CHAPTER SIX
THE POSSIBILITY AND SCOPE OF AESTHETIC EVALUATION

We have discussed so far the nature of the art-work from two points of view, one, from that of the artist for whom it is an individual creation, an embodiment of his visualization, something that takes shape as he expresses the inner meaning of life, its vitality and rhythm and, two, from the audience and spectator's point of view, for whom it is that object, the perception of which affords him a singular experience of delight and fulfilment.

We have now to consider the nature of the relationship that exists between the artist and the spectator and the possibility of communication between them through the body of the art-work. The response of the spectator to the work of art is a response to an object of value; the availability of this value makes aesthetic experience worth having. It is, therefore, important that we try to discover how this value is assigned and where it is said to reside and what validity it may claim. Is the focus or seat of this value in the mind of the observer, or, is it in the object, or, is it in a relation between the two? Does the observer create the value himself or does he merely discover it in the object? What part does the creator play in contributing towards this value?
These are some of the more important questions that will arise in the course of our discussion.

In Indian thought the function and possibility of aesthetic evaluation is summed up briefly by Bharata in a well-known aphorism.

"Born in the heart of the poet, it (aesthetic experience) flowers as it were in the actor (in drama) and bears fruit in the spectator. All three in the serene contemplation of the work, form in reality a single knowing subject fused together."¹

The general conception of art-evaluation enunciated here, conceives its major business as an imaginative recreation rather than art assessment or appraisal. It pre-supposes that the spectator and artist during the aesthetic moment share a single experience. Even as the seed that is sown, the tree that it grows into and the fruit that it eventually bears, are different aspects of a unified process, which means that all three stages of the creative activity are in reality one. The whole process which starts from the intuitive moment in the mind of the creator finds its expression in the body of the object and fulfilment in the appreciation of the

¹Natyasastra, VI, V. 42; Abhinavagupta's, Abhinavabhārati, p. 295; Gnoli, The Aesthetic Experience p. XXVIII.
observer. In the absence of any one stage the entire creative process is incomplete.

Does this commit us to the view that the artist always creates for an audience? In a way, yes. The artist does always create for another, even though the spectator may be sometimes none other than himself. Every artist combines in himself the qualities of the creator and the spectator, of the artist and the critic. For the traditional Indian artist, the articulation is indeed an act of externalisation. This point will presently be dealt with more fully. Here we only wish to emphasize the often overlooked fact, evidently due to the great influence of Benedetto Croce's theory of art as intuition, that art is essentially a making which involves a maker, an actual process of making, and the made object.

The entire qualification for an imaginative recreation on the part of the spectator is artistic sensibility of the same kind as the artist possesses. Such an ideal spectator is known in Sanskrit as the sahredya which means literally one possessing a heart similar to that of the creator, that is, a "poetic heart".3


3Sahredya means literally 'of similar heart', that is, one who through cultivated sensibility is able to identify his mood with that of the artist. The term also means the 'enlightened' or 'cultured' (vidagdha)
This identity of attitude and feeling is a primary assumption made by the Indian aestheticians who look upon the process of appreciation to be qualitatively no different from the process of creation, the difference being only one of degree. This non-difference is clearly brought out by the use of the same set of terms to signify the artist’s talent as well as the observer’s experience; for instance, the term pratibhā, meaning literally ‘creative energy’, is also used to signify the aesthetic response, even as the all comprehensive term rasa is used to denote both the experience and the art quality. It is the rasika alone who is capable of tasting rasa as the artist alone is capable of producing it. Visvanātha says that the only proof of the existence of rasa is its relish by the sahrdaya. The response of the spectator is referred to as udbodhana which is an active mental revival or reproduction and not a passive appreciation or critical appraisal.

If this position is accepted then it follows that evaluation in art is primarily a matter of sharing and reviewing an experience. It is not a matter of making value judgements by deductive and inductive inference;

critic. Abhinavagupta on Natyāśāstra, p. 281/12, p. 287/7.

nor is there any sense in analysing the means by which communication is effected between the artist and the spectator, for the work of art is something other than a mere physical object. All that the artist does is to assemble and present his materials, what Bharata called the Determinants (vibhāva), Consequents (anubhāva) and Concomitant Effects (vyabhicaribhāva), in such a manner that together they provoke in the spectator a feeling similar to what he is experiencing.

The evocation of a mood in the spectator identical to the artist's is possible due to the prevalence of two sets of conditions. First, the possession by all human beings of certain common traits, tendencies and emotions (bhāva), some of which may not be evident but nevertheless are latently present in the sub-conscious. These are known in Indian speculative thought as saṃskāra; some of these can even be so deep-rooted as to go back to a previous life-time; these are called vāsanās. These

5 The word saṃskāra refers to the impressions which exist sub-consciously in the mind, of the objects experienced and which can be revived through key experiences and words.

6 Vāsanā comes from the root vas, to stay. It is often loosely used in the sense of saṃskāra. But vāsanā generally refers to the tendencies of past lives which lie dormant. Vāsanās are innate saṃskāras not acquired in this life, whereas saṃskāras are subconscious tendencies which are revived through appropriate stimuli. Surendranath Dasgupta, A History of Indian Philosophy, 5 Vols., Cambridge 1932-1955, Vol. I, p. 263.
influences form a part of man's racial consciousness and belong elementally to each one of us. A successful work of art aims at evoking these latent tendencies in every member of the audience. It thereby makes the experience communicable, between the artist and the spectator, and between the members of the audience themselves.

Since the artist possess a nature qualitatively similar to the spectator's, he is able, through the presentation of generalised moods, to elicit from him feelings similar to his own. Aesthetic experience is possible due to the existence of preconstituted knowledge and feeling on the part of the spectator, this experience being in part innate and in part acquired through the experience of our own reactions and our observation of reactions in others. Abhinavagupta says that poetic sensibility is the faculty of entering into identity with the heart of the poet. Of course people whose nature is gentle (sukumāra) will have a greater feeling for erotic poetry; people of bolder nature will have for heroic poetry etc.

The second set of conditions which allows the identification of the artist and spectator to take place

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7Gnoli, op. cit., p. 100, note 4.

Is the fact that we can remove successfully those mental obstacles (vighnas) which inhibit our natural responsiveness and stand in the way of a free exercise of artistic intuition. As mentioned earlier, the primary qualification for the creation of art as for its appreciation is artistic sensitivity, which talent though innate and universal, generally tends to get clouded over because of the intrusion of practical interests, intellectual or even social, moral and religious prejudices, doubts, false conceptions, egocentric tendencies and other inhibitions. For instance, if a spectator at a dramatic performance, doubts the authenticity of the characters portrayed and feels the whole thing to be anti-realistic, he will be seeing the show as a portrayal of real life and his perception of dramatic form and poetic feeling as conscious illusion, is likely to be frustrated. He may be naturally quite sensitive and responsive to other art forms like music and painting, but anything he identifies as 'drama' will be beyond his appreciation. This intellectual prejudice engendered by a theoretical conviction (that drama must necessarily portray life as it is) stands in the way of his responsiveness. Countless more examples can be given from the arts to show how such preconceptions and fixations, individual to every one, do not permit a universal aesthetic response.
Another type of prejudice which commonly occurs is the result of laying too much emphasis on categorization and classification in the arts. This tendency is due mainly to the formal type of instruction which is imparted in the arts. It causes us to think of art forms not as individual creations but primarily as examples of schools, periods, styles or the classes that Croce decries. This kind of thinking stands in the way of a free uninhibited response. Instead of responding directly and spontaneously to the work itself, we think about it as a type, proceed to gather all the available data regarding its method and style of production and thereby succeed only in making an intellectual judgement and not an aesthetic response.

The exhilaration of a direct experience, of actual sharing and participating, comes readily when the mind is cleared of all prejudices and preoccupations. Abhinavagupta and his school of thought lay the greatest emphasis on this mind-clearing discipline, considering it to be the primary requisite for proper art appreciation. They list seven major obstacles, which generally stand in the way of a pure experience, or in the current language of Edward Bullough, which prevent us from maintaining

9Edward Bullough, "Psychical Distance as a factor in Art and an Aesthetic Principle", in British Journal of Psychology, 1912, V, pp. 84-98.
an adequate psychical distance from the work, whereby we lose the full enjoyment of it. These are:

1. "Unbecomingness (avogata) of perception, called lack of versimilitude". This means simply, that when the artist presents fantastic or unrealistic themes, the spectator finds them difficult to accept and he assumes a sceptical attitude. This kind of attitude is not conducive to the aesthetic experience. Therefore the artist employs certain devices in order to make the themes artistically acceptable. One such device, for instance, is to introduce famous or legendary personalities around whom the fantastic themes can revolve with credibility, or he tries to create a kind of total atmosphere wherein even the fantastic appears to be credulous. In such circumstances the spectator willingly suspends disbelief and permits his scepticism to be overcome.

2. "Immersion in temporal or spatial determinations which are exclusively one's own or exclusively those of another". This obstacle is primarily due to the spectator's peculiar mental make up, whereby he finds it difficult to transcend his private sensations and reacts to the art work as he does to things in ordinary life. This fault is the result of an excessive 'underdistancing'. It is best represented by the type

of reaction made by the simpleton who, witnessing a drama for the first time, tries to intervene on behalf of the hopeless heroine who he thinks is suffering in actuality. Bharata's well-known injunctions concerning the enactment of certain ritual preliminaries like benediction, dance, etc. before the commencement of the performance is designed to draw the mind of the spectator away from too great a pre-occupation in his own affairs. In this way, the dramatist subtly leads the mind of the spectator away from practical concerns and prepares him for an aesthetic experience. 3. "The fact of being at the mercy of sensations of pleasure etc. which inhere solely in ones own person". This is quite similar to the just referred to obstacle and arises mainly due to the spectator being unable to detach himself from common pleasures, and from a submission to passion. It can be overcome by the employment of certain technical devices on the part of the artist who tries to present his material in such a manner that the mind of the spectator is drawn away from his own personal affairs. Formal music and dance, according to these aestheticians usually help to bring about a state of aesthetic receptivity in most people more easily than poetry and drama alone can do, hence these should be introduced along with the play whenever necessary.
4. "Defective state (vaikalya) of the means of perception" is a physical handicap which naturally affects the quality of the perception. 5. "Lack of evidence (asphutatva)". The normal spectator requires a complete audio-visual impact in order to respond aesthetically. The art-work must make an actual presentation, concretely embodying all elements it wishes to present in order to draw out an immediate reaction. Unlike science and other academic subjects (śāstra) the essence of art does not lie in what is inferred and not directly perceived, but in what is actually 'shown'. That which is not given cannot be inferred and is considered to be a lack of evidence. Bharata and other Indian aestheticians list a number of kinds of representation and styles which help the artist to project his intuition and create a better impact. Needless to say a sensitive spectator will not need all the techniques of presentation, but will be able to discern the artistic quality without its full and actual presentation. For instance, the reading of drama or poetry alone without its acting or recitation is sufficient for such a man to derive from it complete aesthetic pleasure. 6. "Lack of pre-eminence (apradhānata)". This obstacle to aesthetic experience embodies a great psychological insight. It is based on the principle

11Ibid., p. 84.
that the supreme human motive is pleasure, not pleasure taken in the hedonistic sense, but a non-sensuous, undisrupted delight. Rasa itself is predominantly this delight which when prolonged and intensified is akin to beatitude. Beatitude is the plenum of consciousness, the full enlightened awareness of "I" when the mind rests finally on this subjective essence; complete within itself it finds a perfect joy. This concept is explained in the Vyasabhasya (2, 4)\textsuperscript{12} by the example of a man who is hungry and whose mind cannot find the joy of fulfilment due to being obsessed by a want which can be satisfied only by something external to himself. The aesthetic delight arises, according to the Saiva philosophers, when the subject finds a pre-eminent state of mind within which it can absorb itself, undisrupted by any need beyond itself or other than itself. The nine rasas given by Bharata and accepted in full by those who followed him, are those states of mind which are based on relatively permanent conditions, and thus are able to enlist wholly the subject's consciousness. Any art work, based on an ordinary fleeting emotion (bhava) cannot enlist the undivided attention of the spectator for long, who due to the many distractions, desires and needs that arise, cannot experience supreme beatitude. These needs etc.

\textsuperscript{12}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 88.
are the obstacles to be removed from the experience of a pure delight.\(^\text{13}\) 7. "The fact of allowing admission to doubts". This last obstacle arises when the spectator tries to generalize conclusions in art drawn from particular instances. We have seen there is no logical connection between the elements presented in an art-object and the experience they evoke. The experience is evoked, but because the spectator makes a quick inference, such as "tears mean sorrow, laughter means

\(\text{13}\)Bharata analysed human emotions into eight principal ones and thirty-three subordinate ones. Poetry, music or drama which is essentially the evocation of a mood, must contain one dominant principal emotion, with the others supporting it. Two or more moods, he argued, break up the unity of the composition, and a piece based on a subordinate emotion fails to sustain the undivided attention of the spectator. The principal human emotions (sakāyābhāva) are the following: love, laughter, sorrow, anger, heroism, fear, disgust and astonishment. The principal subordinate emotions are the following: discouragement, weakness, apprehension, weariness, contentment, stupor, joy, depression, cruelty, anxiety, fright, envy, indignation, arrogance, recollection, death, intoxication, dreaming, sleeping, awakening, shame, mental aberration, distraction, assurance, indolence, agitation, deliberation, dissimulation, sickness, insanity, despair, impatience, and inconstancy. These fleeting states of mind should be used by a clever dramatist to support the main emotional theme; they contribute when used correctly, towards bringing out an aesthetic emotion, but if made into the main theme, the drama (poetry, music) fails to sustain long drawn-out attention, and thus never leads to the state of undivided joy (cf. Gnoli, The Aesthetic Experience, op. cit., pp. 29-30).
joy", but because the spectator can find within himself emotions and feelings similar to those presented in the work of art and is able to respond readily to them. The materials of art simply arouse the emotions already present in us; they act merely as stimuli. Aesthetic experience is possible because the human mind bears the latent traces of all its experiences and these come to the fore during the aesthetic moment, thereby enlisting the individual in an active participation. The aesthetic response lasts as long as there is an actual participation. Rasa is not the object of cognition nor the cause of it; it is not that which is realized in feeling but the feeling itself; not that which we taste, but the tasting itself. Anything not directly tasted, experienced, felt or shared gives rise to doubt and presents itself as an obstacle. The artist’s purpose is to eliminate these doubts by presenting his work in a manner which permits the spectator to immerse himself, so to speak, in his own consciousness. “Aesthetic enjoyment consists in the tasting of one’s own consciousness; this tasting is endowed with extreme pleasantness (beauty) which it contains from a contact with the various latent traces of pleasure, pain, etc. It differs both from ordinary perception which is full of obstacles (pragmatic requirements etc.) and from the perception of vogins, which is not free from harshness on account of the lack
The mental disciplines described above, it must be pointed out, are only the necessary pre-conditions of the aesthetic response and not characteristics of the response itself. They succeed in disengaging the mind from its immediate environment, a disengagement which is essential for the free activity of the mind, but the attitude engendered by this detached withdrawal is not by itself aesthetic. These conditions, by the removal of all personal factors which are likely to influence the making of an objective judgement, prepare the ground, so to speak, for a universal consent. This is the negative side of the aesthetic response; its positive side is characterised not by a passive withdrawal but by an active participation and identification.

The objectivity of aesthetic valuation, depends undoubtedly on the quality of the spectator's understanding; even as Kant observed in the Critique of Judgment, the beauty of nature is its conformity to our understanding, and conformity is something originally imposed in it by our intuition. But that wholly individual,


15 Immanuel Kant, Critique of Judgment, Tr. James Meredith Claredon Press, Oxford, 1911, p. 34, Introduction, VIII.
warm, intimate aspect of the response which makes it truly aesthetic, requires qualities other than those of understanding alone.

From this account a number of implications follow. First, that the aesthetic response, subjective as it is, does involve a degree of objectivity, thereby endorsing the judgement made thereupon with a measure of authority. Objectivity, however, that accrues to these judgements is derived not from any criteria-qualities present within the art-object but from the nature of the mental and emotional equipment with which the spectator is provided. Behind the individual evaluation of a particular work no general theory is involved, which can guide critics to formulate hypothesis about a standard which all artists ought to achieve and by which their works may be judged. We know that when such standards are sought to be stipulated as is done in every age, by the setting up of the various canons, schools, period, styles and standards, they possess only a limited value and are frequently transcended by original artists. The law of the artist is a law from within.

The second implication that follows concerns the nature and possibility of the aesthetic valuation. Clearly the aesthetic judgement which forms the basis of all our evaluation and criticism, is of different
order from (a) the response itself, and from (b) logical, scientific and moral judgements. In as much as the aesthetic judgement concerns the estimating of the value of a work of art in relation to other works of art and to other human values, it exercises the cognitive faculties of man and as such is distinct from the level of art intuition. Judgement is a necessary and closely allied phase to that of imaginative re-creation and appreciation, but it is nonetheless distinct. In order to realise the exact nature of the distinction let us first understand the function of critical judgement in the arts and distinguish it as a practical activity as against the contemplative spirit of the aesthetic response. Practical judgement and criticism which involves the appraisal of particular works involves a number of aspects. Greene aptly points out that "A work of art is a unique whole, a self-contained artistic 'organism' with a 'life' and reality of its own. But it is also an historical phenomenon, the product of a specific school, period and culture, and an exemplification of stylistic characteristics which it shares with other works by the same artist and of the same school, period and culture.... Finally, works of art vary in artistic excellence, truth, and significance; every work of art possesses its own degree of perfection and its own measure of truth or falsity, triviality or
In order to achieve a re-creation of the work in his own mind, the spectator is expected initially to understand the artist's "language". This implies knowledge of the technical 'knowhow' of a particular art form and familiarity with the generic style of the work and its historical and cultural setting. It is when the task of re-creation is over that the mind naturally seeks to estimate the value of the work. According to Greene these three aspects, namely, the historical, re-creative and judicial, are complementary approaches to the work of art, and for a valid criticism all three must be present together. No doubt he is right in emphasising the value of historical orientation and judicial appraisal for assisting and conditioning the task of re-creative apprehension, but it must be emphasised that these aspects can only complement, before and after, the supreme moment of the aesthetic response and not form an integral part of it.

Criticism strictly belongs to the first and final aspect alone of the appreciative process, that is, to the stage of historical reconstruction and judicial appraisal. At these levels it performs the important function of contributing to our understanding of the art-work, the background in which it was constructed, the medium,

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technique and methods employed. It helps us to understand the artist's language and idiom. But unless the critic transcends this level and keeps clear of the intrusion of judicial appraisal and of all the influences, intellectual, academic, historical etc. and otherwise, he can never achieve the degree of sensitivity, detachment and artistic responsiveness, which is necessary for a perfect re-creation, and consequently objective judgement. A man can never achieve the status of an ideal beholder, the sahārā, unless he goes, so to speak, beyond "criticism". At this level he is more than a mere "critic", being akin to the artist in his contemplative attitude, which requires the greatest activity and is not a passive state of mind. Within the supreme moment of the aesthetic response when the spectator and artist are one in spirit, all critical discourse is subordinated. This does not imply that it does not exist, nor that it is not necessary but that its function is relatively limited.

Even as the artist needs technical devices and the skill to employ them, in order to express his intuition, the spectator needs to be completely aware of the artist's medium and method in order to perceive and fully appreciate his intention. Criticism may accompany the aesthetic response but is not a part of it. Artistic sensitivity
alone can reveal what is and what is not "a work of art", and no critical verdict upon it can alter the nature of the agreement.

Criticism does not belong to the response itself, but accompanies it so closely that it appears to be a part of it. Its significance however lies not in any influence it exerts on the nature of the response evoked in the spectator but in the fact that it reinforces intellectually a decision at which he has already arrived at through intuition.

Clearly then art evaluation and criticism are processes distinct from art intuition, and the genuine connoisseur (sahrdava) is a different person possessing different qualities from the "critic". It is of course possible that both the qualities of critic and sahrdava are combined, and indeed this is often the case, but the one quality does not presuppose the other. There are countless "critics" who pass only intellectual judgements on art-works bringing to the notice of the audience remote points concerning the artists' biography, authenticity and method of work. At best they perform the task of identifying the style, period and school to which the work may belong, whether it is purely formal, or purely descriptive or mixed with foreign elements, and so on and on. Such men may never have had an
undiluted experience and consequently their evaluation of the work's artistic worth will be distorted. On the other hand, there are countless sensitive connoisseurs, who without any familiarity of the cultural milieu in which the artist has lived and created, can identify themselves with the work completely.

While the art-object is primarily a product of its age and time and these factors are of major importance in establishing the necessary involvement between spectator and audience, they can be overcome by the man who possesses a "poetic heart", and the artistic worth of the work can appreciated despite the barrier of "psychical over-distancing" they normally create.

Distinct as the aesthetic judgement is from the intuitive moment, it is nonetheless an essential aspect of the creative process and, as we have seen, is so closely allied to the art intuition as to be almost indistinguishable from it. Indeed, it derives its validity and authority from the absolute certainty of the intuitive moment and as such invests aesthetic judgement, even as Kant realized, with a subjective universality. Clearly, a judgement which derives its validity from the personal qualities of the judge and not from those which present themselves in the case, is a judgement of quite a different order from logical, scientific and practical judgements which are based on the facts of the case.
Without going into a detailed discussion of what is judgement and the various kinds of judgements that are possible, one might say broadly that to judge something implies the use of a definite procedure and not the arrival at a decision on the basis of personal inclination. Neither are judgements simple descriptions of physical or physiological fact. The procedure of arriving at a decision from given facts need not necessarily be the logical one of relating evidence to conclusion as in deductive and inductive inference. When works of art are evaluated in respect of other works and terms such as "good" and "better" conferred on them, the valuation is not made on the basis of any criteria-qualities given in the work from which the conclusion is drawn. Neither is the evaluation based on a simple feeling of the assessor. It is derived from the intuitive certainty through which the sensitive spectator has passed, and which has enabled him to reconstruct as objectively as possible the work as it was created by the artist. The function of the true critic, therefore, must be not to discover but to re-create. Criticism and appraisal too, should be more like creation than like demonstration and proof. To judge an art work, is not to assess it on its merits or demerits but to pass an unconditional verdict with which others may or may not agree, but for which there is no "proof" but only "agreement". There
is no logical justification for approving an art-work, as there is no sense in which we can justify our affections and antipathies. For a work either appeals or it does not, and no "reasons" can possibly make us enjoy what we have rejected on the basis of experience. This does not imply that no definite procedure has been followed and hence the judgement is an arbitrary one, but that it is of quite a different order from the objective method of logical judgement.

Does it then follow that there can be no education in art; is it that the one who is not fortunate enough to possess the primary qualification for appreciation is not capable of developing a taste for it? Also, that if a work has no appeal in the first instance, there is no future possibility of liking it? No doubt the capacity for intuitive visualization is innate and as such cannot be learnt, but there are some methods whereby the capacity may be enhanced. It is the artist's business to present his work in as objectively pleasing a manner as possible, so as to attract the spectator in the first instance, and involve him personally in the contemplation of the work as well to bring about in him, through the application of appropriate psychological and technical devices, the required detachment. This two-fold task requires the greatest skill and imaginative ability; it is such a subtle interplay of forces that the slightest imbalance
on one or the other side can destroy completely what might otherwise have been a work of art.

While no formal instruction can teach a spectator how to "involve" and "distance" himself simultaneously, a skillful artist can and does present his work in a manner as to "show" the spectator what he wants. The point we are trying to emphasize is, that instruction can take place in the arts, by exposing people frequently to art and thereby permitting them to develop from within and through experience their intuitive and imaginative faculties. This development is not an unconscious or passive process, but a highly stimulating and fully conscious activity. Taste in people is developed not by understanding principles of beauty but by experiencing them and absorbing them within oneself.

The critic likewise must not attempt to formally teach people the principles of art in order to develop in them a taste for it, but to bring to their notice the truly artistic moments and their end-products which might otherwise escape attention. By high-lighting and repeating such performances and by eliminating all that is in bad taste and unworthy, the critic can perform the very important task of educating people in the arts. He must show them how to respond aesthetically and not explain to them when and why they should respond.
The task of criticism, therefore, we suggest, is not to give general criteria as "reasons" but to "convey" the artistic qualities as artists do by creating them. It is in the use of an indefinite set of devices for "showing" and not "explaining" the merits of art, that true criticism lies.

It is significant, that the traditional Indian aestheticians never bore the burden of critics as we do in modern times. For them, as we have mentioned, criticism was not a necessary or separate function but a subordinate part of the entire creative process. Every artist, they maintained, is himself a creator and a spectator, an artist and a critic, even as is the sahādava who is essentially one in spirit with him. Consequently the services of an outsider like the critics of today, were never really required, art being, as they fully realised, wholly a matter of personal and direct experience.

In most cases, it was left to the efforts of the individual himself to develop his own sensibilities. This could be done through the arduous practice (abhvāsa) of prescribed personal disciplines such as those which enhance concentration, help detachment and permit identification. In most cases, these practices were similar to the first stages of yoga; indeed, the artist in fact, and even the skillful craftsman were given a
status similar to that of the yogi. "I have learned concentration from the maker of arrows", said Śaṅkarāchārya, in deep humility of spirit.

Finally, it remains to be asked whether our account of the nature of aesthetic value commits us wholly to a position of complete subjectivity whereby beauty is resolved into a type of emotional effect consisting in the feelings which certain persons of taste, entertain in regard to a work of art, or to a position of relative subjectivity whereby beauty refers to a relation subsisting between the artist's mind, the spectator's mind and the art-object in question? And if this be so, is it implied that beauty as an objective value, self-sufficient and independent of any other factors in the universe, does not exist?

In the theories of art that obtain today, protagonists do tend to commit themselves to one or the other viewpoint. The extreme subjectivist position is chiefly represented by Tolstoy in What is Art? wherein he identifies art with the communication of emotion.  

17Leo Tolstoy, What is Art, Oxford, 1924, p. 173. "To evoke in oneself a feeling one has experienced and, having evoked it in oneself, then by means of movements, lines, colours, sounds or forms expressed in words so as to transmit that feeling that others experience the same feeling - this is the activity of arts".
and the extreme objectivist point, by Joad, wherein the objectivity of beauty as a general concept is sought to be established. Others take positions half-way along the line, accepting with modifications one or the other view, but which on analysis reduce themselves to the basic stand-point of complete subjectivity which Tolstoy embraces or total objectivity which Joad advocates.

The view of the traditional Indian aestheticians does not commit itself to either of the above positions. To try to assign it to one or the other camp, or to a position half-way in between, is to misrepresent its essential nature. In Indian Idealist thought the subjective and objective are not polar principles, but in their essence one. The two, the objective and subjective, the cosmic and the psychical principles are looked upon as identical. The immost individual being is recognised to be the immost being of universal nature and all her phenomena. Beauty has therefore both an objective and subjective value, it being an all pervasive, all inclusive quality belonging equally to the object which contains it and to the subject who perceives it.

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It does not lie in the communication of emotion alone, nor is it a property of the object existing independently of a perceiving mind; it is rather that value which is discovered when we go beyond individual feeling and perception and directly experience the essence of the object. The perception of beauty is not the perception of an object as something different from the subject but its experience as something none other than the subject. From this point of view the controversy of whether aesthetic value is a subjective principle measured in terms of individual feelings, or an objective property of things is irrelevant. From one aspect it is completely objective, for the quality of beauty is not affected by the varying judgements pronounced upon it in different generations, or by different people in the same generation. A man of good taste, will invariably discern value in whatever form it may appear and public approval or disapproval will not affect his judgement. And a man of good taste, we define, not as one who is impulsive and whimsical but as a person who consistently passes judgements on the aesthetic value of works of art which are reasonably near the truth, or nearer the truth than most. It follows from this, that it may not always be possible to decide with certainty who is a person of good taste and who is not. This decision can only be borne out by experience. The point however is, that good taste is
not a private judgement; as we have already pointed out certain mental attitudes are necessary to acquire prior to the passing of accurate judgements. These mental attitudes include the acquisition of a certain frame of mind which must be free from all turmoil. The achievement of such a state of mind, known traditionally as sātvik and which means literally, one of purity, is insisted upon by the Indian thinkers, in order to ensure the objectivity of the response. While the water is troubled it cannot reflect, but that does not prevent the sky from being there.

Aesthetic value has an objective quality in as much as the spectator’s reaction does not alter the fact of its subsistence, but only reveals it. The nature of this objectivity, however, is not of the type prevailing in science and logic, for its discovery depends not on objective methods, which can, through a knowledge of their application, be employed by anyone. It depends rather on the possession of a clear, lucid state of mind which can be acquired only by great personal effort. It is in the total awareness within oneself of the objective value without, that beauty has its proper locus. Like the values of truth and goodness, beauty for the Indian thinkers exists, not as an abstract principle or general concept, but as a living
experience. From this we can conclude that while beauty as an objective principle may have potential subsistence as a fact of the phenomenal world, it exists actually in its realization by a subject, and it is here that its proper value, whereby it becomes truly aesthetic, belongs. Aesthetic value lies in the state of identity achieved by the subject in its full awareness of the object, whereby the subjective and objective as contradictory principles are sublimated and transcended. Therefore, beauty is as completely subjective as it is objective and the attempt to pinpoint it on one or the other side is a misguided attempt which gives rise to many questions which cannot be directly answered. Such questions, for instance, as to how we can perceive and understand artistic value correctly, how we can rate a work of art among others, and judge its value properly, whether beauty is a property of things, independent of a perceiving mind, etc. really have no answers as they are based on fundamental misconceptions which are expressed in the terms that are employed. We have seen that beauty cannot be properly an objective property of things and hence a work of art cannot be said to effect a communication at all but a communion wherein all those who belong to an identical state of consciousness, participate. The problem of aesthetic valuation sorts itself out when it is kept clear of such intellectual discussions which can
be at best relative and empirical, and becomes a living experience. As such art assumes a significant function in the life and development of the individual and of the society which is constituted of such individuals.

We shall now proceed to discuss the function of art and its value for human living.