



PASTORAL LIVES AND FEATURES DEPICTED IN THE LANDSCAPE PAINTING: BRITISH ERA

Arts

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ABSTRACT

India has witnessed immense creative activity in the field of architecture, painting, sculpture and other fields of art, for over two thousand years. This great heritage was gradually deteriorated with the invasion of British East India Company. It reached almost a dead end towards the end of the nineteenth century. With the fall of Mughal Empire, the art of Mughal and Rajput miniatures had become exhausted and lost their vitality. During the company rule Indian art has undergone intensive changes. Those changes were more crucial because the Indian people were not fully prepared for them. As a result, a special type of Indian painting style emerged to satisfy European patrons, those painting displays an amalgam of heavily influenced European naturalistic style and the stylization of Mughal miniature. This new genre was termed "company painting". The impact of academic style created an entirely new atmosphere which resists expressing Indian thoughts and ideas in painting.

KEYWORDS

PASTORAL, PAINTING, PICTORIAL, LANDSCAPE

With the independence of India there were significant changes came in the attitude of western critics as well as Indian Government and educated classes. Shedding the misconceptions about Indian art, Western art critics had begun trying to understand the Indian view point of understanding art. Their attitudes changed when the critic Roger Fry, after a brief period of curatorship at the Metropolitan Museum, returned to his native England and reviewed, in an illuminating article, the pioneering studies of Ananda Coomaraswamy and E. B. Havell. Writing in 1910 in "The Quarterly Review", Roger Fry drew attention to the serious new claims that he believed had to be faced: "We can no longer hide behind the Elgin marbles and refuse to look; we have no longer any system of aesthetics which can rule out, a priori, even the most fantastic and unreal artistic forms. They must be judged in them-selves and by their own artistic standards.

Pastoral lives denote to the life of living things of those people attached to the grass-root level. When we the term Landscape comes, the ambience that flashes in our mind- 'The surrounding soothing sights of the landscape that lift once heart to the heaven, having seen those sweeping view of the mountains, lush green forest, gorgeous valley, temples, lakes, rivers, wide-spread meadow'.

The term pastoral always denotes to a rustic life of living things of locality. It was embraced as a work of art such as poem, a painting, a play, or the rustic lifestyle of Indian landscape, and in the time of the golden age, commonly in a conventional or artificial manner, or with simple rural life in general. The essence and significance of the humanistic pastoral theme as central image were also noticed.

The social origins of the pastoral view, as is often observed, lie in the urban upper and middle classes. It was in the town and the court that the beauty of rural nature was idealized, at a distance from the countryside. And the groups who paid for its idealization were typically not involved in rural practices, but in government, commerce or industry. This confers a highly ambiguous character upon pastoral lives. It is celebrated for its difference from the urbanized, political and commercial life and used to criticize urbanism and industrialism.

Against that social background is not surprising that the pastoral images of rural idyll and wilderness, at least in their ideal-typical form, are marked by a highly stylized and symbolical character and are quite far removed from the countryside and the rural practices that they proclaim to depict on the flat canvas of a painter.

Generally, a pictorial or a dramatic/pastoral composition, humanistic shepherds are usually treated as protagonists and epitomized some important concerns of Renaissance man. These shepherds are often associated with nymphs and other mythological figures. They are also associated with music and poetry and connected with courtly culture in order to contrast each other. As a new artistic genre, the humanistic pastoral shows some unique characteristics: (1) It deals with "landscape with figures" and the landscape is humanized; (2) all the elements in a pastoral composition are harmoniously put together; and (3) it pictures – it combines different media to create the central image.

The landscape and human figures are combined into a single pictorial or poetic theme, and the general harmony of human and natural images is emphasized. There also exists a harmony of visual and verbal imageries. Therefore, the Pastoral Music may be considered a painting as poetry, and a poetic play as a painting. 5.a

Landscape artist must be a difficult job to hold. Everyone assumes they paint pastoral scenes of trees and plains and end up selling their work as a 'starving artists'. The study traces the development of landscape painting in the early republic from portrait backgrounds to representations of the land, and places these paintings within the context of the economic and political motivations of the collectors.

The continuity with British tradition of landscape painting and picturesque theory is recognized, but both are modified by the different situation of the closely allied landed gentry and wealthy merchants. Exploring land ownership and control of the land by this powerful and elite minority, who also patronized the early landscape painters, provides a foundation for interpreting the symbolic content in the works of art. The vast resources available, and already being exploited, in the land west of the colonial settlements found idealized expression in a vision of pastoral landscape.

The encouragement of landscape painting is evident in the estate collections and early commissions of this elite class, and their involvement in the earliest art organizations. Literature and imprints from the period also support an attitude toward pastoral landscape as the symbol of "improvement," signifying the republican virtue of a politically responsible landed aristocracy. The founder of the republic viewed the pastoral landscape as a symbolic middle ground reconciling their traditional culture based in classical education with their vision for the developing new continent. By exploring the influence these wealthy and powerful men exerted on the developing arts of the nation, this study also opens a dialogue about the effects of power and class structure on the visual representation of the nation itself. It attempts to discern between representation for its own sake and deliberate efforts to create a national myth.

The study provides, therefore, a political and economic basis for the encouragement of landscape painting in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth century as the genre most suited to convey the national identity. An ideology based on the social and political motivations of the ruling class created a national myth about the land and its development expressed in pastoral landscape images. This pastoral ideology prevailed until the Jacksonian era, when other political forces altered the national agenda, and the images of western expansion reflect those changes.

A review of geologic landscape paintings reveals that they were manifestations of the romantic imagination, even though scientifically rendered, for it was the theoretical and conceptual geologic landscape instead of the economic or documentary one that artists addressed in their paintings. The salient geologic theories and concepts that artists addressed include glacial theory and the Ice Age, geologic landscape

symbolized an exuberant fascination with geology, a belief in the providence of God, and optimism in America's future as a nation. It mattered little in the final analysis of their works whether artists captured only the idea of geology in their pictures or whether they portrayed scientific concepts with textbook accuracy, for the suggestion of scientific geology in paintings was as important as the most informed representation. Both types of landscape were apt expressions of an empirical and exploratory age when America's faith in geology as a science was perceived as providential sign of the future progress of the nation.

Paintings "minor" genres were not as lucrative as portraiture; painters of landscape and still life, of animals and peasants, had a tougher row to hoe. While there were always one or two buyers interested in Welsh landscapes or peasant cottage scenes, there were rarely enough. But among the masters of minor genres were Hogarth, Hayman, and David Willkie. The greatest of these, Hogarth, was multifariously accomplished, painting histories, theatrical pieces, conversation groups, and satirical genre scenes. Frustrated at the ignorance of British collectors who appreciated only foreign art, he painted modern history pictures, satirizing the manners and morals particularly of the upper classes.

The mainstream writers are essentially pursuing teleology of landscape painting in which the ultimate end is a straightforward representation of exactly what was in the artist's immediate line of sight. The implicit aesthetic judgment is that amendments to these "raw" observations of nature should be kept to a minimum.

Boat Building, however, is the only exhibited work for which evidence of completion in the open air exists, and even this is ambiguous because there are notable differences between a surviving drawing that gives the main lines of the composition and the painting. He has put Leslie's deliberate construction of the Constable myth in a context of cultural politics. Leslie was part of a group trying to defend British "naturalism" against the influence of continental "academic" painting. These champions natural art needed a hero of the English school to bolster their case. Constable would fit the bill better if his sophistication of artistic thought, dependence on inherited art theory and ambitions to produce monumental pictures, were played down in favour of a vision of landscape as simple representation of the scene.

Landscape, as suggested above, was, at the beginning of the Hanoverian period. Before 1700, English landscape art was almost entirely limited to background settings for history paintings and portraits. But by the end of the 18th century, in an unprecedented development, landscape painting had become a primary expression of the nation's cultural values.

Several interrelated developments contributed to the rise of landscape art: the growth of industrialism and consequent nostalgia for a disappearing rural way of life; the accelerating pace of agricultural enclosure between 1750 and 1815, with accompanying displacement and impoverishment of rural workers; growing nationalism and critical reaction to the French Revolution; scientific discoveries in geology, botany. And geography with landscape painting anticipating the role of photography and finally the Romantic movement in aesthetics, which brought painting, poetry, and philosophy together to celebrate the individual's free response to physical nature as a source, moral, and aesthetic inspiration.

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