

Grotesque Elements: In different Rasa's

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ABSTRACT: *In this paper we highlights the Rasas which come under the different grotesque elements. Rasas have contained some kind of human emotions, sentiments and attitudes which found expression in the Indian art. Many grotesque sculptures and paintings have come into existence to express these emotions, sentiments and attitudes, a particular term which is related to both literature and art is the term Rasa from the time in memorial Rasa played an important role in the Indian Art and its mythology. These Rasa's are expressed in both the mythology and the paintings in different periods of history, for example: during Mughals, Rajasthani, Pahari and Persian Miniature paintings. According to the theory of Indian Aesthetic, all rasas are the type of different grotesque elements, but the 'Veebhatsa' is a synonymous of grotesque.*

Key Words: Grotesque, Rasas, Indian art, Painting, and Sculpture

There are a wide range of human emotions, sentiments and attitudes which found expression in the Indian art. Many grotesque sculptures and paintings have come into existence to express these emotions, sentiments and attitudes, a particular term which is related to both literature and art is the term Rasa from the time in memorial Rasa played an important role in the Indian Art and its mythology. These Rasa's are expressed in both the mythology and the paintings in different periods of history, for example: during Mughals, Rajasthani, Pahari and Persian Miniature paintings. According to the theory of Indian Aesthetic, all rasas are the type of different grotesque elements, but the 'Veebhatsa' is a synonymous of grotesque.

The urge for communication is instinctive in social man. He wants to communicate his desires, his feelings, his emotions, in short, his total being. The mode and manner of communication determine the form and meaningfulness of the content. Terms like '*Bhava*' and '*Rasa*' to the writers of the Indian '*Shipa Shastra*' relate to the meaningfulness and hence to the content of the works of art.

According to Dr. Coomarswamy- "*beauty can be dreadful or disgusting, exalted or lowly, cruel or kind, obscure or refined, actual or imaginary.*" He further says that '*there is no subject that cannot evoke rasa or Brahma Swadan*' in man. *The absolute which is neither created nor destroyed but can be invoked and mentally realized.*'

Apart from Rasas there are emotions '*Bhava*' which also produced grotesque art. The term Bhava and Rasa are related to any work of art and give meaning and contexts to any work of art. There are eight types of Bhava like disgust (jugupsa), fear (bhayanak), love (rati), laughter (hasya), anger (krodha), amazement (vismaya), sorrow (soka), and energy (utsaha), which all produced corresponding Rasas and which in turn becomes instrumental in giving grotesque elements to the art.

There are nine Rasas in which grotesque can be defined and illustrated very well.

- *Shringara Rasa*- this Rasa is considered the best of all the Rasas. This Rasa depicts grotesque elements in erotical perception and the idea. It tries to produce extra-ordinary beauty which can be created by extreme affection, erotic tempting and attraction. The main deity which is depicted in this Rasa is Vishnu in green color for example; we can talk about the sixth century A.D Maithuna sculpture of Orissa as well as on the tenth century A.D. Lakshmana temple and eleventh century A.D. Kandariya Mahadeo temples at Khajuraho, these examples can be termed as grotesque. These sculptures represent a feeling of intense love, for example first century B.C. a grotesque dwarf coupling with a female with ram's head is depicted.¹
- *Karuna Rasa* is a rasa of unusual, profound trauma which becomes grotesque as it produces a feeling of mercy but grotesquely. It is the emotions of empathy with the pain of others. (Compassion, tragedy, pathetic, mercy, presiding deity is Yama depict in dove colored) the sixth century statue of Ganga from Ellora Caves is an example of this.

¹ <http://www.find.org.in/intellectual-dialogue/find-newsletter/find-indialogues-3-march-2014/>

- *Raudra Rasa* is Rasa of anger and tries to convey an active emotion which is destructive. The sculptures and painting depicting this Rasa in red color. The deity of this Rasa is Raudra. This Rasa is usually represented in the anger of Kali rampaging through the world, shows how no one can evade her anger which leads inevitably to violence, she is often shown slaying demon. And another example is Shiva doing wild Tandava dance a dance of anger also shown in the Natraja bronze Chola Natraja of the twentieth century.²
- *Vibhatsa Rasa* is the main Rasa which bring out the emotions of the grotesque, a sensation of vomit-like uneasiness, feelings of revulsion and revulsion at the representation of something like that in the art. This Rasa produces macabre and violent imagery, disgust, uneasiness and repulsion for example, in the mythology Yakshas particularly their female counterpart are presented in such a way that we get the feeling of disgust. *And disgust is often a quicksilver emotion—metamorphosing in a blink into anger or self-pitying sorrow.*³ These are depicted as extremely dangerous beings devouring human meat, sucking the blood of children and torturing men. The exterior appearance of yakshas are presented in such a way as well as of Rakshas that they are inconsistent. They are capable of werewolfness. Therefore, sometimes they get the images of gigantic shapeless abominable monstrous, with long arms and monstrous mouth, for example: Kubera was presented as the one eyed giant with three legs and sometimes as a dwarf with droopy belly and short legs and sometimes as strong and handsome, sometimes transformed as beautiful and seductive girl.
- *Bhayanaka Rasa* in the Rasa of fear and frightfulness which a mind cannot accept as true. The presiding deity is Kala depicted in black color the *Head of Bhairava*⁴ in the fifth century; a reddish brown terracotta sculpture has represented Shiva in his terrific appearance that is when his third eye is open on his forehead. The frightening expression of the Shiva, his rolling and protruding eyeball and open mouth is depicted very well.⁵
- *Hasya Rasa*- a Rasa which produces laughter. A Rasa which produces amusement for the onlookers. The presiding deity of this Rasa is Ganesha, depicted in white color. According to *Chitrasutra*⁶ this Rasa tries to produce laughter by presenting deformity like hunchbacks or dwarfs. The purpose is to express awkward position jesters to produce laughter and amusement. The dwarf drummer of the Gupta period is an example of a merry fellow and his distortion and expression clearly make him amusing. The examples of Ganas are also a mark of an amusing, whimsical figure of Indian art ganas is known the attendant of Shiva; the other is like Fat yaksha in Mahabalipuram.
- *Adbhuta Rasa* is also a part of grotesque. It creates an anthropomorphic image in mind as it strikes the onlooker by exaggerating the human qualities such as extravagant beauty, wisdom and super power and sometimes also a human weakness such as greed, hatred, jealousy and anger. The presiding deity of this Rasa is none other than Brahma depicted in yellow color and its example is the sculpture of Naga Nagini from Belur made in the twelfth century CE, another is Ardhaneshwara is the adbhuta, also an example of the grotesque.
- *Shant Rasa*- this Rasa denotes and signifies serenity, peace, tranquility and calm. This Rasa does not mean the absence of activity or emotions rather than it depicts the steadiness which lies at the core of true experience of peace, which can be experienced anywhere any time. It is the experience of the true God as well as equanimity. *It holds in itself non-violence, as well as equanimity.*⁷ For example the unusual gigantic size of sculpture of Buddha god which depicts the serenity, tranquility, but the enormous size of it, makes it grotesque.

Among all the Rasas and emotions, Shant Rasa is generally found more predominant in Indian art because the purpose of most of the art form is to attain 'Moksha', but if we see the history of Indian artist, he never showed the hesitation in producing images that are more repellent, absurd, fantastic and bizarre for example the 'Dasarupa' that clearly assert that beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder. According to Dr.

² <https://www.lifepositive.com/nine-states-of-emotional-empowerment/>

³ <https://www.lifepositive.com/nine-states-of-emotional-empowerment/>

⁴ Pal, Pratapaditya. (1986), 'Indian Sculpture: Circa 500 B.C.-A.D. 700'. Vol 1, pub: University of California Press. p-244

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⁶ Pal, Pratapaditya. (1986 'Indian Sculpture: Circa 500 B.C.-A.D. 700'. Vol 1, pub: University of California Press. p-37

⁷ <https://www.lifepositive.com/nine-states-of-emotional-empowerment/>

Coomarswamy, "beauty can be dreadful, fearful or disgusting, exalted or lowly, cruel or kind, obscure or refined, actual or imaginary."⁸

Therefore, it means that different Rasa's can produce a grotesque element in a work of art and they have been doing it from ancient time. The Rasa not only played a significant role in visual but also in literature. Many characters are based on the theory of Rasas and Bhavas.

⁸ Nayar, Kavita. (2008), 'Elements of Grotesque in Indian Art- A Brief Observation'. Posted: February 20, 2008, 8:17 A.M., Kavita Nayar's Blog, <http://4art.com/profile/KavitaNayar>