

## LITERATURE, MUSIC AND FINE ART: THE MYSTERY OF THE EXPRESSIVENESS OF THE HUMAN MIND IN THE LIGHT OF TAGOREAN AESTHETICS

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### Abstract

*This research article is based on the aesthetical point of view of Rabindranath Tagore on the expressive attitude of mankind and on the various renditions of the Fine-Art. There are trillions of tender tendons situated in between each and every rendition of Fine-Art and actually, make a beautiful coalescence between them. Tagore has explained all the distinct essences of them. Tagore also explored the prime reason and the justification of the supreme power of the expressiveness with the mysticism of the 'rasa theory' which is the core particle of the Indian Aesthetics. The major tune of the Indian literature, as well as fine-art, is 'Bhuma'. Tagore reveals the transcendental power of Bhuma that actually accelerate the artistic qualities inherent in man which leads to generate 'beauty'. A balanced proportion of 'beauty' creates a bridge between the connoisseurs and the divine Absolute. Tagore believes that among of the all renditions of Fine-Art, Music is the most powerful, beautiful and expressive art form which can bless a man to turn in a 'mastermind'. Tagore unravels the cosmic sensation of Indian music as well as ragas and strikes a symmetrical correlation with the Universal whole. It is the justification of Tagorean aesthetics. It may inspired by the Indian aesthetics with its spirituality at the fullest but if we culture it thoroughly, we can see the amalgamate form of the Western and the Indian aesthetics which produces nothing but the 'Global Aesthetics'- a new discipline developing through intermixture of component belonging to both Indian and Western aesthetics which opens up a new window for a newer vision towards Tagorean aesthetics.*

**Keywords-** Aesthetics, Art, Beauty, Expressiveness, Literature, Music, Tagore.

### Introduction

The locution 'Fine Art' has an intrinsic value as it divulges the finer sentiments of human and the beauty lies in its sonority, proportion, form and content which creates the bridge towards aesthetics. We may notice that generally the visual organ and the hearing organ have escorted human to the unparallel artistic imagination and to the extreme expressiveness through the creation of fine arts. There are tenuous relationships among all the fine arts. The Literature portrays imageries, static or dynamic in character, are to be generated through imagination and exact mode of expression. That is why we can metaphorize Poetry as 'speaking picture' and visual art like painting, architecture and sculpture as 'mute poesy'.

The French versatile writer, historian and philosopher **François-Marie Arouet** known by his pen name **Voltaire** said in rhetorical language- **"Painting is dumb Poetry and Poetry eloquent**

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**Painting**” though it was not to be found in any manual. **William John Thomas Mitchell**- known as **W.J.T. Mitchell** wrote in his essay titled “**Mute Poesy and Blind Painting**”- “*The most fundamental difference between words and images would seem to be the physical, ‘sensible’ boundary between the realms of visual and aural experience. What could be more basic than the brute necessity for eyesight in the appreciation of painting, and the sense of hearing for the understanding of language? Even the legendary founder of the ut pictura poesis tradition, Simonides of Ceos, acknowledges that, at best, ‘painting is mute poesy.’ It may aspire to the eloquence of words, but it can only attain the kind of articulateness available to the deaf and mute, the language of gesture, of visible signs and expressions. Poetry, on the other hand, may aspire to become a ‘speaking picture,’ but it would be more accurate to describe its actual attainment in Leonardo da Vinci’s words, as a kind of ‘blind painting.’ The ‘images’ of poetry may speak, but we cannot really see them.*” (Mitchell, 1986).

Fine art associated with our sense of hearing is called aural art. The main aural art Music is dynamic in character. Though the sound is the basic element of both music and literature, literature is concerned with the comprehension of the words composed of sounds uttered or unuttered, while music is formed only with the sonorous sound which consisting of pitch, timbre and volume. Music and Architecture have been described as *‘Music is liquid architecture; Architecture is frozen music’* by **Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**. Therefore, the forms of expressions whatever they may, they correlate among themselves with a delicate relationship called **‘synaesthesia’** and always lead us towards aesthetic delights as well as the voyage to the stream of *Rasa*.

Indian aesthetics complements the *Rasa Theory*. Rabindranath Tagore unravels the mystery of the chamber in *Rasa Theory* with his aesthetic point of view. According to Tagore – a person always gathers knowledge from the universe as a lifelong process. Hence, the sense of ‘knowledge’ has two dimensions. In the cognitive domain, we just only gather information as an outer sense of knowledge. At this stage, an intellectual stands behind the intellect. But in the affective domain, a true realization generates the spark of wisdom. It’s the stage where wisdom coalesces with wise to generate the ultimate truth of the Ultimatum or *Brahma*. *Upanishada* says that we are the fragments of the most powerful, most beautiful, most auspicious *Brahma*. Therefore if we unfold the mystic energy inside ourselves by insight, we can make a strong connection with the Ultimatum. We can realize the power of wisdom which is beyond information based knowledge. The ray of wisdom can kindle the candle of self-realization.

Tagore asserts that Science offers us a lot of information which are critically proved. Science tells us the accurate equations, measurements, theories which are static. There is no scope to add any kind of brush-strokes of our various realizations as they are not static but abstract. It is the way that our hearts can make us to think rationally and add a different kind of moods and flavors of realizations which vary man to man. These essences of self-realization bloomed in Literature. Mankind can see the reflection of self-realization like a mirror-effect in Literature. The self-realization is not established on accuracy or the materialistic truth but whatever a bunch of stupendous fantasies it is, it becomes the ultimate truth of a literature and a true art. From the primitive era, man wants to correlate imaginations with the astounding attributes of nature as well as the universe which generate the Fairy-tales. When the correlation makes the highest level of bond between mankind and the fictitious or non-human characters of literature, it seeks its

justification. Therefore the prime work of literature, as well as art, is to describe the reality including the cosmos. It is the outcome of the correlation between the creative play or 'lila' by the divine absolute or *Brahma* and mankind. But the 'lila' (creative play) generates not only beautiful but also 'ugly'.

In his earlier concept, Tagore thought that the prime duty of Literature is to create and express the Beautiful. But later he realized that the thought was a judgmental one. The experience of Literature and the experience of Art are not the same. Therefore Tagore rearranged his thought. According to him, it is not that the 'Beautiful' generates the Joyfulness as a catalyst in Literature but actually, it is the sense of 'Joyfulness' which strikes our heart and helps to realize the 'Beautiful'. It is not that how the literature produces the sense of beauty but the most important is its true realization. The subject can be too little to afford negligence from the materialistic world but in Literature it may represent the 'Beautiful'. Literature of tragic senses makes us too obsessed to drink the nectar of the beauty by its tragedy. But in real, we are too much afraid of tragedy, soreness, painful conditions of life and we never address them as 'Beautiful'. It is the magic-wand of exceptional expressiveness which transforms a tragic literature to a true Art. As Rabindranath Tagore says-

*“Amari chetonar ronge panna holo sobuj..*

*Chuni uthlo ranga hoye*

*Ami chokkh mellum akashe*

*jwole uthlo alo*

*pube pashchime.*

*Golaper dike cheye bollum “sundor”*

*sundor holo se” (Tagore, Ami, 1936)*

*[“With my senses' hues*

*Emerald as green I muse*

*And the Ruby as red*

*As my sight I spread*

*The sky is luminous*

*East to West with light glorious;*

*To rose I said “Bonny is thee”*

*And so did she be.”](Translated by Rajat Dasgupta)*

[http://www.ratemyliterature.com/magazine/read/ami-myself---a-tagore-poem-translated\\_697.html](http://www.ratemyliterature.com/magazine/read/ami-myself---a-tagore-poem-translated_697.html)

The human soul exists with its three-dimensional image viz. I am, I know and I express. The perception of 'I am' is equivalent to the image of the eternal truth of *Brahma*; the cognition of 'I

know' is identical with the spark of the wisdom of *Brahma* and the feeling of 'I express' complements the image of the infinity of *Brahma*. When the perception of 'I am' makes a narrow sense, it only indicates the selfish attitude of human being. But the broader sense of 'I am' is selflessness where no division can last between the first person and the second one. This integration makes a human expressive in his own way. When the existence of a man fulfilled its justification in the existence of mankind in a whole, his expressiveness will never cease by his daily needs. The expressiveness of the infinite joy of the universal integration finds its own way in the Literature, Architecture, Painting, and Music.

It is the only reason for what we can correlate our own selves with the ultimate expressiveness of the literature and this realization becomes the internal truth which is eternal. The pain, the soreness expressed in literature enlightens our thoughts towards tragedy. We can realize that tragedy gives a sensation towards '*Bhuma*', the Sanskrit word especially used in *Upanishada*. **M.S. Srinivasan**, a former Research Associate at Sri Aurobindo Society, has discussed '*Bhuma*' in his article named- '**Values, Ethics And Wellness: An Integrated Corporate Perspective**'. According to the author the term '*Bhuma*' gives "*the sensation of flowering into a vast, fertile and expansive fullness.*" (Srinivasan, 2012) To realize a dynamic and tenable prosperity, the constant endeavor towards higher values and aims are required. It can uplift us from the brute selfish nature to the selflessness and Literature as well as Art becomes the medium of this prosperity. It is told that- "*In our human nature there are deeper and higher elements, closer and receptive to the Spirit, which have a natural inclination towards Bhuma. They are the ideal mind, ethical and aesthetic being, intuitive intelligence and the deeper emotions. These are the elements in human nature, which are the transmitters or channels of the spiritual impulsion in human life, manifesting in the higher aspiration of man for truth, beauty, goodness, perfection, progress, freedom, justice, unity and wholeness. The path to highest well being for the individual as well as the community lies in developing this higher nature in us and making it a conscious and transparent instrument for manifesting the Bhuma-nature of the Spirit in our material and outward life.*" (Srinivasan, 2012)

Human nature wants to grasp the essence of '*bhuma*' in Literature as well as in Art as it harmonizes the relation between the inward realization and the mighty Truth which is Beautiful too. Tagore finally realized the eternal lines of **John Keats**- "*Beauty is truth, truth beauty...*" and he says – Truth is beauty, beauty truth. The ultimate Truth realized by '*hrida manisha manasa*' or the heart, the intellect and the mind is recognized as the Beautiful. Tagore discovers a harmonious tune between the ideas of **Keats** and **Yajñabalkya**. According to **Yajñabalkya**, the renowned sage and philosopher of Vedic India- we truly realize ourselves in whatever is lovable to us and it is the reason that we address it beautiful. *Upanishada* says- '*Anandarupammritam yadbibhati*' or the expressiveness of existing bodies represents the 'infinite joy' and the 'immortal beauty' of the *Brahma*. Literature and Art expand the field of the continuous endeavor of expressions of the ultimate truth felt by the heart. It may be ugly through our outer eyes but the insight vision address and admit it as the Beautiful.

Human-mind correlates with the world not only for the needs and knowledge but also for the sake of Art. From the primitive era, the expressiveness of the earliest ancestors of the genus 'Homo'

makes the modern man fall into astonishment. Continuous struggle for existence cannot cease the frolicsome expressiveness of the human ancestors and as a result, the mutation has completed its journey towards Homo sapiens or the 'wise man', who knows the art of living and living for art.



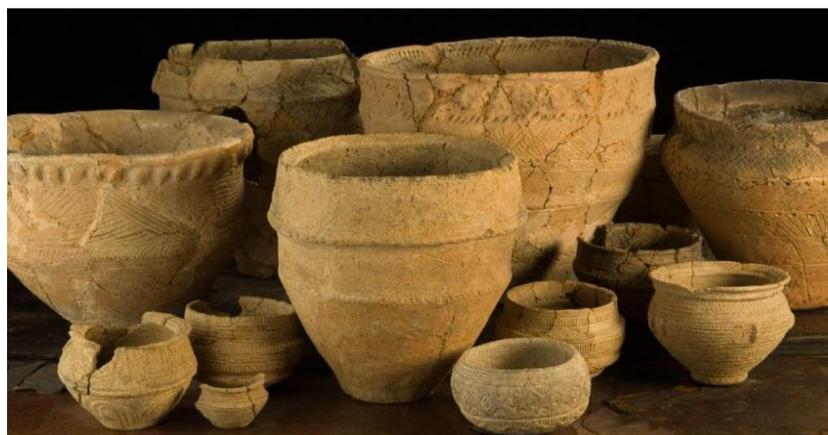
1. Cueva de las Manos Argentina Cave of the Hands 2. Lascaux cave paintings

[Source:

<https://www.google.co.in/search?q=cave+paintings&safe=active&espv=2&biw=1242&bih=606&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi08KLywPbOAhXF8Y8KHTZfAN0QsAQIJw> ]

These two pictures of the cave paintings are the living examples of the artistic mind of the primitive man. He never jailed his thoughts in between the primary and secondary needs like other animals but he felt an urge to express his various thoughts which drove him to find lots of medium of the various expressions. It leads to the rising of the Masterminds of the world of art.

The life of a primitive man was not a cake-walk; he struggled for his life, his food, his shelter like other animals. Basically, he had no exception except his mind, as it thinks; his heart, as it feels. He had a strong desire to express his thoughts and his feelings and his sense of beautification led him to decorate his everyday utensils in an artistic way. A little pottery, a harsh weapon, the cave-wall, the food, the clothing and every single piece of everyday needs were transformed in Art-forms which are beyond imagination of the greedy needs of materialistic, practical and maleficent requirements.



3. The Early Bronze Age pottery from the cemetery in the Mound of the Hostages at Tara

[Source:

<https://www.google.co.in/search?q=cave+paintings&safe=active&espv=2&biw=1242&bih=606&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi08KLywPbOAhXF8Y8KHTZfAN0QsAQIJw#safe=active&tbm=isch&q=early+bronze+age+pottery> ]

This picture depicts the sense of beauty of the primitive man where some insignificant water potteries become the symbol of the beauty as well as the art. It is the ultimate satisfaction in dissatisfaction of an Artist. The primitive men not only expressed their feelings through these concrete art-forms but also by modifying their language of interpretation they achieved another feather in their throne of expressiveness.

The origin of language of the human species has been the topic of scholarly discussions for several centuries, but there is no like-mindedness on the ultimate origin or age of human language. One problem makes the topic difficult to study viz. lack of direct evidence. Some people argue that the origins of languages probably relate closely to the origins of modern human behaviours. In the book named '**THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF PRIMITIVE MEN**', **Dr. Albert Churchward** asserts - primitive men or pygmies had dances as Sign Language; they spoke a mono-syllabic language and had a Sign and Gesture Language. (Churchward, 1912)

According to Tagore, interpretations must have two dimensions; one is the 'language' and the other is its 'style'. Languages are the '*signs of ideas*' and their styles are the '*signs of feeling*'. Tagore was deeply moved with the essay titled '**THE ORIGIN AND FUNCTION OF MUSIC**' by **Herbert Spencer**. According to Spencer, music has an indirect effect of modifying the 'language of emotion' as it has its root in the continuous endeavour of the recitative tones, intervals and cadences of speech which express combinations of feelings and intensify them to create the embodiment of music. Music reacts upon speech and increases the power of rendering emotions. Spencer told that- "*..... it is the function of music to facilitate the development of this emotional language; we may regard music as an aid to the achievement of that higher happiness which it indistinctly shadows forth. Those vague feelings of unexperienced felicity which music arouses--those indefinite impressions of an unknown ideal life which it calls up, may be considered as a prophecy, to the fulfillment of which music is itself partly instrumental. The strange capacity which we have for being so affected by melody and harmony may be taken to imply both that it is within the possibilities of our nature to realise those intense delights they dimly suggest, and that they are in some way concerned in the realisation of them. On this supposition the power and the meaning of music become comprehensible; but otherwise they are a mystery.*" (Spencer, 1875)

Therefore, music, having its root in emotional language, gradually evolved from it, and has ever been reacting upon and further advancing it. The complex musical phrases by which composers have conveyed complex emotions may have influenced us to make those cadences of conversation by which we convey our subtle thoughts and feelings. The philosopher-poet Tagore was mesmerized by the expressiveness of a true art. According to him, a true art should have an exception in itself and the varieties of expressions are creditworthy for this. So in Music, expressiveness is an important domain which evolves beauty. The essence of Beauty produces '*rasa*' in man and voyages to aesthetic delights. Tagore said that expressiveness in Music depends on its lyrics and musical notes. The beauty and exuberance of lyrics escort Music towards the highest level of 'Aesthetic Emotion'. As a worshipper of literature, Tagore was obsessed by the flavor of *Kirtan*, a typical form of music found in Bengal. It overwhelms him with its beauty of lyric as it is the perfect casket for the *Kirtan*-tune. In his euphoria, Tagore creates his marvelous songs where the lyrics and tunes complement each other. There is no supremacy between lyrics and tunes. Both have the same importance to create an ideal music, an expressive one. By this vice-versa process, the beautification and expressiveness of Tagore's songs accomplished its journey towards highest level of aesthetic emotion.

As the time goes, the philosopher poet Tagore has also been fascinated by the expressiveness of 'pure music' which is beyond lyrics. In the perspective of beauty in music, it is told by the western aesthetician **Edward Hanslick**- "*the beautiful is not contingent upon nor in need of any subject introduced from without, but that it contains wholly of sounds artistically combined.....*" (**Hanslick, 1854**)

Indian Classical Music has justified the phrase '*sounds artistically combined*'. Especially the instrumental tunes and the '*alapa*' of a raga by a vocalist provoke the sublime beauty of 'pure music'. The structure and the pattern of notes of each raga are important to produce their own exceptional appeal. By this distinction each raga unfolds the beauty of expressiveness and creates the bridge towards aesthetics. So it should not be an exaggeration that the expressiveness of the Indian Classical Music and the concept of its beauty is 'end in itself'. In 1917 according to Tagore's essay named '*Sangit-er Mukti*' (emancipation of music) in '*Sangit Chinta*' (thoughts regarding music), he has portrayed the eternal sensations of *ragas* and *raginis* with the illustrations of his words. Raga *Bhairon* is not just a tune with major and minor chords but actually it embellish the 'awake' of the first ray of the dawn; raga *Bhairabi* illustrates the melancholy of the companionless Absolute; raga *Multan* renders the utmost tiredness of the respiration of the scorching dusk; raga *Kanada* evokes the forgetful state of midnight-lady about her journey of love; raga *Purbi* elicits the draining of the tears from the eyes of a companionless evening as like a widow; raga *Paraj* sketches the drowsiness of the last part of the night.

Tagore has written about the utmost expressiveness of Indian ragas which coalescences with Nature in his '*Chchinnapatrabali*' (a bunch of letters of Tagore's scattered thoughts or a collection of dull, mundane letters). It seems to him that the torsion of *Bhairabi* tunes expresses the extraordinary sensations towards the universe. It seems that the intrinsic core of the heart of the universe is going to be poured with the tragic senses; this essence originates from none but '*ananda*' or the joyful avatar of the *Brahma*. Tagore was supposed to feel that the key of the organ instrument is being twisted continuously by the conscious hand of the Almighty Time, the *Mahakaal*, and what originates is a profound melancholy *ragini* from the midst of the heart of the universe. The sunshine becomes timid; even the herbage become silent as they are listening something; the magnificent sky overwhelmed by the worldwide tears-stream; the poet can see the blue eye of the sky with the moist of tears has given the steadfast look. That is why poet Tagore has written in his song-

**'sakalbelar aalay baje biday-byathar bhairabi...'**

[ 'The morning light aches with the pain of parting by *Bhairabi* tune' (Translated)]

The *Bhairabi* tune playing by the Indian metallic instrument '*Sanai*' or '*Sehnai*' emerges the utmost lamentation of the universe. Tagore regretted, why the metallic tune of '*Sanai*' or '*Sehnai*' is so expressive than a human vocalist! Actually both of these arts are evolved by human and what makes difference between them is the expressiveness which varies artist to artist. It is the magic of expressions by which a non-lively material is reforming to its lively-entity. It seems to Tagore that science and philosophy cannot but *Bhairabi* can express the mystery of the birth of the universe; it can reveal the ultimate truth of the livelihood of Mother Nature. Whatever we know, are all about mortal world and they are too little to know the 'Big Bang' but we have no direct idea about the ultimate truth, embellishes by *Bhairabi*, is immortal and can conceive the whole universe.

These are the mysteries of the expressiveness of the human minds as well as the masterminds which are unable to describe by words but to feel by heart. Tagore, being one of their descendants, realized that the incongruity of our everyday life can be dismissed by the music as well as the musical symmetry. Music erects the universe in a 'perspective' where those little incongruities erased by the majestic power of the symmetrical harmonious whole and the universe emerge as the loveliest portrait sketched by the finest artist beyond centuries. The birth-death-giggles-weep-past-future-present of human-world is being played as a compassionate rhythm of poetry through the inner ear of an artist. These feelings decrease personal prevalence and intensity; our hearts are being poured with full of levity; we float in the musical stream and relish the ultimate peace and the cyclic motion of the 'expression-creation-revelation' is going to betide continuously.

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