

INDIAN AESTHETICS – AN OVERVIEW (ESSAY)

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Abstract

Indian aesthetics is Indian art evolved with an emphasis on inducing spiritual or philosophical states in the audience, or with representing them symbolically. Or particular concern to Indian drama and literature are the term *Bhava* or the state of mind and *Rasa* or juice or essence referring generally to the emotional flavours/essence crafted into the work by the writer and relished by a sensitive spectator or *Sahrdahya* or one with positive taste and mind. *Rasas* are created by *Bhavas*. They are described by Bharatha Muni in *Natyashastra*, an ancient work of Indian dramatic theory. Although the concept of *Rasa* is fundamental to many forms of Indian Aesthetic art including dance, music, musical theatre, cinema and literature. *Rasa* greatly differs between different styles, emotions and huge regional differences even within one style. All tastes cannot be found in one place or item, for these tastes are variously distributed throughout space. Food which are all produced effects, effects that are produced owing to various causes. The *Rasas* are the unique qualities which bring about variety in things created whose source is one and one only.

Keyterms : Aesthetics, Rasa, emotions and senses

Introduction

Aesthetics is a branch of philosophy dealing with the nature of beauty and art. Aesthetics is a discipline in which the authors and philosophers try to explain the concepts of beauty. Each culture has its own manner and style, way of categorizing objects and concepts. Aesthetics is recognized as a regular part of philosophy. Many of the aesthetic issues dealt within poetics are significant to dance, music, painting and sculpture. Many philosophers explore the concept of “beauty” in relation to “goodness”.

Saivantaras and Kamasutra

Saivantaras and Kamasutra lists sixty four *kala*’s which include the following:

- ❖ Singing
- ❖ Playing on musical instruments
- ❖ Dancing
- ❖ Writing and drawing
- ❖ Picture making, trimming, decorating

- ❖ Culinary skills
- ❖ Making birds and other shapes out of yarn or thread
- ❖ Mimicry or imitating
- ❖ Reading and chanting
- ❖ Architecture
- ❖ Colouring jewels
- ❖ Composing poems
- ❖ Making play figures

Aesthetics and Philosophy

Joseph Addison in his article *The Pleasure of Imagination* marks the beginning of aesthetics as an area of philosophy evolves with an emphasis on inducing special spiritual and philosophical state in audience. Aesthetics is regarded as a part of philosophy in west. It is because every prominent philosopher regards the question of beauty as part of the problem he is attending to solve. Aesthetics has an implicit relation with philosophy. The Indian philosophers may not deal with beauty in art but they describe beauty in nature.

Rasa

Among the various aesthetic concepts, Rasa appears to be the most popular and wide spread one. Without Rasa there can be no work of art. This concept not only applies to literature but to the totality of performance with all its elements. Rasas' can be considered nine in number, as follows:

1. Heroic
2. Erotic
3. Comic
4. Tragic
5. Furious
6. Disgusting
7. Terrifying
8. Wondrous
9. Quietitude

Rasa denotes an essential mental state and is the dominant emotional theme of a work of art or the primary feeling that is evoked in the person who views, reads or heard such a work.

The ultimate aim of any work of art is to provide aesthetic delight to the receiver. Aesthetic emotions are distinctively different from ordinary emotions, and are pleasurable. In order to take delight, we must sometime forget ourselves in the experience, even if short lived comes close to spiritual delight and neither has a beginning nor end.

No emotion is called Rasa unless it is aesthetically excited. When a young man falls in love with a young woman and his whole frame is shaken, we cannot speak of him as being a subject of Rasa. Rasa is an emotion excited by artistic circumstances. Many scholars have tried to expose their own view on Rasa. Some say that Rasa is neither produced nor suggested, nor created by anything. A proper aesthetic creation generates in as a new spiritual enlightenment which gives us enjoyment.

Dhvani

The term *Dhvani* was developed systematically by Anandhavardhana which is taken directly from the grammarians. *Dhvani* means sounds of utterances. *Dhvani* becomes essential in

the domain of the literary criticism. Its central thesis is that words or combination of words of words performs three functions in conveying senses, as they are:

1. Denotative function
2. Indicative function
3. Suggestive function

In *Dhvanyaloka*, Anandhavardhana establishes his theory that suggestion is the soul of poetry. He says that beautiful ideas in poetry are of two types: 1)Literal 2)Implied

Implies is something like charm in girls which is distinct from the beauty of various parts of the body. It is something more than literal meaning and depends on the whole poem and not merely on its parts.

Two kinds of senses are:

1. Expressed sense – idea figure of speech
2. Suggested sense – idea, figure of speech, emotion

Suggested sense is not understood by those who merely know grammar and lexicon. It is understood only by men of taste who know the essence of poetry. This sense is the most important element in poetry, and it is the soul of poetry. In all good poetry, prominence is given to this element. A poetry in which the words and their literal meanings occupy a lower position suggesting some charming sense is called *Dhvani*, which is the highest type of poetry. In case if the suggested sense is subordinate to the expressed sense may be. The quality of poetry depends on the importance given to the element of suggestion.

***Dhvani* – An Extension of Rasa**

The doctrine of *Dhvani* is only an extension of Rasa. There is no conflict between the theory of *Dhvani* and the theory of Rasa. *Dhvani* stresses the method of treatment and Rasa deals with the ultimate effect. In drama or poetry, what is suggested must be charming and this charm can come only through emotion. The emotion is not something which can be expressed directly by the words, it can only be suggested.

Obstacles to Indian Aesthetics

Every poet hopes that his poem will be read by a set of ideal readers who are competent enough to penetrate into the essential spirit of the poems and to realize fully the quality and intensity of the experience rendered in them. A published poem has its own life and destiny. The poet has as much control over it as an archer has over an arrow released from his bow. The variable factors of the readers are social environment, fund of real life experience, psychological temperament, degree of training, philosophical preferences, emotions aspects

1.Sahrdaya

Sahrdaya is the ideal reader. He is one whose sensibility is like that of the poet. He is poet himself and is capable of relishing emotional theme of poetry, and the one whose mind is clear and concentrated. Even the subtlest, minutest vibrations of the poet's heart embodied in the poem produce resonance of the same volume, pitch and tone in ideal reader's heart. Sahrdayas have the proper intellectual, emotional equipment and training. The ideal spectators are men of good character; they are born in noble families, learned, impartial, sufficiently mature, proficient in all the aspects of drama. They are attentive, honest with various disciplines like grammar and versification. They are attentive, honest with various disciplines like grammar and versification. They are experts in debate and can detect flaws, appreciate merits. They are perfect sympathy too.

The Two Basics Qualification of Sahrdaya are:

- i. He is a keen observer of situations and has sufficient fund of experiences. No one can extract all the meanings from a poem unless he is a keen student of life. If we go to the poem with an empty mind we shall gain very little. The Sahrdaya has a mirror like sensibility, cleansed, purified by his constant acquaintance with poetry. Training is very much essential and without it we are bound to miss the aspects in a highly complex work of literature. The response of a trained critical mind is superior to that of an untrained mind.
- ii. The Sahrdaya is not just a passive reader. He not only enjoys the poem but also discusses its merits and faults, and formulates the basic principles of poetic creation and appreciation. He is a reader, critic as well as aesthetician. He can be called a complete reader.

2. Diversity of Resonance

There is no doubt that the spirit of ancient Greek tragedies is capable of moving through our consciousness when we read them or see them staged. It's an open question whether the plays strikes completely as they did the Greek audience. Our experiences are at the same time similar to and different from those of ancient Greeks. The experiences are different because our social, cultural, psychological traits, kind of training, our sensibility receives are different.

Women, children and uncultured men take more interest in farce and costumes. Heroic persons take delight in heroic and terrible aspects. Young people relish love poems. Learned people take that we are unavoidably and unchangeably determined to like only certain poems, and dislike others sometimes it so happens that a reader confines his attention to one particular poetic tradition and excludes other traditions. The depth and intensity of a reader's response result partly from the familiarity and appreciation of the reader.

3. Weakness of *Pratibha*

In all poetry sensuous imagery is a vital ingredient. Sensuous images function as vehicles of feeling. In some readers the capacity to reproduce imaginatively the patterns of visual and auditory images is weak. Dramatic representation on the stage removes this obstacle to some extent. Persons with powerful *Pratibha* – intuitive talent – can adequately realize as the mental state and emotional theme of the play and characters even in reading, acting, costumes, music, and etcetera make the realization easy for those who do not have this capacity in sufficient measure. On the other hand, for the persons with powerful imagination, the stage representation is less satisfactory than their reading. The world of the play seems boundaries when read. No film version of a first rate novel or drama can be as rewarding as its reading. It unheard melodies are sweeter, unfilmed novels are better.

4. Intrusion of Personal Feelings

Sometimes the reader's attention wanders. Instead of concentrating on the aesthetic construction, he indulges in private memories and dreams. His private memories affect the feelings interfere with the free working of the poem. If the excitement is pleasurable the readers and spectators would want the experience to prolong. If it is painful, they would feel discomfort.

5. Excess of Emotion

Sometimes the readers immerse in emotions evoked by poems which melts them. A person who wades with his emotions away from the work of art is not realizing fully the event

presented there, he would lack the depth of appreciation, even if the emotion is relevant. Every genuine aesthetic response is a total response, our entire being is awakened to new spiritual possibilities. Sentimental responses reduce the complexities of poetic situations, and repeated indulgence of such things will have disastrous effect on the reader. Their ability to discriminate between experiences and evaluate them is impaired. Just as fears dim our physical vision, sentimentality darkens our mental insight.

6.Emotional Lack of Interest

The failure to evoke appropriate emotions may arise from the association of certain specific emotions with feelings of guilt or shame. It's an entirely mistake notion that spiritual strength prevents any emotional response. The four stages of human life were devised to satisfy all the genuine human urges. The English educated Indian Intellectual suffers from emotional hindrances resulting immoral pretensions. His heart slowly dries up and poem fails to move him. Putting an end to emotion is not the same thing as controlling. In life, between excessive over performed emotional reactions which hid our insight, and cold intellectualism which weakens our experiences by turning over heat into a wasteland.

Conclusion

Indian enriched culture is the deepest expression of experienced emotions that could be touched by all the other cultures but stands itself as it's ideology and identity of uniqueness and universality of the beauty. This kind of taste makes the Indian arts to become innovation and incomparable descriptions and appreciative appearances through the work of art, philosophy and other arts.

References

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