

**Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada
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**SEM III Course No 09 Indian Poetics
Unit I**

(B) Main aspects of Indian Aesthetics

**Prashant M. Mannikar
Professor & Head,
PG & Research Dept of English,
Dayanand College of Arts,
Latur**

Indian Philosophy and Aesthetics

The question of beauty - Aesthetics – a part of philosophy in the West

Indian philosophers did not discuss the concept of beauty/aesthetics under philosophy as -

Its pursuit cannot lead to the attainment of the final goal of life.

Instead, the Indian Philosophers emphasized on the theory of meaning 'Vyangy artha' (suggested sense) I theory of art.

The aim of art is not to discover the nature of reality but to secure for us the highest experience of life.

Aesthetics, unlike ethics is alogical – it is closely related to psychology and regards logic or epistemology irrelevant to its purpose.

Art is a short cut to the ultimate value of life, by-passing logic. Arts concerned less with facts than with values.

Nature and Art

What is the need of seeking beauty in art, it is found in nature?

- i) Nature as a whole is beautiful, but it may not be so if looked at in parts. The part that is beautiful, may not remain so for – either the perception of the viewer may change or the nature may change . That's why the creations of art- not subject to a change in the representation of nature; or in our attitude towards them. –idealistic view of nature**
- ii) The ugliness in nature can not be eliminated without eliminating the entire unit- pessimistic view of nature- art is the sole means of enjoying the quest for unmixed joy- the need of escaping from the struggles and perplexities of everyday life. That's why the need of art.- evil in life and an ideal within us led to the invention of art. Art is a device for the provisional attainment of the final ideal of life.**

Art Experience

The aim of art is to secure for man a unique form of experience which-i) can never be attained in actual life, and ii) can be attained only when self-perfection is achieved. But either way, it is an ultimate value in the sense that it is sought for its own sake and not as a means to anything else.

The characteristics of this art experience:

- i) Unselfishness – art experience consists in the disinterested contemplation of beauty- one becomes virtually unconscious of his private self.**
- ii) It yields a kind of joy which is pure and untainted by even the least pain- transcendental character of art experience- aesthetic attitude stands higher than that of common or everyday life tainted by more or less of mental tension.**

Art experience leads to i) Atmananda ii) Rasanubhava

The Content of Art –Art Experience

All art is a blend of form and content-

Content – the meaning which art expresses – it must be drawn from actual life, but it should be judiciously idealised.

Purpose of idealization- i) having its source in the artist's imagination, it may appeal to the same faculty in the spectator and not to his intellect merely.

ii) Particular things of common experience may be transformed into general experience which induce a 'detached attitude in the spectator' which a salient feature of art experience .

The things depicted in art assume a unique character- neither real nor unreal- we do not take a logical view of them. We neither believe nor disbelieve in their reality. We merely entertain them.

The Content of Art –Art Experience

About 9th century AD – change in the conception of art experience – meaning as only the outer vesture of art and to take emotion as its true content.

The emotional character of the situation depicted by the artist constitutes the true content of art and the type of experience to which it gives rise in the spectator is called Rasa.

The Method of Art

Emotions cannot be directly communicated- it is possible only through a proper portrayal of select aspects of its causes and consequences- that is an artist has to adopt an indirect method in dealing with his material- this method is called Dhvani (suggestion).

The method of Dhvani led to other spheres of art like 'Alamkaras'- when they indirectly suggest instead of being directly expressed.

Dhvani as *Vastu* – the subject of first rate art –

i) Emotion when the resulting experience is called Rasa dhvani

ii) Imaginative situation – Alamkara dhvani

iii) A matter of fact representation Vastu dhvani

Dhvani method – as a secret of true art – leads us to the alogical character of art-

Dhvani lacks the element of necessity, which is essential to what is strictly logical process.

Art and Morality

Art cannot be unconnected with morality- the art experience is essentially disinterested and disinterestedness is the very root of all morality.

**Ethical attitude is oriented towards some purpose
Artistic attitude – the transcendence of all purpose- it is an attitude of contemplation rather than of achievement**

**Aesthetic attitude is induced by an external stimulus
Morality which springs from fear of punishment or hope of reward is really no morality at all. The unselfishness is enduring only when it springs from inner urge and is spontaneous. Art experience may give this exalted experience to spectator, but the effect might be temporal. Moreover, it results from a reaction to a stimuli that is imaginary and not a real life situation.**

Art and Morality

Fiction facilitates detachment- but it is not favourable to true morality. The selflessness effected by art experience is temporal and may cease after some time.

Some maintain that art has nothing to do with morality and is ethically neutral- but then it will cease to be a human value and its recognition of evil as a fact of life becomes meaningless.

Art is a criticism of life's values –hence can not be divorced from morality

Close alliance of art with religion saves art from possible degeneration by its separation from morality.

Art is not a selfish escape from life, it must influence life permanently or should aim to do so.

Art and Morality

The view Art is not connected to morality is not however baseless. *Art has nothing directly to do with morality.* It should influence character indirectly so as to perform the true purpose of art- to raise man above all strife and secure a form of unique experience.

That is a true poem which treats of the doings of the good and the great.

Art should not have moral aim but must necessarily have a moral view if it should fulfill its purpose.

The function of art is to awaken in us the emotion of love.

The creations of art must leave a moral influence on the spectator without his knowing that he is being so influenced.

The artist's choice to the higher aspects of life else art not only ceases to exert any moral influence; it may turn out in the end to be a means of corrupting character and degrading ideals.