WOMEN IN CHUGHTAI PAINTINGS

ABSTRACT

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

After the creation of Universe and Adam’s arrival on this earth, God for the sake of companionship of Adam, created a super most one in beauty surpassing his every other creation. This superlative charming personality whom God called “Eve” was made to grace and adorn the stage of this world forever came into being, was the first woman. It seems surely that God himself appreciated his super creation, later on continuous creation of superb beauties till the end of this world is the evidence.

Among these beauties some of them are known as Cleopatra, Apsaras of Ajanta Alora, Chitralekha, Shakuntala, Sita, Shireen, Laila, Zubaida, Anarkali etc.

History also mentions some genius persons whom we call artists, sculptors, painters from ancient period till today. These painter and artists
created beautiful figures, a few as an example, the 'Apsara's' in Ajanta Alora, Monalisa by Leonardo-da-Vinci etc. Similarly some famous Persian Painters Behzad, Merek, or Raza abbasi produced marvelous paintings showing women in Persian style. At the same time in the Mughal miniature paintings, queens, Princesses, courtesans, all women painted really beautiful.

After the Mughal comes the Indian Modern period of paintings. Among famous artists of this period one of them is Mohammad Abdur Rahman Chughtai. He was born on 21st September 1897 and died in 1975. He was one of the greatest modern artist in art world, who brought revolution and gave a new turn to art. His paintings are the best representation of Asian culture especially the cultural, religious and artistic heritage of Indian sub-continent.

Woman play important role in his paintings. In majority of the paintings he depicts women in a particular style of his own. Themes of the
paintings are based on different subjects such as history, religion, philosophy, poetry, social and romance. He illustrated two famous poets Ghalib in Murqqa-e-Chughtai and Iqbal (Poet of the East) in Amal-e-Chughtai. Chughtai was an important oriental artist in modern art world. He painted many paintings bearing oriental influence.

Chughtai created his own style in wash and tempura technique. His work contains the prevailing customs, style, dresses, use of jewellery, ornaments, head gears, footwear's and necessary artistic intricate articles to wear for sake of beautifying the women and to enhance their charm.

Although in different school's of painting's the women have been depicted as an ordinary female figure but the way in which Chughtai depicted woman in his paintings is really a unique graceful way. As we compare to the other schools of art like Ajanta Alora, Mughal, Rajasthan specially in Ajanta
paintings the art was full of ornamentation and "Woman is supposed to be a symbol of beauty".

In Ajanta school one can feel the fashion of that age while observing the garments. No two figures can be found wearing the same design of ornaments. The ornaments are like crowns, garlands, armlets, ear-rings, belts and bangles. The hair styles painted with minute details, no two women have been shown with a similar hair style. Linear beauty is the main characteristic of Ajanta paintings. In Rajasthan school of painting the human figure's nose is shown a little longer and pointed, faces are round and eyes are like fishes.

The female figures in this school are of a small size or in other words we can say that in comparison to faces, the whole figure seems to be smaller.

Garments used by these women, are Choli, Daman or Ghagra are all over embroidered clothes. In Rajasthan school of painting romance of 'Radha and
Krishna' has been beautifully painted. 'Radha and Krishna' is also the main subject matter of paintings of Kishangarh School. Main attraction of this school is depiction of women. Woman have been painted slim, flexible and tall. Faces are also long, with high and sloping foreheads, pointed and long nose, and bulging out well cut lips with chin a little longer.

After these schools Mughals school came, when Mughal came to India and established their rule and with them came their culture. The mixture of Rajasthan and Persian style of painting was developed and was known as the Mughal school of painting.

Profile faces are the one of the qualities of this school which we find in Chughtai's paintings as well. The ornaments and garments are beautifully painted in Mughal School. Transparent Chunries painted and the figures have also been decorated with ornaments. Abdur Rahman Chughtai was a famous
artists of the East. He was born in 1897 and died in 1975.

Chughtai has a great influence of Mughal and Persian painting in his overall work but he also respected enough the rule of perspective in his paintings and in this respect we can differentiate his work from Mughal or Persian. (e.g. Jahanara and the Taj) also in some other paintings it seems that he deliberately ignores the rule (e.g. Sukut-e-Shab). These two paintings are reproduced in the book \textit{chughtai's paintings}. Chughtai does not care much about the body proportions according to the human anatomy and paints the figures as he likes but gives a charming effect which attracts everyone.

The most impressive figures are that of women. He painted women in variety of themes Persian as well as in Hindu atmosphere. His paintings related to Indian aspect of life were reproduced in
Chughtai's Indian Painting, a book published in 1951.

Chughtai portrayed numerous paintings on Radha and Krishna in various moods. Like Kangra and Kishangarh artists, he has beautifully presented the emotional scenes of Radha and Krishna. One of his paintings, entitled Gloomy Radha is in the collection of National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi and was reproduced in Chughtai's Indian Paintings.

Another example from Hindu mythological themes is "Draupadi and Pandavas". Chughtai also painted some incidents of Mahabharata which is a great epic of India.

Chughtai portrayed numerous paintings on Radha and Krishna in various moods like in Rajasthan and Kishangarh schools. Chughtai also presented women as a model of Muslim culture. The example of muslim culture influence on his paintings is 'Eid message'. It is a very impressive study. The seated
old graceful lady with youngsters of the family around her looking and watching Eid moon, present a calmful scene. All are wearing 'Chador' (dupatta like cloth) worn by Muslim ladies. This painting is reproduced in 'Iqbal- The poet of the east' (Amal-e-Chughtai).

Chughtai also painted several different social themes, e.g. 'The book of verse', 'Deepak', 'Engagement ring' etc. But he also paints several historical themes in which he has depicted women e.g., 'Jahangir and Noor Jahan'.

The dresses of the Chughtai's woman painted are all cut come of his imagination. The jewellery we find in his figures specially women suites well, which is elegant, decorative, intricate, attractive impresses the observer.

Chughtai in his paintings paid much attention to the articulation of the hair style of figures. The hair dos are carefully rendered especially while executing mythological and historical
characters. The hair incorporated with jewellery are also striking features of chughtai's female forms. Along hair styles he has painted many novel styles of head gears and foot wears.

As he is known as the artist of the East M.A.R. Chughtai has adopted Oriental speciality in his paintings which is prominent in every article he paints in his compositions and at once the viewer recognizes his work. The customs of the olden times specially in Muslim society, the way of wearing dresses by females was particularly to cover whole body because of the purdah system. Thus we can say that chughtai was one of the most important oriental artist. A vital force of chughtai's art lies in the strength and beauty of his line. His uniqueness lies in the fact that he can very successful bring out the emotional aspect of man through his flowing lines. He also painted in water colour wash technique but that was a technique which was unique of his own. His paintings are so
close to reality with natural colours that one is simply spell bound and lost into the beautiful colours and brush strokes.

Chughtai was born in Lahore and educated at the famous Mayo School of art, Lahore in prepartition India. He studied under Abanindranath Tagore as well.

Chughtai's painting technique that differentiates him from others is his choice of colours and their proper application. He uses soft hues, besides bright colours. Sometimes he uses very contrasting colours in his paintings.

Chughtai choose the water colour media for his work and utilized the infinite capacity of the flowing line work with graded wash-colouring technique. It was for no ordinary reason that the public gave him the title of the "Artist of the East". He used to do his paintings with an influence Mughal, Rajasthani and Persianised style of paintings in water-colour wash technique.
The artist’s pencil drawings are also different from the other famous paintings of his time. The famous Indian art critic “Vencatachalam said that his line was superior to any other artist in India”. Chughtai, is considered as supreme Master of Pencil drawing of the country. In brief, we can say that Chughtai’s pencil work has its special uniqueness. His undying creative urge made his paintings a valuable contribution to art world.

In the true tradition of his ancestors, he has created many abstract patterns geometric and floral forms. His fanciful figures coming from his mental world of dream of past and steeped in oriental feelings, moods, customs and manners, romantic and mystified, reveal immense variety. He is an imaginative artist who sees with the eye of mind-vision which is an indispensable quality for any creative art.

Chughtai was fascinated by Ajanta paintings so, Abdullah, his brother and himself made a trip to
the south and visited Hyderabad and after that they went to see the Ajanta frescos. There, they spent a few days watching closely the gracious figures of Ajanta and admiring Sublime beauty in the form of colour and line.

This visit to Ajanta caves left an undying impact on the style of chughtai. He studied every fresco piece minutely and tried to incorporate that unique style in his paintings. Ajanta, like Mughal or Persian and Rajasthan also inspired him much.

The examples of standard beauty in his paintings are oriental. This oriental emphasis is more aesthetic and attractive in chughtai's paintings than in Iqbal's poetry. It is more feminine than masculine in nature and character which have been shown in many ways such as eyes, hands and lips are important in chughtai's paintings. Eyes like almond muscara eyes are all attractive for chughtai. The thick bulky lips having sex appeal, their thin corners, all show the
aesthetic taste of the artist. All these reflect the turbulent inner feeling which were kept suppressed due to the religious atmosphere of his house.

The women of Chughtai have peculiar face and anatomy which he assimilated precisely after studying the art of Persia, Ajanta and Kangra. His understanding of art objects was unique.

Women of chughtai have elongated bodies and variety of faces which he painted according to their need.

Have a thorough look on his work you will come to know something amazing. In present days there are many industries such as fashion industry, dress designing industry, cosmetic industry, jewellery industry, stylish headgears, foot wears industry producing, for example, female 'juteez' all these industries in design and decoration of the items they are producing, it seems, have an impression of
the designs and decorations, as found in chughtai's women paintings.

These industries if not exactly copying chughtai's design/decoration style, seem to be well impressed by his imaginative creativity. Visit the modern time's shops, malls, haats or any boutique shop of the above mentioned industrial production items, the work of artisans, craftsmen and designer's creations whether in costumes or other articles to be worn by women, sometimes reminds us that there is a similarity found in these items to that of the artistic work of chughtai.

Chughtai was one of the oriental artists, his creative work, no doubt, is the composition of various schools of art. He was influenced mainly by Persian, Mughal, Ajanta, Alora, Kishangarh and the like schools.

Over all in brief we can say that Chughtai is one of the most important artist who paints specially female figures in his own unique style,
which deserves high appreciation, as he has painted
women and whatever women like to wear whether
garments, ornaments, jewelleries, besides other
necessary articles. The appreciation of his work by
dignitaries and artists almost all over the world
is the testimony to this statement.