

---

# UNIT 1   PHILOSOPHY OF ART

---

## Contents

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Formalism
- 1.3 Suchness
- 1.4 A Unified Experience
- 1.5 Feelings
- 1.6 Existential Possibilities
- 1.7 Relation Between Art and Epistemology
- 1.8 Enjoyment of Beauty in Art
- 1.9 Beauty as Meant by Different Thinkers
- 1.10 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.11 Further Readings and References

---

## 1.0 OBJECTIVES

---

‘Philosophy of art’ is studied and discussed under the branch of philosophy known as ‘aesthetics;’ one among the normative subjects besides logic and ethics. Under philosophy of values there are a few distinct subjects as axiology, aesthetics, ethics, and religious philosophy. These subjects come under applied philosophy. The unit introduces to the students the subject matter of philosophy of art.

---

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

---

Aesthetics is applied to the systematic study in a philosophical way of understanding beauty and its manifestation in art and nature. ‘A thing of beauty is joy for ever; its loveliness increases and perishes into nothingness’ (Keats). A beautiful object or event brings forth immense joy. Philosophy is interested in analyzing the true characteristics of beauty in identification with several theories of art. For this analysis is seriously concerned with the value dimension of human experience. The person who becomes wonder-struck and develops the sense of ‘awe’ on perceiving the work of art and the events of nature, his attention is arrested and promotes a kind of self-forgettable joy and gets absorbed in them. In this context what takes place is ‘appreciation’ or ‘worth-assigning awareness.’ Hence aesthetic experience is a distinct type of human experience when compared to other experiences.

In the opinion of C.J. Ducasse, “Art is the language of feeling. So its essence as an activity is expression, not the creation of beauty. What the artist really aims at is objective self-expression. Transmission of feeling is neither the essential intention nor the necessary effect of a work of art. Finally art is expression in the special sense that it is both free or spontaneous and yet not quite undetermined.” This citation implies that an object of aesthetic experience is concerned with two important human potentialities viz., cognitive and practical. The former deals

with the knowing aspects, while the latter with the pragmatic aspect. Again the term 'aesthetics' has a two-fold perspective. First art criticism and secondly art experience. The former is concerned with the merits or demerits of particular works of art, i.e., a kind of intensive investigation into a chosen area of beauty. In this process, aesthetics becomes a science than a philosophy. Beauty emerges from nature and art. In nature, beauty is 'given' and in art it is made. The ideal of beauty pertains to its nature or character. The constitution of ideal beauty forms the subject matter of aesthetics, which comes under the realm of philosophy. The relation of beauty to the meaning of life, its relation to other human values, the evaluation of aesthetic ideal in the context of other values etc., constitute the study of beauty through meta-aesthetics, really an extensive study of aesthetics. Aesthetics is to be understood in terms of 'what beauty is;' meta-aesthetics is to be known through the ideal of 'why we pursue it?' The characteristic features of beauty arising out of art and nature are studied in aesthetics while the significant features of beauty arising out of nature and art are studied in meta-aesthetics.

As beauty in nature is obtained from particular parts of nature and not universal, changeable, alterable, impermanent, non-constant the enjoyment or delight arising out of natural beauty is non-stable, man has resorted to enjoy beauty in art. It is clear that men are dissatisfied with beauty found in nature, but they cannot ignore the ideal of perfect beauty, which is immanent in their consciousness, which is also not associated with ugliness. Since philosophy of art is directly connected with the joyous, delightful enjoyment of beauty it is quite obvious that treat aesthetics as a 'process' and not an end product, an inquiry, an kind of conversation among earnest minds. Any theory of art or art-history for that matter is not keen on the practice of an art such as giving training in the craft of painting, of sculpture, of architecture. However, the above components of artistic creations may stimulate and inspire the artist. From the historical perspective the goal of art is concerned with enjoyment and appreciation, waxed and waned through intervening ages. But from the philosophical point of view the work of art depends on the objects available in nature and events created by the imagination of the artist.

Scholars on aesthetics are of the view that aesthetic attitude is characterized by detachment, psychic distance or disinterestedness. These terms imply that in the process of appreciation of art should not be intruded by the practical as well as personal concerns. This does not mean that the appreciator of art should forego intimate rapport, emotional participation and identification with the artistic object leading to aesthetic enjoyment. The major function of the objects of fine art is to embody an aesthetic vision and elicit an aesthetic response especially in the spheres of dramas, paintings, sculptures, symphonies, poems, dances etc.

There are five alternative views concerning the themes and meanings expressed in aesthetic objects: eternal forms (formalism), suchness, a unified experience, feelings and existential possibilities.

---

## 1.2 FORMALISM

---

Form is generally interpreted to mean unit in variety. Art object is expressed through and embodied in concrete form. Again, the term 'form' indicates the internal relations of the aesthetic object, which has a complex of different but interrelated parts. "The theory of formalism maintains that the art object is 'pure form' and that its formal excellence alone determines its aesthetic quality. This

interpretation is particularly congenial to the proponents of abstractionism in art. The claim that formal excellence is a sufficient condition of aesthetic quality is open to question, that it is a necessary condition is not debated.” Further from the point of view of the ingredients of ‘formal excellence,’ aesthetic evaluations are objective rather than subjective.

As far as the nature and meaning of aesthetic objects are concerned, they express eternal forms, which are also known through imitation or representation as held by Plato and Aristotle. “They were not advocating the naïve idea that artists strive to mirror natural objects as exactly as possible. Rather, the artist seeks to represent the essential nature (essence) of objects, the rational forms on which they are patterned (Plato) or which are inherent in them (Aristotle). For Plato, objects of art are twice removed from the eternal forms, since they are only images of copies of the forms; that is natural objects are imperfect copies of eternal forms and works of art are only ‘imitations’ of natural objects.” It is also believed that aesthetic objects represent an ultimate reality that is eternal, perfect and complete especially in the forms of truthfulness, goodness and beautiful.

Keats and Hegel consider beauty as truth in sensuous form. Schopenhauer treats music as an intuitive grasp of ultimate reality. Santayana refers to beauty as an eternal divine essence suffusing a material object. Tolstoy conceives beauty as a quality of perfecting a material object. Goethe indicates that an art object is a sensuous embodiment of a spiritual meaning. Hinduism observes that the aesthetic objects give intuitions of the ultimate as pure being. Intuition and perfection indicate the epistemological and moral implications in the expression of aesthetic objects. This leads the process of knowing and judging goodness.

---

### 1.3 SUCHNESS

---

This view is held by the Eastern philosophies and religions since the Western thought has predominance of science (cognitive and theoretical aspect of reality) and technology (a highly practical activity). The Eastern religions characteristically accept, appreciate and celebrate aesthetic experience, which is complete in itself. According to Suzuki, “Zen naturally finds its readiest expression in poetry rather than philosophy because it has more affinity with feeling than with intellect; its poetic predilection is inevitable.” This view envisages an Eastern perspective to a Western audience. Aesthetic objects are to be understood in terms of the expression of suchness. Artistic expressions do not represent nature, but are natural in themselves in their spontaneity. Suchness is an awakening to the present instant as the only reality. This approach has been critically evaluated as that suchness cannot be applied to future events especially cruelty, war, disease etc.

---

### 1.4 A UNIFIED EXPERIENCE

---

This view refers to the expression of aesthetic objects. The theory of art as promulgated by John Dewey pertains to the development of common experience, which involves a constant interaction between the living beings and their involvement in the environmental conditions pertaining to actions as well as inactions. In the words of Dewey, “Art is... prefigured in the very process of living... It is the living and concrete proof that man is capable of restoring consciously and thus on the plane of meaning, the union of sense, need, impulse

and action characteristic of the live creature. Form, as present in the fine arts, is the art of making clear what is involved in the organization of space and time prefigured in every course of a developing life-experience” The above view remarks that our experience becomes aesthetic when we resort to the pervasive, integrated quality of an experience. It becomes an experience, which is complete and unified in itself, indicating its quality of wholeness.

Again to quote Dewey, “The task [of the philosopher of art] is to restore continuity between the refined and intensified forms of experience that are works of art and the everyday events, doings, and sufferings that are universally recognized to constitute experience. Mountain peaks do not float unsupported they do not even just rest upon the earth. They are the earth in one of its manifest operations... [so] in order to understand the aesthetic in its... approved forms, one must begin with it in the raw; in the events and scenes that hold the attentive eye and ear of man; arousing his interest and affording him enjoyment as he looks and listens; the sights that hold the crowd – the fire-engine rushing by;... the tense grace of the ball player (as it) infests the on looking crowd...(one has also to consider those) who are happily absorbed in their activities of mind and body... the intelligence mechanic engaged in his job, interested in doing well and finding satisfaction in his handiwork, caring for his materials and tools with genuine affection, is artistically engaged.”

Science provides us only instrumental meaning by taking the objects out of isolation by informing the causes and effects. But art, since it provides with direct expression of meanings, such meanings cannot be translated into ordinary language. The artist enlarges and unifies the quality of the perceiver’s experience by way of his imagination in a wholesome manner. Anyhow, the work of art, according to this theory, cannot be viewed as the intention of the artist, but the unified quality of experience which evokes perception. The art object becomes the vehicle of complete unhindered communication. It enables us to overcome our blindness by vividly sharing the meanings. However the question remains, “Is the net cast by a unified experience’ ambiguously all-inclusive?”

---

## 1.5 FEELINGS

---

The theory, which upholds the view that aesthetic objects express feelings in known as expressionism, which can be understood in three different dimensions:

- a) Since the composer exhibits his personal feelings, he is said to be sad.
- b) The music creates a sad feeling in me
- c) In addition, the music itself is sad.

All the above expressions are not mutually exclusive alternatives. Altogether, the feelings may be aroused by the artist, caused by the object and experienced by the observer. This view is mainly maintained by Croce who had interpreted art as an expression of the artist’s state of mind. A movement called romanticism has exemplified the personal emotion of the artist through his artistic creation. First the artist develops a deep-rooted feeling in him and communicate those feelings and emotions so as to stimulate same kind of experience by the spectators which act mainly is concerned with love of nature which is a manifestation of the spirit. Sublimated sexual impulses, primordial images, the unconscious state

etc, are experienced artistically through the feelings of the artist in his work. Susan Langer and Ernst Cassirer hold that art as the creation of forms that articulate the very structure of human feelings. However human feelings cannot be arrested through statements by an art object. It is merely a symbolic representation and in this sense a major role of art is to clarify the subjective side of human life. In the presence of aesthetic objects we are subjected to expressing our emotions in a variety of ways like sadness, joy etc. According to George Santayana beauty is objectified pleasure. This approach poses the following questions; Whether our feelings indicate the intentions of the artist? Whether they indicate the art object itself? Whether they point out our emotional state then? Whether they refer to the meanings and expectations we project on top the aesthetic object?

---

## 1.6 EXISTENTIAL POSSIBILITIES

---

This view maintains that aesthetic objects express the existential possibilities that an art object is a pure possibility. It is not a representation of form or essence; rather it is a presentation of a possibility felt and imagined by the artist. The art object is more than an imagined possibility; it is itself the presence of the possibility. The art object in its finished state is not an expression of fullness, but a thrust of spontaneity from lack of being. The art object refers to the existence of the enactment, utterance or feeling of an individual. It is truthful in its content and essence and not abstract kind of truth and it does not need any kind of empirical test. Art assists human beings to taste the human existence in a manifold way with clear and complete meaning.

---

## 1.7 RELATION BETWEEN ART AND EPISTEMOLOGY

---

Since aesthetic perception involves intuition, the instant awareness enables to grasp the qualities of the art object. According to intuitionism, the observer develops direct awareness of the aesthetic object which results in the intuitive knowledge about the nature of the object presented by the artist. Language and literature are the best sources to depict human nature through aesthetic appeal such as love, pathos, joy, good, evil etc. to know more about human conditions, the novelist, poet and the dramatist are of immense help. Susan Langer maintains, “that the arts express truths about human emotions, but the explicitly states that these truths are not translatable into propositions subject to empirical test. No knowledge claim is put forward in her view that art clarifies human emotions. The latter statement coincides with the view that art provides, not knowledge, but a sense of disclosure, insight, and heightened intelligibility. The above argument of Langer makes a skeptical approach of the intuitionism that the artists furnish a vivid acquaintance with human realities and possibilities, but without any knowledge about them. The view of the existentialists that are presentations are ‘true’ when they emanate perfect and authentic feelings is also refuted here that they do not produce any knowledge. The critics of this knowledge theory in art are of the view that the function of art is to offer new interpretation leading to the expansion of awareness.



---

## 1.8 ENJOYMENT OF BEAUTY IN ART

---

Since the nature cannot provide a permanent and abiding aesthetic experience because of calamities, human aspirations etc., man resort to enjoy beauty in artistic creations, which offer the solace that lacks in nature. Man's imaginative attitude and skilful exercises are reflected in the creation of art, but not in the absence of natural base. Hence, there cannot be extreme idealism nor extreme realism as well as abstractionism and imitationism. As the artist transcends the realm of the actual world and rests in the world of imagination, there is no imitation of the actual world. However, the actual materials of the world serve as the basis for the execution of his work and hence the artist has to work within the ambit of the real world. Immanuel Kant in his *Critique of Judgement* introduces the theme of aesthetics within the mental framework in the form of a judgement. Any judgement to have an aesthetic appeal Kant stipulates two criteria, viz., beauty with a kind of freedom which is unique and disinterestedness. They have certain formal conditions.

According to Clive Bell, aesthetic judgments should have something in common; otherwise we may not call them aesthetics. "Either all works of art have some common quality, or when we speak of works of art we gibber."<sup>6</sup> This view indicates a narrow theory about the meaning of words. One and the same word may give different kinds of meaning and represent a number of different things, provided the definite characteristics which those things all share. Bell is of the opinion that every work of art has something in common worthy of the name. "Only one answer seems possible, significant form. In each, lines and colours combined in a particular way, certain forms and relations of forms, stir our aesthetic emotions. These relations and combination of lines and colors, these aesthetically moving forms, I call 'significant form'" Just opposite to the view of Kant who treated men as ends in themselves, and meant by that men must be treated and respected as autonomous agents with an inalienable right, Bell has developed a different view. If men are seen as end in themselves, they would be known as a combination of colors and lines or patterns. In the same way work of art will also be seen as a pattern and not as a representation or as something with some function or relation to men or other living organisms.

Again, as the work of art is a product of ideal, or mental construction of the artist, the firm belief is that there can be no ugliness in a work of art. The material medium on which the art is created may look beautiful or ugly, but as such art is neither beautiful nor ugly. Also in the long run the physicals structure of the art may be eroded or dwindled, but the significant structure of the art remains the same, since it is based on the will as well as the imagination of the artist. Since the artist has the right to select his things and materials according to his skill and fertile imagination, the work of art remains as harmonious whole. For instance, a drama, a painting, a sculpture or music may appear to be organized in parts or patterns; they reveal unitary appeal to the audience when they enjoy the manifestation of artistic taste through them. Thus, the beauty of art is constant, consistent, unchangeable and immortal. The ontological categories of real or unreal cannot be applicable to the works of art, but the works of art are treated as class by themselves since they pave the way for entertainment only rather than intellectual interrogation. As the work of art is pure and devoid of ugliness, it becomes steady for ever and does not produce pain. Hence art produces higher pleasure than the natural beauty.

The pursuit of art is not based on instinct even though it is spontaneous both for creation of art and its appreciation. Neither planned effort nor deliberate choice play a vital role in the process of creation and enjoyment of art. Hence people are prone to declare 'art for art's sake. According to one view art activity is the manifestation of play of impulse, or the effusion of surplus energy. Another view refutes this theory that it would denounce art from the perspective of human value. As dissatisfaction prevails in the pursuit of art in nature, man naturally gets satisfied in the artistic creation since he longs for the ideal of perfect beauty. For the creation of art the significant factor that is required at the initial level is the inspiration which is based on spontaneous, self-forgetful and detectable experience. In the vicinity of nature, the artist forgets himself and his imagination flows to convert the natural beauty into artistic beauty. In this sense the artist is placed above the common man who lacks the ability of imagination, inspiration artistic skill etc, and place below the enlightened persons who see and enjoy beauty in the flora and fauna of the earth. The creative genius in the artist enables him to convert the nature enjoyable more through his marvellous ideas. The appreciator must stoop to the level of the artist, i.e. he must have a similar heart that of the artist to appreciate his creation.

Regarding the content and method of art presentation, it will be interesting to note that both of them are the two aspects of the same phenomenon. The former refers to the theme or the subject matter of art creation, especially the theme causing emotional appeal in the mind of the appreciator. The latter is the mode of communication or transmitting the content. Only when there is a proper blending of the content and method, there would be the fulfillment of enjoying beauty in art. Between the content and method, the content is the foremost element while the method is secondary and is subservient to the content. If method predominates in any work of art, it will lose its significant aspect. The method is actually a means to serve the purpose of communicating the content. The content of any work of art is predominantly situational as well as emotional since the content cannot go beyond human life. But the emotional and situational themes of art must be not actualized but idealized. Then only the appreciator will develop a kind of detached attitude in appreciating the central theme of art. If it is not idealized, then it becomes personal and will culminate in developing a kind of distaste for art. The main objective of art creation is to evoke a kind of interest, self-forgetful joy and delightful experience in the appreciator. However, the method of appreciation will undergo change corresponding to the change in the content.

According to Croce any aesthetic work especially the work of art must be internal or intuitive; non-internal or external type of art is no longer a work of art. However he insists on the inseparable nature of intuition and expression. To put it precisely, art is intuition-expression. He has frankly identified intuitive or expressive knowledge with the aesthetic or artistic fact, taking works of art as examples of intuitive knowledge and attributing to them the characteristics of intuition and vice-versa. He also wants those who contemplate on artistic creations to set aside theory and abstraction, but to estimate their attractive nature through direct intuition. There are a few implications from this hypothesis of Croce:

- A) Knowing a thing implies the expression to oneself which is a necessary togetherness of intuition and expression. Any aesthetic expression is essentially is nothing but an inner clarity or shaping which is involved in

intuition itself. All works of art such as painting, drawing, singing etc., are cases of merely practical or willed activity. The physical work of art which is outer like literature, music etc., evoke a kind of external stimulus in the minds of the audience or readers, enables the artist to resort to outer expression since it causes kind of aesthetic experience in the form of intuition expression.

- B) None can consider any work of art as representing a symbol of some meaning since it is an inseparable unity of intuition and expression. Actually a symbol is different from its meaning in everyday language.
- C) In the opinion of Croce, if any work of art is an instant result of intuition-expression, it would be wrong to evaluate its merit on the basis of general laws or genres of art, rather one must straightaway proceed to study the art's finished work itself. The several kinds of work of art are not true species, with genera and sub-species. But it resembles a kind of family likeness.
- D) Artistic expression has a secondary value, as it is the outcome of outer activity, however having its root in the spiritual or inner activity called intuition. In his own words, "The aesthetic fact is altogether completed in the expressive elaboration of impressions. When we have achieved the word within us, conceived definitely and vividly a figure or a stature, or found a musical motive, expression is born and complete: there is no need for anything else. Croce here emphasizes that we should not confuse true aesthetic expression with a practical activity. For the genuine work of art arises and completes in the mind itself. The aesthetics are expected to share or recall the real work and hence there is only pragmatic value rather than aesthetic appeal for the observers of the work of art.
- E) Croce propounded a new theory of beauty which is a 'successful expression, or rather, as expression and nothing more, because expression when it is not successful is not expression.

In spite of Croce's profound views about aesthetic work as having intuition expression formula, there arise certain difficulties in making his ideas to have universal command or general acceptance. There is also a problem in 'forming' and 'making' if we rely upon intuition as having formed expression. Where exactly do we find that intuition? We also cannot totally ignore the symbolic representation as well as meaning attributed to work of art like music.

---

## 1.9 BEAUTY AS MEANT BY DIFFERENT THINKERS

---

**R.G. Collingwood**

Collingwood considers art as imagination and expression instead of intuition and expression. His views on art may be summarized as follows; "the essential function of art is to express emotions, not to arouse or describe them. The artistic expression of emotions is also to be distinguished from merely giving vent to them. Positively, it is clear and highly individualized projection of emotions. It is also creation. But creation is not to be taken as the manipulation of some external material in accordance with a set of method or technique. Art is not the same kind of making as craft. This difference may be clearly seen (partly) by reflecting that the true locus of artistic creation is imagination, not the outer



world of performance and artifacts.” The central problem for Collingwood regarding aesthetics is whether art is an expression of emotions. This is not a philosophical theory or definition of art, but familiar to every artist and to those who have some acquaintance with the arts. In aesthetics, one has to carefully think what kind of expression of emotion has been really depicted.

According to Collingwood, there is a difference between what makes the expression of emotion and the actual arousal of it as in the case of a father angrily scolding his mischievous child. This will not arouse the same emotion in the child, but the child will understand the kind of emotion that is being expressed, anger. Similarly when a person arousing emotion on others may not have the same experience in himself, like a salesperson who tries to attract the buyers of his products. However, the man who seeks to arouse a kind of emotion in the audience knows well in advance, what this emotion is. This Collingwood regards an expression as an activity of which there can be no technique.

He also insists to distinguish between expression of emotions and their mere description, since description involves generalization. Also emotions vary from individual to individual depending upon its precise nature pertaining to a particular situation. Hence the aim of art is different from craft according to him, for craft is conceived in general terms. To quote him, “the artist proper is a person who grappling with the problem of expressing a certain emotion, says, ‘I want to get this clear’ He does not want a thing of a certain kind, he wants a certain thing. This is why the kind of a person who takes his literature as psychology, saying, ‘how admirably this writer depicts the feelings of women, or bus drivers...’ necessarily misunderstands every real work of art with which he comes into contact and takes for good art... what is not art at all.”

In the opinion of Collingwood, art is not only an expression but a kind of creative, imaginary making, also not the making of an artifact nor a craft. Art cannot be construed as a mere transformation of the raw material from one thing to something based on a fixed plan with a plan with a preconceived end. It is a voluntary act of procreation. It is spontaneous achievement with creative genius, deliberation and responsibility in his mind. He also distinguishes imagination from make-believe in explaining a work of art. For ‘make-believe’ is always opposed to reality and vice-versa. Imagination is not necessarily tied down to the unreal like the make-believe system. Again make-believe is determined by aversion and desire, while imagination is indifferent to them. Collingwood’s contention is the art-work is based on an imaginary object internally. Art is totally a imaginary work which is total or comprehensive.

The critics of Collingwood question the nature of emotion and the purpose of creating art by every artist. For in the case of instrumental music, art is nothing to do with emotion. Regarding the expression of emotions, the critics point out that an emotional experience is a wholly indeterminate one, which is purely psychological without having any awareness of the objective situation. It would be a cumbersome task to express our emotions in perfect language, even though we may have an awareness of the same. Collingwood speaks of generic features of emotion rather than its specific significance. The critics also point out his biased tendency against the perceptual elements in arts; for he firmly underestimates them. They also disagree with the distinction of artist from a craftsman.

**C.J. Ducasse**

Ducasse in his famous work, *The Philosophy of Art* refers a vigorous and analytical style of argument. The significant element of his notion of ‘aesthetic art’ may be summarized as follows: “Art is the language of feeling. So its essence as an activity is expression, not the creation of beauty. What the artist really aims at is objective self expression. Transmission of feeling is neither the essential intention nor the necessary effect of a work of art. Finally, art is expression in the special sense that it is both free or spontaneous and yet not quite undetermined. Before, however, we set out to explain the various ideas implicit in this summary of Ducasse, we would do well to bring out what he means by aesthetic art. The term, aesthetic, he rightly points out, has been used in quite a few different sense; loosely as synonymous with ‘beautiful’ in the etymological sense, to mean the generally perceptible as when Kant titles the first part of his *critique of pure reason* as ‘transcendental aesthetic.’ and again, ‘as an adjective intended to differentiate feelings obtained in the contemplation of things which are meant to be mere designs, from feelings obtained in the contemplation of other things, such as dramatic entities...’ Therefore, in so far as there is no one firmly establishes sense; in which the word aesthetic is used in the language of the plain man. Ducasse feels justified, in putting his own meaning on the word, and decides to use it to signify; ‘having to do with feelings obtained through contemplation.’”

According to Ducasse, aesthetic art has been characterized as the ‘conscious objectification of one’s feeling.’ He distinguishes it from fine art, which produces something beautiful. But art is merely conscious objective, self-expression i.e. critically controlled objectification of self. In his own view, “strictly speaking, pictures, statues, and the like are not art at all but works of art; and art is not a quality discernible in them but an activity of man, - the activity namely, of which such things are the products.” It also involves the language or expression of feeling. Like the art of putting our meaning into words, art is putting of a feeling into an object created ad hoc., i.e. giving a concrete shape to the feeling leading to contemplation. Through this type of explanation, Ducasse avoids the excesses of Croce and holds that his theory of art has a value of expression in terms of an external, observable object. However, his association of art with language seems to be misleading. Language, properly used can offer meaningful statements, but not to good works of art. His idea of feeling is also does not suit to the idea of emotion since both are psychologically at variance. Emotion is nothing but the strengthened or vibrant feeling.

**John Dewey**

John Dewey considers art neither as luxury nor as an intrusion into life, but simply experience. To quote Dewey, “This task (f the philosopher of art) is to restore continuity between the refined and intensified forms of experience that are works of art and the everyday events, doings and sufferings that are universally recognized to constitute experience. Mountain peaks do not float unsupported; they do not even just rest upon the earth. They are the earth in one of its manifest operations... [so,] in order to understand the aesthetic in its... approved forms, one must begin with it in the raw; in the events and sense that hold the attentive eye and ear of man, arousing his interest and affording him enjoyment as he looks and listens; the sights that hold the crowd – the fire-engine resting by;... the tense grace of the ball-player (as it) infests the on looking crowd... (one has also to consider those) who are happily absorbed in their activities of mind and

body... The intelligent mechanic engaged in his job, interested in doing well and finding satisfaction in his handiwork, caring for his material and tools with genuine affection, is artistically engaged.” To put it more precisely, the task of the philosopher of art, according to Dewey, is to restore the link between art and everyday experience. ‘Experience’ for Dewey is not merely a subjective pole, but refers to the whole transaction of explicit manifestation, contrary to the views explained by Croce and Collingwood.

An art product or a work of art, according to Dewey is a fusion of sense and meaning since the artist has engaged artistically in the product of art. Aesthetic experience is no more private and psychical exclusively than any other kind of experience. Several aesthetic predicates like beautiful, poignant, tragic, etc., express the original character of the things themselves and not mere projections of subjective states. Experience is not individualized, but occurs continuously since it is unconsummated and divided. Aesthetically an experience consists of an inner unit and order, moves towards fulfilment, agreeable and satisfying on the whole, which is basically emotional. For the emotional states are conditioned by parts of an inclusive and enduring situation that involves concern for objects and their issues. To quote Dewey, “A work of art elicits and accentuates this quality of being a whole and of belonging to the larger, all inclusive, whole which is the universe in which we live... Somehow, (it) operates to deepen and to rise to great clarify that sense of an enveloping undefined whole that accompanies every normal experience... This fact... is the explanation of the feeling of exquisite intelligibility and clarity we have in the presence of an object that is experienced with aesthetic intensity. It explains also the religious feeling that accompanies intense aesthetic perception. We are, as it were, introduced into a world beyond this world, which is nevertheless the deeper reality of the world in which we live in our ordinary experiences. We are carried out beyond ourselves to find ourselves.... (the) enveloping undefined whole is felt as an expansion of ourselves.”

The above citation will give the entire gamut of the outlook of aesthetic experience developed by Dewey. An art product is a work of art only potentially so long as it does not so quicken others’ experience, which as a formed substance leading to the work of art in actuality and is perceived as formed in terms of an experience.

### **George Santayana**

He names his work on aesthetics as *The sense of beauty*, since it plays a vital role in life than the aesthetic theory in philosophy. “We must learn from our study why, when and how beauty appears, what conditions an object must fulfil to be beautiful, what elements of our nature make us sensible of beauty, and what the relation is between the constitution of the object and the excitement of our susceptibility.” In his view the sense of beauty is to complete in the living context of our experience of beauty and artistic expressiveness rather than reflecting upon in the abstract. In his another work *The Realm of Essence*, Santayana explicitly states that beauty is indefinable. ‘The beautiful is itself an essence, an indefinable quality felt in many things which, however disparate they may be otherwise, receive this name by virtue of a special emotion, half wonder, half love, which is felt in their presence.’

Santayana maintains that judgement of beauty is immediate, unmediated and non-relational. Art is different from science, since the latter is related to truth, a

## Introduction

fidelity to fact, while art is for entertainment, stimulation of our senses and imagination. Reasoning really sub serves the aesthetic by way of satisfying our understanding. Again Santayana distinguishes aesthetic values with other kinds of value like moral, social, economic etc. beauty may be good, it cannot lead to moral obligation. He insists that our practical reason compares, combines and harmonizes all our interests but each value coming under its domain is unique and distinct. Aesthetic pleasure, in his opinion is objectification, a pleasure of ours, though regarded as a quality of things. However, it is an agreeable state of experience since there is the assigning a locus in the object. As elements of beauty, the materials of beauty are sensations of bodily welfare and surplus energy caused by instincts etc., another element is form which is agreeable in several respects which temper the unpleasantness and commotional power of adversity and unrighteousness since forms are the types which we come to form as a residuum of everyday experience. He describes music, sculpture, literature, poetry, as the individual arts.

### Susanne K. Langer

Langer treats art as an expressive form. The ability to express or articulate or project the subjective factor of our experience distinguishes art from other things. "The essential function of art is not to give vent to the artist's own feeling, nor even to evoke any emotion in the contemplator, but to so 'express' the life of feeling that art lovers in general, nay, even artists themselves, may come to know a little more about 'vitality in all its manifestations from sheer sensibility to the most elaborate phases of awareness and emotion.'" In other words, the essential value of art is not affective or predominantly subjective but cognitive. Art is a vehicle of knowledge of the life of feeling." Like other philosophers of art, Langer considers 'expression' as the central concept of his aesthetical theory. 'A work of art is an expressive form created for our perception through sense or imagination, and what it expresses is human feeling.' The major concepts in his theory are 'form' 'expression,' 'feeling,' 'creation' and 'perception.'

The form of an work of art is the moral effect of it and it also represents the whole work of art as a form itself, which requires in art making and art contemplation. But form need not be an essential factor in literary art. Art in expressed in a certain form according to Langer. They are expressed in the forms of symbol, sign and signal, image, experience etc. Art Symbol is presentational or non-discursive leased pm the principle of construction. Feeling in art is concerned with the subjectively felt realities, i.e., everything that can be felt especially from sensation, pain, comfort, excitement and repose including complex emotions and intellectual tensions. However, non-verbal or non-representational work of art may not evoke any kind of feeling. Regarding creation Langer is of the opinion that art-work is the expressive forms created for our perception. Finally, artistic import and intuition constitute the contemplation of the created art in a form with expressiveness with several meanings each one is unique and distinct. According to Langer, poetry contains the discourse, which creates and projects an illusion besides image, semblance of virtual life or personal and immediate experience as well as forms of feeling.

### L.A. Reid

Reid treats art as an embodiment of creative aesthetics from the perspective of constructive and critical. By the word 'creation' Reid means that which was

earlier unknown to the artist, but gradually manifests through his creation. He prefers to use the word embodiment instead of expression, as the key concept of aesthetics, since the works of art give definite, or more or less material, shape to the artist’s idea or vision. Art is the creative aesthetic embodiment which has an individual form. Language in art, according to Reid, is the excitement in ideas of the artist which moves him to proceed further. “A poet has a freedom in the selection and manipulation of his subject-matter (in exactly the same way as a painter freely selects from the features of a landscape) to which the philosopher or the scientist has no right. It is ideas-as-he-feels-than (ideas as values) that ‘get into’ the poem. As with the painter, his emphasis, his style, is affected by the rhythms and pulsing of his feeling. In the writing of philosophy and science (on the other hand) the quality of style is primarily subordinate to the clarity of ideas.” However, critics state that that art cannot be regarded as a kind of expression but better may be called embodied meaning.

**Check Your Progress I**

**Note:** Use the space provided for your answers.

1) How do you understand Beauty?

2) What are the views of different philosophers on ‘rasa’?

1.10 LET US SUM UP

Besides the above philosophers of art we come across Aristotle, Leo Tolstoy, John Hospers, Clive Bell, E.H. Gomrich, T.M. Grane, David Hume and Magaret Macdonald discussing about poetics, art, the language of emotion, art and emotion, artistic representation and form, artistic representation, artistic greatness, of the standard of taste and some distinctive features of arguments used in criticism of the art respectively.

1.11 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

Choudhri, N. N. *Philosophy of Poetry*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1959.

Gnoli, Raniero. *The Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta*. Rome: 1956.

17



## Introduction

Haveli, E. B. *The Ideals of Indian Art*. Delhi: Indological Book House, 1972.

Hiriyanna. *Art Experience*. Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1954.

Hiriyanna. *Indian Conception of Values*. Mysore: 1975.

Sastri, Pancapagesa P. *The Philosophy of Aesthetic Pleasures*. Annamalai Nagar: 1940.

Pandey, K. C. *Comparative Aesthetics*. Vol. I *Indian Aesthetics*. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1959.

Dasgupta, S.N. *Fundamentals of Indian Art*. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1963.

Mahadevan, T.M.P. *The Philosophy of Beauty*. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1969.

Ramachandran, T.P. *The Indian Philosophy of Beauty*. Chennai: University of Madras, 1980.