CHAPTER VI

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In the previous chapters we found that aesthetic perception is quite different from general perception, and it is neither subjective, nor objective, but both in character. We also found how different factors are working side by side in the origin of such perception and we have discussed the role of suggestion in aesthetic perception. Now for audio-visual signs, abstraction as well as symbols are necessary for the communication of aesthetic perception has also been discussed.

In this concluding chapter human consciousness about aesthetic concept and attitude will be analysed from different points of view.

Different thinkers have employed different concepts and variously regarded this consciousness as a kind of sexual attraction, play, illusion, imagination, wish-fulfillment, pleasure, aesthetic distance, intuition, transcendental feeling, so on and so forth.

That consciousness may be discussed under three broad
classes, such as primitive sexual attraction, aesthetic appreciation and transcendental feeling. Though it is true that no sharp demarcation is possible and an artistic consciousness is too complex a phenomenon to discuss and that it cannot be reduced to any single formula, yet this classification will help us to detect the main stream and isolate the guiding force behind it.

**Primitive Sexual attraction**

Today it is impossible to discover the exact time of origin of human consciousness about Art. To begin with, let us examine the biological theory according to which aesthetic awareness is deep rooted in the biological nature of living beings, and appreciative characteristics are found in both higher and lower animals.

Even before the appearance of human species in the world, artistic consciousness existed in some lower insects, which has been noticed by some eminent scientists. One of them, Charles Darwin, held that aesthetic feeling was not exclusively confined to human beings. Beauty in nature has not been created only for the satisfaction of men's feelings, and that many objects, of beauty appeared long, long before the descent of Man. Nature does not create flowers not only to provide a
pretty perception for human species, but also to attract insects. Though that attraction mainly raises sexual awareness, yet we have to accept that appreciative consciousness must imply some modes of consciousness of beauty.

Here we can reproduce some important information from Charles Darwin: "Sexual selection implies that the more attractive individuals are preferred by the opposite sex, and as with insects, when the sexes differ, it is the male which, with some rare exceptions, is the more ornamented, and departs more from the type to which the species belongs, and as it is the male which searches eagerly for the female, we must suppose that the female, habitually or occasionally prefer the more beautiful males and that these have thus acquired their beauty.

This discriminating power we find in the fish-kingdom as well. Darwin says in this connection "on the whole we may conclude that with most fishes in which the sexes differ in colour or in other ornamental characters the males originally varied, with their variations transmitted to the same sex, and accumulated through sexual selection by attracting or exciting the females".

2. Ibid., p. 687.
Not only colour, but the most interesting point is that fishes are known to make various noises, some of which are described as "being musical". The sounds are voluntarily produced by different fishes in several ways as a means for attracting members of the opposite sex.

Birds also have fine powers of discrimination and in few instances it can be shown that they have a taste for the beautiful.

Thus selection is always made by the sex which is not surplus in nature. In the kingdom of human beings we find just the opposite. Generally the male member of the sex has the power of selection. Though there are some exceptions, we find in Indian Mythology, there were selection meetings for marriage, (Seyâmbera-Sabæ) where the bride could choose her bridegroom. Yet in general we find this selection was always made by the male member of the sex.

From the above instances of insects, fish and birds, we come to the conclusion that these lower creatures have a rudimentary power of appreciating beauty. And this sense of appreciating power gradually developed in the higher beings.

We also come to know that savages coloured and ornamented their bodies to draw the attraction of members of the opposite sex. In ornamenting themselves they exhibited their
consciousness of beauty. Negroes and other tribes in many parts of the world are used to paint their faces with red blue, white or black bars.

Darwin shows that savages pay great attention to dress. Beautifully dressed people, were preferred for sexual selection. Even an English philosopher maintains an extreme opinion that, clothes were first made for the purpose of ornamentation and not for warmth. Still now savages in almost every country decorate themselves with plumes, necklaces, armlets, ear-rings etc. This act of decorating and painting of one's body is a mark of their consciousness of beauty, which is also a factor in sexual attraction.

These primitive sexual characteristics of painting as well as ornamenting one's own body according to different racial standards of beauty, can be found even now in different countries and races. In our modern urban and rural civilizations, women pay great attention to treatment of hair, eyelid colouring, dress etc. and this shows how appreciation of beauty acts on sexual attraction. So, Darwin regarded aesthetic consciousness as the most sublime expression of an instinct, deeply rooted in animal nature. This current of thought was both enriched and forced into a new direction by Herbert Spencer (1820-1903). Spencer

1. The Descent of Man, pp. 852, 831.
seeks to explain this artistic consciousness not as mere animal nature but as a compound of nature and society. Physiology and sociology interpenetrate in his doctrine. It is in the light of these sciences that he develops the play hypothesis.

In the great organisms of nature and human society, each functional part and each structural feature is determined by its peculiar utility. All our bodily powers and mental faculties, the instincts and appetites as the highest feelings subserve either the preservation of the individual or the maintenance of the species. There are only two activities which are exceptions to this rule and they belong together by their very exemption from the dominion of necessity - art and play.

So, according to Spencer, art is also one type of play, and aesthetic consciousness is devoid of utility.

Sexual traits are intermixed in the fighting games and games of skill. From anthropology we know that primitive man fought for woman. The battle for woman plays a vital role in all races. Woman is the spectator and judge in the fighting games of men. The pleasure in the fighting games is greatest when the participator knows himself to be observed and appreciated by the eyes of beautiful women. A peculiar biological connection exists between fight and love. Erotic games take place only among sexually mature people.
The attractiveness of such a play consists merely in the illusion.

Konrad Lange1 says, "The need for erotic illusion is the fruitful soil of several arts. First, of the dance, whose one element is the play of movement and the other the game of love. In its mimic side the dance is an artistic supplement to wooing. .............. Woman dances for the sake of dance, man for the sake of woman. For men the dance is a means to an end, for women it is an end in itself. Naturally, with women, too, the dance has a certain sexual tint".

Friedrich Schiller developed the play theory of art in a new direction. Schiller says that the source of both play and art is overflowing energy. Art is imposed by taste upon playful imaginary activity.

So, the aesthetic consciousness is 'conscious self deception' or illusion.

Epicurean Appreciation:

Epicureanism is the doctrine, which we mainly find in psychology. This doctrine determines the motive of every voluntary action, which may be regarded as the desire for one's own welfare. The doctrine is often combined with psychological hedonism, which is to be explained exclusively in terms of the desire for pleasure and aversion from pain.

In aesthetic consciousness, the application of this theory is like this: the artist gets some 'pleasure' by creating art work, and the appreciator also gets such pleasure by perceiving it, though that art work may or may not be personal. Both are appreciating aesthetic creation only because it is 'pleasurable'. There is much controversy about the character of that 'pleasure', even some theorist raises the question, 'Is art work really pleasure giving?'

But here we will not enter into that controversial question; we shall only confine our discussion within 'Ego' or Self, and to what extent, if at all 'pleasure' plays a vital role behind that egocistic appreciation. Here we can limit our notion of aesthetics, to exclude all perceptions, which are not appreciative in character, and therefore, are no values at all. So, appreciative perceptions are only to be judged in this sphere. Therefore, we can say that aesthetics is chiefly concerned with the perception of values.

George Santayana, an American Philosopher and interpreter of aesthetics, defines 'Beauty' as a value. That is to say, it is not a perception of a matter of fact or of a relation, it is an emotion, an affection of our volitional and appreciative nature. An object cannot be beautiful, if it cannot
give pleasure to any perceiver. This value is positive. Beauty is constituted by the objectification of pleasure. It is the pleasure, which is only objectified through artistic-creation. According to him, it is not merely consciousness but also emotional consciousness.¹

Sigmund Freud's (1956-1939) theory of aesthetic consciousness follows from his general theory of psycho-analysis. Freud attaches the greatest importance to the element of "Volition" in our mind, and to put it simply we can say that volition means "impulse toward a goal". Some kind of pleasure or satisfaction is that goal. Briefly we can say the appeasement of desire involves pleasure.

We know the famous three-fold structure theory of Freud for describing human personality. The 'Id' is the bearer of the primal energies of our deepest instinctive nature. The 'Ego', is the social self which is concerned with the perception of the environment and the self's adjustment to it. The 'Super-Ego', is the seat of our ideals and moral standards, which is largely unconscious. This 'Super-ego' is developed within us in early childhood. The ego in men is gradually trained by the influence of external necessity to appreciate reality.

¹ /Modern Book of Esthetics, p. 36.
According to Freud the creation of art is an activity whose aim is to assuage unappeased wishes. Both the creator and perceiver of art achieve this wish-fulfilment. Day-dreams are common to all, and the ego of the normal adult admits this kind of satisfaction to some extent. The enjoyment or the gratification of the imaginary fullfilment is the motivating force behind our phantasy activity.

We are already familiar with the idea that a day-dream is not necessarily conscious, that unconscious day-dreams are the main source of art. Freud explains, that a latent dream, the realization of a wish-phantasy, is frequently built up in unconsciousness. The act of repression creates in the unconscious sphere hidden ideas and impulses isolated from the rest of the personality.

An artist is one who is urged on by instinctual needs which are too clamorous; he longs to attain to honour, power, riches, fame and the love of woman. But he lacks the means of achieving these gratifications. So, like any other person with an unsatisfied longing, he turns away from reality and transfers all his interest, and all his libido too, on to the creation of his wishes in the life of phantasy, from which the way might readily lead to neurosis.

1. Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis (delivered 1915-17).
An artist is not only one who has a life of phantasy; the intermediate world of phantasy is sanctioned by general human consent. For those who are not artists the gratification that can be drawn from the springs of phantasy is very limited. An artist opens out to non-artists the way back to the comfort and consolation of their own unconscious source of pleasure, and so earns their gratitude and admiration.

Another founder of psychoanalysis, the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung (1875- ) diverted the theory of artistic consciousness to a new direction. According to him, the artist draws upon the treasury of unconscious primordial images, the psychological traces left by countless typical experiences of our ancestors.

An artist has a dual contradictory aptitude. On the one hand he is a man with a personal life, on the other hand, he is an impersonal creative process. As a man he may be sound or morbid with a will or personal aim, but as an artist he is 'man' in a wider sense—he is "collective man". So as an artist he can carry and shape the unconscious psychic life of mankind.

We find the life of an artist in many cases full of conflicts, because two forces are at work within his

consciousness. On the one side as a common man he is consciously eager for enjoying happiness, satisfaction and security in personal life, on the other side he is moving with a ruthless unconscious passion for creation which may go so far as to override every personal desire. When conscious life is characterized by one sidedness, the aesthetic aptitudes are activated instinctively, and ultimately come to the light in the dreams of individuals and the visions of artists and sages. Thus psychic equilibrium is restored in the artist's consciousness, and the artist comes to meet the spiritual need of the society in which he lives.

Again, a great work of art is like a dream. We perceive it when we are able to let the work of art act upon us as it acted upon the artist. We see that the artist has drawn upon the healing and redeeming forces of the collective psyche behind consciousness with its isolation and its painful errors.

Ultimately Jung declares that aesthetic consciousness is a 'participation mystique' - a higher level of consciousness, in which it is men who lives, not as an individual, where weal and woe donot count, but only as human existence.

A similar interpretation we find in the writings of Christopher Judewell (1907-1937). He synthesised Freudian and Marxian theories of art.¹

According to him poetic feeling is controlled by the social ego. He also recognised the aesthetic consciousness which directly springs from the artist's instinct. But that consciousness is always molded by the surrounding social world. That consciousness may even contradict his personal experience. Ultimately the artist's personal consciousness will be changed or self-socialised through the medium of the art world and the life of the artist will be forced to live in a new and dumb consciousness. This is the conceptual adaptation of the artist. In the same way the perceiver or appreciator of art, also adapts his consciousness by incursion into a new work of art. His appreciation is possible only when he has some similar experience in life. A British psychologist, Edward Bullough (1880-1934) has emphasized the concept of 'psychical distance', and claims it to be considered as one of the essential characteristics of the aesthetic consciousness. The consciousness is by no means devoid of interest but 'actual spatial distance'.

This 'psychical distance' he illustrated thus "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 distant 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, . . . . . . .
Nevertheless, a fog at sea can be a source of intense relish
and enjoyment.¹ It becomes a source of enjoyment when
represented in a picture. Normally we are unable to perceive
distance view. Usually we are not aware of those aspects of
things which do not touch us immediately and practically.
Even we are not 'conscious of impressions'—which have not
impressed ourselves. But when we perceive things reversely,
I.e. from psychical distance perception, the experience
finds its expression in various forms of aesthetic conscious-
ness.

Transcendental Feeling

Immanuel Kant has given emphasis upon the isolation and
disinterestedness of the aesthetic consciousness. Conceiving
fine art as the free creation of beauty for beauty's sake,
Kant admits that the essence of beauty is that it is enjoyed
only for itself. We find an harmonious play of our faculties—
a dynamic equilibrium of sense, feeling, imagination and
understanding—which are stimulated by the aesthetic creation.

Kant says in his critique of pure Reason:—"No knowledge

can take place in us, no conjunction or unity of one kind of knowledge with another, without that unity of consciousness which precedes all date of intuition, and without reference to which no representation of object is possible. This pure, original and unchangeable consciousness I shall call transcendental appreciation.

This representation of unity, which is a constituent element of the conception of combination, is not that which is expressed through the category of unity, but that of unity of apperception or transcendental self-consciousness. Self-consciousness, which has been shown to be the ground of possibility of all empirical experiences, because it is the presupposition of the synthesis of recognition, is itself empirical. Kant, therefore, maintains that the ultimate ground of possibility of all consciousness and, therefore, also of empirical self-consciousness is the transcendental unity of apperception. It precedes experience as its apriori conditions.

The transcendental self has no content of its own, through which it can know itself. It is a mere identity" I am I", It is a mere form, through which the contents, which never constitute the self, are yet apprehended as objects to the self. Thus, though the self is being conscious of itself
as identical throughout the succession of its experiences, yet that identity can never be discovered in those experiences. It can only be thought as a condition of them. It is the condition of memory and, therefore, cannot be substituted by it. It can never be found among appearances. From the above discussion we get two major points.

1. All consciousness involves self-consciousness.
2. Self-consciousness is a mere form of which the contents are apprehended as existing for the self.

From the second point, it is clear that there can be no such thing as pure self-consciousness in the sense of consciousness where only the self is aware of itself and nothing else.

We can summarise the whole position of Kant as follows:–

1. Consciousness of time, as a form of change, involves empirical self-consciousness,
2. Empirical self-consciousness is conditioned by transcendental self-consciousness,
3. Transcendental self-consciousness is also the pre-condition of objective experience.

According to Schelling aesthetic consciousness is the highest stage of transcendental Idealism. In the work of art the original harmony or identity of object and subject, nature
end freedom, unconscious and conscious, is presented objectively.

Schelling is an advocate of transcendental idealism. He says: 1 "the work of art reflects for us the identity of conscious and unconscious activity. But the opposition of the two is infinite, and it is removed without any contribution of freedom. The basic character of the work of art is thus an unconscious infinity . . . . . . which no finite understanding can fully unfold."

To make it clear he gave an example from Greek Mythology "The Odyssey of the spirit which, in a strange delusion, seeking itself feels itself; for the land of fantasy toward which we aspire gleams through the World of Sense only as through a half-transparent mist, only as a meaning does through words," of which it is undeniable that it includes within itself an infinite meaning and symbols for all Ideas. It is impossible to assume any through-going intentionality in its discovery and in the harmony with which everything is unified into such a great whole.

According to Schopenhauer 2 "Art, by providing us with

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1. Philosophy of Art and Beauty, p. 367.
2. Philosophy of Art and Beauty, p. 448.
the apprehension of the Ideas, enables us to enter a state of pure subjectivity of perception. In this state the will is eliminated from subjective consciousness and we became a pure will-less subject of knowledge. With the withdrawal of subjectivity the possibility of suffering is abolished, the will being quieted. We escape from the world and its troubles through this pure will-less contemplation.

We can say that this "Will-less contemplation" is the transcendental feeling in art, which lifts us from mere egotism.

According to him aesthetic experience is the 'Idea', which is free from all relations. This 'Idea' can be attained when our knowledge is free from the service of will and the subject also is free from all elements of individuality. Time, space and causality are the forms of human intellect. The apprehension of objects is done by means of the forms of intellect which are immanent in knowledge. That apprehension of object, which transcends these forms, is transcendental knowledge.

This transition, takes place when some external cause or inward disposition lifts us to a higher plane of consciousness all on a sudden. Our knowledge is always subservient to
our will. All willing arises from want, deficiency and final
from suffering. But in a connoisseur it breaks free from
the service of the will. This happens when the individual
subject ceases to be individual. When he becomes the pure
will-less subject of knowledge. He, who gets such percep­
tion is no longer an individual but he is pure will-less,
timeless and spaceless subject of knowledge. \(^1\) Aesthetic
feeling is, therefore, according to him, the knowledge of
'Idée' as pure contemplation, transcending all the indivi­
duality.

Harold Osborne \(^2\), a contemporary aesthetician, discusses
this transcendentalism more elaborately. The artist, is a
man who experiences the world more richly than the ordinary
perceiver. Again, the artist, by means of his art, enables
others to participate in that richness. Thus by appreciating
an art-work the ordinary person attains a richer and finer
experience of this universe. Actually, when we appreciate
a proper art work, we are sure to obtain such experiences,
which directly involve some mysterious and transcendental
feeling of ultimate reality.

Therefore, the artist opens before us a new road of

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sensation or increases the ordinary man's capacity for experience. The good singer or instrumental musician can profoundly alter our ordinary or normal capacity for sound perception. The painter can also alter and sharpen our habits of visual attention, guiding us to see and enjoy patterns of colours and shapes in the actual world which would otherwise have passed unnoticed.

Harold Osborne diagramatically represents two types of 

transcendentalism:

Traditional transcendentalism

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{R} \\
\downarrow \\
\text{AER} \quad \text{WBe} \quad \text{SeR}
\end{array} \]

R- Real essence

AER- Artist's emotion which mediates knowledge-by-acquaintance of R.

WBe- Work of Art embodying the artist's emotion.

SeR- Duplicate of the Artist's emotion in the Spectator, mediating to the spectator knowledge-by-acquaintance of
The excellence of any work of art is judged by the extent to which the spectator achieves—or feels that he achieves—a revelation of ultimate reality through contemplation of the refined transcendentalism.

R - Rela essence

W - Work of Art

AER - The work of art arouses in the artist an emotion which mediates to him knowledge-by-acquaintance of ultimate reality.

SeR - The work of art arouses in the Spectator a similar emotion which mediates to him also knowledge-by-acquaintance of ultimate Reality.

Here we can ask a question, is there really such a thing as knowledge-by-acquaintance?
According to Harold Osborne, the knowledge-by-acquaintance is certain. We are directly acquainted with the sensory core of every perceptual situation, whether it be external or internal perception, and without this direct acquaintance we could have no conceptualized knowledge of anything whatever. Aesthetic transcendentalism claims that some men enjoy a form of knowledge, which is direct awareness of the metaphysical reality. That awareness is comparable to the awareness of material reality which we attain in sense perception. This knowledge is mediated through an emotion aroused in the perceiver by the contemplation of certain works of art.

So, we can say, that primary concern of transcendentalism is to achieve the awareness of the true nature of reality underlying the superficial appearances of things.

This attitude of transcendental consciousness is the ultimate aim of Indian aesthetics. This consciousness indicates harmonious development of all our aesthetic faculties which is also the prime condition of our spiritual life. The Universal Spirit being the embodiment of aesthetic aspiration, most perceivers of beauty are concerned with a spiritual

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discipline which liberates our consciousness from all diversity, foulness and darkness, and enable us to be united with the Supreme Beautiful.

The same Idea of Beauty we find in Sahityadarpana.

"सद्ययोऽक्षणिण्यासुण्याच्यावस्थानांनिदः
चेतनायथाप्रत्ययो चतुर्थायो नस्योऽपि
सुविदाविद्या नामस्यार्थे रसः"

"This Flavour(arising) from the exaltation of 'Purity', indivisible, self-manifested, made up of joy and thought (in their identity '), free from the contact of aught else perceived, akin (as a uterine brother) to the perception of God, the life whereof is hyper-physical wonder, is enjoyed by those competent, in inseparableness—like the form of the Deity (which is according to the Vedanta—itself the Joy with which it is recognised by the liberated soul').

Dr. A.B. Keith expresses the same idea in the following passage "That is something supernormal (Alaukika), an aesthetic pleasure (cematkāra), which we understand, because we actually experience it and are conscious of it,

but which cannot be explained in any other terms. The
pleasure is comparable to the appreciation of unity with the
absolute attained in meditation; it is something which comes
to the man of taste (Sahrdaya) and if a man has not taste,
he cannot experience the feeling. This meditation or "Dhyana" is the seed of glory, which emancipates man from
this gloomy biological life and summons the infinite within
sense-datum. The seed, which exists within mire, surely has
the imagination of infinite halo—Dhyana of Sun, otherwise
that seed does not blossom as the colourful fragrant lotus.

This sublimation of mind really we attain in meditation
or "Dhyana". In Chandogya Upanishad we get very nice
explanation of Dhyana, that is

1. Dr. Sasibhusan Dasgupta, Silpa Lipi, P. 55.
"Dhyana is wider than mind, so the world is just contemplating, the inner earth is also contemplating. The sky the ocean, the mountain, the God, the man- all are just contemplating. So the man, who attained glory in the human world also gets fruits of Dhyana."

The artist who is intensely devoted to his work becomes absorbed in the contemplation of the beautiful, and that devotion surely excites an emotion of admiration in the mind of other perceivers. The consciousness must be pervaded by a profound discontent with the facts of the external world and so it, yearns for something which transcends all these familiar facts and breaks into the remote and infinite. This transcendental joy is intuitive, where the artist as well as the perceiver's mind are illumined with a halo of divine light.