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A Study On The Personification Of Art Aesthetics In Dr Ananda Coomaraswamy's Works

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Abstract

In the Indian theory of aesthetics, 'Rasa' literary means "essence" or "taste", which is an extraction which overflows through an object of beauty. God has created this earth and the world of the cosmos with fantastic beauty. So, when we look down at every nature or object, we may feel that these arts are of God, of which everything exists with immeasurable beauty. We should realise how God created this world with concrete or permanent beauty. This paper aims at analysing the personification of art aesthetics in the works of Dr Ananda Coomaraswamy.

Keywords: aesthetics, performance, art, rasa, bhava.

1. Introduction

In the Indian theory of aesthetics, 'Rasa' literary means "essence" or "taste", which is an extraction which overflows through an object of beauty. Because according to the Indian theory of beauty or aesthetics, every work of art is made with beauty. For instance, God has created this earth and the world of the cosmos with fantastic beauty. So, when we look down at every nature or object, we may feel that these arts are of God, of which everything exists with immeasurable beauty. We should realise how God created this world with concrete or permanent beauty. These creations seem to be as much an accurate picture that may attract our sight, and we cannot believe either real or art. Our soul and mind become frozen at the beauty of a work of art.

This concept of the theory of beauty now reminds us of the word of William Wordsworth about how poetry is made. He rightly asserts as: "Poetry is the made of spontaneous which overflows from the tranquillity of the powerful mind" So, poetry is born from objects of nature such as woods, meadows, mountains, lakes, rivers, oceans, sky, earth, sun and moon. These are real or natural works of art which are painted with a variety of colours or engraved as sculptures, or reflected as poetry. Therefore, God is the actual poet, painter, sculptor and dramatist.

Apart from it, in our everyday life, we speak about our poets, dramatists, painters, and sculptors, and their works of art are only the imitation of God's creation. We may consider which has the natural beauty or aesthetics. We can understand that God's creations are natural aesthetics, but an imitative artist's work

of art is artificial. However, every artificial work of art is considered divine or marvellous and dearly attracts our artists like a poet, painter, sculptor, a critic or rasika. So, these artists function like imitators of God's creations, so they are the recreators, they are recreating such great kinds of paintings and sculptures, poetry or play, and they are beautifying or the God's creations highly described through their work of art. Either creations or recreations, both are made of beauty.

Aristotle says: "Poetry is a painting, and Painting is poetry". So, real natural paintings have already been painted in the world or on the earth through nature.

Dr Ananda Coomaraswamy says that 'Beauty' or 'beautiful' requires the careful use of the correct terminology. 'Beautiful weather', 'beautiful music', or 'beautiful picture' refers to something congenial, approving or attractive. However, when we Judge a work of art aesthetically, we may better call it *rasavant*. When we judge it from the standpoint of activity, with practical or ethical, we may better call it with different terminology. For instance, we can say the picture is 'lovely'; the action is 'noble'; the colour is 'brilliant'; the gesture is 'graceful'. These remarks would then reveal the material, the separate parts of which they are made, the activities they represent, or the feelings they express.

Beauty or *rasa* consists of aesthetic intuition on the artist's part, the internal expression of this intuition by the artist, the indication of this intuition through external signs and, finally, the resulting stimulation of the critic to identify the original or approximation of the intuition by the artist. It means an artist sees beauty. First, he forms a clear picture of it within himself. Then he expresses it in his way, that is, through painting, poetry, or sculpture. The critic or *rasika* sees this representation of beauty and explains it to the people.

The source of the original intuition of the artist may be any aspect of life, the scales of a fish, certain landscapes, palaces, the General Dance or the Knowledge of our Father. The artist discovers beauty through internal signs, and the critic rediscovers it when he feels the same experience through external signs. Beauty exists everywhere, and so it may be discovered anywhere. Only an artist can discover it, and only a critic can rediscover it.

A correspondence between theme and expression, content and form, reflects the beauty. Beauty is absolute. It can neither be increased nor diminished by us. The degree of variance lies only in our expression. The vision of beauty is spontaneous. It cannot be achieved by deliberate effort. Such people become slaves to loveliness, but the artist remains free, enjoying his vision of beauty.

The Concept of Beauty originated with the philosopher and not with the artist. The philosopher aims to say clearly what he has to say. On the other hand, the artist is fully absorbed in enjoying the beauty. A person without a love of beauty cannot become an artist just a person without wings cannot fly.

Hindu writers point out that just as a poet is born and not made, a critic or *rasika* is also born. The genius of both differs in degree and in kind. The gift of a poet is necessary to understand the act of poetry. The critic becomes an exponent of the work of art by creating a new work of art, namely, criticism. The audience, or the readers, appreciate the gleam in the work of art through the eyes of the critic and approach the original work a second time more reverently.

Works of art are reminders of the intuition of the artist. Criticism is a reproduction of the reminders. Ananda Coomaraswamy goes a step further and points out that a work of art may only be a discovery of the beauty and not a creation; beauty awaits discovery everywhere. The artist sees it and enjoys it. Then, like Wordsworth, he recollects it in contemplation and reproduces it. The artist identifies himself with beauty and gets freed from his individuality. In this sense, the artist only discovers and reproduces. So beauty does not create it. According to Ananda Coomaraswamy, Art is simply God's reflection which is shining through objects because the beauty of work art is the independence of its subjects, Like Love and Beauty.

Absolute beauty refers to that beauty which is ingrained in every object. It is this beauty which we identify with God. The conclusion is that every object is a realisation of God's being.

We already have the ancient theory of art or ancient literary criticism with a citation from our *Natyasastra*, Vedic literature, Philosophy and the Buddhist primitives. For the theory of work of arts, even though Coomaraswamy, Anandavardhana, and Sri Aurobindo have indicated the precise way. Here, Coomaraswamy interpreted the Indian aesthetic concepts of "rasa", "bhava", and "sadarsya", which are reflected not only through drama, dance and poetry but also in music, painting and sculpture.

The 'rasa' is the crucial concept of Indian aesthetics, which is dealt with by Coomaraswamy. There are nine rasas or nava rasas; love (stringara), mirth (hasya), Pity (karuna), Wrath (rudra), heroic might (vira), terror (bhayanaka), repugnance (bibhatsa), wonder (adbhuta), tranquillity (santa). These closely connect with the Bhava or expression made according to the mood of the performer, actor, or poet.

However, our Bharata's classical definition of rasa indicates a harmonious blending vibhavas (determinations), anubhavas (consequent), and vyabharibhavas (passing mood). These bhavas of rasa are usually indicative of Sthayibhavas (transformed into aesthetic rasa or emotions from the standpoints of the connoisseur). The range of bhavas is pointed out to be very vast, including not only a Sthayibhavas but also 33 Vyabharibhavas and 8 Sattivika bhavas (in voluntary psycho-physical states).

Even the word Sadrsya, can stand for 'likeness', 'versimilitude', 'resemblance', 'reflection', 'prototype', etc. These are the aesthetic principle; they might imply naturalism or realism as much as an imaginative reconstruction or metaphysical representation in conformity with a subjective idea or ideal archetype.

Dr. Ananda Coomarasamy, for the first time, explains how the Indian theory of rasa and bhava offers an adequate explanation of the essence of all arts, viz. Poetry, Drama, Dance, Painting, Music and Sculpture. Only an all-comprehending imagination could cover such a field of art. In this way, Indian speak of 'lyrical painting', which explores the various poses and movements that reflect the motives and emotions of real humans or any objects because of this kind of reality and richness as belonging to the drama, and music. In the same way, our Indian dance form begins and ends in rasa. The Indian dance has a spiritual significance, independent of its theme or charm, that clearly expresses the rasa and bhava.

Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy does not give any new aesthetic theory, but he provides new eyes to see the perfect beauty symbolised by Indian Arts. He asserts as; "The true critic is the 'rasika' who perceives the beauty of which the artist has exhibited the signs, " The poet is born, not made; but so also is the rasika whose genius differs in degree, not in kind, from that of the original artist".

He concluded that the critic seems to be an evaluator or judge, and he wants to confirm the true beauty of a work of art. In this way, he evaluates the creator or the artist.

According to Sri Aurobindo, 'rasa' is an essentially spiritual 'Ananda' or bliss distinct from the experience of what is merely physical or sensuous beauty. The same quality underlies even the deeply moving lines quoted above from English poetry. The lines reveal life's most profound truths and appeal to our innermost beings. The poet's inner soul receives unsullied the limitation of the immortal beauty of Ananda or universal joy from the higher consciousness or overmind and transforms it into appropriate rhythmic words. So 'Ananda' is nothing but praise for the rasa theory. He quotes, "The ancient Indian critics defined the essence of poetry as 'Rasa' and by that word they meant a concentrated taste, a spiritual essence of emotion, an essential aesthetics, the soul's pleasure in the pure and perfection sources of feeling". He also refers to 'Rasa', that it explains the secret of poetic creation. It is the part played by the spiritual being in us which is the secret of "rasa", or universal delight.

2. Conclusion

Apart from formulating the theories on Poetics and Drama, our Indian literature also expresses Hindu aesthetics, literature and arts. According to Coomaraswamy, poetry contributes to achieving any one or all the four Ends of our life Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. Poetry is said to embody an essential element called 'rasa' or Flavour, which is the equivalent of Beauty or Aesthetic Emotion. A piece of poetry is called "rasavnt", or having rasa. A person who enjoys this rasa is called a rasika, since he can have "rasavaddana" or taste the rasa. Visvanatha explains the beauty and aesthetic emotion in his monumental work Sahaitya Darpana. According to him, Aesthetics experience is pure, indivisible and self-manifested. It is a harmonious blending of joy and consciousness. Wonder is its watchword and a twin brother of mysticism and experience. It is enjoyed by competent persons just as the form of God could be experienced by those aware of it. Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy asserts that beauty does not exist. It is timeless and super sensuous. It could be seen only by those who can see it. It could be experienced only by those who are aware of it. It could be enjoyed only by those who rise to that level.

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