Chapter 3

AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE ACCORDING TO KANT

I

Analysis of the Judgment of Taste and Aesthetic Experience

In each of the three Critiques, Kant starts his philosophical inquiry with some fact of human experience. The Critique of Pure Reason deals with cognitive experience, the Critique of Practical Reason with moral experience and the Critique of Judgment with aesthetic experience. Kantian philosophy, therefore, may be regarded as a Critique of experience.

Kant has approached the problem of aesthetic experience through the aesthetic judgment. According to him, the aesthetic judgment is "the judgment of taste". Kant has assigned a unique status to aesthetic experience. His theory of the nature of aesthetic experience has important bearing on his metaphysics. Kant has stated that aesthetic experience serves as the channel whereby man can apprehend the rays of the noumenal world through the phenomenal world. It is the avenue through which the order, uniformity, design and purposiveness of Nature can be viewed. It is also the means by which the inner moral and spiritual base of the Noumenal Reality can be grasped.
In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant deals threadbare with all the issues connected with the faculty of Judgment. The *Critique of Judgment* has two parts, namely, 'Critique of the Aesthetic Judgment', and 'Critique of the Teleological Judgment'. It is in the first part of the work that the problems of aesthetics are discussed. The second part is devoted to the issues concerning the objective purposiveness of nature. There is similarity in structure between the two parts of the *Critique of Judgment* in so far as each part consists of Analytic and Dialectic.

The Analytic of the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment consists of Analytic of the Beautiful and Analytic of the Sublime. It is in these two sub-divisions of the third *Critique* that Kant's view on the nature of aesthetic experience has been stated. The second sub-division of the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* entitled 'the Dialectic of the Aesthetic Judgment', deals with the so-called paradoxes of aesthetic judgment.

Kant maintains that the characteristics, or what he called the "moments" of aesthetic experience can be brought to light only through the analysis of ordinary judgments of taste, such judgments as "This rose is beautiful". Kant has, therefore, attached special significance and value to the analysis of aesthetic judgments for revealing the true nature of aesthetic experience.

The first statement of the Analytic of the Beautiful is that "The judgment of taste is aesthetic". This judgment
has special significance in the development of the Kantian aesthetics. According to Kant, taste "is the faculty of estimating the beautiful", but "the discovery of what is required for calling an object beautiful must be reserved for the analysis of the judgment of taste."\(^1\) Thus, the judgment of taste is concerned with the estimation of the beautiful and the discovery of the \textit{a priori} principles of aesthetic experience.

According to Kant, "Judgment in general is the faculty of thinking the particular as contained under the universal. If the universal (the rule, principle, or law) is given then the judgment which subsumes the particular under it is \textit{determinant}. This is so even where such a judgment is transcendental and, as such provides the conditions \textit{a priori} in conformity with which alone subsumption under that universal can be effected. If, however, only the particular is given and the universal has to be found for it, then the judgment is simply \textit{reflective}.\(^2\) Judgment is that faculty of mind which enables us to decide whether or not a particular case is an instance of a universal rule. Understanding cannot be assigned the task of making such decision, because understanding can do nothing but produce concepts. Moreover, the understanding is not concerned with the sphere of particulars at all. Hence, in order to decide whether a particular case is or is not an instance of a universal rule,

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Critique of Judgment}, (Trans. Meredith), 1; \textit{iff}
\item \textit{op.cit.}, Introduction, IV
\end{enumerate}
we require the faculty of Judgment.

The function of the determinant judgments, which furnished the principles of the Transcendental Analytic in the Critique of Pure Reason, is to apply universal rules or concepts given by the understanding to the particulars furnished by intuition. The function of the reflective judgments on the other hand, is to find out the universal when the particulars only are given. Kant maintains that in judging an object with respect to its beauty whether in nature or art, the faculty of Judgment is exercised in its reflective capacity. Kant considers the judgment of taste as a kind of reflective judgment. He also maintains that reflective judgment has an a priori principle related to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure in a way analogous to that in which the a priori principles of the understanding are related to the knowledge of the empirical facts (in the first Critique), and those of practical reason to desire (in the second Critique). Reflective judgment, further, has an a priori principle which establishes the required harmony between nature and freedom. Thus, in the third Critique, Kant emphasised the importance of reflective judgment as the judgment through which our aesthetic experiences are expressed.
II
Subjective Basis of the Aesthetic

Kant begins the Analytic of the Beautiful with the following words:

"If we wish to discern whether anything is beautiful or not, we do not refer the representation of it to the Object by means of understanding with a view to cognition, but by means of the imagination (acting perhaps in conjunction with understanding) we refer the representation to the subject and its feeling of pleasure or displeasure. The judgment of taste, therefore, is not a cognitive judgment, and so not logical, but is aesthetic - which means that it is one whose determining ground cannot be other than subjective." 3

According to Kant, in aesthetic experience we are not concerned with an object but with the representation (Vorstellung) of an object in the subject's mind. It is the object as a perceived entity that produces the feeling of beauty. In other words, it is the object as experienced which exhibits beauty. It is the subjective effect of the object on the consciousness that the aesthetic judgment is concerned with. For example, when one perceives a sunset, aesthetic interest is awakened by the visual impression made

3. op.cit., 1
upon the mind. The actual, physical object is not directly important, rather it is the peculiar visual sensations and patterns which strike the mind that result in aesthetic feeling. An object in itself does not exhibit order and design, but it is the representation of the object that exhibits order and design. According to Kant, in aesthetic experience the mind is presented with contents from the noumenal world. But no objects can be beautiful, that is, reveal noumenal properties, since as an object it has been determined by consciousness and no longer exists as a pure entity. The aesthetic object is a subjective existent, it is not an actual existent objective entity. It is due to the subjective character of aesthetic experience that it can be a pure, free experience, which serves as a means of bridging the cleavage between the world of science (nature) and the world of freedom (transcendental).

Kant distinguishes the aesthetic judgment from the cognitive or logical judgment. He writes, "Here the representation is referred wholly to the subject, and what is more to its feeling of life - under the name of the feeling of pleasure or displeasure and this forms the basis of a quite separate faculty of discriminating and estimating, that contributes nothing to knowledge. All it does is to compare the given representation in the subject with the entire faculty of representations of which the mind is conscious in the feeling of its state. Given representations in a judgment may be empirical and so aesthetic; but the judgment which is
pronounced by their means is logical, provided it refers them to the Object. Conversely, be the given representations even rational, but referred in a judgment solely to the subject (to its feeling), they are always to that extent aesthetic.\textsuperscript{4}

Thus, the judgments of taste are essentially different from the cognitive or logical judgments, because they are not concerned with the object and its properties but merely with our own feeling about it. They are subjective inasmuch as we refer the representation of the object to the subject and its feelings of pleasure or displeasure.

From the above discussion, we find that, according to Kant, representation of an object in the subject's mind is one of the a priori elements of aesthetic experience. The a priori condition of aesthetic experience is that the subject must be impressed by the aesthetic object and that there should be subjective representation.

Further, it follows that in so far as the state of mind in aesthetic experience is not concerned with the object but with the effect the object produces in the subject, the aesthetic attitude is an attitude of indifference. Kant says, "It is quite plain that in order to say that the object is beautiful, and to show that I have taste, everything turns on the meaning which I can give to this representation, and not on any factor which makes me dependent on the real existence of the object."\textsuperscript{5} Kant maintains that aesthetic experience is

\textsuperscript{4} loc. cit
\textsuperscript{5} op. cit., 2; p. 43
completely free from conscious determination, and this means that aesthetic experience is not objective. Moreover, since it is not the object of any conscious aim, aesthetic experience is an indifferent experience.

III

Attitude of Disinterestedness in Aesthetic Experience

The necessity for subjective representation in aesthetic experience implies that we need fresh eyes to see objects as aesthetic objects. It is one fundamental condition of aesthetic experience that the aesthete sees the object as if for the first time, that is, perceives the contents without projecting into them the meanings which they have in everyday experience. In our everyday life we are concerned with the objects as existents, whereas our aesthetic concern for the objects is not existential. The aesthetic concern may be called phenomenological concern. Moreover, our concern with the objects of everyday experience is accompanied by interest, whereas our aesthetic concern is disinterested.

The attitude of indifference or disinterestedness makes aesthetic experience a unique, free and pure experience, which is associated with emotional satisfaction. According to Kant, this emotional state is qualitatively superior to other satisfactions. Kant calls this emotional state or aesthetic feeling "pleasure" or "delight". The qualitative superiority of excellence of the aesthetic pleasure or delight follows
from the disinterested nature of aesthetic experience. In other words, the mental state of satisfaction resulting from disinterested experience is qualitatively superior to any other feeling of satisfaction which follow from actions performed with interest. The disinterestedness of aesthetic experience is revealed by the analysis of the judgment of taste from the 'moment' of quality, which is the first moment or characteristic of the judgment of taste.

Thus, according to Kant, "The delight which determines the judgment of taste is independent of all interest", whereas, "The delight which we connect with the representation of the real existence of an object is called interest." Interest has reference to personal likes or preferences. Kant says, "Everyone must allow that a judgment on the beautiful which is tinged with the slightest interest, is very partial, and not a pure judgment of taste. One must not be in the least prepossessed in favour of the real existence of the thing, but must preserve complete indifference in this respect, in order to play the part of judge in matters of taste."

Kant distinguishes between three different modes of the feeling of pleasure and displeasure. These are the lower sensuous gratification, aesthetic experience, and practical moral experience. Kant says, "The agreeable, the beautiful, and the good thus denote three different relations of

6. op.cit., 2; p. 42
7. loc.cit.
representations to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, as a feeling in respect of which we distinguish different objects or modes of representation. Also, the corresponding expressions which indicate our satisfaction in them are different. The agreeable is what gratifies a man; the beautiful what simply pleases him; the good what is esteemed (approved), i.e., that on which he sets an objective worth. Agreeableness is a significant factor even with irrational animals; beauty has purport and significance only for human beings, i.e., for beings at once animal and rational (but not merely for them as rational - intelligent beings - but only for them as at once animal and rational); whereas the good is good for every rational being in general; - a proposition which can only receive its complete justification and explanation in the sequel. Of all these three kinds of delight, that of taste in the beautiful may be said to be the one and only disinterested and free delight; for, with it, no interest, whether of sense or reason, extorts approval. 8

That which gratifies appetitive satisfaction is confined to the fulfilment of animal needs, like hunger or thirst. That which is esteemed or is morally satisfying serves a rational need, that is the consistency of a universalised maxim. That which pleases or is aesthetically satisfying is pleasing because it fulfils a rational need but requires an animal element, that is, the order and undesigned

8. op.cit., 5; p. 49
lawfulness of a representation unified by the imagination but originating from the organs of sight and hearing. The rational need in the case of aesthetic feeling is for order and design, and its animal foundation lies in the role the sense organs play. The moral feeling is bound by a purely intellectual process; the appetitive feeling by a purely animal process; the aesthetic feeling by an intellectual process which is impossible without an accompanying animal process. Thus aesthetic pleasure is neither appetitive gratification nor moral esteem. It is a feeling which stands midway between the purely sensuous and the purely intellectual.

After distinguishing the delight of taste from other forms of satisfaction, Kant has defined the beautiful in the context of the first "moment". He says, "Taste is the faculty of estimating an object or a mode of representation by means of a delight or aversion apart from any interest. The object of such delight is called beautiful." This definition puts stress on two theses which form the cornerstone of Kant's aesthetic theory. The first says that the judgment of taste is aesthetic, and the second that the judgment of taste is disinterested. These two statements sum up the discussion on the nature of aesthetic experience and the judgment of taste from the standpoint of quality.

9. loc cit
Kant, then, proceeds to examine aesthetic judgment from the moment of Quantity. He writes, "The beautiful is that which, apart from concepts, is represented as the object of universal delight." Kant maintains that this definition of beauty is deduced from the element of disinterestedness in aesthetic experience. He argues that he who judges an object to be beautiful is aware of the fact that he does so apart from the interest in the existence of the object, that is to say, he is in no way influenced by any personal predilection for the object. Hence, the object will be judged in the same manner by each and every person. In other words, each person makes aesthetic judgment independent of his personal likes and dislikes, and other idiosyncrasies.

It follows that a person will speak of the beautiful as if beauty were an objective quality. He will also formulate his aesthetic judgment as if it were a logical judgment, which is a judgment about the cognition of objects, although he knows that his judgment is not a logical one. He does so because there is a resemblance between the aesthetic and the logical judgments in that they both claim to be universally valid.

The difference between the aesthetic and the logical judgments, however, is apparent, because the aesthetic judgment

10. op.cit., 6; p. 50
is concerned with nothing but the subjective feeling of pleasure or pain. The universality involved in aesthetic judgment, according to Kant, is subjective universality, unlike the objective determinative judgments of logic. Kant introduced a special term, 'Gemeingültigkeit', a difficult German term for translation, which carries the meaning of inter-subjective validity of aesthetic judgments. Universally valid logical judgments have universal appeal because they are subject to open intellectual discussion. They are of the form "All roses are beautiful". On the other hand, aesthetic judgments are not open to cognitive intellectual discussion. They are singular judgments expressed in the logical form, "This rose is beautiful." The aesthetic judgment is also different from the moral judgments, which claim universality. The moral judgments demand universal agreement because we can presuppose that everyone will feel the same respect for the moral law as we do, and will approve of actions that conform to it. But the moral judgments carry an interest in them, because we approve of moral actions in so far as we believe that the actions which are determined by those laws realise an object in the existence of which we are interested, namely, the good. The aesthetic judgments, however, claim universal validity simply because they are independent of all personal interest in the objects. Besides this, the fact that aesthetic judgments are communicable demands that aesthetic properties be formal and not material, because if I can communicate my feeling of beauty, it cannot be a feeling based simply on a sensed, material quality. Kant says, "In a judgment of taste,
the universality of delight is only represented as subjective." He has pointed out that the particular form of universality in aesthetic judgment is a significant feature not for the logician but for the transcendental philosopher. The transcendental philosopher takes special interest in this form of judgment because it is a new discovery regarding the relation between the particular and the universal, which is to be found neither in the Critique of Pure Reason nor in the Critique of Practical Reason. In this respect Kant kept in mind the role of aesthetic experience (which is expressed through aesthetic judgment for the sake of communication) in apprehending the inner throb of noumenal reality.

Kant concludes that "a universal voice" is present in aesthetic judgment, concerned merely with the delight without depending on mediation through concept. Kant says, "Here, now, we may perceive that nothing is postulated in the judgment of taste but such a universal voice in respect of delight that is not mediated by concepts; consequently only the possibility of an aesthetic judgment capable of being at the same time deemed valid for everyone. This judgment of taste itself does not postulate the agreement of everyone (for it is only competent for a logically universal judgment to do this, in that it is able to bring forward reasons); it only imputes this agreement to everyone, as an instance of the rule in respect of which it looks for confirmation, not from concepts, but from the concurrence of others. The universal voice is, therefore, only an idea." 11

11. op.cit., 8; p. 56
Kant then raised the question: In a judgment of taste does the feeling of pleasure follow or precede the judging of the object? Kant says that this is a very important question because "the solution of this question is the key to the Critique of taste." He maintains that our judgments of taste rest upon the assumption that a state of mind which accompanies a representation can be communicated. Here Kant deals with the inter-subjective communicability of the judgments of taste. He writes, "The subjective universal communicability of the mode of representation in a judgment of taste, since it is to be possible without presupposing a definite concept, can refer to nothing else than the state of mind in the free play of the Imagination and the Understanding (so far as they agree with each other, as is requisite for cognition in general). We are conscious that this subjective relation, suitable for cognition in general, must be valid for everyone, and thus must be universally communicable, just as if it were a definite cognition, resting always on that relation as its subjective condition." 

According to Kant, since aesthetic experience precedes the feeling of pleasure, and also since aesthetic judgment accompanies aesthetic experience, the feeling of pleasure does not precede the judgment, rather the aesthetic judgment precedes the pleasure. Kant says, "Now this purely

12. op. cit., 91: P. 57
subjective (aesthetic) estimating of the object, or of the representation through which it is given, is antecedent to the pleasure in it, and is the basis of this pleasure in the harmony of the cognitive faculties.  

Kant sums up the discussion in the form of a definition drawn from the moment of Quantity: "The beautiful is that which, apart from a concept, pleases universally." This definition brings out two points, namely, (i) that the beautiful is devoid of concept, and (ii) that the beautiful can please universally. It also means that aesthetic experience is conceptless and that the element of universality is present in this experience. Further, it follows that aesthetic judgment is conceptless although it appeals universally.

V

Notion of Subjective Finality in the Aesthetic:

Purposiveness Without Purpose

Kant then analyses aesthetic judgment from the moment of Relation. In this regard, he defines the concept of end or finality "in transcendental terms". He says, "An end is the object of a concept so far as this concept is regarded as the cause of the object (the real ground of its possibility); and

15. op.cit., p. 60
the causality of a concept in respect of its Object is finality (forma finalis).

Kant maintains that the concept of finality is very important in the context of aesthetic judgment. He recognised two kinds of finality, namely, subjective finality and objective finality. He says that the division of the Critique of Judgment into the "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment" and the "Critique of Teleological Judgment" depends upon the distinction between these two kinds of finality. Aesthetic judgment is concerned with subjective finality, and teleological judgment is concerned with objective finality. Subjective finality is the faculty of estimating formal (subjective) finality by the feeling of pleasure or displeasure. Objective finality, on the other hand, is the faculty of estimating the real (objective) finality of nature by understanding and reason.

In the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment, Kant is concerned with subjective purposiveness where we are interested in nothing but the mere form of our object and its relation to our faculty of representing it to ourselves. When we judge an object to be purposive in this sense we do not assume that the object itself is a purpose of nature. Regarding the character of this purposiveness, Kant says, "There can be, then, purposiveness without purpose, so far as we do not place the causes of this form in a will, but yet can only make the explanation of its possibility intelligible to ourselves by

16. op.cit., 10; p. 61
deriving it from a will. Again, we are not always forced to regard what we observe (in respect of its possibility) from the point of view of Reason. Thus, we can observe a purposiveness according to form, without basing it on a purpose (as the material of the nexus finalis), and we can notice it in objects, although only by reflection. As a corollary to this characterisation of subjective or formal purposiveness, Kant maintains that the judgment of taste rests on a priori grounds. This means that the judgment of taste claims universal and a priori validity. But there is a difficulty in linking this statement with the statement that the judgment of taste depends entirely on the pleasure which is felt by the judging subject. For it is quite impossible to determine a priori what the objects are the representations of which will give us the pleasure. The objects must first be given in experience. Until then we cannot know anything as to the causal relation between our representation of the object and the pleasure which is produced by it. But Kant tries to overcome this difficulty by maintaining that the consciousness of formal purposiveness and the pleasure which we take in it are identical. The consciousness of formal purposiveness expresses itself in the subjective feeling. Kant maintains that our pleasure in the beautiful, that is to say, aesthetic experience, is contemplative and disinterested. Contemplative and disinterested delight, therefore, is the hallmark of aesthetic experience.

Kant, further, says that the judgment of taste is “independent of charm and emotion.” According to him, that taste of the beautiful which is uninfluenced by charm or emotion is pure aesthetic experience. He maintains that the charm which is simply ornamental, although contributory to the aesthetical satisfaction should not be confused with real beauty. Moreover, “Emotion, i.e., a sensation in which pleasantness is produced by means of a momentary checking and a consequent more powerful outflow of the vital force, does not belong at all to beauty.” Such emotion, therefore, should not be considered as pure aesthetic experience.

On the above issue Prof. T.M. Greene, however, observes as follows:

"Wholesale exclusion of emotion as irrelevant to the aesthetic experience ... is a mistake into which he (Kant) was led by his analytical preoccupation with what was entirely unique to the aesthetic transaction, it is clear that he has merely overshot the mark. Desiring to exclude from consideration aesthetically irrelevant emotion and to correct the common romantic identification of aesthetic satisfaction with artistically uncontrolled emotional response, Kant failed to recognise the essential role of emotion in both artistic creation and aesthetic.

18. op.cit., 13; p. 72
19. op.cit., 14; p. 76
response. But granting the inadequacy of his analysis, he erred in the right direction. For beauty is certainly not present in all objects that are emotionally appealing; it is indeed a unique quality whose locus is "aesthetic form", i.e., the aesthetically satisfying organization of sensuous or other material. And true aesthetic response expressing itself in the judgment of taste is certainly a unique type of satisfaction occasioned by a distinctive intuition of a distinctive type of object. Kant's critique of emotionalism in art provided much needed corrective to contemporary romantic bathos and might still be read with profit by critics and philosophers of art who would reduce the aesthetic experience to undifferentiated emotional response."  

There are certain elements of truth in the above remarks. We cannot wholly exclude the element of emotion in aesthetic experience, nor should we indulge in emotionalism in aesthetics. Kant's intention, however, was not to reject emotion totally. He simply pointed out that undue emphasis on emotion mars the purity of aesthetic experience. He holds that pure aesthetic experience must be a priori (i.e., it should not be based on the pleasure of sensation), necessary and universal. These features of aesthetic experience are also

present in the pure aesthetic judgment.

Kant distinguishes between two forms of beauty — "free beauty" and "merely adherent beauty". The beauty is adherent if the beautiful object is referred to a specific purpose; it is free if it is not. This distinction is not a classification of things but rather a distinction between two modes of apprehending 'purposive' wholes. Kant says, "The first presupposes no concept of what the object ought to be; the second does presuppose such a concept and the perfection of the object in accordance therewith. The first is called the (self-subsistent) beauty of this or that thing; the second as dependent upon a concept (conditioned beauty), is ascribed to objects which come under the concept of a particular purpose."21 According to Kant, as soon as an idea interposes itself into the aesthetic experience it destroys its purity. Only visual forms which mean 'nothing in themselves' can be proper objects of aesthetic experience. Kantian examples are "delineations a la grecque foliage for borders or wall-papers ... what are called in music phantasies (i.e., pieces without any theme), and in fact all music without words."22 These are phenomena which, having no intellectual content, present themselves for pure aesthetic judgment. They are instances of free beauty (flowers, of course, are free natural beauties), whereas the Church or "a

21. Critique of Judgment, (Trans. Bernard), 16; p. 81
22. loc cit
Regarding the **Ideal of beauty**, Kant says that "It is only throwing away labour to look for a principle of taste that affords a universal criterion of the beautiful by definite concepts; because what is sought is a thing impossible and inherently contradictory."\(^{24}\) The **Ideal of beauty** "is bound to be merely an ideal of the imagination, seeing that it rests, not upon concepts, but upon the presentation - the faculty of presentation being the imagination."\(^{25}\) This Kantian view reminds us of Plato's doctrine of the ideal character of the "Ideas".

Kant's discussion of the nature of the judgment of taste from the standpoint of the moment of Relation leads to the third definition of beauty:

"Beauty is the form of finality in an object, so far as perceived in it apart from the representation of an end."\(^{26}\)

This definition characterises beauty as the form of finality without representation of an end. This point has been clearly explained in Kant's distinction between the two kinds of finality already discussed. In the context of this definition,

\(^{23}\) loc cit
\(^{24}\) Critique of Judgment, (Meredith trans.), 17; p. 75
\(^{25}\) loc cit
\(^{26}\) op. cit., p. 80
it follows that in aesthetic experience we experience the form of finality (without representation of end) in the aesthetic object.

VI

Subjective Necessity, Common Sense and Universal Assent

Kant, then, analyses the judgment of taste from the moment of modality. Here, the question raised by Kant is: "What special kind of necessity may be ascribed to the judgment of taste?" Kant maintains that in judging a thing beautiful, we assume that there is a necessary connection between our representation of it and the pleasure which is felt by us. But the necessity involved in the judgment of taste is not the kind of necessity which belongs to our theoretical a priori judgments. The reason is that the aesthetic judgments are not based on objective concepts. The necessity involved in aesthetic judgment, again, is different from the necessity claimed to be involved in the practical moral judgments. In every practical judgment, there is a necessary connection between the representation of the moral law and the delightful feeling of respect for the moral law. And this feeling is the subjective awareness of the objective law through Reason. It is the will of the agent which is determined by the moral law and the feeling of respect is identical with this determination of the will.
The necessity involved in our theoretical and practical judgments is objective; but that of aesthetic judgment is not objective. Kant called the necessity of aesthetic judgment 'exemplary necessity'. We call a thing beautiful on the ground that we regard it as an instance of a rule which we consider necessary. According to Kant, this form of subjective necessity, is not derived from experience, i.e., from observation of the agreement of personal judgments on beauty.

We demand everybody's assent to our aesthetic judgment because the aesthetic object seems to us to exemplify a universal rule. We simply assume that our judgment is necessary, and that every other subject ought to agree to it, on the ground that it refers to a rule which we must necessarily assume. Kant writes, "However, this necessity is of a special kind. It is not a theoretical objective necessity ... . Nor yet is it a practical necessity ... . Rather, being such a necessity as is thought in an aesthetic judgment, it can only be termed exemplary. In other words, it is a necessity of the assent of all to a judgment regarded as exemplifying a universal rule incapable of formulation. Since an aesthetic judgment is not an objective or cognitive judgment, this necessity is not derivable from definite concepts, and so is not apodictic."²⁷

²⁷ op.cit., p. 81
Kant maintains that the subjective necessity attributed to a judgment of taste is conditioned, that is to say, the ought in aesthetic judgments is only pronounced conditionally. The ought is conditional in so far as we can never be certain that we have subsumed a particular case under the rule correctly. However, the rule itself must be held to be universally valid and necessary.

Again, the subjective principle which determines what pleases or displeases is based upon feeling only and not through concepts. However, such a principle has universal validity because it is "a common sense" (Sensus communis). Kant presumes that there exists a specific subjective state of mind called "common sense", which is common to all judging subjects. He thinks that only if we presuppose such a common sense can we make a judgment of taste. Kant writes, "The judgment of taste, therefore, depends on our presupposing the existence of a common sense. (But this is not to be taken to mean some external sense, but the effect arising from the free play of our powers of cognition). Only under the presupposition, I repeat, of such a common sense, are we able to lay down a judgment of taste." Kant maintains, however, that we cannot give objective proof of the existence of common sense in transcendental philosophy since it is not possible to prove existence logically. But, according to Kant, transcendental philosophy can prove that a determinate relation

28. op.cit., 20; p. 85
between imagination and understanding is a necessary condition of objective existence. But it cannot prove that an indeterminate relation between the two faculties actually exists.

Here, some questions may be raised: Whether the assumption of common sense compatible with the fundamental principles of transcendental philosophy? And have we reason to assume that common sense might exist? Kant answered these questions in the affirmative. His argument is that since transcendental philosophy is convinced that the universal communicability of knowledge is possible, it can assume, although not prove, that the universal communicability of the feeling which arises from our consciousness of the harmonious play of the cognitive faculties is also possible.

Kant's conception of subjective necessity accounts for both the presence of common sense and the universal communicability of aesthetic experience. He says, "The necessity of the universal assent that is thought in a judgment of taste, is a subjective necessity which under the presupposition of a common sense is represented as objective." When we make a judgment of taste, that is, when we call an object beautiful, we demand universal assent to our judgment, in spite of the fact that our judgment is not based on concept, but dependent on our own feeling. This is because we presuppose that our feeling is not a private feeling, but a feeling which

29. op.cit., 22; p. 84
ought to be common to all judging subjects. This shows that aesthetic judgments are not empirical judgments because they are not judgments concerning what is, but judgments of what ought to be. And we learn in logic that the ought cannot be derived from the is. Thus, we cannot advance much to prove the existence of common sense except presupposing its existence as the condition for the validity of the judgments of taste.

Following the discussion on aesthetic judgment in the light of the Fourth Moment (Moment of Modality), Kant defined beauty, thus: "The beautiful is that which apart from a concept, is cognised as object of a necessary delight." From the standpoint of modality, and in the context of this definition of the beautiful, aesthetic experience is characterised as a unique kind of experience which entails necessary assent of all. It is, again, an experience in which delight follows necessarily if the aesthetic requirements are fulfilled.

VII

Solution of the Paradoxes of Taste

Although Kant's theory of taste is interesting and illuminating, his solution to the problems of aesthetics is not free from difficulties. While studying his analysis of taste we come across some paradoxes. Kant himself recognises the paradoxical nature of the notion of an aesthetic judgment. The notions of disinterestedness, of purposiveness without a
purpose, of universal validity while retaining the individual character, and of necessity without objective basis of the judgment of taste - all these characterizations of the judgment of taste may, on the face of it, lead one to question whether Kant is resorting to an exercise in self-contradiction.

However, we have shown in our discussion above that Kant has given proper explanations to his view on taste. We may here furnish some additional explanations to solve the paradoxes of taste. The paradox can be presented thus: How are we to account for the fact that beauty, though not a quality of the sensuously apprehended object, and though not apprehended conceptually, nonetheless, is an object of necessary satisfaction to all who are aesthetically sensitive? Kant explains this paradox first in terms of man's faculties of cognition and feeling, and then more illuminatingly in terms of his noumenal nature.

The first solution rests on his earlier analysis of our cognitive activities. In our awareness of physical objects the faculty of imagination and the faculty of understanding co-operate to produce intelligent perception. In the aesthetic experience these same faculties are aroused by the beautiful object to a more harmonious and complete activity than is occasioned by ordinary objects. The feeling of this greater and unexpected harmony is aesthetic pleasure. And, since all men's cognitive faculties are essentially alike, what gives us aesthetic enjoyment may be expected to do the same for others. The communicability of our delight
in beauty is thus explained, and the paradox of taste is psychologically resolved.

The second solution is the metaphysical solution. It is developed by Kant in the answer to the question: How are we to interpret the beauty of nature and the creations of artistic genius? According to Kant, "Genius is the talent (natural endowment) which gives the rule to art." It is the "mental aptitude (ingenium) through which nature gives the rule to art."

VIII

Genius as the Creative Faculty

Kant distinguishes between taste and genius, and points out that for the judgment of the beautiful objects only taste is required whereas for fine art, that is, for the production of beautiful objects, genius is needed. This distinction between taste and genius is an important aspect of the Kantian aesthetics. Now, though the genius employs a definite technique, the value of his work lies not primarily in its technical excellence but in its 'spirit' (Geist). Though nature is his model, he does not copy nature slavishly, and though each work of art which he produces is an expression of his artistic insight, he is himself more often than not

30. op.cit., 46; p. 168
31. loc.cit
unaware of what he meant to say until, in the finished product, it has said itself. Such unique activity can be accounted for only in terms of inspiration. **Genius is the vehicle of a supra individual force whose comings and goings the artist himself can only partially control.** Works of art are the phenomenal expressions of the noumenal realms of values. Beauty, like goodness is born in mysterious fashion, and its discovery by genius is not to be explained solely in terms of psychological and physical antecedents. It is created; yet not, like goodness, by an act of will and through the agency of reason but rather through the spontaneous activity of our noumenal nature. And since all genuine works of art are perfect and complete, they may well be regarded as the most adequate expressions of noumenal value which the phenomenal world affords.

This account of genius suggests a more illuminating explanation of the universality and communicability of taste. Genius, provides us with the Key for natural beauty. For nature is not beautiful to the aesthetically untutored mind; the artist teaches us to find beauty in it and in so doing opens up to us a new and deeply satisfying approach to nature. In the aesthetic experience natural objects are apprehended not as embodiments of universal law, but on the analogy of art, concretely, each object being regarded as complete and perfect in itself. In this context we remember the remark of E.M. Foster, who wrote, "A work of art - whatever else it may be - is a self-contained entity with a life of its own imposed on it by its own creator. It has internal order. It
may have external form. That is how we recognise it.™ The understanding still clings, in science, to the mechanical interpretation of nature; our aesthetic sense meanwhile releases us from this conceptual yoke and calling upon us to view nature from within rather than from without, opens our eyes to a beauty which the scientist cannot see. This new experience does not of itself justify the definite assertion that natural beauty has been created by nature for our special benefit, but it does enable us to envisage nature as the phenomenal embodiment of the self-same noumenal reality, or "supersensible substrate", as Kant calls it, which in creative genius and aesthetic insight stirs the human soul. Thus, only when we consider Kant's aesthetic theory against the background of his overall metaphysic, we can solve the so-called paradox of taste.

IX

Beauty of Nature and Beauty of Art

Kant also distinguishes between the beauty of nature and the beauty of art. He writes, "A beauty of nature is a beautiful thing; beauty of art is a beautiful representation of a thing.™ He maintains that whereas we can appreciate the beauty of nature independently of any concept of the sort

33. Critique of Judgment, (Trans. Meredith), 48; p. 172
of thing the object is intended to be, that is, without any reference to purpose, we must, in appreciating a beautiful work of art, presuppose a purpose, that is, an idea of what the object is to be. In the appreciation of a beautiful work of art, its perfection must be taken into account.

In contrasting the beauty of art with the beauty of nature, what Kant is trying to show is that in estimating a beautiful product of art we have to refer our representation of it to the will of a human being who intended to give beauty to his product. The purpose which the artist has in mind and the perfection he seeks to realise is beauty. Kant writes, "Beauty (whether it be of nature or of art) may in general be termed the expression of aesthetic ideas. But the proviso must be added that with beauty of art this idea must be excited through the medium of a concept of the object, whereas with the beauty of nature the bare reflection upon a given reflection upon a given intuition, apart from any concept of what the object is intended to be, is sufficient for awakening and communicating the idea of which that object is regarded as the expression." 3\textsuperscript{a}

Kant points out that a distinction should be drawn between mechanical art and aesthetic art. It is only the latter which has in view nothing but the production of objects which will give pleasure to those who judge them. Aesthetic art may be divided into pleasant art and fine art. The former

3\textsuperscript{a}. op.cit., 51; pp. 183-184
produces things with a view to giving pleasant feelings to others. Cookery for instance may be called a pleasant art; for its only concern is that people should enjoy its products. Fine art on the other hand seeks to produce more than mere enjoyment.

Kant maintains that a man who produces beautiful things cannot act according to any definite rules, and that on the other hand a work of art must be dependent on some rules. It follows that the rules which the artist applies belong to his own individual nature. He must possess a capacity for producing things which will be judged beautiful. The rules cannot be determined either by the artist who produces the work of art or by those who judge it. They are an expression of the individual nature of the artist. The productive faculty of the artist is called by Kant, Genius. Kant maintains that a balance between taste and genius, between judgment and imagination should be maintained in fine arts. On this matter Kant says, "Taste, like judgment in general, is the discipline (or correlative) of genius. It severely clips its wings and makes it orderly or polished; but at the same time it gives it guidance, directing and controlling its flight, so that it may preserve its character of finality. It introduces a clearness and order into the plenitude of thought, and in so doing gives stability to the ideas, and qualifies them at once for permanent and universal approval, for being followed by others and for a continually progressive culture." 35 Thus, Kant has

35. op. cit., 50; p. 182
emphasised the need for maintaining harmony between taste and genius. According to Kant, "The requisites of fine art are, therefore, imagination, understanding, soul, and taste." 36

X

The Beautiful and the Sublime

Kant's theory of aesthetic experience has two aspects, namely, experience of the beautiful, and experience of the sublime. Kant gives an introspective description of these two aspects of aesthetic experience. Both the beautiful and the sublime arouse aesthetic response of the subject in the form of pure aesthetic experience.

Both the beautiful and the sublime please on their own account. However, they have two things in common: they can both be predicates of aesthetic judgments that are singular in logical form and claim universal validity, and they afford in themselves a pleasure that does not depend on sense or on a definite concept of the understanding. Further, our judgments about the sublime, like our judgments of taste are reflective judgments.

But beauty and sublimity are contrasted in some respects. Beauty is connected with the form, hence the boundedness of an object, while the sublime involves an experience of boundlessness. Further, while beauty depends

36. loc cit
upon the purposiveness of an object, making it seem as it were, pre-adapted to our judgment, the sublime is aroused by objects that seem as it were to do violence to the imagination. Kant says, "The beautiful in nature is a question of the form of the object, and this consists in limitation, whereas the sublime is to be found in an object even devoid of form, so far as it immediately involves, or else by its presence provokes a representation of limitlessness, yet with a super-added thought of its totality ... ."37

Kant maintains that the delight in the sublime like that in the beautiful is universally valid (according to quantity), to be independent of interest (according to Quality), to contain subjective purposiveness (according to relation), and to be necessary (according to modality). Thus, Kant's analytic of the sublime corresponds in structure to the analytic of the beautiful.

Kant distinguished between two kinds of the sublime, namely, the mathematically sublime and the dynamically sublime. When nature presents us with objects which we judge to be infinitely great, and to which therefore we attribute absolute magnitude, we have mathematical sublime. And, when nature in some of its products makes us feel its absolute might over us, we have dynamical sublime.

37. op.cit., 23; p. 90
According to Kant, "Sublime is the name given to what is absolutely great." This means that the sublime is that "in comparison with which all else is small." Kant holds that the joy and elevation felt in the presence of the sublime is the natural human pleasure of being reminded that we have a faculty of mind surpassing every standard of sense.

Kant maintains that the mathematically sublime is explained in terms of 'a movement of the mind' caused by an interplay of the imagination and cognition; the dynamically sublime, on the other hand, by an interplay of imagination and desire - in both cases 'without purpose or interest'. The mathematically sublime is great beyond all comparison. On the other hand, nature judged as power in an aesthetic judgment is dynamically sublime. In either case, the sublime pleases immediately by virtue of its opposition to the interest of the senses.

XI

Dialectic of Aesthetic Judgment

As in the case of the Critique of Pure Reason and the Critique of Practical Reason, the Critique of Judgment also deals with the dialectical problems. The second Division of the "Critique of Aesthetic Judgment" is entitled the "Dialectic

38. op. cit., 25; p. 94
39. loc. cit.
of Aesthetic Judgment”. The dialectical issue involved, therein, is the antinomy of taste. But Kant raised the question: How can there be a dialectic of the Judgment of taste? How can aesthetic judgments, being purely subjective and not laying any claim to objective universal validity or necessity involve dialectic?

Kant clarifies his standpoint on this issue in the following passage:

"For a power of judgment to be dialectical it must first of all be rationalizing; that is to say, its judgments must lay claim to universality, and do so a priori, for it is in the antithesis of such judgments that dialectic consists. Hence there is nothing dialectical in the irreconciliability of aesthetic judgments of sense (upon the agreeable and disagreeable). And in so far as each person appeals merely to his own private taste, even the conflict of judgments of taste does not form a dialectic of taste for no one is proposing to make his own judgment into a universal rule. Hence the only concept left to us of a dialectic affecting taste is one of a dialectic of the Critique of taste (not of taste itself) in respect of its principles: for, on the question of the ground of the possibility of judgments of taste in general, mutually conflicting concepts naturally and unavoidably make their appearance. The transcendental
Critique of taste will, therefore, only include a part capable of bearing the name of a dialectic of the aesthetic judgment if we find an antinomy of the principles of this faculty which throws doubt upon its conformity to law and hence also upon its inner possibility.40

Kant explains the dialectic of taste using two antithetical statements on taste, along with a third statement which suggests a synthesis to the earlier two statements. The first statement says that "everyone has his own taste". The second statement, on the other hand, says that "there is no disputing about taste." These two statements are antagonistic to each other. Kant suggests a third one, "there may be contention about taste", which stands between the first two statements.

The antinomy of taste may be presented as follows:

1. **Thesis.** The judgment of taste is not based upon concepts; for, if it were, it would be open to dispute (decision by means of proofs).

2. **Antithesis.** The judgment of taste is based on concepts; for otherwise, despite diversity of judgment, there could be no room even for contention in the matter (a claim to the necessary agreement of others with this judgment).

40. *op.cit.*, 55; p. 204
Kant's solution of the antinomies of taste is similar in procedure to the solutions of the theoretical and the practical antinomies, in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Practical Reason*, respectively.

Kant has solved the theoretical antinomies by showing that the contradiction between two apparently incompatible propositions arises from the fact that the object to which the propositions refer is not taken in the same sense.

Kant follows similar procedure in the solution of the antinomy of taste. It is asserted in the thesis that the judgment of taste refers to no concept and in the antithesis that a reference to a concept is implied in the judgment. There are elements of truth in both the contentions. Concepts in the sense of cognitive concepts are not employed. But concepts in the special sense are employed, otherwise judgments of taste will not be judgments without concepts. The judgment of taste refers to a specific kind of concept, namely, an indeterminate concept.

For the ultimate solution of the antinomies of taste Kant took the help of metaphysics. Thus, regarding the universal validity of our aesthetic judgment we do not know any objective reason. Yet we are entitled to ascribe to them subjective universal validity by referring our representation of the object to the supersensible substratum. This explains why Kant believes that it is only on *transcendental principles* that the nature of a judgment of taste can be explained and the antinomy of taste solved. It is only on principles which
presuppose, the existence of an unknown supersensible world
that the nature of such a peculiar faculty of the mind as
taste can be explained, a faculty which contains such different
elements as mere subjectivity (independent of concepts) on the
one hand and reference to the indefinite concept of the
supersensible on the other.

Thus, just as Kant has shown in the *Critique of Pure
Reason* that the Idea of the existence of another world is
necessary for the knowledge of our own world although
theoretical Reason cannot know supersensible objects; and just
as he has shown in the *Critique of Practical Reason* that in
the practical field we can transcend the world of sense and
can realise the supersensible (as the postulate of morality)
although we find that no theoretical knowledge of it is
possible; similarly in the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment*,
Kant has presupposed the 'supersensible substrate' as the
ultimate ground of aesthetic judgment. Kant considers the
problem of the Dialectic of Aesthetic Judgment from a
comprehensive point of view.

XII

*Kantian View on the Nature of Aesthetic
Experience: A Retrospect*

The analysis of the judgment of taste under four
different 'moments', namely, Quality, Quantity, Relation, and
Modality, and the definition of the beautiful given at the
end of the discussions under each 'moment', have revealed the important features of aesthetic experience. The characterisations under Quality (namely, disinterestedness) and Relation (namely, purposiveness without a purpose) are the negative, while those under Quantity (namely, universality) and Modality (namely, necessity), are the affirmative, modes of describing the nature of aesthetic experience.

In saying that aesthetic experience is disinterested, Kant does not mean that the aesthetic object is uninteresting. On the other hand, he maintains that aesthetic experience awakens in us no desire, moral or sensuous. In aesthetic experience we contemplate on the aesthetic object and enjoy the act of contemplation itself. Aesthetic experience does not arouse our appetites, nor does it call forth our moral approval or condemnation, but it merely delights us in being what it is.

Further, aesthetic experience is universal, although it is non-conceptual. In this experience we look upon beauty as though it were objective. Yet beauty, unlike truth and goodness is not objective in the sense of being susceptible to logical proof. No intellectual criterion of beauty can be found. To say that an object is beautiful is to suggest that others possessed of taste will agree with this judgment always, provided that the judgment has been made correctly. Aesthetic judgment lays claim to universal acceptance. The beautiful, therefore, is that which universally and necessarily arouses disinterested satisfaction by virtue of its form (i.e.,
purposiveness without purpose).

Kant maintains, moreover, that aesthetic experience is the feeling of purposiveness without the idea of purpose, the sense of meaning without conceptual definition of what is meant, the awareness of finality or completeness without an intellectual realization of what was aimed at or achieved.

The Kantian theory of aesthetic experience and the judgment of taste in barest outline is this: The exercise of reflective judgment in the estimation of an object, in which the cognitive faculties of imagination and understanding are nevertheless involved leads to an aesthetic response to that object. This aesthetic response yields a special state of mind, which may be thought of as a harmony or free play of these cognitive faculties. This subjective state manifests its existence by the occurrence of a feeling of pleasure - the pleasure (delight) in the beautiful, or aesthetic response. But the source of the pleasure is not immediately apparent, although it is decided that the pleasure felt is due to the harmony of imagination and understanding. In aesthetic experience the object is regarded as altogether individual, and all notions of purpose, or morality, are laid aside. Moreover, there should be rigorous exclusion of concepts from aesthetic experience.

There should also be the free play of imagination and understanding. When the harmony of imagination and understanding is enjoyed in and for itself, apart from any concept we have the genuine aesthetic pleasure. And since the harmonious
Interplay of imagination and understanding is transcendentally necessary for any experience, it is a condition which can be supposed legitimately in all men. Hence the implicit claim that our judgments of taste hold for all men is in principle justified. The judgment of taste as a class of judgment, therefore, has been legitimised.

As we have stated earlier, the Kantian theory on the nature of aesthetic experience is based upon the overall metaphysical position of Kant. For Kant, aesthetic experience is the experience of the noumenal world as it filters through the phenomenal world. Kant shows that given the metaphysical significance of aesthetic experience, and given the condition that aesthetic experience be "pure" experience, the subjectivity and universality, the contingency and necessity of aesthetic judgments, and the emotive but disinterested state of mind in the aesthetic subject are seen as logical deductions.

We have already stated that the Kantian metaphysics is based upon the concept of "the supersensible" which is teleological in nature. When we enjoy the beauty of nature we experience a design which is nothing but the expression of a Cosmic Reason akin to that within us which expresses itself in the moral law. Thus beauty can be taken as the symbol of the moral order. Kant says that "to take an immediate interest in the Beauty of Nature ... is always a mark of a good soul, and that, where this interest is habitual, it is at least indicative of a temper of mind favourable to the moral feeling that it should readily associate itself with the
contemplation of nature." Three ideas stand out clearly in the Kantian metaphysic. As he says, "Firstly, there is the supersensible in general, without further determination, as substrate of nature; secondly, this same supersensible as principle of the subjective finality of nature for our cognitive faculties; thirdly, the same supersensible again, as principle of the ends of freedom, and principle of the common accord of these ends with freedom in the moral sphere." Moreover, Kant maintains that beauty ultimately leads to a teleological goal. He says that "the teleological judgment serves as basis and condition of the aesthetic." Earlier he wrote, "The sole foundation of the judgment of taste is the Form of Finality of any object (or mode of representing it." Kant maintains that ultimately aesthetic judgment is related to teleological judgment. Hence, the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment leads to the Critique of Teleological Judgment.

Thus the Kantian theory on the nature of aesthetic experience opens a wide vista to Kant's metaphysical position. It helps us in the proper understanding of Kantian metaphysics. It may appear that there are paradoxes in the Kantian aesthetics. But the so-called paradoxes disappear when they are seen against the background of Kantian metaphysics, as we

41. op.cit., 42; p. 157
42. op.cit., 57 - Remark II; p. 215
43. op.cit., 48; p. 173
44. op.cit., 11; p. 62
have already discussed in the context of the Dialectic of Aesthetic Judgment.

In the two succeeding chapters we shall discuss Abhinavagupta's standpoint on the problem of aesthetic experience. In the next chapter (Chapter 4), we shall give an account of the problems of Indian aesthetics and Abhinavagupta's thought.