

The Indian Philosophy of Beauty

PART ONE: PERSPECTIVE



T. P. RAMACHANDRAN



**The Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Institute for
Advanced Study in Philosophy.**

UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS

Madras University Philosophical Series—No. 24

GENERAL EDITOR

Dr. R. BALASUBRAMANIAN

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THE DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN INSTITUTE
FOR ADVANCED STUDY IN PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY OF MADRAS

1979

First published 1979

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PRICE Rs. 10/-

PRINTED IN INDIA

AT AVVAI ACHUKKODAM, 17, P. V. KOIL STREET, MADRAS-13.

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GENERAL EDITOR'S FOREWORD

I have great pleasure in introducing to readers this book by Dr. T.P. Ramachandran from the Dr. S. Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy. The book is a contribution to an aspect of philosophy which has remained comparatively neglected, namely the study of beauty. Dr. Ramachandran has dealt with this aspect with special reference to the Indian tradition. Although beauty may interest a variety of persons, the author's stance is distinctly philosophical. And in this lies the originality of the book. It is a product of the author's patient labour for seven years. What is now published is Part One of the book, which sets forth the Perspective of the subject. It is hoped that the second part will be published in a year.

Dr. Ramachandran has to his credit two other books, *The Concept of the Vyāvahārika in Advaita Vedānta* (1969) and *Dvaita Vedānta* (1976).

MADRAS
March 2, 1979

R. BALASUBRAMANIAN

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Dr. Ramachandran has to his credit two other books, *The Concept of Karma* in *Indian Values* (1959) and *Indian Values* (1961).

R. RAMACHANDRAN

MADRAS
March 2, 1970

PREFACE TO THE WORK

This book is intended for students of philosophy. The systematic study of beauty goes by the name 'aesthetics', and aesthetics is no doubt a branch of philosophy. So it might appear that I should have described the contents of this book 'Indian Aesthetics'. But I prefer the title which I have given for two reasons.

The first reason is this. The term 'aesthetics' is often applied in a loose way to the criticism of art. But aesthetics should not be equated with art criticism. Art criticism, in the first instance, is confined to beauty in art. It is not concerned with beauty in nature except as described by an artist among his other themes. And nature as described by the artist constitutes art and cannot be identified with nature as such. The criticism of art, in so far as it is an intensive investigation into a chosen area of beauty, is more a science than a philosophy. The distinguishing mark of philosophy as against other branches of knowledge is its concern for fundamentals. A philosophical treatment of beauty, which is the purport of this book, should attempt to understand beauty as such and not in any particular form alone. For this reason it should comprehend beauty in nature as well as beauty in art. In other words its scope should be wider than that of art criticism. Although the term 'aesthetics' properly applies only to such a philosophical study of beauty, in view of the prevalent practice of describing art criticism also as aesthetics, to avoid any possible misunderstanding of the scope of this book, the term 'aesthetics' is not used in the title. (Even with regard to beauty in art, which is common to both art criticism and aesthetics, there is a difference in the

functions performed by the two disciplines. While criticism is concerned with the merits of individual works of art, aesthetics, in so far as it deals with art, constructs a general theory of art, which is a philosophical task. But it is not necessary to enter into this difference to justify the title.)

The distinction sought above would no doubt have been fulfilled had we used an expression such as 'Philosophical Aesthetics' (though it involves an obvious tautology). But the term 'aesthetics', although it would now be avowedly philosophical, would still not be an adequate expression for what the book proposes to discuss. This is the second reason. Let me elucidate it.

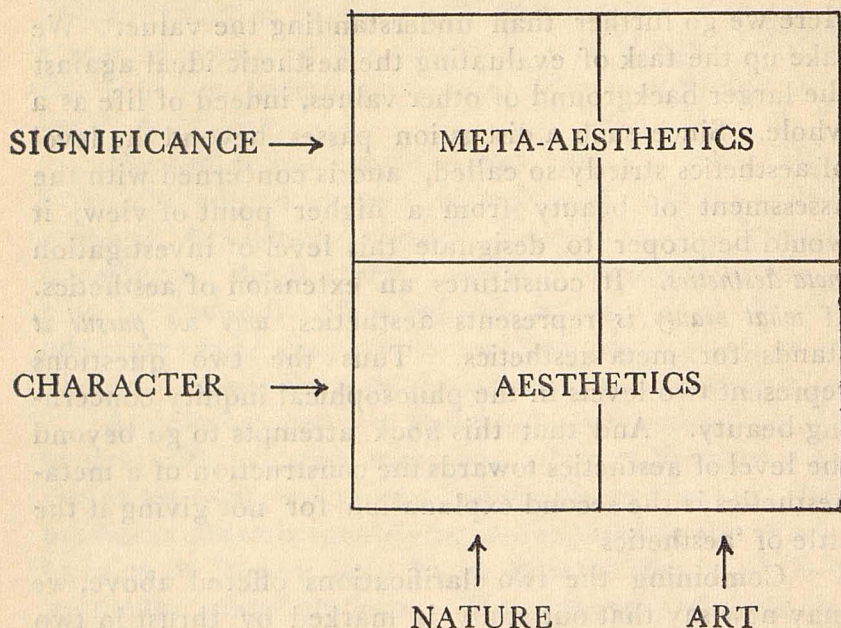
A philosophical treatment of beauty should be able to deal with two main questions. The preliminary question is the *character*, or nature, of the ideal of beauty. The problem consists in identifying and explaining the characteristics of beauty both in its general form and in its particular manifestations. The discovery of these characteristics is based on a comparison, firstly between the beautiful and the ugly and plain, secondly between one particular order of beauty and another (like between the artistic and the natural or between beauty in one fine art and beauty in another), and thirdly between what is more beautiful and what is less beautiful within the same order (like between one type of poetry and another). In short, we are here concerned with understanding the ideal of beauty taken by itself and going into its constitution. This is the question that forms the subject-matter of what we call *aesthetics* in the realm of philosophy. But the philosophic mind cannot afford to stop with the treatment of this question.

There is another question which spontaneously follows from the first. To the extent the first is settled, one is bound to ask oneself: how is beauty, being such and such, meaningful to life? To state this question specifically: how is beauty (whether in its general character or in any specific form) distinguished from and related to other human values? Is it an intrinsic value or an

instrument to some other value? How far is it influenced by other values and how far does it influence them? Here we go further than understanding the value. We take up the task of evaluating the aesthetic ideal against the larger background of other values, indeed of life as a whole. Since such a discussion passes beyond the level of aesthetics strictly so called, and is concerned with the assessment of beauty from a higher point of view, it would be proper to designate this level of investigation *meta-aesthetics*. It constitutes an extension of aesthetics. If *what beauty is* represents aesthetics, *why we pursue it* stands for meta-aesthetics. Thus the two questions represent two levels in the philosophical inquiry concerning beauty. And that this book attempts to go beyond the level of aesthetics towards the construction of a meta-aesthetics is the second explanation for not giving it the title of 'aesthetics'.

Combining the two clarifications offered above, we may now say that our study is marked by thrust in two directions. On the one hand there is a horizontal expansion in the sense that we cover not merely the realm of art but also of nature. On the other hand there is a vertical elevation in the sense that we discuss not only the character of beauty but also its significance. It is to justify these two extensions of thought that a fairly comprehensive title has been used for the contents of this book. This does not mean that the book will not use the term 'aesthetics' at all. What it means is that wherever that term is used it will be used not as a synonym for 'the philosophy of beauty' but only as a level, or stage, in it. We shall, however, make a liberal use of the adjective 'aesthetic', e.g. in 'aesthetic thought' as it simply means 'what pertains to beauty'. At the risk of over-simplification I should like to indicate these basic features of the book by means of a diagram.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF BEAUTY



Now, for the word 'Indian' in the title. A philosophical treatment of beauty is comparatively new in University studies in India. Hitherto the study of beauty was represented mostly under criticism in the fine arts, especially literature, under the title *Alaṅkāra śāstra*. The philosophical orientation indicated above is, however, not impossible, at any rate with reference to Indian aesthetic thought. There is sufficient material in our classical aesthetic thought for organization on these lines. This is one of the significant discoveries made by the late Professor Hiriyanna. We find it expressed principally in his collection of essays entitled *Art Experience* and in the book *Indian Conception of Values* (both published by Kavyalaya, Mysore). We find him observing on the matter as early as 1919 in the first article included in the *Art Experience* thus. 'Here is a vast field for the student of Indian antiquities to labour in and the harvest, if well garnered, will be of

advantage not only for the history of Indian thought but also, it may be hoped, for Universal Philosophy.' (p.1) 'Research has till now been largely confined to linguistic, historical and similar aspects of oriental learning; but there are still other aspects of it which cannot be regarded as either less instructive or less interesting. It appears necessary in the future not only to carry research further in the departments already worked, but also to widen considerably the sphere of research itself.' (p. 16)

In the two books referred to above supplemented by two other collections of his essays *The Quest After Perfection* and the *Popular Essays in Indian Philosophy* (also published by Kavyalaya, Mysore) Professor Hiriyananna has given the guidelines to a distinctively philosophical treatment of the Indian aesthetic lore. What this book attempts is to develop the core ideas thrown up by Hiriyananna. My gratitude to this pioneer is illimitable. I have soaked myself in the writings of Hiriyananna, and this is my only excuse for having dared to work upon the foundations left by him. Had he lived, he might himself have expanded the ideas in his own unexceptionable way. At the same time his interest in the work of future students, which makes him share even his distant thoughts with them, speaks of his qualities of heart as well. Being one generation away, I did not have the privilege of studying under Professor Hiriyananna. But I have heard glowing accounts of him from one of my own teachers the late Professor M. K. Venkatarama Iyer of the National College at Tiruchirapalli, who was a pupil of Hiriyananna. The attraction of Hiriyananna for me is more than intellectual—personal. As a token of my grateful regard let me dedicate this humble work to the revered memory of Professor Hiriyananna.

This book grew out of the opportunity given to me from 1972 to teach 'Indian Aesthetics' as one of the subjects for the Master of Arts Degree course in Indian Philosophy conducted at the Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy (formerly called Centre for Advanced Study in Philosophy) in the University of

Madras and the research work which I concurrently conducted on the subject for the last seven years. I am profoundly grateful to Dr. T.M.P. Mahadevan, the then Director of the Centre, who agreed to my suggestion that the subject could be introduced for the Post-Graduate course and gave me every encouragement for this teaching-cum-research endeavour. I am grateful also to Dr. V.A. Devasenapathi, who succeeded Dr. Mahadevan as Director, for lending his support to the proposal and for giving me continued encouragement. The progress of the undertaking was not a little due to my students, most of whom took to the course with avidity in spite of initial difficulties. The responsibility I owed to them for this untried course was considerably lightened by the constant help of a valued colleague and friend Dr. N. Veezhinathan, who is now Reader in the University's Department of Sanskrit. Dr. Veezhinathan has also enabled me to develop my material to book form especially through his valuable help in regard to documentary evidence from Sanskrit classics. He has guided me in the interpretation of these passages and himself supplied some. I thank also Dr. C.S. Sundaram of the Department of Sanskrit for his special help in regard to the *Nāṭya-śāstra* of Bharata. Finally I am thankful to my old class-mate and friend Dr. R. Balasubramanian, who is the present Director of the Institute, for his kind interest and help in the publication of the book. But for his impulsion I should still not have got the work ready for the press.

The book is equally intended for the beginner and for the advanced student. I crave the indulgence of the latter wherever I present the elementals. The specialist can easily skip over these and pay attention to the more technical elements. Similarly the beginner is advised not to bother over the less comprehensible as they come up in the first reading. An overall comprehension of the contents will pave the way for a better understanding of these spots in a second reading.

I now surrender with a grateful heart whatever

good there is in this work as in any other undertaking of mine to the very source and direction of my powers my Preceptor Jagadguru Śrī Candraśekharendra Sarasvatī Śrīcaraṇāḥ of Śrī Kāmakoti Pīṭha at Kāñcī. All the blemishes in this labour are of this instrument which is me.

MADRAS

T. P. RAMACHANDRAN

February 26, 1979

good that this work is in my hands, and I am
able to the very source and direction of my power.
I am a student of the University of the Pacific, and
I am a student of the University of the Pacific. All this
is done in the name of the University of the Pacific.

T. J. KAMACHIAN

RECEIVED

February 2, 1907

PREFACE TO PART ONE, PERSPECTIVE

For sheer practical reasons I am obliged to divide what I originally intended as a single book. The first part of the book, which is being published, sets the perspective of the Indian philosophy of beauty. We first survey the wide framework of the Indian philosophy of values and assess the place of the philosophy of beauty in it. Then we mark out the subject-matter of our study by reference to its first level, namely aesthetics. This leads us to the identification of three orders of beauty and the division of the subject in accordance with these three orders. Then we devote special attention to what we could regard as the crucial order, art, discussing its significance and the relation between the artist and the aesthete. Thus within the perspective there is a passage from the general to the relatively particular.

The outcome of the present part introduces the contents of the remaining part of the book, which is to be published. This future portion will concentrate on art, discussing special concepts in regard to it on the basis of the perspective set forth in the present volume. Its contents may be indicated thus: the historical development of the concepts of *bhāva*, *rasa*, and *dhvani*; the probable influence of metaphysics on the evolution of these concepts; the factors involved in the production of *rasa*; the homogeneity of *rasa*; the special significance of *śānta* and *bhakti* rasas to religion; art and religion; the nature of *dhvani*; the defence of *dhvani*; comprehensive theories regarding the process of art appreciation which culminates in *rasa*; the relation between art and Brahman.

I am thankful to the authorities of the University of Madras for sanctioning the publication of this volume under the auspices of the Institute.

I am thankful to Sri V. Seshachalam and his staff at the Avvai Achukkoodam for the happy execution of the printing within the short time given to them.

MADRAS

February 26, 1979

T. P. RAMACHANDRAN

Chapter One

THE PLACE OF A PHILOSOPHY OF BEAUTY IN THE INDIAN PHILOSOPHY OF VALUES

I

IS THERE AN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY OF BEAUTY?

There are two methods open to a modern student for studying Indian philosophy. The familiar method of study is in terms of the different schools, or systems. We begin with the earliest sources of philosophy in this country and trace the evolution of the various systems of philosophy from them. This is the method that we find in any book dealing with the history of Indian philosophy. We may call it the historical method provided we remember that the historical succession is not strictly among the systems but within each system. It is a special characteristic of the Indian schools of philosophy that their development is not successive but simultaneous. In Europe we find a succession of philosophical positions taken up by successive thinkers, each succeeding position refuting and nearly replacing the earlier one. But in India, although all the schools did not originate exactly at the same time, each of them developed alongside the other schools. The different thought patterns, Vedic and non-Vedic, took shape on parallel lines through mutual impact down the centuries. The reason was that in India philosophy was closely connected with religion. Each school of philosophy produced its own set of followers who preached its doctrines and passed on its tradition to the succeeding generation.

The other method of studying Indian philosophy is conceptual. It is in terms of the different divisions, or aspects, of philosophy. The broad divisions into which any system of philosophy, Eastern or Western, would fall are the philosophy of reality, or metaphysics, the philosophy of knowledge, or epistemology, and the philosophy of values, or applied philosophy. They represent respectively the inquiry into the nature of reality, the inquiry into the process by which we come to know about it, and the inquiry into the ends of life in the light of the knowledge of reality already gained. In Indian terminology these three divisions are called *tattva-vicāra*, *pramāṇa-vicāra*, and *prayojana-vicāra*, respectively. We may apply this three-fold division to the contents of all the systems of Indian philosophy. Such a study would cut across the systems. It may be said to yield cross-sections of Indian philosophy at different points if the other method could be said to give longitudinal sections. We would then have a comparative account of the metaphysics of all the schools, a similar account of their epistemology, and likewise an account of the philosophy of values represented by the different schools. By an extension of this method we could even look into the germs of thought present in the early sources in terms of metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of values.

In Western philosophy the three broad divisions to which we referred are sub-divided for the sake of convenient study, this characteristic being more marked in modern than in ancient times. We thus speak of cosmology, ontology, eschatology, psychology, and rational theology within the broad field of metaphysics. We have logic marked out within epistemology. Under philosophy of values we have such distinct branches as axiology, ethics, aesthetics, and philosophy of religion. The term 'axiology' means 'theory of the valuable'. It denotes the study of value in general. It identifies the different *types* of values by investigating into the *origin* of values and discusses the *relation* of the different values to one another in our lives. On the other hand, ethics,

aesthetics, and philosophy of religion represent the special study of particular values. Ethics is concerned with the value called goodness, aesthetics, with beauty, and philosophy of religion, with liberation.

The Indian treatment of the three-fold task of philosophy is not so diversified as this. The argument in favour of treating philosophical problems without a clear-cut demarcation among them is that the problems are inter-related. Yet, from the point of view of the modern student of Indian philosophy it may be desirable for the sake of convenience in treatment to adopt the compartmental scheme of Western philosophy, taking due care not to do violence to the natural unity of philosophical inquiry in India among the three broad divisions and within each of them. Thus in our treatment of the Indian philosophy of values we may sub-divide our subject-matter into aesthetics, ethics, and so on, provided we remember that such a demarcation is only for purposes of intensive study and does not represent watertight compartments in the mind of the original philosopher. This is the justification for our treatment of an aspect of our philosophical heritage under the head 'the philosophy of beauty'.

II

THE CHIEF CHARACTERISTIC OF THE INDIAN PHILOSOPHY OF VALUES

Indian aesthetic thought is a part of the Indian philosophy of values. Hence to understand the characteristics of this field of thought, it is necessary to acquaint ourselves with the features of the Indian philosophy of values.

We have first to note the implications of the term 'value'. That quality by virtue of which a thing comes to be desired is called its value, or worth. By possessing value, the thing itself comes to be called a value. The power of money to purchase goods is its *value*. By virtue

of this power money itself is a *value*. Here is a difference in the use of the noun as an uncountable and as a countable. Thus a *value* may be defined as 'that which is desired', as 'an object of desire'.

'A value' is different from 'a fact'. (We are now using both these terms as countables. Like 'value', 'fact' also could be used as an uncountable, when it means the 'quality of being real, true, or actual'.) A fact is a thing taken as it is without reference to our like or dislike, desire or aversion. How the thing impresses our minds, or comes to be estimated by us makes it more than a fact. If the impression is favourable, if we like it, and accept it, or desire to have it, it is called a value. If the estimation goes against it, if we come to regard it as something to be avoided or shunned, it is called a disvalue, the opposite of a value. That there is peace or war at a certain time and place is a fact. But peace is a value and war a disvalue.

The consideration of values is an important division of philosophy, making it a guide to life. The philosophy of values, as this division is called, is the application of metaphysics to problems of value. A philosophy of values has to address itself to three main tasks. (1) It has to determine the types of values. (2) It has to clarify the nature of each of these values. (3) It has to arrange these values according to a scale, or graded system, and indicate their relation to one another. The manner in which the philosophy of values in any particular tradition or any particular school within a tradition fulfils these tasks will depend on the kind of metaphysics involved in that tradition or school, i.e. the way in which reality is conceived of in it. Differences in philosophies of values are to be traced to differences in their metaphysical foundations.

In the first place there are differences among schools in regard to the types of values. In the West, Plato's metaphysics enabled him to conceive of three values, truth, beauty, and goodness. But the Scholastic philosophers of the middle ages, for whom philosophy was closely

connected with religion, added salvation, or liberation, to the list. In India the majority of schools spoke of four values, *artha*, *kāma*, *dharma*, and *mokṣa*. But the Cārvāka school had its own metaphysical reasons to reject both *dharma* and *mokṣa* as values. For a long time the Mīmāṃsakas had in mind only the first three of these values, omitting *mokṣa* from the scheme. Belief in the soul and rejection of *mokṣa* were contradictory. So, later, even the Mīmāṃsakas were forced to admit *mokṣa* as a value.¹

Secondly, even when any value is recognised in common by more than one school, there are differences in the way in which the nature of that value is conceived. Liberation, for example, is recognised as a value by all the schools that believe in the immortality of the soul. But the conception of liberation varies from one of these schools to another according to the conception of the soul in each of them. Similarly, the ethical ideal of *dharma*, or goodness, although common to many schools, admits of varied interpretation according to the conception of reality underlying it.

The third task of a philosophy of values, as we said, is to graduate the values and bring out their inter-relation, their organization. The manner of doing this in any school depends on the way in which the first two tasks are fulfilled in it. That is to say it depends on the types of values recognized and the exact meaning given to each value. We may give the following example. Those Indian schools which provided for *mokṣa* invariably regarded it as the highest value and all the other values as subordinate to it and also as subservient to it either directly or indirectly. But to the Mīmāṃsā school, which until its later phase stopped with three values, *dharma* was the highest value.

Thus there are differences in three important respects among traditions and schools in their philosophies of values. Confining our attention to the Indian philosophy of values, if we look behind the differences among schools for broad points of agreement among them, we might note the following point. The majority of schools

regard *mokṣa* as the highest value and all the other values not only as subordinate to *mokṣa* but also as means to it. This characteristic may therefore be regarded as representative of the Indian philosophy of values.

III

THE DEFINITION OF PURUṢ ARTHA

The Samskr̥t equivalent for the term 'value' is *artha*. It comes from the root *arth*, which means 'to desire', 'to strive to obtain'. Another term used is *iṣṭa*. It comes from the root *iṣ*, which also means 'to desire'. The opposites of these terms are *anartha* and *dviṣṭa*, and these mean 'that which is to be shunned, or avoided', i.e. a disvalue.

The term *artha* (*iṣṭa*), or value, includes what is sought after by any being, human, animal or plant. But there is a difference between a value for a human being and a value for an animal or a plant. The difference does not lie in the scope of the ends; for there are ends which man seeks in common with the lower orders of life such as food and shelter. The difference rather consists in the manner of seeking ends. What distinguishes the human seeking of ends from the animal seeking is that it is deliberate. Man is aware of what he is seeking; he can conceive of new ends, like going to other planets, or choose between ends, as between books and clothes, or refrain from an end to which he is by nature impelled, such as avoiding a dinner though hungry. He can also plan for the future and provide for himself in advance. The animal also may act for an end, but it does not evince the *idea* of the end, i.e. the knowledge of its worth, in these ways. In spite of adaptation to environment, there is such a uniformity in the pattern of its behaviour as to indicate that it acts by an in-built mechanism or a system of instincts. The conclusion is strengthened by the fact that the animal does not make innovations for the sake of innovations, i.e. in the absence of a compell-

ing circumstance. Hence in the philosophy of values it is only the ends as pursued by man that demand consideration. An end as pursued by man is called *puruṣārtha* (*puruṣaiḥ arthyate iti puruṣārthaḥ*). The second element (*-artha*) in the compound means end, goal, object desired. The first element (*puruṣa-*) restricts its usage to human ends. The significance of the qualification *puruṣa* in the compound is more in *how* an end is sought than in *what* is sought. Even the same ends become *puruṣārthas* when sought by man but not by animals. Hence the distinguishing mark of a *puruṣārtha* is that it is consciously sought.²

What is consciously sought, a *puruṣārtha*, may be of two kinds. Primarily it signifies something to be attained for its own sake, i.e. what is intrinsically valuable. Such a *puruṣārtha* is called *sādhya* (intrinsic), or *mukhya* (primary). The pursuit of it involves also the pursuit of whatever serves as a means to it, in other words, of what is instrumentally valuable. Such a *puruṣārtha* is called *sādhana* (instrumental), or *gauṇa* (secondary). For example, pleasure is an end in itself, but the seeking of it involves also the seeking of the means to it. Thus a *puruṣārtha*, or human value, may be either intrinsic or instrumental.

In the words of Hiriyanna, a *puruṣārtha* may therefore be defined as 'an end which is consciously sought to be accomplished either for its own sake or for the sake of utilizing it as a means to the accomplishment of a further end'.³

IV

THE TWO LEVELS OF PURUṢĀRTHAS

Four *puruṣārthas* have been recognized in India from very early times. They are *artha*, *kāma*, *dharma*, and *mokṣa*. *Kāma* is personal, mundane pleasure, which may be associated with objects, like clothing, housing, and so on, or with circumstances, like power, position, fame, and

so forth. The pursuit of this involves also the pursuit of the means to that pleasure, namely material goods, or wealth. This is called *artha*. (Previously we used this term in the sense of 'value in general'. Now it applies to a specific value.) The economic value is a concomitant of the hedonistic value. *Dharma* represents the ethical ideal of goodness, though the term has other meanings such as disposition, quality, and devotion with which we are not concerned here. *Mokṣa* is the ideal of complete and permanent freedom from all the imperfections that characterize life.

The Indian philosopher does not regard the four values as of the same rank. He arranges them according to a scale. The four values are broadly distinguished into lower and higher groups. *Artha* and *kāma* represent the lower (*adhama*) level, and *dharma* and *mokṣa*, the higher (*uttama*). The distinction between the lower and the higher levels is based on the fact that man, not being satisfied with the one, makes the transition to the other. What is the reason for the dissatisfaction?

According to the Indian analysis of the nature of values, all values, whether human or animal, have one common characteristic, namely the desire to overcome misery. Life involves pain.⁴ And there is no living creature that does not long for freedom from pain. All values are expressions in various ways of the desire to overcome pain, to avoid discomfort. But among living creatures man alone is capable of becoming aware of the degree to which each value can fulfil this need. His dissatisfaction with certain values such as *artha* and *kāma* arises from the reason that he does not find them real solutions to the problem of misery. Thus, according to the Indian view, the criterion for regarding values as higher and lower, in other words for a scale of values, is the adequacy of the values to meet the demand for relief from suffering.

At the lower level man imagines that the answer to the problem of misery is the obtainment of a maximum of such pleasure as is available in life (*kāma*).

As a means to such pleasure he seeks also the acquisition or control of material goods (*artha*). But sooner or later he becomes dissatisfied with the pursuit of wealth and pleasure. He realizes that wealth and pleasure, *artha* and *kāma*, are no solution to the problem of misery. The pleasure that comes out of wealth is not only transient but also involves the pain of conflict with others pursuing the same goal. This is true both of individuals and of society at large. Men who passionately pursue material comforts, power and position, name and fame are equally beset with gnawing anxieties and fears. At the social level we speak of man's conquest of nature and an ever-rising standard of living under the limitless potentialities of technology. But the price that the world community has to pay for this so-called progress, this sophistication of man's simple needs, is equally heavy. Power games among nations and blocks with growing suspicion, tension, and fear is the order of the day. The efficiency with which a few can now exploit and tyrannize over the many in a variety of spheres holds out grim prospects. Nature itself seems to take revenge on man in the shape of new diseases, failure of weather patterns, and so on for all the pollution and depletion it is subjected to. When the human mind wakes up to the worthlessness of wealth and pleasure, it is bound to make the transition to the pursuit of the higher values of *dharma* and *mokṣa*.

Artha and *kāma* fail to remove suffering because their pursuit is avowedly selfish, or personal, whether men seek them individually or in groups; and selfishness is the cause of suffering. *Artha* and *kāma* are meant for self-gratification even when their pursuit is restrained by social considerations. This is sufficiently indicated by the fact that it is not only man but all sentient creatures that seek pleasure and the means to it. The pursuit of these values by man is prompted by the natural impulses which he shares with the lower orders of life. The only difference is that, while other creatures seek them by instinct, man does so knowingly. Fortunately man com-

bines in himself the character of a rational, self-conscious, spiritual being with that of an animal. Hence at some stage in life he wakes up to the truth that happiness consists in contentment and self-renunciation rather than in self-appeasement and consequently turns his attention to the ideals of *dharma* and *mokṣa*.

The distinctive mark of the higher values is unselfishness. Of them *mokṣa* stands for a state of absolute freedom from selfishness. In fact, if *mokṣa* means complete and permanent liberation from suffering, it is because selfishness is totally absent in it. The notion of individuality may or may not be present in that state, but the individualistic outlook, or individualism, would have totally disappeared from one who is liberated. *Dharma* also is characterized by unselfishness but in the sense that the pursuit of it necessarily involves the conscious effort to overcome selfish tendencies. *Dharma* stands for social conduct. It consists in activities that ensure the solidarity of society.⁵ And one cannot contribute to social well-being without exercising some degree of self-restraint and self-sacrifice. Although personal interests would not have disappeared from the practiser of *dharma*, they necessarily get subordinated to public interests. Consider, for example, the patience with which one would await one's turn for something in a queue. It is thus clear that, unlike the appeal of *artha* and *kāma*, that of *dharma* and *mokṣa* is restricted to man. *Dharma* and *mokṣa* are therefore man's real values—the values which are worthy of him. He begins to seek them when his higher nature asserts itself. We may therefore distinguish the lower and the higher values as between the 'material' and the 'spiritual' values, the values which man naturally seeks and the values which he ought to seek. It is this distinction that the Upaniṣads convey through the terms *preyas* and *śreyas*. The former is just what is pleasing. The latter is what is really worthwhile. The distinction may also be represented as between the material side of civilization and its mental side, which consists in the refinement of taste, or culture.

The transition from the lower to the higher level is not sudden; one cannot give up wealth and pleasure abruptly. In fact, wealth and physical well-being are to some extent needed for the pursuit of the higher values. For example, one needs minimum food and shelter to practise virtue. The transition is therefore gradual. It begins when *artha* and *kāma* cease to occupy the focus of attention and proceeds as they recede more and more to the background, enabling the person to do with the minimum of appurtenances.

V

THE PLATONIC AND THE INDIAN VALUES— WAS BEAUTY NEGLECTED IN INDIA?

The Indian ideal of *dharma* reminds us of the Platonic scheme of values, namely truth, beauty, and goodness. Truth, beauty, and goodness relate to the thinking, feeling, and willing aspects of our personality. Truth is the intellectual ideal. It is knowledge of reality as it is. The distinguishing mark of what we call beauty is that it gives us undiluted joy. There is beauty in nature and art. We turn to it to feel this joy. Goodness is the ideal of conduct. The essence of it consists in acting with due concern for the well-being of others.

The question is whether these values recognized by Plato find a place in the Indian scheme of *puruṣārthas*. The term *dharma* easily comprehends the moral ideal of goodness although it has a wider connotation. We do not find truth and beauty mentioned in the Indian list of values. But the mere absence of a formal recognition of them does not mean that the Indian philosopher was oblivious of the concepts represented by these terms and neglected their treatment.

Truth, or true knowledge, is knowledge of reality as it is. The pursuit of truth gives us either science or metaphysics. It is science if the knowledge relates to select aspects of reality, and it is metaphysics if the

knowledge relates to the whole of reality. Metaphysical truth being comprehensive, scientific truth may be subsumed under it. In fact, it is the tendency of science to pass over into metaphysics. Intellectual inquiry admits of no barriers. Hence the pursuit of scientific problems will take one to wider and fundamental metaphysical problems. Hence, when we speak of truth as a value, it is sufficient to speak of metaphysical truth. The philosophy of values applies truth as discovered in metaphysics to problems of value. Thus, although truth is itself a value, its attainment is the basis on which the philosophy of values proceeds with its tasks. Since truth has to be taken for granted by the philosophy of values, it cannot be discussed therein. The special study of truth comes under epistemology instead. What the philosophy of values actually discusses are the other values and their relation to truth. It was probably owing to this basic character of truth, that the Indian philosopher did not formally include it in the list of values. But from the importance given in India to metaphysical knowledge as the basis of the study of values it is clear that truth has been recognised as a *puruṣārtha* by implication. The Samskr̥t term which represents this ideal is *tattva-jñāna*, or simply *jñāna*.

We now come to the ideal of beauty. Till the recent past there was an impression even among Western scholars sympathetic to Indian thought that the study of the beautiful was neglected by Indian philosophers. While granting that Indian philosophy had achieved distinction in all other branches, they felt that there had been little place in it for aesthetics.⁶ The main reason that might have led the Western scholar into this impression might be that beauty is not mentioned in the list of *puruṣārthas*. We shall refer to other probable reasons later. But so far as this chief reason is concerned, we must observe that the mere absence of a formal inclusion of beauty in the list of values does not mean that the Indian philosopher was unaware of the concept represented by the term 'beauty'.

To begin with, we can safely surmise that, being specially concerned with humanistic philosophy, the Indian philosopher could not have been oblivious of the fact that man is drawn towards objects of beauty in nature and art. We do not, however, have to be content with such an indirect surmise as to the attention paid to beauty in India. We have direct evidence of it in our classical lore. In the first place, there are many philosophical works, like the *Sāṅkhya-kārikā* and the *Pañcadaśī*, where parallels are drawn from art for the elucidation of metaphysical doctrines.⁷ These go to show that the philosopher in India did not lack a sense of beauty. Secondly, there are numerous works in Saṁskṛt on poetics and dramaturgy, technically called *Alaṅkāra-śāstra*, which, although primarily intended to elucidate the principles of poetry and drama, are equally well treatises on the theory of fine art in general. As for beauty in nature, the investigation is explicit in some systems of Indian philosophy like Sāṅkhya and Vedānta, and it is found at least implicitly in the others.

It is thus evident that the concept connoted by the term 'beauty' has not suffered for want of attention from the Indian philosopher. But, if we search for a single term to represent this ideal in the Indian philosophy of values, we cannot come across one. This is probably because the Indian philosopher found that this particular ideal has an objective and a subjective aspect. The term 'beauty' has reference to the objective aspect. It signifies a quality in the object which attracts us. The Saṁskṛt equivalents having such a reference are *saundarya*, *raṁaṇīyatā*, *cārutva*, and so on. But this quality in the object, being somewhat elusive, has to be understood by reference to its effect on our minds. We call a thing beautiful when it gives us pure self-forgetful joy. This subjective aspect of the value has been dealt with using such terms as *ānanda*, *āsvāda*, *rasa*, and so on. But neither set of terms by itself could comprehend both the objective and the subjective aspects. It was for this reason probably that the Indian philosopher was reluctant to

name the ideal which Plato called beauty. But the absence of a uniform name does not amount to non-recognition of the ideal.

Thus we find that all the three values mentioned by Plato, namely truth, beauty, and goodness, are recognized in Indian philosophy, two of them implicitly if not explicitly. It only shows that this 'trinity of values' is common to all philosophical traditions though the exact conception of and the name used for each in this triad may vary.

VI

MOKṢA, THE HIGHEST PURUṢĀRTHA

We have seen that the Platonic ideals of truth, beauty, and goodness have their counterparts in Indian thought. For the sake of convenience we shall at present refer to these Indian counterparts by the standard English expressions 'truth', 'beauty', and 'goodness'.

The special feature of the Indian conception of truth, beauty, and goodness is that they are not ultimate although they are higher than wealth and pleasure. The highest value in the Indian view is *mokṣa*, or liberation. We have noted earlier that, according to the Indian view, all values represent man's desire to overcome misery and that the position occupied by a value in the scale of values depends on the adequacy of a value to fulfil this desire. It is on this criterion, as we saw, that man gets dissatisfied with wealth and pleasure and makes the transition to the higher values. Now, although truth, beauty, and goodness are higher than wealth and pleasure, even they are found wanting in this respect. Each of these ideals has its own limitations, and when taken together, they present problems in organization. Hence neither any of these values individually nor all the three values collectively can be the ultimate solution to the problem of misery.

Let us consider truth. Like all the other values truth represents an attempt to overcome pain. The quest for metaphysics does not start from mere wonder but from the human predicament. It is the besetting problem of misery that gives urge to metaphysics. This is evident from the nature of the questions raised in metaphysics. The questions are wide-ranging and fundamental — questions about the whole universe, its origin, disposition, and destiny, questions about the soul and about God. These are problems about which one would not normally bother oneself in a sustained manner unless one is in some degree sensitive to suffering, either in oneself or in others. Doubt and despair, anxiety and fear, sorrow and suffering—it is these that give rise to such questions rather than wonder though wonder may have contributed to the quest. It used to be said that Western philosophy started out of curiosity and Indian philosophy out of the difficulties of life. But such a view overlooks the fact that human nature and aspirations are fundamentally the same in spite of differences in details. All philosophy must have arisen out of human predicaments. Hence the inquiry into the nature of reality as a whole, which constitutes metaphysics, is, in effect, an inquiry into the cause of suffering and the means to its removal. We do not know why we suffer. And we search for the nature of reality as a whole in the hope that such knowledge will give us the clue to the end of our woes.

Metaphysical truth is no doubt comprehensive. It seeks to remove the possibility of doubt about any aspect of reality. But metaphysical truth by itself does not remove suffering. It is well known that, in spite of our metaphysical convictions — whatever they be — we continue to be subject to the afflictions of life as before. For example, one may be convinced that the body is not the true self. Yet, in practice one identifies oneself with the body and undergoes the pain of a disease or injury. The reason for this is that metaphysical knowledge, or knowledge of reality,

is only mediate (*parokṣa*) while the knowledge of suffering is immediate (*aparokṣa*). Metaphysical knowledge is only second-hand. It is simply the intellectual conviction that reality is such and such, produced by the words of others and by our own reflection. On the contrary, suffering is a matter of actual experience. What is immediately presented to knowledge can be dispelled only by another case of immediate knowledge. For example, our common illusions like a mirage or a bent stick may continue to be felt in spite of our conviction that they are only illusions. They are actually dispelled only by the experience of the objects as they are. Hence intellectual conviction about reality must be transformed into direct knowledge, or experience (*sākṣātkriyā*) of it.⁸ One must have the vision of reality. Only then will release from the vortex of misery become possible. Hence truth cannot be the ultimate value.

We next come to the ideal of beauty. Beauty is adopted as a value because the appreciation of it gives us a temporary respite from the stresses and strains of life. An object of beauty, whether in nature or in art, makes us forget ourselves and our worries for the time it is contemplated. As a consequence we experience pure joy, or joy unmixed with pain. But the relief that beauty gives us from pain is externally induced by a stimulus, which is either a work of art or an object of nature. Hence the experience of restful delight, though pure, lasts only so long as we are in contact with the stimulus. The moment we come out of its operation we relapse into narrow self-consciousness and the ordinary business of life that is connected with it. Thus, like truth, beauty cannot be ultimate.

The ideal of goodness, again, represents in its own way the desire for relief from pain. Common experience tells us that bad conduct is the cause of affliction both to the agent and to his fellow-beings and, conversely, that good conduct contributes to the happiness of all including the agent. Thus the pursuit of goodness is aimed at creating the ground for happiness. Neverthe-

less, it is not ultimate. The practice of good conduct involves the subordination of narrow selfish interests to social interests. This necessitates continuous struggle with oneself. Again, when one duty conflicts with another, the choice of one of them becomes very delicate. The pain involved in effort to overcome the conflict between good and bad and between one good and another shows that goodness is not the final solution to the problem of misery.

All the three values have one common excellence, namely unselfishness, or freedom from ego-consciousness. But it is only relative in each case, the relativity arising from the manner in which it is secured. The pursuit of metaphysical truth is the pursuit of the antidote to selfishness. Selfishness arises from ignorance of one's essential relation to the rest of reality. Hence knowledge of this relation is necessary to remove selfishness. Thus truth promises to be a remedy for selfishness. But truth, being mediate, is not adequate to fulfil this role, and unselfishness remains a distant goal. The pursuit of beauty involves unselfishness in the sense that we completely forget ourselves while contemplating a beautiful object. But this state of unselfishness is not permanent as it is only induced by an external stimulus. The ideal of goodness no doubt requires the continuous and persistent subordination of selfish tendencies to altruistic purposes. For example, to be honest, one's fidelity to fact has to be unexceptionable. There can be no holiday from virtue. But, as this state of unselfishness has to be maintained through effort, it can only be partially achieved. Thus the state of unselfishness is relative in each case—in truth it is radical but distant, in beauty it is total but temporary, and in goodness it is persistent but partial.

We have seen that, although each of the triad of values has merits, both special and general, each has limitations, either peculiar to itself or in common with the others. Truth is comprehensive but only mediate. Beauty gives pure joy, but the joy is transient. Goodness

implies the welfare of all but involves struggle. There is unselfishness in all the three values but only in a relative way. Owing to all these limitations, none of the values taken by itself fully and finally satisfies the original urge for freedom from suffering, and hence none of them can be regarded as the ultimate value.

Can we, then, say that all the three values taken together so that the advantages of each will compensate for the defects of the others will make the ultimate value? Even this is not possible. Over and above the limitations of these values taken separately, there is the problem of reconciling them with one another. Although there is no inherent opposition among the three values, in practice they present difficulties in coordination. Situations often arise in life which involve a lack of harmony among the three values. For example, knowledge may sometimes be used for bad purposes. The pursuit of beauty, again, may often result in dereliction of duty. This shows that these are *three* separate ideals, each having its own quality and appealing to a distinct aspect of our nature. It is not possible to regard them as one composite value. Thus even collectively truth, beauty, and goodness do not make the ultimate solution to the problem of misery.

The conclusion to which we are led by the foregoing analysis is that the ultimate value is other than and beyond the triad of values. A little reflection will show that all the values which we have so far considered symbolize attempts to overcome pain within the conditions of life. Wealth and pleasure represent the endeavour to remove pain by altering the physical conditions of life. And truth, beauty, and goodness stand for the effort in the same direction by improving the mental, or cultural, conditions of life. The import of their limitations is that complete and lasting freedom from suffering is not possible within the conditions of life. The only remedy for the ills of life is therefore to transcend those conditions, i.e. to attain a state which does not involve birth and death. The attainment of such a state

thus comes to be looked upon as the highest ideal of man (*parama-puruṣārtha*). It is called *mokṣa*, or liberation. It has been regarded as the supreme value in all the systems of Indian philosophy except the Cārvāka and a section of Mīmāṃsā. The Scholastic philosophers of medieval Europe also recognized this as the supreme value. The ideal of *mokṣa* has been conceived differently in the different schools of Indian philosophy. Broadly speaking, the conception may be described as either purely negative or with a positive content. For some schools like Sāṅkhya it is simply a state of complete cessation of all pain. For others like Vedānta it means also the presence of unalloyed and eternal bliss. In either case *mokṣa* is the fulfilment of man's effort to overcome the misery which he experiences in life.

It may be asked whether such an ideal is ever possible of attainment. Indian philosophers were never in doubt about the possibility of *mokṣa*. In fact, there were many among them who believed that liberation is not only possible but possible even while the body lasts. *Jīvanmukti*, as this is called, is a concept explicitly accepted by three schools, namely Advaita, Sāṅkhya and Bauddha. Even in the other schools the idea may be said to be implicitly present.⁹ Although, according to these schools, liberation in the strict sense of the term is possible only after the extinction of the body (*videhamukti*), the one who is to be liberated is said to reach within the span of life a state of perfection that is as good as being released, which is just on the threshold of release, and which is different from release only in degree. Even these schools may therefore be said virtually to admit the possibility of *jīvanmukti*.

What is the nature of the final ideal? Although this ideal goes beyond truth, beauty, and goodness, we can form an idea about it from the nature of these ideals.¹⁰ The reason is that each of these three ideals satisfies at least partially our spiritual thirst for freedom. All the three have merits, general as well as special, which deserve to be conserved in the highest value to

which they point. Hence we can be certain that *mokṣa* cannot be such as to exclude these excellences. It must have all the excellences found in truth, beauty, and goodness but be free from the defects for which they are transcended. What, then, would be the surmise ?

Firstly, like all the three values, the final ideal of *mokṣa* would be marked by unselfishness. But that unselfishness would not be relative as in these values. It would not be distant, temporary or partial but immediate, permanent, and complete. Secondly, like truth, the final ideal would be marked by all-comprehensive knowledge but without the disadvantage of mediacy. Thirdly, like the experience of beauty, it would be a state of bliss, but the bliss would not be provisional. Fourthly, like goodness, it would be characterized by altruistic service but without involving the pain of struggle. Inasmuch as *mokṣa* is free from the defects characterizing truth, beauty, and goodness, it represents a radical revolution in standpoint. The secret of this revolution is that the knowledge of reality present in it is immediate. It is a vision, or experience, of the entire reality, which transforms the personality and invests it with a new outlook.¹¹ This experience therefore is the central feature of *mokṣa*. Other features of it follow from this experience as a matter of course.

In the first place, when the self grows into the immediate awareness of its essential relation to the rest of being, there results the total and permanent disappearance of egoism. It is not that the self itself goes into nothingness. But it gains a larger life in one sense or another, transcending the narrow limits to which its outlook is confined in ordinary life and breathing a sense of oneness with all. The liberated one sees himself in all beings and all beings in himself.¹² Unselfishness thus becomes his natural state. This absolute unselfishness reveals itself in unqualified eternal bliss on the one hand and spontaneous loving service on the other. The condition of joy being unselfishness, the liberated one alone can be said to be immersed in pure everlasting joy.¹³ The joy is no longer

precariously dependent on external stimuli but is irrevocably secured as a result of inner transformation. It is indicated by the gentle smile that uniformly plays on the face of the liberated one. Again, being completely bereft of all sense of separation, service to fellow-beings comes naturally to the liberated. So long as knowledge is mediate, whatever service is done is the painful outcome of constant struggle against personal interests. But the service of the liberated one is the spontaneous expression of his equal love for all, such love being born of his experience of his essential oneness with all.¹⁴

The final ideal thus stands for the synoptic vision of reality expressing itself in absolute unselfishness, eternal bliss, and loving service. While it thus includes the excellences of truth, beauty, and goodness, it transcends their characteristic defects. Hence the final ideal is not a mere combination of the three values but a metamorphosis of their combined essence. The lives led by the perfected ones in all religious traditions bear witness to these qualities.

The conclusion is irresistible that the concept of *mokṣa* is India's biggest contribution to human welfare. It holds up the message that life is not an aimless drift but is invested with a clear and definite purpose in terms of which it ought to be planned and directed.

VII

THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF TRUTH, BEAUTY, AND GOODNESS TO *MOKṢA*

In the last section we were concerned with showing that, according to the Indian philosopher, truth, beauty, and goodness are subordinate to *mokṣa* in the scale of values. We may now ask in what relation these values stand to *mokṣa*. The final Indian view on this question is that truth, beauty, and goodness are not intrinsic but

instrumental to *mokṣa*. They are not to be valued for their own sake but only as means to *mokṣa*. We may briefly state in what way each of these values conduces to *mokṣa*.

Truth is related to *mokṣa* directly. Truth is mediate knowledge of reality, acquired through study and reflection. *Mokṣa* stands for immediate knowledge, or experience, of reality. It is the mediate knowledge that gets transformed into the experience. What is known second-hand itself becomes one's own vision. The mediate knowledge is called *jñāna*. The immediate knowledge is distinguished from it by being called *viññāna*. The distinction is in form rather than in substance. *Vijñāna* is *jñāna* 'as brought within or transmuted into one's own experience'.¹⁵ Sometimes the immediate knowledge is also called *jñāna*. Hence the term *jñāna* may cause some difficulty in understanding. The exact sense in which it is used has to be understood from the context. But even the fact that the same term is used either for the mediate or for the immediate knowledge only underlines the direct relationship of the two.

Unlike the relation of truth to *mokṣa*, the relation which beauty and goodness bear to *mokṣa* is indirect. They conduce to *mokṣa* by aiding *jñāna* to become *viññāna*. According to all the schools of Indian philosophy, the conversion of mediate knowledge into experience depends on two requirements. And beauty and goodness fulfil these requirements.

One of the conditions for transforming *jñāna* into *viññāna* is the eradication of selfish impulses. The chief obstacle to the vision of reality is egoism. Although that vision alone ensures the complete and final disappearance of egoism, to reach it itself requires a degree of unselfishness, or mental cleanliness (*sattva-śuddhi*) as it is called. In the act of cleansing the mind the practice of goodness, in other words *dharma*, becomes necessary. Thus, by preparing one of the grounds for transforming *jñāna* into *viññāna*, goodness (*dharma*) becomes an indirect means to *mokṣa*.¹⁶

The removal of the obstacle is the negative requirement. The positive requirement for the transmutation of the mediate into the immediate knowledge is meditation, which is variously called *dhyāna*, *upāsana*, *yoga*, *vidyā*, and *nididhyāsana*. Meditation is the constant dwelling of the mind on the reality about the nature of which one has been intellectually convinced so that the conviction may gradually sink into one's life and become a matter of experience. In this process of meditation the pursuit of beauty becomes useful. The contemplation of beauty, especially in art, as we shall see later, trains the mind in the technique of concentration in an unobtrusive and pleasant manner and thus becomes a part of *yoga*. Thus, like goodness, beauty becomes an indirect means to *mokṣa* by being an aid to *jñāna* in its transformation into *vijñāna*. There are many other ways also in which beauty can be an indirect means to *mokṣa*, like being a pointer to the content and experience of *mokṣa* and being in some cases a source of moral reformation also. But to these we shall refer in later chapters.

VIII

THE PLACE OF THE INDIAN PHILOSOPHY OF BEAUTY IN THE INDIAN PHILOSOPHY OF VALUES

Indian philosophy, as Professor Hiriyantha has observed,¹⁷ is essentially a philosophy of values. Its entire scheme of metaphysics and epistemology moves towards a discussion of man's aspirations in life. And as for the Indian philosophy of values, it may be said that it is essentially a philosophy of religion. The whole discussion of values culminates in the concept of *mokṣa*, which is considered to be man's highest ideal. All other values are shown to be not only subordinate to *mokṣa* but also subservient to it.

Indian philosophy is thus closely allied to Indian religion. But the concept of *mokṣa* is not only the necess-

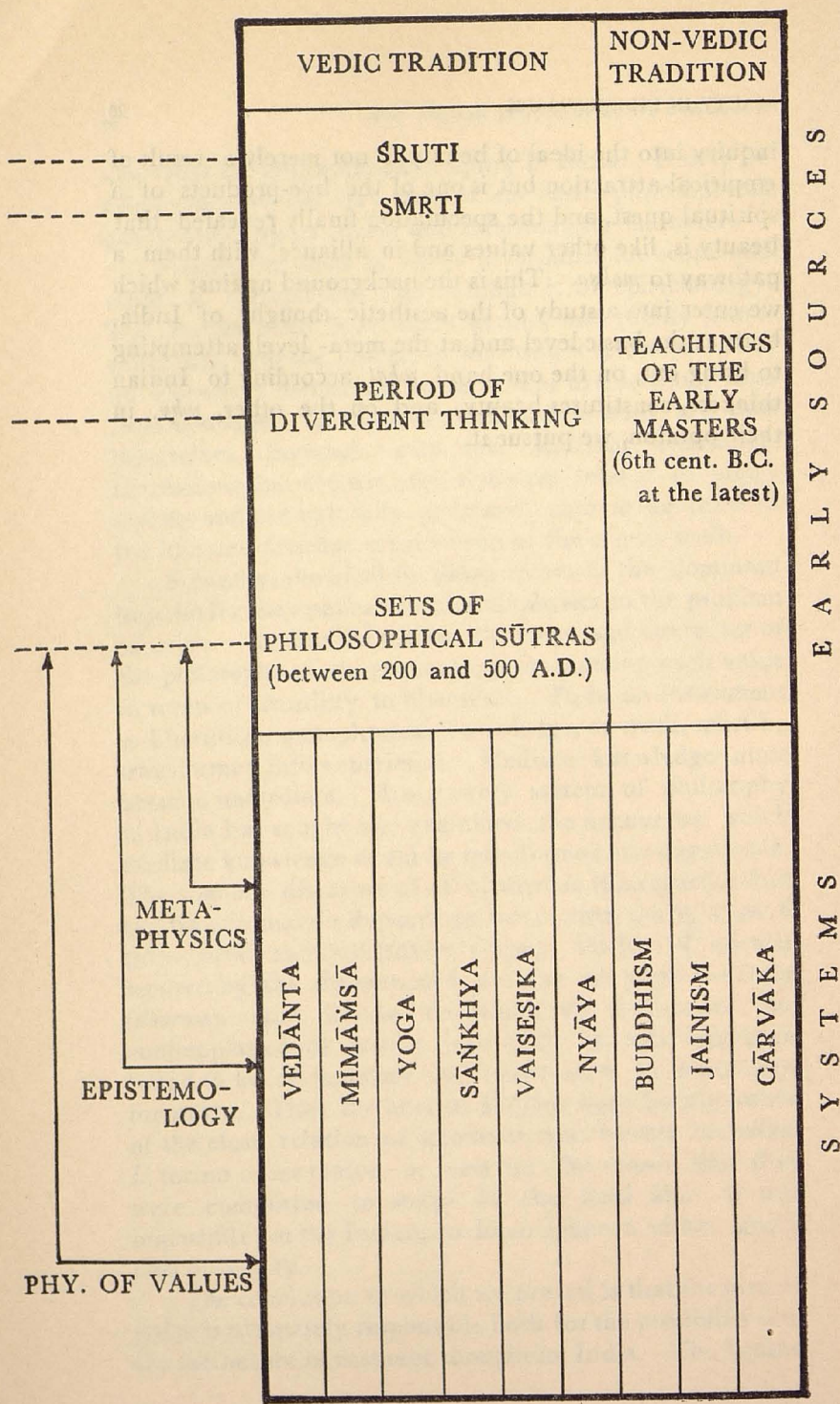
any *result* of philosophical inquiry in India. It may be said to be even the very *goal* of the entire philosophical quest, directing its course and informing its character.

Firstly, the ideal of *mokṣa* determines the scope and tenor of metaphysics and through it of epistemology. The Indian mind looks upon inquiry into reality (*tattva-vicāra*) and into the process of knowing it (*pramāṇa-vicāra*) not as ends in themselves but as means to liberating man from bondage. Metaphysics and epistemology are thus themselves invested with this spiritual character. Discussions that are not even remotely related to man's highest end are carefully eschewed, comparing them to the idle and fruitless examination of the crow's teeth.

Secondly, the ideal of *mokṣa* serves as the dominant impulse for the application of metaphysics to the problem of value. It thus determines the scope and character of the philosophy of values, making it examine each value in terms of its utility to liberation. To be an instrument to liberation, metaphysical knowledge, or truth, must be transformed into experience. Mediate knowledge must become immediate. Hence every system of philosophy in India has sought and examined the avenue by which mediate knowledge could be transformed into experience. The common discovery of all of them in this regard is that the transformation depends on two factors, purity of mind (*citta-śuddhi*) and meditation (*yoga*). Purity of mind is secured by the disinterested practice of good conduct (*dharma*). And in the technique of meditation the contemplation of beauty (especially in art) has been found to be of immense use, apart from its other uses for *mokṣa*. Thus the ancient Indians were keenly aware of the close relation of goodness and beauty to *mokṣa*. If for no other reason, at least for the reason that they were committed to *mokṣa* as the final aim, it was impossible for the Indians to have ignored either goodness or beauty.

The conclusion to which we are led is that the idea of *mokṣa* is ultimately responsible both for the possibility and for the nature of aesthetic thought in India. The Indian

inquiry into the ideal of beauty is not merely a result of empirical attraction but is one of the bye-products of a spiritual quest, and the speculation finally revealed that beauty is, like other values and in alliance with them, a pathway to *mokṣa*. This is the background against which we enter into a study of the aesthetic thought of India, both at the basic level and at the meta- level, attempting to bring out, on the one hand, *what*, according to Indian thinkers, constitutes beauty, and on the other, *why*, in their opinion, we pursue it.



INTERSECTION OF HISTORICAL AND CONCEPTUAL METHODS IN THE STUDY OF INDIAN PHILOSOPHY (refer ch. ONE, topic I)

ABSOLUTE UNSELFISHNESS

EVERLASTING
BLISS

LIBERATION

SPONTANEOUS
SERVICE

SYNOPTIC VISION

transformation
of knowledge

----- RELATIVE UNSELFISHNESS -----

PURE DELIGHT

COMPREHENSIVENESS

ALTRUISM

BEAUTY

TRUTH

GOODNESS

TRANSIENCY

MEDIACY

STRUGGLE

concentration of mind

purification of mind

THE RELATION OF TRUTH, BEAUTY, AND GOODNESS TO LIBERATION
(refer ch. ONE, topics VI and VII)

Chapter Two

THE INDIAN APPROACH TO THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF AESTHETICS

1. Man is attracted towards objects of beauty because he derives from them a temporary, restful, and joyous relief from the difficulties of life. And being also inquisitive, it is natural for man to attempt to understand the nature of what he calls beauty. Thus has resulted the intellectual pursuit of the knowledge of beauty in addition to the pursuit of its enjoyment.

The study of beauty had an ancient origin both in the West and in the East. But the study did not acquire the special name 'aesthetics' until a few centuries ago. It was Baumgarten (1714-1762), an immediate predecessor of Kant, who was responsible for it. He first coined the word 'aesthetic' in German to denote the realm of beauty. It means 'pertaining to the beautiful'. The term comes from the Greek root 'aesthesis', which means 'sense perception'. According to Baumgarten, beauty belongs to the rank of sense perception because the eye and the ear are involved in its experience. So he used this particular Greek root standing for sense perception to refer to beauty. From his time the study of beauty has come to be called in all European languages *aesthetics*. The conception of beauty to which Baumgarten subscribed is not true of all thinkers on beauty. Nevertheless, the term suggested by him for the study of beauty has come to stay as a matter of convenience; and aesthetics as understood now denotes the systematic study of beauty, no matter what the concep-

tion of beauty is. We may therefore conveniently apply this term to that aspect of Indian philosophy which is concerned with the ideal of beauty.

2. It is common to say that the subject-matter of aesthetics is beauty. But examination will show that aesthetics has actually to deal with more than what is connoted by the term 'beauty'. To say that aesthetics deals with beauty is largely a matter of convenience.

The term 'beauty' has a reference to the object and not to the subject, the one who appreciates it. We call a flower, a landscape or a painting or an image beautiful. When we describe an object, say a flower, as beautiful, we mean that it has a character that attracts us and which gives it a distinction from other objects which are not similarly described. It is commonly recognised that this special character which we call beauty does not consist in any single feature of it but in the sum-total of its features. The reason why we call a thing beautiful is not just that it has a certain colour or a certain shape or a certain size; for there are other objects having the same colour or size which we do not call beautiful. The parrot is beautiful not merely because it is green; for we do not call a blade of grass beautiful though it is green. The real reason for regarding the object as beautiful is that all the qualities in the object enter into perfect union or adjustment (*samyoga*). There is an excellent coordination of all its members, parts or aspects. It is this harmony of parts, this togetherness of qualities, which transcends the qualities taken separately, that constitutes the distinctive character of the object described as beautiful. The ancient Greek thinkers as well as the classical Indian thinkers agreed on this fundamental meaning of beauty.

3. The peculiarity of beauty, in other words of the harmonious relation of parts, is that it defies description. While we apprehend the presence of the harmony, we find it difficult to describe the nature of that harmony. While we can say that everything about the object perfectly suits every other feature of it, we are unable to state how exactly the features fit in with one another.

When there is a lack of arrangement in any respect, we may be able to identify it: we may say, for instance, that the ass's head is too big for its body. But when the adjustment is present, as in the features of a horse, we find it difficult to describe the nature of the adjustment though we apprehend it. We may state the individual parts, but the totality of the parts is more than we could identify. Our only means of indicating its nature is the delight that it produces in our minds. A beautiful object impresses us in a pleasing way. And it is only by reference to that pleasure that we can acknowledge the harmonious adjustment of features in the object. That is why the term 'pleasing' is often employed as an equivalent for 'beautiful'. The two terms correspond with each other: they refer to the same object. But they are employed from two different points of view, and thus convey two connected but different ideas. When we speak of an object as 'beautiful', we imply its own special character of harmony. When we call it 'pleasing', we imply the impression that the harmony produces in our minds, how it affects us.

It is true that beauty is not the only source of pleasure. From delicious food and sound sleep to the pursuit of truth and disinterested service there are various objects and situations which give us pleasure though we do not call them beautiful. But the pleasure of the beautiful is unique and different from the pleasure that anything else could give. What, then, is the uniqueness about it?

The condition for pleasure is the absence of ego-consciousness, the absence of the identification with a body-mind system which makes one feel separate from others. It is observed in life that we are happy to the extent that we are able to forget this narrow personality. So long as we are aware of ourselves as distinct individuals, there arise desires for objects that satisfy this individuality. Such personal desires lead to effort for fulfilling those desires: *kāma* leads to *karma*. Any effort involves pain. And effort for personal ends involves also

the pain of conflict with others pursuing the same goals. It follows therefore that the enjoyment of pleasure depends on the extent to which and the manner in which we are able to forget our distinct personalities.

The pursuit of sense objects is avowedly selfish. Hence whatever pleasure it seems to give is deceptive because it is mixed with pain. In contrast to sense pleasure the pleasure that comes from devotion to an impersonal end like altruistic service or the discovery of truth is pure. But, although genuine, it can only be intermittent. The reason is that personal interests often conflict with these impersonal pursuits, and consequently the attitude of self-forgetfulness has often to be restored and maintained through struggle with oneself. Thus the joy of service or of the pursuit of truth is often broken into by the pain of effort.

We can infer from this that pleasure can be continuous, or even, only when self-forgetfulness is secured without involving struggle. This happens during deep sleep and the contemplation of a beautiful object. But there is a difference in the content of these two experiences. As deep sleep results from exhaustion, the mind is totally inactive in that state. There is no doubt that the complete inaction of the mind secures total freedom from ego-consciousness during the period. But, because of that very inaction of the mind, the pleasure of sleep is a kind of negative experience — it is simply the complete absence of pain. It is called pleasure only by courtesy. In contrast to the experience of sleep the bliss of contemplating a beautiful object—the aesthetic bliss—is not only effortless but also positive, the mind being fully alive and active during the experience. The mind remains alert, but its attention is gently weaned away from the ego under the spell cast on it by the object on beauty. The pleasure that ensues therefore is not only unmixed with pain but also uninterrupted by it. Hence we may say that within common life aesthetic bliss is the highest order of bliss. There is no doubt that the joy is

not permanent. It does not last beyond the period of contemplation. But its quality is unique among all orders of joy within common life. It is pure, even, and positive. When we employ the term 'pleasing' as an equivalent for the term 'beautiful', the pleasure that we have in mind is this unique pleasure that beauty alone can give.

4. To return to our main theme, it is only by reference to this peculiar delight which beauty produces in our minds that we can indicate the nature of beauty. From this fact it follows that in aesthetics we cannot afford to neglect the experience that beauty produces in the subject. There is no doubt that beauty resides in the object. It is the object and not the experience that we describe as beautiful. But this objective phenomenon is inseparably connected with the subjective phenomenon of its enjoyment. Hence, although we conventionally speak of beauty as the subject-matter of aesthetics, actually the subject-matter is more than this. It comprises the combination of beauty and pleasure, the aesthetic object and the aesthetic experience. These are but two aspects of the aesthetic ideal—the objective and the subjective, beauty as the character of the object and pleasure as its effect on the mind of the appreciator. The proper pursuit of aesthetics should combine the considerations of both these aspects.

It follows that there are two types of problems to be discussed in aesthetics. One type takes its stand on the thing to which beauty is ascribed and concerns itself with the nature of beauty. The other concerns itself with the unique feeling of pleasure that the beautiful object produces in the subject. But the two types of problems are closely connected, and one cannot be discussed without reference to the other. The beauty of the object cannot be understood without taking into account its joyful impact on the subject. The experience of the subject is the means of understanding the beauty of the object. Similarly the experience cannot be explained without reference to the beauty that produces it. The recognition of

beauty in the object is the necessary pre-supposition for understanding the experience of the subject. The discussion of either aspect of the aesthetic content out of relation to the other would be one-sided and partial.

Certain instances in the history of European aesthetics bear testimony to the risk involved in the abstraction of one set of problems from the other. Some of the ancient Greek thinkers, Plato and Aristotle for example, devoted their attention to the objective side of the matter, the beauty as such. The impression that the beauty produces on one's mind is referred to by these early thinkers only in passing. To that extent their treatment of aesthetics is incomplete. In contrast to them some of the moderns, especially from the time of Croce, tend to regard the subject-matter of aesthetics exclusively as a subjective phenomenon. In other words, they are not concerned with what beauty is but with the psychological factors that enter into what is called aesthetic experience. Simply because beauty, the objective factor, does not admit of much direct scrutiny, these aestheticians have abandoned the study of it for an exclusive study of aesthetic experience. Such an attitude makes the understanding of aesthetic delight artificial and misleading, making it appear that the experience occurs as though by itself. It is in the middle ages that we find in Europe an approach to aesthetics that is balanced between the object and the experience.

5. Indian aestheticians have uniformly recognised that the subject-matter of aesthetics is neither purely objective nor purely subjective, but that it has an objective and a subjective aspect in inseparable relationship to each other.

The terms used to refer to the aesthetic content from the objective standpoint are *saundarya*, *raṁaṇīyatā*, *cārutva*, and so on. They have roughly the same connotation as the English term 'beauty'. Classical Indian aesthetics developed in the context of the fine arts of poetry and drama. The beauty that exists in poetry and drama is

referred to by the special term *alaṅkāra*, which literally means 'embellishment', or 'adornment'.¹ And the study of beauty in these arts is specially called *Alaṅkāra-śāstra*. The import of all these terms is that the Indian aestheticians, like the early Greek aestheticians, devoted sufficient attention to the objective factor.

The Indian aestheticians, however, found that the aesthetic phenomenon, in so far as it is objective, is so elusive that a frontal approach to it only chases it away from grasp. This is because, as they found, beauty is characterized by novelty. A beautiful object, even though it may be old and familiar, is capable of revealing ever newer and newer features to the same spectator every time he meets it. It does not mean that the object undergoes change but only that it has a fresh appeal each time. An object that presents the same appearance to the beholder does not have an aesthetic appeal to him. It must strike him as new, convey a new message, to provide aesthetic joy. The poet Māgha gives expression to this idea in his work *Śiśupālavadha*. He describes how, while Śrī Kṛṣṇa was passing from Dvāraka to Indraprastha, the mountain Raivataka, though familiar to him, suddenly appeared as new and caused him surprise, and adds that 'that alone is of the form of beauty which takes on newness from moment to moment'.

dr̥ṣṭo'pi sailaḥ sa muhur-murārer-
apūrvavad-vismayam-ātatāna |
kṣaṇe kṣaṇe yan-navatām-upaiti
*tadeva rūpaṁ ramaṇīyatāyāḥ ||*²

The element of novelty renders the concept of beauty inscrutable to a direct approach. Hence the Indian aestheticians realized that the more fruitful approach to the problem of beauty is to examine the effect of beauty on the mind of the appreciator. While they recognized that beauty belongs to the object, they felt that it can be better understood in this indirect manner by reference to the subject. The study of aesthetic experience thus becomes the means to the comprehension of its stimulus. As a typical instance of this approach we have Jagannā-

tha's attempt to describe beauty in terms of its joyful impact on the mind. 'Beauty', he says, 'is the content of that cognition which produces supra-mundane joy.' In other words beauty is that on knowing which one experiences supra-mundane joy. (*ramaṇīyatā ca lokottarāhlādajanaka-jñānagocaratā*).³

Thus the question of beauty has naturally led the Indian aesthetician to undertake a close study of the unique joyful experience which it produces in the mind of the appreciator, which has been variously called *āhlāda*, *ānanda*, *āsvāda*, and so on. Progress in this direction has gone to such an extent as to enable the Indian aesthetician to identify and explain the nature of the highest form of aesthetic experience, which he calls *rasa*.

6. The necessity for attention to the subjective did not, however, land the Indian aesthetician into the psychological isolation into which some modern Western aestheticians have fallen. The Indian aesthetician was keenly aware that the study of aesthetic experience is not possible without any reference to the objective factor which stimulates the experience. Although the nature of beauty, as we have seen, cannot be understood without taking into account its effect on the mind, the presence of beauty in the object must be presupposed in any study of its effect. That this condition was recognized by the Indian aesthetician is evident from instances like the following. We have referred to *rasa* as the highest form of aesthetic experience. But *rasa* is not supposed to occur without an occasion for it. In his *Nāṭya-śāstra* Bharata speaks of *rasa* in a drama as the experience that results from a configuration of objective factors, called *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, etc., presented on the stage. He then enters into an elaborate discussion of these objective factors whose combination produces *rasa*. That a discussion of *rasa* would involve a reference to the objective factors is indicated by Jagannātha thus: '(The idea of) *rasa* carries with it (the idea of) beauty.' (*rasaḥ ramaṇīyatām āvahati*).⁴

Chapter Three

BEAUTY IN PARTS OF NATURE—ITS CHARACTER AND SIGNIFICANCE

In indicating the subject-matter of aesthetics in the previous chapter we were speaking of beauty in general. In the three chapters from this we shall consider beauty in its specific forms so as to suggest the scope of aesthetics and, by implication, of meta-aesthetics as well. It will be easily admitted that we perceive beauty in aspects of nature, such as mountains and rivers, the dawn and the moonlit night, animals and plants, as well as in works of art, like a sculpture, a painting or a drama. The difference between beauty in nature and beauty in works of art is that the one is given and the other made by man. So, then, we have two orders of beauty within common experience. Now, if beauty is given in nature itself, where is the need for art? In the classical Indian view, the urge for art comes from dissatisfaction with certain deficiencies found in the beauty associated with natural things. In this chapter we shall analyse the character of the beauty found in nature and assess its significance.

When we speak of nature with reference to our ordinary experience of it, we mean only *parts* of nature, i.e. nature in particular objects or events. The whole of nature is not presented to our perception. There is no doubt that the beauty that we find in parts of nature gives us pure joy. But the joy is not steady, or secure, owing to certain limitations in this order of beauty.

1. The beauty that we meet with in nature is not universal, that is to say all objects in nature are not

beautiful. Beauty exists in the midst of much that is not beautiful. There are some objects which are ugly, or repulsive, and others which are just neutral, or plain. There are hills and dales, but there are also deserts or barren land to contrast with them, besides plain grass-land, which is different from both. Or, again, there are beautiful birds like the parrot, the ugly ones like the crow, and the plain ones like the hen. The difference arises from the fact that the beauty that we commonly perceive in nature exists on the physical plane. The manifestation of beauty depends on the constitution of the physical objects. The constitution of certain objects is such that they appear beautiful, of others, that they appear the very opposite of beauty, and of the rest such that they do not impress the spectator in either way. The Sāṅkhya school of philosophy explains that objects appear beautiful and produce pleasure (*sukha*) in the perceiver only when they are predominated by *sattva* *guṇa*. Those that are predominantly of the nature of *rajas* are repulsive and produce pain (*duḥkha*). And those that are predominantly of the nature of *tamas* are neutral, or plain, producing the effect of delusion, or indifference (*moha*). The Vedānta schools agree with this explanation, though some of them differ from Sāṅkhya in regard to the definition of a *guṇa*. *Sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* are the three constituents of matter according to Sāṅkhya. While Advaita agrees with this definition, theistic schools like Viśiṣṭādvaita regard the three as qualities of matter. But this difference is of no consequence here. What matters is that to all Indian philosophies the terms *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* convey three definite sets of ideas: *sattva* stands for all that is fine, pure, beautiful, pleasing, and so on; *rajas* brings up the ideas of strength, vigour, action, pain, struggle, and so on; and *tamas* represents darkness, dullness, heaviness, non-discrimination, and so on. Hence it is natural that the Indian philosopher should explain the three-fold difference of beauty, ugliness and plainness together with their corresponding experiences in the subject in terms of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*.

Thus in nature as we ordinarily see it beauty is confined to certain objects and exists side by side with ugliness in other objects. This obviously is a drawback of the beauty belonging to this order. Attention easily shifts from the beautiful to the ugly with which the former co-exists, and the thought of ugliness in certain aspects of nature produces pain, which nullifies the joy derived from the thought of the beautiful. One cannot fully enjoy the lush vegetation of a place when one recalls the severe conditions of drought in the neighbouring territory. The placid blue expanse of sea reaching up in a thin surf on a spring morning is indeed a sight to see, but just call to mind the fury of the tidal waves in the previous monsoon which devoured the whole coastal village in a trice, and you will hardly claim that nature is a source of perennial delight. The little fawn prancing on the tender grass is a feast to the eyes, but only so long as the tiger does not pounce upon it and tear it to pieces. Nature is often 'red in tooth and claw'. Thus, although the contemplation of a beautiful object in nature produces pure joy, the joy is unstable.

2. The second deficiency in natural beauty as we commonly know it is that an object that is beautiful at one time does not remain so always. This limitation is due partly to the character of the object itself and partly to the attitude of the subject.

(a) As already remarked, beauty in nature is associated with particular physical objects or situations. Matter is subject to change. When its physical basis changes, a thing of beauty may cease to be beautiful. An entire landscape may be laid waste by a devastating flood or fire or earthquake. Age and disease alter the aspect of living beings. According to Sāṅkhya, the constituents of an object, namely *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, are in a state of perpetual motion. When *sattva* predominates, an object is beautiful. But, when either *rajas* or *tamas* predominates, it ceases to be beautiful.

(b) Even so long as the physical basis does not radically change, the object may not continue to appear

beautiful to the observer. Beauty is a quality which depends for its continuance not only on the nature of the object but also on the attitude of the subject. The subject has to maintain an impersonal attitude towards the object if he must be able to perceive beauty in it always. But such a disinterested attitude cannot be uniformly secured with reference to an object of nature. Being part of the real world, a natural object occupies an essential place in our day to day life. Hence it easily tends to get associated with some personal desire. The immediate reaction to the perception of a beautiful object in nature may be disinterested. But this attitude may not last for more than a while. Some selfish desire may soon crop up with reference to the object. Thus, on seeing a beautiful landscape, after the first flush of pure joy, one may descend to the level of desiring to build a house there. Now, the intrusion of any personal desire is sure to ruin the aesthetic attitude. The observer is no longer in restful adjustment with the object. His thought interferes with the object in terms of possession or utilization. The object is no longer 'beautiful' to him; it is merely 'useful'. If the desire is frustrated, he would even look upon the object with displeasure. Thus, as a result of a change in attitude, what appeared to a person as beautiful at a certain time may lose its charm or even look repulsive and be a source of pain at a later time. And one may not like even to be reminded of it. The Sāṅkhya school explains that, like the external object, the *buddhi* is made up of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. The attitude of a person is impersonal only so long as his *buddhi* is predominated by *sattva*. The *buddhi* is intrinsically of the nature of *sattva* in the sense that it can get rid of egoistic impulses as in the case of the *jīvanmukta*.¹ But more often than this, under the influence of selfish tendencies (*saṁskāra*, *vāsanā*) acquired through past lives, either *rajas* or *tamas* overcomes the *sāttvika* nature of the *buddhi*. And when this happens, the observer's outlook ceases to be impersonal.

3. Thus the beauty experienced in natural objects

is neither universal nor constant. Neither are all objects in nature beautiful at the same time nor does the same object remain beautiful at different times. The result is that the delight arising from the contemplation of a natural object of beauty, although pure, is never stable. It easily passes over into pain either by the shifting of attention to the ugly or by the beautiful ceasing to be beautiful. That there is beauty in nature is cause for admiration. At the same time its partial and transitory character makes the beauty nothing more than of the lowest order. These deficiencies are sufficient ground for dissatisfaction with beauty of the natural order. It makes us long for beauty that is free from these defects, and it is the search for such beauty, in the Indian view, that takes us to art. Let us elucidate.

Dissatisfaction with something always arises from the awareness, however vague, of something better. The fact that we are dissatisfied with beauty as we ordinarily find in nature shows that the ideal of perfect beauty is immanent in our consciousness. The analysis of the beauty of natural objects has enabled us to clarify the character of the ideal. Perfect beauty, we may now say, is that which is free from any association with ugliness and which is unaffected either by physical change or by change of mental disposition. Since man does not find such beauty in the natural world as ordinarily presented to him, he tries to create such beauty. This in the Indian view is how art is born. Artistic beauty is the human portrayal of the ideal of perfect beauty, which is unfulfilled in aspects of nature. Likewise the appreciator also turns to art as he finds his ideal left unfulfilled by nature. Thus one way in which the beauty present in parts of nature is significant is that it points to a higher order of beauty than itself. Although itself not perfect, by the very reason that it is not perfect it brings to our minds the ideal of perfect beauty and thereby gives the urge both for the creation and for the appreciation of art. Another way in which it is significant is, as we shall see shortly, that it serves as the material for art.

Chapter Four

BEAUTY IN ART — ITS CHARACTER

1. While the beauty that we commonly perceive in nature is associated with actual objects and events, the beauty presented in a work of art rests on objects and events created by the artist's imagination. But imagination requires a real basis. One cannot imagine something that has no roots in the actual world. So the artist has necessarily to draw material from nature. Now, how is the material dealt with by the imagination of the artist? The classical Indian view on this question avoids two extremes. According to it, the artist neither alters the material to such an extent as to sever all connection with the actual world nor does he reproduce it as it is. The view keeps equally clear of abstractionism and imitationism, extreme idealism and extreme realism.¹

The content of art is modelled upon the facts of nature. In fact it is one of the conditions of good art that its creations must be familiar (*paricita*) to the appreciator. If they are totally unrecognizable and queer, they would not evoke aesthetic interest in the onlooker. It was perhaps this condition that Shakespeare meant when he said that a drama must 'hold the mirror up to nature'.²

That the artist's work is faithful to nature does not mean that art objects are mere copies of those in nature. If the objects imagined by the artist are exact copies of their actual counterparts, they would not interest us as works of art. The reason is that we long to find in art what we miss in our ordinary experience of nature,

namely beauty that is unmixed with ugliness and that is not subject to change. We shall have no use for art if it cannot depict things as we deeply long to see them. Professor Hiriyanna cites the example of a famous painter to illustrate this. When somebody, on seeing a sunset painted by him, remarked, 'I never saw a sunset like that', he is said to have replied, 'Dont you wish you could ?'³ Hence, while being familiar, the theme of art is at the same time expected to be perfect (*utkr̥ṣṭa*). It follows from this that the work of the artist is not just to represent nature as it is. His work involves a good deal of invention and mental construction. His skill consists in creating out of actual objects and events such imaginary objects and events that far surpass them in quality. He selects out of the actual only such features as would be necessary to retain for his creations a resemblance to it; the rest are supplied by his own fertile mind. Thus a painting is no mere photograph and a drama no exact history. The objects depicted in a work of art are therefore far removed from the actual world from which their material is drawn. In this sense the Indian aesthete describes them as 'not of this world' (*alaukika*). The material taken from the actual world gets so transformed at the hands of the artist that his product conveys to us that perfect beauty—unmixed and constant—which is our ideal.

2. Now, what is the essence of this transformation, of this process in the artist's mind that makes perfect beauty out of the actual? It consists in generalizing the particular. A particular object or event found in the actual world is invested with new qualities such that it is no longer a particular but represents a general pattern, or universal idea. In other words, it is said to be *idealized* by the artist. For example, a painting depicting an old man represents, not the case of a particular old man the sight of whom might have given the inspiration to the painter, but the general idea of old age with its pitiful frailty and decrepitude and the neglect which it usually suffers from those around.⁴

The secret of the artist's achievement, then, consists in what is called *idealization*. The Indian aesthetician calls it *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*. The process of idealization enables the artist to conform his creations to the highest conception of beauty. A common object or event when idealized by the artist, is, on the one hand, freed from association with ugliness and rendered wholly beautiful and, on the other, made immune to changes.

3. (a) There is no place for ugliness in a work of art. This characteristic is present because a work of art is a product of ideal, or mental, construction. Art, of course, requires a physical medium for expression. Thus, architecture makes use of brick and mortar, sculpture of stone, painting, of canvas etc., dance, of gestures, music, of sounds, and literature, of words. But matter serves only as the medium, the vehicle, not as the stuff, of artistic beauty. The beauty as such is different from the matter which it uses for manifestation. It consists in an idea, not in a physical thing. Hence the constitution of physical objects, on the basis of which they are distinguished as beautiful or ugly, does not apply to the world of art, which is imaginary. Being of the nature of the idea, the presence of artistic beauty is subject only to the will of the artist, who can make his work beautiful in every respect. In other words, artistic beauty is under no constraint of co-existing with ugliness. We may give an illustration. Surveying the sea from his window, an artist may take in a host of details such as the expanse of blue waters, the white surf, the brown sand, the waving coconut palms, a few crows and kites on the wing, a vessel or two on the horizon, and a tourist bus parked in the foreground. In painting this scene, while he might choose to retain some of these items, he would be at liberty to drop some others like the tourist bus if he felt that they did not fit in happily with the rest. Hence a work of art is a harmonious whole. A painting, a drama, a sculpture or a song is complete in itself; and when we take it as a whole, we see that it reveals a beautiful pattern of colours, sounds, shapes or events.

Every item will be in the right place and measure, and not one either misplaced or wanting or in excess. Even those items that are displeasing when taken by themselves, like untimely death in a drama, appear beautiful when they blend with the general pattern.

(b) Unlike a beautiful object of nature, there is no possibility of a work of art ceasing to be beautiful. In other words, the beauty of art is constant. This advantage is secured both in respect of the art object and in respect of the appreciator.

The work of art does not change its nature with the passage of time and lose its charm. The physical medium in which art is expressed may change or perish, but the ideal forms which it expresses are immortal. That is why even from the fragments of a ruined monument or a forgotten play it becomes possible to reconstruct in the mind its ideal form and appreciate its beauty. A work of art therefore continues to hold the same aesthetic appeal to appreciators even after the lapse of centuries.

The constancy of artistic beauty is equally due to the fact that the attitude of the spectator to it can never be anything but aesthetic. The condition of the aesthetic attitude is the absence of ego-consciousness. This condition is fully and uniformly secured in the contemplation of art as the objects comprising a work of art are ideal in character. None but the simple-minded and unwary will mistake the objects of art to be real and behave as though they were real. Art objects are not apprehensible in terms of space and time but can only be visualized by exercising the faculty of imagination. To say that art objects do not have a spatio-temporal status does not, however, mean that they are unreal, or fictitious. If they are unreal, they would not evoke interest in the spectator. It does not follow from this that, like illusory objects, they may be described as neither real nor unreal. The reason is that, unlike the objects of illusion, the objects of art are not at one time wrongly believed to be real and later repudiated. The correct position is that the question of reality and unreality simply does not

apply to them. We do not look at them in terms of ontological categories. They are a class by themselves. Neither believing nor disbelieving their reality, we merely 'entertain' them.⁵ They hold our attention, but, having no relevance to the actual and the particular, they have no appeal to the egoistic self. They do not excite the latent tendencies (*saṃskāra*) of a personal nature but always induce a detached attitude. Hence a person's attitude to a work of art can never undergo any change from the impersonal. The response to art being always disinterested, an art object is ever beautiful to the same person and is thus a source of perennial joy to him.

4. We have seen how artistic beauty, being a product of idealization, is free from the limitations of natural beauty as we commonly know it. Being unassociated with ugliness and unaffected by change, the pleasure of contemplating a work of art is not only pure (like the pleasure of contemplating a beautiful object in nature) but also remains steady, i.e. never passes over into pain (unlike the latter). For this reason the pleasure which art yields is described as 'higher pleasure' (*para nirvṛti*) — higher than the delight which parts of nature induce.

Chapter Five

THE PROBLEM OF COSMIC BEAUTY

1. In our search for perfect beauty we get dissatisfied with particular objects in nature and turn to art. Art, no doubt, presents to us an order of beauty which is both complete and constant. The joy which it yields is therefore not only pure but also certain and steady. But we have reason to be dissatisfied even with art. In spite of its excellence over natural beauty as we commonly know it, artistic beauty, is after all, outside the real world. Consequently, while the joy of its contemplation is superior to that derived from objects of nature, we are thrown into a state of estrangement the moment we are out of it. We are therefore led on to ask whether it would not be possible to realize the type of beauty that we find in art—beauty that is complete and lasting—in nature itself from a point of view other than what we ordinarily occupy with reference to it. Obviously such a realization will depend on the possibility of fulfilling with reference to nature the conditions under which perfect beauty is secured in art. The beauty of art is free from ugliness because a work of art is presented as a whole and not in bits. The beauty is also free from change because, though it is expressed through matter, it rises above the constraint of matter. Thus a whole view and transcendence above matter are the two conditions which secure for artistic beauty its perfection. The question is whether these two conditions can be fulfilled with reference to nature, that is to say whether we can understand nature as a whole and apart from its material presentations.

A whole view of nature does not mean putting together all our partial views of it. Such a summation of all our separate ordinary views of nature is neither possible nor would it make for a transcendence of our ordinary superficial materialistic view of nature. A view of nature which is at once synoptic and non-material is possible only by tracing the variety of nature to a single unifying principle. Hence the answer to the question whether there is perfect beauty in nature will depend on the admission of a unifying principle behind the discrete material objects and events in nature. The approach to this question has taken two lines in the history of philosophy, European and Indian.

2. Schools of philosophy that are characterized by pluralistic and realistic tendencies in metaphysics are averse to the idea of a unifying supra-physical essence in nature. The pluralistic element in them discourages them from the idea of a unifying principle behind the diverse phenomena of nature, and the realistic element binds them to the notion that these phenomena are as such real. In the absence of a single integrating spiritual principle under-neath natural phenomena there is no question of a synoptic and non-material view of nature. Hence pluralistic-realistic philosophies are averse to the idea of a transcendental order of beauty. Beauty exists, according to them, either in its imperfect way in the material parts of nature or in its perfect way in the imaginary representations of art. It is idle to conceive of an order of beauty beyond these two realms of common experience. In other words, all beauty is empirical. This view has found expression in the West in such thinkers as Aristotle, Herbert Spencer, and William James. In India it is represented by Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika and Sāṅkhya. In Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika nature, or the world, consisting of innumerable objects and events, hardly shows any binding factor. The school recognizes God but only as loosely fitted into the scheme of realities. Sāṅkhya has no place at all for God. Hence the school is at pains to explain how insentient nature (*prakṛti*) can act by itself. The

only other reality is the class of souls (*puruṣa*), which is essentially independent of nature.

3. Schools of philosophy that are monistic and idealistic in metaphysics have tended to affirm that nature as such is perfectly beautiful. The idea that reality is one and entire in spite of the manifoldness that is presented to our common experience is the indication of their monism. And the recognition that the oneness of reality lies behind and beyond the material nature of things, which is only an appearance, represents their idealism. Hence schools of philosophy that are characterized by these tendencies seek to trace the diverse phenomena of nature to a common supra-physical, or spiritual, principle. The discovery of such a principle makes possible a whole view of nature which at the same time transcends its physical appearances. They affirm that when a total and non-sensuous view of nature is taken in this manner, we shall understand that things in nature are in essential harmony with one another. There is a unity behind the apparent diversity which we ordinarily see, a peace and concord behind the surface appearances of conflict and disharmony. Natural calamities like earthquakes and cyclones, wars and deadly competitions among nations and communities, epidemics and predations in the animal world—everything seems to fall into place and become part of a big game or grand design. Evil and suffering lose their sting and come to be seen as opportunities for good.¹ In the language of aesthetics this inner harmony of nature may be described as its beauty. As this beauty relates to the whole of nature, it is unopposed by ugliness. The so-called ugly, or evil, things of the ordinary view of nature, when seen now against the wide scheme of things, cease to be repulsive and acquire a new significance. Again, as the beauty now spoken of belongs to the very essence of nature rather than to its outer forms, it is undying and eternal.² Thus nature as such is perfectly beautiful.

This, in general, is the stand taken by thinkers like Plato, Plotinus, Spinoza, Schelling, and Hegel in the

West. Spinoza, for instance, speaks of God as the truth of all things. To Hegel reality is at bottom entirely rational. And Schelling compares nature to a great poem. The same general position is represented in India by the tradition of Vedānta. And Vedānta has special contributions to make to the idea of cosmic beauty.

4. (a) The chief feature of the Vedānta schools which distinguishes them from all the other schools of Indian philosophy is that the Vedānta schools trace the entire universe, consisting of the physical world, or nature (*jagat*), and the world of living beings (*jīva*), to the ultimate reality, designated Brahman, Īśvara. The relation which the universe bears to Brahman is conceived of differently in the different schools of Vedānta. But the common tenet which is important in all the schools of Vedānta is that the character of nature and souls, and even their existence, are, in some sense or other, dependent on Brahman. Hence to know Brahman is to comprehend the universe in its entirety.³ Brahman is also pure spirit, as indicated by the synonym Ātman. Hence the knowledge of Brahman results also in a spiritual view of the universe. Thus a comprehensive and non-material view not only of nature but of the universe at large becomes possible through the knowledge of Brahman. When such a view of the universe is attained, the universe will be found to be perfectly beautiful in the sense that it exhibits both physical and moral order. The *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* passage VIII. 4. 1 says that the Ātman (Brahman) is the dyke, the embankment, for the safety of the worlds. All evils turn back from the Ātman, i.e. when the world is viewed as centred in the Ātman, there is really no evil in it. The description given in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* passage III. 8. 9 is specially inviting. Brahman is shown here as the basis of the physical and the moral order of the universe. Passage II. 5. 15 of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* says that just as all the spokes of the chariot-wheel are fixed on its nave and its felloe, all things in the universe are fixed on the Ātman.

Thus the first special contribution of Vedānta to the idea of cosmic beauty is that its basis is Brahman.

(b) The second speciality about Vedānta in this connection is that, according to it, the knowledge of the unity of the universe need not be mediate. It is true that one learns about it through scriptural delineation of Brahman in relation to the universe. It may also be possible to speculate on and infer the presence of cosmic order from the concept of Brahman. But a stage is also visualized in Vedānta when this mediate knowledge becomes a matter of experience. The possibility of realizing Brahman even while tenanting a body (*jīvanmukti* as it is called) is admitted, either actually or virtually, by all the schools of Vedānta. When Brahman, which is the basis of cosmic unity, is immediately known, or realized, that unity is also presented to the vision of the one who has realized Brahman, the *jīvanmukta*. Thus the *jīvanmukta* has the privilege, not merely of knowing, but of experiencing the unity of nature. Having realized the one basis on which the entire universe rests, the *jīvanmukta* is not perplexed by its diversity as we are.⁴ The unqualified joy and universal love which he exudes is evidence of his direct contact with the essential harmony of the universe.

The Sāṅkhya school also recognizes liberation while in the body (*jīvanmukti*) in addition to liberation after death (*videhamukti*). And its recognition of *jīvanmukti* is not merely figurative but literal. Yet its denial of an ultimate reality as the basis for nature and man renders the experience of the *jīvanmukta* totally different from what it is conceived to be in Vedānta. It has therefore no implication at all for the experience of cosmic order. This will be evident when we compare the Sāṅkhya conception of *jīvanmukti* with its conception of bondage and final release. In the state of bondage the self has experience of nature through its identification with the *buddhi*, which interacts with nature. But the character of the *buddhi* is such that we can have through it only a fragmentary and material view of nature. Hence so long as

the self identifies itself with the *buddhi*, there will appear to be beauty in certain parts and ugliness in others, and there will be no certainty that even those aspects that appear beautiful will continue to do so. In the state of liberation after the extinction of the body (*videhamukti*) the self dissociates itself from the *buddhi*, but, as a result, there is no more contact with nature, for, according to Sāṅkhya, experience is possible only through the *buddhi*. Therefore the self remains in a state of pure awareness, having nothing to do with nature. Thus, neither in the state of bondage (*bandha*) nor in the state of ultimate release (*videhamukti*) can the self experience the whole of nature and apart from its material form. Either there is experience of the material parts of nature or there is no experience of nature at all. The state of *jīvanmukti* in the Sāṅkhya system is a peculiar one. In it the self is associated with the body (*deha*) and the intellect (*buddhi*). It is therefore in contact with nature. But the self having overcome ignorance, the *buddhi* does not function as a limiting factor. It is predominated by pure *sattva*, and through it the self experiences nature as a whole instead of in parts. Contemplating it, the *puruṣa* is said to be in a state of neither pleasure nor pain and serene. But, then, nature as experienced by the *jīvanmukta* is not in its evolved (*vyakta*) state with all its variety but only in its unevolved (*avyakta*) state when differences are not manifest.⁵ In the absence of variety we cannot speak of unity, or order. Thus in Sāṅkhya there is no question of the *jīvanmukta* experiencing cosmic beauty in spite of the claim that nature as a whole is presented to him. Such an experience is possible only according to Vedānta.

(c) Since the perfect beauty of the universe has its source in Brahman, Vedānta comes to regard Brahman itself as the ultimate in beauty. A clue to the aesthetic conception of Brahman is contained in the term 'bliss' (*ānanda*), which is one of the terms used by the Upaniṣads to denote Brahman, the other terms being 'existence' (*sat*) and 'consciousness' (*cit*). The term *sat* indicates that Brahman is the reality underlying the external

world and the term *cit* that Brahman is the reality underlying the self of the knower. And Brahman is described in terms of *ānanda* in order to convey that this ultimate reality is also the ultimate value, the goal of man. Man seeks everlasting and complete bliss (*mokṣa*), and, according to Vedānta, *mokṣa* consists in realizing Brahman. How could the soul be said to attain bliss by realizing Brahman unless bliss is associated with Brahman? Hence Brahman is *ānanda*.⁶ On realizing Brahman, one is freed from all fear.⁷

The idea of beauty (*saundarya*) is closely connected with the idea of bliss (*ānanda*). The fact that the idea of bliss is associated with the concept of Brahman in the Upaniṣads shows that the conception of Brahman in terms of beauty is not without a basis in *śruti*. It is true that at the empirical level the two terms cannot be equated. What is beautiful gives pleasure; but pleasure may come from sources other than what we call beautiful. But, when we speak of beauty in the transcendental sense of the Brahman-centred inner harmony of the universe, beauty becomes co-eval with bliss; for both the terms now refer to Brahman. Hence to describe Brahman as bliss (*ānanda*) is as good as describing Brahman by the term 'beauty' (*saundarya*). The difference between the two expressions is that they use two points of view familiar to our minds. 'Bliss' takes the point of view of experience and 'beauty' the point of view of what is experienced — the subjective and the objective points of view. It is true that the Upaniṣads do not use the term *saundarya* as such with reference to Brahman just as it uses the term *ānanda*. But the point of view pertaining to beauty is not absent there because we find Brahman being referred to as the source of delight, the essence of the universe on realizing which one becomes blissful—*raso vai saḥ. rasam hyevāyaṁ labdhvā ānandī bhavati.* (*Taittirīya Upaniṣad* II. 7.1) Again, in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* I. 4. 8, II. 4. 5, and IV. 5. 6 Brahman, which is there represented as the true essence of man by the term *Ātman*, is described as ultimately the only object of love. That it is an object

of love implies the presence of beauty in Brahman ; for what is loved must be lovely. And that loveliness must be of the perfect kind — quite unlike all the lovable aspects of the common world, which admit of comparison — because the text asserts that Brahman is the final and sole object of love.

Thus the search for the ultimate in beauty, beginning from parts of nature and passing through art and the whole of nature, culminates in Brahman.

How exactly the terms 'bliss' and 'beauty' apply to Brahman is interpreted differently among the Vedānta schools. Advaita Vedānta regards *ānanda* as a term approximately denoting the very essence (*svarūpa*) of Brahman. Most theistic schools of Vedānta regard *ānanda* as an essential attribute (*viśeṣa*) of Brahman. Like the term 'bliss', the term 'beauty' may be used in two ways with reference to Brahman. Advaita would identify beauty with Brahman regarding it as Brahman's essence (*svarūpa*).⁸ To regard beauty as an attribute of Brahman would be to introduce the distinction between substance and attribute. It would also imply that just as other beautiful objects are known by a subject other than the object, Brahman characterized by beauty is an object for a subject. But Brahman, according to Advaita, transcends all distinctions. Hence, if the term beauty is to be applied to Brahman, from the point of view of Advaita, it should be regarded as the essence and not the attribute of Brahman. On the contrary, a theistic school of Vedānta would regard beauty as a necessary attribute (*viśeṣa*) of Brahman. The distinction between substance and attribute and between object and subject is vital to the theistic point of view. Thus, while from the point of view of Advaita Brahman is 'beauty' (*saundarya*), from the point of view of theistic Vedānta Brahman is 'beautiful' (*sundara*). In fact Viśiṣṭādvaita uses the expression 'Bhuvanasundara', which occurs in *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*,⁹ to describe Brahman. It means 'he whose beauty is the order of the universe', or 'to whom the cosmic order belongs as the beauty'.

The distinction pointed out above does not, however, mean that Advaita is opposed to the conception of beauty as the attribute of Brahman. The concept of Īśvara — Brahman with all auspicious personal qualities — occupies a place of great practical importance in the teaching of Advaita. Meditation on and worship of Īśvara is an indispensable means to the realization of Brahman as such. Thus on practical considerations, if not on metaphysical, Advaita, as much as theistic Vedānta, describes Brahman as one who *has* beauty. Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, who is distinguished among Advaitins for his special attention to the personal form of Brahman, describes Īśvara as 'The sole essence of all that is beautiful' (Ananta saundarya-sāra-sarvasva)¹⁰ and as 'The seat of the essence of all beauty' (Sakala-saundarya-sāra-nidhāna).¹¹ The *Saundaryalaharī* ('Wave of Beauty') of Śrī Śaṅkara throughout employs rich imagery to describe Divine Power (Śakti) in terms of the attribute of beauty.

Beauty as a quality of Brahman admits of being conceived at two levels — abstract and concrete. At the abstract level the whole universe constitutes the beauty of Brahman. This is divine beauty in its full manifestation. But the ordinary mind cannot easily contemplate this. Hence there are partial manifestations of the beauty of Brahman at the concrete level. These are the special excellences of particular forms of Godhead such as Śiva and Viṣṇu, the incarnations of Viṣṇu such as Rāma and Kṛṣṇa, Devī, Gaṇapati, and Subrahmaṇya. These excellences are nearer to human imagination as they consist in attractive qualities of head and heart, in grace and grandeur in action, and even in the charm of physical appearance, all combined in perfect harmony in the deity of one's choice (*iṣṭa-devatā*).

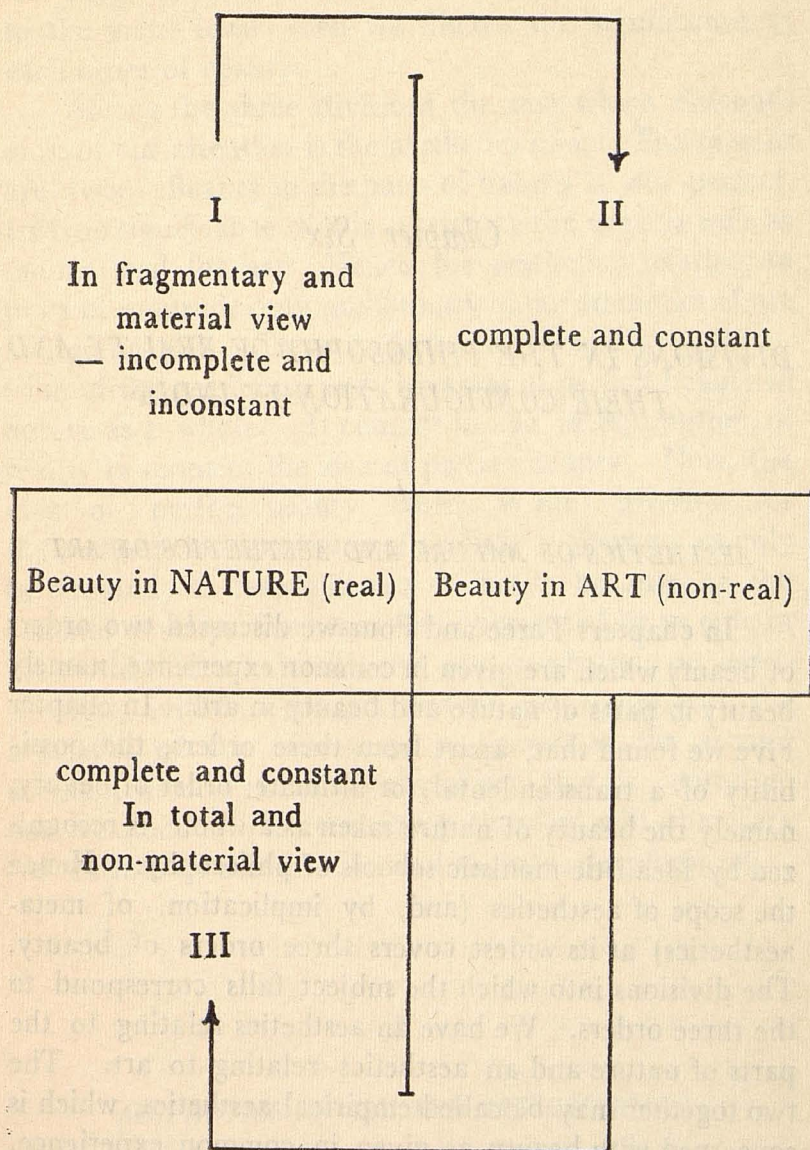
(d) The necessary implication of the aesthetic conception of Brahman is that all forms of empirical beauty, both natural and artistic, are expressions of the ultimate in beauty, namely Brahman. If beauty in parts of nature and beauty in art point to Brahman as their fulfilment, it is because they are manifestations on the empirical plane

of the highest beauty represented by Brahman. There is support in the metaphysics of Vedānta for such a view.

According to all the schools of Vedānta, the entire physical world (*jagat*) serves the purpose of revealing to the individual soul (*jīva*) the existence and nature of the ultimate reality (*Brahman*), the realization of which constitutes *mokṣa*. Brahman is pure spirit. The world is material. Matter has a way of concealing spirit. At the same time it serves, though in an imperfect way, as the medium for the manifestation of spirit.¹² Now, although the same Brahman is hidden in all beings, movable and immovable, there are degrees in its manifestation according to the fineness of the material medium. The Lord says in the *Bhagavad-gītā*, 'Whatever being is glorious, prosperous or strong, that know thou to be a manifestation of a part of My Splendour.' (X. 41)¹³.

On the basis of this general Vedānta doctrine of the significance of the world, all forms of empirical beauty, whether in natural objects or in works of art, have come to be regarded as manifestations of Brahman. The degree to which the beautiful things of nature and art reveal the character of Brahman depends on the degree to which beauty is free from the constraint of matter. Beauty in the parts of nature is of the lowest order of manifestation because it is necessarily identified with physical objects and events. But even these serve as reminders of God to a saint and suffice to send him into a trance. Beauty in art is superior because it is ideal although it is expressed through a material medium. Among the fine arts themselves there is said to be a gradation in the manifestation of Brahman depending on the fineness of the material medium employed. But of this detail we shall treat in the last chapter of this book since it requires certain special concepts as tools of explanation. What we may now note is that, in general, the Vedānta view stands for an aesthetic interpretation of Brahman and a spiritual interpretation of the lower orders of beauty.

Thus the significance of cosmic beauty, which has reference to Brahman, is intrinsic. As the ultimate in beauty it does not point to any other beauty, but becomes the source of all beauty.



THE THREE ORDERS OF BEAUTY

(refer ch. FIVE)

Chapter Six

DIVISIONS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF BEAUTY AND THEIR CONFIGURATION IN INDIA

I

AESTHETICS OF NATURE AND AESTHETICS OF ART

In chapters Three and Four we discussed two orders of beauty which are given in common experience, namely beauty in parts of nature and beauty in art. In chapter Five we found that, apart from these orders, the possibility of a transcendental, or ultimate, order of beauty, namely the beauty of nature taken as a whole, is recognized by idealistic-monistic schools of philosophy. Hence the scope of aesthetics (and, by implication, of meta-aesthetics) at its widest covers three orders of beauty. The divisions into which the subject falls correspond to the three orders. We have an aesthetics relating to the parts of nature and an aesthetics relating to art. The two together may be called empirical aesthetics, which is concerned with beauty as given in common experience, beauty as actually observed in life. The inquiry into the problem of beauty in nature as a whole may be called transcendental aesthetics because it deals with an order of beauty which is beyond what is given in common life. It may also be called metaphysical aesthetics because the discussion turns on the metaphysical question whether reality is ultimately many or one, material or spiritual. We thus treat of nature from two different points of view,

one which is inferior to art and the other which is superior to it. Each of these three divisions of aesthetics rises to the meta- level when we discuss the significance of each order of beauty.

Among the three divisions the one which demands most of our attention is the aesthetics of art. The reasons are two. Beauty in the parts of nature is not perfect. Its true significance lies in serving as the urge as well as the material for art. Hence the aesthetics relating to parts of nature is only preliminary to the aesthetics of art and points to it. Transcendental aesthetics is the discussion of the possibility and character of perfect beauty in nature as a whole. It consists in the interpretation of reality in terms of the idea of perfect beauty. Now, the idea of perfect beauty, which is the criterion for the aesthetic interpretation of reality, is given to us only by our study of beauty in art. This is because at the common level perfect beauty is experienced by us only in the world of art. In this way transcendental, or meta-physical, aesthetics is dependent on, or presupposes, the aesthetics of art. For these reasons it is the second division, namely the aesthetics of art, that is central to our treatment. The remaining chapters will therefore concentrate on this division and its meta- development.

II

AESTHETICS OF ART AND ART CRITICISM

A word may now be added about the distinction of the aesthetics of art from art criticism. The two disciplines are closely related, but it would be safe to bear the distinction in mind. The criticism of art is the examination of the merits of particular works of art. In criticizing a work, the critic employs certain standards, or criteria, of artistic excellence. These are the indications in the presence of which he declares the work to be

beautiful and otherwise not. For example, in the criticism of drama there are the classical standards such as (1) that all emotions must be portrayed, (2) that one emotion should be dominant, and (3) that all other emotions must work in unison with the dominant one, and so on. But the critic, as a critic, does not go into the question whether the standards that he employs for judging a work are themselves adequate. He takes the adequacy of these standards for granted and only concerns himself with their application to a work. In other words, his attention is more on *what* he examines than on *how* he examines it. The question whether the tools of the critic's examination, namely his standards of artistic beauty, are themselves satisfactory is a deeper question which goes beyond the scope of the critic. The standards employed in art criticism themselves become the subject-matter for examination by the aesthetician of art. Such an examination requires the construction of a basic psychology of art — an insight into the mind of both the artist and the appreciator, an understanding of the nature of their equipment and of the processes of creation and appreciation. It is only in the light of these foundations of art that the standards usually employed by critics can be sorted out and evaluated. Thus the aesthetician of art has to work at a deeper level than the critic. While the critic of art is concerned with the surface question whether there is beauty in a given work in a particular fine art, the aesthetician of art is engaged in the basic question of what the nature of artistic beauty as such is. While the critic examines the merits of individual works in one or other type of fine art, the aesthetician constructs a theory of art in general. He examines how far the standards which different critics employ are justified. For this reason, while art criticism is a specialized study, a science so to say, the aesthetics of art occupies the status of a philosophical discipline.

The distinction between art criticism and the aesthetics of art is important for us because of the identity in nomenclature between art criticism and aesthetics of art

in India. The ancient Indian art criticism which was practised with special reference to Saṁskṛt poetry and drama went by the name *Alaṅkāra-śāstra* and the professional thinkers in this field *Ālaṅkārikas*. This criticism naturally provided the field for the evolution of an aesthetics of art. Although what immediately confronted successive *Ālaṅkārikas* were the merits of individual works, being inquisitive minds, the *Ālaṅkārikas* found themselves involved in the deeper problem of beauty as such in art. As the transition from criticism to aesthetics was imperceptible, in the mind of the thinker the name *Alaṅkāra-śāstra* held good for the aesthetics of art as much as for the criticism of art. The identity in name, which is only an accident, should not lead us to imagine that the Indian aesthetics of art is nothing more than art criticism, especially literary criticism.

III

THE ROLE OF THE ĀLAṅKĀRIKAS IN THE STUDY OF ART

We have now to note a special feature of the Indian philosophy of beauty in so far as it concerns art.

In the West aesthetics, whether it relates to nature or to art, is regarded as a regular part of philosophy : the character of beauty as such is discussed in connection with the nature of reality, i. e. as a consequence of metaphysics. In India, although it has been recognised that the general problem of the character of beauty is intrinsically related to the problem of metaphysics, it was felt that a distinction had to be maintained between the study of beauty in nature and the study of beauty in art. Nature is a part of the reality into which the philosopher has to inquire. Hence the study of beauty in nature, whether nature is taken in its parts or as a whole, forms, as it should, a regular part of philosophy in India, even as in the West. In some schools of Indian philosophy like Sāṅkhya and Vedānta the treatment is explicit, and

in others it is implicit but not absent. Thus the aesthetics of nature stands on the same footing as ethics. Moral life deals with the real world. Hence our theory of morals necessarily depends on the view of reality that we have. Ethics without a metaphysical basis is inconceivable. The nature of a moral code can be understood only against the metaphysics that underlies it.

As regards the study of beauty in art, the distinction between the character of art and its significance (between its aesthetics and its meta-aesthetics) has been made the basis for a division of labour. There is no doubt that the significance of art exercised the direct attention of the Indian philosopher even as the significance of beauty in nature. He considered its bearing on life—its relation to other values, especially *mokṣa*. The character of art was, however, left to be studied by that distinct class of thinkers called the *Ālaṅkārikas*, who were professionally literary critics rather than philosophers (*dārśanika*). This is the reason why we do not find the character of art discussed in the Indian philosophical treatises. The relegation of the study of the character of artistic beauty to non-philosophers was perhaps one of the reasons that led Western scholars to charge Indian philosophy with neglect of beauty. But this relegation was made not because the Indian philosopher was not interested in the character of art or failed to appreciate its importance. In fact any discussion of its significance presupposes the understanding of its character. The real reason lies in the unique status of the content of art.

The content of a work of art does not belong to the real world. It is, as we have seen in chapter Four, ideal, a product of the artist's imagination. This is not to say that it is unreal or even illusory. The point is simply that ontological considerations are irrelevant to the character of art. Hence our study of the character of art does not presuppose any knowledge of reality. Whatever view we form regarding its character is in no way determined by the metaphysical view we may hold. In fact the application of a metaphysical view to

that study would result in conclusions not germane to the object of study. It is natural for different philosophers to hold different views of reality. Therefore, when a philosopher undertakes to inquire into the problem of the character of beauty in art, he is bound to impose his particular metaphysical view on the solution of the problem and try to evolve a theory of art that squares with his theory of reality. This is what has actually happened in the West. Indian philosophers have been of the view that, while a diversity of views based on diversity in metaphysical thinking cannot be helped regarding beauty in nature, which is an essential aspect of reality, such a diversity of views originating from the metaphysical point of view would be unwarranted concerning beauty in art, which is not part of reality.

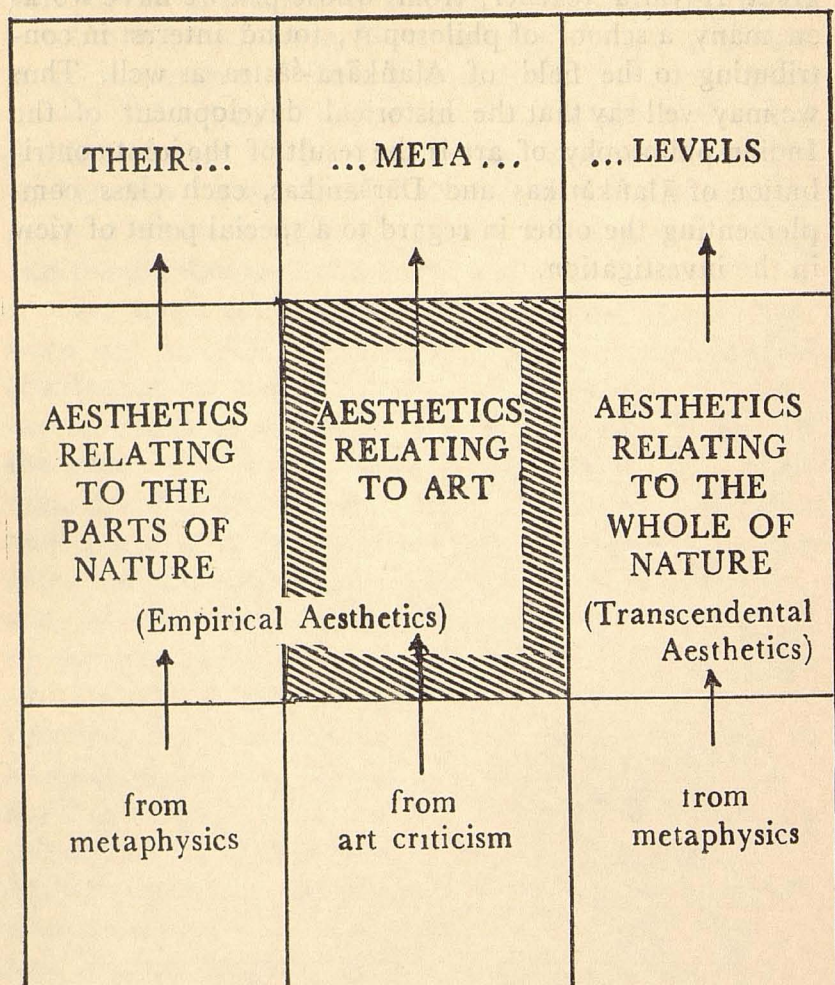
Therefore the Indian philosophers rightly believed that for a proper understanding of the character of beauty in art it is necessary to separate this branch of investigation from philosophy proper and entrust it to another class of thinkers equally interested in art but not committed to any metaphysics, namely the critics, or Ālaṅkārikas. It is not that there is no diversity at all in the Indian treatment of the character of art. There is as much diversity in the Indian treatment of it as in its Western counterpart; but the important point to be noted is that this diversity is based on artistic considerations themselves and is therefore natural and legitimate unlike the diversity resulting from the imposition of conflicting metaphysical theories on that study.

The wisdom of separating the inquiry into the character of art from philosophy proper has been borne out by results. It gave rise to the evolution of a distinct discipline, Ālaṅkāraśāstra, which specially concerned itself with the nature of beauty in the world of art and thus amounted to an aesthetics of art strictly so called. And Indian Ālaṅkāra-śāstra has enjoyed a degree of freedom that has resulted in original discoveries. As an instance of this we may cite what is called *vyāṅgyārtha*, or *dhvani*. It is a theory of meaning evolved by the Ālaṅkārikas

themselves and sheds new light on the character of art which could not have been discerned by any approach from metaphysics. The philosophers, for their part, having disburdened themselves of a specialist's task, left themselves free to draw upon the conclusions of the Ālaṅkārikas for the further investigation into the significance of artistic beauty, its place in the scheme of values, and the development of a meta-aesthetics of art.

We have pointed out that the division of work between the art critics (Ālaṅkārika) and the philosophers (Dārśanika) in regard to art was based on two fundamental questions, one relating to the character of art and the other relating to its significance. But the two questions are closely connected. Hence the fields of Ālaṅkāra and Darśana in the treatment of art, though distinct, often ran into each other. On the one hand, the discussion of the nature of art, when pursued, often brought up the question of its significance. Hence many of those who started as Ālaṅkārikas and studied the structure and function of art were drawn into the deeper problem of its meaning for life. In the understanding of this meaning they looked to some school or other of philosophy for principles of interpretation. Thus Śrī-saṅkuka and Mahima-bhaṭṭa were influenced by the Nyāya school; Bhaṭṭa-nāyaka came under the influence of Sāṅkhya. And Ānandavardhana, the discoverer of *dhvani*, belonged to the Pratyabhijñā school of philosophy. Some of the later Ālaṅkārikas, Rūpagosvāmin and Jagannātha for instance, were drawn to the Vedānta schools. On the other hand, any appreciation of the significance of art depended on the understanding of its nature. Hence some of those who came from the side of philosophy and were primarily interested in the significance of art stepped into the field of the Ālaṅkārikas and discussed the nature of art in the manner of the Ālaṅkārikas themselves. We have the outstanding example of Abhinavagupta in this regard. He was one of the foremost teachers of Kāśmīra-Śaivism. But his contribution to Ālaṅkāra-sāstra is equally great. Again, Appayya-dīkṣita, the

great Advaita teacher, from whose pen we have works on many a school of philosophy, found interest in contributing to the field of Alaṅkāra-śāstra as well. Thus we may well say that the historical development of the Indian philosophy of art is the result of the joint contribution of Ālaṅkārikas and Dārśanikas, each class complementing the other in regard to a special point of view in the investigation.



the special
contribution of
the Ālaṅkārikas
to the Indian
philosophy
of beauty

Chapter Seven

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ART CREATION

I

THE PROBLEM OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ART

The pursuit of art, whether by the artist or by the appreciator, is spontaneous. Man takes to art by an inner urge rather than by deliberate choice. In fact, the pursuit of beauty in general is spontaneous. A thing of beauty, whether natural or artistic, draws us to itself. Hence the making of art by the artist and the taking of it by the appreciator is the expression of inner propensity rather than the product of planned effort. The pursuit of art, whether by the artist or by the aesthete, is not governed by a set motive. This is the spirit of the expression 'art for art's sake'. It would be pointless to ask why the artist creates. There is no chosen purpose behind art creation. Even we as appreciators find it difficult to answer why we approach works of art. The Indian aesthetician is not inclined to look upon art as a deliberate activity on the model of moral action.

The admission of spontaneity, however, does not mean that art activity, whether it be creation or appreciation, is blind, i.e. uninformed, like a biological instinct. Though the activity is not *meant* for a purpose, it is not as though man is unaware of its worth and takes to it as a creature of sheer impulse. Some Western aestheticians have explained art activity as the manifestation of play impulse, or as the effusion of surplus energy.¹ Such a theory would take away from the status of art (indeed of

all beauty) as a human value (*puruṣārtha*). The distinctive mark of a *puruṣārtha* is that man is aware of the importance of what he pursues, its place in life. As Indian aestheticians see it, the urge for art — both in respect of creation and in respect of appreciation — arises from dissatisfaction with the imperfect beauty found in the parts of nature. It is invariably observed that if one is dissatisfied with something, in however vague a manner, it is because one is aware of the possibility of something better. Hence the fact of this dissatisfaction with natural beauty implies the presence of the ideal of perfect beauty in the mind. And it is precisely one's longing for the ideal of perfect beauty that takes one either to the creation or to the appreciation of art. Hence it is not as though man pursues art without consciously attaching a value to it. But the peculiarity of that consciousness is that it is vague and intangible. Hence the pursuit of art calls for explanation. The question before us, then, is, 'What is the meaning, or significance, of this pursuit?' Stated more specifically, it is, 'Is art an end in itself or does it point to and subserve a still higher end?' The question may be discussed from two standpoints — that of the artist and that of the appreciator. In each case we find two main views in India, one put forward by Sāṅkhya and the other by Vedānta. In the history of the Indian meta-aesthetics of art the earlier aestheticians generally followed the line of Sāṅkhya and the later ones that of Vedānta.

II

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ART CREATION

The Inspiration for Creation

The artist starts with a spontaneous, self-forgetful, delectable experience, an inspiration, which he expresses in his work. That the artist's experience is the origin of his creative activity is admitted by all. But what the experience, or inspiration, is about, or what its content

is, needs to be explained. The Sāṅkhya school has no explanation to offer. On the contrary, the Vedānta schools, which admit the existence of perfect beauty in nature taken as a whole, are ready with an explanation.

Unlike the appreciator, the artist is keenly sensitive to the order that lies at the heart of nature notwithstanding the apparent conflicts on its surface. The verbal expression of this unique experience by poets is our best evidence for it. More than once in his *Gitanjali* Rabin-dranath Tagore pours out the joy of this vision :

‘All that is harsh and dissonant
in my life melts into one sweet
harmony — and my adoration
spreads wings like a glad bird
on its flight across the sea.’ (2)

‘When one knows thee, then alien
there is none, then no door is
shut. Oh, grant me my prayer
that I may never lose the bliss
of the touch of the one in the play
of the many.’ (63)

‘The same stream of life that
runs through my veins night
and day runs through the world
and dances in rhythmic measures.

... ..

I feel my limbs are made glorious
by the touch of this world of life.
And my pride is from the life-throb
of ages dancing in my blood this
moment.’ (69)

We read the same idea in Wordsworth’s *Tintern Abbey* :

‘And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy

Of elevated thoughts ; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,

... ..

A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.'²

Typical facts of nature serve as occasions for the artist to become aware of that perfect beauty. These to us appear quite commonplace and are passed over in the rush of our lives. As the poet laments,

'Little we see in nature that is ours ;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon !
This Sea that bears her bosom to the moon ;
The Winds that will be howling at all hours
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers ;
For this, for every thing, we are out of tune ;
It moves us not—Great God !'³

But these very facts catch the attention of the artist and hold a message of deep import. We have to believe the poet when he says :

'To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.'⁴

When the artist is thus under the influence of a finer situation in life, his imagination (*pratibhā*) is aglow with a vision, or intuition, of the inner beauty of the universe. Take for instance the manner in which Kālidāsa describes Śakuntalā's departure from her home. It is indeed a sad parting of dear ones. But to the poet's mind it brings a whole range of relationship — a deeper link between man and beast and bird and plant and even the forces of nature. Kaṇva entreats the elderly trees 'who' had been well served by his daughter to grant her leave ; a voice in the air invokes the comfort of the elements on her path ; from the gaping mouths of the stunned antelopes drop mouthfuls of *darbhā* grass ; the peacocks cease

to dance ; the creepers shed their faded leaves ; the orphaned fawn which she had tended like a child when it was injured clings to her garment and has to be coaxed to release her. (*Śākuntala*, Act IV)

The artist thus shares the experience of the seer, the mystic (*draṣṭā*, *muni*). The word *kavi* used for a poet⁵ is suggestive of this affinity. The term *kavi* denotes a wise man, or sage, or seer, one who knows everything.⁶ It also stands for the omniscient Supreme Being.⁷ The application of the term to the poet indicates the presence of similar, if not identical, wisdom in the poet, or in the artist in general. The similarity of the artist with the sage, or seer, is further supported by the fact that like the sage and the Supreme Being⁸ the artist has been described as a *krānta darśin*—one who sees far ahead. The ancient Indian practice of ending a drama with a benediction—*bharata vākya* as it is called, because it is said to be in honour of Bharata the founder of the dramatic technique—often indicates how the artist sees life as a whole and sees it steadily. We may refer for instance to the benediction at the end of the *Śākuntala*. For all the joy of his life the king here looks forward to liberation from rebirth as its fulfilment.⁹

The comparison of the artist to the seer, however, must not make us ignore an important difference between the two. The seer's vision is the result of long and arduous discipline and leads to complete inner transformation. It is therefore a permanent enlightenment (*vidyā*). Like us, ordinary men, the artist is within the realm of ignorance (*avidyā*). His vision of cosmic beauty is therefore, only occasional and less vivid than that of the seer. It does not result in any radical transformation of his personality. It is in the nature of a gift rather than of an achievement. How exactly it comes to be gifted to him while we miss it we cannot explain. Perhaps it is the reward of a good stock of merit (*punya*) earned through past lives. Be that as it may, the artist is less than the seer though he has a strong resemblance to him in the

content of his experience. The description of him as a seer is qualified and figurative.¹⁰

It so happens that every mystic is invariably an artist, most often a poet or a musician, and expresses himself in a form of high artistic quality. But this coincidence is no basis for equating the two terms. For we value the mystic because he is a mystic, not because he is an artist. That he is also an artist may lend additional charm to his personality. But he would still be valued were he not an artist. Being an artist is a criterion different from being a mystic. That there is a difference becomes fully evident when we remember that the converse of the relation is not true—not every artist is necessarily a mystic. There are many—even of the stature of Kālidāsa or Shakespeare—whom we value as artists, not as mystics. So, when we were considering the experience which sets off the artistic creation, we were concerned only with the artist who is an artist but not a mystic. The mystic-artist, the artist who is much more than an artist—a mystic—is beyond our present concern. Our whole point has been that even at this minimum the artist has something in common with the mystic which lifts him above the level of the ordinary man.

Though the artist's vision falls short of the seer's permanent wisdom, the artist is definitely superior to us who lack even this occasional inspiration. The artist is thus midway between the seer and the ordinary man. It is the peculiar glory of the artist that the intrinsic beauty of the universe, which we at the ordinary level miss and which the seer always beholds, is vouchsafed to him in glimpses during moments of exaltation. 'But God has a few of us', says Browning, 'whom He whispers in the ear; the rest may reason and welcome: 'tis we musicians know.'¹¹ During these moments of glimpse the artist rises above the consciousness of his private self and loses himself in pure joy. In his *Tintern Abbey* Wordsworth sings of this un-self-conscious mood:

'that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,

Until, the breath of this corporeal frame,
 And even the motion of our human blood
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
 In body, and become a living soul:
 While with an eye made quiet by the power
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
 We see into the life of things.'

The Act of Creation

The artist's creative activity is the spontaneous outflow of his self-forgetful, joyous, inner vision of perfect beauty in the universe. 'At the immortal touch of thy hands my little heart loses its limits in joy and gives birth to utterance ineffable', exclaims Tagore.¹² No great artist will claim his work as his own, as he is hardly conscious of himself when his experience takes outward expression. Tagore regards himself as an instrument in the hands of a Higher Power: 'This little flute of a reed thou hast carried over hills and dales, and hast breathed through it melodies eternally new'¹³ Mathew Arnold has said of Wordsworth's poems that it was as though nature wrote them for him.¹⁴ The artist is beside himself with the joy of his vision and cannot but share it with his less fortunate brethren. And in his works he spontaneously creates ideal objects and events through which we are enabled to perceive something of that perfect beauty.¹⁵ In the mind of an artist the ideas which are to make the theme of his work keep coming unasked. This implies that the artist is adequately equipped or rather gifted for it.

The artist's genius for ideas is a marvel. It is represented by the Saṃskṛt term *pratibhā*, or *pratibhāna*, which may be rendered into English as 'imagination', or 'creative fancy', or 'creative genius'. Its importance is brought out by the fact that in the art of poetry it is described as 'the seed of poetry' (*kavitva-bīja*).¹⁶ The description would apply to it in any fine art. The excellence of *pratibhā* is that it throws up an inexhaustible variety of ideas

to go into the content of a fine art. In the *Dhvanyāloka* Ānandavardhana compares the infinite possibilities of poetic themes to the limitless resources of Primordial Nature (*prakṛti*), which puts forth a world containing varied objects in endless cycles of creation. Though countless poets have touched on numerous themes, themes can never be exhausted.¹⁷ Such is the power of *pratibhā* to create ideas. Hence *pratibhā* has been defined thus:—

- (1) 'The mental faculty which can flash forth ever fresh (ideas) is called *pratibhā*.' (*prajñā nava-navon-meṣaśālinī pratibhā matā*)¹⁸
- (2) '*Pratibhā* is the mental faculty which is capable of creating unprecedented objects (of contemplation).' (*pratibhā apūrva-vastu-nirmāṇa-kṣamā prajñā*)¹⁹
- (3) 'The power (of composition in poets) is (what is called) *pratibhāna*. It is the capacity to depict the matter that is to be described as (if it were) something novel.' (*śaktiḥ pratibhānam varṇanīya-vastu-viśaya-nūtanollekhaśālitvam*)²⁰

The ideas which flash on the fertile mind of the artist take after and conform to the total vision of unity which has inspired him. They serve as symbols to represent that ideal on the empirical plane. The material for them is supplied by the facts of the actual world, and they are fashioned out of the actual on the model of the ideal. In so far as he creates beauty which is as perfect as the beauty that rests in Brahman, the artist has been compared to the Creator (*Prajāpati*) himself. Ānandavardhana observes, 'In the boundless realm of poetry the poet himself is the Creator, and as it pleases him, so does this world transform itself.'

apāre kāvya-saṁsāre kavir-eva prajāpatiḥ |
*yathāsmāi rocate viśvaṁ tathedaṁ parivartate ||*²¹

But there is this difference that what the artist creates is not the ultimate beauty itself but only a symbol of it, a device to manifest it. Thus he is called the Creator only by courtesy.

There is another point of view from which also the artist has been compared with the Creator, and the result of this comparison is one of contrast. If we confine our attention to nature as presented to us in common experience, we see only imperfection. It is beauty and ugliness all mixed up. And if in our frustration with this we (mistakenly) ascribe such a world to the Creator, then the artist is superior to the Creator; for what he creates is uniformly beautiful. Mammaṭa begins his *Kāvya prakāśa* with such a contrast.²² Obviously this is not meant to decry the Creator but simply to glorify the artist. Brahmā is not to be blamed for the imperfections of the world. These are present only in our narrow outlook. The world as a whole is perfect. And the real significance of artistic creation is that it reveals the flawless beauty of the cosmos. This is the Vedānta view. The Sāṅkhya view of the significance of art creation is a striking contrast. According to Sāṅkhya, the very concept of cosmic beauty is inadmissible. The value of art creation is simply in excelling the imperfect beauty of the parts of nature. Thus, according to Vedānta, the artist 'reveals the best in Nature', while, according to Sāṅkhya, he simply 'fashions something better than Nature'.²³

Chapter Eight

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ART APPRECIATION

In regard to art appreciation there are two main views which correspond with the two views stated in regard to art creation, one following Sāṅkhya and the other Vedānta. Besides these there is a third view on this matter which is associated with the popular mind rather than with any philosophical school. We might begin with this third view, not because it is in itself important, but because it gives occasion to reiterate the special character of art.

I

ART AS A MEANS TO KĀMA

That art is a means to personal pleasure (*kāma*) is a very old popular view. The unenlightened man seeks art for his own pleasure. Such a view, no doubt, reduces beauty, the pursuit of which calls for a degree of mental culture, to the level of the lower values.

The popular view is based on two wrong assumptions.

(1) It regards the joy derived by contemplating a work of art as of the same order as the pleasure of the senses. But discerning minds recognized even from the olden times that art experience is not pleasure of the sensuous and selfish kind (*kāma*) but a higher kind of delight in which self-consciousness itself is absent. They point out as evidence for this that art appeals to several people: its joy is shared by many. (2) The popular mind, while identifying the art experience with *kāma*, makes an artificial division between the art experience and the art ob-

ject. It regards the art object as the means and the pleasurable experience it gives as the end. This, again, is a serious fallacy. During the moment of contemplation the appreciator is so absorbed in the object that he is not aware of any distinction between the object and his experience. Hence the distinction between means and end is inappropriate in the case of art appreciation. That such a distinction exists in the mind of the common man only shows his lack of qualification for engrossing appreciation of art.

The view that art is a means to personal pleasure, in spite of being totally unfounded, holds an easy appeal to the common mind. When art appreciation is perverted in this manner, it could well become a serious distraction from higher values such as *dharma* and *mokṣa* and an impediment to their pursuit. It is probably in view of this possibility that Manu¹ condemns certain forms of art like dance, song, and instrumental music, regarding them as human weaknessess (*vyasana*). It could not be that Manu wanted to denounce art as such. That art is misused for selfish pleasure is a mistake of man, not of art. But to the extent that art comes to be identified with selfish pleasure in the mind of the ordinary man, it is better for him to avoid art than to run the risk of this abuse. That this must have been the spirit of Manu's warning becomes evident when we come across a kindred philosopher Yājñavalkya² who takes an avowedly liberal view of the fine arts, even recommending one like music in view of its utility for salvation by conducting to concentration of thought.

II

ART AS AN END IN ITSELF

The second and the third views are associated with Sāṅkhya and Vedānta respectively. They both turn on the question whether art can be instrumental to *mokṣa*.

According to Sāṅkhya, art has nothing to do with *mokṣa*. Such a view is held not because Sāṅkhya does

not believe in *mokṣa* but because its conception of *mokṣa* does not permit any connection of art with *mokṣa*. For the sake of convenience in understanding, let us make a distinction between the art object and the art experience. A similar distinction may be made in respect of *mokṣa* between reality and experience, for *mokṣa* consists in direct knowledge, or experience, of reality. We may now see whether the two aspects of art bear any relation to the two aspects of *mokṣa* as conceived in Sāṅkhya.

First as regards the art object, the harmony represented by the art object has no relevance to the reality which forms the content of *mokṣa*, whether it is the penultimate one of *jīvanmukti* or the ultimate one of *videhamukti*. In *jīvanmukti*, although the self is said to be in contact with the whole of nature through the *buddhi* predominated by *sattva*, nature is experienced only in its unevolved state with reference to which there could be no question of unity in the absence of variety. In *videhamukti* the self, being completely dissociated from the *buddhi*, goes into a state of isolation from nature. Thus the concept of *mokṣa* in Sāṅkhya does not involve the idea of cosmic beauty. Therefore artistic beauty cannot have any reference to nature at the level of *mokṣa*. Nature in its manifest (*vyakta*) condition is presented to the soul only in the state of bondage; but, being presented only in parts, its beauty is bound to be imperfect. Perfect beauty is found only in the imaginary world of art. Hence the beauty of art is better than the best that nature can present. It is thus a 'deflection' from reality and not a pointer to reality.

Corresponding to the above view of the art object, the Sāṅkhya does not recognize any relation between art experience and the experience of *mokṣa*. According to Sāṅkhya, *mokṣa*, whether of the penultimate stage (*jīvanmukti*) or of the final stage (*videhamukti*), stands merely for the complete absence of pain. It does not denote presence of bliss. It is therefore appropriately called *apavarga* — a term which has the sense of 'cessation'—indicating thereby the absence of any kind of experience. In contrast to

this negative state art experience is a positive state of pure pleasure. For this reason art experience has no connection with the state of *mokṣa*. If anything, it resembles common experience, or bondage, rather than *mokṣa*. In the state of bondage, when the self is presented with parts of nature, it experiences pleasure only as mixed with pain. But, although vitiated by pain, it is an experience (*bhoga*) anyway. Hence art, in so far as it gives an experience, though of a different kind, shares the character of bondage rather than that of release.

Thus neither the art object nor the art experience has any significance in respect of *mokṣa*. Why, then, do we seek works of art? The Sāṅkhya answer is that the only value of art is that it gives us a temporary relief from common life. At the level of common life we meet with the imperfect beauty of the natural world and thereby experience a mixture of pleasure and pain. Pleasure unmixed with pain can be experienced only in the contemplation of art. By presenting us with a world of perfect beauty, albeit imaginary, which induces in us pure, self-forgetful joy, art lifts us, although for a while, out of this humdrum existence and refreshes our souls. Since art has thus no significance beyond itself, Sāṅkhya regards art as an intrinsic value.

III

ART AS A MEANS TO MOKṢA

The view that art is an end in itself, a mere recreation, which is associated with Sāṅkhya, is not the final view of the Indian mind regarding the significance of art. Such a view is too pessimistic and negative for man to take abiding interest in art. Hence it is profoundly transformed by later thinkers, who come to look upon art as a means to *mokṣa*. Such an optimistic change comes about under the influence of Vedānta. And, as Vedānta ultimately prevailed over all the other schools in every branch of philosophy, we may well say that the Vedānta attitude to art is the typical Indian attitude.

The chief objection of Vedānta against the view that art is an end in itself is that, just as we are dissatisfied with nature in parts, so also we are dissatisfied with art. Dissatisfaction with something always implies the awareness of an ideal yet to be realized. Hence whatever value art possesses can only be as a means to a higher ideal. It is on this principle that Vedānta regards art as an instrument to the final end of man, namely *mokṣa*. According to Vedānta, it is actually the presence of the ideal of *mokṣa* in our minds that makes us turn from natural objects to art in the first instance. The ideal is only partially fulfilled in art, and hence the dissatisfaction with it. Therefore, although art is better than the parts of nature, it can only be a passage to what is superior to itself, namely *mokṣa*. Under the influence of Vedānta art thus acquires a positive significance. The significance of art for *mokṣa* is two-fold: it serves both as a pointer to *mokṣa* and as a preparation for it.

1. *Art as a pointer to mokṣa*

We can discern this significance both in respect of the art object and in respect of the art experience.

(a) *The art object*

As regards the art object, there is no doubt that it is outside the scope of reality. But it is unmixed with ugliness and unaffected by change. When we consider why artistic beauty is perfect, we find that it is because a work of art is presented as a whole and apart from its material medium. According to Vedānta, it is these same conditions that are fulfilled with reference to nature in the state of *mokṣa*. The essence of *mokṣa* is the realization of Brahman. As Brahman is the basis of everything and is pure spirit, the realization of Brahman results in the comprehensive and spiritual view of nature. The *jīvanmukta*, who attains to such a view of nature, experiences the essential harmony of all its members. By virtue of this similarity in conditions, artistic beauty,

though unconnected with reality, gives us an insight into the beauty of reality that can be realized at the level of *mokṣa*. Artistic beauty is thus a half-way house between natural beauty as we commonly perceive and the beauty of nature as the seer beholds. It is a unique order of beauty which, while retaining its resemblance to the former, gives us an insight into the latter. 'From the words of the poet men may take what meanings please them; yet their last meaning points to thee', exclaims Tagore.³

The ultimate beauty — the beauty of the entire universe — is experienced only when realizing Brahman. The presence of this ideal in our consciousness creates dissatisfaction with common beauty in nature. But we are too impatient to wait for Brahman-experience for a vision of that perfect beauty of nature. We need the immediate satisfaction of catching at least intimations of the inner beauty of the universe. It is in answer to this need that we seek works of art. To one who has realized Brahman and has a synoptic view of nature art is superfluous. He is in direct communion with the perfect beauty of the cosmos. But we at the empirical level can have contact with it only through the imaginary representations of it in art.

(b) *The art experience*

Just as the art object points to the reality which is experienced in the state of *mokṣa*, the art experience points to the experience that constitutes *mokṣa*. The joy which art yields does not remain a permanent feature of life, because it is induced by an external stimulus and is not the result of inner transformation. Hence it is impossible for us to rest satisfied with it. We long for that permanent bliss which comes from the transformation of personality accompanying the experience of reality as a whole. Nevertheless, the quality of artistic joy is such that we may well say that it serves as a significant pointer to the experience of *mokṣa*. The condition of pure joy is absolute unselfishness. The happiness that is

unmixed with any trace of pain can be experienced only when one rises above the consciousness of one's narrow interests. In the state of *mokṣa* the limitations of the self are permanently gone, so that the self eternally exists in the freedom of a larger awareness characterized by pure bliss. It is the same condition of absolute unselfishness that is secured when one contemplates beauty in art. Being lost for the moment to all the desires that commonly play on his attention, the appreciator enjoys for the time being exactly the kind of bliss in which the liberated are said to be permanently lodged. It is thus the excellence of art experience, unlike every other situation in life, that it gives us even within the bounds of ordinary existence a foretaste of the bliss which lies beyond these bounds.

The implication of this foretaste is two-fold. Firstly, it is an intimation to us that *mokṣa* is possible, and is thus an inducement to pursue it. It demonstrates that complete freedom from pain, characterized by pure bliss, is within the possibility of human realization. Man may long for liberation. But unless he begins to feel that it is feasible, he may not have the inducement to make an earnest effort for it. By serving as a sample of the state of *mokṣa*, art experience functions as a powerful incentive to the deliberate pursuit of that goal. Secondly, the glimpse of *mokṣa* that art experience represents demonstrates also how *mokṣa* is possible. It indicates that the essential condition that has to be fulfilled for the realization of *mokṣa* is that man should completely discard the narrowness of outlook characterizing his association with the body. Thus art experience points not only to the nature of the goal for which we may strive but also to the essential condition for the fulfilment of that striving.

2. Art as a preparation for *mokṣa*

We have seen that both in respect of the object and in respect of the experience art serves as a pointer to *mokṣa*. Besides these two aspects of art we may now

speak of a third aspect—the process of contemplating art, which may be said to connect the stimulus and the response, the object and the experience. According to Vedānta, the contemplation of art constitutes a preparation for *mokṣa*.

The direct means to *mokṣa* is the transformation of the mediate knowledge of reality (*jñāna*) into the immediate knowledge, or experience, of it (*anubhava*). The practical discipline that is recommended by all the schools of Indian philosophy to effect this transformation has two sides. One consists in the gradual effacement of the narrow self, the cleansing of the mind (*sattva-śuddhi*) as it is called, by the disinterested practice of *dharma*. The other consists in directing a steady and even current of thought on the whole of reality. This technique of mind concentration, or meditation, has been called by various names such as *upāsana*, *vidyā*, *dhyāna*, *nididhyāsana*, and *yoga*. It was originally associated with Vedānta and is discussed in the Upaniṣads, the later Upaniṣads, the *Bhagavad-gītā*, and some of the Purāṇas. In course of time it came to be adopted by all the other schools including the non-Vedic ones. By the time of Patañjali the technique had been developed to such detail that he had to condense the whole science in the form of aphorisms (*sūtra*) indicating its essential steps. Although there are differences among the different schools in the manner of orienting the technique, the purpose of the technique is, in all cases, the transformation of the mediate knowledge of reality into an experience of it. We may now note a special contribution of the Vedānta tradition to *yoga*.

Concentration on anything is a difficult process—not to mention on the whole of reality. The mind is well known for its fickleness. Hence to bring the mind to bear on the whole of reality, the Upaniṣads propose a long training in the method of concentration. The training is a graduated one. The beginner is put through exercises involving particular concrete objects. The idea is to enable him to acquire the power of concentration. Objects of attention of a more universal and abstract

nature replace the earlier ones at higher stages until at last the aspirant can meditate on the idea of reality as a whole. In cultivating the power of concentration, art can function as an excellent aid. This is the view of Vedānta.

The contemplation of beauty in art involves the absorption of the mind in the object. It must be noted that the absorption is not partial but complete, for the appreciator is not aware of himself as such. He is, so to say, in union with the object presented. Art experience has therefore been compared to the final stage in *yoga*, namely *samādhi*. To reach the stage of *samādhi*, the *yogin* has to strain himself for long. But art has this advantage that it is able to effect with facility and sweetness the same degree of concentration in anyone who contemplates it. The fascination that the beauty of art can cast on the mind is so complete that it is gently weaned away from itself without its knowing. Art has therefore been called 'the layman's yoga'.⁴ A mind that is continually nurtured upon art cannot but acquire skill in concentration.

Summary

Indian thought relating to the problem of the significance of art appreciation passes through three stages. In the first stage there is the popular view that art is a means to personal pleasure. In the second, there is the Sāṅkhya view that art is an end in itself. The final view is that of Vedānta that art is a means to *mokṣa*. It is both a pointer to and a preparation for *mokṣa*. While the art object indicates the beauty of reality, the art experience signifies the bliss of realizing it. And the process of art contemplation paves the way to *mokṣa* by training the mind in meditation.

Chapter Nine

THE ARTIST, THE WORK OF ART, AND THE AESTHETE

There are two standpoints from which a work of art may be viewed — one, of the artist, and the other, of the aesthete, or the appreciator. The process of appreciation is, in order, the reverse of the process of creation. The work of art stands midway between the two processes, effecting a transition from the one to the other. The transition is rendered possible by the fact that the appreciator is of the same nature as the artist. But the appreciator differs from the artist in the degree of that nature, and this is the reason why appreciation waits upon creation.

Since the final Indian view regarding the significance of art is that of Vedānta, we shall lay out the relation between creation and appreciation in terms of the Vedānta view.

I

THE PROCESS OF CREATION

The role of the artist as conceived by Vedānta is evident from his comparison with the seer and the Creator. The observation of typical facts in the actual world suggests to his fertile imagination the idea of the essential harmony of the universe. It is in this respect that he has been compared to the seer (*muni*). Such a rare insight into the beauty of the universe is his occasion for self-forgetful joy. His eagerness to share this joyous

glimpse with fellow-men spontaneously finds expression in the form of a fine art. Thus the delightful experience of the artist, which is qualitatively comparable to that of the seer, is the first stage of the creative process.

The experience cannot be transmitted as such to us who are on a lower plane. Therefore what the artist does is to transmit those glimpses of perfect beauty to us in a manner in which we can take it. The progress of thought is from the familiar to the unfamiliar. The artist therefore draws material from our common experience and at the same time transforms and exalts it so as to make it a fit instrument to reveal the Brahman-centred inner beauty of the universe. Under the white heat of the artist's imagination, the particular facts he has observed get transformed into a general idea representing his vision of perfect beauty. Thus constructing an idea to serve as a symbol of his experience of cosmic beauty constitutes the second stage. It is in this connection that the artist has been compared to the Creator. The artist's imagination plays its part here also.

The third stage consists in giving expression to the idea. The idea requires a material medium for expression. Hence, among the fine arts, we find architecture making use of stone, brick, and mortar, sculpture, of stone, metal, and wood, painting, of canvas etc., dance, of gestures, music, of sounds, and literature, of words. Thus translating the idea into a form of matter is the last stage in the creation. This calls for skill (*kauśala*), just as the first two stages call for imagination (*pratibhā*). The artist is gifted with skill even as he is with imagination.

II

THE PROCESS OF APPRECIATION

Unlike the artist, the appreciator is not sensitive enough to have unaided glimpses of cosmic beauty and the joy that comes of it. Hence for these he is dependent upon the artist.

The process of appreciating art is, in point of order, the reverse of that of producing it. The aesthetic experience of the artist throws up some general pattern, which is translated into a material form. The appreciator starts from the material expression, takes it into his mind, and contemplates it. The contemplation enables the appreciator to recapture the general idea implanted in the material form by the artist. Through the general idea the perfect beauty of the universe, which is visualized by the artist and which the idea represents, comes to be presented to the appreciator's mind also. The result is an experience for the appreciator similar to that of the artist. Like the artist's experience it is marked by two features. Firstly, it is utterly unselfish. The person becomes oblivious of his narrow private self. Secondly, as a consequence of this, a kind of joy ensues which is unsullied by any trace of pain. Thus the essence of both experiences is the same. On both these sides art experience transcends common life, which is dominated by the narrow self and is subject to a mixture of pleasure and pain. Hence art experience, whether of the artist or of the appreciator, is described as 'not of this world' (*alaukika*). The only difference between the artist's experience and the experience of the appreciator is in the nature of origin: the artist's experience is spontaneously attained while the appreciator's is induced by the artist. The work of art, which results from the artist's experience, generates the same experience in the appreciator.

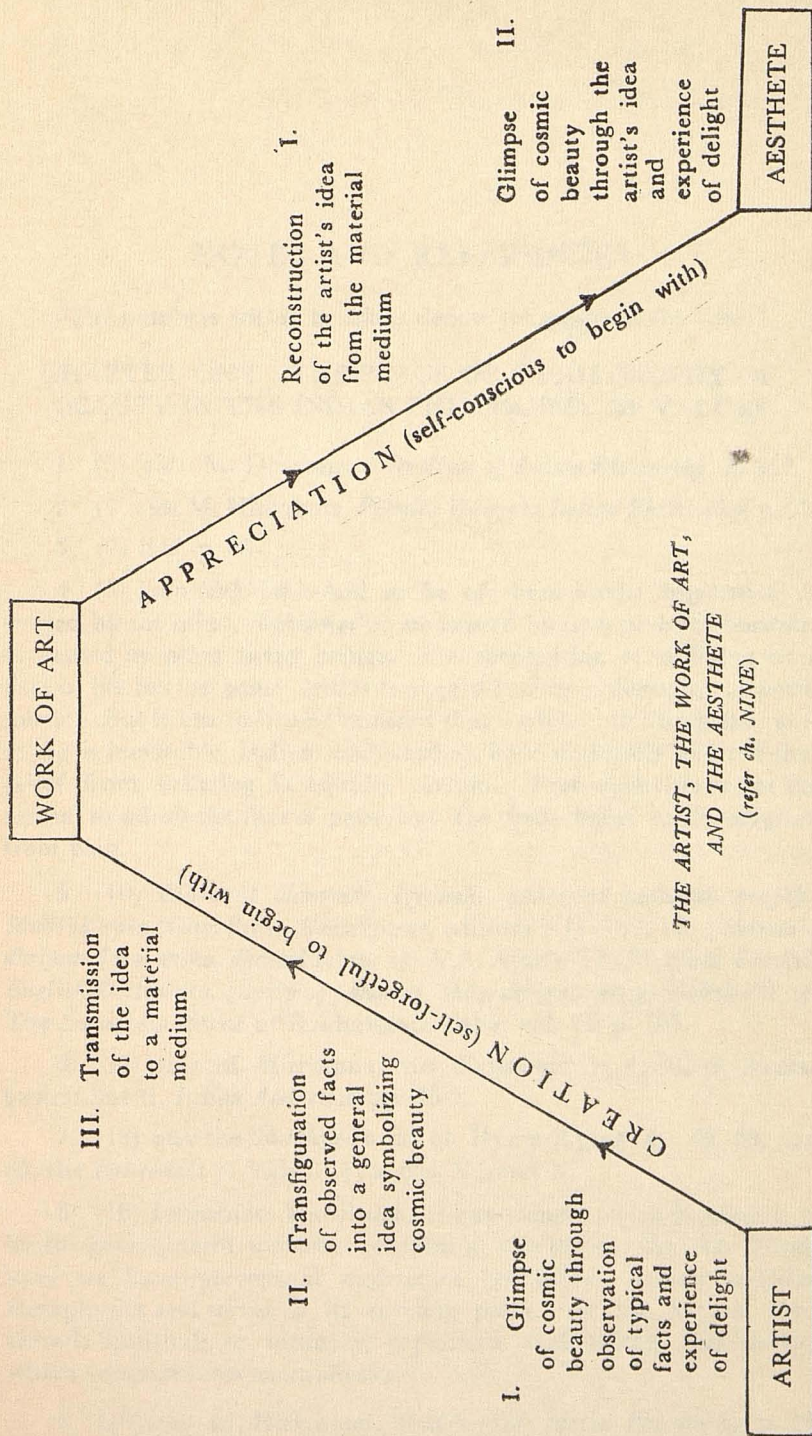
III

THE EQUIPMENT OF THE ARTIST AND OF THE AESTHETE

The artist is endowed with imagination and skill. His imagination plays a dual role. It catches for him a glimpse of the unity of the cosmos out of ordinary particular facts. Then it transforms the facts into a general idea to serve as a symbol of that unity. His skill translates the idea into a material form. The appreciator lacks the skill of the artist even as he falls short of the

artist's original vision of cosmic beauty. And these are the reasons why he is no creator like the artist. But, in order to be able to appreciate the artist's work, he must be gifted with an imagination similar to that of the artist.

The ordinary man takes for granted that passive submission to the forms of beauty presented is all that is required to derive pleasure from art, and that therefore anyone is qualified to appreciate art. The naivety of this assumption is quite apparent. That all people are not able to appreciate properly the beauties of art is an indisputable fact. The reason may be clarified by a reference to the parallel case of knowledge. Knowledge is not given to us ready-made by the external world. It arises from the deliberate construction by the subject of what is presented to it in an object. In the same way we cannot have aesthetic experience for the mere asking. The experience depends as much on the responsive functioning of the subject as on the aesthetic quality of the object. Not even the beauties of nature will evoke delight unless we put ourselves in restful adjustment with them. In the case of art the part played by the subject is even greater. We have to remember that a work of art is the expression of an ideal construction. Hence it requires an exercise of the imagination to appreciate its significance. As we have already seen, the process of appreciating art is the reverse of that of creating it. The appreciator has to reconstruct in his mind the idea implicit in the work. It is only then that he will be able to recapture the beauty represented by the idea exactly as it has been visualized by the artist. In order thus to enter into the spirit of the work, the appreciator must himself be an artist at heart. That is he must be of the same temperament as the artist, so that the artist's experience might find a ready echo in his heart. Indian aestheticians therefore describe the qualified appreciator of art as *sa-hṛdaya*, which literally means 'one of similar (*samāna*) heart (*hṛdayaḥ*)'.¹ Without this identity of temperament with the artist, a work of art will remain a closed book to one who approaches it.



NOTES AND REFERENCES

(The numbers within brackets denote the pages in the Text.)

CHAPTER ONE THE PLACE OF A PHILOSOPHY OF BEAUTY IN THE INDIAN PHILOSOPHY OF VALUES

1 (5) *vide* M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p. 332.

2 (7) *vide* M. Hiriyanna, *Popular Essays in Indian Philosophy*, p. 65.

3 (7) *ibid.* p. 66.

4 (8) Pain (*duḥkha*) is said to be of three kinds: *ādhyātmika*, or caused by the mind, *ādhidaivika*, or caused by fate, and *ādhibhautika*, or caused by other living beings. The recognition of suffering as a fact of life has led some critics to regard Indian philosophy as pessimistic. But it has to be remembered that, while admitting that suffering is inevitable, Indian philosophers have uniformly averred that relief from suffering is equally certain. True optimism is not the refusal to admit the fact of pain but the firm belief in redemption from pain.

5 (10) *dhāraṇāt dharmāṁ ityāhuḥ, dharmeṇa vidhṛtāḥ prajāḥ : Mahābhārata* (Gita Press, Gorakhpur, edition) XII, 109, 11. [*dharmāḥ*] *dhriyate loko anena, dharati lokam vā*: V.S. Apte's *The Practical Sanskrit English Dictionary*. [*dharmāḥ*] *dharati lokān dhriyate puṇyātmabhīr-iti vā*: *The Śabdakalpādruma* of Radhakanta Deva, vol. II, p. 783.

6 (12) *vide* M. Hiriyanna, *Art Experience*, p. 1; K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, *Indian Aesthetics*, pp. 45-7.

7 (13) *vide* the *Sāṅkhya-kārikā* of Īśvara-Kṛṣṇa, vv. 42, 59, and 65; the *Pañcadaśī* of Vidyāraṇya, chs. VI and X.

8 (16) Immediate knowledge, or experience, which is referred to by the general term *anubhava*, obtains at two levels. At the lowest level we have perceptual experience (*pratyakṣa*), which underlies metaphysics and serves as its starting point. At the highest level there is spiritual, or intuitive, experience (*sākṣātkāra*, *sākṣātkriyā*), which consummates metaphysics.

9 (19) *vide* M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy*, p. 19; *The Quest After Perfection*, pp. 110-11.

10 (19) *vide* M. Hiriyanna, *The Quest After Perfection*, p. 55.

11 (20) *vide Bhagavad-gītā*, IV, 34 and ff.

12 (20) *vide ibid.* VI, 29.

13 (20) *vide ibid.* VI, 27.

14 (21) *vide ibid.* VI, 31.

15 (22) *vide* M. Hiriyanna, *The Quest After Perfection*, p. 60. Śrī Śaṅkara, who is quoted here, states in his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* thus: *jñānaṁ śāstroktā-padārthānāṁ pariñānaṁ, vijñānaṁ tu śāstrato jñātānāṁ tathā eva svānubhavakaraṇaṁ...* (VI, 8); *jñānaṁ śāstrata ācāryataḥ ca ātmādināṁ avabodhaḥ, vijñānaṁ viśeṣataḥ tadanu-bhavaḥ...* (III, 41).

16 (22) It may be mentioned that *dharma* too in turn stands to gain by its relation to *jñāna*. Every moral action is a conscious reaction to a specific situation in life. Very often, in any given situation we have to choose between two or more alternative courses of action. The right choice depends on the proper understanding of the situation. To be properly understood, the situation has to be viewed in relation to the larger scheme of things to which it belongs. Such a scheme ultimately comprises the whole of reality. Hence, when one acquires knowledge of reality, though it may be mediate, one will be able to exercise greater confidence and skill in moral choice than before. Thus the practice of morality is itself improved by the metaphysical insight which it subserves.

17 (23) *The Quest After Perfection*, p. 21.

CHAPTER TWO THE INDIAN APPROACH TO THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF AESTHETICS

1 (34) *saundaryam alaṅkāraḥ*: Vāmana, *Kāvya-ālaṅkāra-sūtra*, I, 1,2.

2 (34) *Śiśupālavadha*, IV, 17.

3 (35) *Rasagaṇgādhara*, ānana I, *kāvya-lakṣaṇa-prakaraṇa*.

4 (35) *ibid.*, ānana I, *bharatasūtrasya aṣṭadhā vyākhyānaprakaraṇa*.

CHAPTER THREE BEAUTY IN PARTS OF NATURE— ITS CHARACTER AND SIGNIFICANCE

1 (39) *vide* M. Hiriyanna, *Art Experience*, p. 11. That in the case of the *jīvanmukta* the *puruṣa* is in contact with the *buddhi* predom-

minated by *sattva* is made clear by Vācaspati Miśra in his commentary (*Tattva-kaumudī*) on the *Sāṅkhya-kārikā*, verse 65: 'svacchaḥ' *iti rajas-tamoṛttikalauṣayā buddhyā'sambhinnaḥ. sātत्वikyā tu buddhyā tadā'pyasya manāk sambhedo asti eva, anyathā evāmbhūta-prakṛti-darśanānupapatteḥ iti.*

CHAPTER FOUR BEAUTY IN ART—ITS CHARACTER

1 (41) Bharata in his *Nāṭya-śāstra* recommends a balance between *lokadharmī* and *nāṭyadharmī*. The term *lokadharmī* stands for qualities pertaining to real life, and the term *nāṭyadharmī*, for qualities appropriate to the stage. The objects, persons, and events in drama, in so far as they resemble their counterparts in the actual world, are designated *lokadharmī*. And in so far as they are idealized for the purpose of drama, they are designated *nāṭyadharmī*. In his commentary (*Bhāratī Vivṛti*) on the *Nāṭya-śāstra* Abhinavagupta stresses the importance of both types of qualities, each in its own way. The world being the basis of drama, *lokadharmī* is compared to the wall on which paintings are depicted. And since it is the imaginative departures from the world that constitutes beauty in drama, *nāṭyadharmī* is compared to the paintings on the wall. (*vide* Abhinavagupta's commentary on the *Nāṭya-śāstra* — Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Baroda, edition—ch. XIII, v. 70.) For a detailed discussion on this subject read V. Raghavan, 'Nāṭya Dharmī and Loka Dharmī', *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, vol. VII, iv, Oct-Dec. 1933, pp. 359-75 and vol. VIII, i, Jan-Mar. 1934, pp. 57-74.

2 (41) '... suit the action to the word, the word to the action; with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for anything so o'erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold, as 't were, the mirror up to nature; to show virtue her own feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.' *Hamlet*, Act. III, Scene 2.

3 (42) *Art Experience*, p. 31, f. n. 1.

4 (42) Professor S. N. Dasgupta cites Rembrandt's painting of a boy at lessons to illustrate this feature. Here is 'a young boy with papers and book on the desk before him, holding the pen in his right hand, with the thumb pressed against the chin and looking vacantly before him. In and through the portrait the spirit of a young boy oppressed by the burden of studies has come out in lively form.' *Fundamentals of Indian Art*, pp. 47-8.

5 (45) *vide* M. Hiriyanna, *Art Experience*, p. 22.

CHAPTER FIVE THE PROBLEM OF COSMIC BEAUTY

1 (48) cf.

'What was good, shall be good, with,
for evil, so much good more;
On the earth the broken arcs; in the
heaven, a perfect round.'

—Robert Browning, *Abt Vogler*.

2 (48) cf.

'The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments. ...'

—Shelley, *Adonais*.3 (49) *vide Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, I, 1, 3; *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VI, 1, 3.4 (50) *vide Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad*, II, 2, 8.5 (51) *vide Sāṅkhya-kārikā*, vv. 64-7.6 (52) *vide Taittirīya Upaniṣad*, III, 6, 1.7 (52) *vide ibid.*, II, 4, 1 and II, 9, 1.8 (53) *vide Śrī Śaṅkara, Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, v. 237.9 (53) *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, X, 52, 37.10 (54) *Gūḍhārtha-dīpikā on Bhagavad-gītā*, VII, 14.11 (54) *ibid.*, XII, 6 and 7.

12 (55) cf.

'... the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there
All new successions to the forms they wear;
Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.'

—Shelley, *Adonais*.13 (55) *vide also vv. X, 19-40.*

CHAPTER SEVEN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ART CREATION

1 (67) This view is closely connected with the theory of art as imitation and of play as the child's impulse to imitation. For a short history of this view see under 'Art and Play' in the *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, N. Y., Charles Scribner's Sons, vol. I, 1973.

2 (70) cf.

'That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.'

—Shelley, *Adonais*.

3 (70) Wordsworth, miscellaneous sonnets.

4 (70) Wordsworth, *Ode on Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*.

5 (71) *vide*, e. g., Bhavabhūti, *Uttararāmacarita*, I, 1:

idaṁ kavibhyaḥ pūrvebhyo namo-vākaṁ praśāmahe |
vindema devatāṁ vācam-amṛtāṁ-ātmanah kalām ||

6 (71) *vide Bhagavad-gītā*, X, 37 : *kavīnāṁ uśanā kavīḥ*.

7 (71) *vide ibid.*, VIII, 9:

kaviṁ purāṇam-anuśāsītāram
aṇoraṇīyāṁ samanusedyaḥ |
sarvasya dhātāram-acintyarūpam-
ādityavarṇaṁ tamasaḥ parastāt ||

8 (71) *vide Śrī Śaṅkara's bhāṣya* on the *Bhagavadgītā*, X, 37 : *kavīnāṁ krāntadarśināṁ*; also on VIII, 9 : *kaviṁ krāntadarśināṁ sarvajñaṁ*.

9 (71)

pravartatāṁ prakṛti-hitāya pāṛthivaḥ
sarasvatī śrutī-mahatāṁ mahīyatām |

*mamāpi ca kṣāpayatu nīlalohitaḥ
punarbhavaṁ parigata-śaktir-ātmabhūḥ ||*

10 (72) Here is a significant observation in a book on sages. 'The poet, the nature lover, the aesthete are granted apprehensions of Reality analogous to those vouchsafed to the selfless contemplative; but because they have not troubled to make themselves perfectly selfless, they are incapable of knowing the divine Beauty in its fullness, as it is in itself.' Aldous Huxley, *Perennial Philosophy*, p. 159.

11 (72) *Abt Vogler*.

12 (73) *Gitanjali*, 1.

13 (73) *ibid.*, 1.

14 (73) *Essays in Criticism*, Second Series (edited by S. R. Littlewood), V., Wordsworth.

15 (73) *vide*

'The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shape and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.'

—Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V, Scene 1.

16 (73) *vide* Vāmana, *Kāvya-lāṅkāra-sūtra*, I, 3, 16 : *kavita-bijaṁ pratibhānam*.

17 (74) *udyota* IV, *kārikā* 10 and *vṛtti*.

18 (74) Bhaṭṭa-tauta, *Kāvya-kautuka*, quoted in Hemacandra's *Kāvya-nuśāsana* (edited by R.C. Parikh and V.M. Kulkarni, Mahavir Jain Vidyalaya, Bombay, 1964) p.3.

19 (74) Abhinavagupta in his commentary (*Locana*) on the *Dhvanyāloka*, *udyota* I, *kārikā* 6.

20 (74) Abhinavagupta, *ibid.*, *udyota* III, first half of *kārikā* 6.

21 (74) *Dhvanyāloka*, *udyota* III, *vṛtti* on *kārikās* 41 and 42.

22 (75)

*niyatikṛta-niyamarahitām
hlādaikamayīm-ananyaparatantrām |*

navarasa-rucirām nirmītim-

ādadhātī bhāratī kaver-jayati ||

—*kārikā* 1.

23 (75) M. Hiriyanna, *Art Experience*, p. 16.

CHAPTER EIGHT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ART APPRECIATION

1 (77) *Manu-smṛti*, VII, 47.

2 (77) *Yājñavalkya-smṛti*, III, 113-16.

3 (81) *Gītanjalī*, 75.

4 (84) M. Hiriyanna, *The Quest After Perfection*, p. 33.

CHAPTER NINE THE ARTIST, THE WORK OF ART, AND THE AESTHETE

1 (88) *vide* Abhinavagupta's description of saḥṛdayas in his commentary (*Locana*) on the Dhvanyāloka, *udyota* I, *kārikā* 1: 'Saḥṛdayas are those who concur (with the poet) in their own hearts by virtue of the fact that, through constant exercise in the reading of poetry they possess the capacity to identify themselves with what is depicted (by the poet) when the buds of their minds blossom (into an impersonal state).' *yeṣāṃ kāvyānuśīlanābhyāsaśāśād-viśadibhūte manomukure vārṇaniya-tanmayibhavana-yogyatā te svahṛdaya-saṁvā-dabhājāḥ saḥṛdayāḥ*).

1. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1934, 1, 1-10.
2. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1934, 1, 1-10.

3. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1934, 1, 1-10.

CHAPTER NINE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ART APPRECIATION

1. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1934, 1, 1-10.
2. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1934, 1, 1-10.
3. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1934, 1, 1-10.
4. *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 1934, 1, 1-10.

CHAPTER NINE THE ARTIST, THE WORK OF ART, AND THE AESTHETE

The artist's description of his work is a description of his own life. The artist's work is a work of art. The aesthete is a person who is interested in art. The artist is a person who is interested in his work. The work of art is a work of art. The aesthete is a person who is interested in art. The artist is a person who is interested in his work. The work of art is a work of art. The aesthete is a person who is interested in art.

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THE CONCEPT OF THE VYĀVAHĀRIKA IN ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

by

T. P. RAMACHANDRAN

First published by The Centre of Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, in 1969. The book is being reprinted.

The book deals with the significance of the realm of duality and the attitude of an aspirant for release towards that realm as understood in Advaita. Although illusory, the realm of duality, designated *vyāvahārika sattā*, is a useful field of manifold training for the realization of the non-dual reality, Brahman. Hence the right attitude towards it is attention without attachment. The book consists of eight chapters : preliminary considerations; the significance of the *vyāvahārika*; intellectual training; ethics; religion; aesthetics; reason in Advaita; conclusion.

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