Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

I

Art as Expression of Aesthetic Experience

Aesthetic experience is one of "the most primitive and fundamental thing in conscious life." It is an experience which is presupposed by all arts. In the absence of this experience, there would be no fine arts, no taste, no speculation on beauty either of nature or of art. We may even say that "Art is the expression of aesthetic experience." The aim of an artist is to communicate what he has experienced. An artist fails as an artist if he keeps his matter to himself without making it communicable. As Benedetto Croce says, "Art is the expression of impressions, not expression of expression." Art is the expression of the intense intuition of the artist felt in the rarest of the rare moments. In this context we may quote Leo Tolstoy's famous definition of the process of artistic expression. He says, "To evoke in oneself a feeling one has experienced, and having evoked it in oneself,

2. ibid., p. 44
3. ibid., p. 49
4. B. Croce, Aesthetic - As Science of Expression and General Linguistics (Translated by D. Ainslie), p. 15
then by means of movement, lines, colours, sounds, or forms expressed in words so to transmit that feeling so that others experience the same feeling - this is the activity of art.\textsuperscript{5}

Tolstoy also says that "Art is the deliberate communication of feeling." Herbert Read expresses similar view when he writes, "Art is a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that others are infected by these feelings and also experience them."\textsuperscript{6}

It follows that unless the artist has enjoyed aesthetic experience, he cannot evoke the joy of this experience to others, for, as Plato says, "no one can give to another that which he has not himself, or teach that of which he has no knowledge."\textsuperscript{7}

The artist need not, however, explicitly express everything that he has experienced, because he may sometimes prefer silence to make the communication more vocal. As John Keats says, "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter .." It is also said that "the most beautiful part of a painting is that which is not seen."

\textsuperscript{5} Quoted by Herbert Read, The Meaning of Art, London, 1931, p. 256

\textsuperscript{6} Herbert Read, \textit{loc cit}

\textsuperscript{7} Plato, Symposium; J.D. Kaplan (ed.) The Dialogues of Plato (Jowett trans), The Pocket Library, 1955, p. 198
II

Moment of Creativity

That one must have intense experience in the creative process is true not only of artistic activity but also of other creative works. Arthur Koestler in his book, Act of Creation, even argues that the creative activity in all creative undertakings such as artistic creation, scientific invention, etc., is more or less the same. Bertrand Russell also talks about the intense experience involved in doing a creative work. He writes, "Everyone who has done any kind of creative work has experienced in a greater or less degree the state of mind in which, after long labour, truth or beauty appears or seems to appear in a sudden glory - it may be only about some small matter, or it may be about the universe. The experience is at the moment, very convincing; doubt may come later, but at the same time there is utter certainty. I think most of the best creative work in art, in science, in literature, and in philosophy has been the result of such a moment." 8

III

Creation in the Sense of Making

According to Plato, "All creation or passage of non-being into being is poetry or making, and the process of all

8. B. Russell, History of Western Philosophy, p. 138
art are creative; and the masters of arts are all poets or
makers."9 Plato compares the creative act with the act of
procreation in the biological sense. He says, "There is a
certain age at which human nature is desirous of procreation -
procreation which must be in beauty and not in deformity; and
this procreation is the union of man and woman, and is a
divine thing; for conception and generation are an immortal
principle in the mortal creature, and in the inharmonious they
can never be. But the deformed is always inharmonious with the
divine, and the beautiful harmonious. Beauty, then, is the
destiny or goddess of parturition who presides at birth and
therefore, when approaching beauty, the conceiving power is
propitious, and diffusive, and benign, and begets and bears
fruit; at the sight of ugliness she frowns and contracts and
has a sense of pain, and turns away, and shrivels up, and not
without a pang refrains from conception. And this is the
reason why, when the hour of conception arrives, and the
teeming nature is full, there is such a flutter and ecstasy
about beauty whose approach is the alleviation of the pain of
travail. For love, Socrates, is not, as you imagine, the love
of the beautiful only. 'What then?' 'The love of generation
and of birth in beauty'."10 This is what Diotima of Mantinea,
a wise woman of ancient Greece, taught to Socrates.

Aristotle also uses the word 'creation' in the sense of making (poiesis). He makes use of a very fundamental distinction between three kinds of 'thought'—knowing (theoria), doing (praxis), and making (poiesis). In this context 'poietike' means the productive art in general.

In the Indian literature the poet's work is compared to that of the Supreme Creator (Prajapati). In Kālidāsa's Kumārāsambhava (VIII), there is a beautiful description of the love-making of Śiva and Pārvati for the creation of the World. Now, just as the Universe is created by Śiva and Pārvati, the poet or the artist creates the work of art with the help of his creative imagination (pratibbha). The creative process passes through the stages of conception, maturity, pain of travail and the ecstatic delight of the artistic creation. The pleasure arising out of the consummation of the art experience is compared to the state of beatitude in the realisation of Brahma or Paramātma, the Supreme Self.

IV

Aesthetic Contemplation and Civilised Life

Just as aesthetic experience is "a primitive and fundamental thing" in conscious life, contemplation on the beautiful is also generally considered to be as old as human

11. Aristotle, Metaphysics, VI(E), i; Topics VI, vi.
civilization. As G.E. Moore says, "The admiring contemplation of beauty is one of the values of civilized living." One of the earliest aesthetic judgments is ascribed to Homer in the Iliad (17.548) "when on the shield of Achilles, the Homeric poet says, 'the earth looked dark behind the plough, and like the ground that had been ploughed, although it was made of gold; that was a marvellous piece of work." In India the germ of speculation on the beautiful is present in the Vedas even. Thus, contemplation on the beautiful, which is the concern of aesthetics, is quite old in the history of civilization, although aesthetics in the modern sense is a new discipline. Speaking in the context of literary criticism (which is very close to aesthetics), T.S. Eliot says, "Literary criticism is a distinctive activity of the civilized mind." We may, therefore, say that artistic creation and aesthetic contemplation are the special endowments of the civilized Homo sapiens.

Indeed, man is attracted by beauty, as if beauty is a biological necessity. "The sense of beauty", George Santayana says, "has a more important place in life than, aesthetic theory has ever taken in philosophy." He adds:

12. G.E. Moore, Principia Ethica, Cambridge, 1903, p. 188ff
"To feel beauty is a better thing than to understand how we come to feel it. To have imagination and taste, to love the best, to be carried by the contemplation of nature to a vivid faith in the ideal, all this is more, a great deal more than any science can hope to be. The poets and philosophers who express this aesthetic experience and stimulate the same function in us by their example do a greater service to mankind and deserve higher honour than the discoverers of historical truth. Reflection is indeed a part of life, but the last part. Its specific nature consists in the satisfaction of curiosity, in the smoothing out and explanation of things: but the greatest pleasure which we actually get from reflection is borrowed from the experience on which we reflect."16 In this admirable quotation Santayana is emphasising the importance of aesthetic experience in our life. Clive Bell also writes on similar lines: "He who would elaborate a plausible theory of aesthetic must possess two qualities—artistic sensibility and a turn for clear thinking. Without sensibility a man can have no aesthetic experience, and obviously, theories not based on broad and deep experience are worthless."17

16. ibid., p. 11
Beauty eludes Definition

Since the beginning of speculation on the beauty, several definitions of beauty have been presented by the poets, artists and philosophers. Each definition brings out interesting features of beauty. But no precise definition of beauty depicting all the faces of beauty has so far been found out. As a matter of fact, to give an all-embracing definition is really a stupendous task, since any attempt at the positive characterisation leads to controversies. As Goethe says, "Beauty is inexplicable; it is a hovering, floating, glittering shadow, whose outlines elude the grasp of definition."

'Beauty' is used in several senses. It is used in the ordinary give-and-take of daily parlance to express aesthetic feeling and to evoke the same aesthetic feeling in others. In linguistic usage, the word 'beautiful' is used to indicate many other things. As Croce says, "Beautiful, for instance, is said not only of a successful expression, but also of a scientific truth, of an action successfully achieved, and of a moral action; thus we talk of an intellectual beauty, of a beautiful action, of a moral beauty." The different senses in which the word "beautiful" is used lead "into a trackless labyrinth of verbalism in which many philosophers and students of art have lost their way." However, beauty

18. B. Croce, op.cit., p. 78
19. loc.cit
is generally considered by philosophers and connoisseurs of art as one of the three spiritual values, namely, the True, the Good and the Beauty.

VI

Importance of the Study of Aesthetic Experience

The study of the nature of aesthetic experience is very important in aesthetics because all aesthetic objects, and by that matter, all artistic objects, are the expressions in concrete form of a unique kind of experience of the artists. The enjoyment of the beauty of the aesthetic object, the appreciation and judgment on it, are all based upon aesthetic experience. Aesthetic experience, therefore, is the starting point of all philosophy of art and aesthetics.

However, there is a tendency in contemporary aesthetics to discourage speculation on the nature of aesthetic experience. As Harold Osborne says, "The fairly widely held belief at the beginning of the 1950's that philosophical writings in aesthetics are bound to be futile and dull, because philosophy has little to say about such topics as the nature of aesthetic experience and the grounds of aesthetic judgment." 20

An interesting theory of the 1950's is that of J.L. Austin, who maintains that we must avoid dealing with such absolute concepts as 'the beautiful', 'the ugly', etc., to spin aesthetic theories about them. According to Austin, we can weed out certain confusions and puzzles in aesthetics "if only we could forget for a while about the beautiful and get down instead to the dainty and the dumpy." Austin maintains that we should study 'actual usage' of the terms of artistic parlance in ordinary language. Austin and other ordinary language philosophers who are influenced by Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), discourage speculation in aesthetics.

Our objection to the linguistic approach in aesthetics is that linguistic analysis, in the sense of the analysis of ordinary talks on artistic subjects, is of little value in understanding and solving problems in aesthetics. For the proper understanding and solution of aesthetic problems we must accept the fact of aesthetic experience and contemplate on it.

Another thinker who discourages speculation on aesthetic experience is I.A. Richards. He is an advocate of the "emotive theory" of art. He maintains that "the phantom problem of the aesthetic mode or aesthetic state" is "a legacy from the days of abstract investigations into the Good, the

Beautiful and the True.\textsuperscript{22} He is against the view that aesthetic experience is a \textit{unique} kind of experience. Contrary to the view of I.A. Richards, we shall attach due importance to aesthetic experience in the light of our contention that no discussion on art and aesthetics will be possible unless we accept aesthetic experience.

VII

Modern Approaches to Aesthetic Experience

We may, here, discuss some other modern approaches to the study of the nature of aesthetic experience. These are empirical approaches. The first to be discussed is the Psychological one. The idea of submitting aesthetic questions to laboratory experiment was first mooted by the German psychologist Gustav Fechner in his \textit{Verschule der Aesthetik} (1876). Fechner laid the foundation of experimental aesthetics and since his days a large number of experimental studies have been made on various aesthetic phenomena. Psychologists have investigated into the preferences in shapes, colours, and pictures, criteria of musical aptitude, the validity of metaphorical descriptions of music, poetic meter, the properties of colour, the structure of jokes and many other phenomena. It goes without saying that the psychologists have made useful

\textsuperscript{22} I.A. Richards, \textit{Principles of Literary Criticism}, London, 1925, p. 11
contributions to modern aesthetics. Thus, three of the Key terms in contemporary aesthetics were first introduced by the psychologists. The first is the word "empathy" (Einfühlung), coined by Robert Vischer, and developed by Theodor Lipps and his followers, H.S. Langfeld and Vernon Lee. This term is used to indicate our perception of objective qualities by stating that human feelings are projected onto inanimate objects. The second is the term 'psychical distance', proposed by Edward Bullough in his famous paper "Psychological Distance as a factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle", published in 1912. According to Edward Bullough 'aesthetic consciousness' is distanced to the degree to which the object is purged of concern with practical needs and ends. Bullough's term has become very important and indispensable in contemporary aesthetics. The third term is 'synaesthesis' used by C.K. Ogden and I.A. Richards. This term refers to a state in which opposed impulses are harmonised in a tense equilibrium that still allows the 'free play' of the impulses.

The Gestalt psychologists and the Depth psychologists also have done research works in the field of the Psychology of Aesthetics. The Gestalt psychologists have interpreted the perception of beautiful objects in terms of the Principles of Gestalt Psychology. The psychologists who worked in the field of the Psychology of aesthetics are Christian von Ehrenfels, Wolfgang Kohler and Kurt Koffka. Some psychologists, even in the recent past have attempted to measure aesthetic experience psychologically. C.W. Valentine writes, "Although the
philosophers and the aestheticians have hardly agreed on any definition of beauty, the psychologists I think can describe some general signs of aesthetic experience. Valentine, a psychologist by profession, is concerned with exploring aesthetic qualities through psychological measurements in such fields like painting, music and poetry. She worked on the psychological measurement of the intensity of aesthetic experiences in these artistic fields. In her work, she dealt with (i) the study of elements and wholes, (ii) individual psychological differences, (iii) colour and form domination, and choice in painting, (iv) temperamental differences in response to certain stimuli in the form of art objects, (v) the development of taste, (vi) combined stimulation and facilitation of attention, (vii) the attitude of the expert, and similar other issues. C.W. Valentine maintains that her task is concerned with the study of individual reactions to objects regarded as beautiful. Many other psychological and psycho-analytical studies have been made about the life and works of many writers and painters following Sigmund Freud's discovery of the unconscious. Psycho-analytical studies on creativity, motivation, symbols and unconscious have been taken up in Depth Psychology. The literature in this field is vast. We shall not discuss the psychological issues in detail since our present work is not a work on Psychology.

The phenomenological approach to aesthetics, which is very popular in Germany and France, may also be briefly discussed here. Phenomenology pledges absolute and total respect for 'the given' (as distinct from the inferred and conjectured) in human experience. The German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) worked out this complex and subtle method of philosophical inquiry in various books and essays. The phenomenologists have made important aesthetic studies exploring in detail what is presented and what is felt in aesthetic experience. They aim to grasp fully what is actually experienced and described faithfully. To do this they set aside all the culturally determined pre-conceptions about beauty and all theoretical constructs that they may have been relying on in ordinary life. They do not allow any assumptions about actual existence or non-existence to influence their conclusions about the nature of the phenomenon itself. They even set aside any concern about whether the object exists or not (bracketing' existence). This is done to face experience in all its richness. Moreover, in order to arrive at indisputable knowledge in their field of inquiry, the phenomenologists take the help of intuition of general essences (Wesensschau), 'eidetic intuition'. Through such intuition the presented particular is not only recognised as particular, but as an instance of the universal. The phenomenologists claim that if the phenomenological mode of inquiry is followed, the nature of aesthetic experience can be described with authenticity. Husserl's ideas influenced Russian, Polish and Czech Formalists. The Polish philosopher Roman Ingarden had
made brilliant application of the phenomenologist method to literature in his *Das Literarische Kunstwerk* (1930), and later to painting and music.

Another important work in phenomenological aesthetics is Mikel Dufrenne's *Phenomenologie de l'Experience Esthetique*, published in two volumes in 1953. This book has been translated into English by Edward Casey and others (North Western University Press, Evanston, U.S., 1973). This work is widely acclaimed as a coherent presentation of the phenomenology of aesthetic experience. Dufrenne undertakes a detailed examination of the aesthetic object, and of aesthetic experience, with considerable clarity, insight, and originality. Dufrenne studied the ontology of the aesthetic object and considered it as phenomenally given although not identical with objects as they appear in the ordinary world of space and time. It is an object within the bounds of space and time, and yet, despite its historical character as an object created and destroyed, it preserves an air of timelessness, or time resistance. Dufrenne says that the aesthetic object is not only in the world, but it has a world with double aspects - 'the represented world' of persons, places, and things, and the 'expressed world'. Like Kant, Dufrenne maintains that aesthetic experience requires the co-operation of imagination and understanding. The aesthetic 'sentiment' which is a response to such co-ordination is not emotion, but a kind of knowledge, since it 'reveals a world', while emotion is a reaction to 'a world already given'. Further, the aesthetic
sentiment is a response of the whole self and its accumulated experience to the object; the depth of the aesthetic object reveals the depth of the self. Dufrenne's position here is very similar to that of Kant.

We have so far referred to some of the important approaches to aesthetics. We have already stated that these empirical and psychological approaches yield useful results in formulating some of the important concepts and principles of contemporary aesthetics. We shall, without hesitation, make lavish use of those concepts and principles in the course of our study.

VIII

Main Features of Aesthetic Experience

In our study of the nature of aesthetic experience, we shall start from those features of aesthetic experience which are generally accepted by the aestheticians.

Firstly, aestheticians generally refer to the non-practical character of aesthetic experience. Aesthetic experience is characterised by complete detachment from practical actions and the practical concerns of everyday life. In aesthetic experience, the stress and strain of practical life and its problems somehow disappear. This feature of aesthetic experience has been generally accepted.
Secondly, aesthetic experience is characterised by complete disinterestedness from the practical ends of life. Such disinterestedness also signifies that it is non-possessive. In the words of Hunter Mead: "To appreciate without the itch to acquire, to love without longing to possess, to contemplate with joy and satisfaction but without thought of social advantage, economic gain, or practical exploitation: this is to achieve the disinterested attitude which is fundamental to the aesthetic mood." The disinterested character of aesthetic experience is one of the main features of aesthetic experience recognised for the first time by Kant in Western aesthetics. Since Kant's time all the Western aestheticians have accepted it as an important feature of aesthetic experience.

Thirdly, "aesthetic or psychical distance" (if we borrow this word from Western aesthetics) is another important characteristic of aesthetic experience. This characteristic is closely connected with the two other features already discussed. "The aesthetic attitude can occur", as John Hospers says, "only when the practical response to our environment is held in suspension." According to Edward Bullough (1880-1934), the originator of the term 'Psychical distance', "Distance ... ... is obtained by separating the object and its appeal from one's own self, by putting it out of gear

26. John Hospers, Meaning and Truth in the Arts, p. 4
with practical needs and ends." Edward Bullough explains the concept of 'Psychical distance' with the help of the following illustration:

"A short illustration will explain what is meant by 'Psychical Distance'. Imagine a fog at sea: for most people it is an experience of acute unpleasantness. Apart from the physical annoyance and remoter forms of discomfort such as delays, it is apt to produce feelings of peculiar anxiety, fears of invisible dangers, strains of watching and listening for distance and unlocalized signals. The listless movements of the ship and her warning calls soon tell upon the nerves of the passengers; and that special, expectant, tacit anxiety and nervousness, always associated with this experience, make a fog the dreaded terror of the sea (all the more terrifying because of its very silence and gentleness) for the expert seafarer no less than for the ignorant landsman.

Nevertheless, a fog at sea can be a source of intense relish and enjoyment. Abstract from the experience of the sea fog, for the moment, its danger and practical unpleasantness, ...

and the experience may acquire, in its uncanny mingling of repose and terror, a flavour of such concentrated poignancy and delight as to contrast sharply with the blind and distempered anxiety of its other aspects. This contrast, often emerging with startling suddenness, is like a momentary switching on of some new current, or the passing ray of a brighter light, illuminating the outlook upon perhaps the most ordinary and familiar objects - an impression which we experience sometimes in instants of direst extremity, when our practical interest snaps like a wire from sheer overtension, and we watch the consummation of some impending catastrophe with the marvelling unconcern of a mere spectator." 28

The concept of psychical distance in aesthetic experience was clearly suggested by Kant in his explanation of the concept of disinterestness. The traditional Indian theoreticians also emphasised this element in their description of aesthetic experience. The word 'detachment' is also used in this context. Detachment is an attitude which is used to distinguish the aesthetic from the non-aesthetic way of looking at objects. Likewise disinterestedness is an attitude shown during the enjoyment and appreciation of art objects when the subject does not let his personal feelings and

28. loc cit
sympathies sway him or prejudice him in his judgements.

Fourthly, aesthetic experience is characterised by an active process of intrinsic perception, through intense concentration on an object, or field of objects, or situation. One is absorbed by the aesthetic object, 'getting outside' himself, and transcending his narrow interests, thereby acquiring a new perspective. Aesthetic experience is, therefore, a kind of pure and immediate experience. It requires a state of mind which is free from anxiety, existential insecurity and other mental tension. One can have aesthetic experience only on a relaxed or tranquil state of mind devoid of all inhibitions. This mental state of perfect equipoise is called "Sama" (balanced) by the Indian thinkers.

"Poetry", as the English poet Wordsworth said, "is emotion recollected in tranquility." What Wordsworth said about poetry is true of all art experiences. Great poets like Tagore and Tennyson say that their poetic experiences transcend the mundane. Both the Eastern and the Western theoreticians maintain that in aesthetic experience there is complete mental concentration and contemplation on the aesthetic object.

On this point Ananda K. Coomaraswamy writes: "Here indeed European and Asiatic art meet on absolutely common ground; according to Eckhart, the skilled painter shows his art, but it is not himself that it reveals to us, and in the
words of Dante, 'who paints a figure, if he cannot be it cannot draw it', *chi pinge figura, si non puo esser lei, non la puo perre*. It should be added that the idea of Yoga covers not merely the moment of intuition, but also execution: Yoga is dexterity in action, *Karmasu kausala*, Bhagavad Gītā, II, 50. So for example, in Sāmkaraśrya's metaphor of the arrow-maker 'who perceives nothing beyond his work when he is buried in it', and the saying 'I have learnt concentration from the maker of arrows.' The words *yogya*, application, study, practice and *yukti*, accomplishment, skill, virtuosity, are often used in connection with the arts. Art is considered by the traditional Indian thinkers as *dhyāna yoga*. The meditative character of aesthetic experience is further explained by A.K. Coomaraswamy; he says, "Aesthetic experience is a transformation merely of feeling (as suggested by the word *aesthesis*, per se), but equally of understanding; cf. the state of 'Deep sleep' characterised by the expression *prajñāma-ghana-śnanda-mayi*, 'a condensed understanding in the mode of ecstasy'.”

The above point on the meditative character of aesthetic experience has been emphasized by the eminent Western aesthetician, Eliseo Vivas, who wrote: "An aesthetic experience is an experience of rapt attention which involves the intransitive apprehension of an object's


30. ibid., p. 50
Fifthly, aesthetic experience is essentially pleasant and delightful. But the pleasure which is associated with this experience cannot be interpreted in hedonistic terms since it is not bound by the principles of pleasure and pain. Even the aesthetic experience derived from witnessing tragic dramas are associated with delight. The peculiar nature of aesthetic delight of the tragic has vexed and puzzled the minds of many Western literary critics. In ordinary circumstances we are pained to witness somebody's sorrow. But when we witness a tragedy we feel emotional upheaval as the tragic episodes are developed. Still we enjoy them because we elevate ourselves above personal considerations.

Thus while seeing Kalidasa's Abhijñāna Śākuntalam, Act IV, when we witness the pang of separation that Śākuntala feels for Dusyanta, and Kanva's emotional tribulation presented on the stage, we feel upset and we identify ourselves or transport ourselves to those situations presented on the stage. However, although we feel the plight (śoka), we are eager to witness the scene again and again because we derive pleasure or delight in witnessing the scene. This is possible because aesthetic experience is not identical with our usual emotional experience. It is neither a purely personal experience, nor is it a psycho-physical reaction to the emotional experiences.

of the dramatic characters. Aesthetic experience is based upon our feelings and emotions. But it is not ordinary feelings or emotions. Many Western artists, art and literary critics, however, consider it as feeling or emotion. In the West, the best definition of beauty is still generally considered as the one given by St. Thomas Aquinas, who said that beauty is "that which pleases upon being seen" (id quod visum placet). However, so far as St. Aquinas' view on the nature of aesthetic experience is concerned, we cannot flatly say that he advocated a sensuous or perceptual theory of aesthetic experience, in view of his outlook on aesthetic which considers beauty within the framework of a realm of values which include truth, goodness, and beauty. The view that aesthetic experience is a mere feeling or emotion distorts the true nature of this experience. Aesthetic experience is an experience of a transcendental and liberated state of mind, and is free from egoistic interests.

In connection with the pleasure (or delight) associated with aesthetic experience, there is a controversy among the thinkers. Some maintain that aesthetic experience arises from the pleasure derived from seeing or hearing beautiful art objects. Some others think that the pleasure (or delight) that accompany aesthetic experience follows from aesthetic experience itself. We shall discuss this controversy in the context of the discussions on Kant and Abhinavagupta's theories of the nature of aesthetic experience in the subsequent chapters of the present work. We may, however, say in anticipation that both Kant and
Abhinava advocated the later view that the pleasure or delight follows from aesthetic experience itself, and not vice versa.

From the above discussion we can say that aesthetic experience is a unique and autonomous experience possessing distinctive characteristics (some of which we have so far discussed). It is also distinguishable from other human experiences. Aesthetic experience is non-cognitive, non-moral, non-utilitarian, and non-acquisitive form of experience. Its character has been well-defined by Kant (also by Abhinavagupta), who maintained that it is a disinterested mode of experience, which is the result of perceiving something not as a means but as an end in itself, not as useful but as ornamental, not as instrument but as achievement. In the words of J.N. Findley: "... it (aesthetic experience) is a type of experience uniquely marked out, extraordinary in its delight, and often in its difficulty and pain, but above all an experience that is not always nor readily to be had, that it involves the concentration, the mental undistractedness, even the bodily euphoria and lightness that we too often cannot master at all." Both Kant and Abhinavagupta had emphasised the uniqueness of aesthetic experience. They also brought to light important features of aesthetic experience. We shall discuss those features in detail when we study the aesthetic theories of Kant and Abhinavagupta later.

Relation between the Aesthetic and Other Experiences

We have, now, to distinguish aesthetic experience from other experiences. Firstly, aesthetic experience is distinct from cognitive experience. In both cognitive situation and aesthetic situation there is a relation between the subject and the object. But the nature and relation of the subject and the object in the cognitive situation is quite different from the nature and relation that hold between the subject and the object in aesthetic experience. In knowing an object, the subject remains as an individual, and the object also exists as a phenomenal object. The knowing process takes place at the common phenomenal level. But in aesthetic experience the subject has to transform himself and transcend his nature and activities from the level of ordinary phenomenal existence. It is in this sense that Indian thinkers regarded aesthetic experience as extraordinary (alaukika) experience. Moreover, the nature of the judgment, which characterises the cognitive act is different from aesthetic judgments. Cognitive judgments are mostly judgments of facts, whereas aesthetic judgments are value judgments. Further, the aim of cognition is truth, whereas aesthetic experience ends in the realization of beauty. It may, however, be maintained in this connection that the funded store of knowledge of the aesthete may determine the nature and character of artistic creations, and also the attitude of the critics who pass judgments on them. As
Dr. Nihar Ranjan Ray says, "One who goes through an aesthetic experience naturally sees much more in the object or situation than one who does not have the same perceptual experience. Indeed internal perception leads inevitably to increasing knowledge of the world of objects, fields of objects and situations."\textsuperscript{33}

Next, we shall distinguish between aesthetic experience and moral experience. Moral experience is concerned with man's practical actions considered from the standpoint of the good, which is one of the fundamental human values. In moral experience we are not free from practical concerns, whereas we are free from such concerns in aesthetic experience. Besides, moral experience keeps in view the relation between means and ends; whereas when we are enjoying something aesthetically, we are enjoying it for what it is in itself. We are not thinking of the use to which it can be put, what we can get out of it, or how we can influence others by means of it. As Prof. A.J. Baha says, "Experience is 'aesthetic' when it is enjoyed as complete in itself and 'moral' when it is felt as incomplete and as needing something more to complete it."\textsuperscript{34} Kant distinguished between the moral and the aesthetic; and many Western writers following Kant have distinguished between the moral and the aesthetic.

\textsuperscript{33} N.R. Ray, Inaugural Address to a Seminar sponsored by IIAS, Simla, 1968, Transaction Vol. 2

But it is difficult to draw a sharp line of demarcation between the moral and the aesthetic. If we consider experience as a whole that belong to the individual human being, we cannot isolate a particular experience from others. In that way the aesthetic cannot be alienated from the moral. Thus, the aesthetic or the artist should be regarded as 'the total man'. Moreover, when we consider the 'life value' of an aesthetic object, it will be difficult to distinguish the moral from the aesthetic. It is due to this reason that many aestheticians associate art with morality. Some philosophers have even identified 'the beauty' with 'the good'. The Truth, the Good and the Beauty are considered in the West as the fundamental human values. Their Counterpart - Satyam, Śivam and Sundaram - are considered in India as the trium of Supreme existence. In this context the traditional Indian thinkers considered art in intimate relation with life and its goals (Purūśārthas). Regarding the relation between the three basic human values the great Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore wrote, "Whenever we see the good and the true in perfect accord, the Beautiful stands revealed." Dr. S. Radhakrisnan also expressed similar view. According to him, "... We cannot be artistic if we are not nourished by thought and sustained by morals. Highest art, philosophy and morality are manifestations of spiritual

35. Tagore on Art and Aesthetics, p. 63
unity ... We should be whole men before we can be artists, philosophers, heroes." Thus at the highest level of man's intellectual, moral, artistic, or spiritual pursuits, there is perfect harmony and unity of the three basic values.

The early Western tradition relates the aesthetic with the religious and mystic experiences. In ancient Greek thought close relation was established between art and religion. This is evident from the works of Homer and Hesiod. According to Greek theology, poetry and music had been invented by the Gods for their own delight. The Gods taught these arts to men through such chosen spirits as Orpheus, Linus, and Musaeus. The inspiration of the Muses was considered as essential to the production of good poetic and musical works. In Hellenic thought two strands of culture mingled with each other - one was Dionysian and the other was Apollonian. Dionysius, the Thrasian God was worshipped as the repository of all natural life and vigour, as the typical exponent of exhuberant pleasures of life. Art took its inspiration from the worship of Dionysius. The annual worship of Dionysius at the temple of Delphi aroused religious ecstasy and psychopathic tendencies into many people, and such religious mania ultimately transformed into such art forms as tragic drama. God Apollo, on the other hand was the God of reason. The blending of the two opposite cults in Greek religion and culture influenced Greek art to

a great extent. In this manner, in ancient Greece art and religion were intimately connected. But it was in the Third Century A.D. that aesthetic experience and mystic experience came to be almost identified in the thought of Plotinus and the New-Platonists. Plotinus gave a mystic explanation of the aesthetic experience. He maintained that aesthetic experience is akin to mystic experience, which is the highest experience of divinity. This view is also shared by Rudolf Otto.

This Western view on the identification of the religious with the aesthetic experience finds its parallel in Indian thought expounded by Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka and Abhinavagupta, and was subsequently accepted by all scholars in Sanskrit poetics. Aesthetic experience, which is considered as Rasa experience in Indian tradition is taken to be akin to mystic experience because it is considered as Brahmānanda (Brahmānanda Sahedaraḥ). In the traditional Sanskrit texts, this experience is considered as the twin brother of the experience of the Brahman. The Indian aestheticians, however, point out a difference between the two experiences. The subject in the aesthetic state while transforming and transcending the occurrences and feelings of everyday life, remains ever conscious of them, whereas the mystic state dissolves all polarities, including the distinction between subject and object, and in that way the contents of everyday life are transcended. We shall discuss this issue in the subsequent chapters.
As in the case of traditional Hellenic culture wherein art and literature have been traced back to the mythological background, in India also art and literature are linked with mythology as regards their pristine genesis. Goddess Saraswati is the Goddess of Speech and poetry; Brahmā, the Supreme Creator, is the creator of drama (Mātya); Viswakarma, the divine engineer is the celestial artist, Ganapati is the heavenly scribe, (and so on), considering the different Gods and Goddesses as patrons of different fine arts.

Natesvara Siva is considered as the originator of all art forms including dance and music. He created the universe for his own pleasure; He enjoys creation itself. Further, art forms are treated in the spiritual background of Rasa realisation - as Rasa-Brahmavāda, Nāda Brahmavāda and Vāstu-Brahmavāda by the traditional Indian thinkers.

According to the Indian aestheticians, aesthetic experience is characterised by a state of beatitude in which the Self does not feel the need for anything other than itself. This kind of beatitude cannot be enjoyed in practical life where things external to the subject are always desired. The external agents break the unity of the aesthetic experience with their presence. This experience though not completely identical with the religious or mystic experience, is still considered as akin to the spiritual experience of the Brahman, the Supreme Reality.
In the foregoing discussion on the nature of aesthetic experience we have referred to the main characteristics of this experience. We have also dealt with the relation between aesthetic experience and other human experiences. In our discussion, we have presented both the Indian and Western standpoints.

We have now to refer to an important approach to art and aesthetics, the importance of which has been recognised in the traditions of Indian and Western speculations on art. This approach is that of the unity of vision in art. We are coming to this issue because all great artists possess the quality of the unity of vision, and all great works of art exhibit such unity.

We may here quote the beautiful words of praise the great German poet, Goethe, had showered upon Kālidāsa's Abhijñāna Sakuntalam:

"Wouldst thou the young year's blossoms and the fruits of its decline And all by which the soul is charmed, enraptured, feasted and fed? Wouldst thou the earth and heaven itself in one sole name combine? I name thee, O Sakuntala! and all
The distinguished German poet exposes the ideal of unity achieved by Kalidāsa's Abhijñāna Sakuntalam. "For Goethe it was axiomatic that beneath the essential differentiation of art forms there was a common basis for all art and he frequently translates his context from the visual arts to literature and back again ... ." (Editorial note in G.F. Senior (ed.), Goethe the Critic, Manchester Univ. Press, 1960, p. ix).

There are many instances of the artist's unity of vision and experience. Bhavabhuti in his Uttararāmaśarīta gives a penpicture of such unity in the life of Vālmiki whether Vālmiki is engaged in writing Rāmāyaṇa or in teaching Vedānta or in deep meditation or engaged in nursing the forlorn Lava and Kusa as a mother and training them in the art of archery like a father - in all these activities alike he was at ease and enjoyed each experience. He alternates with grace from the artistic to the moralist, and from the moralist to the philosophical.

We have also examples from the artistic creations of the Western World, wherein the artists express unity of vision and experience in their creations. We find intimation of this ideal in the lust for adventure which motivates, Odysseus and his men. Dante in fact, finds the secret of his character in the ardour of Odysseus 'to become experienced of the world, and of the vices of men, and of their virtues', which leads
him 'to pursue virtue and knowledge', even to the point of his 'mad flight'. There is suggestion of this ideal of experience in the unbounded vitality of Gargantua and Pantagruel, and in the enterprise of the wife of Bath, in Chaucer's tale. But the great poetic expression of the ideal is written in Faust — in the Worlds of experience Mephistopheles opens to the man who has wagered his soul for one ultimately satisfying moment.

'Whatever to all mankind is assured
   I in my inmost being, will enjoy and know,
Seize with my soul the highest and most deep;
Man's weal and woe upon my bosom heap;
And thus this Self of mine to all their selves expanded.'

Thus it is the aesthetic ideal of the unity of vision and experience that underlies great works of art, although it may be the case that some artists put more stress on this or that aspect of man's experience.

Traditional Indian artists and aestheticians not only lay emphasis on the unity of vision and experience, but also recognise the underlying unity and interdependence among all the forms of fine arts. According to them, Rasa underlies and pervades all beautiful artistic creations. The theory of Rasa provides the essential doctrines for all art forms. The following dialogue between King Vajra and Sage Mārkandeya in the Vīṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa, gives an illuminating illustration
of the unity and interdependence among the arts:

"King - 0 Sinless One! Be good enough to teach me the method of image making.

Sage - One who does not know the laws of painting can never understand the laws of image making.

King - Be then good enough, 0 Sage, to teach me the laws of painting.

Sage - But it is difficult to understand the laws of painting without any knowledge of the technique of dancing.

King - Kindly instruct me then in the art of dancing.

Sage - This is difficult to understand without a thorough knowledge of the laws of instrumental music.

King - Pray teach me the laws of instrumental music.

Sage - But the laws of instrumental music cannot be learnt without a deep knowledge of the art of vocal music.

King - If vocal music be the source and end of all the arts, reveal then to me, 0 Sage, the laws of vocal music."^{37}

Thus, Indian tradition advocates integration among the fine arts.

Western tradition of art and aesthetics, however, does not show much enthusiasm for evolving common doctrines for the unification of different forms of fine arts. With the exception of some isolated suggestions towards the integration of arts in the history of Western aesthetics (for instance, by the Cartesian Rationalists during the period of Enlightenment), there is no serious and consistent effort on the part of the aestheticians for finding out principles for the integration of the arts.

Certain impressive slogans, such as, "ut picture Poesis" (Horace), "architectures is frozen music" (Schelling), "Poetry is a speaking picture" (Simonides), have been raised now and then. But these slogans are drowned in the din and bustle of contemporary art and literature. We feel that Western art and aesthetics need new flavour to be more savoury. An orientation in the light of Rasa theory is needed for an integrated and more broad-based approach.

The Purpose of the Present Thesis

The present thesis is a comparative study of the aesthetic theories of Immanuel Kant and Abhinavagupta. It is

38. This statement may be compared to the Chinese proverb, "A picture is a voiceless poem, a poem is a vocal picture" - H. Osborne, Aesthetics and Criticism, London, 1955, p. 176ff
an attempt to explore the areas of agreement and disagreement in the thoughts of these two great thinkers with special reference to the nature of aesthetic experience. In the course of this study we shall also try to locate the focal points where Indian aesthetics meets Western aesthetics.

Although these two great philosophers are separated by a wide margin of time and space, their ideas converged on fundamental issues of aesthetics. They have made epoch-making contributions in the aesthetic thought of the Orient and the Occident.

Immanuel Kant was born in Konigsberg in 1724 A.D. By dint of the originality and depth of his intellect this philosophical Colossus of the Western World diverted European thought towards new channels by opening new vistas of philosophical thought. After a long span of brilliant philosophical career, this intellectual luminary died in 1804 A.D.

Regarding Kant's contribution to aesthetics, Prof. M. C. Beardsley observes: "... it is astonishing that a thinker who turned the course of metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical inquiry irrevocably in new directions should also have been capable of working out an aesthetic theory which, in its originality, subtlety and comprehensiveness, would mark a turning point in this field as well ... he hoped to provide a theory of the aesthetic judgment that would justify its apparent claim to inter-subjective validity, and escape the
temptations of scepticism and relativism; and he believed this could be accomplished only by giving a deeper interpretation of art and its values, by establishing for it a more intimate connection with the basic cognitive faculties of the mind. He thus became the first modern philosopher to make an aesthetic theory an integral part of a philosophic system." Kant has made a thoroughgoing attempt at a comprehensive aesthetic theory within the framework of philosophical respectability. His work in the field of aesthetics has been highly commended even now, and his ideas have still great relevance to the present-day aesthetic thinking. As B. Bosanquet remarks, "We may fairly assent to Hegel's verdict when he finds in the introduction to the Critique of the Power of Judgment 'the first rational word concerning beauty.'"

Abhinavagupta, the saint-philosopher, lived in Kashmir between the later part of the 10th and the early part of the 11th century A.D. The profundity of his knowledge and the originality and brilliance of his critical insight entitle him to the position of the final authority on all matters of doctrine in Indian aesthetics and Saiva philosophy. Concerning his contribution to aesthetic thought Professors J.L. Masson and M.V. Patwardhan write, "Abhinavagupta was without doubt the greatest example in Indian history of a literary critic

who was also a philosopher of repute. Pandits will often say
of him that: alamkārasāstram tenaiva sāstratvam prāpitam -
'He alone turned poetics into a science'. There are virtually
no important ideas in later Sanskrit poetics that do not
derive from him (or from his influences). In his two famous
commentaries, the Locana on the Dhvanyāloka, and the
Abhinavabhārati on the Nātyaśāstra, he has dealt with almost
every important issue of Indian aesthetics.41

Prof. S.N. Dasgupta also says, "The view of Rasa
expressed by Abhinavagupta had been accepted in later times
as the almost unchallengeable gospel truth and as the last
analysis of the aesthetic phenomenon propagated through
literature."42

Regarding Abhinavagupta's influence on Indian Poetics,
Prof. K.C. Pandey writes, "... all the writers on Poetics,
who came after Abhinava, for instance Mammata in his Kāvya
Prakāsa, Hemacandra in his Kāvyanusāsana, Visvanatha in his
Sāhitya Darpana, Sārade Tanaya in his Bhāva Prakāsa, Appaya
Dikṣita in his Kuvālayānanda etc., Pandit Jagannātha in his
Rasa-Gaṅgādhara and Mahāmāhopādhyaya Govinda in his Kāvya
Pradīpa, refer to or follow Abhinava's theory of Rasa and
Dhvani and most of them extensively quote him, and that
Śaṅgīta Ratnākara and the Śṛṅgāra Ratnākara are more or less

41. J.L. Masson and M.V. Patwardhan, Sāntarasa and Abhinavagupta's
Philosophy of Aesthetics, Poona, 1969, Introduction, p. vi
42. S.N. Dasgupta, A History of Sanskrit Literature, Vol. I,
Calcutta Univ. 1947, p. 604
simply versifications of parts of Abhinava's commentary on Bharata's Nāṭya Sāstra."\(^{43}\)

Prof. R. Gnoli also writes on the same line: "A great part of later Indian poeties draws its inspiration in the matter of aesthetic experience from this commentary (Abhinava Bhārati). The 4th chapter in Mammata's Kāvyā Prakāśa - and by implication all the works that stem from it - is nothing but an epitome of it. The Commentary (Viveka) added by Hemacandra, the great Jaina poligraph (12th century), to his own Kāvyāmūsāsana reproduces it word for word (except for a few variations). While Manikyacandra (13th century) in his commentary on Mammata's Kāvyaprakāśa does no more than copy and simplify, at the very most, the viveka of Hemacandra."\(^{44}\)

In the course of our study, we shall be concerned with the exposition of the aesthetic theories of Kant and Abhinavagupta. We shall begin with a "General Survey of Kantian thought" in the next chapter.

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43. K.C. Pandey, Abhinavagupta - An historical and Philosophical Study, p. 270

44. R. Gnoli, Aesthetic Experience according to Abhinavagupta, Preface, pp. XIII-XIV