INDIAN ART AND THE IMPACT OF HINDUISM

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Abstract

The present paper delves into the intricate dynamics that exist between visual culture, with a particular focus on religious images, and the formation of Hindu identity. The central focus of this scholarly paper pertains to the examination of the various interactions between individuals identifying as Hindus and those who do not identify as Hindus, with regards to religious imagery within the diasporic context. The focus of this inquiry lies in the examination of the various connotations attributed to religious depictions that are meticulously curated within the confines of museum environments. Additionally, this investigation seeks to elucidate the multifaceted role of the museum as an establishment vested with significant influence and power. In the context of the museum, I shall undertake an examination of the utilisation of Hindu deities within a multicultural framework. Specifically, I aim to explore the diverse ways in which different groups invoke notions of authenticity to substantiate their distinct encounters with these sacred images. Furthermore, an in-depth examination will be conducted to delve into the intricacies surrounding the construction of Hindu identity within the geographical boundaries of India.

Keywords:Hindus,Hindu identity, multifaceted role

Introduction

Around two centuries ago, the first steps were taken by scholars to begin studying the art and architecture of mediaeval and ancient India. There was a noticeable fascination in Indian antiquities throughout the second half of the 18th and most of the 19th centuries. The aforementioned artefacts were valuable not just as interesting trinkets but also as examples of exceptional craftsmanship, strange phenomena, and, most importantly, as documents documenting a nation's history under British rule. The goals set by prominent academics in the late 19th and early 20th centuries had a profound impact on the development and methods used in the field of Indian art history and archaeology. Recognizing the ubiquitous colonial bias that impacted the development of art history in India is crucial in light of this historic period. The official creation and institutionalization of the discipline inside the country reached a critical turning point during this age, which must be acknowledged.

Art And How India's Past Is Interpreted

The British antiquarians of the nineteenth century demonstrated a keen appreciation for the potential of visual artefacts in enhancing our understanding of India's rich historical past. This recognition coincided with their efforts to delve into Indian history and culture through the examination of written records. The establishment of the Asiatic Society (of Bengal) in the year 1784, under the guidance of William Jones, marked a significant milestone in the formalisation of the scholarly investigation into India's historical legacy. In Jones' perspective, it is worth noting that the remnants of architecture and sculpture were regarded as mere "monuments of antiquity" rather than esteemed as artistic specimens. Interestingly, Jones drew a parallel between these artefacts and the artistic traditions of Africa, suggesting a potential shared heritage. Simultaneously, the individual expressed a profound sense of sorrow regarding the disappearance of çilpaçästras, ancient manuscripts that were believed to harbour significant insights into the realm of traditional Indian arts and craftsmanship. It is worth noting that the initial spark of British interest in Indian art was ignited by its portrayal as a form of 'handicraft' or 'manufacture'.

The examination of art and architectural remnants has garnered considerable interest within the context of regional surveys conducted to gain insights into the geographical, historical, cultural,

linguistic, literary, and folkloric aspects of a particular society. Significant contributions were made by notable individuals, including the esteemed Colin Mackenzie (1754–1821), whose personal endeavours yielded noteworthy outcomes. In collaboration with a group of skilled draughts men and knowledgeable individuals from the indigenous Indian community, Mackenzie undertook a significant endeavour to obtain translations of inscriptions and manuscripts. Additionally, he commissioned the creation of intricate maps and drawings depicting various archaeological sites located in the southern region of India. The endeavours undertaken by the individual in question to record and document the Amaravati stüpa and its surrounding site hold a notable position within the realm of art history, as noted by Howes in 2010. Throughout the colonial era, it is evident that numerous traditional Indian scholars made significant contributions to the endeavour of reclaiming India's historical legacy. However, it is important to note that these scholars were often relegated to subordinate positions within the colonial project.

The artistic renderings of these scenes not only captured the aesthetic appeal of these dilapidated structures but also served as a testament to the enduring allure of India's rich historical heritage. These evocative portrayals found their way into numerous exhibitions, captivating audiences with their exotic charm and providing a glimpse into a distant and mysterious world. The utilisation of the 'Picturesque' as a visual style of representation proved to be highly effective in evoking the enigmatic allure, aesthetic splendour, and romanticism associated with India's historical era, while simultaneously highlighting the stark juxtaposition with its current state of impoverishment.

The pursuit of scientific rigour and a more solid foundation in the realm of early attempts gained momentum during the mid-nineteenth century. The period under examination was characterised by a notable and influential contribution, primarily centred around the implementation of an extensive surveying process, meticulous documentation practices, efficient archiving methods, and comprehensive reporting procedures. Throughout history, there has been a persistent pursuit of capturing and preserving visual representations in various forms. From the early days of aquatints, drawings, and plaster casts to the later advancements of lithographs, stereoscopes, dioramas, and ultimately, photographs, individuals have devoted considerable effort to obtain these images.

This narrative shed light on the British perception of these architectural wonders during the early twentieth century. When examining these two photo-narratives in conjunction, one can glean significant insights regarding the British perception and attitude towards the monuments that were built during the preceding Mughal era. By examining the intersections of these monuments, which serve as potent symbols of appropriation, power dynamics, strategic manoeuvring, control, and the concept of 'empire,' we are able to shed light on the original intentions and artistic qualities that were imbued within these structures during their creation. In his compelling work, Bautze effectively illustrates the significant intersections between the realms of spectatorship, ideology, and aesthetics within the field of art historical research.

Art and History in Colonial India: A Foundational Study

James Fergusson (1808–1886) is a prominent figure in Indian architecture who made significant methodological contributions. Most notably, he pays close attention to detail while trying to interpret the complex history of Indian architecture. Alexander Cunningham (1814–1893) was a major figure whose impact on Indian archaeology has persisted to this day. His essential contributions to establishing norms for an It was obvious that the two individuals were totally devoted to the notion that Western standards, practices, and norms were foundational. Both individuals classified the artefacts that attest to India's illustrious past using frameworks that were established during colonialism.

In their pursuit of a historical and cultural understanding of Indian art via the examination of its textual and geographical complexity, notable Indian philosophers like as Ram Raz (1790–1830) and Rajendralala Mitra (1822–1891) did not find universal acceptance in their scholarly writings. Their achievements did not begin to get the acknowledgment and appreciation they were due until much later in life. Everyone agrees that Ram Raz was an early trailblazer when it came to studying Indian architecture. Raz spent his whole life delving into the intricate web of connections between indigenous architectural texts, monuments on Indian land, and the rich history of architect-sculptors. The innovative work of this illustrious scholar has contributed significantly to our knowledge of India's rich cultural history and the building techniques that were prevalent there. The posthumously published Essay on the Architecture of the Hindus is a great way to get a feel for the author's extensive body of work.

Although Cunningham's knowledge of archaeology was extensive, it is important to mention that he had a profound grasp of several aspects of the field. Thanks to this material, which covered a broad variety of issues, we could learn a lot about various historical times and how they were researched. This man's unwavering commitment to documenting and writing comprehensive descriptions of many historical places was on full display during his tenure as an Archaeological Surveyor from 1861 to 1865. It was during this individual's tenure as the first Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India that he achieved significant strides forward in the field. He served in this illustrious capacity from 1871 to 1885. Singh's exhaustive scholarly investigation sheds light on the nuanced differences in Cunningham's contextual analyses of Buddhist artefacts and buildings from antiquity. The author's insightful evaluations of the artworks at Bhilsa Topes, Bharhut, and Bodhgaya reveal his profound passion for these sites.

objective of the study

1. To Examine the extensive literary legacy that India has.

2. To discover the influence of Hinduism on Indian art.

Review of literature

In the year 2018, it was documented that an individual by the name of Paulo Martins assumed the role of author. This essay endeavours to present a concise survey of the historical trajectory of sacred art in the Indian subcontinent. It shall encompass various significant epochs, commencing with the Dravidian and Aryan civilizations, followed by the advent of Buddhism, the subsequent Muslim and Mughal periods, the Rajput era, and concluding with the Western and contemporary epochs. The primary objective of my research is to explore the central motivation behind the visits made by individuals from Eastern cultures, particularly Hindus and Buddhists, to their revered temples for the purpose of engaging in the ritual of darshan. This Sanskrit term, which translates to "seeing God," holds significant importance in understanding the religious practices of these communities. In this particular context, it is imperative to expound upon a series of philosophical observations, thereby emphasising the underlying impetus that has propelled Western culture's enduring tradition of embarking on sacred journeys to religious sites of great significance, including but not limited to the Temples associated with Islam, Judaism, and Christianity.

Ananda Majumdar, a prominent figure in history, has made significant contributions to the field of research. His work has been widely recognised and the promotion of Indian art, culture, and religion within the educational model has been a matter of concern for the welfare of Indian youth and people. The National Educational Policy (NEP-2020) implemented in India has been regarded as a significant milestone in the nation's educational landscape. This policy has been strategically designed to facilitate the academic and social growth of students and young individuals. The promotion of religious and cultural activities is highly valued by the Indian government. The primary objective of the initiative is to facilitate the development of a robust sense of identity among children, particularly with regards to their cultural heritage, language, artistic expressions, and traditional practices. It is believed that such an endeavour will not only enhance the collective sense of pride among Indians but also contribute to the overall betterment of society. Throughout the annals of India's illustrious history, a multitude of artists, authors, and specialists hailing from diverse religious and cultural backgrounds have been summoned with the noble purpose of disseminating the opulent tapestry of the nation's cultural heritage. The user's text is not provided. The emergence of secularism, a sense of communal belonging, and the widespread utilisation of multilingual imagery collectively indicate a prospective trajectory for cultural education within educational institutions. This trajectory entails a shift towards a curriculum that encompasses not only English and Hindi, but also an array of diverse languages. In light of these circumstances, it presents a remarkable opportunity for educators possessing expertise in the realm of Indian traditional religion as well as proficiency in diverse languages to impart their wisdom and insights to students. The present study aims to delve into the subject matter at hand, namely Hinduism, Indian history, art, and sculpture, with the objective of attaining a more comprehensive comprehension. This endeavour is undertaken in light of the national educational policy (NEP) 2020 of India, which serves as a contextual framework for the examination. Upon perusing the contents of this article, it is expected that one's comprehension pertaining to the spiritual and cultural dimensions of religion in the Indian subcontinent shall be significantly enhanced. The methodology employed in this study adopts a documentary analysis approach. The central concerns revolve around the extent to which Indian educational policy facilitates the promotion of Indian religion, art, and culture. In examining the historical context, it is imperative to explore the various possibilities and obstacles that were present during the given period. By delving into these factors, we can gain

a comprehensive understanding of the circumstances that shaped the events and outcomes of that time.

This is Ananda Majumdar. Practicing one's faith (also known as Dharma), accumulating financial wealth (also known as Artha), loving one's fellow man (also known as Karma), and obtaining spiritual redemption (also known as Moksha) are the four goals that one should set for themselves throughout their lifetime. Indian temples, epics, and other works of art are all examples of the holistic ideas that are practiced there. The sculptures that decorate the walls of these temples reflect the arts and images that speak of spirituality via moksha, which is the road to obtaining the blessings of the Supreme Lord as recorded in the Vedas, the Puran, the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita, the Ramayana, and the Mahabharata. These sculptures are a representation of the art and pictures that speak of their spirituality. The Vedas, which glorified the Lords of inanimate abstracts or natural elements, and the sacred writings of the Aryans (Indus Civilization), an ancient Sanskrit language and culture, as well as the worship of Mother Goddess by Indigenous Indians, were all sources that contributed to the development of Hinduism. There was no single prophet or founder of Hinduism; rather, it developed from a synthesis of several sources.

There are many different deities that are worshipped in Hinduism. Some of these deities are Brahma, who represents fire, Shri Shiva, who represents power, Shri Rama, who represents light, and Shri Vishnu, who represents light. The omnipotent character of these gods, who represent the lords of the cosmos, is reflected in the representation of them as having numerous arms. A demonstration of the gods' and goddesses' omnipotence and ability to do several tasks at once, the numerous limbs of the gods and goddesses are symbolic of their cosmic acts in the fight against the forces of evil. God is continually working for the welfare of mankind and the vanquishing of evil forces like demons with several heads, and the creative creation of many arms is a metaphor of the limitless power that God has. With the central face symbolising the protagonist and the other two faces showing his violent and joyous aspects, the three heads of Lord Shiva depict the human form. The human form is represented by the three heads.

Research methodology

When one thinks about what pictures are capable of, this assumption takes on huge implications. It is not always the intention behind a religious picture that makes it "religious," according to

Morgan; rather, it is the image's usage and the impact it has on the spectator. According to Morgan, religious images serve to "order behaviour by persuasion or magic; or displace rival images and ideologies." The viewer-image covenant is therefore always up for grabs due to the multipurpose nature of religious pictures.

Additionally, the covenant is inherent in the spectator, who, according to his or her own cultural experience, gives the picture meaning that may either align with or contradict the creator's original goal. "Each claimant builds a specific cultural framework around the image to decipher its meaning, and each person brings it to life within an interpretive community where the image holds tangible significance for its members." As a result, many of claimants means lots of claims, and those claims might be contradictory.

Data analysis

Customary Pictures in Communities of Immigrants

The term "Indian Diaspora" is a multifaceted concept that encompasses a diverse range of immigrant populations, thereby lacking a precise and universally agreed-upon definition. According to the United Nations Development Programme, there is an estimated population of approximately 25 million individuals categorised as "Non-Resident Indians" (NRIs) and "Persons of Indian Origins." However, it is important to note that the available statistics do not provide a breakdown of these immigrants based on specific types or categories.

The Sanatan Dharma organisation was established in 1881 as part of the Hindu reform movement in Trinidad. However, reformist movements did not achieve widespread support until the arrival of Arya Samaj missionaries from India in the early 1900s. The Arya Samaj had a significant influence on populations in Diaspora because to its unusual view of the caste structure and monotheistic focus, which caused division in North India. Members of the Arya Samaj sent to communities abroad. Hinduism in the Caribbean, which the Samajis saw as fundamentally different and hybridised, had its origins in India, but the Arya Samaj wasn't the only group that tried to bring it all together.

Figure 1 The interviewee is Sipari Mai of London

The term "Indian Diaspora" encompasses a wide range of communities, both contemporary and historical in nature. It encompasses the more recent emigrated upper-class urban communities, such as those found in the United States, as well as the settled communities that trace their origins back to the indentured labour migrations of the 19th century, like those in Trinidad. The outcome of this phenomenon is the formation of a diaspora that encompasses a diverse array of communities, characterised by varying socio-economic statuses, linguistic backgrounds, religious affiliations, ethnic origins, and degrees of cultural integration. However, what unites these disparate groups is their shared connection to India.

In Singapore, Vineeta Sinha investigated how people's perceptions of religious authenticity correlated with their ownership of religious artefacts. Here, fascinating challenges arise for purchasers and sellers as they try to balance the demand for culturally genuine religious goods with the reality of the global economy. "While believers insist on India as the central repository for all things 'Hindu,' the truth is that various other countries provide the particular artefacts used in religious ceremonies," Sinha explains. So, it's worth mentioning that some regions of Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, and, more lately, China, have become major actors in these networks of selling, marketing, and distribution of things used in Hindu worship, such as pictures of gods. Consequently, both Hindus and non-Hindu business owners in Singapore have learned to differentiate between authentic Indian deity images and cheap "imitations."

Fig 3.2 From Religion and Commodification, we have this image of Ganesh bathing in the front row

Since sculptures and artworks from other regions of Asia could not live up to the expectations of the refined society, many store owners caved to consumer pressure and stopped selling them. According to one of the traders Sinha spoke with, non-Hindu Asians lacked the "embedded 'authentic,' cultural knowledge required to produce images that are able to capture notions of 'auspicious beauty' that would be acceptable to local Indians (read Hindus)" when it came to creating ritual objects. In claiming that a true representation of the god would never show him in such a position, one merchant brought up a little sculpture created in China of a swimming Ganesh (Fig. 3.2). The Hindu diaspora views non-Hindus who deal with religious iconography with a deep-seated distrust, as these observations show. Those who lack the knowledge that is inherent to Hinduism may not be able to pass a certain cultural threshold.

Colonial and cultural Expansion

It is clear that Neolithic societies had substantial relationships with countries in the Far East throughout the ancient period. These early human groups had an extraordinary inclination for migration, setting out on long voyages by land and sea. So, they ended up settling in Indo-China and the Indian Archipelago, where they had a long-lasting influence. It is clear from looking back at history that the Indian people have always encouraged open and meaningful

communication with people all around the world. This practice has persisted throughout Indian history and is indicative of the resilience of Indian society as a whole. Over the next few thousand years, the Indus valley area was home to an advanced civilization that was both affluent and well-documented.

You may find interesting references to a group of ambitious people called Indian merchants in the Mahabharata, the Jataks, and the Katha Sarit Sagar, which are all parts of the extensive canon of ancient Indian literature. In the heroic quest for financial gain, these brave individuals set sail on dangerous journeys across enormous seas. From what we can gather from the Jataka, we learn that Indian merchants would bring all sorts of goods with them when they travelled to the kingdom of Baveru, today known as Babylon. It is worth noting that an Indian peacock is among these priceless things. Many historical accounts detail the perilous journey that Indian traders had to reach the famous Suvarnabhumi area, which extended from Burma to Indonesia.

Looking back across history, it is clear that India has always worked hard to cultivate strong trading links with the great civilizations of Babylon, Syria, and Egypt. In the centuries leading up to the Christian period, India had substantial cultural and commercial ties to other countries in northern Central Asia, western Greek kingdoms, and even the islands in the Pacific Ocean. The origins of these connections go all the way to the centuries before the Christian period. Compared to the previous age, the Mauryan period saw a noticeable improvement in the development and formation of that connection. Indian merchants and missionaries clearly set sail from a number of well-known ports, according to the historical records preserved in the Periplus and Pliny's works. Muziris, Barbarika, Neleyanda, Bakari, Korkai, and Puhar are among them.

The ports in question were vital nodes in the economic and cultural network that connected the enormous Indian Ocean area throughout the time under review. The primary consideration in choosing these harbours was their beneficial closeness to the sea. As time went on, it's important to remember that Indian immigrants, motivated mostly by trade, continued to build up colonies on other islands in the Arabian Sea. Under colonial rule were the thriving port city of Alexandria on Egypt's Mediterranean coast and the world-famous island of Socotra in the Indian Ocean, both of which were known for their rich biodiversity and advantageous position.

Reasons for the Spread of Hindu Culture

Various civilizations have been spread around the world throughout history due, in large part, to the expansion of commerce and the pursuit of conquest. The historical records show without a doubt that the formation of trade links between India and the Far Eastern countries was crucial in allowing Hindu culture to spread in the area. A powerful impulse pushed the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas to set sail on nautical journeys across the enormous Indian Ocean, exploring faraway countries and enduring many dangers and difficulties.

Medium of Indian cultural expansion

Merchants from the Indian subcontinent would often set sail for other parts of the world in search of unending business opportunities in ancient times. Not only did these people travel far and wide, but they also made pilgrimages to the western realm of Rome and the eastern realm of China. In the distant past, adventurers would go out on perilous journeys in pursuit of the golden metal. The areas that are today known as Indonesia and Cambodia were among the many places these daring explorers travelled to. These remarkable excursions occurred as early as the first century BCE, when human civilizations were only beginning to take shape. In their dogged quest for riches and prosperity, these early explorers were captivated by the cultural and inherent importance of gold, which pushed them to travel vast distances and experience uncharted regions. Among the many islands visited by these daring explorers on their long journeys were Java, Sumatra, and Malaya.

Indian culture in Central Asia

Cultures of the Indian subcontinent spread beyond the Himalayas in Central Asia. India began to establish trade connections with China and Central Asia beginning in the second century B.C. and continuing ever since. China, Russia, Tibet, India, and Afghanistan are the countries that border the region that is named Central Asia. Traders travelling to and from China often traversed the area despite the challenges they faced. They were the ones who first opened the road that would eventually become known as the Silk Road.

It was because silk was one of the most important commercial goods that China traded that the route was given its name. During subsequent times, the same path was travelled by monks, intellectuals, and missionaries throughout history. Through the route, civilizations from all around the globe that was known at the time were able to be transmitted to later generations.

The writers of these articles argue that artists have responded to their creative tendencies due to two key inputs. These motivations include the need to restore an abandoned creative history and establish oneself in current society. Each of these articles shows how crucial these cultural materials are to current Indian artists. Instead of a drastic break, modern art continues its historical roots. Contemporary art reconfigures and reinterprets old art, creating new and progressive viewpoints.

Figure 2Aryan Migration or Vedic Period (1750-1000 BC)

Asoka Maurya (324 – 200 B.C or 273 – 236 B.C)

It is Asoka. However, Maurya was tolerant of various faiths, despite the fact that Buddhism was the dominant religion during his reign (Sen, 1988).

Stupas, which are Buddhist relic shrines, and pillars that were inscribed with his speeches and lectures were examples of his attempts to bring about cultural unification via the medium of sculpture. Due to the fact that they exemplified daring design, technical expertise, and expressive symbolism, the pillars of the Asoka period were considered to be among the most significant works of art in the history of Indian art. In the year 184 B.C.

Invasion of North India (200 BC.)

Ancient Greeks from Turkestan and Northern Afghanistan led the first invasion of the nation's northwestern and northern peripheries. The Central Asian Sakas took over rule of the area. The Sakas, from Asia's centre, ruled the lower Indus River and western India. Parthians or Pahlavas, an Iranian nomadic tribe, arrived after this time, changing history. These wanderers helped advance Hellenistic culture and art in their realm (Thaper, 2002).

During his reign from 78 to 123 A.D., Kushan emperor Kanishka was impressive. His power expanded into Kashmir, Upper Sindh, and Bihar. Besides India, Kanishka ruled Afghanistan's Hindukush, Herat, Kabul, Ghazni, and Kandahar. His dominion also embraced Seistan and Balochistan. Kanishka helped make Buddhism theistic. In 2002, Thaper's research showed that Buddha adoration and prayer rose in a given time. Thus, commitment, faith, and compassion became key values for shaping one's life.

Conclusions

In this paper, the author discusses Indian representation's essential ideas, particularly measurement and proportion. The chapter also discusses important painting philosophy topics. Despite certain disparities in the texts, painting and sculpture are deeply interconnected and depend on similar linguistic roots. This section's use of Brhat Samhita (58) and Pratima-mana-lakshana passages is largely accepted as relating to sculpting principles. The aforementioned individuals' measurement and proportion teachings, as shown by their representation of a 108-angula figure or picture, closely resemble the Vishnu dharmottara and Chitralekha of Nagnajit. After close investigation, it becomes clear that categorising the writings into two disciplinary groups based on their incorporation of painting theory or sculpting philosophy is incorrect. The idea is discussed further using empirical data from sculptors' work. These examples are not contradictory since both painting and sculpting theories use the same textual sources, suggesting that their actual implementation is based on common goals.Physiognomy in citrasutras is emphasised throughout the chapter. Physiognomy was important in early writing. The SamaranganaSutradhara is an unusual outlier. This 11th-century text seems to have continued the practice of categorising people by their physical traits into five divisions. The Vishnudharmottara explains how the duality, albeit unimportant in art, is pragmatic. This ancient document specifies how to represent figures in a hierarchical order.

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