CHAPTER - II

ANNADASANKAR ROY
ON LITERATURE
India's primary contribution in the history of intellectual and cultural development of the world, is acknowledged in the four different subjects, these are- The Vedas and Upanisadas, The Gita, Buddhist philosophy and the art of rhetoric. Infact, it was in the Vedas, the oldest book of the world, where the ideas on literature and aesthetics first germinated. The Vedas were even considered the fountain head of poetry. Although the Rickveda is reticent in commenting about the nature of soul of poetry, yet it is first in exploring the relation between rasa and poetry or selected works having independent aesthetic appeal. However, it was in Bharatacharya where form we can trace back the formal history of development of Indian rhetorics.

The history of Sanskrit rhetoric which stretches from Bharatacharya to Pundit Jagannath Acharjee of 17th century, bears the mark of prevelance of a rich artistic consciousness. Sanskrit rhetoric enriched itself by imbibing various fields of humour, phonetics, literary principles, and Sarcasm. This is a matter of pride for any country. Even in modern times also, Indian intellect has made its mark of originality in artistic and literary deliberations. It may be mentioned, that the four persons having connoisseurship, in whose intellectual
consciousness the original rules of poetic and artistic creativity were scriped, were all from Bengal. They were Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Abanindranath Tagore and Brajendranath Sil. Abanindranath Tagore pioneered art criticism in India through his series of lectures from 1921 to 1929 at Calcutta University which was compiled in the volume- *Silpa Prabandabali*.

In the contemporary time, towards the second half of 20th century, Sri Aurobindo made his mark of originality as a critic in his analysis of theories of art and literature. Although as a critic he preceds Abanindranath Tagore, but unlike the latter, who wrote in Bengali, Sri Aurobindo preferred English for expression of ideas. In this regard, mention can be made to two of his prominent works like-

a) The *Future Poetry*, and  
b) The *Significance of Indian art*.

As a critic Rabindranath was mainly concerned with literary theory, however reference to art found intermittent presence in some of his writings also. Art critic Annadasankar is a product of this critical tradition, but as a critic Annadasankar lacks that originality and finesse which was the hallmark of Sri Aurobindo or Abanindranath. The originality and depth that we observe even in Buddhadeb Basu, Jibananda Das, Sudhinindranath Dutta, Nalinikanta Gupta, Critics - all near contemporaries of Annadasankar finds wanting in him.

His is a superficial approach in the analysis of literary theory contained unorganisingly in few of his scattered writings. Such a casual practice spelt a failure for him as a critic and literary
theoretician, because of his inability to fathom the depth and richness of Indian rhetorical tradition. An example may make the analysis transparent. According to Annadasankar, the mode of expression is the soul of art, i.e.,

বাক্যঃ রসাঙ্কঃ কাব্যঃ।

The sentence where rasa is the soul, is poetry. Annadasankar did not understand that the rasa of poetry is not dependent on the art of rhetoric. According to Avhinaba Gupta, a reader's process of deciphering the thematic significance of poetic language rouses in him the preexisting emotions of love etc. making it conceivable- and this spirit is rasa. In his analysis of nature of poetic spirit, Annadasankar has somehow missed the crucial point that the full potential of witty poetry can flourish only when the interest of the creator and the appreciator coincides. In the same article he writes-

কবির হৃদয় থেকে উৎসর্গিত হদয়রসই সেই রস যাকে বলা যেতে পারে বাক্যের আত্মা, সেই রসে রসাঙ্ক না হলে বাক্য কখনও কাব্য হতে পারে না, কল্যাণে আর্ট হতে পারে না।

It is interesting to note that Abanindranath Tagore added a new dimension in art criticism in his Bageswari essays on Art by analysing it from the point of Indian rhetoric. In the essay রসের কথা, published in Bharati magazine he commented that-

এ দেশের অল্পকারের সুক্তগুলি যে ছত্রে ছত্রে আঁটের বাখ্যা করে চলেছে সেটা কোনও পাতিকেরো এ পর্যন্ত বলতে পারলেন না।

Thus it is seen that Annadasankar has nothing original to offer in
his appreciation of art from the angle of poetics.

However, in the field of literary aesthetics, Annadasankar has original contribution. He is credited with presenting the nature of literary art and aesthetics to his readers in a simple language. While the analysis of issues literary art and aesthetics by Sudhindranath Dutta, Jibanananda Das, Nalini Kanta Gupta, Buddhadeb Basu is aimed at erudite readers, Annadasankar's is a refreshingly simple approach to explain the fundamentals literary aesthetics making them acceptable to common readers. He is definitely a pioneer in this regard, in the study of Bengali aesthetics.

Our approach will now be to appreciate Annadasankar's thoughtful deliberations on art and literature. Literary theoriticians have long been perplexed in ascertining the nature of ideal relationships that may exist between emotion and logic or rasa and wisdom- whether two are at dagger's dawn or in complimentary accommodation. Many sided with the conventional perception, that in literature rasa and feelings are only important and reason has no place in it. However, there are others who refuse to agree. In this regard they remark paradoxically-

"...... if the logician could never be other than a logician, he could not, and could not, be a logician, and if the poet were never anything but a poet, without the slightest hope of being able to reason abstractly, he would leave no poetic traces behind him."

In his *The Future Poetry* Sri Aurobindo talks of three *intensities* of condensed elixir of literature, which he associates with hymns. According to him three things are required for the success of poetry:
a) A highest intensity of rhythmic movement;
b) A highest intensity of verbal form and though-substance, of style; and
c) A highest intensity of the soul's vision of truth.

He then comments that *All great poetry comes about by a unison of these three elements; it is the insufficiency of one or another which makes the inequalities in the work of even the greatest poet; and it is the failure of some one element which is the cause of their lapses;*

It is interesting to note that Annadasankar too, has expressed his curiosity regarding the hostility between literature of intuition and philosophy of reason and science, in his essay *রস আর আলো* Appropriating the conventional ideas of the literary theoreticians, he opines that rasa and light i.e. emotion and wisdom are not contradictory to each other. Art deals with perceptible truths - on the basis of this conviction he comments:

সেইজন্য আটের রাজে রস যদিও রাজে, আলো বা জ্ঞান তার জ্ঞানে, মানুষের কথনা রস ও আলো উভয় রাজে আনাগোনা করে।

In fact, much before Annadasankar wrote the above essay, Rabindranath, on the issue of presence of a special philosophical wisdom in literature, wrote:

সময় গেছে কবার ভিতরে এমন একটা কিছু থাকে যাতে আমাদের জ্ঞান তৃপ্ত হয়, যাতে আমাদের মনোরূপিকে উদ্বোধিত করে তোলে, কবি যদি অতাতী খাসেহাতে এমন একটা কিছু নিয়ে কাব্য রচনা করেন যাতে আমাদের জ্ঞানের কোনো খাদ্য না থাকে অথবা যাতে সত্যের বিকৃতি বশাত মনসিদ্ধিকে প্রীতি করে তোলে তবে সে কাব্যে রসের প্রকাশ ব্যাপক হয়- সে কব্য যাত্রী ও গভীর ভাবে আমাদের আনন্দ দিতে পারে না।
It was Aristotle who for the first time indicated about the harmonious relations between literary pleasure and philosophical wisdom and intellect. He said-

*Poetry is more philosophical than history, for poetry deals with universals, history with particulars.*

However, a poet has his individual mechanism of doing this. Sri Aurobindo said in this regard:

*..... the poet may express precisely the same thing in essence as the philosopher or the man of religion or the man of science, may even give us truth of philosophy, truth of religion, truth of science, provided he transmute it, abstracts from it something on which the others insist in their own special form and gives us the something more which poetic sight and expression bring.*

If a link is established between *rasa* and wisdom at the initial stage of literary creation/literature, this will appear as a heterogenous mixture, like the mixture of oil and water, because-

*The meeting is not here at the base, but on the tops. The philosopher's reasoning intelligence discovers only a system of thought symbols and the reality they figure cannot be seized by the intelligence, but needs direct intuition, a living contact a close experience by identity in our self of Knowledge.*

Our aim of this long discussion is to show that much before Annadasankar's essay on true meaning of literary creation, there exists a whole range of critical scholarship all over the world on the same subject. Since the issue of relation between literary pleasure and
wisdom, i.e.- perceiving of the fusion of intuition and intellect through literary appropriation - is a much debated subject, it does not appear that Annadasankar has any thing original to offer us in this regard through his essay রস আর আলো।

Annadasankar’s another area of focus here is the relation between fact and truth, a subject where is no dearth of criticism available. Rabindranath’s essay তথ্য ও সত্য deserves a special mention in this regard. While commenting on the nature of relation between art and facts Annadasankar argues that art doesnot mearly transcribe the visual reality in to words inducing like in it. He says:

Poet’s responsibility lies in expressing in words the inner pulsation of the visual reality. Sri Aurobindo says in this regard :-

For the poetic mind sees at once in a flood of coloured light in a moved experience, in an ecstasy of the coming of the word, in splendours of form, in a spontaneous leaping out of inspired idea upon idea, .......

The matter appears in its true spirit when the individual style of the poet deciphers the material facts. This attitude of the poet helps him to grasp the inner significance of things and the reality thus appears in its true spirit. By denoting this real nature of matter as essence or truth some have opined:
By asking to elicit the underlying mystery of visible reality, Annadasankar actually meant this or *essence of things*.

He further reminds us that art does not consist in direct imitation of nature. An artist's responsibility lies not in blind imitation but in exploration of the mystery of nature. He says in this regard-

*Aristotle reminded us about the same long ago—

*poetry imitates nature and partly carries to completion what nature has left incomplete.*

The issue of construction of form in poetic creation comes along the process of making the invisible visible and perceptible. A new creation takes place when the reflected image of Nature comes our inner mind. For this one needs, according to Annadasankar अन्नदासांकरी दृष्टिर वर्तिका.

With the help of this inner flame, poet discovers new worlds. For this, in this Sanskrit rhetoric a poet is compared with Prajapati Brahma-
Annadasankar points out that the new creation of the poet is synthesized version of idea and expression, feeling and form, truth and beauty. Ancient rhetoricians were also aware of the same. Annadabardhan, while acknowledging the symbolic meaning of the poem as its soul, rather than its literary meaning, also asks the poets to invoke the metaphysical by engaging in the physical, like a mind seeking light adores the flame. While commenting about the rules that lies behind the excellence of art, Annadasankar says-

Rabindranath also had a similar idea, as reflected in his poem. The same can also be found in Kalidash's invocation of dancing Parvati-Parameswar for making the relation between words and meaning the condensed and effective.

Following ancient poet Dadu's words-

Rabindranath work:

Sur aparadhe dhara dithe chah bhed
chedh firinia chute yete chay surere.
Bhav pete chay rupor mabher aaj,
Rup pete chay bhorer mabher chhorda.
Tagore's intention here is again to highlight the entwined relation between idea and expression, feeling and form. Annadasankar's essay further establishes this principle of literary creation. The ideas expressed in his essays on literary theory are all results of Annadasankar's personal experiences as poet, novelist and story-teller. These essays are real-treasures in Bengali literature.

Although many of Annadasankar's views on art and literature are mere repetitions of old established ideas, but it is the flair of his style which breaths new life in them. For example, we have no difficulty in understanding that his comment- literature is the amalgamation of truth and beauty, is based on Keat's of quoted observation *Beauty is truth, truth beauty*; but he registers his originality by subdividing the idea of beauty of literature its inner and outer dimensions. Annadasankar considers the beauty of the outer form of literature as perceivability of external beauty of a poetic form, Tagore cited the reference of *Lalit labangalata* from Jaideb's *Gitgobindam* and said:

इंद्रिय ताहाक शन-महाराजेद्र काछे निबैदन करे, मन ताहाक स्पर्श करौ राखिया देय- तथन ताहा इंद्रियेद्र भोजेही सेष हईया याय ।

Ancient rhetorician Annadasankar also did not prioritize the beauty of inner meaning of a poem over the beauty of its outer form.

According to Annadasankar it is difficult to define the inner beauty and truth of literature and art, which illuminates itself only before eyes with depth and vision.

Indian rhetoricians used terms like *Kabyo-boddha, Rasik,*
Sahridoy Samagik Rasaggo - for such a visionary person. The inner beauty of art and literature is not self-revealatory for all- it is rather the matured eyes of rare connoisseurs which can truly appreciate its depths. By quoting lines from Kalidasas' *Kumar Sambava* -

> আবর্জিতা কিছুদিন জনাভাষায়..... commented that-
>
> পর্যায়ে পুষ্পতন্ত্র বন্ধু - ঈঁহার মধ্যে লয়ের যে উখান আছে, কঠোরে কোনলে যথাযথক্রমে মিশিতি হইয়া ছন্দকে যে দোলা দিয়াছে তাহা জয়দেবের জয়দেবী লয়ের মতে অতি প্রভাক্ষ নহে, তাহা নিগুচ্ছ, মন তাহা আলসভরে পড়িয়া পায় না, নিজে আবিষ্কার করিয়া লইয়া যে একটি ভাবের সৌন্দর্য তাহার আমাদের মনের সহিত চক্ষু করিয়া আকৃতিগম্য একটি সংগীত রচনা করে, সে সংগীত সম্বন্ধ শব্দ সংগীত কর্তা হাঙাইয়া চলিয়া যায়, মনে হয়, যেন তাহ জ্বাইয়া গেল - কিন্তু তাহ জ্বাইয়ার কথা নহে, মানসিকযোগ্য কাণ্ডকে প্রতারিত করে।

This comment of Tagore stresses the necessity of form in revealing the inner beauty of a poetic creation. An ideal composition where the beauty of form and feeling are perfectly blended- attracts not only the conscious mind, but exerts a spell to our senses also. Annadasankar echoes the same in his essay. To him the inner beauty of a poem resides in a closet of inner mind. To expose this beauty it must be made perceptible by senses by expressing it through a beautiful external form. If a poem has true depth of beauty and truth, then these expression should be graceful also. Annadasankar's suggestion here is a need for equal prioritization of feeling and emotion- the *rasa* of poetry along eith rhyme, meter and other external rhetoric devices. But if in a creation form is highlighted at the cost of feeling and idea - to him it is the mark of a decadent literature. On the other hand, excessive stress on feeling and emotion by neglecting the
necessity of form and style—makes a work as dry as wood. Our ancient rhetoricians also gave similar suggestion of blending of form and feeling as golden rule for creation.

For example—Annadabardhan, while attempting a definition for rhetoric, said that rhetorics use in poetry is necessiated by the emotional content of a poem—its does not have a life in isolation.

A sloka from অন্যালোক has this to say that for some, rhetorics are rare to come, but from the mind of a promising poet they flow jostling among each other as if saying আমি আগে, আমি আগে।

The crue of Annadasankar’s essay সাহিত্য ও সৌন্দর্য is this that in an ideal poem emotion, and feeling fuses with rhetorical devices in the most creative way possible.

According to the essayist, the ultimate of poetry is truth. All the literary theorists, of the world, including Tagore and Keats are with the view that between fact and truth it is truth which is the base of poetry. Annadasankar too, treaded in the same path in expressing his idea of truth. A creation will have temporary life if it is not strongly foregrounded on the edifice of truth. Artists gives equal importance to both truth and beauty, as he says:

অজন্য অভিজ্ঞতা অসীম উল্লভ্য ক্রমে শিলে রূপান্তরিত হয়। যখন হয় তখন তার মূল্য নির্ধারণ করা হয় তার অজন্যতা সত্য দিয়ে, অর্থে সৌন্দর্য দিয়ে। কেবল একাদশ ভব্য থাকলেই চলবে না, আরো গভীরে যেতে হবে সত্যের উপলব্ধি করতে ও করতে, আরো আড়ালে যেতে হবে সৌন্দর্যের অবগুণ্ঠন খুলে দেখতে ও দেখতে। তথ্যের অর্নের ভিত্তির সত্যের সাক্ষাত। এখন দুটি চাই যা
In ascertaining the nature of such poetic truth, Sri Aurobindo wrote in his *Future Poetry* that:

> The poetic truth of which I am speaking has nothing to do with any of these limitations. Truth, as she is seen by us in the end, is an infinite Goddess, the very front and face of infinity and Adity herself, the "inimitable mother of all the Gods." 

This theory finds a poetic expression in Tagore’s poem *Bhasa O Chanda*.

The same is also expressed by the poet in prose in his essay- *Tathyo O Satyo*. Truth breathes life in dry facts, without truth, fact remains incomplete. As Tagore says:

> It is the expression which is the sole concern of art and literature-

We are introduced to the truth of literature and art through *rasa*. The inherent *rasa* of poetry helps to distinguish between fact and truth.
The magic touch of truth liberates facts. It Rabindranath said:

रूपेंर महले रसेन सत्यके प्रकाश करतें गेले तथ्यें दस्तहत थेके मुक्ति निधें हया।

It may be mentioned here that in Tagore we find repeated reference to the idea of *rasa* as apprehended by Sanskrit rhetoricians who considered rasa as the soul of poetry. Annadasankar too, is no exception in this regard like Tagore. He considered *rasa* as yardstick to assess art and literature. He too, has accepted the meaning of truth in a broader sense. Echoing the Sanskrit rhetoricians he says:

बाक्यं रसांकं काबाद्। The sentence whose soul is *rasa* - is poetry.

He adds then that:

प्रधु मात्र एই रसेइ काबेर मूल तत्त्व नय। कविर्हदय थेके उत्सारित हदयरसइ सेइ रस थाके बला मेतेपारे काबेर आज़ा। सेइ रसे रसांकक ना हले बाक्य कथनो काब्य हतेपारे ना, कला कथनो आरां हतेपारे ना।

This shows that Annadasankar was reluctant to follow the beaten track of Indian rhetorics. There is no indication of what he meant by कविर्हदय थेके उत्सारित हदय रस in Indian rhetorics. The definition of *rasa* as putforwarded by Abhinava Gupta, assumes the role of cultured readers important in creating poetic *rasa*. A reader's process of deciphering the thematic significance of poetic language rouses in him one of the pre-existing emotions of his mind, making it conceivable - and this spirit is *rasa*. Annadasankar's deliberation on *rasa* disregarded the above aspect completely. He never said that, existence of a tacit understanding between the poet and his readers is a prerequisite of enjoying the spirit of a poem. However, we are taken
by surprise when Annadasankar comments that:

যেখানে রূপ নেই সেখানে আর্ট নেই। যেখানে রস নেই সেখানে তো নেইই।

..........

Although these words appear to be Annadasankar's original ideas, but similar views can be traced back in the writings of Abanindranath Tagore, - the pioneer of art criticism in Bengali, like -

Although these words appear to be Annadasankar's original ideas, but similar views can be traced back in the writings of Abanindranath Tagore, - the pioneer of art criticism in Bengali, like-

Abanindranath Tagore, the pioneer of art criticism in Bengali, expressed a broader view in his analysis of theories of art, without compromising with the original ideas of the Indian rhetoric. Annadasankar in this regard appears to be limited. For example, it is incomprehensible of what he means by রস, because rasa follows a particular procedure before its full fledged growth in an approving heart. Our rhetoricians did not conceptualized a pre-existing idea of রস.

Abanindranath seems to have a broader vision than Annadasankar on the idea of art. In a nutshell, Abanindranath expressed a broader view in his analysis of theories of art, without compromising with the original ideas of the Indian rhetoric. Annadasankar in this regard appears to be limited. For example, it is incomprehensible of what he means by রস, because rasa follows a particular procedure before its full fledged growth in an approving heart. Our rhetoricians did not conceptualized a pre-existing idea of রস.

Annadasankar has not acknowledged any procedural growth of the idea rasa when he says:

রস যখন রূপান্তরিত হয়, রূপান্তরিত তখনই তো আর্টদ্যোপা হয়। তখনই তা হয় বাক্য বা সংগীত, চিত্র বা অভিনয়।

In his discussion on art, Annadasankar brings the issue of light. Attempting a comparative study between literature with philosophy and science he says philosophy kindles the light for us, science makes us
feel it but literature captures the idea of truth in moulding an art form; - for him:

To the essayist, the nature of art makes it intangible in words. Even then art has to endeavour for light. There is no epic where there is no light but rasa. He believes that-

One can refer to such an analysis much before Annadasankar, by Sri Aurobindo, who wrote-

For the poetic mind sees at once in a flood of coloured light, in a moral experience, in an ecstasy of the coming of the word, in splendours of form, in a spontaneous leaping out of inspired idea upon idea .......

He showed in this regard that a writer has basic difference with a philosopher and Scientist. Philosopher and Scientists move by the rigorously based and potentially self assured steps of the systematising intelligence. On the other hand a poet sees:

.......... by the intuition and direct perception and brings out what they give him by a formative stress on the total image, and the aspect to which he thrills in the living truth of the farm, of the life that inspired it, of the creative thought behind an the supporting movement of the soul and a rhythmic harmony of these things revealed to his delight in their beauty.
Finally, in the movement of ultimate creative excellence
differences among a scientist, philosopher and a poet disappears. All
are then one with common aim, because-

The first effort of philosophy is to know for the sake of pure
understanding, but her greater height is to take Truth alive in the
spirit and clsp and grow on with her and be consciously within
ourselves all the reality we have learned to know. But that is
precisely what the poet strives to do in his own way by intuition
and imagination, when he labours to bring himself close to and
be one by delight with the thing of beauty which awakes his
joys.

Annadasankar with his distinctive style, says the same thing-

He further explains it thus:

Nevertheless, this is true that there cannot be an agreement
between an artist and a scientist, philosopher or a religious-minded
person. The nature of an artist is different even though in one stage of
creative process light and rasa fuse together to be one. Because-

For this reason Plato banished poets from his ideal state and many others did not hesitate to compare poets and artists with lunatics. An artist views an object by placing it within the idea of wholeness of things. To give shape to his holistic vision, an artist takes the help of science, religion, ethics or philosophy, without compromising with his visionary ideal. In his discussion on artistic vision, the essayist incorporates philosopher and scientists only to point out their difference from artists. He writes:

Annadasankar's analytical mind has also reflected upon the long continuing controversy regarding the issue of decency and obscenity in literature. For long there has been deliberations on what should be banned in literature and whether a writer should be conscious of a borderline in the process of his artistic imitation of life. Regarding the same, the essayist points out to a simple truth:

...
Two decades after his writing of *Sristir Swadhinata* he is still firm on his views. The issue of obscenity and decency in literature added a new dimension to his 1968 essay *Sristir Swadhinata*, concerning the idea of freedom in art and artists. According to him, like the new philosophy reconciling with new science, modern literature will also have alliance with novelty. The facts of life which science approves and considers decent, cannot be termed as obscene in literature. Bimal kumar Mukhopadhay in his essay *Arter Annadasankar* has analysed the same issue of decency-obscenity debate related to literature. One of the novels of Buddhadev Basu was charged with obscenity and the issue became subjudiced. At the time of composition of the essay under discussion, Buddhadev Basu wrote satire in self defence and defence of art, named *Charam Chikitsa*. 60

**Nisiddha Shristi** was written by Annadasankar on 1968. His comment about this-

"আমাদের এই আধুনিক যুগে বলবান মতো কথা এর বেশী আর এতরকম যে কয়েকটি নীতিকথা বা তথ্যকথা যেমন সাহিত্যের বা আর্টের সমাজ হতে পারে না তেমনি কয়েকটি ধর্মীয় সামাজিক ধারাকে 'শ্রদ্ধা' আর অবশ্যই 'অশ্রদ্ধা' বলে সাহিত্যের বা আর্টের সীমা সংকুচিত করা সংগঠিত হবে না। আর ভাষা তো ভাবেরই উপযোগী হবে। অনুপ্যোগী হলে শ্রদ্ধা ভাবারই বা মূল্যায়ন কী ? অনেকক্ষেত্রে অশ্রদ্ধে ভাষাই উপযোগী ভাষা।"

He was in favour of autonomy of art. Since an artist is the monarch of his own kingdom, so he enjoys the right to ignore the social verdict about his creation. Art is for arts' sake; Otherwise it will appear queer. 61
In the article **Sonar Johuri**, he says that a jeweler knows gold best. It is not possible for all to deliberate on the nature and objective of art-

কারা যদি তার প্রকৃতির প্রতি সত্য হয়ে থাকে তবে যা, হবার তাই হয়েছে। তার
অভিনন্দিত উদ্দেশ্য যদি সিদ্ধ হয়ে থাকে তবে সে যেমনটি হয়েছে তেমনটি
ভালো।

Idea of morality cannot be in agreement with the sense of aesthetics and the sense of beauty. The essayist clarifies-

গুছিয়ে লেখা দেখলেই সম্ভব হয় যে বানিয়ে লেখা। বানিয়ে লেখার উপরেও
অনেক কিছু। জীবন যদি মসৃণ না হয় তো সাহিত্য মসৃণ হবে কি করে
এলেমোলা এবং চেতনার পছন্দ। চেতনার প্রেম বলা হয় যাকে
তার পরিত্যাগ্যুক্ত উল্টোপাল্টা মাধ্যমের।

While discussing the issue of perfection of art in the above essay, Annadasankar refers to Absurd drama and supports its special aesthetic appeal. He believes that in the modern age the true judgement of literature cannot be done with traditional notions of religion, ethics and view of the society. In this connection he refers to D.H. Lawrence and says:

নিজা আমি বিবি যেমন বিয়ে করতে চাইলে বিয়ে করেন লেখকের ভেন্নিয়ে লেখিয়ে
পাঠকও ভেন্নিয়ে পড়েন, কারা জন্যে কিছু আটকায় না।

There were many writers in the twentieth century who expressed their opinion on the issue of beauty and ugliness or obscenity and decency in literature. We can refer to Rabindranath, Abanindranath and Nalini Kanta gupta in this regard. Rabindranath offered his simple decision in this debate which is-
Elsewhere he said that when literature appropriates an idea of totality- beauty is born. The character Bharudutta of *Kabi Kankan* is not a man of character, but he appears perfect and beautiful because shedding aside the excess, his character promoted one particular emotion only. For the same reason, Hanuman of *The Ramayana* or *Supranakha* is beautiful. Contemporary writer Nalini Kanta Gupta wrote-

> শিক্ষে অঙ্গলের খান আছে, কিন্তু অসুসন্দর খান নেই। অঙ্গলও অসুসন্দর এক জিনিস নয় - শৈল ও সুন্দরও এক জিনিস নয়।

To him,-

> শুলষা হইতে আচারগত তোগাতা, সমাজে চালিত নিয়মনিষ্ঠা।

and it is relative in perception. Great poet Kalidasa is the proof that whatever is obscene, may not be ugly. Regarding this Nalini Kanta has an interesting observation, that decent thing may be uncouth also.

> শুলষা অসুসন্দর যখন তারা কেবল বাহা যোগাযোগ প্রচিতা, যখন তারা অসুসন্দর কোনো সত্তার অভিব্যক্তি নয়। প্রতু অসুসন্দর কেন, শরীরচাষকে সামালাইয়া ধরিবার অতিবাদ চেষ্টা, শুলষা সমরে সর্বপ্রায় অঙ্গল হইয়া উঠে।

On the other hand obscene may be beautiful also-

> দুশাসনের হাতে আক্রহণ অঙ্গল এবং অসুসন্দর; শোকের হাতে আক্রহণ শৈল না হোক পরম সুন্দর।
He quotes Victor Hugo in this context:

अनुसरण हटें जुड़िया दांग तपबानके, पाइबे अति सुनदर। 
कासिकाठे 
तपबानके यखन बुलाइया दियाहै तखनहै ताहा हैइया उठियाछे 'क्रेश'।

It is noteworthy that when Rabindranath or Nalini Kanta Gupta puts forward definite ideas about the issue of decency and obscenity in literature, in Annadasankar, we donot find the same. He cannot be put in the forefront of twentieth century Bengali theoreticians of literature and art. However, this must also be acknowledged at the same time that his conscious mind has left its marks of originality in almost all aspects of art and literature.

Pundits of the world have a long history of debating on the issue of importance of literature in life. Many have considered literature as unnecessary for material life. In the Western aesthetic tradition Plato was the first to denounce the value of literature. Music, composed for heart's contentment is considered a playstuff by him, --

*That which has neither utility nor truth nor likeness, nor yet, in its effects, is harmful, can best be Judged by the criterion of Charm that is in it, and by the pleasure it affords. Such pleasure, entailing as it does not appriciable good or ill, is play.*

Later on in Schiller, this idea of play undergoes a transformation to be projected as play-ism, embellished with philosophical resonance. According to him, -

*Man plays only when he is in the full sense of the word a man, and he is only wholly Man when he is playing.*
In India, this subject of playism/Lilabad received amplified treatment in Brahma-Sutra. Here the creation of the world is considered as an unnecessary playful act. Later on, following this line of thought, creation of artists and poet was also termed as lila or play. Rabindranath plays an important role in this context who inherited the lilabad of the Upanisada. He says-

Annadasankar too, in the line of Rabindranath, has considered the act of creation as lila/play, in his literary theories:

To him, the success of creation justifies of lila.

Addressing the question about the meaning of art, Annadasankar arrives in such conclusions like:

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It was Rabindranath and Abanindranath, who much before Annadasankar, stressed the necessity of enjoying apparently unnecessary *Lila* in this need-based world. To Abanindranath it is meaningless to withdraw oneself into the fantasy world of art and literature, leaving aside the world of responsibility. Secondly, Annadasankar’s view that literature has no power to resolve the problems of life, is a much argued topic in Bengali. Rabindranath believed that literature cannot take authoritative role of a Schoolmaster:

Sri Aurobindo has important observation on the subject of literature’s role in the promotion of ethics or solving problems. To him, the excessive stress on wit and rationality in poetry with disregard to pure emotion, fails to impress upon a critical reader, in spite of its rich philosophy and ethical moorings. However, at the same time he warns us not only to look for pure poetic pleasure in poetry. He refers to Antigone’s reply when King Creon advised him to hate the enemy of the nation:

_Not to join in hate, but to join in love was I born!_
Sri Aurobindo, then says:

*The Athenian poet intended no moral instruction, calls up no religious emotion into his line, is concerned only with a crucial situation in life, the revolt of nature affection against the rigid claim of the law, nation, state. It is a simple cry of the voice of nature and life, yet there breaths behind it a greater thought which is not so far from the truth underlying religious teaching and spiritual experience. The poet his eyes fixed on life shows us as if by accident the seed in our normal nature which can grow into the prodigious spiritual truth of universal love.*

We cannot thus agree to Annadasankar's view that literature never resolves and cannot resolve problems of life. Infact, artists and poets address the practical aspects of life in their special ways, and never bowing to pre-existing codes of ethics. Sri Aurobindo rightly says:

*He (poet) has to do it in his own way in the mould of poetic beauty and delight.*

In the absence of a penetrative vision, Annadasankar's observations on art and aesthetics appears at times superficial and simplistic.

However, he has observed rightly, the commodification of modern art and literature, jettisoning its primary aim and intrinsic values. He writes in this regard:

*আমাদের দুর্ভাগ্য এই যে আমাদের যুগে সামাজিক অব্যবহার পায়ে আট হয়ে দীঘিয়েছে বাজারের পথ। যেসব চাল ডাল ফললা আছে মাংস ভিড়ে ষাড়ী পয়লা সিন্ধির তোমরা নাটক উপন্যাস নাচ গান ছবি।*
Annadasankar cites Tagore's poem in self defence:

`আত্ন যাতে দেক্তে মূখ আত্ন যাতে দেক্তে
আত্ন যাতে তালো বলে, বলে না যাতে।
ফুলের মালাক্ষি বিকাওতে আসিয়াছি
পরক করে সবে, করে না যাতে।`

In fact, the process of commodification of art in the contemporary world has caught the attention of many. The essayist urged art to follow its own laws rather than following a different part by losing its originality. However, this idea of Sawdharma or own laws of art is a contentious issue for rhetoricians of the world. For some art is for art's sake, for others art is for life's sake, and again for a few art is for the Almighty. Annadasankar in his discussion on art, adapted the first proposition - art is for arts sake. He has written:

`আট হচ্ছে আপনি আপনার উদ্দেশ্যা। আপনি আপনার উপায়।`

A host of German writers promoted this idea of art in their works; prominent among them were: Kant, Schelling, Goethe and Schiller. The literary movement associated with this view is called Aesthetic Movement. The idea of Art for arts sake is implicit also in Augus prefaces to Cromwell. According to the pioneers of this movement, in appreciating art:

`........ the critic should reject moral, social, political, religious and other nonaesthetic standards as irrelevant.`

Annadasankar echoes the same in his writing:

`আটের খাতিতে আট বলি যখন, তখন এই কথাটীকে বেঝাতে চাই যে আট নয় সামাজিক বা আধ্যাত্মিক বা নৈতিক বা রাজনৈতিক বা অর্থনৈতিক উদ্দেশ্যসাধনের উপায়। আট হচ্ছে আপনি আপনার উদ্দেশ্য আপনি আপনার উপায়।`
In another context he said:

Annadasankar’s reference to **pure art** is influenced by Western critical tradition. It was Kant, who first of all talked about **Pure Art** in the West -

*Kant stressed the 'Pure' and disinterested existence of the work of art, .....*.  

By **Pure art** Annadasankar meant an art, which is not a product of a decadent mind, because he believes:

**The essayist is with the view that art is not a photographic imitation of reality - a much discussed issue in the aesthetic criticism, which dates back to Plato.**

*Aristotle accepts imitation as a fundamental human instinct - an intellectual instinct of which poetry is one manifestation, along with music, painting, and sculpture. His real innovation, however, and the cornerstone of his new theory of poetry, is a redefinition of mimesis to mean not a counterfeiting of sensible reality but a presentation of universals.*
Later critics have not been able to go beyond Aristotle, in their analysis of the above subject. With the help of two terms like fact and truth, Rabindranath attempted to explain the exactness of art's imitation of reality. According to him in the world of rasa, facts have an illusory presence, what stands as real is the idea of truth. An artist endeavours to go beyond the world of facts to imbibe the idea of truth and express it in language. To the poet:

রসকুর এবং তথ্যকুর এক ধর্ম এবং এক মূল্য নয়। তথ্যজগতের মেআলোকঅম্বি দেয়ালে এসে ঢেকে যায়, রসজগতের সে রস্মি মূলকে ভেদ করে
অনায়াসে পার হয়ে যায়, তাকে মিছি ডাকতে বা সিংহ কাটতে হয় না।

Annadasankar's idea is a follow up of Tagore's ideas only. He also says:

াধারণ অর্থে যেমনটি তেমনটি মানে নিযুক্তির আড়ালে যে উক্ততর সত্য আছে
তার সঙ্গে সত্য রক্ষা।

Regarding a reader's expectation from an author, he says that a reader expects his author to deliver truth. It should be obligatory for an author to offer his reader a slice of pure truth, because literature is different from science or history.

সাহিত্য হল রূপাজ্ঞ, সুতরাং এখানে সত্য হল তথ্যের রূপাজ্ঞ।

A reader imagines an author to be an apostle of truth and beauty. This status is achievable for an author, if he writes with a rare sense of dedication and passion, nurturing an idea of eternal truth. However, a reader's wish cannot be satiated so easily by providing him a model of truth. Further, he aspires for beauty replete with truth. A curious reader wants to know the story of becoming of a writer and the author.
cannot but comply with as he knows the readers to be the custodian of his fortune. The essayist says:

The essayist's reference to the idea of being and becoming in relation to art and literary creativity had its earlier place in Western rhetorical tradition and in Rabindranath, in the context of India. While comparing Indian idea of life with that of the Western, in the essay Nababarsa, he said:

Applying this view in his analysis of poetic principle, he wrote:

Western poet Archibald Macleish wrote in his poem:

*Poem should not mean, but be.*

According to one Western critic the real aspect of judging a poem is to study the process of its becoming a poem. In this connection we may quote a remark of a western critic,

*......... no work of art is immortal of itself. Its endurance and value depend not upon what it is, Judged simply by the standards of its contemporaries, but upon what it has power to become.*
Annadasankar is no precursor here as he uses a pre-established literary principle in his critical appreciation of literature. Similarly, his use of the technical terminology *lila* was earlier used by Rabindranath.

In his essay concerning art Annadasankar writes:

>The effectiveness of *Lila* is in the repletion of creation. Thirty two years before this article of the essayist, in a letter to Amyo Chakraborty which was later on used as a preface to his book *Sahityr Pathe*, Tagore wrote:

>মনুষ্য আপনার মধ্য থেকে আপনাকে সৃষ্টি করতে করতে নানাভাবে, নানারূপে আপনাকে পাঙ্ক্ষে। মনুষ্য লীলায়। মানুষের সাহিত্যে আর সেই লীলার ইতিহাস লিখিত অংকিত হয়ে চলেছে।

A critic is with the opinion that Rabindranath's theory of *Lila* has no similarity with Western illusionist theory. In the history of Indian literary principles the idea of *Lila* had no place. So the critic concludes:

>প্রাচ্য বা পাপ্চাত্য, কোনও সাহিত্য সাদৃশ্যের রবীন্দ্রনাথের লীলার উদ্দেশ্য খুজে পাওয়া যাবে না।

The concept of *Lila* was unique and original creation of Tagore. There can be no doubt that while using this terminology, Annadasankar was heavily influenced by Tagore. It is in this *Lila*, Rabindranath held the view, that human beings find the meaning of their existance. He says:
Here is an echo of the same in Annadasankar:

In considering art and literature as *Lila* Annadasankar was influenced by Rabindranath. The latter exerted tremendous influence on the essayist's literary sensibility as is evident in his interpretation of the term *Sahitya*, of which he says:

> সাহিত্য কথাটার ভিত্তি একটা সাহিত্যের ভাব আছে। সাহিত্য সৃষ্টি নিয়ে যাই রাপ্ত তাদের পাঠকদেরও একপ্রকার সাহিত্য অর্থে সমিতের ভাব।

It seems as if Tagore is speaking here through the essayist's words. In explaining the nature of literature, Rabindranath attached much importance to the word *Sahit* which is inherent in the word *Sahitya*, meaning *to unite* or *to connect*. Indian rhetorical tradition has it that literature is the unifying ground for *word* and *meaning*, i.e. a *Sahit-tyo* of the two. However, for Rabindranath, the meaning of *Sahit-tyo* is much more broad; as he says:

> সাহিত্যের সহজ অর্থ যা বুঝি সে হচ্ছে নৈকট্য অর্থে সমিলন। মানুষকে মিলতে হয় কেবল হয় নানা প্রয়োজন, আবার মানুষকে মিলতে হয় কেবল মেলাবারই জনো, অর্থে সাহিত্যেরই উদ্দেশ্য। ..... এর থেকে বুঝতে পারি, ভাষার ক্ষেত্রে সাহিত্যের শদের তাং পর্য কি। তার কাজ হচ্ছে হদয়ের মোগলালা, যেখানে মোগটাই শেষ লক্ষ্য।
In his essay, Annadasankar not only followed the above definition but also cited Tagore's poem in support of his view:

एकाकी पायकेर नहे तो पान,
मिलित हवे दुईजाने ।
पाहिजे एकजन खुलिया गला, आरेकजन पाबे मन।

Regarding the same, Annadasankar wrote else where:

आटे एकजनेर अन्वेषणीके आरेकजनेर अन्वेषण करे। एकजनेर सता परिचय आरेकजनेर हुढळे पौछे देये। एकजनेर गोपनपत्र वापी आरेकजनेर सनेर काने बने। एकजनेर सुख-दुःखेखेर अविभक्ति निये आरेकजनेर उपडोपा बालया। एकजनेर सकित ऐमेर्ग निये आरेकजनेर उत्तरकिषार गड़े।

This is Simply a resonance of Rabindranath's idea and not the expression of originality for the essayist. Like Rabindranath again, Annadasankar didnot appropriate all the ideas of Sanskrit rhetoric but selectively used the phrase बाक्य रसायनकं काव्यं in constructing his idea on art and aesthetic. He writes that in art the mode of expression is most important:

सेके थेके एकटा सूत्र रचित हलो बाक्य रसायनकं काव्यं ........। एर मध्ये काम्यर सब कोणा नेह। रस यार आजा एमन येबाक्य सेके हच्छे काम्य ........
शंके मध्ये, धवनि मध्ये, उपमार मध्ये, अलंकारेर मध्ये बनसीएकटा रस आहे।

It is noteworthy that Annadasankar's discussion here is poles apart from Indian rhetorical tradition. Like Tagore he used the phrase to express his independent ideas.
Annadasankar also thought about various forms, themes and real artistry of literary creations. This ranges from his ideas about forms of essay, forms of travel-literature, the art of novel as expressed in the essay *Upanyas*; the art of short story as expressed in *Golpo Lekhar Golpo*; and about rhymes in the essay *Chhara*. However, it must be mentioned here that inspite of producing such a vast bogey of literature, Annadasankar cannot claim an important place as a literary theoretician, because of the dearth of originality in him. It seems that Bengali literature would have been richer had he thought more about originality- expressing his ideas in a select few artistic pieces- rather that going all the way for quantity. It is unfortunate that the volumes of writings of the essayist has not fetched him that special place which, except Rabindranath, others like Sudhindranath, Jibanananda, Nalini Kanta Gupta, Buddhadeb Basu have achieved through their expression of original ideas in selected pieces.

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19. First pub.: 1924.


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30. Quoted by Sudhir Kumar Dasgupta in his *Kavvalok*, P. 260.


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42. Ibid, P. 53.
43. Ibid, P. 23.
44. Annadasankar Roy: *Art*, P. 23.
45. Ibid, P. 25.
46. Ibid, P. 25.
49. Ibid, P. 25.
52. Ibid, P. 213.
57. Ibid, P. 411.
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63. Annadasankar Roy: *Sonar Jahuri*, 'Art', P. 64.
64. Ibid, P. 65.
68. Ibid, P. 171.
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77. Annadasankar Roy: *Art* P. 67.
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79. Ibid, P. 70.
83. Ibid, P. 217.
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86. Quoted by Annadasankar Roy: *Art*, P. 15.


93. Ibid, P. 76.


98. Ibid, P. 121.


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