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PLATO'S THEORY OF FORMS AND SANSKRIT LITERARY THEORY – A COMPARITIVE STUDY

Mrs. ANJANA SOJAN

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

T. JOHN COLLEGE OF NURSING, BANGALORE

ABSTRACT

The western tradition of literary theory and criticism essentially derives from the Greeks, and there is a sense in which Plato, Aristotle, and Longinus mark out positions and debates that are still being played today. At a moment when we are questioning the sufficiency of such western critical methods to make sense of the plethora of literatures produced by the world's cultures, it may be useful to remind ourselves that other equally ancient classical critical traditions exist. There is an unbroken line of literary theory and criticism in Indian culture that goes back at least as far as the western tradition. Indian criticism constitutes an important and largely untapped resource for literary theorists, as the Indian tradition in important respects assigns a more central role to literature than the Greek tradition does. While explicit literary theory in India can be traced as far back as the fourth century B.C.E, placing Indian critical theory at the same time as Aristotle and Plato, there is much discussion of poetic and literary practice in the Vedas, which developed over the period 1500 BCE to 500 BCE. In India, literary theory and criticism was never isolated simply as an area of philosophy; the practice and appreciation of literature was deeply woven into religion and daily life. The study of value, called axiology, has three main branches: ethics, concerning the morally good; political theory, concerning the social good; and aesthetics, concerning the beautify, or taste. Modern value theory may be said to have arisen with modern science, which distinguished between fact and value. For Plato, there was no discord between the Good, the True, and the Beautiful. The theory of Forms or theory of Ideas in which Plato argues that the physical world is not as real or true as timeless, absolute, unchangeable ideas. Ideas or Forms are the non - physical essences of all things, of which objects and matter in the physical world are merely imitations.

INTRODUCTION

Plato argued in The Republic that the social role of the poet was not beneficial, Ayurveda, the science of Indian medicine, believed that a perfectly structured couplet by its rhythms could literally clean the air and heal the sick. This perfect couplet is known as Mantra, literally "Verse". Sanskrit poetry has to be in the precise meter of the sloka, comparable to the heroic couplet, to be able to speak to the hearer. The Vedic Aryans therefore worshipped vach, the goddess of speech or holy word like the Greeks, Indian critics developed a formalistic system of rules of grammar and structure that were meant to shape literary works, but great emphasis was also laid on the meaning and essence of words.

This became the literary critical tenet of rasadhvani.

In contrast to Plato's desire to expel poets and poetry from his republic, poetry in India was meant to lead individuals to live their lives according to religious and didactic purposes, creating not just an Aristotelian "purgation of emotions" and liberation for an individual but a wider, political liberation for all of society. Society would then be freed from bad karma, or "ill will" and "feelings that generate bad Karma", causing individuals to live in greater harmony with each other. This research proposal outlines the various systems that aimed at creating and defining this liberatory purpose in literatures through either form or content.

To understand how critical theories developed, we need to look at briefly at the development of Indian literature. The period of Indian philosophy that spans more than a millennium from the early Christian centuries until the seventeenth century C.E or the period of treatises upon the religious and literary texts. To point out that so many of the ancient critical and theoretical principles have been handed down and kept current that they are absorbed by contemporary Indian writers and critics, whether working in indigenous Indian languages or in English is almost by osmosis. Thus, the ancient critical tenets have a curious currency even today.

LITERATURE SURVEY

There are number of researches in Indian literary theory and criticism which focused on different aspects of criticism and theory. Some of them are cited here to make out the research gap in this area.

- STEPHEN GILLS RESPONSE TO INDIAN CULTURE, A CULTURAL STUDY OF HIS WORKS by Parihar, Sapna in 2016. His studies focus on multicultural societies of different countries with distinctive ideologies made him realize that human existence can be ensured only with co – existence.
- A CRITICAL STUDY OF BHARATA'S RASA THEORY AND HANS ROBERT JAUSS RECEPTION THEORY by Mundhe Shivanand Asaram in 2016. This research work aims to study of Bharata's Rasa Theory and Jauss's reception theory. This research insists on the principles of the theories and their relevance through comparative study, and this study highlights the similarities and dissimilarities between rasa and reception theory as these theories are formulated by different philosophers at different region, period, language and culture.
- CD NARASIMBAIAS CONTRIBUTION TO MODERN INDIAN LITERARY CRITICISM AN ASSESSMENT by Lourdusamy in 2007. A. His study highlights in Indian criticism, by all accounts, begins with Bharata's theory of RASA as enunciated in his Natyashastra. This theory which gained popularity over the centuries was evaluated upon and theorists after him introduced various changes in the field of criticism.
- ARISTOTLES THEORY OF CATHARISIS AND BHARATA'S RASA SIDDHANTA - A COMPARATIVE STUDY by Bhati, Kusum in 2008. This study attempts to introduce the lives and works of Aristotle and Bharata's predecessors, contemporaries and successors.

STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVES

To analyze how the Indian critical theories developed, we need to look briefly at the development of Indian literature. The Rigveda is considered the earliest extant poem in the Indo - European language family. Valmiki is considered the first exponent of poetic form. The literature review shows that not much studies has been taken in the field of Indian literary theory and criticism so I wish to do my

research on COMPARATIVE STUDY ON PLATO'S THEORY OF FORMS AND SANSKRIT LITERARY THEORY. Thus, my research will attempt to

- To analyze how a new Indian literary theory needs to be forged to suit the multicultural Indian context of the newer literatures, whether those of the vernaculars or in English.
- To identify whether Indians must even import their radicalism from the west
- To analyse, how should new Indian writing in English be judged? What yardstick should be applied?
- To compare Sanskrit literary theory and new Indian criticism
- To establish relationship between Sanskrit literary theory and classical theory of Plato.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Indian literary theory and criticism has existed even before the start of Christian millennium. The period of Indian philosophy that spans more than a millennium from the early Christian centuries until the seventeenth century C.E is considered as the Sutra period, or the period of treatise upon the religious and literary texts. It was this period that saw the rise of the many schools of literary criticism and interpretation. Indian literary criticism and theory has evaluated mush before but due to the western influence in India, Indian literary theory had lacked its wide acceptance across the cross cultures. Indian writers lack the knowledge of their own rich tradition and valuable literary theory and then blindly followed western theory and literary criticism. Through my research I would like to draw the attention of critics and writers to the well-developed and established area of Indian literary theory.

In my research I would follow Descriptive, Correlational and Exploratory Approach and my research studies attempts to describe systematically the problem which Indian writers of today face in their writings. The research will discover the existence of Sanskrit literary theory and the association which it has with western theory which most of the Indian writers poses, through Correlational Approach and Explanatory research will attempt to clarify how the Indian theory and western theory are in relationship with more than many aspects in literature.

CONCLUSION

Through my research, I question the sufficiency of western critical methods to make sense of the plethora of literatures produced by the world's cultures, it is useful to remind ourselves that other equally ancient classical critical traditions exist. Through the research we will trace an unbroken line of literary theory and criticism in Indian criticism and a throwback on Sanskrit literary criticism that goes back at least as far as the western tradition. Through my research I will intend to probe into Indian criticism that constitutes an important and largely untapped resource for literary theorists, and will probe that Indian tradition in important respects assigns a more central role to literature than the Greek traditions does. In light of contemporary western critical theory, there is a very interesting twist to the theories of Sanskrit literary theory. The school of criticism recognizes the importance of both Sanskrit theory and western theory. According to the conception of the Sanskrit theorists, not only well read and wise and initiated into the intricacies of theoretic requirements, but also possessed of fine instincts of aesthetic enjoyment.

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