

The Moral Role of Indian Art

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Abstract:-- The more significant of the art work the more universal and impersonal is its appeal. Artistic genius consists in the expression of Universals from concrete relations and situations. For man is so constituted that his performed satisfaction can come only from a conscious or unconscious identification of himself with other than self. A lyrical poet, a musician, a painter or a sculptor may so express the individual passion and sentiments of love, grief, and exaltation that there become abstract typical and Universal as embodied in all actual or possible relations, and situations. The Nayikar of the medieval temple of Central India, Bengal and Orissa do not suggest gross sex but the spot and delight of the primordial energy that underlines the causations of the universe and of every manifestations or appearance such images of female beauty have in fact contributed towards the sublimation and elevation of sex to a supersensible plane, following up the entire medieval Indian religious thought that found the sex motif as the symbol of the cosmic energy explaining the conception and creates of the universe.

Keywords – Indian Art, express individual passion and sentiments, medieval temple, female beauty.

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1. The Social and Ethical Significance of Early Buddhist Art:

In the Orient what largely passes for religious content of art is social and ethical. In the early Buddhist sculptured decorations at Bharhut, Sanchi, Bodh Gaya and Amaravati we see illustrations of the birth legends of Buddha with exquisite characterization and loving attention to details, depicting a moral tale that for all time to come stands for the glorification of certain social virtues like self-sacrifice, tenderness, compassion, purity and truthfulness that have been accepted by the Oriental peoples.

2. The Jataka Illustrations at Ajanta:

We have here the entire procession of Indian life from love-making, dice playing, hunting, procession of horsemen and elephants and march of armies in foreign lands to the episodes in the birth, life and death of the Buddha, from the sports of monkeys and elephants and cock and buffalo fights to the flowering palasa tree along the trunk of which a swarm of ants climb up. A strong sense of naturalism and a broad humanitarianism have mingled with an intense spirituality to animate the graceful men and women and their chaste gentle poses and gestures. In fact the idyllic scenes of Indian life, the rich panorama of the following jungle or the pomp and pleasures of the king's court from the setting of the enchanting figures of the holy beings of wisdom and compassion the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas some of the

loveliest and purest visions ever dreamt of and executed by an artist.

3. The Barabudur Bible:

The Buddhist legends but also legends from the Ramayanas and the Mahabharata are depicted in bas reliefs and paintings in a thousand temples within the frontiers of India and in Java, Siam and Cambodia, where the Indian art traditions spread. In the great Stupa at Barabudur in Java we have the procession galleries adorned by a series of some two thousand bas reliefs, illustrating the life of the Buddha. The reliefs at Barabudur are so extensive that if laid end to end they would cover a space of about three miles. In these magnificent sculptured panels which have been seen by thousands of devoted pilgrims through the centuries, we are unfolded a poignant epic drama of human emotions in a cosmic setting where man reaps the fruits of good and evil deeds in previous births, where god, man and animal links in a continuous chain of sequence of existences, inexorably working out the universal law of Karma and where the profound lesson is to end the uninterrupted cycle of births and deaths compassion and sympathy for all.

This triumph is expressed in every single gesture and mood of gods and angels, men and women, animals and birds in the vast panorama. Over the procession of human episodes which are linked together under a master-plan and in each of which every figure is absolutely unique and sincere in expression of face, gesture and pose of body, there broods the ineffable mystery of the oneness and harmony of life.

4. Biblical scenes in European Christian Art:

The Javanese sculptured panels have been compared with Ghiberti's "Doors of Paradise" in Florence designed at the opening of the 15th century. Ghiberti, Jacopo dellaQuercia, Donatello and the Della Robbias presented many Christian scenes with marvelous verisimilitude and elegance of

composition. The creation of Adam and eve, the Temptation and Expulsion, the story of Cain and Abel, Esau and Jacob, Christ before Pilate, the Crucifixion and the Resurrection were all pictured by Ghiberti in delightful natural backgrounds with superb illustrational effect. Like the javanese scenes with the various events from the Old Testament and of the life of Christ and Fathers of the Church formed the dource of inspiration to generations of pilgrims who visited the Baptistry at Florence.

There is, in the first place, a tendency towards sentimentality marked in the Christian scuptors that found its apotheosis in the delicious Bambini and sweet Madonnas of the Della Robbias and Raphael. This is far different from the chasity and restraint of movements and the serene rhythm of gestures of men and women in the Amaravati or Barabudur reliefs. Many angels, Madonnas and Cherbims in Christian art are similar, pictured it appears from local models.

5. The Notion of Super-sensual Perfection in Art:

Man's physical beauty appears in Indian art as the rapture of the soul. It suggests supernatural capacity transcending the limitations of physical well-being. It is far different from the form of physical perfection derived by classical Greek sculpture from the spectacle in the national games and that became almost an obsession of Europe for several centuries. The luminous beauty of the Buddha, the Bodhisattva, Vishnu or Shiva is in subtle unison with the supernatural aims of the body as the receptacle of the soul.

6. Metaphysical Conceptions in Art:

In Indian metaphysics the feminine symbolizes the mind in creation and movement, not in rest and withdrawal that are symbolized by the masculine. Indian art represents the female divinity in the state of profound meditation only in such Buddhist images of the goddess of wisdom as prajnaparamita and Tara seated in the rigid Padma and vajrasana with the legs firmly locked in. usually, however, the female divinities express movement, and are in the standing, gentle Tribhanya or in alidha and pratyalidha poses in vigorous action against the forces of evil. The female divinity or Shakti in Indian religion and art symbolizes form, energy or manifestation of the human spirit in all its rich and exuberant variety.

7. Impersonal Love and Beauty in Art:

The grim supernatural types of beauty in Indian art are the types of loveliness as represented by the Yakshis, Vrikshakes and Salabhanjikas in Sanchi and Mathura and the Apsarases and Nayikas in Khajuraho and Orissa in the later centuries. The Apsaras is the danseuse of heaven as the Nayikaos of the earth. Each is free in her loves and wiles, unattached to the

home and the family. In these figures Indian art expresses the delights and sports of sex, the incomparable charm of woman that lures men and gods.

CONCLUSION:

Oriental art metamorphoses and exalts man's natural delight in human beauty and the associated eroticism into an abstract intellectualized and universal sentiment that becomes the cule to profound knowledge, insight and striving. The incomparable figure of loveliness becomes also the social symbol or universal that effectively drains the unconscious of the individual, and prepares him according to the state of his psychological development for a generic and impersonal vision of love goodness and beauty.

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