CHAPTER I

ART AND REALITY

SECTION I (A)

ART AS IMITATION (WESTERN THEORIES)

One of the problems of perennial interest in aesthetics is the nature of art and its relation with reality. Of the many answers that have emerged in the course of discussion, the theory of art as imitation is perhaps the earliest. The term ‘imitation’ itself is much older in the critical consciousness of the West than its much-discussed employment by Plato to denigrate art. The Greek term ‘mimesis’ which is often translated into English as representation approximately means production of similarity. But this term is by no means simple; it is "vague, inadequate, primitive and its use involves a play on words when it does not lead to self-contradiction." In Plato it becomes even more enigmatic since, in the Dialogues "imitation as a term is left universal in scope and indeterminate in application",

2. R. McKeon, "The concept of Imitation in Antiquity" in Critics and Criticism - Ancient and Modern, ed. R.S. Crane, p.148
and, "is at no time established in a literal meaning or delimited to a specific subject matter." Imitation is a crucial concept in the aesthetic theories of Plato and Aristotle, though their interpretations of it are poles apart. Plato's theory of art as imitation is, in fact, a theory of art as illusion.

In the Republic Plato's prime concern as a philosopher and practical moralist is with truth and with the task of finding an answer to the social and political evils of his day. Most of his Dialogues deal with the problems of philosophy, ethics and politics. Plato's concern with art derives from his concern with these subjects. The Republic is primarily a treatise on politics, but it is characteristic of Plato, and generally of the Greeks, that it should become a treatise on paideia. The question is, what kind of education should be imparted to the guardians of the ideal city-state to fit them for their responsibility? Are the educational curricula suitable? The guardians are to be carefully selected. They are highly endowed citizens who must go through a rigorous course of education. This education must strengthen in them the

3. Ibid, p.149.
inherent virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice and generate in them a love of the ultimate reality, leading ultimately to a vision of it. With these ideals and objectives in mind, Plato challenges the traditional Greek view of the Homeric epics as the source of wisdom and culture and calls into question the value of poetry as a formative influence on the mind and character of the guardians. How could Homer, with his blasphemous representation of the gods as base, selfish and intemperate, with his depiction of heroes as suffering from common human failings, and his perverse stories showing the happiness and prosperity of the wicked and the misery of the just and good, teach nobility of character? Again, all art is imitative. Since justice in the state consists in each citizen doing the duty for which he is best fitted, it is imperative that each perform only one duty and play only one role. But art encourages mimicry, often of the ignoble sort. Imitation is unworthy of the high-souled guardians of the city-state who should always be truly themselves. Whom could they imitate, those, who are devoted to the vision of the ultimate reality? Plato allows imitation only of the courageous, the temperate, the just and the

wise. He proposes to institute public censorship of literature and declares that he would admit only hymns to gods and praises of heroes in his ideal republic.

This is Plato's stand on poetry in Books II and III of the Republic when he is considering the education of soldiers and artisans. In Book X, he returns to the problem in the context of the education of the guardians. Appropriately enough, the problem is now considered in a more philosophic light - in the light of his theory of Knowledge and of the Good. In Book III Plato had used the term 'imitation' in the pejorative sense of only external resemblance. In Book X, however, he discusses the concept of 'imitation' in epistemological terms. Imitation is not only the production of mere similarity; it carries the implication of an illusion that is at the other extreme from Forms or Ideas. His thinking in this respect is based on two considerations: 1) there is a ladder of reality whose highest rung is the Idea or the Form of the Good, 2) the words used in literature have no referential status. Plato's theory of imitation is well-known and we need not recapitulate it here at length.

5. Ibid, II 377, III 392.
6. Ibid, III 393.
7. All that the artist need do is "to take a mirror and turn it round in all directions." Republic, X 597. (tr.F.M.Cornford, The Republic of Plato p. 318.)
The essential point is that the artist tries to imitate not the ultimate reality but the things the craftsman makes. There also he imitates them not as they really are, but only as they appear,

"... he never penetrates beneath the superficial appearance of anything ... yet if he is skilful enough, his portrait of a carpenter may, at a distance, deceive children or simple people into thinking it as a real carpenter."

Thus, according to Plato, art is nothing but make-believe; it is illusory. As illusion, it represents the lowest degree of reality, and to live in this world of make-believe is to betray our endowment and our responsibility as rational creatures whose proper aim of the ought to be the vision/Highest Reality. Art takes us away from reality. The four ascending orders of reality and the four corresponding stages of human knowledge in Plato's epistemology can be explained with the help of the following diagram (based on his analogy of a divided line) : -

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<th>The Intelligible World</th>
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The vertical line is divided into two unequal parts AB and CD. AB which is much shorter than CD stands for the world of the senses and of appearances; CD for the world of intelligence. These two sections are subdivided into A, B, C and D. Of these A represents the lowest stage of human understanding, namely, images i.e. shadows, reflections in water, close grained and polished surfaces etc. This is

the stage of the complete ignorance of the real nature of things. Plato calls this stage eikasia. The objects of the mind's thought in this stage as in other stages do not represent different classes of real objects. They only represent four different views of the world or different aspects of the same objects. Thus, eikasia (derived from 'eikon', i.e. image) which refers to the perception of images (it also means conjecture) represents the most superficial view of the world. In this stage the objects of the mind's thoughts are of the nature of mere images and conjectures. The mental state involved in eikasia is one of uncertain belief, the objects being of the nature of 'images', i.e., appearances, shadows, reflections, etc. Characters and situations in literature are also of the nature of eikasia.

The next stage is pistis or belief or a feeling of certainty. In this stage the mind grasps the actual tangible things of the world about which we feel a great deal of certainty. In the sphere of morality pistis stands for "correct belief without knowledge" such as the young guardians were taught to hold. Pistis gives the

originals of which art objects are imitations.

Both eikasia and pistis belong to the sphere of opinion (doxa) and not of true knowledge. Whereas eikasia obviously gives the most superficial views of objects, pistis is bound up with particular objects in the world, which are liable to change and decay, and which depend upon their surroundings for their properties. They are, therefore, cognitively less real than Forms.

Professor Gregory Vlastos explains this point thus:

F and not F. Thus, if 'F' means beautiful in a particular example, then it may be (1) beautiful in one feature and ugly in another, or (2) beautiful at one time and ugly at another, or (3) beautiful in comparison with one thing, ugly in comparison with another, or (4) beautiful at one place and ugly at another (as, for instance, a painting from a wrong perspective). Plato thus considers the 'being F and not F' of an object as indicative of the inferior reality of that object in comparison with the Form because the sensible instance does not admit of necessary connection with its predicates. Thus, the statement "Simmias is taller than Socrates" may be a true belief, but it is not knowledge, because it is not because of his being Simmias that Simmias is taller than Socrates (being Simmias, unlike being tall, is not a character). But on the other hand, the statement "Simmias is taller than Socrates, but shorter than Phaedo" constitutes knowledge, because in it a true belief has been "bound" or "tied" by reason. The implication is that the required "tying" or "binding" connects statement by logical inference, or term with term by logical analysis...

Truth owes nothing to sensory impressions; it is based on inference and analysis. Only knowledge can give truth and not belief.

The next higher stage in human understanding is _dianoia_. It leads the mind beyond the visible things to the intelligible reality, for example, it leads the mind from various triangles to the concept of triangularity. It uses sensible things such as diagrams and specimens but considers them as nothing more than imperfect illustrations of objects and truths of pure thought. Roughly speaking _dianoia_ stands for what may be called the laws and theories of science. It represents a degree of knowledge which falls short of perfection only to the extent that the basic axioms (of a science, for instance) have not been proved.

The last and highest stage of knowledge is _noesis_. This stage is attached by 'dialectic' or the

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15. F.M.Cornford - _The Republic of Plato_, p.218
technique of philosophical dialogue which seeks to
discover the account of some Form such as justice in
The Republic. With this stage we enter the realm of
Platonic mysticism. The highest object of knowledge is
the Form of Good which is the source and justification,
utility and value of everything else. The highest form
of knowledge is obtained by intuition.

The general interpretation of Plato's Republic
including the theory of art adumbrated in it is beset with
many problems, and Plato's thought is not always free from
obscurity. But the main outlines of his case against
poetry are fairly clear. Art belongs to the lowest stage
of human understanding, namely, eikasia. His theory of
art as imitation is a direct consequence of his theory of
Forms, and his theory of Forms itself is the result of his
belief in the existence of a transcendental world of reality.
His theory of art has deeply disturbed many lovers of art,
but the very fact that his view has been challenged and
refuted over and over again suggests that there is
something of enduring vitality at least in the question
that Plato has raised about the relationship of art and
reality. It has reappeared in our own day as the conflict
of science and literature and their respective claims to form the common core of a General Education. Which is the superior mode of understanding, the more essential for us - knowledge through observation and experiment, or knowledge through identification with the object, recreating its very inscape?

Plato's theory is open to objection on several counts. It assumes that there is one simple "essence" of everything, the Form. It does not account for the fact of experience that we learn something from art and that the learning is not mere recognition-learning. It ignores the unification of the particular and the universal which results in what is usually called the artistic symbol, and the apprehension of the symbolic calls for the joint participation of the senses and the higher faculties that Plato distinguishes. There is, therefore, a heightened sense of awareness in artistic contemplation. Whether one accepts the doctrine of Forms or not, it was a valuable insight of Plato that reality is not contained by the actual. But he failed to consider how the artistic medium can be and is in fact exploited to recapture more of reality than media that are non-artistically handled; how, for instance, as I.A. Richards has argued, poetry realises more of the uses of language than ordinary
discourse does. Equally, Plato ignores the role of the imagination — the co-adunative faculty, as Coleridge called it, in artistic creation, which brings together in a unique structure properties that, being similar to a number of particulars, may be regarded as universals.

In a sense, the problem of the referentiality of the language of literature which Plato's theory raises is misconceived; it assumes without proof that the artist imitates external reality. But as Susanne Langer has pointed out, the artist tries to create the appearance of "experiences", the semblance of events lived and felt, and to organise them so they constitute a purely and completely 18 experienced reality, a piece of virtual life.

Thus in Othello, it is arguable that the question is not whether such a person as Othello existed in actuality, but whether Shakespeare has imitated the movement of Othello from the love of Desdemona to the point where that very love turns against her. From this point of view the play then swings on the central idea that in the life of Othello, the love of Desdemona is a creative, cohesive and integrating force; that is to say, love is not an irrational passion, but, quite on the contrary,

17. 'Towards A Theory of Comprehending' in Speculative Instruments, p.29
18. Feeling and Form, p.212
plays the ordering role assigned to reason in the hierarchy of the human personality as conceived by Plato. The question of referentiality then shifts. We ask now: How is language used so that it imitates this structure of feeling, this movement of the soul? It is used not as a system of symbols - in which case we would be justified in looking for referents outside - but as a system of signs. The linguistic sign, it will be recalled, was defined by F. de Saussure as follows:—

"The linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and sound image". The concept is the signified (signifié) and the acoustic image is the signifier (signifiant). Language is a system of signs possessing an independent structure of its own and by implication, internal coherence, and being parallel to external reality with which its relationship is not of referentiality but of interpretativeness. It interprets reality by structuring it. The play of Othello then is an interpretation of a great love relationship and its sad finale. We are still left, of course, with the question of the difference between the literary, especially the poetic use of language and the non-literary. One mode of distinction has been suggested by I. A. Richards in his "Towards a Theory of Comprehending" (Speculative Instruments) where he distinguishes the sorts of work

19. Course in General Linguistics, tr. Wade Baskin
Peter Owen Ltd., 1959, p.66
that an utterance can perform and suggests that the poetic use of language consists in using language in such a way that more than one sort of work is done by the utterance at the same time.

Plato's theory of art as illusion is unacceptable but the foregoing paragraphs have tried to show that the theory raises several fundamental issues which have led to much fruitful discussion in recent thinking about the nature of art. In our next section we shall investigate whether any parallel theory of art as illusion is available in Indian thought and how it is distinguished from Plato's.

20. 'Towards A Theory of Comprehending' in Speculative Instruments, p.29
Before proceeding to consider the Indian theories of art as illusion, it is necessary to state that Indian poeticians did not deliberately set out to determine the ontological status of art as Plato did. Their prime concern was with the nature of aesthetic experience (rasa). It was while dealing with this question that they investigated the relationship of art and reality. Their observations in this respect are clearly based on certain tenets of the Sāmkhya and the Vedānta schools of Indian philosophy and their employment in a modified form of certain ideas and concepts borrowed from these philosophies leaves no doubt about what they think of the ontology of art. In order to understand clearly the Indian views of art as illusion it is necessary to have some idea of the philosophical concepts on which they are based, and therefore the following brief account of the Sāmkhya and the Vedānta systems is offered.

The Sāmkhya divides the world into two ultimate realities, namely, spirit (puruṣa) and matter (prakṛti). These two are totally opposed to each other in their nature. Prakṛti (matter) is insentient, mutable but one
and is constituted of three qualities (gunas), namely sattva, rajas and tamas. Roughly speaking, sattva stands for light and knowledge, rajas for activity, and tamas for ignorance and inertia. Before creation the three qualities of Prakṛti are said to be in a state of equilibrium. The disturbance of this equilibrium is the starting point of creation. Since Prakṛti is mutable, the three qualities which constitute it grow and diminish once their equilibrium is disturbed and this waxing and waning is samsāra or the phenomenal world. It is also the inherent characteristic of the gunas that they seek to establish their equilibrium and when it is accomplished, there is an end of the phenomenal world or pralaya.

As against matter, there is the spirit or soul (purusā). According to the Sāmkhya, souls are many; they are sentient but inactive. The purusā only watches the activity of prakṛti. He does not play any active part in the process of creation. Prakṛti is inanimate, but it becomes active by virtue of the presence of the purusā. It evolves out of itself mahat, the principle of individuation (ahāmkāra), intellect (buddhi), mind (manas), the five elements in their essences (tanmātras), the five sense organs, and the five organs of action. When the creation of the world is thus presented by prakṛti, the

purusa comes to identify himself with it. The identification of the purusa with the 'show' of prakrti is the root-cause of all bondage. It is the knowledge of their separateness that constitutes moksa (spiritual release from the bondage).

What is the interest of this philosophy to aesthetics? The Samkhya is not interested in aesthetics, but interestingly enough it has used the analogy of dramatic representation to explain the illusory nature of the phenomenal world. Prakrti puts up the 'show' of cosmic illusion only for the release of the purusa, and once it has revealed itself fully to him, it retires from its 'show', and the emancipation of the purusa follows.

22. rangasya darśayitvā nivartate nartakī yathā nṛtyāt
purusasya tathātmanam prakāśya vinivaratate prakṛtih
(SK 59)

(tr. As a dancer retires from dancing after having displayed (her skill) to the audience, even so prakṛti having revealed herself to purusa, desists from functioning)

This analogy is very frequent in the Samkhya philosophy. Cf. SK 42, 65, 66.
The *purusa's* experience of the unending chain of life, death and rebirth is likened to the various roles played by an actor. The same analogy is employed from a different angle to describe the emancipation of the *purusa*; he is described as the spectator at the play of Nature (*prakrti*).

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23. While commenting on the SK 42 Gaudapada, the reputed preceptor of Saumkaracarya's guru Govinda, has explained this analogy thus:—

> yātha naṭah
> paṭāntaraṇa prāvīśya devo bhūtvā nirgacchati,
> punarmanuṣah, punarvidūṣakah evam lingam nimitta-
> naimittika-prasangadarāntah prāvīśya hastī strī,
> puman bhavati. (p.40)

(By just as an actor entering behind the scenes comes out (now) as a god, then as a man and afterwards as a buffoon, so "the linga"* which is involved in the transmigratory process enters the womb (again), and is reborn as an elephant, a woman, or a man)

cf. Gaudapada also on the SK-59.

*lingam* : subtle body; it is the indestructible original of the perishable gross body constituted of the ten senses, intellect, mind and ego.

24. *tena nivṛttaprasavāmarthavaśat saptarūpavavinivṛttām* prakṛtim paśyati puruṣah prekṣākavada vaśthitah svastah (SK 65)

(By this knowledge, the spirit, seated composed like a spectator, perceives the Nature which has ceased to be productive and consequently which has now reverted from the seven forms.)

tr. by H.D.Sharma, p.76
The Sāṃkhya view of art is implicit in the analogy it so frequently employs; its stress is on the illusory nature of the 'show' of prakṛti. The phenomenal world is the illusion created by prakṛti and this illusion is the subject matter of art.

There are three points to be noted about this analogy. Firstly, the dramatic spectacle is illusory. Secondly, even after the release of the puruṣa, the dance of prakṛti goes on as before, but the puruṣa's attitude to it changes completely. After release, the puruṣa comes to enjoy prakṛti's dance as dance only, i.e., without any practical involvement in it. Art is to be enjoyed and the highest state of aesthetic enjoyment is characterised by a kind of detachment in attachment. The illusion exists to enable us to cultivate this attitude. In the third place art may be an illusion but the purpose of the illusion is paradoxically to teach us freedom from

25. Kālidāsa probably means the same when he describes drama as

traigunyodbhavamatalokacaritam nanārasam dṛṣya
t ( The Mālavikāgnimitra I.4)

(tr. Here (i.e. in drama) is seen the activity of the world characterised by various passions springing from the three ṣūnas.)
illusion. It is interesting to note that whereas philosophers employ the analogy of aesthetic experience to explain the state of release, aestheticians use the analogy of spiritual emancipation or the analogy of samādhi to explain aesthetic experience. The implications of this paradox become clear when we take into account the Vedantic point of view.

The Vedānta is the philosophy of the Vedas, or rather of the Upaniṣadas, and this philosophy has been variously interpreted in India. One of the best known is the interpretation known as Advaita Vedanta or non-dualism. According to Advaita Vedanta, Brahman is the only reality, and the phenomenal world is an illusion. Brahman is One without a second, eternal, changeless, immanent and beyond the limitations of time, space and causation. It is Existence (sat), Sentience (cit), and Bliss (ānanda). It abides in its absolute transcendence (kūṭastha) unaffected by anything, since there is nothing except Brahman. It is inactive, since activity belongs to space and presupposes a motive which cannot be thought of in respect of a transcendental principle like Brahman. The phenomenal world and the individual self are obviously not the ultimate reality,
because they are subject to birth, decay and death, and to the limitations of time, space and causation. But the world and the individual self cannot be said to be altogether unreal in so far as they are actually experienced and encountered in daily life. Thus, the world and the individual self pose a formidable epistemological problem for the Vedānta. The solution suggested in the Vedānta is that from the ultimate point of view, Brahman is the only Being (sat), all else is non-being (asat). But on empirical grounds, the world and the individual self must be said to have being. It is impossible to say whether they are being or non-being. Empirically they are real, but from the transcendental point of view, they are unreal. But they are not unreal in the sense in which "a barren woman's son" is unreal. "A barren woman's son" is only a verbal expression (tuccha vastu) and nothing more. Moreover, as the Veda proclaims, the world and the self are rooted in Brahman, 26 "Sarvam khalvidam brahma" - "All this indeed is Brahman", "tat tvam asi", "That thou art". The world and the self are in their essence Brahman only, but they appear to be different. The unreality of these is only a matter of

appearance. The world of phenomena is unreal only in
the sense that it appears to be different from Brahman.
The relation between Brahman and the world is that of
non-difference (ananyatva) and non-independence
(avyatireka) since the world cannot be thought of
independently of Brahman. But why should it appear to be
different? The answer is that it does so on account of
māyā.

The word "māyā" denotes, inter alia the
inexplicability of the relation between Brahman and the
world, and the apparent dream-like character of the
world. This has a bearing on the Vedantic theory of
illusion or vivartavada. "Vivarta" literally means
"turning round", perversion or misrepresentation. The
unique relationship of non-difference (ananyatva) and
non-independence (avyatireka) between Brahman and the
world has already been mentioned. If Brahman is the
cause and the world is the effect, this cause effect
relation is unique indeed. Here the effect, world, is
not different from the cause Brahman, though it appears
to be different. To explain this Śaṅkara, the great
teacher of Advaita Vedanta, uses the analogy of a rope

27. S. Radhakrishnan - Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 461
28. Ibid. p. 461
which appears to be a snake because of darkness or defective sight. Here the snake is pure illusion, since it has no correspondence with the reality of the rope. Still the apprehension of the snake is real enough for it produces fear which is an undeniable empirical fact. The rope in this example is the cause which produces an effect without itself undergoing any change, and its effect is not different from itself, though it appears to be different. This peculiar phenomenon which also explains the Brahman-world relationship is called vivarta.

The apprehension of the phenomenal world where really there is only Brahman is vivarta or illusion. This is the work of māyā. But it is impossible to say whether māyā is being or non-being. If there is no māyā, we cannot account for the appearance of the world; if there is māyā, it cannot be different from Brahman which is the only Being. The relation between the two is that of non-difference, which does not affirm identity but only denies difference. Māyā is bhāvarupa (positive) even as the 'rope-snake' is positive (bhāvarūpa), as can be inferred from its results. It is not a mere verbal

29. S. Radhakrishnan, Indian Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 570
expression like "a barren woman's son". Sadananda explains the Vedantic concept of cosmic illusion as follows:

\[
\text{ajñañādisakalajādasamūho avastu ajñañam tu}
\]
\[
sadasadbhyāmanirvacanīyam trigunātmakam jñāvirodhi
\]
\[
\text{bhāvarūpam yat-kincit iti vadanti}
\]

(tr. The conglomeration of all insentient things including ignorance (i.e. māyā) is unreality. Ignorance is something positive (bhāvarūpa) which cannot be categorised as being or non-being, but it is opposed to knowledge (i.e. Brahman) and is composed of the three qualities).

Thus, illusion is empirically positive and real so long as the knowing subject has a wrong apprehension of it, but negative as there is no correspondence between wrong apprehension and the real nature of the thing thus apprehended. It is positive in the sense that it produces visible results; it is not like "a barren woman's son". In the last analysis it is based on reality and is not different from it though it appears to be different.

30. THE VEDANTASARA of Sadananda, Ed. with the commentaries of Nṛṣimha-sarasvati & Ramatirtha, p.8
The influence of this Advaita philosophy is discernible in many ways primarily in the Indian theory of aesthetic experience or *rasa*, as it is called.

The concept of *rasa* is the core of Indian aesthetics. *Rasa* is a word difficult to translate exactly. But literally it means "relish". In aesthetics it is used to refer to the pleasurable and imaginative experience of a feeling like love, wonder, fear etc. presented in literature. How this experience, which is peculiar to literature, arises and what its essential nature is, are the problems with which all aesthetic investigations in India are concerned. The starting point of all these investigations is the rather enigmatic enunciation of the factors involved in the production of aesthetic experience in the earliest aesthetic treatise of India, the *Nātyasastra* of Bharata.

Bharata's *rasa* formula is as follows:

\[ \text{vibhāvānubhāvavyabhicāri-samyogād rasaniśpattih} \]

(tr. The production of *rasa* results from the combination of *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas* and *vyabhichāribhāvas*.)

This technical jargon becomes clearer as we go into further details.

31. The *NS*, VI.
Rasa is an aesthetic presentation of certain latent but universal psychological proclivities of mankind. These proclivities are called *sthāyibhāvas* or permanent feelings and are enumerated by Bharata as eight, namely, love, laughter, grief, anger, enthusiasm, fear, wonder and disgust. (Some add to this list *śānta* or spiritual quiescence). Rasa is presented through appropriate situations, agents, their actions and reactions. These latter may be called, after T.S. Eliot, "objective correlatives", that is,  

\[ \text{a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion, such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.} \]  

Bharata's term vibhāva refers to 1) characters (*ālambana vibhāva*), and 2) situation (*uddīpana-vibhāva*). His other term, anubhāva refers to the outward manifestation of the principal feeling by word or gesture. Thus, Rosalind's remark in *As you like It*, that Orlando has defeated more than his enemy, and her presenting her necklace to him is anubhāva. *Vyabhichāri-bhāva* is

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32. T.S. Eliot *Hamlet and His Problem*  
Selected Essays, p.145
any subsidiary feeling called temporarily into play by the principal feeling. Thus, Orlando's standing tongue-tied, his hanging verses on trees, Rosalinda's curiosity in the forest of Arden are all vyabhichāri-bhava. According to Bharata all these factors combine to produce the aesthetic feeling of rasa.

The difficulty about Bharata's rasa-sutra (formula) is that he has not explained how the objective correlatives of vibhava etc. combine. Samyoga (combination), the crucial term in his definition, has given rise to several interpretations. Some of them raise the question of the relation between art and reality, and therefore they may be briefly reviewed here.

The earliest commentator on Bharata known to us is Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa (9th Cent. A.D.) His commentary on the NS is lost but his view on rasa is quoted and commented upon by later poeticians and one of them, Mammaṭa, has summarised it as follows:

The feeling of love, for instance, is produced by various causes. It is supported and stimulated by such circumstances as women, gardens etc. and it is conveyed
to the spectator by the looks and gestures of the lover. The feeling of love primarily exists in the actual hero. He is, however, imitated with the same feeling of love by an actor who is identified with him. Bhata Lollata maintains that this feeling which in truth belongs to the actual person but is seen as existing in the actor is rasa. The actor creates the illusion, he is the master of maya.

33. vibhavair-lalanodyanādibhirālambanoddipanakāraṇaṁ
ratyādiko bhāvo janito, anubhavaih kaṭaṃśabhum ākṣepapra-
bhṛtibhih karyaih pratitiyogyah kṛtah, vyabhicāribhih
sahakāribhirupacito mukhyā vṛtya rāmādāvanukārya
 tadṛupatānusandhānāt nartake api pratiyamāno rasaḥ
(KP Ch. IV)

34. While commenting on Bhata Lollata's theory Vamanacarya observes as follows:-
As fear is experienced to arise even from a rope which is (wrongly) taken to be a snake, even so Rama's love in the form of longing for Sita which does not exist in the actor, appears, as it were, to exist in him because of his skill in acting. This feeling (simulated but taken to be real because of histrionic skill) astonishes and pleases the spectator and gives rise to the state of rasa.

Yathā asatyapi sarpe sarpatahvalokitāt damno api
bhīturudeti, tathā sitāviśayini anurāgarūpam rāmaratīr
avidyamanā api nartake nātyanaipūnyena tasmin sthiteva
pratiyamāna sahrdaya - hrdaye camatkaram arpayantyeva
The spectators are subject to his maya. But while the cosmic maya spoken of in Vedanta leads to bondage, the actor's maya is productive of rasa.

The relationship between art and reality is also touched upon in his commentary on Bharata by Śrīśāṅkuka (9th Cent.) Śrīśāṅkuka argues that there is a difference between art and illusion and that the ontological status of art is unique.

An actor who appears on the stage as Rāma is obviously not identical with the real Rāma. Nor is he, "non-Rāma". In an erroneous cognition a snake is apprehended where there is only a rope, but when the mistake is discovered, the snake becomes "non-snake". This, however, never happens in the case of an actor appearing as Rāma. The actor who poses as Rāma is "Rāma" all right, though he is not identical with the real Rāma. Since the spectators take him to be Rāma, he is not different either from Rāma. He cannot be said to be

35. His commentary is also lost, but his theory has been stated and criticised by Abhinavagupta and summarised by Mammata. It is based on the Nyaya school of Indian philosophy, but he is clearly indebted to the Advaitic concept maya.
"similar" to Rāma since the spectators do not know the real Rāma. The cognition involved in the experience of the "enacted" Rāma is unique. A horse shown in a picture is neither real (samyak) nor unreal (mithyā), nor similar (sadrśa) nor of a doubtful nature (saṁśaya). It is not similar to a real horse because a picture has only two dimensions. It is not of a doubtful nature because we at once identify it as 'horse'. In short, art has a status of reality peculiar to itself. Thus, the apprehension involved in aesthetic experience cannot be categorized as (i) identity, (ii) difference, (iii) doubt or (iv) similarity.

The argument of Śrīśaṅkuka was further developed by Abhinavagupta (10th Cent. A.D.) in the course of his commentary on the Nātyaśāstra, I 107. The context in the

36. rāma evāyam, ayameva rāma iti, na rāmöyam iti auttarakālike bādhē rāmöyam iti, rāmah syād vā nā vā ayam iti, rāmasadrśo ayamiti - saṁyaṁmithyā saṁśaya-sadrśya-pratītibhyo vilaksanāyā citra turaga-nyāyena rāmöyam iti pratipattyā grahye nāte (ratyādir bhāvah rasah) (KP Ch.IV)

37. naikāntatotra bhavatām devānam cāṇubhāvanam trailokyasyāsy sarvasya nātyam bhāvānukirtanam.
NS is the consolation given by the god Brahma to the asuras, after the first dramatic performance in heaven. The asuras were infuriated to see themselves as suffering a defeat at the hands of the gods. Brahma consoles the asuras with the explanation that the drama did not represent exclusively either the gods or the asuras. "Drama", says Brahma, "is representation (literally description - anukīrtana) of the states of this triple universe.

It is while commenting on this utterance of Brahma that Abhinavagupta explains the art–reality relationship.

Abhinavagupta accepts Śrīśaṅkuka’s argument that the relationship between dramatic figures and their originals is neither of identity nor of similarity. The cognition involved in aesthetic experience is not hallucination (bhrama) as there is when one sees a shining shell and mistakes it for a piece of silver. We do not conceive of dramatic figures as a false superimposition (āropa) on the true cognition as in the analogy of the snake and the rope. Nor is it metaphorizing

38. Asuras - mythological beings known as rivals of gods.
either. ("The boy is a lion" is a metaphor). It is not a creation of fancy. It is not a copy as of a picture, nor imitation like the rote imitation of a teacher's lecture by pupils. It is not magic or jugglery. None of these relationships reflects the experience which art gives. In these relationships the spectator remains "indifferent" (drṣṭur-audāsīṇya); in aesthetic experience, however, the spectator is drawn in completely.

Abhinavagupta thus considers exhaustively all the possible relationships and after rejecting all of them proposes that the reality of art is a special kind of

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reality. He calls it *alaukikatva* i.e. "not-of-this-worldness." The concept of "alaukikatva" is originally a philosophical concept used to justify the authority of the Veda as the revealed truth. *Alaukikatva* is not a mere assertion. In order to be accepted as *alaukika* (i.e., revealed), a truth should be new and attainable only through extra-empirical means, e.g., the propositions of the Veda are not of the nature of propositions like "heat expands and cold contracts." The revealed truth is known to come to us in terms of our experience, for even the Veda cannot teach the unknown except through the known. In fact, the scriptural truth is a new way of constructing our experience. Secondly, it must not be self-contradictory; it must not be invalidated by any other means of knowledge. It must be internally coherent. Though it is above reason, it must not be against it. Thirdly, it must be foreshadowed as probable by our reason; the reason must only serve to corroborate it.

Now, these tests of *alaukikatva* are approximately applicable to literature, though literature never has the status of the scripture. The *alaukikatva* of literature consists in its power of universalization (*sādhāranīkarana*).

40. M. Hiriyanna - *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p. 181
The theory of poetic universalization constitutes Abhinavagupta's contribution to the theory of rasa; it is his statement on the art-reality relationship. Its roots are in Vedanta. The Vedantin says of māyā that it is neither real nor unreal, but still bhāvarūpa (empirically true). Literature is also bhāvarūpa like māyā. It is essentially of the nature of rasa and therefore it is not of the nature of other objects of cognition.

Yet another view of the relationship of art and reality is represented in the work of Rājaśekhara, (circa. 950 A.D. - 1000 A.D.)

In a myth of his own creation Rājaśekhara narrates how Kāvyapuruṣa or the Person of Poetry was born. Kāvyapuruṣa was born out of the mind of Saṅśvati, the goddess of learning. As soon as he was born, he paid homage to his mother in what may be translated as follows:-

"I am Kāvyapuruṣa, the Person of Poetry. Poetry is the universe of speech appearing in the form of meaning. Mother, I offer obeisance at your feet."

41. "rasyataikaprāṇo hyasau na prameyādi-svabhāvah"
   The AB on the NS. Vol.I, p.285

42. KM Ch.III, p.6
The crucial words in the original Sanskrit are "speech" (vānmaya), "universe" (viśva), "appearing" (vivartate), and "the form(s) of meaning" (arthamūrti). If we bear in mind the vivarta in Advaita Vedanta, namely, that the world (viśva) is the vivarta or an apparent superimposition on Brahman, we may ask whether Rājaśekhara is suggesting that the verbal world of poetry (etad vānmayam viśvam) is also "vivarta" or a superimposition of meaning (arthamūrtvyā vivartate). The question then becomes: What is the Brahman, the Underlying Reality of this verbal universe? This inevitably leads to the larger question of the reality of art. Here we must seek an answer through an apparent digression.

The Indian poeticians did not raise the problem of art and reality in the form Plato had done, though they were aware of its importance. While dealing with this question they employ the analogy of the body and the soul or the world and Brahman.

Words and meanings are the "body" or the superimposed "world" (vivarta) and some idea of the "soul" or "Brahman"

43. For vivarta, see p.21 above.
44. sabdārthsarīram tāvat kāvyam, Dh.A. Ch.1, p.5
of these words can be understood from studying how words function in poetry.

Poetry uses words combined into sentences. Words have their primary denotative sense which is based on convention (saṅketa) and which is immediately understood by all speakers of that language as soon as they are heard. Thus the word "hand" in English denotes a particular part of the body. A word which gives this kind of primary, immediate and conventional meaning is a vācaka-śabda (denotative word); its meaning is called vācyārtha (denoted sense) and the relation between the denoting word and the denoted sense is called abhidhā (denotation). Denotative words have a direct reference to the things they denote. Sometimes, however, words are used in a sense other than their denoted sense, thus, in an expression like "He had no hand in that affair", the word "hand" means "active participation".

Sanskrit semantics calls this kind of meaning laksārtha (secondary or indicated sense). A word which gives this kind of meaning is called lakṣaka-śabda (lit., a word pointing to or indicating) and the relation between a lakṣakaśabda (indictative word) and indicated sense (lakṣārtha) is called lakṣāna (lit. indication).
Indication operates only under the following conditions:—
The denoted sense should be inapplicable in the given
case (as the denoted sense of 'hand' in the example
given above); the secondary sense should in some way
be connected with the primary sense; and thirdly, in
using a word in its secondary sense (lakṣyārtha), the
speaker must have some purpose.

The constant use of certain words in their
secondary sense often makes the secondary sense almost
the primary sense. This is the source of dead metaphors
and fossilized expression in a language (examples—'the
hand of a clock', 'a technical hand' etc.) When words
are used consciously in their secondary sense, we get
figures of speech, e.g., 'Death lays his icy hand on kings'.
Here 'icy hand' means cold, inexorable grip. Now, the
secondary meaning (lakṣārtha) is significant and
unmechanical only if there is a conscious purpose behind
its use. But how can we know that purpose?

The Sanskrit poeticians answer that we can know
the purpose from the power of suggestion (vyanjana) in
words. A word which gives rise to a suggested meaning is
called vyanjaka sabda (suggestive word); the suggested
meaning is called vyāŋgārtha. The relation between a suggestive word and its suggested meaning is "aniyata" i.e. indeterminate. In other words, it is not a rule that every word should necessarily have a suggested meaning in every context. The suggested meaning depends on its associations in the given context. Thus, in the sentence,

All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand

the word 'hand', besides meaning Lady Macbeth's hand, is full of multiple suggestion, e.g., Lady Macbeth's horror at the enormity of her crime; her haunting sense of guilt; the sickening smell of the murdered king's blood; the smallness of the hand and the enormity of the crime. Here the most exotic and the most familiar are brought into juxtaposition to suggest that expiation is impossible. Now this is neither "denoted" sense of "hand" nor its "indicated" sense (as in "to have a hand in an affair"). The power of suggestion operates in poetry in this way.

Poetry uses words with all these three varieties of meaning, namely denoted (vācyārtha), indicated (laksyārtha), and suggested (vyāŋgārtha). But the question is: What is the denoted meaning of words in
literature? Does the denoted meaning of a word refer to the individual or to the universal? Does "cow" refer to the species or to a member of that species?

The grammarian, Patañjali postulates that the conventional primary meaning (sāṅketa) of a word refers neither to the individual nor to the universal, but to the attribute (upādhi). The expression "gauḥ śuklah chalo ḍittahah" ("Dittha, the rambling white bull") refers only to one individual. But the individual is a member of his species. In addition to being bull, he has his distinguishing traits which mark him off from other members of the same species; his qualities (the white colour), actions (rambling) and his personal name ("Ḍittha" in the given example). The attribute thus comprehends within its scope the universal or the species of which an individual is a member, and his distinguishing individual characteristics. Now, what results do we get if we apply this theory to creations of art?

The characters in literature no doubt belong to the species of "human beings", but they are not individual

45. Mammaṭa has quoted this view in the KP Ch.II.
human beings in the sense in which our neighbours are. (This led Plato to equate them with shadows and reflections). Neither are they mere verbal expressions (tuccha vastu) such as "a flower in the sky", "a hare's horn", "a circular square", "the present king of France". All words in literature have their denotative base in language which is their link with everyday speech and the condition of their comprehensibility. But they do not remain merely at this denotative base and if they do, they cannot be poetry. The daffodils in Wordsworth's well-known poem do not have a merely denotative and biographical significance, i.e., flowers of a kind and the flowers of that kind seen by the poet. The biographical circumstance is only the beginning of the poem, but the poem as a complete whole can exist independently of the poet's biography. To what daffodils, then, does the poem refer? The semantic concept of upādhi discussed above gives the clue to the Sanskrit poetician's answer. A word is basically a sound (dhvani) but its meaning is upādhi; a poem is basically a string of denotative words, but its meaning is what these denotative words in the context of the poem combine to suggest (dhvani). To take the same example again

56. The Indian theory of poetic suggestion (dhvani) cannot be discussed here in detail; an example, however, is discussed here to clarify the point at issue.
The actual daffodils the poet saw have ceased to exist; they obviously had many more attributes than the daffodils in the poem. But the daffodils in the poem continue to exist and to "flash upon the inward eye". They are inseparable from the poet's experience of them. The poet builds upon the denotative base and the superstructure that he builds is what Sanskrit poeticians call "suggestion". When they say that the poetry of suggestion is superior to the poetry of statement what they mean, in effect, is that if words are used purely denotatively it could not be poetry at all (or it would be inferior poetry). Indian poeticians use the analogy of the lamp and the jar to explain the relationship between the denoted and the suggested sense. "The lamp is stated meaning (vācyārtha); the jar is suggested meaning (vyāāgyārtha) which it illumines and reveals." The denoted sense is always subservient; the suggested sense, by its aesthetic value and exclusive importance, is always supreme. The poetry of statement, as the phrase is sometimes used in Anglo-Saxon criticism, for example in D. Davie's *Purity of Diction in English Verse*, is a different term altogether. The poetic art in the

57. Krishna Rayan, *Suggestion and Statement in Poetry* p. 52
also the *Dh. A. Ch. I* p. 31
poetry of statement consists in so controlling the meaning of the words that it is sliced down to the nucleus. The Sanskrit poetician, however, refers in the term "poetry of statement" to a poetry of pure denotation. And he says that it is not very valuable because the power of the words is not being fully realised to project a larger meaning than what is possible in pure denotation. Thus the poet uses the materials of experience and the materials of language to build a different world of art. This is the verbal universe of which Rājaśekhara speaks. The words in literature have a reference only to this universe.

The Indian poetician's position on the referentiality of literature is something midway between the propositional and/organic theories in Western poetics. The propositional theory maintains that a poem is "about" something, that

58. The metaphysical relationship between this universe and the actual universe has been explained above on the analogy of Brahman-maya relationship. As Prof. Hiriyanna explains, "Art objects have no place in the everyday world of space and time, and owing to this lack of spatiotemporal position or physical status, the question of reality does not apply to them. This does not mean that they are unreal; it only means that the distinction of existence or non-existence does not arise at all in their case."

(Art Experience, Mysore:Kāvyālaya, 1954, p.30)
it says "something"; in its extreme form it considers that a poem is equivalent to its paraphrasable content and that form is a superadded decoration. The organic theory maintains that a poem is a complete organic whole, and as such, has no reference to anything outside itself. The Indian poeticians unanimously accept that a poem says "something" but reject the view that it is equivalent to its paraphrasable reduction. But with all this the Indian poeticians would not remain satisfied with the organicist's insistence on the mere truth of internal coherence in a poem. The verbal universe of the poet's creation is not a chimera. It has a significance, based on the parallelism between the world of everyday reality and the creation of the poet.

Abhinavagupta explains that the world of literature is not an imitation of the real world; it is a world parallel to it and existing on its own right. The crucial difference is that the practical world is a permanent physical fact, whereas the world of literature

59. na hi kevalaśṛṇcaarādī śabdāmarabhāji vibhāvādiprati- pādanarahite kāvye manāgapi rasavattvapratātirasti

(Dh.A. Ch.I, p.25)
is real only during aesthetic experience. Again, some experience of the practical world is necessary to understand literature fully. The real world is the "substratum" on which the world of literature is a "superimposition" (vivarta). The words used in literature have reference only to this superimposed world.

But we must hasten to add that "illusion" is a pejorative term and the Indian theoreticians do not condemn literature as Plato did. On the contrary, their attitude to art is most respectful. The Indian philosophers use the analogy of aesthetic experience to explain the state of spiritual emancipation; and the Indian poeticians use the analogy of samādhi to explain the nature of aesthetic experience. The typical Indian attitude to art becomes clear if the analogy of the jīvanmukta (i.e. a spiritually emancipated person) is applied to the dramatic spectator.

The jīvanmukta is one who has attained spiritual emancipation even in this very life through the realization of his oneness with the Supreme Principle (Brahman). Nevertheless, even thereafter he continues his separate existence as an individual till death occurs.

60. The Vedāntasāra of Sadānanda p.53
Since he is alive (jīvan), he is in the phenomenal world, but since he is released (mukta), he is not actively and practically involved in it. He comes to regard the world with what may be termed "spiritual distance". This lack of practical self-interest lifts him above selfish considerations and ennobles his feelings. His non-involvement in the world helps him to watch the world as it were, with the disinterestedness of God who knows it to be the creation of his own māyā, (the power which creates the illusion of the world).

Now the spectator's attitude to the drama he is witnessing cannot be described as identical with that of the jivan mukta to the phenomenal world. The jivan mukta's attitude is part of his very being, it is the result of hard spiritual training, and it endures uninterruptedly till he breathes his last; its content is strictly spiritual. The spectator's attitude to art, on the other hand, is aesthetic and lasts only so long as the aesthetic experience lasts. Still it is analogous to the jivan-mukta's attitude to the world in a significant way.

What the spectator witnesses in the drama (and by implication the reader in literature), says Abhinavagupta,
is a world which he knows to be not the real world but something parallel to it. In the real world the spectator always moves about with practical selfish interests. But there is no reason why these considerations should vitiate his attitude to a dramatic spectacle in the theatre. The spectator's mind is completely absorbed in it and he is lifted out of his limited, selfish and practical ego. It is this "unegoistic" attitude which constitutes the aesthetic distance between him and the work of art. But still he remains essentially a human being capable of feeling human emotions and what he witnesses in art is intensely human. It is the lack of practical selfish interest that ennobles his feelings during aesthetic experience and changes his attitude. The characters of literature exist only in the imaginative consciousness of the spectator during aesthetic experience. It is for this reason that he takes them in an idealised, generalised or universalised form. He is no doubt in some way involved in what he witnesses, but his involvement is aesthetic, not practical.

61. Thus Iago is taken only as a mean-minded villain and Othello as an essentially noble moor whose love is destroyed with machinations. The "noble-moor" view of Othello seems to have more truth and fidelity to Shakespeare's design than its opposite.
It is said that it is given only to gods and angels to be witnesses of the human drama. Art gives that privilege to the spectators at least temporarily during aesthetic experience. Therefore the Indian aestheticians do not condemn art even though it may be illusory in nature. The enjoyment of art is spoken of as akin to the enjoyment of the Highest Reality. But again, a note of ambivalence is heard. The Vedantic philosopher Sadānanda says that when the mind gets fixated in the pleasure it feels in the detached contemplation of an object, it will fail in the unitive knowledge and experience (samādhi) of the Highest Reality. Art, the Indian poeticians aver, can give us both a glimpse of Reality, and prevent, if one is not alert, in keeping us back from it. It is a conclusion that puts the responsibility for the nature of the relationship of art and reality on the human uses of art.

62. akhandavastvanavalambanena cittavṛtteh
    savikalpakānādāsvādananam rasāsvādah

The Vedāntasāra of Sadānanda p.50
SECTION II (A)

ART AS EXPRESSION OF THE UNIVERSAL (THE WESTERN THEORIES):

The inadequacies of the strict "illusionist" theories of art become patent when applied to actual works of art. Not only are Oedipus, Lear or Hamlet not felt as shadows, images or misrepresentations, but on the contrary, we feel that they are somehow more "alive" in some sense than the men and women we meet in flesh and blood. The situations they find themselves in and the thoughts and feelings they express are all essentially human; the only difference is that they appear more intense. This intensity is inherent in the very nature of art and the language it employs. This was, in fact, the contribution of Aristotle who argued that art enhanced the expression of reality with the aid of the artistic medium. His theory of art (whether he intended it so or not) is the exact antithesis of Plato's theory of art as illusion. It is

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63. The question of artistic medium is discussed below in greater detail while dealing with Bharata's *natyadharma* and touched upon again in the conclusion.
the first of the theories which regard art as expression of the universal.

Aristotle retained the term "imitation" because it had an important bearing on the relationship between art and reality, but he changed its connotation completely and made it highly complimentary to art. He uses this term strictly in connection with art. Indeed, "imitation" in his definition is the distinguishing characteristic of art. "Epic poetry and Tragedy, as also Comedy, Dithyrambic poetry and most flute-playing and lyre-playing are all, viewed as a whole, modes of imitation."65 A poet is, a poet by virtue of the imitative, element in his works.

64. The term 'universal' is used here in the following sense: "Universals are, by tradition, contrasted with particulars, the general contrasted with the numerically unique, and differing theories of universals are differing accounts of what is involved in this generality and our experience of it." "Even if there is only one red object in the world, we would know what it would be like for there to be to be others, and we would be able to recognise another if we were to meet with it." Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, ed.in chief - Paul Edwards, Vol.8, p.194.

65. Aristotle's Art of Poetry, Ch.I, tr.by Ingram Bywater, ed. W.H. Fyfe, O.U.P., 1940, p.3 (All further references are to this edition).

66. ibid, Ch.9, p.26
The "poetic sciences" or the fine arts as we call them, owe their origin to man's natural proneness to imitation and his sense of rhythm and harmony. In imitation we learn and derive a pleasure accruing from learning. Therefore, the imitation of even painful things is pleasurable.

Aristotle's concept of imitation, like that of Plato, is derived from his epistemology and is connected with his theory of universals.

In the Posterior Analytics Aristotle discusses whether the demonstration of particular or of universal is superior and concludes that universal demonstration is always superior. While proving this point he explains his epistemological position thus -

67. Aristotle divides the field of man's interest into three kinds of sciences:-- the theoretical sciences like philosophy and mathematics, the practical sciences or the sciences of action like ethics and politics, and the sciences of making or poetic sciences. (L.Golden and O.B.Hardison - Aristotle's Poetics - A Translation and Commentary for Students, p.64

68. The Art of Poetry, Ch.4, p.9

69. Ibid.
The more demonstration becomes particular, the more it sinks into indeterminate manifold, while universal demonstration tends to the simple and determinate. But objects so far as they are indeterminate manifold are unitelligible; so far as they are determinate, intelligible: they are therefore intelligible rather in so far as they are universal than in so far as they are particular. 70

According to Aristotle, therefore, knowledge is necessarily knowledge of universals; the individual is known as belonging to a species; the individual as individual is unknowable. Aristotle's theory of universals is different from Plato's in certain fundamental respects. Plato argues for a transcendental world of Ideas which is above and apart from the empirical world of particulars. Aristotle's universals, however, are realised in the empirical world; they are real, but they are not scientifically knowable in so far as they are "manifold and indeterminate" and subject to the accidents of time and place. Universals proceed from particulars alone. What is involved in the apprehension of particulars is perception. But perception also plays its role in the progress from sensation to conception (i.e., of the universal)

The transaction is made possible by the fact that perception itself has an element of the universal; we perceive a particular thing, it is true, but what we perceive in it is characters which it shares with other things. From this first element of universality we pass without a break through higher and higher reaches of universality to the highest universals of all. 71

This epistemological position is at the basis of Aristotle's theory of imitation. "The poet's function", he defines, "is to describe not the thing that has happened but the kind of thing that might happen, i.e., what is possible as being probable or necessary." By making necessity or probability the test of imitation Aristotle puts the stress on the idealization of reality. Thus, while discussing plot as the soul of tragedy he advises the playwright to "simplify" and reduce to a "universal form" his story, whether borrowed, or invented, "before proceeding to lengthen it out by the insertion of episodes." 73 In this the poet's endeavour should be to


72. The Art of Poetry, Ch.9, p.25

73. ibid, Ch.17, p.48
bring out the essential nature of the objects of imitation. This, in fact, is the creativity of art. Imitation thus becomes synonymous with creation.

The subject of poetry is always human life. "The objects the imitator represents are actions, with agents who are necessarily either good men or bad." The universal of poetry, therefore, is always a human universal though it "affixes proper names to characters." In this respect poetry is different from science.

74. As creation, imitation is an improvement over the products of nature which are all composites of form and matter and are subject to the natural principles of their being. As McKeon explains, the poet separates in imitation "some form from the matter with which it is joined in nature," that is, not the "substantial" form but the form that appears to mere sensation, and joins it anew to the medium he uses. ("The concept of Imitation in Antiquity" in Critics and Criticism, ed. R. S. Crane, p. 162) This joining anew presents an object in its universal form.

75. The Art of Poetry, Ch. 2, p. 25.

76. While explaining this McKeon points out that science is concerned with abstract universal forms whereas poetry imitates the forms of individual things. "So the actions of the historical Orestes differ from the actions presented as probable or necessary for Orestes in the plot of a play; and if Orestes had no historical counterpart, the play would still, in this sense of imitation, be an imitation of the actions of men." ("The concept of Imitation in Antiquity", p. 162).
Aristotle's theory of art as imitation and as a representation of general nature forms the core of the literary doctrine which latter came to be called Classicism. Classicism lays stress on two important principles - one, the thematic importance of life, i.e. generality or universality of outlook or idealization so far as the contents of literature are concerned; and secondly, strict adherence to certain norms of construction so far as form is concerned. The second aspect of Classicism was responsible for the later versions of "imitation" as imitation of ancients, but the first aspect remains central to all later theories of art as expression of the universal. We shall now proceed to take a brief look at the fortunes of this concept in later ages.

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The Renaissance is the bridge between antiquity and modern times. In its endeavours to assimilate the critical teachings of the ancient masters, especially of Aristotle, it sought to apply their critical tenets to contemporary literature in such a way that it can be said
to have made a new beginning. Apart from certain linguistic and material variations, Renaissance literary criticism forms a single European tradition since it is ultimately based on the interpretations of the teachings of the same old masters - Aristotle, Horace, Cicero, Quintilian and in some respects Plato. But here we shall restrict ourselves to the concept of imitation in the Renaissance since it is this concept that bears on the art-reality relationship. But the term "imitation" as used by the Renaissance critics to explain the art-reality relationship is by no means easy to understand. It is an amalgam of Aristotle's theory of art as a mode imitation, of Horace's doctrine of literary decorum, of Plato's philosophy of the Ideal and the Christian version of unfallen Nature and a desire to follow in the footsteps of the elder authors of antiquity by imitating their style. With the

77. A further major influence is, of course, Christianity. The Horatian "instruction" is now reinterpreted in Christian terms.

78. In his Discoveries Ben Jonson laid down imitation of ancients as a necessary rule of poetic discipline. "The third requisite in our Poet or Maker is Imitation, to be able to convert the substance or Riches of an other Poet to his owne use. To make choice of one excellent man above the, and so to follow him, till he grow very Hee... observe, how the best writers have imitated and follow them. How Virgil and Statius have imitated Homer; how Horace, Archilocus, how Alcaeus, and the other Lyricks and so the rest." Ben Jonson, ed. C.H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, Q.U.P., 1954, Vol.VIII, pp.638-639
Renaissance, we have the beginning of the era of classical revival known as Neoclassicism.

The Renaissance rejected the view (also accepted by the exponents of the early Reformation like Calvin and Luther and the occultist philosophers like Paracelsus) that Nature was irremediably corrupt, blighted and decadent owing to Adam's sin. It regarded Nature as a system governed by rational laws expressive of the fulness of God's creative power and His benevolent design. Nature embraced all contrarieties, and fused them into harmony and became their justification. It was invariably linked with man's reason. To the Christian humanists,

reason most frequently was either equivalent or supplementary to Nature. The two terms were used either interchangeably or in mutual support to designate divine guidance manifested in the created universe; the norm of virtuous life, the regulative and purposeful concert of law, divinely and wisely originated in all departments of life. 80


80. Haydn, p.462
The study of Nature and its laws therefore became the central intellectual urge in the Renaissance. In the field of poetry, it found expression in the doctrine that art imitates Nature. Poetry as the imitation of Nature was intimately associated with knowledge. To Sidney, it was, "the mistress knowledge ... which stands ... in the knowledge of a man's self." With its stress on Nature, poetry became a means of attaining to the pre-lapsarian glory. Augustinian theology had considered the ideal order of Nature created by God as permanently lost to man because of the Fall. The only way of escape from post-lapsarian corruption and misery was through the grace of Christ. Even so the realm of grace into which the select were delivered was not pre-lapsarian Nature. The Renaissance, on the other hand, believed that poetry presented by means of imitation the ideal order of Nature created by God. Its arguments were based on Aristotle's

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82. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, ed. by J.Hastings, Vol.IX, p.214
distinction between history and philosophy. The Italian critic Speroni explained the distinction as follows:

History deals with what is in effect true but also with that which considered by reason, ought not to be true, since it is true counter to reason. Poetry may deal with what in effect is false, because in effect it never existed, but it is true according to reason because according to reason it should be like this. 83

The truth of history is the truth of fact, the truth of poetry is the truth of reason.

But how does poetry reveal the "truth of reason" and what is the nature of that truth? Here also the answer was based on Aristotle. Poetry imitates human actions following probability or necessity. According to Renaissance critics probability is "an organisation of particulars according to causal necessity." When so organized the universal of

83. Baxter Hathaway  The Age of Criticism, p.159
84. ibid. p.130. Aristotle's position is explained thus:- "The requirements of 'necessity' and 'probability' are not derived from natural verisimilitude or from the way in which things usually happen in an ordered universe. Rather, they are expressions of relationships of a strictly structural character which assure the proper integration and order of the component parts of the work". (B. Weinberg, A History of Italian Literary Criticism in the Renaissance, Chicago, 1961, Vol.1, p.357) "'Necessity' and "probability" establish the imitative relationship of the poem with the object in nature, its intelligibility and emotional effectiveness.
those particulars becomes manifest. Philosophy deals
with universals as abstractions of thought; poetry
dealing apparently with particulars, brings out their
universal. History, in Sidney's words, is tied "to
the particular truth of things and not to the general
reason of things, that his (historian's) example

draweth no necessary consequence". Poetry, on the
other hand, imitates actions not in chronological but
in their logical order. The poet first considers what
kind of action he is to imitate and then invents proper
human agents with appropriate moral qualities and
purposes to act it out. This makes poetry universal
even though it uses proper names. Every character
is represented as the perfect specimen of its type.
When the poet creates a superior second nature he
supplies the deficiencies of real nature. Aristotle
had said in the Physics that art completes nature.
"Any understanding", said Sidney,

knoweth the skill of the artificer standeth
in that Idea or fore-conceit of the work and
not in the work itself. And that the poet
hath that Idea is mainfest, by delivering

85. The Defence of Poesy, p.107

86. "... and generally art partly completes what nature
cannot bring to a finish, and partly imitates her." Physics II, 8, tr.R.P.Hardia and R.K.Gaye,
The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed.R.McKeon, p.250
them forth in such excellency as he hath imagined them. Which delivering forth is also not wholly imaginative as we are wont to say by them that build castles in the air but so far substantially it worketh, not only to make a Cyrus, which had been but a particular excellency as nature might have done but to bestow a Cyrus upon the world to make many Cyruses if they will learn aright why and how that maker made them. 87

The world of ideas is superior to the world of phenomena, as Plato had argued. Is the imaginative world of the poet's creation not analogous to Plato's world of ideas? Perhaps Bacon was thinking of this when he said -

The use of this feigned history (i.e. poetry) hath been to give some shadow of satisfaction to the mind of man in those points wherein the nature of things doth deny it, the world being in proportion inferior to the soul.88

87. The Defence of Poesy, p.101

88. The Advancement of Learning Book II, CH.IV. (ed. by F.G.Selby, Macmillan, Lond.1901, p.25) While commenting on Bacon's claim that poetry 'doth raise and erect the mind by submitting the shows of things to the desires of the mind' (The Advancement II. IV 3) D.G.James equates the example of Shakespeare's King Lear which apparently counters this claim. He argues that King Lear or anything like it, in Bacon's thinking "does not buckle and bow the mind unto the nature of things" because poetry "is at best a dream of learning; and Bacon was concerned with the advancement of learning." (The Dream of Learning - An Essay on the Advancement of Learning, Hamlet and King Lear, O.U.P. 1951, p.30-32)
The creations of art are not fictions or shadows of particulars; they are their very essence. Sidney said, therefore, that the world of poetry was golden, that of nature only brazen.

A very important dimension of the Renaissance concept of nature or the ideal was its moral significance. The Renaissance looked upon the world as a divinely ordained ideal order. In human affairs this ideal order was represented by morality or "the truth of reason". But in mundane affairs "the truth of reason" is not always experienced. In poetry, on the other hand, "the truth of reason" is always present. The argument of course leads to the demand for "poetic justice", and this is what made poetry in the eyes of the Renaissance critics allegorical theology and morality.

Thus the Renaissance fused in an original but complex way the Aristotelian, Horatian, Platonic and mediaeval Christian elements into a comprehensive theory of art as expression of the universal. We may

89. In this sense "nature" is what is acceptable to our moral sense as just and right.
conclude this review of the Renaissance theory of art as expression of the universal by referring to the story of Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Johnson complained that the reader of the poem found no transaction in which he could be engaged, no condition in which he could by any effort of imagination place himself "the want of human interest is always felt." It is arguable, however, that *Paradise Lost* is, on the contrary, rich in human significance. Adam and Eve are not like any ordinary man and wife, but they are typically human. The story of their fall and its aftermath is essentially the story of man as an acting and suffering moral being. Adam and Eve, expelled from heaven, and with the whole world stretched before them, become the symbol of humanity ready to accept new challenges, convert the world into a place of rest, and finally, by proving virtue in action, possess a richer paradise within. Of far greater importance and interest than the real cause of the Fall is the end of the poem:

> The World was all before them, where to choose Their place of rest, and Providence their guide: They hand in hand with wand'ring steps and slow Through Eden took their solitary way

- *Paradise Lost*, XII, 646-649.

This conclusion, which is "earned" in the poem, brings out the "the truth of reason" and justifies the ways of God to man.
The era of Classicism ushered in by the Renaissance continued into the 18th Century doctrine of Neoclassicism. The base of this doctrine was the view of art propounded by Aristotle, Horace and Longinus. In England in the hands of great masters like Dryden and Johnson, it never had become the narrow inflexible dogma that its opponents represented it to be. It was eager to benefit from the recent French experiment in the imitation of the ancients, without becoming a mere echo of another age or country. It dealt with the then current problems of criticism in its own independent way and soon developed into a powerful and comprehensive theory of art as the universal. Neoclassicism was concerned with finding the permanent standards of poetic excellence not only in the style of expression but in the intrinsic value of what was expressed. It found that standard in "Nature". It declared that art was the imitation of Nature. Pope advised poets to follow Nature as the surest guide. He explained its importance as follows:

First follow Nature, and your judgement frame
By her just standard, which is still the same:
Unerring, Nature, still divinely bright
One clear, unchanged and universal light
Life, force and beauty, must to all impart,
At once the source and end and test of art.
Art from that fund each just supply provides,
Works without show, and without pomp presides:  
In some fair body thus th' informing soul  
With spirit feeds, with vigour fills the whole  
Each motion guides and ev'ry nerve sustains  
Itself unseen, but in th' effects remains  

"Nature", of course, is a difficult term to handle.  
As Rene Wellek observes it means anything between the  
most literal naturalism and the most abstract  
idealization. Among the more important of its  
Neoclassical meanings the following may be mentioned:  
the external world, the objects in the external world,  
and also the rules and principles governing it.  
The Neoclassical concept of Nature is a legacy from  
the Renaissance religious beliefs which, we may  
recall, looked upon the universe as a well-regulated  
rational system expressive of God's benevolent design.  
Neoclassicism also looked upon Nature as God's art  

90. *Essay on Criticism*, I 68-79 (The Best of Pope  
ed. G. Shernburn, p.55)  

91. *A History of Modern Criticism*, Vol.I,  
The Later Eighteenth Century, pp.14-15  

92. *Literary Criticism - A Short History*,  
W.K. Wismatt Jr. and Cleanth Brooks, p.317
and therefore, it was the artist’s duty to imitate Nature. But the imperfections of the post-lapsarian Nature were patent to all, and there appeared the concept of the two levels of Nature— the ideal order and the ordinary one. The artist’s concern was with the ideal order of Nature. John Dennis, who was an eminent critic of his day explained this as follows:

The universe is regular in all its parts and it is to that exact regularity that it owes its admirable beauty. The microcosm owes the beauty and health both of its body and soul to order and the deformity and distempers of both to nothing but the want of order. Man was created, like the rest of the creatures, regular and so long as he remained so, he continued happy; but as soon as he fell from his primitive state, by transgressing order, weakness and misery was the immediate consequence of that universal disorder that immediately followed in his conceptions, in his passions and actions.

The great design of arts is to restore the decays that happened to human nature by the Fall, by restoring order.

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93. “If nature, as Pope’s generation believed, was the art of God, the harmonious symmetrical product of divine contrivance, then these principles of harmony, balance and regularity must find expression in the products of human art.” (M.C. Battestein, The Providence of Wit: Aspects of Form in Augustan Literature and the Arts, Lond.OUP 1974, p.3)


95. ibid, p.102
The stress on ideal nature rules out the imitation of actual nature. Sir Joshua Reynolds also cautioned his students on this point. "Nature herself is not to be too closely copied. There are excellencies in the art of painting beyond what is called the imitation of nature." This comprehensive concept of "ideal nature" was, however, in the actual poetry of the age, somewhat modified. "Nature" tended to be used in the sense of "human Nature" with all its noble qualities and also imperfections. Neither in the Renaissance nor in the Neoclassicism was idealization taken to mean "morally" idealized. What art presented was the "the idea", not "the ideal". Ben Johnson's Volpone is "the idea" of cunning and avarice, he is not of course an ideal human being. (In this respect, Shakespeare's art is different from Ben Johnson's).

The cardinal doctrines of Neoclassicism, "nature," "wit" and "imitation" clearly show that the stress is on the general truth of the human experience of life. Imitation of the ancients was prescribed on the grounds that when a great poet like

96. Discourse III, Discourses on Art, ed. Robert R. Wark, p. 41
Virgil creates a second nature, he creates not something altogether new and unnatural, but only brings out what lies potential in nature. When a poet imitates nature, he has to be sure that he is doing his job correctly and he can know this from the practice of the ancients. Since nature is "still the same" what is permanent must have been known to the ancients, and conversely what they knew as permanent must be nature. This was also the experience of Virgil :-

When first young Maro in his boundless mind
A work t' outlast immortal Rome design'd
Perhaps he seem'd above the Critic's law
And but from Nature's fountains sco'd to draw
But when t' examine ev'ry part he came
Nature and Homer were, he found, the same.98

In Neo-classical thinking 'wit' is also a crucial term but equally difficult to define. It is at once the poet's genius and his grasp of Nature.

"True Wit is Nature to advantage dressed." But in "wit" also importance is given to truth and universality.

97. Those rules of old discovered, not devised
Are Nature still but Nature methodiz'd
(An Essay on Criticism, I, l 88-89)

98. ibid, I. 130-135

99. ibid, II. 1. 297.
"The test (of true wit) is, that it must take its course from nature, that is from truth." Wit is the test of literary excellence, "not a stale or commonplace thought nicely tricked out." It is the poet's insight into the universal in common human experience. It is with the help of this that the poet imparts his work "life, force and beauty".

Neoclassicism gets a theoretical enunciation in Pope's Essay on Criticism, but for a practical application of its tenets to works of literature we may turn to Dryden and Dr. Johnson. In their assessment of the achievement of Chaucer, Shakespeare and other English poets both Dryden and Johnson stressed universality as the supreme test of poetic excellence. 'Nature' they always understood to mean human nature. Classicism, in its long experience of literature, has determined that human nature in all its vicissitudes is the only subject of abiding interest to poetry, and therefore, it is the business of the poet to deal with it. This stress is


101. ibid, p.203.
seen in Dryden's criticism. He declared that the common characteristic of the different forms of literature was "the same, a just and lively Image of Human Nature, representing its Passions and Humours and the Changes of Fortune". Faithful representation of human nature in all its universality becomes thus the sure, unchanging and permanent test of poetic excellence.

for mankind is even the same and nothing lost out of nature, though every thing is altered. 103

Dryden praises Chaucer for his accurate depiction of characters, for giving each of them a distinct individuality, but his greatness is that

we have our forefathers and great grand dames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days, their general characters are still remaining in mankind, and even in England; though they are called by other names ... 104

What is remarkable about both Dryden and Johnson as neoclassical theorists is that they explicitly


104. ibid, pp.262-263.
rejected the old Neoclassical doctrine of the imitation of the ancients, stressed the importance of originality and novelty and sought to find new theoretical grounds for the justification of the classical doctrine of the imitation of nature. Dryden pointed out that there would be no novelty in the mere imitation of the ancients and that Nature and not they, was the source of the perfection in art.

... (had we set down with a dull imitation of them) we might then have lost somewhat of the old perfection, but never acquired anything that was new. We draw not therefore after their lines, but those of Nature, and having the life before us, besides the experience of all they knew, it is no wonder if we hit some airs and features they have missed. 105

Johnson's approach was even more broad-based; he explained the causal relation between life and literature. In his praise of Shakespeare as a poet of nature, in his justification of the mixing of the tragic and the comic, in his rejection of the Unities and in his views of the Neoclassical concept of poetic genres and decorum, Johnson's stress, above everything else, was on the causal relation between life and literature and the dynamic nature of human experience of life. For this reason he rejected

the petty rules of Neoclassicism. Literature cannot be created according to the rules of criticism because it is prior to rules, and there is always an appeal open from criticism to nature and nature is not coeval with the rules of antiquity:

It ought to be the first endeavour of a writer to distinguish nature from custom or that which is established because it is right, from that which is right only because it is established; that he may neither violate essential principles by a desire of novelty, nor debar himself from the attainment of beauties within his view by a needless fear of breaking rules which no literary dictator had authority to enact.¹⁰⁶

Johnson's originality as a critic is seen in his views on the stock Neoclassical doctrines of the Three Unities, poetic genres and decorum. He refuses to be intimidated by the authority of the ancients while discussing these problems and tests their propriety solely on the basis of truth. But truth is nature, and nature is the universal form of human experience of life. In this sense nature transcends all that is merely local, topical or accidental. In the well-known "tulip passage" in Rasselas Johnson has expressed the "locus classicus" of the universality of poetry thus:

The business of a poet ... is to examine, not the individual, but the species, to remark general properties and large appearances; he does not number the streaks of the tulip or describe the different shades in the verdure of a forest. He is to exhibit in his portraits of nature such prominent and striking features, as recall the original to every mind; and must neglect the minuter discriminations, which one may have remarked and another have neglected, for those are characteristics which are alike obvious to vigilance and carelessness.107

Johnson ascribes the greatness and long-continued popularity of Shakespeare to the fact that he is "the poet of nature", for "nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature". As a poet of nature he holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, un-practised by the rest of the world; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions: they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets a character is too often an individual; in those of Shakespeare it is commonly a species. 109

109. ibid, p.62
Shakespeare's treatment of love is still strictly in keeping with this broad vision of "the whole system of life". He refuses to accord love disproportionate importance because he cannot be unfaithful to nature.

But love is only one of many passions, and as it has no great influence upon the sum of life, it has little operation in the dramas of a poet, who caught his ideas from the living world, and exhibited only what he saw before him. He knew, that any other passion, as it was regular or exorbitant, was a cause of happiness or calamity. 110

Johnson justifies Shakespeare's ignoring of subtle academic distinctions between customs and manners of different nations:

Shakespeare has no heroes; his scenes are occupied only by men, who act and speak as the reader thinks he should himself have spoken or acted on the same occasion. Even where the agency is supernatural, the dialogue is level with life. 111

Shakespeare's carelessness about historical accuracy is really of no consequence because his art does not suffer from it. "His story requires Romans or

110. ibid, p.63.
111. ibid, p.64.
kings, but he thinks only on men." Shakespeare's mingling of the comic with the tragic is justified by the nature of life, in all its myriad variations. His plays exhibit

the real state of sublunary nature, which partakes of good and evil, joy and sorrow, mingled with endless variety of proportion and innumerable modes of combination; and expressing the course of the world, in which the loss of one is the gain of another; in which, at the same time, the reveller is hasting to his wine, and the mourner burying his friend, in which the malignity of one is sometimes defeated by the frolic of another

Shakespeare's grasp of truth is so firm and accurate that

his drama is the mirror of life, that he who has mazed his imagination, in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delirious ecstasies, by reading human sentiments in human language, by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world and a confessor predict the progress of the passions.114

112. ibid, p.65
113. ibid, p.66
114. ibid, p.65
In all his discussion of Shakespeare's achievement Johnson never loses sight of his original proposition that the universality of significance is the proper criterion of poetic excellence. He applies the same criterion when he judges English poets. He finds fault with Cowley's love poetry because the poet had never experienced the ardour of love and hence there was insincerity about his love poetry. He is critical of the metaphysical poets because, as he felt, they always neglected the quality of universality and lost themselves in the pursuit of eccentricity by way of novelty.

The fault of Cowley and perhaps of all the writers of the metaphysical race is that of pursuing his thoughts to their last ramifications, by which he loses the grandeur of generality ... and all the power of description is destroyed by a scrupulous enumeration.115

Johnson was dissatisfied with the very method of metaphysical poetry. Extreme particularity of every thought and image violates the principles of generality and it is "neither nature nor life".116


116. ibid, I.19
The method of metaphysical poetry is "analytic"; it breaks every image into fragments. Johnson considered this bad because, it did not allow a uniform sentiment and a unity of tone, and fragmentation of images required a close attention, which had the effect of dispersal, ambiguity and irony.

If Johnson does not speak of the ideal order of nature, the old concept is seen temporarily revived in Sir Joshua Reynolds' Discourses on Art, which is the most comprehensive single embodiment of the Neoclassical aesthetic principles. His Discourse III contains a general statement on the nature of art which is applicable also to poetry. The basis of Reynolds' theory is his concept of "Ideal Beauty" which is a modification of the humanistic concept of the ideal order of nature. Reynolds rejects literal naturalism (represented by Dutch painting, for instance) as imitation of nature.

... a mere copier of nature can never produce any great thing; can never raise and enlarge the conceptions, or warm the heart of the spectator.\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{117} ibid, I. 20-21

\textsuperscript{118} Discourse III, p.41
The products of art are superior to the objects of nature because art supplies the deficiencies and deformities of nature.

There are excellencies in the art of painting beyond what is called the imitation of nature.\textsuperscript{119}

The fit object of the artist's imitation, therefore, is not nature, but "the perfect state of nature". In this theory "deformity" stands for particularity.

... the whole beauty and grandeur of the art consists ... in being able to get above all singular forms, local customs, particularities and details of every kind.\textsuperscript{120}

But the artist can conceive ideal beauty from a careful observation of individual objects, abstracting from them everything that is purely accidental and inessential. Thus, "he makes out an abstract idea of their forms more perfect than any original." The embodiment of the abstract idea of individual objects in the art is "the Ideal Beauty."

\textsuperscript{119} ibid,
\textsuperscript{120} ibid, p.44
\textsuperscript{121} ibid, p.44-45
But even with this stress on ideal beauty, Reynolds is not a Platonist; he is rather an Aristotelian. The "Ideal Beauty" of which he speaks is not a Platonic transcendental:

The great ideal perfection and beauty are not to be sought in the heavens, but upon the earth. They are about us, and upon every side of us.  

The artist can discover them by experience. The object of imitation is the general nature of man.

Neoclassicism is based on Aristotle's theory of art as imitation, but it is not a mere restatement of it. It assimilated the Horatian doctrine of decorum and the Renaissance concept of the ideal order of Nature. It considered human nature as a more or less stable phenomenon compounded of the same psychological, moral and intellectual elements. Art's concern, according to Neoclassicism, is with this stable core of human nature. It stressed the causal relation between life and experience, and rejected everything that was particular, local or accidental in human experience of life. It is perhaps the most emphatic theory of art as expression of the universal. In our next Section we shall deal with Romanticism which is often looked upon as the antithesis of Classicism.

122. ibid, p.44
In Romanticism the centre of interest shifts from general human nature to the individual and his sensibility and imagination. Romanticism as a literary doctrine is often regarded, therefore, as the antithesis of Classicism. But so far as the view of art as expression of the universal is concerned, it seems to be substantially in agreement with Classicism. The difference between Classicism and Romanticism is chiefly one of approach and method and not of the central conception of what literature is. In both the subject matter of literature is man and his experience of life. According to Classicism the object of imitation is human nature; according to Romanticism, "Poetry is the image of man and nature". "A poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth." This stress on the universal is not surprising since one of the influences which shaped Romanticism was the classical philosophy of universals, especially in its Platonic form.

All further references are to this edition.

All further references are to this edition.
Romanticism began as a revolt against the narrow literary dogmatism which overtook Neoclassicism in its later phases, reducing poetry to a matter of stock responses and associations expressed in a conventional style. Further, it was the protest of men of sensibility and imagination against the mechanistic view of the universe made popular by empiricist philosophers like Locke and Hartley. Empiricism reduced knowledge to sensation and reflection, and restricted the scope of reality to the sensible qualities of objects. Romanticism asserted the claims of sensibility and imagination as modes of apprehending reality.

Romanticism with its stress on individual sensibility and imagination modified the classical doctrine of the imitation of general human nature with its new concept of poetry as "expression". The poem

125. Though opposed to Neoclassicism and empiricism in certain respects, Romanticism is nevertheless indebted to them in a fundamental way. The stress in Romanticism on individual sensibility and imagination ultimately derives from the epistemological position of empiricism that the individual's experience of the world is the source of the knowledge of reality. This gave Romanticism its method.
expressed the poet's mind in a "state of vivid sensation" and explored the individual's emotional and imaginative understanding of life. However, what was valued in the individual experience was the universal truth in it. Romanticism stressed the poet's individualism but it also insisted that a the poet was "a man speaking to men" or "a representative man" as Emerson was to say later. It had a more comprehensive grasp of truth than Neoclassicism since it emphasized "the totality of man's forces, not reason alone, nor sentiment alone, but rather intuition". We shall now proceed to illustrate from Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley the nature of Romantic thought about art as expression of the universal.

In the history of Romanticism Wordsworth is important in a unique way. By his poetry and by his poetic reform in the Preface, Wordsworth at once accomplished two things - firstly, he demonstrated that the Romantic revolt against Neoclassical dogmatism was

126. Prose Works, I.138

127. Rene Wellek, Concepts of Criticism, Yale 1965, p.165
primarily against a narrow cult of reason and convention in poetry; secondly, he showed that Romanticism as a literary doctrine was not at variance with the most cardinal classical tenet, namely, the universality of literature. In later Neoclassicism "reason" had become almost synonymous with "theoretical deliberation" and with the "abstractly logical". Even an eminent Neoclassical critic like Joshua Reynolds had pointed out the inadequacy of "reason" in this sense to account for the entire texture of mental and emotional response which art evoked:

I observe, as a fundamental ground common to all the Arts with which we have any concern ... that they address themselves only to two faculties of the mind, its imagination and its sensibility.

All theories which attempt to direct or control the Art upon any principles falsely called rational, which we form to ourselves upon a supposition of what ought in reason to be the end or means of Art, independent of the known first effect produced by objects on the imagination, must be false and delusive.

128. W.J. Bate, From Classic to Romantic, p.91
129. Discourses on Art, p.230
In addition to this narrow cult of reason, there was the obstructive convention of poetic diction. Wordsworth felt very strongly that both Neoclassical "reason" and "poetic diction" were contrary to the spirit of poetry.

Poetry, according to Wordsworth, is the outcome of contemplation for poems to which any value can be attached were never produced on any variety of subjects but by a man who, being possessed of more than usual organic sensibility, had also thought long and deeply. 130

Wordsworth's theory gives a careful explanation of the process of poetic composition beginning with sense impressions that lead to feelings, and feelings leading to thoughts which in their turn are transmuted into feelings again, but refined and educated feelings. The continued influxes of our feelings are modified and directed by our thoughts. But our thoughts arise out of our past feelings and become their representatives. When we contemplate the relations of these representatives of our past feelings, we come to know which of them have real value for men. Repeated contemplation of this kind

130. Prose Works, I. 126
creates the habit of associating the right kind of feelings with worthy objects. A man who has such a habit will describe only such objects and utter only such sentiments as will enlighten his hearers. The poet is such a man. Poetry is "the spontaneous overflow of the powerful feelings" of such a person. A great poet, said Wordsworth in a letter to John Wilson, "ought to a certain degree, rectify men's feelings, to give them new compositions of feelings, to render their feelings more sane, pure and permanent, in short, more consonant to nature, that is, to eternal nature, and the great moving spirit of things.

With this conception of the nature and function of poetry in mind, Wordsworth questioned the value of Neoclassical poetic diction. While criticising Pope's epitaphs as a "tissue of false thoughts, languid and vague expressions, unmeaning antithesis and laborious attempts at discrimination", Wordsworth pointed out

131. ibid.
132. P.M. Zall, Literary Criticism of William Wordsworth, p.72
133. Prose Works, II.80
the danger of poetic diction

Words are too awful an instrument for good or evil to be trifled with; they hold above all other external powers a dominion over thoughts. If words be not (recurring to a metaphor before used) an incarnation of thought but only a clothing for it, then surely will they prove an ill gift; such a one as those poisoned vestments, read of in the stories of superstitious times, which had power to consume and to alienate from his right mind the victim who put them on. 

The most serious defect of poetic diction was that it invariably obscured or even vitiated the feeling, the real source of all poetry, instead of expressing it with fidelity. It was necessary, therefore, to discard such diction, and use instead, the language which feeling naturally prompted. Further, language is conditioned by social norms and mores, and the language of sophisticated urban people had acquired associations which made it an unfit vehicle for human feelings in their pure elemental form. Wordsworth's theory of poetic language makes fidelity to objects or experience the only touchstone of excellence. In the process of expression words must not distort objects or experience. But if experience carried with it associations or ideas that did not inherently belong to it, it was not valuable. Wordsworth

134. ibid, II.84-85.
explained this point of view in a letter to John Wilson on his poem, 'The Idiot Boy': "The loathing and disgust which many people have at the sight of an idiot, is a feeling which, though having some foundation in nature, is not necessarily attached to it in any virtuous degree, but is owing in a great measure to a false delicacy, and if I may say it without rudeness, a certain want of comprehensiveness and thinking," Betty Foy, the mother of the idiot boy, is true in her motherly love, and therein lies her essential humanity. Simon Lee does not become a butt of ridicule because he is unable to sever a tangled root; he becomes the symbol of human gratitude. In his portrayal of rustics, Wordsworth saw "the great triumph of the human heart. It is there that we see the strength, disinterestedness and grandeur of love." 136

135. P.M. Zall, Literary Criticism of W. Wordsworth, (Univ. of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1966) p.73
136. ibid. p.73
Rustic life is ideal for the poet’s purpose for one more reason. Wordsworth believed that the rustics "hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of our language is derived." Coleridge’s criticism of this view of language is well known. According to Coleridge, the best part of our language is derived from reflection, and reflection does not much belong to rustics. The rustic’s experiences are scanty, and his faculties are uncultivated, and therefore, he is not able, like an educated man, to discover and express the connections of things or relative bearings of fact to fact, from which some general law is deducible. He further argued that a rustic’s language, purified of provincialism and grossness, and made consistent with the rules of grammar, would not differ much from the language of an educated man. Wordsworth, however, would question whether the language of reflection which was based on an impure association of ideas or attachment to unworthy objects could be valuable. The circumstances of rural

137. The Prose Works, I.124
life are simple, its occupations are basic and most necessary, and therefore they germinate those elementary feelings which are common to all human beings and easily comprehensible to them.

In that situation, the passions of men are incorporated with the beautiful and permanent forms of nature. 138

The rustic's emotional life, in other words, is attached to the beautiful and permanent forms of nature; he loves not this tree and that hill, but the idea of a tree or the idea of a hill. It is this spirit of nature in the objects of nature that the poet conveys in his utterances:

I felt that the array Of act and circumstance, and visible form, Is mainly to the pleasure of the mind What passion makes them; that meanwhile the forms Of Nature have a passion in themselves, That intermingles with those works of man To which she summons him; although the works Be mean, have nothing lofty of their own; And that the Genius of the Poet hence May boldly take his way among mankind Wherever Nature leads; that he hath stood By Nature's side among the men of old, And shall stand for ever. 139

138. ibid,

139. The Prelude Book, XII 1. 287-299
Therefore, the poet and the prophet are kin with each other.

Coleridge and Wordsworth differed in several vital respects. But Coleridge's theory of art also acknowledges art as expression of the universal. It is implicit in his theory of the imagination. Coleridge's theory of the imagination is a theory of knowledge. It explains the relationship of the knowing subject with the object which is known. In all knowledge there is a "coincidence of an object with a subject. Knowledge is knowledge of truth and the truth always transcends the individual objects in nature." In the process of knowing, the subject is involved not as a passive receiver of sense impressions but as a sentient agent with a mind that is constantly acting upon what it receives. The act of knowing is in fact, the act of what the mind "makes" of what it receives. The "making" is the function of the imagination. Even in the operation of the primary imagination, which in Coleridge's epistemology, is the agent of normal perception, "making"

is involved. It was the contention of the Romantics in general that the act of perception itself involved a bringing together of the universal and the particular. Coleridge called the primary imagination "the living power and prime Agent of all human Perception."

Divine creation consists in the realization of Divine Thought in nature. This creation is eternal because the Thought of God cannot come into being and cease to be, God being the infinite "I AM". To a religious observer who can see the divine thought in nature, said Coleridge, nature becomes the art of God; there is no distinction between art and nature. The secondary imagination is an echo of the primary imagination distinguished by the fact that the secondary imagination co-exists with the conscious will and also by the degree and the mode of its operation.

It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create, or where the process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially vital, even as all objects (as objects) are essentially fixed and dead.

141. On Poesy or Art, ibid, II.254
The task of poetic imagination is to bring out "the idea" ("idealize"), "the form" and its triumph is the greater, the greater the diversity of parts it coalesces and unifies under a single "idea". King Lear and Hamlet are in this sense greater masterpieces of the expression of the imagination than Love's Labour's Lost.

It is the secondary imagination which makes art "as of a middle quality between a thought and a thing ... the union and reconciliation of that which is nature with that which is exclusively human." Coleridge expresses the same thought even in his short light-hearted poem "Apologia Pro Vita Sua":

The poet in his lone yet genial hour
Gives to his eyes a magnifying power:
Or rather he emancipates his eyes
From the black shapeless accidents of size—
In unctuous cones of kindling coal
Or smoke upwreathing from the pipe's trim bole,
His gifted ken can see
Phantoms of sublimity.

142. ibid,

Coleridge's Romanticism, then, is not opposed to the emphasis in Classicism on the universal in art. Nor does it differ radically from Classicism in its concept of artistic imitation. In On Poesy or Art Coleridge states that art must imitate the beautiful in Nature. He clarifies that nature here stands for "the essence", the natura naturans. In imitation also there must be "likeness in the difference, difference in the likeness, and a reconcilement of both in one."

"it is the unity of the manifold, the coalescence of the diverse; in the concrete, it is the union of the shapely with the vital." 146

But this similarity between Classicism and Romanticism in respect of the importance they attach to the universal in art must not obliterate the differences between them. M.H.Abrams, W.J.Bate and other distinguished scholars have pointed out some of these significant differences. Whereas for Aristotle, the work of art brought to full realization and perfection the "form" in nature, the

144. Biographia Literaria II. 257.
145. ibid.
146. ibid.
Romantics argued that the work of art was more a structure of activity than a structure of action. The organic form, said Coleridge, "shapes as it develops itself from within, and the fulness of its development is one and the same with the perception of its outward form. Thus is the life, such the form." The universal, Coleridge agreed, is seen only in the particular and he went on to argue that the particular therefore should be so apprehended that the universal is discerned at the same time. To speak in terms of Johnson's example, "those streaks that can convey to us "the idea" or "the form" of the tulip; without them, the form of the tulip is a jejune abstract idea. Needless to add, we do not number the streaks as an arithmetical exercise. If we number the streaks without apprehending the tulip, we are, in Wordsworth's phrase, murdering to dissect. Thus, the Romantic conception seeks to do away with the tiresome see-saw in aesthetic theory on the rival claims of particularity and universality. Once again, it is the imagination that enables us to apprehend reality in

all its particularity as well as its universality. It is not a faculty of the mind, but the power and agent of the mind in perception. Coleridge went on to argue that the thrust of evolution was from pure matter to pure spirit and this prevalence of pure spirit everywhere was to be seen in a work of art. In an aesthetic experience the reader or spectator realised in himself the main movement of evolution. Art thus helped our spiritual evolution.

The importance of the universal in art is equally prominent in Shelley. Like a true Platonist Shelley believed that there was a changeless, eternal and universal order behind the events in this world. He parted company with Plato, in his belief that it was the duty and prerogative of the poet to express this universal order implicit in human experience of life. "A poem", he declared, "is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth". Poetic creation, according to him, is always in its essence above the accidents of time and place.

148. Complete Works, VII.115
"A poet participates in the eternal, the infinite and the one; as far as relates to his conceptions, time and place and number are not." Shelley distinguished between a poem and a story in a manner reminiscent of Aristotle's distinction between poetry and history. A story is nothing more than a faithful report, "a catalogue of detached facts, which have no other connexion than time, place, circumstance, cause and effect." A poem, on the other hand, is a creation of "actions according to the unchanging forms of human nature, as existing in the mind of the creator, which is itself the image of all other minds." "A poet participates in the eternal, the infinite and the one" but his participation is always conditioned by philosophical, ethical and aesthetic considerations.

To be a poet is to apprehend the true and the beautiful, in a word, the good which exists in the relation, subsisting, first between existence and perception, and secondly between perception and expression.

149. ibid, VII.112
150. ibid, VII.115
151. ibid,
152. ibid, VII.111-112.
Existence is the physical existence of objects; perception is not only sense perception, but the form that the poet's intuitive faculty discerns in objects. Expression is externalization in art of the form so discerned. In the Defence of Poetry, Shelley uses the word 'poet' in a very comprehensive way and makes every contributor to civilization a poet, but his idea of a poet is embodied in his Prometheus who is as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends. 153

The poet is a prophet and seer by virtue of his apprehension of the true, the good and the beautiful in life, and therefore he alone can direct social and moral reforms.

The great writers of our own age are, we have reason to suppose, the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition or the opinions which cement it. 154

153. ibid, II.172
II.173
154. ibid, VII.409 and VII.411
The poet accomplishes all this by the means and methods he uses. Poetry is "the expression of the imagination" and the language it uses is "vitally metaphorical". A metaphor brings out the relation of similarity between two things whose similarity had not been approached before. In a metaphor like "the camel is the ship of desert", the word "ship" implies the tracklessness of the ocean and also of the desert, and further, implies the relation between the ocean and the ship and that between the desert and the camel, and finally it brings together in a flash the relations of these two pairs in an implied but powerful comparison. The language of poetry is metaphorical in the sense that it embodies in symbols the relation between objects of perception ("existence" as Shelley calls them) and their forms which the poet alone perceives. Metaphor is the expression or externalization of the poet's imagination. The imagination as the faculty contradistinguished from reason is concerned with similitudes of things, and helps the poet in creating symbols. Shelley's Jupiter and Prometheus are symbols in this sense; the one of hatred, tyranny and ignorance,

155. ibid, VII.109 and VII.111
the other of forgiveness, love and wisdom. "Prometheus is the symbol of the desire in the human soul to create harmony through reason and love." In the poet's vision of the human in Prometheus there is a general realization of regeneration; of the One in the Many. After regeneration all are poets and participate in the eternal and the infinite. The very grammar of language which is used as an instrument to make distinctions in our perception becomes transmuted. Our present language and its grammar function on the false assumption of the existence of separate grammatical entities which so far as the fact of our perception goes, are really not so. As a Times Literary Supplement reviewer once put it, our linguistic structure is centered on the noun and its predicates and gives rise to an hypostasis of abstract entities corresponding to abstract nouns ... It has led to a general assumption that reality has an intrinsic structural correspondence with the nominal language structure we use, i.e., that there are in reality such things as 'object,' somehow existing outside time, separated out from the process of the real, and capable of acting as individual causes; and even that general classes may share the objective nominal quality attributed to things.  

But in perception, the object becomes one with the subject. After our regeneration language becomes expressive of the form of all objects and of the unity of perceptions:

Language is a perpetual Orphic song
Which rules with Daedal harmony a throng
Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and shapeless were. 158

Thus all the three great Romantics, namely, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley, make universality the most important characteristic of literature. All these three speak of 'forms', 'ideas' and the universal, though perhaps it is only Shelley who most clearly advocates a strong Platonic philosophy of the One and the Many. In our next section we shall see how the Romantic emphasis on the universality of art continues in Matthew Arnold, the great Victorian critic of Romanticism.

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158. Prometheus Unbound IV.415-417. Complete Works II.256
After the advent of Romanticism the central importance of the imagination and of the sensibility of the individual was securely established. Nevertheless, the Classical importance of the universal in art continued though in an altered form. We can see these facts clearly in the criticism of Matthew Arnold. Whether he is speaking of the destinies of poetry, or of the function of criticism, or of the greatness of different poets and the proper subjects for poetry, the emphasis of his thought is unmistakably on the universal in art. He enunciated his view of art as expression of the universal in the very first of his critical writings, the *Preface to Poems* (1853).

Explaining his reasons for excluding *Empedocles on Etna* from the 1853 collection of his poems, Arnold argued at length that poetry demanded a proper subject. Arnold's criterion for the right subject is derived from Aristotle's stress on action with human agents as the object of poetic representation. According to Arnold, the actions worthy of poetic representation are those certainly which most powerfully appeal to the great primary human affections: to those elementary
feelings which subsist permanently in the race, and
which are independent of time. These feelings are
permanent and the same; that which interests them
is permanent and the same also . . . To the
elementary part of our nature, to our passions, that
which is great and passionate is eternally interesting.159

In extolling the Greeks and in rejecting subjects whose
only qualification for poetic treatment was their
modernity, Arnold was stressing the universal in art.
The poet has nothing to do with,

The outward man of Oedipus or of Macbeth; ...
His business was with their inward man; with
their feelings and behaviour in certain tragic
situations which engage their passions as men .160

The feelings and behaviour of characters of which
Arnold speaks have nothing in them "local and casual;
they are as accessible to the modern Poet as to a
contemporary".

159. The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold, ed.R.H.Super,

160. ibid. p.5, This stress on the inward man, on the
feelings of a character, shows the temper of post-
Romantic Classicism. Among the English romantics
Wordsworth stands the highest in Arnold's estimation
for the universal quality of his work. For this
he ranks him with Shakespeare and Milton.
('Wordsworth' - Matthew Arnold - Selected Essays
ed. Noel Annan, p.131)

161. ibid. p.5
The date of an action signifies nothing. Arnold praises the classical attention in poetic treatment to the whole, keeping the parts subordinate. The poet's primary concern is to bring out the inner idea of the action in imitation; the force of the matter is derived from the pregnancy of the matter it conveys. The "idea" of the action is what constitutes its poetical character. Likewise the gratification of the poetical sense (as distinguished from the rhetorical sense) of a reader demands that "the inherent excellences" of an action must be permitted to develop themselves without the personality of the poet intruding. In the example of Aristotle, the acorn must be developed into an oak. The "nature" of a thing is seen in its full development. The poet must entirely efface himself and enable "a noble action to subsist as it did in nature. Arnold rejects

162. Another characteristic of post-Romantic Classicism is that it accepts the Romantic stress on the particular, but through the particular it goes to the essence which sums up all the particulars. In his essay on Maurice de Guerin, Arnold speaks of the interpretative power of poetry as "the power of so dealing with things as to awaken in us a wonderfully full, new and intimate sense of them. When this sense is awakened in us as to objects about us, we feel ourselves to be in contact with the essential nature of those objects, to be no longer bewildered, and oppressed by them, but to have their secret". Complete Prose Works III. 13.

163. ibid I.14.
the view that a poem ought to be "a true allegory of one's/s/mind". No great poetical work could be produced on that premise. The passions and emotions which a poet explores in his work must be those "which subsist permanently in the race"; they must not be the personal passions and emotions of the poet himself. The Greeks understood this perfectly; their first concern accordingly was to bring out the poetical character of the emotions which constituted their universality.

In his later criticism Arnold deals mainly with the function of poetry and the function of criticism. He speaks of the high destinies of poetry and of great poetry. But here again the stress is on the universality of art. When traditional religious belief is being overthrown by scientific discoveries, the human race will find "a surer and surer stay" in poetry because poetry is based not on challengeable facts but on "idea".

164. ibid, I.14
But for poetry the idea is everything; the rest, a world of illusion. Poetry attaches its emotion to the idea, the idea is the fact. 165

In order to know the idea, the poet has to rise above his personal ego. In his Oxford Inaugural Lecture "On the Modern Element in Literature" Arnold speaks of the need for the intellectual deliverance of the age. Only literature can bring about this deliverance. Such a deliverance consists in

man's comprehension of this present and past. It begins when our mind begins to enter into possession of the general ideas which are the law of this vast multitude of facts. It is perfect when we have acquired that harmonious acquiescence of mind which we feel in contemplating a grand spectacle that is intelligible to us. 166

Literature, especially classical literature, takes its stand on the "idea". It rises above personal passions and feelings. A man who is too much involved in the practical problems of his life, his own

165. ibid, IX.161. Was Arnold thinking, one wonders, of the Indian concept of the world as māyā or illusion?

166. ibid, I.20
passions and feelings, can hardly rise to this comprehensive vision of the sage. Hence Arnold praises the quality which he calls "the Indian Virtue of detachment" and distancing oneself from the sphere of practical life.

The ultimate criteria of greatness in poetry, according to Arnold, are only two - a comprehensive grasp of life and a firm hold of ideas. Great poetry brings ideas to bear upon the facts of life. Arnold calls this task "the noble and profound application of ideas to life." He claims that they are the ideas

167. ibid, III.274.
It has been objected that Arnold is inconsistent on this point. On the one hand he states that culture demands of its votaries that they endeavour to make reason and the will of God prevail in the world. On the other hand, he wants the critic to withdraw from practical life. The inconsistency disappears when we recall that Arnold wants the critic to cultivate "the Indian virtue of detachment". What that virtue means has been described at length in The Bhagavad Gita - a book of which Arnold was fond - rather overfond, thought his friend A.H.Clough. "The Indians distinguish between meditation and absorption and knowledge; and between abandoning practice and abandoning the fruits of action and all respect thereto. This last is a supreme step, and dilated on throughout the Poem." (Letters of Arnold to Clough, ed. H.F.Lowry (London, 1932) p.69)

168. ibid, IX.45
concerned with the question "How to live?". The high seriousness of poetry derives only from such an application. But the application should always be according to the laws of art. Otherwise the result would be a didactic tract. That Arnold did not always choose his examples fairly - from Chaucer for instance, does not dispose of his contention. Like Dr. Johnson, Arnold also judges the greatness of poets according to the criterion of universality. He is dissatisfied with the romantics because, though they had plenty of energy and creative force, they were excessively preoccupied with the exploration of their own feelings caused by the French Revolution and not in the exploration of the great thought which was the cause of the French Revolution. Though the French Revolution was a great historical event like the Renaissance, it could not produce many great works of genius as the Renaissance did, because it took a political and practical character without remaining an intellectual and spiritual movement in which "the human spirit looked for its satisfaction in itself and in the increased play of its own activity."

169. ibid, III.264

170. ibid, III.263-64
A consideration of Arnold's theory of art is not complete without a reference to his cultural criticism which is based on the concept of man's "best self". He was aware of the great political and social changes that were taking place in Europe. In England social and political influence was passing into the hands of the middle class which was not quite prepared for its new responsibilities. The aristocracy and the working classes were also not ready for them. In Europe, communism was propagating its philosophy of class-war. Arnold wanted the state to be the source of national unity, instead of becoming an affair of class-interests or an instrument of class warfare. Arnold believed that only a proper system of education could end this state of affairs. Education could encourage people to seek and cultivate the best self.

By our best self we are united, impersonal and at harmony... We want an authority, and we find nothing but jealous classes and a deadlock; culture suggests the idea of the state. We find no basis for a firm state-power in our ordinary selves; culture suggests one to us in our best self. 171

171. ibid. V.135
The most persuasive organ of culture is poetry. Poetry seeks to bring out our "best self". Culture is a "study of perfection" and poetry is "the most perfect speech of man". Both aim at showing the best in man. On this, religion, culture and poetry are one.

Religion says - The kingdom of God is within you; and culture in like manner, places human perfection in an internal condition; in the growth and predominance of our humanity proper, as distinguished from our animality. It places it in the ever increasing efficacy and in the general harmonious expansion of those gifts of thought and feeling, which make the peculiar dignity, wealth and happiness of human nature. 172

In short, it stands for the transformation of the Barbarians, the Philistines, and the Populace "according to the law of perfection". As the most perfect speech of man, poetry "tends to establish an order of ideas, if not absolutely true, yet true by comparison with that which it displaces; to make best ideas prevail". In other words, it tends

172. ibid. V.94
173. ibid. V.228
174. ibid. III.261
"to make reason and the will of God prevail".  

The root-cause of the problems of his day, Arnold believed, lay in the importance given to the fact over the idea. He stated these problems succinctly in his poem in the well-known lines about

...this strange disease of modern life,  
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,  
Its heads overtaxed, its palsied hearts.

Neither science nor religion could provide a satisfactory answer to the problems of his day. Religion had frozen into a fact, and "the fact is failing us". Science had tied itself to observable facts and could not satisfy man's sense of beauty and of conduct and comprehensiveness which ideas alone could give. And it is these ideas that form the stuff of poetry.

The problems of culture which vexed Arnold also troubled T.S. Eliot, and he, too like Arnold, maintained

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177. 'Literature and Science' (Matthew Arnold - Selected Essays, ed.Annan, p.220)
that only poetry could provide answers to them.

In spite of Eliot's antipathy to Arnold's literary criticism, the similarities and continuities between them are more striking than their divergences and oppositions. Like Arnold, Eliot was also opposed to the cult of superficial romanticism which was very much in vogue in the late 19th and the early 20th Century. Further, by his stress on the universal in art, and by his view of the impersonality of poetry, Eliot has become, in spite of differences, Arnold's

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178. Eliot deprecated Arnold's attempts to make poetry a tool of culture. "The total effect of Arnold's philosophy is to set up Culture in the place of religion and to leave Religion to be laid waste by the anarchy of feeling." (Selected Essays, p.436) He also rejected Arnold's contention that the best poetry superseded philosophy and religion. "The most generalized form of my view is simply this: that nothing in this world or the next is a substitute for anything else; and that if you find that you can do without something, such as religious faith or philosophic belief then you must just do without it." (The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, p.113); of Arnold's "application of ideas to life", Eliot made fun by asking whether ideas were a lotion to be applied to the inflamed skin of humanity (ibid. p.112). In the Introduction to the 1928 edition of the Sacred Word (Methuen, 1950) Eliot has sought to make some amends for his supercilious and surely erroneous way of "disposing of" Arnold.
successor in classicism. His various writings on the subject, however, have made him the most influential critic of the 20th Century. His concept of "impersonal" poetry, his description of the creative process which demands a unified sensibility, his theory of "objective correlative", the importance he gave to tradition - all these ideas are at the core of Eliot's thought as a critic. With all this, it is arguable whether Eliot had "a theory of poetry". But the trend of his critical thinking is also in the direction of the theory of art as expression of the universal.

Eliot firmly rejects the view that a work of art expresses the writer's personality. On the contrary,

179. The rejection of expressionism in art may be regarded as the heart of Eliot's aesthetic theory. In After Strange Gods, nearly seventeen years after the publication of "Tradition and the Individual Talent", Eliot reconsidered some of his earlier ideas but did not totally reject them though he conceded that the problem was not so simple as it had seemed to him when he wrote his early essay; nor could it be treated purely as a literary one." (After Strange Gods, London, Faber and Faber, 1934, p.15). In After Strange Gods where he discussed in greater detail his conception of tradition, Eliot includes in tradition, besides literary tradition, religious orthodoxy, heresy, ethics, politics and philosophy. "Tradition may be conceived as a by-product of right living; not to be aimed at directly. It is of the blood ... rather than of the brain; it is the means by which the vitality of the past enriches the life of the present." (ibid. pp.29-30).
a work of art exists in its own right, independently of the personality of the artist. It is not the expression of the artist's personality or of an emotion felt by him. A poem is a verbal artefact which exists somewhere between the writer and the reader, it has a reality which is not simply the reality of what the writer is trying to 'express' or of his experience of writing it, or of the experience of the reader or of the writer as reader. 180

But the relationship between the poet and the poem remains to be explained. It is undeniable that feelings and emotions, experiences and impressions are the raw material of the poet and it is likely that some of these feelings may be personally felt and experienced by the poet. But when they come through the medium of art, they do not remain personal. In the process of creation they are completely transmuted. So the work which emerges is not an expression of personality or felt emotion but "concentration and a new thing resulting from the concentration, of a great number of experiences ..." 181

180. The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, p. 30
181. Selected Essays, p. 21
In order to achieve this concentration, the poet has to subject his material to the laws of his medium which require that the work should be self-consistent and self-intelligible. For this the artist should "consciously or unconsciously draw a circle beyond which he does not trespass." The process of art is, in short, a process of depersonalization. And it is the poet's mind itself which is responsible for the depersonalization. In the medium of the poet's mind various impressions and feelings combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. The metaphysical poets had this capacity to an extraordinary degree. (So Eliot and several others have thought.) They "possessed a mechanism of

182. ibid. 111.

183. On this point Eliot is very explicit. "And I hinted, by an analogy, that the mind of the mature poet differs from that of an immature one not precisely in any valuation of 'personality', not being necessarily more interesting, or having 'more to say' but rather by being a more finely perfected medium in which special, or very varied, feelings are at liberty to enter into new combinations." ibid. p.18
sensibility which could devour any kind of experience."

But the essential point is that everything is
depersonalized in this medium. Here, Eliot's concept
of medium becomes comparable to Coleridge's theory of the
imagination. The difference between them is that
Eliot's concept of "medium" is linked with his concept
of "tradition". Eliot says that tradition has to be
worked for, though not in the way in which a student
works to acquire scholarship. Tradition involves "the
historical sense". The historical sense gives access to
tradition. Through the historical sense the poet grasps
the timeless in the temporal. It gives him a perspective
of the temporal and the timeless together and thus helps
him to discern the universal. As Eliot explains,

184. Eliot described this "mechanism of sensibility"
as follows:— "when a poet's mind is perfectly
equipped for its work, it is constantly
amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary
man's experience is chaotic, irregular,
fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or
reads Spinoza and these two experiences have
nothing to do with each other, or with the
noise of the typewriter, or the smell of
cooking; in the mind of the poet these
experiences are always forming new wholes."
ibid. p.287
the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole literature of Europe from Homer, and within it the whole of the literature of his country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless and the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional.185

In FOUR QUARTERS he expresses the view as follows:--

... I have said before
That the past experience revived in the meaning
Is not the experience of one life only
But of many generations - not forgetting
Something that is quite ineffable;
The backward look behind the assurance
Of recorded history, the backward half look,
Over the shoulder, towards the primitive terror
Now, we come to discover that moments of agony
... are likewise permanent
With such permanence as time has.
We appreciate this better
In the agony of others, nearly experienced
Involving ourselves, than in our own
For our own past is covered by the currents of action
But the torment of others remains experience
Unqualified, unworn by subsequent attrition
People change and smile: but the agony abides.186

When a poet has a sense of tradition, he is aware that he is creating a work of art and not merely giving vent

185. ibid. p.14
to his personal feelings and emotions. He is aware that a work of art is an event in the history of art and not an isolated fact, not an event in the biography of the creating individual. His art should express not his personal emotions but the permanent and the universal discerned with the aid of his historical sense. A work of art, therefore, is judged by the standards and canons set by all works of art in the past. "No poet, no artist of any art, has his meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists." A sense of tradition helps the writer to achieve "the maintenance of an unconscious balance between ... the collective personality, so to speak, realised in the literature of the past and the originality of the living generation." It helps him to develop. "To develop is to understand enough of your past achievement to go on with it;

187. *Selected Essays* p.15

188. *What Is a Classic?* p.58
to see what has so far been done by yourself and others."

Further, Eliot distinguishes between the "raw" emotions in life and the emotions which art conveys. Aesthetic emotions are said to be more concentrated and more complex because the poet expresses in them "feelings which are not in actual emotions at all". The artistic "device" for the expression of emotion in art Eliot calls "the objective correlative".

The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an objective correlative; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events.

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189. Hugh Kenner  The Invisible Poet, p.92

which shall be the formula of that particular emotion, such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.\textsuperscript{191}

The objective correlative thus is the means to an objectification of emotion - not the poet's emotion. It gives the poem a self-consistent and sensuous structure, but this structure is only a means. It points beyond itself to the general structure of reality - to what is permanent and the universal in human emotions.

The universality of art is emphasized by Eliot in another, broader way, in his address to the Virgilian Society, \textit{What Is a Classic?} A classic is above everything else, the work of a mature mind.

\textsuperscript{191} S.E. p.145, In "Changing Interpretations of Shakespeare" Kenneth Muir says that Eliot "no longer holds the views expressed in the essay on Hamlet" (\textit{The Age of Shakespeare, The Pelican Guide to English Literature}, Vol.II,p.301) But it is unlikely that Eliot repudiated his theory of "objective correlative". He never gave up the anti-expressionist view of art. In the preface to the 1928 edition of \textit{The Sacred Wood} Eliot says that though he would put things a little differently, he does not repudiate his earlier views.(\textit{The S.W. pp.VII-VIII}).

\textsuperscript{192} W.I.C. p.55
Maturity includes maturity of manners and the absence of provinciality. Provinciality consists in the "distortion of values, the exclusion of some, the exaggeration of others which springs, not from lack of wide geographical perambulation, but from applying standards acquired within a limited area, to the whole of human experience, which confounds the contingent with the essential, the ephemeral with the permanent."  The malady of the modern man is "provinciality", his proneness "to try to solve the problems of life in terms of engineering." When Eliot speaks of this problem, his tone becomes almost Arnoldian. Like Arnold, he refuses to dissociate literature from the great concerns of life. "How to live?" is itself an ethical question Arnold declared. While discussing the importance of tradition to literature Eliot observed:

193. ibid. p.62
194. ibid. p.69
195. ibid. p.58
Tradition may be conceived as a by-product of right-living, not to be aimed at directly. It is of the blood ... rather than of the brain; it is the means by which the vitality of the past enriches the life of the present. 197

The loss of the sense of 'tradition' is the cause of the modern man's provinciality - his proneness "to confuse wisdom with knowledge, and knowledge with information", and his efforts "to solve problems of life in terms of engineering." The corrective to the modern man's provinciality, Eliot maintains, is literature with its comprehensive grasp of reality and with its stress on the permanent and universal in the human experience of life.

So far we have considered in brief some of the more important Western theories of art as expression of the universal. Universality of art is one of the basic concepts of literary criticism. It has endured for ages in spite of variations in doctrines and dogmas for it explains one essential aspect of art. If there is a general agreement anywhere among great critics and important schools of criticism, it is in respect of the universality of art. This is true also of the Indian theories of art which we shall deal with these in our next Section.

197. After Strange Gods, pp. 29-30

198. W.I.C. p. 69
Bharata, the author of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (NS) or science of drama is the first exponent of Indian poetics. Bharata's approach to poetry is by no means simple, and testifies to his awareness of the highly complex nature of literature. So far as the relationship of art with reality is concerned, his answer is based on three key-concepts: *lokavṛttānu-karaṇa* or representation of the behaviour of mankind, *sādhāranya* or generalization of reality, and *nāṭyadharma* or aesthetic transformation of reality. Of these three concepts, the first two explain the universal nature of the creations of art and the third refers to the means and methods which bring about universalization in art.

*Lokavṛttānu-karaṇa* or *anukaraṇa* (representation or imitation) is the basic concept in the *NS*. The concept of *sādhāranya* (universalization) is implicit in his observations, and it is the basis of the strictly formal, theoretical discussion of the problem of art and reality in the 9th and 10th Centuries by Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka and Abhinavagupta.
Bharata's treatment of the subject, though profound, is unsystematic and repetitive. The elements of his aesthetic theory are scattered throughout the NS and they need to be brought together and interpreted carefully to reveal his theory of art as a whole.

In the first Chapter of the NS, Bharata explains the nature and scope of drama in the words attributed to God Brahmā. The occasion for Brahmā's utterance, we may recall from our discussion Section I-B (p. 31) is provided by the first dramatic performance in heaven in which the gods were shown as triumphing over the asuras. The asuras protest to Brahmā against this defamation. He consoles them with the following explanation of the nature of drama:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{bhavatām devatānām ca śubhāśubhāvikalpakah} \\
\text{karmabhāvānyapakṣi nātyavedo maya kṛtah} \quad (i) \\
\text{naikāntato ātra bhavatām devānām caṇubhāvanam} \\
\text{trailokyaśasya sarvasya nātyambhāvānukāirtanam} \quad (ii)
\end{align*}
\]

199. This is not a literal translation of the text quoted below.

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bhavatām devatānām ca śubhāśubhāvikalpakah
karmabhāvānyapakṣi nātyavedo maya kṛtah (i)
naiṅāntato ātra bhavatām devānām caṇubhāvanam
trailokyaśasya sarvasya nātyambhāvānukāirtanam (ii)
I have created the lore of drama which requires (for its subject-matter) actions (karma) and passions (bhāva), and which deals with good and evil in the asuras as well as the gods. (i)

There is no exclusive representation (in it) of either of you. Drama is a representation of the states of this triple world (of gods, asuras and men). (ii)

It sometimes (represents) dharma (righteous conduct), sometimes play, sometimes material prosperity (and) sometimes spiritual quietitude. It (shows also) laughter, battle, love and killing. (iii).

(It represents) the righteousness of those who are righteous and the lust of lustful.

(It shows) the punishment of the proud and arrogant and the self restraint of the cultured. (iv)

I have created this (lore of) drama which imitates the actions of people includes various situations, and which is rich in various emotions. 200 (v)

A representation of the nature of the world (lokaprakṛtasya svabhavah) with its characteristic joy and misery by means of acting and other ancillaries (such as costume etc.) is called drama. (vi)

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kvacid dharmah kvacic krīḍā kvacid arthah kvacicchamah
kvacid hāsyam kvacid yuddham kvacic kāmāh kvacid vadhah(iii)
dharmo dharmaprajāptānām kāmāh kamopasevinām
nigraho durvinītānām vinītānām damakriyā (iv)(NS I.106-109)

200. nanabhavopasampannam nanavasthāntarātmakam
lokavr̥ttanukaranaṁ nātyametaṁ mayā kṛtam (NS I.112)

201. yo śāyam svabhava lokasya sukhamukkhasamanvitah
so āngādyabhinayopeto nātyamityabhidhiyate (NS I.119)
Brahma explains that drama is a representation of the states of this triple world (trailokyasyasya sarvasya nātyam bhāvānukīrtanam). The word 'trailokya' (triple world) is conventionally taken to refer to the three different worlds, namely, heaven (svarga), earth (mṛtyuloka) and the nether world (pātala). It is possible to interpret the word "trailokya" in a broader sense to refer to the qualities that are predominant in the inhabitants of these worlds, namely sattva (moral and philosophical disposition) rajas (energy without knowledge, will to act, practical initiative, pragmatic attitude) and tamas (inertia, torpor, confusion, complete absence of knowledge etc.) These qualities, in their innumerable combinations and mutations, form the basic ingredients of our psychological being, and give rise to the variety of human nature. This variety in its turn gives rise to the variety of passions and situations in life. These situations, it is arguable, are what Bharata refers to

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202. This broader interpretation was adopted by T.S.Eliot when he quoted from the Bhadāranyaka Upaniṣad at the conclusion of the Waste Land.
in *trailokyasya bhavah*, i.e., States of this triple world.

The implications of the three-quality theory (*traigunya*) from the point of view of the classification of characters in drama are worth investigating. Bharata speaks of three categories of characters, namely, high (*uttama*), middle (*madhyama*), and low (*adhama*). Though he does not explicitly connect these with the three *gunas*, his description of them leaves no doubt about the theory of the three *gunas*. He describes the high characters (*uttama* prakṛti, lit. 'noble disposition') as follows:

Noble disposition should be understood as characterised by the qualities of steadiness, and (the spirit of) sacrifice, seriousness and generosity, and enriched by the knowledge of all the Śastras. (It is) characterised by the restraint of the senses;

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203. This interpretation of Bharata's words finds support in Kālidāsa's observation -

*traigunyodbhavamatra lokacaritam nanarasam drśvate.* (Mālavikāgnimitra, I.4)

(Tr. - Here in (the drama) is seen the behaviour of the world arising out of the three *gunas* and characterised by various passions.)
it has knowledge and is proficient in different arts. It is polite, and aims high and reassures the weak. (lit. terrified).

The middle characters (madhyama prakrti) are described as having these very qualities in a non-exalted form and as suffering from small vices. The middle characters (madhyama prakrti) are described as having these very qualities in a non-exalted form and as suffering from small vices.205

The low characters belong to the 'adhama prakrti' (i.e., low disposition); they are described as follows:

The low people are impolite in speech, characterless, having an evil disposition and are (sometimes) dull. They are wrathful, treacherous and act as informers. They are ungrateful and inactive, and are not able to discriminate between good and evil. They are treacherous, quarrelsome and seek to appropriate other people's wealth. 206

204. nanasastrarthasampanna gambhirvaudaryasaalinin sthairyatyagaganopetajneyapra�rtiruttama (a) jitedriyajnānavaṭi nanāśilpavicaksanā daksinādhamahālaksyā bhitanāṃ parisāntvānī (b) (NS XXIV, 3 & 2)

205. nātyutkṛṣṭairanikhilairebhiresvāṅvīta guṇaih alpadosanuviddā ca madhyama prakṛtih smṛtā (NS XXIV. 11)

206. rūksavacotha duḥśilah kusattvāḥ sthūlabuddhyah krodhanā phatakasāciva mitraghnāscī (chi?) māniṇah pisunastuddhatairvaikyaikaraṃjastraistathālasāh manyamanyāviṣeṣajñāḥ striśolāḥ kalahapriyāh sūcakāḥ pāpakarmaṇāḥ paradravyāpahāriṇāh ebhirdoṣaistu sampanṇā bhavantihādhamā naraḥ - ibid.
These three categories of characters are basic to Bharata's further subdivisions of characters. By these Bharata tries to reduce the variety of human character to universal psychological and moral traits. It should not, however, be supposed that a character falling in a particular category possesses all the qualities of that category. The categories indicate only the broad moral dispositions of men.

Bharata's classification of dramatic characters as 'high', 'middle' and 'low' has a parallel in Western poetics in Horace's doctrine of literary decorum and Ben Jonson's theory of humours. Horace's advice to make Achilles "impatient, hot-tempered, ruthless and fierce" is to make the portrait of Achilles in literature the perfect specimen of his type. In Bharata's terminology Achilles is a dhīroddhāta nāyaka (a courageous but haughty hero). Ben Jonson's concept of humorous characters, however, is a different case. Ben Jonson was

207. It is not clear, however, whether these categories are based on social classes which are mentioned by Bharata in this connection. In the NS XXIV 18-19, he mentions gods, kings, generals, ministers, Brahmins and merchants as 'high' characters, but he does not mention there other categories.
interested more in the oddities and eccentricities of human character resulting from the misuse of reason and free will. A Jonsonian humour is "that evil moral condition that occurs when man's carnal appetite gains ascendancy over his reason." Ultimately, it was a concept based on the ethics and theology of Christian age, but its stress was on the deviations from the norm.

But deviations from the norm are, by their very nature, opposites of the universal. Machiavellism, hypocrisy and cruelty in human character as in Volpone, are broadly general, but Jonson's concern is primarily with monstrosity and hence his theory of "humours" is defective as a theory of universal moral traits; his norm is either left implicit or is unconvincingly realized. Bharata's prakrtis are free from this defect. Their impact on his theory of art as expression of the universal, however, is indirect. It can be brought out by a reference to the story of Brahma's consolation of the angry asuras.

The clear implication of Brahma's consolation of the asuras is that drama presents only avasthas and bhāvas

i.e., situations and sentiments divested of their particularity. What the divine play in question represented was the general truth that good actions lead to good results irrespective of who did them, whether the gods or the asuras.

In the words of Brahma is implicit the distinction between art and reality. Life as experienced in the empirical world affects particular individuals in a practical way, whereas life as represented in art is universalized and results in the experience of rasa. While commenting on the NS I.119 Abhinavagupta observes : Drama is the meaning (of the activity) of all the world manifested in a generalized form and enjoyed as one's own (experience).

Apart from this interpretation of Bharata's words, there are certain other Indian theories which discuss in a more formal way the universal nature of the creations of art - Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's and Abhinavagupta's, for instance. They raise the question of universality in the context of a consideration of the nature of

209. sarvasya lokasya sādhāraṇataya svaṭvena
bhāvyamānasāravyamāno artho nāṭyam (AB. Vol.I, p.43)
aesthetic experience (rasa). The theory of rasa (aesthetic sentiment) is basic to the theory of poetic universalization.

Any theory of poetic universalization must explain two problems: - a) Why is it necessary to premise that characters and situations in literature are universalized? (b) How does poetic universalization take place? The first of these problems is the prime concern of later Sanskrit poeticians like Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka and Abhinavagupta, while the second is discussed by Bharata in his concept of Nāṭya dharmī.

In Indian poetics Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka first raised the question of poetic universalization. He was drawn to this problem by what he found very perplexing about rasa or aesthetic sentiment. As explained above rasa is the delightful experience of a feeling occasioned by

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210. Ch.I, Section I (B), p.25
an aesthetic object like a play. In the aesthetic experience provided by a drama, these three agents are clearly involved, namely, the dramatic character, the actor, and the spectator. Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's problem is: Whose is the feeling which is experienced as rasa (aesthetic sentiment)—the character's, the actor's, or the spectator's? To take an example—Lear's feelings of frustration and anger at the maltreatment he receives from his daughters, and his feelings of remorse and pathos at the death of Cordelia are "experienced" in a performance of King Lear. Now, what we do see on the stage is the actor impersonating Lear, and the feelings which are exhibited as Lear's through the personality and gestures of the actor. Yet, they are clearly not his since he is impersonating a character to whom they seem to belong. The actor is very clearly aware that he is playing a role, and he never identifies himself with the character he is impersonating. Dr. Johnson expressed satisfaction over this attitude of actors when he observed

And if Garrick really believed himself to be that monster, Richard the Third, he deserved to be hanged every time he performed it. 211

The difficulties of ascribing to the character or spectator the feeling which is experienced as aesthetic are greater still. If the feelings of frustration, anger, remorse and sorrow pertain to the real Lear (supposing that he is a historical personage) there is no reason why the spectator, unless he is very sadistic, should "enjoy" them. There is surely nothing enjoyable in the spectacle of the maltreatment of an old man by his callous daughters. But the spectacle of Lear's suffering on the stage gives the spectator a kind of delight - tragic delight, we call it. Prof. Arthur Sewell explains this paradox as follows -

We recognise Hamlet's problem as it appears to him; but how the problem appears to him never absolutely determines how it appears to us. His problem is known to us as his, not as ours; and although we look at the world through his eyes, it is we who look at the world. 212

The reason why the feelings like Lear's give delight is that they occur in an aesthetic context, in which characters and situations have a special kind

of reality. They do not belong to the practical world in which we live. They inhabit the world of the artist's creation and manifest themselves in our consciousness during art experience. This "aesthetic distance" which separates the world of art from the world of reality, disengages the spectator from the selfish, pragmatic preoccupations of the world of activity. The freedom from practical preoccupations which art affords gives the spectator a new vision, as it were, in which the characters appear not as individuals but as figures typifying general traits of human nature. Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka explains how this happens with his theory of sadhāraṇikarana or universalization based on the concept of the revelatory character of poetic speech (bhāvakatva) which is its distinction. His theory, in brief, is as follows: Words in poetry function

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213. This term, of course, does not occur in Indian poetics, but the concept is recognised in it. Edward Bullough, who introduced the term, explained it as follows: "Distance ... is obtained by separating the object and its appeal from one's own self, by putting it out of gear with practical needs and ends. Thereby the contemplation of the object becomes alone (sic) possible. But it does not mean that the relation between the self and the object is broken to the extent of becoming impersonal". (Aesthetics, Lectures and Essays, ed. by E.M. Wilkinson, p.96)
differently from words in ordinary speech. In poetry words are carefully selected and are characterised by literary qualities and figures of speech. Thus they come to have in addition to their usual denotative power (abhidhā), the powers of universalization (bhāvakatva) and delectation (bhogkrītva). "Bhāvakatva" is the abstract noun from the adjective "bhāvaka" which literally means "revealing". Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, however, takes the word "bhāvaka" as meaning revealing the essentially general or universal nature of the situations, characters and feelings in a work of art.

The basic feelings which attain the status of rasa in poetry are, in fact, the permanent psychological proclivities inborn in every human being. The mode of their enjoyment in art is explained by Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka with his concept of bhoga. According to him, aesthetic

214. Abhinava brings out this meaning of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's concept in the following words:

tasmāt kāvye dosabhāvakunālāmākāramayatvena nāṭye
caturvidhābhīhinayarūpaṇa ... vibhāvādīśādhāraṇīkaranātmanā
abhīdhāto dvītiyamśena bhāvakatvavyāpāreṇa
bhāvyamāno rasaḥ (AB Vol.I, p.277)
enjoyment (bhoga) is neither practical experience nor the memory of a practical experience. It is a condition of the mind caused by the interplay of the three qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas in a particular way. Sattva causes the mind to blossom as it were (vikāsa); rajas to melt (dṛti) and tamas to expand (vistāra). When the quality of sattva predominates, the mind of the spectator becomes receptive and conscious of itself and of the presence of the art object. In this condition, the spectator experiences the universalized basic feeling which is part of his own psychological being.

It was, however, Abhinavagupta who gave a final form to the Indian theory of art as expression of the universal. He felt that Bhaṭṭa Nayaka's concepts of bhāvakatva (universalisation) and bhoga (aesthetic delectation) were unnecessary theoretical complications forced on him because he wanted to avoid the theory of dhvani (poetic suggestion). Abhinavagupta argued that the theory

215. anubhavasmṛtyādīvilakṣaṇena ... bhogena bhujyate (AB I.277)

216. These terms are not translatable. The three qualities, however, have been briefly explained above. (Ch.I, Sec. I (B) p.16)
of dhvani or poetic suggestion was adequate to account for the universal nature of poetry.

The starting point of Abhinavagupta’s theory is his commentary on Bharata’s definition of vibhāva etc. (i.e., characters, situations and resultant emotions which may be called the objective correlatives). Bharata has defined these as words, gestures and the representation of the temperament which manifest (bhāvyanti) the meaning of the play. While commenting on this definition, Abhinavagupta observes that the meaning of a poem is the aesthetic experience which it affords. The individual words and sentences are only the means for the attainment of rasa or aesthetic experience. Rasa should not be identified with the denotative sense of the words and sentences in a poem. It has to be

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217. AB Vol. I, p. 278. For more details of objective correlatives see Ch.I, Sec.I(B) p.26

218. NS Ch.VII

219. tat kāvyārtho rasah (AB I.278 and I.343)

220. tatra padārthavākārthau raseṣveva paryavasāyataḥ (AB I.343)
realized through them and through the vibhāvas (i.e. characters, situations and resultant emotions from their interplay). Abhinavagupta agrees that there is an apparent parallelism between the characters and situations in literature and the persons and situations in real life. The latter are experienced first and they call forth multifarious feelings such as curiosity, anger, love, laughter etc. The characters and situations in literature also call forth in us certain responses. These responses called forth by literature are called rasas and bhāvas. But in spite of apparent parallelism, the two are distinct in nature. One belongs to the sphere of the practical and pragmatic, the other pertains to the sphere of the imaginative. One is laukika (i.e. "of this world"); the other alaukika (i.e. "not of this world"). Poetry is "not of this world", but at the same time, some experience of the world is necessary for the understanding of literature. It is alaukika in the

221. tatra lokavyavahāre kāraṇākārtyasahacārātmakalingadarśane
sthavyātmaparacittavṛtyanumānābhāvyāsapātavād
adhuna tairevodyānakaṭākṣavīksādibhir laukikīṁ
kāraṇatyādi bhuvāmatikrāntaih vibhāvānubhāva -
samuparaṇjakatvapraṇaih ata eva alaukikavibhāvādivya-
Padē padeśābhaṅgbhih ... carvyamānataikasāro rasah.
(AB I.284)
sense that its creations are viewed in a way other than the way we regard actual persons in the world. This difference implicit in Abhinava's words has been brought out by Mammaṭa, the author of the Kāvyapraṅkāśa, as follows:

The personalities we come across in real life fall into three different categories depending on our relations with them. They are - 1) "one's own" - i.e., the people for whom one has love, sympathy, or at least a soft corner, i.e., friends, relatives etc. 2) "one's enemies" i.e., the people whom one hates, dislikes and avoids. 3) "neutral and indifferent people", i.e., those in whom one has no interest. However, characters and situations in literature are not apprehended either as belonging or as not belonging to any of these categories. Herein lies their universality. Abhinavagupta maintains that characters and situations in literature are divested of their particularity and are apprehended without reference to their relation to us. They are apprehended in a general way.

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222. bhīto aham, bhīto ayam, śatrurvayasyo madhyastho va
   AB I.279

223. mamaivaite, śatrorevaite, taṭasthasyaivaite, na
    mamaivaite, na śatrorevaite, na taṭasthasyaivaite iti
    sambandha-svīkāraparihāraniyamānadhyanvasāyat. KP Ch.IV

224. AB I.42 and I.285
But a doubt arises. It is all right to talk of the universality of literature, but is it really possible or desirable to divest the characters of literature of their individuality? Is it true to say that we do not include a Hamlet or a Cordelia, an Iago or an Iachimo among the categories mentioned by Mammaṭa? Abhinavagupta's answer seems to be that the feeling of being drawn towards or repelled by a character is a by-product of the enjoyment of rasa. Rasa is a perception rather than a feeling. We perceive that Cordelia is lovable and Goneril is hateful. It is the perception that is at the bottom of the attraction or the repulsion. If the feeling of love for Cordelia and hatred for Goneril overshadows the perception, the enjoyment of a work of art qua work of art ceases. The simple spectator who weeps when he sees a tragedy is thus distinguished from a connoisseur, and Plato is answered. What Keats said, "of the poetical character" which is distinguished by "negative capability" is true equally of the poetical reader or spectator.

Keats' remarks, must, however, be cautiously interpreted. The poetical character is not devoid of an ego-sense; the experience of *rasa* likewise, is an experience of the ego. The ego has a perceptual and a relational aspect relating the perception to oneself. In the experience of *rasa* in the poetical character, the relational aspect of the functioning of the ego is suspended. Abhinavagupta's answer is thus based on two considerations: - *Rasa* or the total experience of a work of art, and the frame of the spectator's mind during this experience.

Since it is the permanent psychological proclivity (sthāya) that is transmuted into *rasa* or aesthetic emotion, Abhinavagupta proceeds to explain this crucial factor. The feeling (for example, love) which is suggested by the situations and actions of characters and which is enjoyed by spectators in their aesthetic experience is, in fact, an inborn psychological proclivity in their own nature. While enjoying a work of art, this inborn tendency is evoked into an idealized and impersonal experience overcoming the experience of the spectator's

limited ego. This happens because of the intensity of the vibhāvas and the enraptured condition they induce in the spectator. Then the spectator is not aware of anything other than the object of his aesthetic enjoyment. He enjoys the poetry as poetry and not as something else. It is the suspension of the spectator's practical ego that constitutes the most important condition for the universalization of the characters and situations in literature. Both in life and art, there is both particular and universal, individual and general. What makes the universality of art a felt experience in a way that the universality of life is not felt is the nature and quality of our art-perception. If we can perceive life also in a spirit of pure perception, life becomes art. What the poet transforms is not so much reality as our own perception.

We have mentioned the nature and quality of our art-perception which seems to transform reality.

227. Abhinavagupta explains the condition of the spectator's ego in aesthetic experience as neither altogether suppressed nor particularly conspicuous - natmatyantatiraskṛto, na viśeṣata ullaḥkhitah (AB I.279)
This leads to the consideration of another question bearing on art-reality relationship, namely, how reality is transformed by art. For the most comprehensive theory in Indian poetics of the poetic transformation of reality, we have to consider Bharata's concept of nātyadharma.

Nātyadharma includes the concept of poetic autonomy, the creative interpretation of reality in art, and the intensity of its effect. While commenting on Bharata's concept of dharmā, Abhinavagupta has clearly brought this out. He points out that in drama there is not any quality or characteristic (dharma) apart from the qualities and characteristics of the activities of people in life. But these assume beauty (vaicitrya) in the work of a poet. This endowment of the characteristics of real life in a work of art is called nātyadharma. Bharata explains the devices included in nātyadharma as enhancement

228. i.e. lokadharmā and nātyadharmā. Lokadharmā is explained below.

229. yadyapi laukikadharmāvyatirekeṣa nātye na kaścid dharmo asti tathāpi sa lokāgataprajñākramo rañjanādhikyapradhānyam adhirohayitum kavinātavyapāre vaicitryam svākurvan nātyadharma ityucyate (AB. II.213)
of speech and action (vākya and kriyā), the creation of powerfully heightened characters, the use of gestures and figures of speech (nātyalaksana), music and other embellishments of art.

The significance of what Bharata says is explained by Abhinavagupta. He explains enhancement of speech and action (ativākyakriyopetam) as the act of imagining an appropriate and diverting story by going beyond the statements of history. He explains powerfully heightened characters (atisattvatibhāvakam) as a pure creation of the poet who brings about a total change in the temperament of a character. These two kinds of nātyadharma (i.e. changing historical narratives and inventing characters) are implicit in the creative function of the writer. In addition, there is the element of alamkāra. It includes the various devices necessary for the aesthetic representation

230. ativākyakriyopetam atisattvatibhāvakam
lilāṅgahārābhīnayam nātyalakṣaṇalakṣitam
svarālāṁkārasaṁkārasaṁyuktamasvasthapuroṣṭrayam
(NS. XIII 73-74).

231. itihāsavākyam atikramya yā ucitā raṇjaketivyṛttakalpa-
nāṭmikā kriyā (taya upetam). AB II.215

232. kavikalpitacittavṛtttyantarayuktam (ibid)
of a play on the stage. These devices are collectively known as abhinaya. Abhinaya results when the different perfections involved in a dramatic representation coalesce. Abhinaya is made up of costume and scenery (ahārya abhinaya), physical gestures (āṅgika abhinaya), diction, style of speech and accent (vācika abhinaya), and communication of various psychological states of emotions (sāttvika abhinaya). Now each of these constituents of abhinaya may be perfect in itself without relating itself to other constituents. Thus, costume and scenery may be perfect (nepathyālāmkāra) without any reference to the perfection of communication of feelings (sattvālāmkāra) or enunciation and style of speech (pāthyałāmkāra). These, perfections belong to the actor. To the poet, however, belongs the perfection called kāvyālāmkāra, or the beauty of the story itself. It is not derived from nature. It is the poet's conception characterised by bold invention going beyond the limits of history and everyday reality. The poet's creation

233. NS XXVII-92; XXI 2-5

234. NS XIII 73-74 and Abhinava thereon (pp.145-147) cf. Aristotle's concept of plot as the structure incidents.
has a quality of intensity which everyday reality lacks. He secures this intensity by heightening the language and emotion in his work and by making his heroes nonpareil. Hence Bharata's stress on ati (a prefix meaning "exceedingly", "surpassing", "of a higher degree" etc.) The implication of this prefix may be explained by borrowing the comment that Professor Harry Levin makes on the dramatic method of Christopher Marlowe. Levin observes:

The overreaching image, reinforced by the mighty line, sums up the whole dramatic predicament and affords the actor a maximum of opportunity. The stage becomes the vehicle for hyperbole, not merely by accrediting the incredible or supporting rhetoric with a platform and sounding board, but by taking metaphors literally and acting concepts out. Operating visually as well as vocally it converts symbols into properties; triumph must ride across in a chariot, hell must flare up in fireworks; students, no longer satisfied to read about Helen of Troy, must behold her in her habit as she lived. Whereas poetry is said to transport us to an imaginative level; poetic drama transports that level to us; hyperbolically speaking, it brings the mountain to Mohammed. 235

Now all these models of expression are forms of a single trope, which in itself is the exaggerated form of many different tropes, hyperbole. Rather a figure of thought than a figure of speech, it relates Marlowe's speech to his thought, his manner to his matter.236

235. The Overreacher. p.43
236. ibid. p.41
What Levin says about Marlowe’s method is true also of nātyadharma. It mainly accounts for the difference between art and reality. It helps the poet to create an autonomous and self-sustaining world of art. The scene of the witches in Shakespeare’s Macbeth and the ghost scene in his Richard III are examples of nātyadharma. The temptation scenes in T.S. Eliot’s Murder in the Cathedral are a modern example of nātyadharma. The tempters are, in fact, manifestations of the inner working of Becket’s own mind. The temptation of worldly prosperity through the alliance with the King or of greatness by leading the dissatisfied nobles against the King, these are the temptations which he easily masters. The temptation hardest to master is that of spiritual pride:

Shall I, who keep the keys
Of heaven and hell, supreme alone in England,
Who bind and loose, with power from the Pope
Descend to desire punier power? 237

It is this temptation which leads Becket to look upon martyrdom as a matter of personal glory and as a means to gain a decisive victory over the King. But these very temptations ultimately reveal to Thomas the

237. Murder in the Cathedral, London, Faber and Faber, 1939, p. 30
true meaning of martyrdom "It is never the design of man; for the true martyr is he who has become the instrument of God, and who no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of being a martyr" Eliot has thus shown through these scenes how Becket finally comes to accept martyrdom as the right deed for the right reason.

Thus nātyadharma is the dialectic of the poet's art which justifies his reshaping of reality according to the needs of his art.

What is the bearing of nātyadharma on the theory of art as expression of the universal? Abhinavagupta emphasises that even nātyadharma is not completely divorced from the reality of life. It is, in fact, the basis of all poetic invention. The relationship between the two, as Abhinavagupta explains in a fine

238. In later Sanskrit Poetics, nātyadharma is represented by Vakrokti or figurative speech as against plain speech and realistic description called svabhāvakta. The comprehensiveness of nātyadharma came to be lost and vakrokti became nothing more than a highly ornate and artificial way of expression. It is regrettable that the vast theoretical and creative possibilities of this key concept remained unexplored.

239. lokaśvabhāvaveva anuvartamaṇam dharmidvyam (AB II.213)
analogy, is that between a mural painting and the wall supporting it.

What we see in a mural is the picture and not the wall, but we cannot have the picture without the wall. The wall and the artistic materials of the painter are the material support of the mural which is the artist’s creation. Nevertheless, his creation is different from the materials he uses; what the artist creates and the connoisseur appreciates is the picture, - a creation with a significance, for example, Buddha’s face with spiritual serenity. Likewise, the poet’s work cannot exist without the support of some experience of reality. But what he creates is art and not reality.

Wordsworth’s daffodils and the solitary reaper are grounded in empirical reality and at the same time exist as unique creations. The significance of reality is practical and varies from individual to individual.

240. laukikasya dharmasya mūlabhūtatvāt nātyadharmam vaicitryollekhyabhittisthānātvāditi lokadharmaṁeva lakṣayati (AB II.214)
The significance of the poet's creation, however, is not practical and its nātyadharma ensures that all have a common interest in the rasa that the work affords. Nātyadharma by its creative magic disengages the spectator's mind from practical preoccupations and then he regards the characters and situations in the drama in a universal light, i.e., without either acceptance or rejection of their relation to him. In such a condition Orlando becomes the type of romantic lover.

In the Indian theory of art as expression of the universal is implicit the answer why Bharata describes drama as a fifth Veda. Brahma created drama at the request of the gods for the instruction and moral uplift of the ignorant people vitiated by sensuality, lust and a general lack of culture. It is only in the heightened and transformed world of art that human passions are refined and civilised. The basic human passions - the

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241. grāmyadharma-prāyatte tu kāmalabhavaḥ saṃ gate
ṛṣyākrodhādisammudhe loke sukhītaduhkhīte (NS I.9)
sarvaśāstrārtha sampannām sarvasīlpa-pravartakām
nātyākhyam pañcamam vedam setihasam karomyaham (NS I.15)
sexual instinct, laughter, anger etc. are in real life very often responsible for what Bharata describes as grāmyadharma (vulgarity, boorishness) but in art they give rise to the aesthetic perception of rasa. The laughter of comedy is more perceptual and disinterested than the laughter of actual life. Rasa is nothing but an experience of the basic psychological proclivities in our nature in an ennobled and heightened form without any selfish, practical and carnal preoccupations. It is an object lesson in the teaching of the Veda itself because the Veda also teaches not a philosophy of self-abnegation; but rather, the ideal of the four purusārthas which constitute the dignified and self-exalting fulfilment of the nature of man.

242. Purusārthas are the common goals of human life. They are righteousness (dharma), material prosperity (artha), experience of worldly pleasures (kama) and spiritual emancipation (mokṣa). The influence of this concept on Indian poetics is discussed in Ch. III below.
SECTION III

CONCLUSION:

The investigation in the previous sections of some of the Western and Indian theories reveals that the view of art as expression of the universal is common to both these traditions though there is a significant variation in the conception of the universal and in the conception of how the process of transformation of reality in art takes place. As an aesthetic theory, the universality theory is far more satisfying than the theory of art as illusion because it offers a better explanation of the nature of art. Indeed, the theory of art as expression of the universal is an outcome of the attempts to find reasons for the deep and lasting human significance of literature and its undeniable effect.

The origin of the theory of art as expression of the universal in the Indian and Western aesthetic traditions is, however, very different. It has been
often argued that Aristotle, the first exponent of this theory in the West, set out to expound the universality of literature in order to answer Plato's charges against poetry. Plato was interested in art, not as an aesthetician, but as a practical moralist and as a political thinker. Since Plato's investigation into the nature of poetry in the Republic is matched in Aristotle's report in the Poetics, it can be said that the seeds of the Western view of art expression of the universal lay in an ethical and political controversy. Later, however, the theory becomes a more purely aesthetic theory (of course, with moral implications). The starting point of the Indian theories of art as expression of the universal is Bharata's elaborate and complex theory of the relationship between art and reality based on his three concepts of the imitation of what takes place in the world (loka-vṛttanukarana), the poet's creative interpretation of reality (nātyadharma), and universalization (sādhanākaraṇa). His enigmatic rasa-sūtra (formula) in which he explained his concept of rasa as constituting the essence of aesthetic experience provoked a controversy which was responsible for Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka and Abhinavagupta's
respective theories of art as expression of the universal. But there is much in common between these two traditions so far as the theory under discussion is concerned. Both these traditions look upon art as "imitation" of actions which involve human agents with diverse moral qualities. Both look upon the whole range of human life as the proper sphere of art.

Aristotle's theory of imitation is founded on his epistemology; Bharata's concept of imitation is rooted in the Sāmkhya and Vedantic doctrine of the three qualities (triguna) of Prakṛti. Further, according to Aristotle's epistemology, as also according to Sanskrit grammarians (in spite of the differences in terminology)

243. This point of divergence, however, is more historical than critical. Another interesting point of divergence is the relation which this theory in both the traditions has with the theory of art as illusion. Aristotle may have deliberately set out to refute Plato's theory of art as illusion; Abhinavagupta, the greatest exponent of this theory in Indian poetics, on the other hand, did not deny the apparent dreamlike character of works of art; he even elaborated the poetician Śrīsaṅkuka's arguments in this regard. The illusion-like character of art, however, challenged the Indian poeticians to determine its ontological status. In Abhinavagupta this became the starting point of art as expression of the universal.
the particulars are not unreal as in Plato's theory. In fact, pragmatically individuals alone are real, but in so far as they are manifold and indeterminate, and are subject to the accidents of time and place, they are not scientifically knowable. The application of this theory to literature has been discussed above in Sections II(A) and II(B). The later history of these two theories of imitation (i.e. Aristotle's and Bharata's) is comparable in one more respect. The followers of Aristotle, especially the modern ones, namely Dryden, Pope, Johnson, Arnold etc., seem to have been influenced more by his observations of the universality of art than by his epistemology of imitation. The later Indian poeticians, Bhaṭṭa Nayaka and Abhinavagupta did not challenge the philosophical doctrine of the three gunas on which Bharata's theory was based, but put forward their respective theories of art in the context of the problem of aesthetic pleasure (rasa). Thus, in both the traditions, the theory becomes less concerned with epistemology and philosophy and more with aesthetics.

Central to the Western theory of art is Aristotle's distinction between poetry and history, namely, that the statements of poetry are of the nature
of universals whereas those of history are singulars. And the concept of "Nature" is at the core of his concept of the universal. In Horace and in post-Horatian thought, however, "Nature" occupies the central position in the theory. In a sense, the history of the theory of art as expression of the universal in the Western aesthetic tradition is the history of the expansion of the meaning of such terms as "nature" "reason" and "truth". Thus, "nature" was taken to mean "general human nature". Dryden speaks of the drama as "a just and lively image of human nature", and Johnson extols Shakespeare as "the poet of nature". Even the Romantics, Coleridge, Wordsworth and Shelley, for example, accept the universality of poetry in the sense of broad general human significance. Coleridge maintained that "poetry as poetry is essentially ideal, that it avoids and excludes all accident ..." Wordsworth described the poet as "a man ... endowed with ... a greater knowledge of human nature," and "a more comprehensive soul". Arnold upheld the importance of human nature as the subject most suitable for all great literature. Only those actions are excellent, he maintained, "which most powerfully appeal to the great primary human affections ...
which are independent of time. Eliot speaks of a classic as a work which is above "provincialism" and which appeals to all classes and conditions of men because it deals with the essential and the permanent. Art is universal with its appeal and comprehensiveness in a manner which cannot be said of science.

The Renaissance critics further diversified this theory by giving it a moral significance. Their concept of "reason" and "the truth of reason" and their successful combination of the Platonic doctrines of Ideals, the Horatian doctrine of decorum, and the medieval Christian religious thought, made the theory of the universality of art richer in meaning. The Romantics explained the deeper truth of literature by emphasising the importance of the imagination, intuition and sensibility. Further, they also resolved a paradox inherent in the nature of art - that is at once universal and particular. The works of art have a symbolic value. A poetic utterance is not a dry generalization. It has an individuality as well as a universal significance. It is an intermediary between percept and concept. Herein lies its value as a symbol. This view of the work of art as a symbol is the great contribution of Romanticism.
to the theory of art as expression of the universal.

On the background of this brief discussion of the principal tenets of the Western theory of art as expression of the universal, we can better understand the distinctiveness of the Indian approach to the problem. The history of the Indian theory of art as expression of the universal is the history of deeper and subtler analyses of rasa. The Indian poeticians raise the question - "What can give us greater aesthetic experience - the ideal or the actual?" Though the terminology is different, the significance of their arguments is clear. Abhinavagupta's six categories of persons and our reactions to them and his insistence that the creations of art are above these categories emphasizes that the line dividing art from reality must always be maintained. This view can be described as the Indian theory of aesthetic distance. What creates this distance is the device of nātyadharmī. If the Indian theory of art as expression of the universal is different in any way, it is in its fundamental concept of nātyadharmī and

244. The originality of this question is discussed above. (pp. 131-132).
its concept of poetry as "not-of-this-world" (alaukika) and its esteem of poetry as the fifth Veda. The Indian poeticians did not remain content with the assertion of the universality of literature. They sought to know how situations and characters are universalized, and they came up with the concept of nātyadharmī. Nātyadharmī at once explains the intense and heightened quality of the works of art, and how this quality attunes the spectator's mind in such a way as to enable him to experience aesthetic distance. Nātyadharmī emphasizes that a change occurs in the spectator's attitude in viewing a play and it also explains what brings about this change. We have really nothing so clear and elaborate in Aristotle to compare with nātyadharmī unless it be his much debated theory of catharsis as interpreted by G.F. Else in Aristotle's Poetics - The Argument.

245. The Indian esteem of poetry as the fifth Veda is discussed in Chapter III, below.

246. According to this interpretation catharsis is the process carried forward by the structural elements of a play, operating upon the emotional material in it. This process is built into the whole structure of the play; it brings about the purification of the tragic act by the demonstration that its motive was not blameworthy. The weakness of this interpretation as Else admits, is that it makes catharsis a relatively minor operational factor in the poetic economy instead of a major aesthetic concept." (p.443) Since 'peripeti' or recognition plays an important part in tragedy, catharsis, in Else's interpretation is restricted to complex plots.
The concept of the alaukikatva (not-of-this-world quality) of poetry further reinforces its universality. This concept, as Abhinavagupta has applied it to art, seeks to explain the enigmatic relationship between art and reality. Abhinavagupta's analogy of a wall and the painting on it throws valuable light on this relationship.

The Renaissance theorists gave the Aristotelian theory of imitation a moralistic bias. The Indian theory of art as expression of the universal also has this moralistic bias, though in a different way. Bharata's description of drama as the fifth Veda expresses, in fact, the common view of all schools of Indian Poetics. Many Renaissance theorists sought to reduce literature to moral and even theological allegory. The Indian poeticians, on the other hand, stress, in general, the delectable nature of art and give morality a subordinate position in its ontology.

247. The Philosophical origin of this concept has been explained above.

248. Discussed in Ch. III below.
To conclude it must be said that the Indian theory of art as expression of the universal with its concepts of nāṭyadharmī and alaukikatva can substantially supplement the Western theory of art as expression of the universal, explaining how a work of art becomes a symbol. These concepts can provide valuable help in dealing with the ontology of art.