

## CHAPTER ONE

### MEANING AND CONCEPT OF ART

"The question, What is art ? is one which many wise men have tried to answer, but never to everybody's satisfaction. Art is one of those things which, like air or soil, is everywhere about us, but which we rarely stop to consider. For art is not just something we find in museums and art galleries, or in old cities like Florence and Rome. Art, however, we may define it, is present in everything we make to please our senses. We shall see presently that there is a kind of hierarchy in art, and that many qualities go to make a work of art of the highest type. But there is no genuine work of art which does not primarily appeal to our senses - our physical organs of perception - and when we ask : What is art ? we are really asking what is the quality or peculiarity in a work of art that appeals to our senses". (See Read, 1958, 14-15).

To begin with, that common to all works of art is something we call 'FORM'. This is quite a simple short word, and it has a meaning familiar to everybody. If someone plays well, or runs well, or does anything well, we say that he or she is 'in good form'. And by this we mean, that they do what they undertake to do as well as possible. We mean that their bodies are in good form, and that they see, hear and act quickly and efficiently. If we use the same word about singing a song or playing a violin or acting in a play, then we are already using 'Form' in connection with art.

We also use 'Form' as a verb. We 'Form' cricket clubs and football teams. We 'Form' a society for nature study. In this sense the word 'Form' means something like 'shape', it means that we give shape to a number of people for a particular purpose. But we go further and say, for example, that ice 'Forms' over a pond, or that dew drops 'Form' on the twig of a tree. Here 'Form' means to 'take shape'.

'Form' in our discussion of art has the same meaning. The form of a work of art is the shape it has taken. It does not matter whether it is a building, or a statue, or a picture, a poem or a sonata - all these things have taken on a particular or 'specialized' shape, and that shape is the form of the work of art.

In sociological language, Art has structure, which can be described and analysed. In other words we can decipher different forms, shapes or structures of home decoration, painting, music and other types of art in a society. The French anthropologist Levi Strauss uses the structural method to analyse the mythical songs, in different societies all over the world.

There is a hierarchy in Art. The art that pleases more our senses, more not only to one sense at a time, but two or more senses together and ultimately pleases and satisfies our mind, can be regarded as the best form of art. Thus we can classify different levels or grades of art in any society

influenced by religion, economic level, outside contact etc. Man has got innate tendency or inclination, to create new Art Forms. It may be from Nature or from his own spontaneous thoughts, desires, social contacts and inspirations.

Creative activity exists from the very beginning of the human race. The things, which the cave man saw in 'Nature' gave pleasure to his sense organs and he retained the memory which he saw in 'Nature'. So he tried to recreate that beautiful 'Form' by his drawing with sharp-stones, charcoal or some other material on the inner part of the cave walls. The beautiful 'Form' of the deer with its graceful curves attracted the mind of a caveman. The vivid lines inspired his imagination. His hands and eyes tried to satisfy his imagination. He sketched many poses of the animals, which he observed in Nature. He depicted the animals in his own way. He captured the event from Nature for ever and provided treasure for the future generation to come.

Now-a-days all efforts of the archeologists are directed towards finding out those picturesque caves which are the reminiscents of past human culture. There is a firm link between Human Society, Culture, Nature and Art.

When we look at the varied beautiful sketches and paintings inside these caves we get some basic answers to our questions as to interior decoration is required for the present homes. The caveman had natural tendency towards decoration of his dwelling

place. Through decoration of his home, he made his living pleasant and comfortable. Beyond this he tried to differentiate his dwelling place from others, by creating new 'Forms' of decoration. Tagore's (1961, 11) sees art as a product of basic human urge, psychological need, and expressed the principle object of Art as also being the expression of his personality. Art gives happiness to him who experiences it with his sense organs.

### A E S T H E T I C S

According to Herbert Read (1958 : 37, 38) "It is the Aesthetic feelings that mark the rhythm of life, and hold us to our course by kind of weight and balance .... ".

A disposition to feel the completeness of experienced event as being right and fit constitutes what we called the aesthetic factor in perception."

### Nature of Aesthetic Experience and Pleasure

"The aesthetic experience is the pleasant experience of an imaginative re-creation of an emotion, which takes place primarily in the mind of the artist and secondarily in that of the art-lover under the stimulus of art" (Nagendra 1968 : 79).

The origin of Aesthetic Experience is from the human emotions. It creates pleasurable state of mind. It moves the

heart of an observer or a spectator and takes him into the state of bliss and self-fulfilment. According to Indian critics 'Rasa' is never created without emotions. The basic emotions underlying the aesthetic experience can be divided into two categories : emotions like love, wonder, courage, humour are pleasurable whereas the other like pathos, anger, terror and horror are painful in actual life. But when they become the art materials they lose their sting, the pathetic situation in art is not at any rate painful as in life. Thus aesthetic experience is not identical with human emotion. It is purged in the process of artistic creation. Aesthetic experience is both pleasant and unpleasant according to the theme of the work of art. It is mixture of pleasure and pain in varying proportion.

Human experience can be divided into three broad categories : sensual, mental and intellectual. For example, the experience of a dear person's embrace is, a sensual pleasure, its reminiscence is a mental pleasure, but the successful precise definition of the above experience is an intellectual, pleasure. The aesthetic experience is different from the experience of a reminiscence because of its impersonal and creative character, which purges it, of all the baser elements and imparts a pleasurable quality.

"The aesthetic experience can be defined as a complex experience, pleasant in essence, in which the emotional and intellectual elements are blended in a subtle harmony. It has

a separate identity because it is more refined than emotional pleasure and more colourful than intellectual pleasure".

(Nagendra 1968 : 79).

Aesthetic pleasure can be said as pleasant experience and is defined by various Indian and Western masters as follows :

i) Plato among the ancient and Marx and Freud among the modern thinkers say that the aesthetic pleasure is a kind of psycho-physical pleasure.

ii) The leaders of sanskrit poetics like Abhinavagupta and Jagannatha on the one hand and the idealist philosophers in the West, Plotinus among the ancients and Kant and Hegel among the moderns say the aesthetic pleasure is a kind of spiritual pleasure.

iii) The aesthetic pleasure is really a pleasure of imagination. This concept which has its seeds in Aristotle's poetics, was presented in a clear form by Addison in the 18th century and was ultimately given a philosophical orientation by Crose who interpreted it as a pleasure of 'intuition' in the 20th century.

iv) The aesthetic pleasure is a specific and unique pleasure, distinct from all other kinds of pleasures, material as well as spiritual. It is an absolute experience incapable of being explained in terms of the material experience. Although this concept is very old, it was presented from a new angle by A.C.Bradley, Clive Bell and other aestheticians in the beginning of the 20th century.

Considering the various definitions contributed by the philosophers we understand that aesthetic experience is not direct, but it is a reflex experience. It is impersonal and creative in character.

Aesthetics is a science of art which has same structure and some fundamental characteristics like (1) Line, (2) Form, (3) Colour, (4) Tone, (5) Texture, (6) Rythm, (7) Composition.

- 1) Line - Different lines create different feelings.  
viz. vertical lines suggest stability and majesty (High Buildings etc.).
- 2) Form - Two dimensional form, three dimensional form.  
viz. Pictures and Statues etc.
- 3) Tone - (A) High light, (B) Light, (C) Middle Tone,  
(D) Shade, (E) Reflected light, (F) Caste shaddw.
- 4) Colour - (a) Primary colours, (b) Secondary colours,  
(c) Analogus colours, (d) Complementary colours, (e) Warm and Cool colours.
- 5) Texture - Means the surface quality of an object.  
viz. roughness or smoothness etc.
- 6) Rhythm - Movement of a line or shape in regular succession of intervals.

7) Composition - Composition means systematic arrangement.

Loose separate parts composed together in harmony which gives pleasing effect, to the eye sight.

8) Design - The beauty of design can be increased by the following principles of (a) Repetition, (b) Alternation, (c) Radiation, (d) Proportion, (e) Balance, (f) Contrast.

### Fine Arts

Fine arts is one when an artist is simply expressing his inner expression in its pure form. It is so natural in his expression as the air and food is required for any life. He never conceives the idea of utility before he expresses himself. His inner self or pure spirit in him gets flow through the mediums of expression. Mediums become a bridge between himself and the expression. It flows as the blood of his body on the canvas. Pure art is one where there is no bounds or the control over his expression. It has such a rhythm not only of self, but of the cosmos. In such expression every action in dance every tune in music, every stroke in painting, every mass in sculpture, every word in poetry is full of meaning with its ethereal form and rhythm to satisfy the inner soul of a man and it elevates his spirit up to heavenly bodies. When we come to secondary arts or applied arts, it is based on utility point of view. It has got a certain function to perform in day to day life. We can call it as an applied art because it has got its use in daily life.



### Society and Art

Let us now see how sociologists and social anthropologists define Art. According to Majumdar and Madan (1963 : 170-171), "Artistic activity is an individual's attempt to give expression to his adjustment to the ideal of beauty as it is conceived by the society. Beauty is a quality which may belong to concrete phenomena as well as to abstract thoughts and images." According to this definition we see that the concept of ideal beauty and art may vary from one society to another.

There are different schools of art in our own country viz. Moghul School, Rajasthani, Himachala School, Hindu School of Art, etc. Culture reflects its mode of life in its arts. Art is a product of the society. It is a mirror of the society and its culture.

Mukerjee (1951 : 135) feels that, though art is a personal expression in the society still he derives images, motifs and symbols from the society and it represents back to the society in many folds with modified and glorious forms.

### Socialization of Art

Thus there is continuous influence of individuals and society over each other. For example for artists in India, the holy scriptures from Upanishad, Ramayan and Mahabharat become the source of ideas for expression of their inner artistic capabilities. Other sources and ideas of expression are the poverty of

slums and the villages in India, the Indian woman, the Himalaya mountains, rivers, lakes, ponds, landscapes, agricultural fields, the buildings, animals and birds, national leaders and historical events, gods and goddesses of worship of the people and a host of other things and ideas from the artists, surrounding environment, society and culture.

Apart from one's own tradition and culture, the ideals of art from another society and culture may also be borrowed due to contact with each other. For example - the process of Westernisation, Industrialisation and Modernisation in India have also brought to India, concepts of modern art, designing home decoration, fashions, and style of living. Thus, what we mean to say here is that, art is to a very great extent is a reflection of the ideals, values and thinking of the society in which the artists live.

The present study seeks to understand about the different types or forms of art and home decoration in the traditional city of Kolhapur.

Art styles arise, and are changed because art is a social activity, and because society is the framework within which an individual artist works. The joy of creativity arises out of its becoming manifest and its being seen, appreciated and copied.

Art is the great binder, the ubiquitous seal of community life and action. Art easily and effectively adapts the human mind to its social milieu and is therefore one of the conditions of social progress. The social and biological value of art rests

on the symbols or ideal transfigurations of human relations. The social view of man's life and destiny is what art gives. "All what humanity dreams, strives and suffers for, stands behind art, giving man peace, peace with self, with the society and with the universe". (Majumdar and Madan 1963 : 170).

Art reveals not only perfectibility of man, but also the enduring essence of society that transcends the barriers of class, race or epoch. Art is an inexhaustible, ever expansive treasury of beauty, strength and joy for mankind as it is ultimate measure of the quality of its progress. Art is neither an escape from reality nor a mere play with agreeable patterns of sound, shape and colour, but is essentially a revealing interpretation of certain aspects of human life and reality and the contemporary social environment. Art thus, is one of the most efficacious means of social control and guidance, enforced as these are by on appeal to sensation, emotion and imagination in sensuous forms, patterns and symbols. Art teaches and administers not by symbols but by the imaginative transfigurations of human relations, values and experiences.

In the course of time, a society chooses the forms, shapes, patterns and symbols from one expression and vision and carries it through centuries with or without modifications by adding, by decorating and by distortion.

Talking about peasant's traditional societies Jean Dethier (1982 : 91) says that "The intense pleasure which traditional

civilizations derive from manipulating ornamentation and conveying vital forces in potent signs, is expressed in the artistic attention lavished on their earth architecture. Engraved on the walls or applied in relief, it is in turn abstract, gestural, geometric, symbolic and figurative. Some of these techniques of earth building are relatively easy to master, enabling the inhabitants - either partially or entirely to construct their homes themselves.

Their walls are often protected by coating, consisting mainly of raw earth, and these are traditionally in the course of a ritual that follows the rainy season.

The façades thus change annually and can vary infinitely as each individual expresses his creative impulses in the visual, tactile and sensual richness of the walls.

Earth construction is thus fused with artistic creation, for the ornamentation is organically linked to the walls as it is to the society that produces it.

#### Art, Individual and Society

Art is developed by an individual and the masses get benefitted and thus the process of communication between the individual and the masses is recognised.

### Social Function of Art

Art expresses sensation, emotion and imagination in the form and patterns and symbols which controls and guides the society. Art guides society. For example picture of Saint 'Meerabai' makes the observer find it to be the symbol of devotion. When we observe the painting of 'Laxmi' it gives us an idea of the Goddess of wealth. The mythological background creates an image before us about that picture.

Thus art can be used as a tool to mould individuals, faith, opinions and wishes helping one on adjustment of life. Since art is used as a media of expressing ones feelings and attitudes, it expresses the fact in a small picture or in a compact form and creates an everlasting effect without describing the same situation in thousands of words. Thus art can perform this function well as it is easily acceptable by the masses and one is able to get the exact meaning out of it. Thus art can bring national integration.

When we consider the processes of national integration, we must understand that here the process of give and take of the individual and spectator does not take place.

The Buddhist art in Asia became the torch bearer of social and spiritual universals for the millions who were stimulated and inspired by communal vision and expression. Thus some culture take the help of art as a vehicle of religious truths and moral ideals, that help in mass social movements and stimulates creative activity. The good and the beautiful are expressed

and appreciated. Thus Art can administer not by morality but by imaginative transfigurations of human relations.

Thus the social views of man's life and the place of art in society are related closely. All what human beings dream and struggle for, stands behind art. Art helps in giving man peace, peace with self and with society. Art reveals not only perfectibility of man, but also enduring essence of society that transcends the barriers of clan and race. Thus the function of art is to build the world of truth and beauty.

Human race progresses with the touch of art. It increases the knowledge of the human being. It creates emotional feeling about the object or surrounding, and it is a sort of relief which is necessary for human beings because man can live with food but the mental satisfaction is gained only after observing beautiful things.

#### Myths, Symbols and Archetypes as Raw Material of Art

Myths, symbols play an important role in India. Even in the peasant's cottages we saw a variety of symbols in Hinduism. In peasant's cottages the ears of corn are tied in beautiful designs and hung on the roof. Pillars, doorways and windows are carved and the clean earthen walls show paintings of cow or other animals, real or fabulous and of the lotus, the holy mountain, the tree, the swastika and other familiar symbols. In front of the cottages the women-fold draw circular patterns of design with a white liquid paste of ground rice representing

the pedestal of the Goddess of Wealth (Lakshmi) worshipped by the agricultural folk. The footsteps of the Goddess are always painted and the paths leading from these to the granaries.

Myths still play an important role in India. Still we see a variety of symbols in day to day life. Art has through the ages abundantly and multifariously depicted images of Gods and Goddesses, heroes and heroines and such archetypal symbols. Symbols have played a very important role in early civilization. Many of the ancient symbols continue up to the modern days also and the Swastika is one of them which is known far and wide. Symbols have a role in personality integration. Art and religion in so far as these can reveal in the creative play of images and symbols from the unconscious and at the same time bring these in to harmonious relations with the conscious life help in the building up of personalities.

Indian art reflects social, psychological and symbolic as well as sculptural values. Art was more humanised and brought into closer association with the daily routine of life. In her daily life, the Indian lady, draws beautiful designs (rangoli) with symbols like - lotus, earthen lamp, Sun and Moon, peacocks, Swastika, Tulsi-Vrundawan, Laxmi the goddess of wealth, Snake, Swan, Kalash, Shiva ling and events from Ramayana and Mahabharata as an expression of art and religious beliefs.

Indian ladies smear cowdung for cleaning the front yard of the house or in front of the Tulsivrundavan and draws designs with powder and she also use vermilion and turmeric powder for

religious decoration. In painting and designs of Swastika, lotus, Kalash, Shiva-ling, 'Om', are used very artistically.

By creation and renewal of symbols and images through seizing and utilizing the various attitudes, loyalties and dispositions in the family life, oriental art helps in organising man's permanent attitudes and weaving the patterns of his social bands. Images and symbols of oriental art are largely fashioned out of the raw materials of man's primordial dispositions and feelings of child and Mother-love and of ardent man-woman love, but transmuted in to impersonal and universal symbols and motifs with none of the personal expressions and idiosyncrasies that limit the range of their appreciation and application. Derived as these are from society by art, it gives back to society a hundred-fold, for images, motifs and symbols become charged with a new glory and holiness by the religious tradition and mystical, consciousness and with new beauty and sublimity by Art. *lef?*

— This chapter is too sketchy, several paragraphs are unquoted. References are incomplete. — see last para.