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## UNIT 5 BEING AS BEAUTIFUL

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### 5.0 OBJECTIVES

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The objective of this unit is to study the transcendental property of beauty. Beauty is a word which is very much in vogue in our daily vocabulary. Things, persons are titled as beautiful. Very often beauty is limited to the experience of the sense perception. Although this sort of beauty viewed from the sense experience is fascinating and meaningful, beauty is not limited only to the sense experience, it goes beyond. Hence the purpose of this lesson is to perceive beauty beyond the sense experience and gauge beauty from a deeper perspective and this can be done when we study beauty as the transcendental property of being. This property of being penetrates into the inner dimension of a being and discovers that every being when its purpose is realized is beautiful even though it may not always please the senses. Hence beauty as the transcendental property of being is an inner discovery of being and ultimately an inner discovery of the truth of every being.

Thus by the end of this unit you should be able:

- To have the fundamental meaning and definition of beauty
- To be able to differentiate beauty from the aesthetic and transcendental point of view
- To know the different elements that constitutes beauty
- To have knowledge on the various degrees of beauty.
- To know, whether we can speak of ugliness.

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## 5.1 INTRODUCTION

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The transcendental properties of being are those properties that constitute the very being. They are ontological in the sense that every being possesses these properties as part and parcel of its existence. These properties are four in number. Unity: that is, every being possess an internal unity by which it is united in itself and divided from all other beings. Truth: Every being is knowable, it is intelligible, it manifests itself to the intellect. Goodness: Every being possess certain amount of perfection which is proper to its own nature thus this perfection draws attention towards it and thus pleases the mind. This property is called the transcendental goodness. Besides these three properties, we have another which is closely linked with goodness and that is called as the transcendental beauty. This property could be said as a combination of all the above mentioned properties. Thus when a thing possess internal unity; that it can be known; and that it becomes desirable for it has certain amount of perfection, it brings delight and pleasure to the person, who beholds them. This property of bringing delight and pleasure is called the transcendental beauty.

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## 5.2 HISTORY OF THE CONCEPT OF BEAUTY

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Beauty has been recognized as a core value throughout history and in diverse cultural traditions. While beauty has cross-historical and cross-cultural recognition, the senses and the standards of beauty differ from one period to another, as well as from one cultural tradition to another. Hence in order to understand the transcendental property of beauty, it is but proper that at the outset we try trace back a little history of this concept in the Greek philosophical tradition.

The Greek word *kalos* (“beautiful”) was used in ancient Greek societies, not only for the descriptions of sensibly beautiful things, but also morally admirable character and conduct, noble birth, high social status, and technically useful things. The Greek word *kalokagatia* (“beauty-good”), combining two terms “beauty” and “good,” was a natural combination in the Greek context. Greek philosophy was built upon the presupposition that happiness (*eudaimonia*) is the highest good. Philosophers differed in their interpretation of what happiness is and the best method for achieving it, but shared the same conviction that it is ultimate goal of life. Accordingly, the Greeks were concerned with understanding beauty, and how beauty can contribute to the highest good. They would investigate beauty in association with truth and goodness, which also pointed to the divine. Thus, the study of beauty was not an autonomous discipline. It was not “aesthetics” in the sense of a “study of human sensibility,” which emerged after Kant.

Pythagoras and Pythagoreans understood that harmony is an objectively existing principle that constitutes the cosmos as a unified body. Harmony is built upon mathematical order and balance, and beauty exists as the objective principle in beings which maintain harmony, order, and balance. They recognized that aesthetic experiences in arts such as music are closely tied to mathematical ratios of tones and rhythms. The Pythagorean connection between beauty and mathematics remains a touchstone of scientific thought to this day. Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans understood experiences of beauty and contemplations of the mathematical as central to their religious exercises to purify the soul. Aesthetic experiences and exercises of reason were understood as

a necessary process and training to cultivate the soul, which they understood to be immortal. They built a theory of beauty within the framework of their religious thought. Their conviction of the immortality of the soul, as well as the relationship between beauty and mathematics, had a strong impact on Plato.

Plato conceived “beauty,” “good,” “justice,” etc. as eternal, immutable, divine existences. They are Ideas—not mental images or psychological objects of mind, but objectively existing, unchanging, permanent, and eternal beings. They belong to a divine realm. For Plato, the idea of beauty exists in a perfect form for eternity in the realm of immortal gods, manifested in imperfect forms on the material plane of humanity. Plato referred to the world of humanity as a “shadow” of the perfect world of ideas. Thus, the basis of earthly beauty was built into Plato’s metaphysics. Human souls are immortal. Every human being is born with implicit understanding of the Idea of beauty and all other Ideas. Upon entering into the body at birth, a human being temporarily “forgets” these Ideas. Throughout his life course, he seeks to familiarize herself with these Ideas. This process is a recollection of Ideas the soul has temporarily forgotten.

The process of ascent through the experience of beauty begins with beauty manifested in human bodies. It is gradually elevated to the beauty in the soul, beauty of character, and other incorporeal realms. Beauty manifested in bodies and physical materials is less perfect for Plato, and hence the soul is naturally led to seek permanent and perfect beauty. For Plato, the power of ‘eros’ is the driving force for the quest of perfect Ideas in humans. Plato conceived the Idea of good as the supreme one, with all other Ideas, including beauty, existing under it. In his ontology, beauty, good, truth, and other virtues are all tied together. Accordingly, “to be beautiful,” “to be virtuous,” and “to have true knowledge” are inseparable.

Plotinus who developed the Neo-Platonic tradition, also held that good and beauty are one in the realm of thought, and that the soul must be cultivated to see good and beauty. In both Platonic and Neo-Platonic traditions, concepts of “being,” “good,” and “beauty” are always understood to be inseparable. The experience of beauty is therefore also inseparable from that of being and good.

From the above history, we come to know that beauty was closely associated with some sort of harmony which would please the intellect. However, we do not see a systematic definition of beauty being drawn. This task was carried out by Aristotle and later on by the medieval philosopher St Thomas Aquinas.

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### 5.3 DEFINITION OF BEAUTY

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The question of beauty as the transcendental property was discussed by Aristotle. In his treatises on Poetry and Rhetoric he lays down a theory of art, and establishes principles of beauty. His philosophical views were in many respects opposed to those of Plato. He does not admit an absolute conception of the beautiful; but he distinguishes beauty from the good, the useful, the fit, and the necessary. He resolves beauty into certain elements, as order, symmetry, and definiteness. A distinction of beauty, according to him, is the absence of lust or desire in the pleasure it excites. Beauty has no utilitarian or ethical object; the aim of art is merely to give immediate pleasure; its essence is imitation.

This idea of beauty was elaborated by a 6<sup>th</sup> century monk named Pseudo-Dionysius who speaks about beauty in his book “*De divinis nominibus*” the divine names.

Here, he writes a chapter on God as the beautiful. All things it says even the least of material beings are beautiful by participating in the beauty of God. They do so by analogy, that is in their own way, up to their own capacities and according to their merits. The divine beauty is essentially an efficient cause and exemplar and a final cause. The features of the beautiful that stem from the causal power of God are: 1. the **selfhood**, identity or perfection that comes from the participation according to one’s capacity in the beauty of God. 2. The **harmony** that orders the universe in a hierarchy. 3. **Radiance**, fundamentally a spiritual quality, an enlightenment of the mind of which visible clarity is but an image.

St Thomas Aquinas, a medieval philosopher was very closely influenced by the idea of beauty as it was enunciated by Aristotle and Pseudo-Dionysius. He makes an attempt to give a systematic definition of beauty. Thus in his book “*Summa Theologica*”, St Thomas describes beauty (pulchrum) from its effects saying, that “the beautiful is that which pleases when seen” or the beautiful is that which is pleasing to behold”. (Summa Theologica, Book, I. q.5, a.4) Beauty thus is a transcendental property which results from the act of being of things and the richness and variety of its diverse forms stem from the different degrees and modes of being. It is to be noted that not everything which pleases is considered to be beautiful for a person may take pleasure also in things which are simply agreeable without being considered beautiful. Money for instance, which pleases yet it is not considered to be beautiful because the beauty spoken as the transcendental property has nothing to do with the question of its usefulness nor the gain it brings either in the financial or at other levels. The beauty spoken here is the pleasure experienced in the contemplation of the beauty that flows directly from the “contemplation” and not from the possession or the usefulness of the object. It is to be also noted that the beauty that we speak here could also accompany pleasure derived from its possession or its usefulness. But beauty should not be identified with this type of pleasure or usefulness. The beauty spoken here is ‘disinterested’, that is, it does not seek possession, but satisfied with contemplation.

Concerning the above definition, let us clarify certain points. In the definition “the beautiful is that which pleases when seen”, “when seen” does not mean only to the sense perception it refers primarily to the intellectual perception for it is only the intellect which is capable of formally apprehending the conformity of an object with a cognitive power because ‘conformity’ is a relation and therefore can be apprehended only by the intellect. Although the external senses especially sight and hearing are used in the perception of material beauty, they perceive it only insofar as they are “tool” of the intellect because of themselves they are not capable of formally perceiving the conformity of their object with a cognitive power.

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## 5.4 BEAUTY IN AESTHETICS: EMMANUEL KANT

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Beauty as the transcendental property of being stresses its ontological character. It is seen as the very constituent dimension of being itself. Besides this ontological dimension, beauty is also perceived from an aesthetic point of view. Here the best example could be that of Emmanuel Kant. Hence we shall briefly make survey of Kant’s idea of beauty.

Kant in the *Critique of Judgment* begins with an account of beauty. The initial issue is: what kind of judgment is it that results in our saying, for example, ‘That is a beautiful sunset’. Kant argues that such aesthetic judgments (or ‘judgments of taste’) must have four key distinguishing features. **First**, they are disinterested, meaning that we

take pleasure in something because we judge it beautiful, rather than judging it beautiful because we find it pleasurable. The latter type of judgment would be more like a judgment of the ‘agreeable’.

**Second and third**, such judgments are both *universal* and *necessary*. This means roughly that it is an intrinsic part of the activity of such a judgment to expect others to agree with us. Although we may say ‘beauty is in the eye of the beholder’, that is not how we act. Instead, we debate and argue about our aesthetic judgments – and especially about works of art - and we tend to believe that such debates and arguments can actually achieve something. Indeed, for many purposes, ‘beauty’ behaves as if it were a real property of an object, like its weight or chemical composition. But Kant insists that universality and necessity are in fact a product of features of the human mind (Kant calls these features ‘common sense’), and that there is no objective property of a thing that makes it beautiful.

**Fourth**, through aesthetic judgments, beautiful objects appear to be ‘purposive without purpose’ (sometimes translated as ‘final without end’). An object’s purpose is the concept according to which it was made (the concept of a vegetable soup in the mind of the cook, for example); an object is purposive if it appears to have such a purpose; if, in other words, it appears to have been made or designed. But it is part of the experience of beautiful objects, Kant argues, that they should affect us as if they had a purpose, although no particular purpose can be found.

**Check Your Progress I**

**Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Give a brief account of the notion of beauty according to Pythagoreans and Plato.

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2) What is the understanding of beauty according to Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas?

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3) Give a brief account of beauty according to Emmanuel Kant.

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## 5.5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRUTH, BEAUTY AND GOODNESS

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Beauty is very closely associated with truth and goodness. Both truth and beauty express a relationship of ‘conformity’ with the intellect, both the ‘good’ and the ‘beautiful’ express ‘suitability’ for the appetite. Yet the ‘beautiful’ is not identical concept with either the ‘truth’ or the ‘good’. As regards the ‘truth’ the ‘beautiful’ adds an element of pleasure to the conformity, where as the ‘truth’ as such does not imply that pleasure is derived from it. On the contrary, the truth can be very unpleasant. Regarding the ‘good’ the beautiful expresses suitability for the appetite of the intellect which comes to rest in its possession by contemplation, whereas the ‘good’ expresses suitability for appetite in general.

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## 5.6 THE BASIS OF BEAUTY

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Although the contemplation of the beautiful is always accompanied by delight, beauty is not the pleasure or delight itself, but rather those properties which are pleasing to behold. St Augustine said : “I will ask whether things are beautiful because they are pleasing, or if they are pleasing because they are beautiful. Undoubtedly the answer will be that things please me because of their beauty” (Augustine, *De Vera Religione*, ch 32.) Just as goodness is not an attribute arising from the will of the subject which desires it, rather a perfection of the desired object, so too, things are beautiful whether or not there are men capable of appreciating their beauty. Thus the beauty arises from the act of being itself and not in the beholder.

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## 5.7 FUNDAMENTAL REQUIREMENTS FOR A BEING TO BE BEAUTIFUL

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Although we have said that the beauty of the things comes from the thing and not the beholder. Nevertheless in order that a thing to be beautiful it is not just sufficient that it exists but it must have certain perfection. Thus something is beautiful in the fullest sense if it possess all the perfections that correspond to its own nature. For example, we say that the cow is a beautiful animal to the extent that it has the harmony and perfection proper to its nature and not just because it has the act of being. Thus the beauty of a thing comes only if it has certain fundamental aspects which are attached to the being concerned. St Thomas a medieval philosopher speaks of three features of beauty:

- a) A certain “harmony” or proportion in the object itself. Proportion does not exclude variety, it does not mean monotony. Thus when an object possesses all the things that are supposed to be there for its existence then we say that that particular object has a certain amount of harmony. Thus for example the nature is said to possess a harmony.
- b) In order that a thing to be beautiful it should possess the “integrity” or completeness of the object with regard to the perfections required by its substantial form or by its accidental forms. A beautiful thing is complete not only in the principal meaning of the word, but also in the sense of receiving the finishing touch that transforms a moderately good or tolerable work into an accomplished work of art.

- c) A third characteristic is “clarity”. For the intellect clarity means intelligibility. Clarity is also known by certain philosophers as ‘splendor’. A certain ‘splendor’ is the essential characteristic of beauty. Splendor is always splendor of intelligibility: Splendor *veri* said Platonists; splendor *ordinis* said St Augustine, splendor *formae* said St Thomas. “Form” according to St Thomas is the proper principle of intelligibility, the proper clarity of everything. Clarity is a characteristic which touches the intellect the most. The intelligence delights in the beautiful because in the beautiful it finds itself again and recognizes itself and makes contact with its own light. Every sensible beauty implies a certain delight of the eye itself or of the ear or the imagination: but there is beauty only if the ‘intelligence’ also takes delight in some way.

The beautiful is essentially delightful. It stirs desire and produces love. It is for its beauty that Wisdom is loved. Love in turn produces ecstasy that is to say it puts the lover outside of himself. Thus this love is pure for it does not have any self-centered motive.

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## 5.8 DEGREES OF BEAUTY

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Beauty could be varying according to the type of being we are referring to. Here we can consider in general two types of beings: the material and the spiritual beings. Spiritual substances whose forms are not limited by matter have the full beauty which pertains to their degree and mode of being. Spiritual substances such as angels or pure spirits for example. To the extent that they have existence they are beautiful. Since they are spiritual beings they do not lack anything hence they possess totality of beauty. The beauty in its most pristine form could be fully found in the divine, God himself. Here there is total beauty for God is the author of all beauty and thus possesses the totality of beauty. He is the perfection in its fullest form. Hence God by his very nature or substance is called beautiful. He does not suffer from any sort of imperfection for he is completely spiritual. Hence Beauty in its totality could be found in God alone.

Beauty in the material substances is fragmentary and scattered. It is because the substantial form is limited by the matter. No material being manifests beauty in all of its extension, not even all beauty which pertains to its genus or species since in different individuals the substantial form is affected by various accidental forms which are adapted to its nature in different degrees. Besides, any given individual will hardly be beautiful in every respect. A horse for example may have a marvelously elegant figure and may show astonishing gracefulness in racing or jumping and yet the color may leave much to be desired. A poem may have very suggestive stanzas and still have relatively less accomplished rhymes. Hence beauty in the material beings is said to be relatively beautiful compared to the spiritual beauties and the divine being. According to scholastic philosophers, material beauty is only a ‘shadow’ of the divine beauty. The material things only ‘share’ a glimpse of the divine beauty. They ‘participate in the divine beauty who is the beauty itself, beauty in its totality. When we apply the religious language to the question of beauty, the beauty of material substances that is the beauty of human person is corrupted due to ‘sin’. The sinful nature in man makes him gullible and go against the author of beauty that is God himself and thus destroy the beauty that is ingrained in him. Hence beauty is disrupted due to sin against God.

**Check Your Progress II**

- Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.  
b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit.

- 1) What are the fundamental requirements for a thing to be beautiful?
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- 2) What are various degrees of beauty ?
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- 3) What is ugliness ?
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**5.9 A NOTE ON UGLINESS**

We have been talking about the transcendental property of beauty, hence it is but very pertinent that we speak a word about ugliness which is very much used in our daily parlance. If every being is beautiful can we talk about ugliness ? Our daily life tells us that we often speak of ugliness. Can we talk about ugliness at all?

Yes, we do and can speak of ugliness. Although everything is beautiful according to its own form human intellect is not always capable of perceiving this beauty. This incapacity may be due to subjective or objective reasons.

The subjective reason is that the one who perceives the object does not appreciate it because he is not habituated to see such objects or the objects do not suit his tastes. As a result everything which does not suit his tastes or his preconceived ideas he considers to be ugly. When it comes to objective reasons, this flows from the nature of human knowledge. To appreciate beauty, the intellect must contemplate an object, that is, it must be able to come to rest in the vision of the thing; hence if anything prevents this contemplation, man cannot see the beauty of the object. There may be certain reasons which prevent the intellect to pay sufficient attention:



- a) The perfection in the object is mutilated. Here the attention of the intellect is drawn towards what does not exist than what exists. Over and above when the defect is more striking the attention towards the defect is drawn keenly. For example, someone comes with a broken leg then the attention is drawn on the brokenness of the leg than other sane members of the body.
- b) Certain beings remind us so much of others that we consider them as caricatures of the latter. We for example compare the monkeys face with human face and consider the former as defective or ugly compared to the latter. Hence we consider the face of monkey as ugly.
- c) Man is so used to see things in one way that any other way of seeing the same object may irritate or may not draw his attention to contemplate that object. For example he is so used to see the structure of a church, temple or mosque in a particular architectural style that any other style would not be able to please his attention. Hence he may consider them as ugly.

Hence ugliness, we could say, does not exist as such, it is more an absence than presence. It is a privation of a perfection which should have been present in an object and which does not exist and hence such absence instead drawing attention and bringing pleasure to the mind brings a sort of repulsion. Thus we could understand in this way transcendental ugliness.

We can certainly speak of ugliness in an aesthetic sense. It implies an aesthetic disvalue. Instead of bringing aesthetic pleasure an object causes repulsion and prompts the mind to negate it. We could also speak of moral ugliness. It consists in the inconsistency that exists between man’s conscience and his action. When a person goes against the demands of his conscience and does moral harm to himself and to others then it is said to be moral ugliness. In religious terms, we call it as ‘sin’ wherein we go against the commandments of God and lead a life unworthy of God’s design.

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**5.10 LET US SUM UP**

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In this unit, we have made an attempt to understand beauty as the transcendental property of being. Beauty like the ‘Truth’, ‘Good’ and the ‘One’ is a transcendental property of a being. It is not an accident superadded to being, it adds to a being only a relation of reason: it is being considered as delighting, the mere intuition of it as an intellectual nature. Thus everything is beautiful just as everything is good. And as being is everywhere present and everywhere varied, the beautiful likewise is diffused everywhere and is everywhere varied. Like being and other transcendental properties, it is essentially analogous, that is to say it is predicated for diverse reasons of the diverse subjects of which it is predicated : each kind of being is in its own way is good, is beautiful in its own way.

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**5.11 KEY WORDS**

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<b>Substance</b>	: Is that to whose nature is due a to be in itself and not in another (it exists in itself)
<b>Truth</b>	: Correspondence of the mind to the intellect.
<b>Goodness</b>	: Is that attribute in an object which makes it desirable.
<b>Aesthetics</b>	: A critical reflection on <u>art</u> , <u>culture</u> and <u>nature</u> .

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**5.12 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES**

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**5.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

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**Answers to Check Your Progress I**

- 1) Pythagoras and Pythagoreans considered that beauty exist in Harmony. Harmony is built upon mathematical order and balance, and beauty exists as the objective principle in beings which maintain harmony, order, and balance. They recognized that aesthetic experiences in arts such as music are closely tied to mathematical ratios of tones and rhythms. Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans understood experiences of beauty and contemplations of the mathematical as central to their religious exercises to purify the soul. They built a theory of beauty within the framework of their religious thought. Plato conceived “beauty,” “good,” “justice,” etc. as eternal, immutable, divine existences. They are Ideas—not mental images or psychological objects of mind, but objectively existing, unchanging, permanent, and eternal beings. They belong to a divine realm. For Plato, the idea of beauty exists in a perfect form for eternity in the realm of immortal gods, manifested in imperfect forms on the material plane of humanity. Plato referred to the world of humanity as a “shadow” of the perfect world of ideas. Thus, the basis of earthly beauty was built into Plato’s metaphysics. Human souls are immortal. Every human being is born with implicit understanding of the Idea of beauty and all other Ideas. Upon entering into the body at birth, a human being temporarily “forgets” these Ideas. Throughout his life course, he seeks to familiarize herself with these Ideas. This process is a recollection of Ideas the soul has temporarily forgotten. Beauty manifested in bodies and physical materials is less perfect for Plato, and hence the soul is naturally led to seek permanent and perfect beauty. For Plato, the power of ‘eros’ is the driving force for the quest of perfect Ideas in humans. Plato conceived the Idea of good as the supreme one, with all other Ideas, including beauty, existing under it. In his ontology, beauty, good, truth, and other virtues are all tied together. Accordingly, “to be beautiful,” “to be virtuous,” and “to have true knowledge” are inseparable.
- 2) Aristotle considers beauty as the transcendental property of being. He does not admit an absolute conception of the beauty like Plato but he distinguishes beauty

from the good, the useful, the fit, and the necessary. For him beauty consists into certain elements, as order, symmetry, and definiteness. A distinction of beauty, according to him, is the absence of lust or desire in the pleasure it excites. Beauty has no utilitarian or ethical object.

St Thomas Aquinas makes an attempt to give a systematic definition of beauty. “The beautiful is that which pleases when seen” or the beautiful is that which is pleasing to behold”. Beauty thus is a transcendental property which results from the act of being of things and the richness and variety of its diverse forms stem from the different degrees and modes of being. It is to be noted that not everything which pleases is considered to be beautiful for a person may take pleasure also in things which are simply agreeable without being considered beautiful.

- 3) Beauty in aesthetics: Emmanuel Kant in the *Critique of Judgment* begins with an account of beauty. The initial issue is: what kind of judgment is it that results in our saying, for example, ‘That is a beautiful sunset’. Kant argues that such aesthetic judgments (or ‘judgments of taste’) must have four key distinguishing features: **First**, they are disinterested, meaning that we take pleasure in something because we judge it beautiful, rather than judging it beautiful because we find it pleasurable. **Second and third**, such judgments are both *universal* and *necessary*. This means roughly that it is an intrinsic part of the activity of such a judgment to expect others to agree with us. Although we may say ‘beauty is in the eye of the beholder’, that is not how we act. Instead, we debate and argue about our aesthetic judgments – and especially about works of art -and we tend to believe that such debates and arguments can actually achieve something. Indeed, for many purposes, ‘beauty’ behaves as if it were a real property of an object, like its weight or chemical composition. But Kant insists that universality and necessity are in fact a product of features of the human mind **Fourth**, through aesthetic judgments, beautiful objects appear to be ‘purposive without purpose’ (sometimes translated as ‘final without end’). An object’s purpose is the concept according to which it was made (the concept of a vegetable soup in the mind of the cook, for example); an object is purposive if it appears to have such a purpose; if, in other words, it appears to have been made or designed.

### Answers to Check Your Progress II

- 1) In order that a thing to be beautiful it is not just sufficient that it exists but it must have certain perfection. Thus something is beautiful in the fullest sense if it possess all the perfections that correspond to its own nature. A thing is said to be beautiful if it possesses three features :

A certain “**harmony**” or proportion in the object itself. When an object possesses all the things that are supposed to be there for its existence then we say that that particular object has a certain amount of harmony.

In order that a thing to be beautiful it should possess the “**integrity**” or completeness of the object with regard to the perfections required by its substantial form or by its accidental forms.

A third characteristic is “**clarity**”. For the intellect clarity means intelligibility. Clarity is also known by certain philosophers as ‘splendor’. Splendor is always splendor of intelligibility: Splendor *veri* said Platonists; splendor *ordinis* said St Augustine, splendor *formae* said St Thomas. Clarity is a characteristic which touches the intellect the most. The intelligence delights in the beautiful because in

the beautiful it finds itself again and recognizes itself and makes contact with its own light.

- 2) Concerning the degrees of beauty, it could be varying according to the type of being we are referring to. Here we can consider in general two types of beings: the material and the spiritual. Spiritual substances whose forms are not limited by matter have the full beauty which pertains to their degree and mode of being. Since they are spiritual beings they do not lack anything hence they possess totality of beauty. The beauty in its most pristine form could be fully found in the divine, God himself. Here there is total beauty for God is the author of all beauty and thus possesses the totality of beauty.

Beauty in the material substances is fragmentary and scattered. It is because the substantial form is limited by the matter. No material being manifests beauty in all of its extension, not even all beauty which pertains to its genus or species since in different individuals the substantial form is affected by various accidental forms which are adapted to its nature in different degrees.

- 3) Although everything is beautiful according to its own form, human intellect is not always capable of perceiving this beauty. This results in ugliness. This incapacity may be due to subjective or objective reasons. The subjective reason is that the one who perceives the object does not appreciate it because he is not habituated to see such objects or the objects do not suit his tastes. As a result everything which does not suit his tastes or his preconceived ideas he considers to be ugly. When it comes to objective reasons, this flows from the nature of human knowledge. To appreciate beauty, the intellect must contemplate an object, that is, it must be able to come to rest in the vision of the thing; hence if anything prevents this 'contemplation', man cannot see the beauty of the object. There are a few reasons which prevent the intellect to pay sufficient attention such as: a) The perfection in the object is mutilated. b) Certain beings remind us so much of others that we consider them as caricatures of the latter. c) Man is so used to see things in one way that any other way of seeing the same object may irritate or may not draw his attention to contemplate that object. Hence ugliness, we could say, does not exist as such, it is more an absence than presence. It is a privation of a perfection which should have been present in an object and which does not exist and hence such absence instead drawing attention and bringing pleasure to the mind brings a sort of repulsion. Thus we could understand in this way transcendental ugliness.