

A GROTESQUE VIEW IN THE PAINTINGS OF A. RAMACHANDRAN: AS A INTERMINGLED BODIES

Atiya Parveen

Assistant Professor, Department of Fine Arts, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, India

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we highlight the works of Achutan Ramachandran has masterfully articulated with the sentiments and emotions in his paintings which he deals on the human psyche and he creates his style which looks exaggerated and he grotesquely distorts different as not seen in any other artists of the world. In his works he applied absurd forms of bizarre and intermingled realistically, his vibrant colors evoke a sense of irony and crummy. When we saw the whole life of A. Ramachandran, his works divided into three main phases: first phases in which he inspired the local landscapes and murals of their own town, he influences more when he went to pray in the Krishnaswami temples with his mother, he saw in the evening that the lights gleaming on the murals look different. The second phase of his life based on the partition of India and Pakistan, which was highly effected on his psyche. In the third phase, his works look as he inspired by the beautiful ponds of dreamy landscape and Kerala bourgeois life.

KEYWORDS: *Intermingled Bodies, Exaggeration, Distortion, Paintings, Three Phases of A. Ramachandran Works*

INTRODUCTION

Paper

Achutan Ramachandran has masterfully articulated with the sentiments and emotions in his paintings which he deals on the human psyche and he creates his style which looks exaggerated and he grotesquely distorts different as not seen in any other artists of the world. In his works he applied absurd forms of bizarre and intermingled realistically, his vibrant colors evoke a sense of irony and crummy. When we saw the whole life of A. Ramachandran, his works divided into three main phases: first phases in which he inspired the local landscapes and murals of their own town, he influences more when he went to pray in the Krishnaswami temples with his mother, he saw in the evening that the lights gleaming on the murals look different. The second phase of his life based on the partition of India and Pakistan, which was highly effected on his psyche. In the third phase, his works look as he inspired by the beautiful ponds of dreamy landscape and Kerala bourgeois life.

Before starting the discussion on his paintings, we shall be sketching on his life. Achutan Ramachandran Nair was born in Attingal, in 1935. It was a small town of Kerala, here is a cluster of temples and a small beautiful palace, that was an outcome onto his works. But in 1950, he left this place and moved to Trivandrum. In 1957, he went to Shantiniketan leaving Kerala forever behind him. Life in a village brought him intimacy with nature, even while he absorbed temple beauty and their culture, the performing arts, and Malayalam literature, he always carried in his mind and spirit, deriving

more inspiration from his creative imagination.

His overall oeuvre was seen, not only in paintings, he worked on others medium too, like sculpture, ceramics, stamps design, illustrations of children books, graphics, drawing, miniature paintings. His graphics and drawings made before 1968, executed a new discovery, piquancy of irony of that time when the people got sting and soreness after the Partition of India and Pakistan. He was only 13 years when the frighten partition has happened, this was his childhood memory which was etched in his psychology, and off course not easy to forget it to anyone, that's why his works revolved around the grotesque and produced some dark subjects taking from his real-life tragedies and harsh reality of the war. His earlier works made between 1968 to 1979, like *'The Lovers'*, *'En Masse'*, *'Three Phases'*, *'Resurrection with the Robbers'*, *'Garden of Gethsemane'*, *'Last Supper'*, *'Portrait of Scavenger Woman'*, *'Entombment'*, *'The Cry'*, *'Crucifixion'*, *'Descent from the Cross'*, all are made in 1968 and few are the Illustrations of *'Saadat Hasan Manto Stories'* made in 1979, in which *'Thanda Gosht'*, *'Dhuen'*, *'Boo'*, *'Kali Salwar'*, *'Uper Neechey Darmiyan'*, *'Khol Do'*, are the notable examples. In these works, the images are sometimes distorted, headless and sometimes exaggerated fantastically and create an insinuation of macabre submerged in all insidious mystery and portrayed of the social ambience. In one of his interview, Ramachandran said that *"I had been painting tortured human beings, faceless people and desecrated bodies. I had been sarcastically portraying the political tormentors of the world from the 1960s to early 1980s. I used to read Dostoyevsky to keep myself in the dark mood. Slowly I realized that I need not create a dark mood, because in my personal life I was comfortable, and the political climate was already dark enough. I was caught between this comfort and confusion only to realize much earlier that artistic pursuit is not sloganeering but expressing one's life through a medium. I wanted to be sincere to my works. So I stopped deliberately being a proponent of dark realities."* These paintings illustrate themes of exploitation, subjugation, suppression, oppression, confrontation, war, human brutality, and political and social violence. His works endorsed anger and fear towards urban life and sense of pathos and were statements of social satire. Tortured images of his older work and infused with the stark contrast to the dark. He creates a feeling of awe through these elements.

He started a new style which connotes the grotesque elements from Indian mythological intermingled bodies as well; he used himself with birds, insects, fishes, tortoises, bats, flowers with fanciful incarnations. His uniqueness derived from the root of Rajasthani culture and Rajasthani women in which he used vibrant hues. More influences from the Kerala ponds, most of his canvases full of lotus flowers. He used dark clouds, self-portrait with a bird's body, sometimes flying on flowers, self-portraits with an insect's body crawling on a stem. His beautiful grotesque examples are such as, *'Yayati'*, *'Apsaras'*, *'Urvashi'*, *'Bahurupi'*, *'Leela'*, *'Umbilical Creeper Carpet'*, *'Bed of Arrows'*, *'Mahua Tree'*, *'Reality in Search of Myth'* and so many. Yayati (Figure 1) is highly sumptuous, made in 1986, twelve panels of serigraph. Yayati is a recreation of the myths; it is representing the story of Mahabharata, divided into three sections in which Usha, Madhyanya, and Sandhya were evolved in an allegorical form. Usha, Madhyanya, and Sandhya, representing in green, yellow and red skin color. Sometimes women seen amalgamated with the half-animal body, and sometimes man depicting as intertwined with a half-animal body, and sometimes animal also depicting as compounding with another creature. Fantastic landscape decorated with ornamental and floral patterns and plentiful motifs to create astonishing chaos.

Urvashis are the celestial nymphs, representing in intertwined body with the other animal which mentions in the Hindu mythology. According to him, he said, *"Urvashi is brought down to earth because of a curse. I look for the classical elements in an ordinary human being."* Female forms, anatomy, and curves are always mesmerizing him; he has a strong

command over lines and colors. His Urvashis is exuberant on the erotic grotesque; their curves of the body and long hair are depicted erotically. It shapes and sounds are rhyme with the first beat of his consciousness. Urvashi sees innocent and simple (Figure 2), they have to remain a constant source of imagery and metaphor.

While the grotesque imagery his paintings are enigmatic. He was concerned with humanity as a whole and did not relate to any specific rural or urban environment and was essentially creatures of a world of myth morphology of his own conception. His grotesqueness fluctuating on the dual world, the imagery and the real, the conceptual and the mythic, the beautiful and sublime. A symbolic representation of the lotus pond, leaves, flowers, petals, stems were growing on an elongated track, depict in an ambiguous way, but it looks so awesome to the viewer, and one can feel the pleasure of his beautiful paintings

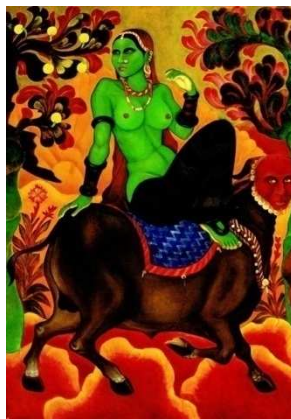


Figure 1: Yayati Series, Sandhya, 39 x 27 Inches, 2012

Source: <http://www.vadehraart.com/a-ramachandran-yayati-portfolio/>

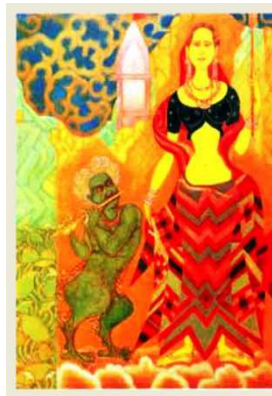


Figure 2: Urvashi and Pururavas, Oilon Canvas, 80 x 54 inches 1990

Source: <http://tomgallery2.blogspot.com/2005/11/ramachandran.html0pt>

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