



REFLECTION OF INDIAN AESTHETICS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Beauty of nature is wonderful, unlimited, incomparable, and sublime creation of God. The changing form of nature is eye-catching, loving, jovial and ecstatic. The dewdrop on grass blades, the music of birds and shining of dawn enable one to forget all the fever and frets of life. The welfare of everyone can be realised in nature. We know that where ever in the hearts lies truth lays God and God is beautiful and beautiful is God. Thus, the truth must be appreciated. Indian aesthetics is a unique philosophical and spiritual point of view, an art, architecture and literature. The theory of aesthetics is psychic and perceptive. The activities reflect the holistic spirit of dreams of Indian aesthetics. For Indian aesthetics one simply has to go to rasa, chhand, dhavani, alamkara theories. In Vedic concept rasa is a developed concept of faith and state of permanent move. Aesthetics means the branch of philosophy that studies the principles of beauty especially in art where a person has love and understanding of art and beautiful things. Aim of this paper is to express the relationship between Indian literature and English Literature and their reflection on human society. In the evolution of human civilisation, art and literature secure to have a significant role. An artist is a social being who has social duties and responsibilities. As a process of communication, art of literature is actually the communication of the artist's experiences and observation. Such experiences and observations are all based on the contact with society and knowledge of social life.

Introduction:

Etymologically, the word aesthetics means the branch of philosophy that studies the principles of beauty especially in art where a person has love and understanding of art and beautiful things. A group of people in England in 1880 believed that art and literature had valued in themselves rather than needing any purpose.ⁱ (OALD, 2005). "The term 'aesthetics' derives from the Greek word for sensation or perception, 'aesthesia'. It came into prominence as a label for the study of artistic experience (or sensibility) with Alexander Baumgartenⁱⁱ" (Freeland, Cynthia, 20) It also means enjoyment and appreciation of beauty, which aimed at



enjoyment of art for art's sake, without any reference to its moral effects. Among literary critic, Walter Pater is the best-known exponent of their movement. Walter Horatio Pater is regarded by Saintsbury as the greatest critic of the later part of the Victorian age, as Matthew Arnold is of its middle phase. Pater in fact, represents the typical antithesis to Arnold. Arnold was a moralist, he believes in the principle, 'Art for Life's Sake', Pater on the other hand is not a moralist; he believes in the principle of "Art for Art's Sake" his methods of criticism are romantic impressionistic as contrasted with the objective classical methods of Arnold. In fact, he was closely associated with aesthetic movement in England whose followers believed in the cult of beauty, or the enjoyment of beauty for its own sake.

Initially, this movement was a European phenomenon that had its chief philosophical headquarters in France. Its root lies in the German theory, proposed by Kant in 1790, that aesthetic contemplation is disinterested, indifferent to both reality and to the utility of the beautiful object. It was also influenced by the view of Edgar Allan Poe in 'the Poetic Principle' (1850) that supreme work is a 'poem per se' a 'poem written solely for poem's sake'. A rallying cry of aestheticism became the phrase 'Part Pour Part' – Art for Art's Sake. This claim usually involved also the view of life for art's sake, with the artist envisioned as a priest who renounces the practical and self-seeking concerns of ordinary existence in the service of what Flaubert and others called "the religion of beauty".

Aim of this paper is to express the relationship between literature and human society. In the evolution of human civilisation, art and literature secure to have a significant role. An artist is a social being who has social duties and responsibilities. As a process of communication, art of literature is actually the communication of the artist's experiences and observation. Such experiences and observations are all based on the contact with society and knowledge of social life. Link between life and literature is sort of imitation. The artist's material in art or literature is life he speculates. Of course, he may approve or disapprove what he finds, but his creative art is actually inspired by his instinctive link with human life and society. This paper is to unravel that art is not merely a propaganda which is the manifestation of artist's view of life, but when it turns into a bare propaganda political, social, or ethereal; it ceases to have its spontaneity and warmth after all the avoided objectives of the artist is to create lively, warm-hearted men and not politically animated roots. This paper also aims at that some of the Indian aesthetics are under the close watch of terrorists to disfigure their beauty.

As per the IGNOU book literary criticism and IGNOU theory the word rasa was originally used for drink of the gods (Somarasa) and men alike and also for such non-drinks as mercury. In Sanskrit aesthetics, the term was employed initially in the context of drama and later to the poetry. From Bharat onwards the term signified, and still, does aesthetic pleasure or thrill invariably accompanied with joy that the audience/spectator/reader, experiences while witnessing/hearing the enactment or reading of a drama or poem. The rasa emanates from a

combination or comingling of vibhavas (causes), anubhavas (effects) and vyabhicharis (accessories)ⁱⁱⁱ.

Dhvani: The word means sound literally but does not deal with the functions of the sound in the musical sense. The theory was first propounded by Anandwardhana the ninth century thinker in his treatise, dhavanaloka (dhvani+aloka) the dhvani theory considers indirectly evoked meaning or suggestivity as the characteristic feature of literary utterance. This feature separates and determines the literary from other kinds of discourse and all- embracing principle which explains the structure and functions of the other significant aspects of literary utterance: the aesthetic effect or rasa the figural mode and devices (alankara) like shabdalanakara and arthalankara and so on.

The Sanskrit word rasa first appears in the hymns of the Vedas. Its original meaning has to do with the botanical arena, its denotative meaning as simply the “sap” or “juice” from a plant, and by way of extension, the way in which sap or juice conduces to “taste,” a strong connotative sense of the word. These original meanings are usually associated with objects of this world. rasa truly is that existence; for once one here reaches that rasa, this person becomes completely blissful, the word rasa takes on a strong ontological dimension. The word’s meaning as “essence” as applied to botanicals in the Vedas is now applied to existence itself. The earliest-known developed theory of rasa as an aesthetic concept is found in Nāṭyaśāstra, attributed to Bharatamuni. The term is used there to describe the cumulative aesthetic effect of a dramatic performance. The text lists eight rasas:

1. ŚṚNGĀRA, “ROMANCE” OR “PASSION”;
2. HĀSYA, “COMEDY”;
3. KARUṆA, “COMPASSION”;
4. RAUDRA, “FURY”;
5. VĪRA, “HEROISM”
6. BHAYĀNAKA, “HORROR”;
7. BĪBHATSĀ, “REVULSION”;
8. ADBHUTA, “AMAZEMENT.”

Although these rasas are each connected with a particular emotion (bhāva), they were not in themselves emotions, exactly. Rather, Nāṭyaśāstra describes rasa as an aesthetic taste experienced by the audience after witnessing the portrayal of emotional components on the stage. These components of emotion were categorized into four different types:

- I. Sthāyibhāvas, “foundational emotions”
- II. Vyabhicāribhāvas, “transient emotions”
- III. Anubhāvas, “emotional reactions”
- IV. Vibhāvas, “catalysts of emotion.”

I. The sthāyibhāvas are eight in number, each one giving rise to one of the eight rasas. They are, respectively:

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| 1. RATI | - | “LOVE”; |
| 2. HĀSA | - | “JEST”; |
| 3. ŚOK | - | “SORROW”; |
| 4. KRODHA | - | “ANGER”; |
| 5. UTSĀHA | - | “WILLPOWER”; |
| 6. BHAYA | - | “FEAR”; • |
| 7. JUGUPSĀ | - | “DISGUST”; • |
| 8. VISMAYA | - | “ASTONISHMENT.” |

II. Vyabhicāribhāvas listed in Nāṭyaśāstra manifest only temporarily, shifting with the course of the plot’s development. For example, in a love story, a heroine’s initial bashfulness may demonstrate her love for the hero, while later her jealousy may demonstrate the same love.

III. The Anubhāvas essentially represent the emotion-driven behaviour enacted on stage. It includes both volitional actions such as raising the eyebrows or gesturing with the hand as well as comparably involuntary bodily states such as perspiring or developing Goosebumps. The actors were supposed to be able to display these latter as well on demand.

IV. Finally, the vibhāvas include all of the various components of the drama whereby the appropriate emotions are evoked. This includes the setting as represented by stage props, the events of the play, as well as the characters portrayed. In explaining how “the sthāyibhāvas attain the status of rasa,” Nāṭyaśāstra offers what has become perhaps the most foundational statement about rasa: By arranging the vibhāvas, anubhāvas, and vyabhicāribhāvas in proper combination, rasa arises.

A sympathetic audience member (saṃrdaya) must be able to identify with the characters in the portrayal of emotion on the stage or in the poem. However, since the concrete details of his or her own emotional experiences are distinct from those of the characters represented, the identification can only take place on the level of the abstract essence of the emotion. This process of abstraction parallels the process of trying to understand the identity of one’s own self with the absolute, brahman, in Abhinavagupta’s Kashmir Śaivism as well as in other philosophical traditions in India espousing ultimate oneness.

Literature and poetry have intimate connection with other fine arts; poetry is abundantly drawn upon sculpture, painting and music. Geoffrey Chaucer’s delineation of twenty-nine characters in his poem ‘Prologue to the Canterbury Tales’ is a fine example of creating images of characters by painting or taking photographs with the pen not colour, bush and

modern gadgets like mobile phone and cameras etc. Wife of Bath's wide teeth, big hips, Prioress clothes and table manners, Squire's putting on colourful garments and Dr. of physics' love for gold etc. are portrayed beautifully. Edmund Spenser the greatest pictorial artist in verse has been deeply indebted to the tapestries and pageants to which he had an access. Christopher Marlowe's portraying art through Helen, Shakespeare's through Cleopatra and Austen's through Elizabeth is incomparable. John Keats has been influenced by the Elgin marbles and the paintings of Claude Lorrain for his 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' are some of the instances of aestheticism. "Art is an imitation of nature or of human life and action^{iv}" (Freeland, Cynthia, 06). Aristotle spoke of art as imitation, but not in the Platonic sense. The artist separates the form from the matter of some objects of experience, such as the human body or a tree, and imposes that form on another matter. Thus, imitation is not just copying an original model, nor is it devising a symbol for the original; rather, it is a particular representation of an aspect of things, and each work is an imitation of the universal whole. Imitation does not mean the representation of sensible reality but the "universals", which actually mean the permanent modes of human thought and action. A new fine art was evolved, and a sense of beauty was attached to it. Art, the aesthetes point out, reveals the nature of things much better than science. A craft is something physical while art is mental and spiritual. The fundamental spirituality, the rare artistic vision, is related to imagination.

John Keats poem 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' conveys a message in five words as the world and the body is made of five elements. He writes about the art painted on a Greek urn in five words. "Beauty is truth. Truth beauty"^v (Prof Roy & Chakraborty, 213) John Keats emphasised beauty because he thought 'truth and beauty' are inseparable. To him it is a great discovery, and so he definitely asserts "all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know"^{vi}. (Prof Roy & Chakraborty, 214).

Indian aesthetics and English literature are co-related with each other. In Indian songs, we find Indian aesthetics such as,

*"Satyam shivam sundaram,
Satya hi shiv hai, shiv hi sunder hai;
Rama Awadh mein, Kashi mein Shiva,
Kanha Bridavan mein".*

Indian Aesthetics in infrastructure point of view like Red Fort, India Gate, Parliament, Birla Mandir, Qutub Minar in New Delhi, Elephanta Caves, Taj Hotel in Mumbai, Raghunath Temple, Vaishno Devi and Lord Amaranth in Jammu and Kashmir, Akshar Dham, Somnath Temple in Gujarat, Sai Temple, Trayambakeshwar in Nasik, Kanyakumari, Rameshwar Temple in Tirvanantpuram, Jagannath Temple in Orissa, Kamakhya Temple in Assam Tripura Sundari/ Tripureshwari Temple, Neer Mahal and Unakoti in Tripura where the angels are still sleeping whom Lord Shiva left during his pilgrimage from Kailash Parvat to



Kashi Vishwanath Temple and many more reflect aesthetics as are full of art, culture and literature. As per the local Tripura myth, these angels are blessed with double tongue and if awaken make full use of it. In due course, a perfect charmer has to awake them and bring into new incarnation which is perhaps still awaited. John Keats thinks, beauty is touchstone of truth. To see things in their beauty is to see things in their truth. He also says in one of his letters, "What the imagination seizes as beauty must be truth."

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-82) was remarkable both as painter and poet and through the force of his personality came to be regarded as the leader of the revolt. The 'Blessed Damozel' is fine example of such poems. In William Morris (1834-1896), pre Raphaelitism is coloured by a nature whose instincts are broadly English. His imagination fills out the frail forms characteristics of primitive painting. He delights in unfolding broad canvasses where languorous effects are bathed in an atmosphere of serenity. He seems to be in the lineage of Spencer, not of Keats, in his virile strength with the greatest refinement of touch. Christina Rossetti was a devout Christian finding the highest inspiration in her faith and investing Anglican ideals of worship with a mystical beauty.

If we have a deep penetration in understanding the society at the marginalised point of our country, we find that history is repeating. Indian aesthetic Somnath temple was attacked by foreign forces. Their forces were defeated many times then he started sending his followers into the defence of the kings in disguise for recruitment and in due course weakening the strength of the kingdom of the kings with the help of the marshy, sandy and hilly land creatures. Even in present, our neighbour opponent friends are enabling doubly tongue creatures to creep through the borders to disrupt, dismantle and disfigure the Indian aesthetics. The day will not be far when their crawling will throw, sting, drive, fling away our babies from our own nest by such action of continuous intrusion. If a man after making clay tiger put life into it will be eaten away by his own creation. Same way, if a saint intends to awake the spirit of forbidden angels on the border line of indigenous/insurgence/marginalised people by sprinkling the water of knowledge to raise the doubly tongue creature then one has to suffer one or the other way but no option other than awakening. We have instances of such attacks on common people in Taj Hotel, Parliament, Ragunath temple, Akshar Dham, and every year threats from the terrorists to disfigure Lord Amaranth in Jammu and Kashmir. We find that from these valleys the followers of Milton's alleys are raging their hoods to disfigure the Indian Aesthetics. There is a need to make them to be aware about the fact that "Satyam Shivam Sundaram".

The philosopher, thinkers, educationists, researchers and even common people of India find that forbidden angels of Milton's dwell in modern Pandemonium foul leaders are now crawling in slum and neglected areas of Mumbai, Loni, Ghaziabad, Aurangabad, Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat and many more places by attaining the unauthorised identity. It demands immediate stoppage for the betterment of the Indian aesthetics as evil insect and evil

spirits do not like good things. It is said that a wandering fly will sit on the place of its choice first and then pollute the good things. Thus, there is an urgent need to cover/electrified /thorny wired or block like China wall the boundaries. The rose is eaten by canker the lily is disfigured by the night worms, and agnostic will disfigure the Indian aesthetics.

We find that most of the Indian songs music has sourced from English literature. For example, the Gajal, “*Chaandi jaisa rang hai tera sone jaise baal*” this silver like white colour and golden hair-clad lady is from English poem, “Porphyria’s Lover” which has been depicted diligently and beautifully by Robert Browning in Shrangaar Rasa. Another Indian aesthetic of music “*Hothon se chhoo lo tum mere geet amar kar do*” the famous song has been sourced from the play ‘Tragical History of Doctor Faustus’ where the protagonist says, “Sweet Helen give me immortal kiss”. This is also perfect example of conjugal love or shrangaar rasa. Christopher Marlowe became immortal in the form of Doctor Faustus for immortal illusionary lip -kiss by Helen in the form of Mephistopheles whom he says “she, suck forth my soul” and at last regret for the salvation to have the last drop of Lord Christ blood. Contrary to it, in American literature Emerson has been influenced by Indian aesthetics. He has been influenced by Geeta. He writes in his poem Brahma which, is the quintessence of poet’s studies in Indian scriptures as he says,

*“If the red slayer thinks he slays,
Or if the slain thinks he is slain
They not well the subtle ways
I keep and pass, and turn again.”^{vii} (Tilak, Raghukul 57)*

Neither soul can be slay nor it slain. It is taken from a well-known chant of Geeta –

*“Neinam chhindanti shastrni, neinam dahati pawakaha
Nachaeenam kaledyanti aapo, na soshyati marutaha”*

(It means the soul is immortal. It cannot be broken up into fragments by arms, it cannot be burnt by fire, it cannot dissolve in water, and even air cannot dry it up. It is supreme sap of enjoyment. The conjugal of soul and super soul. This is perfect rasa.)

In ancient writings, also we find similarities with English poets, Balmiki’s Ramayana, Maha Kavi Kalidasa’s meghdoot, and other epics of the world. Pictorial quality in Spencer’s work is speciality of a poet his poetry is full of images of all kind that is sensuous. It was Spencer’s nature to look at the world of reality and fancy as a grand pageant splendid spectacles as he writes, “sweet fruit of paradise”, “bowls full of cream”, “in wilderness an wasteful desert”, “through woods and westerns wild of wondrous beauty and of bounty rare”, “her neck and breast were ever open bare”.

John Keats in his poem 'Ode on a Grecian urn' writes about the picture of a young girl on an urn which will be permanent, ever blooming, ever glowing, ever-young, ever- captivating and enchanting picture. He writes-

*"Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness
Thou foster child of silence and slow time,
Heard melodies are sweet but those unheard
Are sweeter, therefore, ye soft pipes, play on
Bold lover never, never canst thou kiss
Thou winning near the goal- yet do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou has not thy bliss,
Forever wilt thou love, and she be fair!
Beauty is truth, truth beauty'- that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need not know"*^{viii}

(Prof Roy & Chakraborty, 213-14)

William Shakespeare writes in "Antony and Cleopatra" about Cleopatra's beauty. Enobarbus says,

*"Age cannot wither her nor custom stale
her infinite variety."*^{ix} (Shakespeare, William, 196)

E.M Forster's novels are all about human relationships. The main symbols of "A Passage to India" are named in the titles to three parts of the novel, masque, caves, temples each is more or less closely related to a corresponding variant; Arch, Echo, and sky. The novel made up of three big blocks in first of three blocks is brought to a masque, in the second to the cave, in the third to a temple. Malabar caves and other Indian Aesthetics have been referred in this novel.

Aesthetics was inseparable from morality and politics for both Aristotle and Plato. The former wrote about music in his *Politics*, maintaining that art affects human character, and hence the social order. Because Aristotle held that happiness is the aim of life, he believed that the major function of art is to provide human satisfaction. In the *Poetics*, his great work on the principles of drama, Aristotle argued that tragedy so stimulates the emotions of pity and fear, which he considered morbid and unhealthy, that by the end of the play the spectator is purged of them. This catharsis makes the audience psychologically healthier and thus more capable of happiness. Neoclassical drama since the 17th century has been greatly influenced by Aristotle's *Poetics*.

Indian art may seem overly ornate and sensuous; appreciation of its refinement comes only gradually, as a rule. Voluptuous feeling is given unusually free expression in Indian culture.



A strong sense of design is also characteristic of Indian art and can be observed in its modern as well as in its traditional forms.

The art of India must be understood and judged in the context of the ideological, aesthetic, and ritual assumptions and needs of the Indian civilization. The Hindu-Buddhist-Jain view of the world is largely concerned with the resolution of the central paradox of all existence, which is that change and perfection, time and eternity, and immanence and transcendence operate dichotomously and integrally as parts of a single process. In such a situation, the creation cannot be separated from the creator, and time can be comprehended only as a matrix of eternity. This conceptual view, when expressed in art, divides the universe of aesthetic experience into three distinct, although interrelated, elements—the senses, the emotions, and the spirit. These elements dictate the norms for architecture as an instrument of enclosing and transforming space and for sculpture in its volume, plasticity, modelling, composition, and aesthetic values. Instead of depicting the dichotomy between the flesh and the spirit, Indian art, through a deliberate sensuousness and voluptuousness, fuses one with the other through a complex symbolism that, for example, attempts to transform the fleshiness of a feminine form into a perennial mystery of sex and creativity, wherein the momentary spouse stands revealed as the eternal mother.

The Indian artist deftly uses certain primeval motifs, such as the feminine figure, the tree, water, the lion, and the elephant. In a given composition, although the result is sometimes conceptually unsettling, the qualities of sensuous vitality, earthiness, muscular energy, and rhythmic movement remain unmistakable. The form of the Hindu temple; the contours of the bodies of the Hindu gods and goddesses; and the light, shade, composition, and volume in Indian painting are all used to glorify the mystery that resolves the conflict between life and death, time and eternity. The arts of India expressed in architecture, sculpture, painting, jewellery, pottery, metalwork, and textiles, were spread throughout the Far East with the diffusion of Buddhism and Hinduism and exercised a strong influence on the arts of China, Japan, Myanmar (formerly known as Burma), Thailand, Cambodia, and Java.

The Gupta period established the classical phase of Indian art, at once serene and energetic, spiritual and voluptuous. Art was the explicit medium of stating spiritual conceptions. A special kind of painting, executed on scrolls, depicted the reward of good and evil deeds in the world. Painting of the Gupta period has been preserved in three of the Ajanta caves. Represented are numerous Buddhas, sleeping women, and love scenes. The whole spirit is one of emphatic, passionate force. The paintings in the first and second Ajanta caves date from the early 7th century and can hardly be distinguished in style from those of the Gupta period.

The variety of scenes represented affords valuable information on the manners, customs, and dress of the Gujārāti culture; Gujārāti painting was a continuation of the early western Indian



style. Rajput painting flourished in Rajputana, Bundelkhand (now part of Madhya Pradesh), and the Punjab Himalayas from the late 16th into the 19th century. It consisted of manuscript illumination in flat, decorative patterns and bright colours that resembled Persian and Mughal painting of the same period. Rajput painting, a refined and lyrical folk art, illustrates traditional Hindu epics, especially the life of the god Krishna.

European influence had started to infiltrate with the establishment of British rule in India. After the turn of the century, there was a revival of interest in the older styles (stimulated by the archaeological study that had been going on in India since about the middle of the 19th century). Art centres arose in Bombay and, more importantly, in Bengal, where many of the artists were associated with the Calcutta (now Kolkata) School of Art and with Visva-Bharati, the university founded in 1921 by the Indian poet and painter Rabindranath Tagore to reconcile Indian and Western traditions. Experiments were made in styles ranging from Ajanta, Rajput, and Mughal painting to impressionism, postimpressionism, and surrealism. Artists such as Nandalal Bose drew their inspiration primarily from Ajanta art; others, like Jamini Roy, found their inspiration in Bengali folk art. By the mid-20th century, Indian painting was international in flavour, and Indian artists were working in a number of different idioms.

At last, I would like to conclude with Cynthia Freeland words that, “Plato discussed art forms like tragedy along with sculpture, painting, poetry, and architecture, not as ‘art’ but ‘techne’ or skilled craft. He regarded them all as instances of imitation”^x (Freeland, Cynthia, 21). Beauty of nature is wonderful, unlimited, incomparable, and sublime creation of God. The changing form of nature is eye-catching, loving, jovial and ecstatic. The dewdrop on grass blades, the music of birds and shining of dawn enable one to forget all the fever and frets of life. The welfare of everyone can be realised in nature. We know that where ever in the hearts lies truth lays God and God is beautiful and beautiful is God. Thus, the truth must be appreciated. Indian aesthetics is a unique philosophical and spiritual point of view, an art, architecture and literature. The theory of aesthetics is psychic and perceptive. The activities reflect the holistic spirit of dreams of Indian aesthetics. For Indian aesthetics one simply has to go to rasa, chhand, dhavani, alamkara theories. In Vedic concept rasa is a developed concept of faith and state of permanent move.



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