary he not only codified the floating and uncertain rules of spelling
and grammar, but also recognized that a language is a living thing, and that it
must grow, change like a living being. He thus saved the language from
growing rigid and lifeless. In this way, he rendered one of the greatest
services that can be rendered to the literature of a nation.

The awakening of sensibility is the most radical change that
comes over the English literary scene about the middle of the 18th century.
Sensibility primarily means the power of generation or perception, but this
meaning has become over-laid with another, that of quickness and acuteness
of apprehension or feeling which in turn was extended during the 18th
century to mean the capacity for refined emotion, sensitiveness generally in
the face of external nature, and the readiness to feel for the poor and the
suffering.

Rationalism which had prevailed during the Augustan era and the
order, discipline, and respect for tradition and authority which the Augustans
has inculcated, no longer satisfied. The commonly held assumptions about
man, God and society were breaking down; reason had failed to answer the
fundamental questions about the mystery of life and so stress shifted to emotion and imagination as safer guides to truth.

The medievalisation movement about the middle of the 18th century, led to a revival of interest in old English masters. There was fresh thinking on the subject of literary appreciation. Under German influence there was rethinking on the nature of beauty and aesthetic appeal and a new aesthetics was developed.

Increasingly men of genius like Wordsworth and Coleridge voiced their protest against neo-classicism and through their critical pronouncements laid the foundation of Romantic Criticism. This is concerned with the fundamentals, such as nature of poetry and its functions. Poetry is no longer considered as mere limitation or invention but becomes the expression of emotion and imagination. According to the French writer Godfernaux, "Romanticism represents the invasion of secular literature by mystic or religious emotion which is the secularization of the inner life."\textsuperscript{57}

William Wordsworth (1770-1850) was the first greatest poet and theorist of Romantic Movement and has given a particular shape and direction to English Romantic Criticism. Wordsworth is a romantic in his emphasis on spontaneity, imagination, intuition and inspiration besides laying stress on the element of thought in poetry. His \textit{Preface to Lyrical}
Ballads is an unofficial manifesto of the English Romantic Movement which gave a new direction, consciousness and programme to English Romanticism. It helped substantially to bring about the reforms Wordsworth most wanted; it gave valuable new insights into nature, scope and function of poetry and into the creative process by intense seriousness and by its group of inward experience. According to Visvanath Chatterjee, "Wordsworth is indeed the light priest of nature but nature he worshipped not for her ordinary beauty but for the soul that was in her."58

Wordsworth through his literary criticism demolishes the old and the faulty and opens out new vistas and new avenues by discarding the artificial and restricted forms of approved 18th century poetry. Wordsworth expounded his views on poetry, its nature and functions and the qualifications of a true poet in his Preface. For him, poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions recollected in tranquillity which enables the poet to see into the heart of things and communicate the very soul, or essence of an experience. In his Preface he calls poetry, "The most philosophical of all knowledge the impassioned expression that is the countenance of all science, the image of man and nature."59

Wordsworth's view of nature and function of a poet is an exalted one who brings out the individualism of the poet but at the same
time stresses his essential humanity. For him, the poet is essentially a man speaking to men. He has more lively sensibility, a more comprehensive soul, greater powers of observation, imagination and communication. He is also a man who has thought long and deep, who must come into the light of common day, share in the joys and sorrow of common men and women and write for their pleasure. According to Visvanath Chatterjee, "He lives in the world of reveries, dreams, and visions. His soul has never lacked Aeolian visitations. He does not neglect the mundane world; rather he knows how to transform it."60

'Imagination' as it may be recalled is the watch word of Romantics. Wordsworth dealt with 'fancy and imagination' at much greater length. Wordsworth's distinction between fancy and imagination is not so subtle and penetrating as that of Coleridge. For him imagination and fancy evoke and combine, aggregate and associate and they differ not in their natures but in their purpose and in the material in which they work. Fancy make things exact and definite while imagination leaves everything vague and indefinite. According to Rene Wellek, "The only important difference between Wordsworth and Coleridge is that Wordsworth does not see clearly Coleridge's distinction between imagination as a holistic and fancy as an associative power and does not draw the sharp distinction between
transcendentalism and associationism which Coleridge wanted to establish.\textsuperscript{61}

It is generally believed that Wordsworth who advocated that the language of poetry should be the language of common man is by and large, a competent practitioner of statement poetry. The statement poetry is akin to ‘Svabhavokti’ in Indian poetics. According to Mohit K. Ray, “Although Coleridge in his criticism of Wordsworth points out the discrepancy between Wordsworth’s theory and practise as a poet in terms of the language of his poetry, the fact remains nevertheless, that the main bulk of Wordsworth’s poetry is statement poetry.”\textsuperscript{62}

Wordsworth by his emphasis on simplicity both in theme and treatment on emotion and imagination gave back to English poetry the stuff which properly belongs to it and revolutionised literary concepts. He demolished much that was false and injurious in English critical tradition so that literary criticism in England could breathe a larger and freer atmosphere.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) was a great poet and occupies the first place among English Literary critics. His Biographia Literaria is a work on Literary aesthetics. His literary criticism is scrappy, chaotic and tentative. In bulk it is large and sprawling; in manner it is diffused and
involved; but in its happier moments it possesses a breath, a depth and a searching wisdom that are as rare as they are admirable.

Coleridge poses number of questions regarding the nature and function of poetry and also examines the ways in which poetry differs from other kinds of artistic activity. For Coleridge, “Poetry is an activity of the poet’s mind and poem is merely one of its expression, a verbal expression of that activity and poetic activity is basically an activity of the imagination.”

Coleridge is the first critic to study the nature of imagination and examine its role in creative activity. He is the first to distinguish between ‘fancy and imagination’. For him, ‘imagination’ creates new shapes and forms of beauty by fusing and unifying the different impressions it receives from the external world while fancy is not creative. It is a kind of memory which arbitrarily brings together images and even when brought together they continue to retain their separate and individual properties and it is merely mechanical juxtaposition and not a chemical fusion. Through his theory of imagination he revolutionized the concept of artistic imitation. According to Coleridge, “Poetic imitation is neither a servile copy of nature nor it is the creation of something entirely new and different from nature. Poetry is not imitation but creation based on the sensations and impressions received from the external world.”
Coleridge's 'willing suspension of disbelief' has acquired a wide and universal popularity which he used to indicate the nature of poetic dramatic illusion akin to the view of Indian critic Sankuka. According to Mohit K. Ray, "For Sankuka rasa is experienced when a work of art can induce in the reader or the spectator what Coleridge calls a willing suspension of disbelief." ⁶⁵

All through the Neo-classic era the question of dramatic illusion and credibility has exercised the mind of critics, and the observance of the critics was considered essential for, it was said, their violation puts too severe a strain on the credibility of the audience, and thus dramatic illusion is violated. Coleridge in his Biographia Literaria explains, "The poet does not require us to be awake and believe; he solicits us only to yield ourselves to a dream; and this too, with out eyes open, and with our judgement perdue behind the curtain, really to awaken us at the first motion of our will; and meantime, only, not to disbelieve." ⁶⁶

Coleridge considers the function of suggestion as of paramount importance and describes poetry as an organic whole akin to Anandavardhana's 'dhvani'. According to Coleridge, "Even if a single expression is discovered from the structure of poetry it makes the poet say something else than what he intends to say." ⁶⁷
Coleridge thus made philosophy the basis of literary enquiry and brought about a union of philosophy, psychology and literary criticism. He philosophised literary criticism and brought about a better and truer understanding of the process of creation and the nature and function of poetry.

P.B. Shelley (1792-1822) is one of the greatest of the Romantic Poets of England. His reputation as a critic rests mainly on his small treatise The Defence of Poetry written in 1821. His interest lies chiefly in the philosophy of poetry, and his exposition of it is extraordinarily stimulating and thought-provoking.

Like Sidney, Shelley considers poetry as something better than nature, though for a different reason. He considers it as the expression of imagination, and considers that all are poets who express imagination in life. All the arts are poetry, because they render imagination; but rhythmical language provides the highest kind of poetry, since language is itself created by the imagination and is a medium in its substance intellectual, which is not true of any other. According to Shelley, “The highest moral effect of poetry lies in its appeal to the imaginative and emotional faculties; is the development it gives to these it enlarges the powers of the mind itself.”

68
Shelley gives a profound importance to the function of suggestion in his *Defence of Poetry* and says the same thing following the line of Indian critic Anandavardhana. According to Shelley, "The function of suggestion converts the most ugly into the most lovely, enabling the refined reader to have experiences of beauty."69

Though the Romantics described things, by and large without much obliquity, we find Shelley giving paramount importance in his *Defence of Poetry*. He says, "The poetic language is vitally metaphorical and it marks the before apprehended relations of things and perpetuates their apprehension. Poetic language lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar."70

The Victorian era began with far reaching economic, social scientific and literary changes which not only transformed English social life, but also had far reaching impact on literature and literary criticism. There was a crisis of culture and critics like Arnold pondered over the role of literary criticism in the present age and felt that as against the romantic criticism of the older generation, criticism in the new age must draw closer to life and make life nobler and better and literary criticism to be worthwhile must serve the ends of life, and promote a better understanding of cultural values and thus bring about social regeneration. Victorian literature reflects
Victorian life and Victorian literary criticism seeks to make, that life better and nobler by propagating the best that was ever thought and written.

Matthew Arnold (1822-1888), the greatest name among the Victorian critics, is a poet turned critic. He is an iconoclast, the great gainsayer of English criticism, the most inconsistent and professional of non-conformists. *Culture and Anarchy* is the most valuable and representative work of his period. In his literary criticism he represents the classical resistance to romanticism and asserts the value of poetry as an anti-dote to the cultural anarchy of his age.

Arnold was a moralist who believed in the principle ‘Art for Life’s sake’ and speaks of the moral effects of poetry, of its high-seriousness, but never of its pleasure, the aesthetic pleasure which a poem must impart. Poetry does not present life as it is, rather the poet adds something to it from his own noble nature and this something contributes to his criticism of life. Poetry makes men moral, better and nobler but it does not through direct teaching, or by appealing to reason like science, but by appeal into the sol to the whole of man.

In certain respects, Arnold is superior to Aristotle. Aristotle knew only classics of Greece while Arnold, having the literatures of many nations and ages before him. According to R.A. James Scott, “Aristotle shows the
critic in relation to art. Arnold shows the critic in relation to the public. Aristotle dissects a work of art while Arnold dissects a critic."71

In his treatise Function of Criticism in order to guide the critic in the performance of his task and measure the intrinsic excellence of a work of art, he suggested ‘touchstone method’ to a number of poets, both ancient and modern. For him, there can be no more useful help for discovering what poetry belongs to the class of the truly excellent, and, therefore, do the most good, than to have always in one’s mind lines and expressions of the great masters and to apply them and as a touchstone to other poetry. According to Arnold, “The function of criticism is promotion of a lively circulation of the best ideas yet available to humanity and hence the production of a climate in which poetry can thrive. One criticism provides the set up and encouragement for another criticism and the embarrassment of equating poetry with some kind of quasi-philosophic discipline is greatly accentuated."72

Arnold raised his criticism to a much higher level by waging a war against the intrusion of personal literary or religious prejudices. He saved the disorganization of criticism in the age by stressing the need of some system or principle in critical judgement which he found in the rules of ancients. With this end in view he stressed the need and value of comparative
criticism. He provided the classical resistance, the counter check quarrelsome to the prevalent but degenerate and decadent romantic criticism.

The greatest critic of the later part of Victorian age was Walter Horatio Pater (1839-1894) associated with a literary and artistic movement in England known as the aesthetic movement who believed in the doctrine ‘Art for Art’s sake’, represents the typical antithesis to Arnold. His methods of criticism are romantic impressionistic as contrasted with the objective-classical methods of Arnold. Its followers regarded the worship of beauty as the highest goal of life. Art was divorced from morality; the purpose of art was exclusively to impart aesthetic pleasure by cultivation of beauty.

Pater is the most learned and sober follower of the cult of beauty. His artistic creed, his aestheticism, his cult of beauty finds its clearest and most detailed enunciation in the Preface to History of the Renaissance. He imparted a new dimension and a new dignity to impressionistic criticism. He does not divorce art from life, rather he would have art serve the purposes of life. The concept ‘good art’ becomes ‘great art’ only when it is devoted to noble ends, to the amelioration and elevation of the lot of humanity makes him the noblest of the aesthetes, one who imparted dignity, sanity, and balance to the cult of beauty in England. According to Arnold, “Worship
beauty by all means, but remember that beauty of the highest kind is moral beauty.”

Pater in contrast with Arnold, almost reserves the order of values. For him art is no longer the servant, but is to be the master, the highest morality will be to enable as much as possible of life to be lived in the spirit of the artist. For Pater the problem of literature is the manner in which it represents an approach to life; and the whole task of criticism is to approach literature in the same way. Literature and art for him are not merely part of life; they seem to become the whole of life in so far as it lives in the finer way of the spirit, and in so far as it is objectively expressed. Thus more than anyone else, Pater helped to bridge the gulf between creation and criticism.

The Indian Renaissance was a product of the influence of Western thought. Johnson, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Arnold and Pater opened a new approach to art which dazzled the Indian mind. The new aesthetics that arose after the Western impact had awakened the Indian mind to original and intensive thinking. The new literature in India borrowed western literary forms like essay, the novel, history, biography and autobiography and the main concepts of art criticism, its heritage was so rich that Europe could borrow with profit many things from India too.
Coleridge made a beginning towards a transcendental theory of art, being influenced by Indian thought through German Romanticism. According to Visvanath Chatterjee, “The influence of Kant on Coleridge was especially remarkable that it is this illustrious sage of Konisberg who took possession of him with the giant’s hand.”74

Coleridge’s theory asserts that the transcendence is implicitly present both in the subject and object and this view of life and art holds that external nature and the individual mind exquisitely fitted to each other. According to Visvanath Chatterjee, “He was more interested in the formulation of theories and assessment of axioms than in transcendental truths which are felt in the blood, and felt along the heart.”75

The new aesthetics developed in India in three different directions. There is first of all, the Gandhian approach who was drawn more to truth than to beauty. Moreover, Gandhiji’s approach tended to be puritanical. His ethical bias crept in here and there without a simultaneous, unequivocal emphasis on the need for imaginative transformation in art but the delicate balance between truth and beauty that he maintained is easily disturbed when other minds tried to apply his aesthetic approach.

The next distinctive approach is that of Rabindranath Tagore who was a poet and an apostle of beauty and his approach was more aesthetic,
more in line with the aesthetic tradition both of Europe and of India. Like Gandhiji, he takes into account the spirit of man as well as universe which is a mansion of lovely forms but Tagore does this from the side of beauty, not truth and describes admirably the creative process as well as the function of art and the contribution of art to the enrichment of the life of humanity but psychology of inspiration is not deeply explored. According to James H. Cousins, “What distinguishes Tagore’s expression of his vision from the expression of western poets is that his religion and philosophy are not departments of his work but its fundamental ether, its vital substance. His religion is without theology, though not without personality: his philosophy is without argument, though not without rationale. The outstanding quality that shows in every line of his poetry is life, but not the little span of sensation and lower thought that is the western connotation of the word amongst minor critics.”

The synthesis of Eastern and Western thought is not yet realized on a grand scale and made to serve as the comprehensive basis for an integral theory of art. The third approach of Sri Aurobindo, in which one finds a comprehensive philosophy of art is a continuation of Coleridge’s thought and at the same time the real tradition of mysticism. According to Mohit K. Ray, “Sri Aurobindo, the greatest saint-cum Philosopher of the
twentieth century declares that apart from critical intellect what is necessary for appreciation of poetry is spiritual eye, which enables the connoisseur to have a glimpse of the infinite and savour delight of Bliss associated with it.”

The exposition contained in The Future Poetry, a review of Mr. James Cousins’ New Ways in English literature and Letters by Sri Aurobindo is regarded as the outstanding formulation of aesthetic theory that modern India has thrown up. According to V.S. Seturaman, “Sri Aurobindo’s aesthetics is naturally comprehensive, synthetic and inclusive rooted in the Vedas and the Upanishads but in the course of its development it had assimilated and accommodated many of the modern trends and his prophetic vision has outlined its future.”
NOTES AND REFERENCES


5. Ibid., P.7-8.

6. Ibid., P.12.

7. Ibid., P. 167.


11. Ibid., P. 20.


13. Ibid., P.21.


18. Ibid., P. 36.


28. Ibid., P. 12.

30. Ibid., P. 36.


34. Ibid., P. 37.


36. Ibid., P. 110


41. Ibid., P.124.


44. Ibid., P. 138.


49. Ibid., P. 318.

51. Ibid., P. 318.

52. Ibid., P. 318.


55. Ibid., P. 325.


57. Ibid., P. 82.


63. Ibid., P. 225.


69. Ibid., P. 92-93.


74. Ibid., P.88

