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SHES BOISHER PRIYA (AN AFFAIR IN THE EVENING OF LIFE)

Ninganna thibbaih

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Abstract:-This paper is an attempt to explore how Tagore's interpretation of forms and colours were instrumental in the expressions of his emotions and also how he interpreted the role of colour in painting as an intermediary between the world of forms and the world of ideas.

Keywords: Tagore, emergence as an artist, paintings and themes.

INTRODUCTION:

Tagore (1861-1941) the 20th century most prolific and prominent Indian poet started painting in his career when he was in sixties. Line and colours thus became a passion for him and from 1926 onwards. He devoted more and more time to painting. So prolific a painter was Tagore, He was the first Indian artist who produced thousands of paintings and exhibited the works across Europe, the United States and Russia in 1930. Abanindranath, his artistic nephew, praised his works as a sudden burst of creativity, just like that of a “volcanic eruption”.

Emergence as an artist:

The natural adroitness in using the hands, a lively imagination, rhythm, balance and indulgence and the playful quality of enjoying with colours, are probably the reasons for the emergence of Rabindranath Tagore as an artist. The painter in Tagore laid dormant from his childhood. During the period of his adolescence in manuscripts of Pocket Book (1889) Malati Punthi (1878) there were some doodles which were in lighter mood. When he was self educated his paintings and sketches reflected his matured idealism, experience and subconscious thoughts. He said “Now in the evening of my life my mind is filled with forms and colours” so he often described as Sesh boisher priya (an affair in the evening life).

Paintings and Themes in Tagore's pictorial works

Tagore gathered his ideas mainly based on the three Rasas 'Laughter', 'Queer' and 'Pathos' in his paintings. The remaining rasas 'Passion', 'Valorous' and 'Quire' were rarely used. His paintings are stark images of man and nature. His paintings are also expressions of freedom. Many of his works are doodles which resemble birds, faces, nature, animals, trees, dancing figures, portrait and self portrait etc...

Landscapes take a prominent theme of his artistic outputs. An enriched vision and an unfluctuated growth towards maturity can be observed. His deep familiarity with colour, texture, beauty and rhythms of lines express the innumerable moods and enigmas of nature. Some of his paintings were inspired by the lush and greenery of Santiniketan. He endeavors to give the landscapes through his pictorial mediums, which indicates his growing sensibility by using the colours golden yellow, reddish and brownish often contrast with a black ground. The golden yellow which resembles the golden rice fields of autumn was his favorite colour. He admits that he was colour blind on red and green, the colours he used rarely.

The figural compositions of human pictures are composed in vertical position and a single horizontal row. He portrayed variety of physiognomic facial expression such as grimace, one of disgust, one of laughter and so on. His female figures are more graceful; where as the masculine heads have a greater variety of ranging from the comic to tragic.

Tagore tried to capture the spirit of nature and the mood of elicited in his heart. The common features of his landscapes are silhouetted trees placed against the sky on either side of the painted surface and the open middle through which the glow of the sky is seen. This serves as a compositional focal point and also as a means of leading the eye in to the pictorial space.

Absolutely it's true that the rhythm which allows his imaginary world flow on to the canvas. He never faced any encumbrances and preventive obstacles in the career of artist. When one tries to become aware of his paintings through his pictorial mediums then it is important to realize of 'thought gesture'. Michel Foucault stresses "it's not 'what' but 'why' which is an important point in an archival discourse. The questions which should be posed are: Why did Tagore essentially begin painting? Why did he point these specific paintings? These types of questions can lead us to the answers that "his act of painting as not an event of exception but as a development of the very ideas and concepts which constituted his consciousness in whatever he did.

Tagore was primarily a literary artist before he started painting. A person who has not gone through a proper training in an artist language he tries to speak in a new language with disposal efficiency. So he writes to Pratima Devi "practically in these days I am not writing at all, when I get free moments, I paint..." (I) He writes to Indira Devi from Shantiniketan "I was very busy, now holidays have begun. I am thinking of just to sit in a corner and paint I don't feel like using my pen" (II)

Tagore's fascination for geometrical shapes is also manifested in several of his paintings. Archer notes his fascination with angular geometry, for smooth upward-thrusting shapes, for gaunt ovoids, for protruding beaks, teeth and noses and slimly pointing triangles. For Tagore, these shapes seem to be strangely imbued with the expressionist revelation of deep psychic pain. The pensive, ovoid face of the woman with large unwavering soulful eyes was perhaps a more obsessive theme than any other. Exhibited first in 1930, endless variations of the same mood-image continued to be emergent throughout. The earlier ones were delicately modeled and opalescent, while the later examples were excessively dramatic with intensely lit forehead, exaggerated nose ridge painted in strong colours, foregrounding a primal gloom. Both Archer and K. G. Subramanyan trace the expressionist motif in Tagore's repeated representations of the ovoid face of the desolate woman, reading into them the haunting presence of Tagore's sister in law Kadambari Devi: His art is incontestably modern ... in intimate essentials it presupposes the modern theory of the unconscious, the revolutionary ideas of Freud and the reevaluation of reason which has followed the discoveries of psychoanalysis.¹⁵ In fact, as one moves through the later paintings of Tagore there is an overpowering sense of darkness and the grotesque, an aspect that is also brought out in the numerous mask paintings that depict the subject in pain. Whether they refer to Tagore's anguish at the trauma of his family or a broader anguish at the fate of mankind remains unclear, but the strange brooding mood seems to cut across a variety of forms European and primitive. The influence of the European modernists leads Mitra to evaluate Tagore as, "the only great Indian painter, who starting with his heritage of oriental art gradually proceeded towards the European"¹⁶, but the presence of the influence of primitive art suggests a broader convergence. At the same time Tagore was also collaborating with Nandalal, frequently drawing from him the representation of the everyday details. With Nandalal, Tagore also embarked upon the woodcuts of Sahaj Path, the Bengali primer where images from everyday life were used for pedagogic purposes.

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