

Visual Semiotic Analysis of Women in Indian Paintings of Amrita Sher-gil

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Abstract

Inspired by the modern Indian painter Amrita Sher-Gil, the study focusses on the semiotic analysis of women in Indian portray of Amrita Sher – Gil. In the early 19th century, Amrita one of the women's' highly artistic, professionally much-admired with enigmatic personality in the artistic scenario in India through her brave projection of women themes reflected on her works. It was the main reason for choosing Amrita Sher -Gil. These study closely follows cultural traces of women and colour patterns, she used in her paintings. The variable framed through the Visual social semiotics method were adopted to analyse the Southern and Northern selected images of Amrita Sher - Gil .The Findings reviles that modern paintings gives a clear picture of the people living style on both Southern and Northern tradition and cultures customs replies in her paintings. Most of the paintings of Amrita Sher-Gil gives a symbolical representation of emotions through the dresses, facial expressions and postures of the characters. Amrita Sher-Gil uses a brown shaded background in almost all of her paintings. It can also be understood through the depictions that such a colour tone is used by the painter to define an Indian.

Keyword: *Semiotics, Colours, Paintings and Indian Art*

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1. Introduction

Early twenty first century is amazingly diverse and challenging conventional stereotypes in many ways. Indian Culture as Cross Section of society including literature, different landscape, architecture, cuisine , spiritual- mindedness and dress, Marriage, Family, Festivals, music, dance, social customs and life styles. Indian Culture as something very diverse and unique Indian Culture is full of several unique customs and traditions, which outsiders might find really fascinating. Indian ancient scriptures and art, which had dictated the way of life in India for thousands of years. Major of India religions were Buddhist Stupas and monasteries, Jain and Hindu temples, their ornamental motifs all speak for the culture of India and beauty. Numerous religious temples spread across the country that displays richness of Indian Culture and tradition through art, literature and scriptures. For example remarkable work, Rian, I. M., Park, J. H., Ahn, H. U., & Chang, D. (2007) Khajuraho as the archetype of sanctuaries by way of respect to fractal geometry and depicts the blends of fractal highlights of the sanctuary beginning the Hindu systems and reasoning. South India place of worship which is well-known for the architectural design, statue, long passages and roomy corridors. Indian Culture moreover appears exceptionally wonderful Islamic design. At that point Gurudwaras abundant Churches, all the societies were encompassed, engaged or rehabilitated with the dominant culture of India. So India has no monolithic culture.

Indian painting incorporates an exceptionally long convention with history in Indian art. The most punctual works of art, the petroglyphs of ancient times found in places like Bhimbetka, a few of them date some time recently 5500 BC. Bhushan N (2009) Tagore and Varma invented artistic traditional painting, which creation complex wave of nation for artistic. Many Indian painting were Ajanta, Miniature, Rajput, Mithila, and Mughal.

Amrita Sher -Gil was one amongst the foremost spectacular further because the most talented Indian artists bliss to the pre-colonial period. She was conjointly the vivacious as well because the solely Asian creative person to be electoral as Associate in Nursing Associate of the Grand Salon in Paris. Kress, G., & Van Leeuwen, T. (2006) paintings of Amrita Sher Gil show a big influence of the Western modes of painting. Her works conjointly mirror her deep passion and sense for colours. Her deep understanding of the Indian subjects conjointly comes across through her paintings. Amrita's paintings delineated individuals mind and self-reflective ladies figure were important in her paintings. Her subjective painting attracted the artists either owing to sheer beauty or owing to |the shape that we all know as feminine form. Amrita's paintings views disposal of men, lying happily, care-free, sensuous, or fawning. Earlier works

her paintings seen as nudity, these paintings reflects her perspective of men relating to the gorgeous, aesthetic form, started obtaining a distinct perspective. One of the foremost challenging things for an artists to become a self-Portrayal of herself. Kan Tai-Keung (2012) and Liran Li (2013) have addressed the artistes to know ancient symbols that area unit wealthy in cultural heritage and inimitable to their region, reflected on their confidence.

2. Significance of this Study

The study deals with Amrita's paintings of different art, subject matter of paintings, and use of raw materials and styles of Amrita Sher as a Pre-Modern Indian artist in the 20th century. The study further analyses the reformation of Indian Art in the paintings of Amrita Sher with special emphasis on expressing her thoughts through different brush strokes done in oil canvas. The research aimed to expose understandings of paint meaning by exploring in what way colour as a paint is read and interpreted, and how exactly it convey the colour meaning.

2.1 Objectives of the Study

- a. To Study analysis with visual semiotic analysis on the Amrita Sher – Gil Paintings, and how women were represented in her Paintings.
- b. To Analyse the colour patterns used in Amrita Sher- Gil used in her Indian paintings

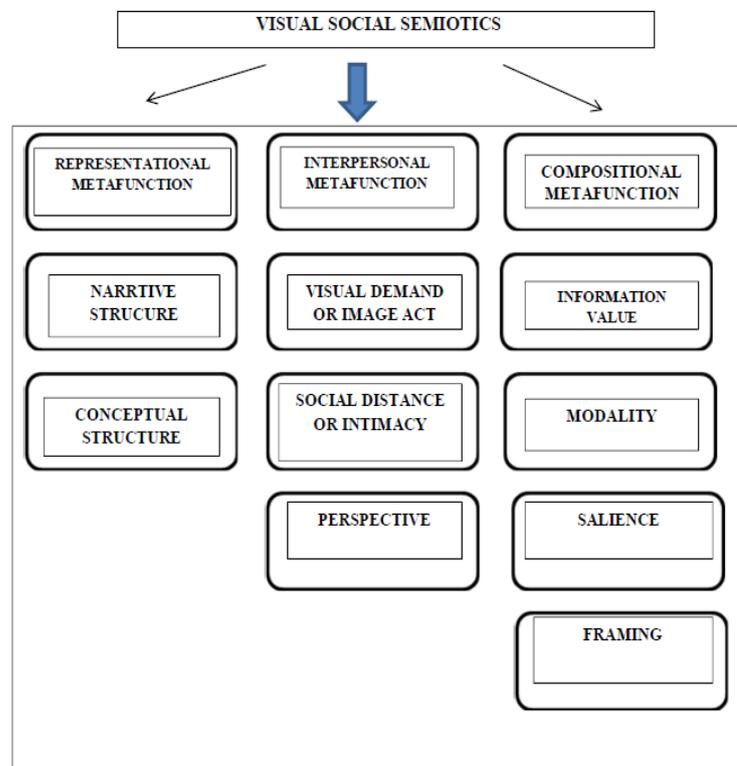
Amrita primarily depicted woman form in her paintings, Woman in her paintings were not objects of desire but confident subjects depicting the very essence of womanhood. She understood the difficulty of Indian woman and her women were a lot more than just pleasing patterns of body contours. The Paintings are categorized into three ways. The first categories the paintings Amrita predominantly depicted woman form in her works, woman in her paintings were not objects of craving but confident themes depicting the very essence of womanhood. She implicit the difficulty of Indian woman and her women were a lot more than just pleasing patterns of body contours. The Paintings are categorized into three ways. The first categories the paintings are Hill Women, Child Bride, and Banana Sellers. This creates an atmosphere and look as if to treat woman as an abstract progenitive symbol. These canvases of her have an echo of the colours of the European palette. Self-Representations are second category "Twelve in Paris for four years" .The third category are Women At bath, Women resting on the Charpoy It depicts the women point of demonstrating the image in fashionable

Indian art by a female artist. By emphasizing on the pith of womanhood instead of objectifying the body, she gave a curiously and way breaking move in anticipating the picture of ladies reflecting the female sensibility from female perspective.

3. Visual Social Semiotic Analysis

The grammar of visual, designed by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) established the social semiotic framework for analysing images, “We intend to provide inventories of the major compositional structures which have become established as conventions in the course of the history of visual semiotics, and to analyse how they are used to produce meaning by Contemporary image-makers”. Further they visual social semiotics for metaphors in western culture, and analysis in the field of applied research and additional theory. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) framework identifies that an image performs, at the same time, three types of meta-semiotic tasks to create meaning. These tasks are representational metafunction, interpersonal metafunction and compositional metafunction

Figure 1



Source: Google Images

Language as social-semiotic: Halliday (1978) profound the dialectical relationship with language operates through three functions:

- a. To communicate her own experience of the world;
- b. To express the communicator's attitude or mood on the subject of the experience, and also to position the receiver in terms of mood and attitude;
- c. To assembly these two into a coherent, perceptible form.

The first two functions were experiential and the interpersonal; the third was the compositional function (Riley H, 2013) in the social semiotics of relational art.

4. Method

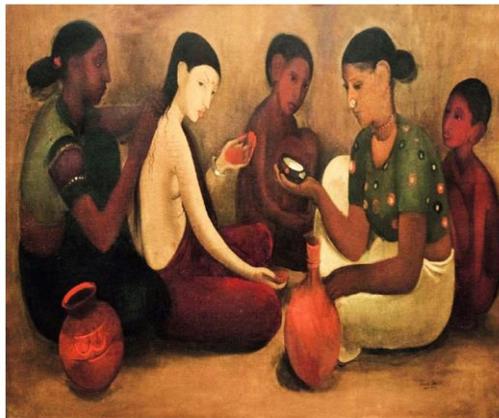
The study proposes a methodology that fetches social semiotic approach and to create of Amrita Sher - Gil ideational meaning, as it created specific relational connotation that represented people, place, things and ideas. The representation are permanently about the social and cultural paradigms. Gage (1999) has commented, 'colour presented an aspect of content as complex and resonant. The study variables framed through the visual social semiotics were used in visual social semiotics analysis method to analyse the Southern and Northern selected images of Amrita Sher - Gil paintings. The variables of the representational metafunction, interpersonal metafunction and Compositional metafunction interpret the images in the following aspects.

- a. In Representational Metafunction the variable 'narrative' allows viewers to create a story about the represented participants; the variable 'conceptual' explains the idea or concept conveyed in the image.
- b. In Interpersonal Metafunction the variable Visual Demand or Image Act creates a visual form of direct address and creates an imaginary relation to the viewer. The variable Social Distance and Intimacy interprets spatial distances between the images and explains' emotion and intimacy. Perspective explains the angle portrayed in the image and this refers to the position of the represented participants and the viewer.

- c. In Compositional Metafunction, the variable ‘information value’ explains the role played by the participants in the image based on the placement in the space. The variable Modality refers the feels about the visual message and elucidates the validity and reliability. The variable Saliency explains the sharpness, clarity, size and colour of the image and creates meaning, framing represents the arrangement of the images, whether grouped together or separated.

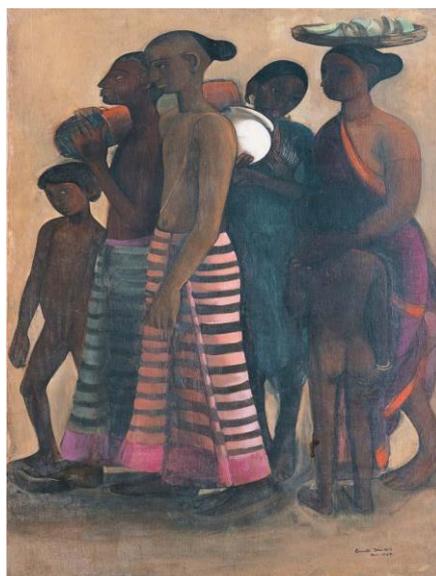
Meta-Semiotic Tasks Performed in her Paintings, Categories of Amrita Sher - Gil
Painting into South Indian Paintings (2) Bride’s Toilet, Villagers market and Northern Indian Women (2) Three Young Girls, Mother India.

Figure 2: Bride’s Toilet



Source: Google Images

Figure 3: Villagers market



Source: Google Images

5. Analysis

5.1 Bride's Toilet

5.1.1 Representational Metafunction

Narrative Structure image narrates a girl bride getting ready for her marriage ceremony and other two female around her are professionals (Beauticians). Conceptual Structure the concept of the image is "bride toilet" and the bride's yellow body is flat and has less mass than the other figures. The limbs are treated differently for the different characters in the image. The bride is getting ready with the help of attendant figures.

5.1.2 Interpersonal Metafunction

Visual Demand or Image Act image acts as a portrayal of bride and the two attendant figures. The image depicts the true culture of South India. The picture conveys that the bride is going to get ready for the marriage ceremony with the help of two attendant figures. Social Distance and Intimacy a close intimacy with the viewers as it grasps the attention of South Indian brides. The painting tends to attach themselves to the image as it clearly portrays the bride getting ready for her marriage with hatred and anguish on her face with the help of attendant figures and the background empty spaces were as Light Brown (Burnt sienna, Yellow ochre, White) colour. Emotive way. Perspective The artist concentrates more on bride's face and the mehandhi in her hands. The reddish colour of the mehandi and the fierce shown in the eyebrows of the bride indicates that bride is forced for her marriage. People around her were unhappy.

5.1.3 Compositional Metafunction

Information Value the participants in paintings is bride, two attendant figures. The woman who is sitting in the centre is a bride, which can be confirmed by her way of dressing and the mehandhi in her hand. Modality The painting depicts the marital ceremony of the backward class people of a particular south Indian region. The painting is modal that it displays the reality of the marriage of the lower class people. It shows that they are the ghettos of the particular area. Saliency relevant to the culture of South India considering the dressings and the makeover of the two attendant figures and the bride in the frame. The bride has special fascination for the colour red. They have a symbolic meaning that changes with different

cultures and countries. The red is the colour for the celebration of weddings .In India red indicates weddings and its revelries and

Women wear a red saree on occasion's as it stands out against the dark tones of her background (Burnt sienna, yellow ochre, White = Light) Brown. Red using colours for high symbolic and emotive value. **Framing** only valid elements that place in the composition .Starting from the side details like pots in the foreground, the bowl in her hand of the attendant figure are arranged in a given frame by the artist thus leaving empty space that makes the central subject prominent. The arrangements of the image are grouped by the artist.

5.2 Villagers Market

5.2.1 Representational Metafunction

Narrative Structure The image narrates and shows two kids, two women and two men are with the hopeless faces; The women in the right side of the frame carrying a bunch of bananas in the basket to visit the market along with their family. **Conceptual Structure** the concept temptation to show peasants at work. In this painting, encircled by six figures, two naked kids, two women, and two half naked men are in the market with some personal belongings.

5.2.2 Interpersonal Metafunction

Visual Demand or Image Act the image shows a group of villagers going to the market .The image depicts the culture habits of south India villagers... **Social Distance and Intimacy** the image it clearly portrays the south Indians groups are going to the market and the background empty spaces are painted with Light Brown and shabby in colour. **Perspective view** of Indian villagers going to market .The two peasants family were returning from the market feeling disappointment about the trade and their inability to buy clothes to their children. The artist concentrates more on characters in the group.

5.2.3 Compositional Metafunction

Modality The image has clearly portrayed the group of villagers are from the sub-continent. The villagers are driven throughout the restless urge of ordinary village people of south Indian region. The figures seemed to have stepped down from the cave walls to go about

their everyday affairs. Salience figure revolves to the culture of South India considering the dressings and the makeover of the villagers with their burnt sienna bodies. Their excellent clothes of black and pink striped dhotis of men and plain coloured saris with strong colour border of women in Violet (Cobalt Blue, Vermilion Red, and Prussian blue) and their progression prove the fleeting effects of dullness and give the real impression of a momentary movement in the painting. Dry background are light brown (Burnt sienna, Yellow ochre, white) muddy shadows on the soil and the drama, project the 'academic' conventions of the artist aligned with the solid social realization of the subject matter. Framing the figure 2 shows girl child is carrying a pot in her hand. The man carrying a mat roll in his hand are perfectly arranged in a frame. Crowded with figures, the composition is filled with shabby colours.

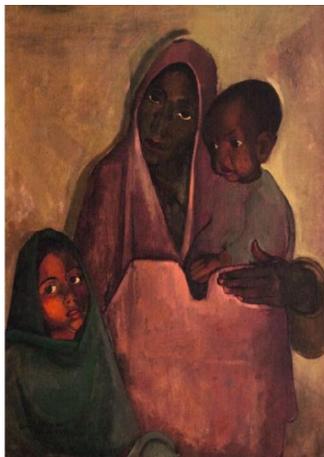
North Indian Paintings

Figure 4: Hill Women



Source: Google Images

Figure 5: Mother India



Source: Google Images

5.3 Hill Women

5.3.1 Representational Metafunction

Narrative Structure shows a group of the two girl kids two young women and yet they prevails a passive, melancholic mood in the static images. **Conceptual Structure** concept of the thin bodies of the poor folk are transmuted to figures bearing an unutterable grace and dignity.

5.3.2 Interpersonal Metafunction

Visual Demand or Image Act image acts as a portrayal of the two girl kids and two young

Women are in cloying sentimentality. **Social Distance and Intimacy**, painting has a close intimacy with the viewers as the subject in the image it grasps the attention to all. The Artist did not depict them with a cloying sentimentality rather than approach the problem on the more abstract plane of the purely pictorial not because of essentially a painter but because she hates cheap emotional appeal and the background empty spaces are painted with a shabby in colours.

Perspective view has a sense of gravity to the figures, yet overcome a passive, gloomy mood in the still images. **Compositional** The role of the participants is two girl kids and two young women

Modality

The image is painted with the message to the viewer expressed the scorn for modern representations of India which represented a beautiful landscape while recognizing the misery of the poor first as a sentimental picturesque detail .The variant in the quality of four female figures is placed in the whole picture plane of the canvas and depicts a weak, gloomy and freezing outlook of hilly terrain. After producing these pieces that eulogize the dignity of the hill folk, the paintings portray exceptionally emaciated, starved men and women, of the Pahari

Villagers whom she congregated around the Summer Hill residence in Shimla. **Salience** image relevant to the culture of North India .Hill women is their dole-full expressions and their outlines are reminiscent of tombstones. Closer inspection reveals a carefully contrived play of light and dark masses .Near the centre of the canvas a child dark face is ringed by a pale shawl; this light and slight foreground figure as a whole is set off against a larger dark counterpart behind.

Further beyond, two figures turn inwards in near mirror- image of each other, one dark, the other clad in a Lighter tone .All three dark heads are silhouetted against the bright background, each echoing the form but inverting the colour pattern of the central child. The irregular rhythm of curves at the top of the canvas is anchored by the more static alternation of light and dark verticals at the base. Hill Women shaped again an immense cluster of female figures, which converse a sagacity of significance and it beat a reactive, dull temper in the still images. **Framing** the women seem detached from each other, each directing the gaze inwards, the pictorial form establishes relations between them. The introspection bounded into a group. The image has clearly give the impression to treat woman as an abstract progenitive symbol.

5.4 Mother India

5.4.1 Representational Metafunction

Narrative Structure mother India image narrates about a family one kid, one girl child, and women are waiting for something in a hopeless faces. **Conceptual Structure** Social context represented the poor women beggars.

5.4.2 Interpersonal Metafunction

Visual Demand or Image Act image acts as portrayals of the family. **Social Distance and Intimacy** Image has a close intimacy with the viewers as the subject in the image it grasps the attention to all. It can be outspokenness and strong and has painted the empty spaces with the background of (Burnt sienna, Yellow ochre, white) with shabby colours.

5.4.3 Compositional Metafunction

Information Value (one woman, a kid, and girl child). **Modality** the message figures represents poor of Picasso's in blue period. They have some sort of social content. Mother India presents the powerful nation through its depiction of the land as mother and the mother as land as it is enshrined in a discourse of Nationhood. Mother India are the nature of motherless. It is the "true" life of India and the life of the villagers. The symbolism of the mother as divine derives from the cult worship of mother goddesses, especially in Northern India. It is one defining myths of post-independence India. Mother India as a cultural signifier resonates particularly in the context of motherhood. **Saliency** The black tone is applied on her face says

in symbolic way they are beggars. In addition The Women holding a kid are detailed clearly with beautiful sharp eyes (Vermilion red, White, Pink). The face of kid is very dark tone (Burnt sienna, Yellow ochre). The portrait of a women in the centre is dark skinned, striking 'Ugliness'. The colour tone of her dress are in Pink (Burnt Sienna, Vermilion Red) and her body is fully covered with the purdah. **Framing** subject of a woman, the girl child in the left and the kid stood on the mother is correctly framed by the artist. The image framed the meaning as poverty.

6. Findings

The Paintings of Amrita Sher –Gil demonstrate the in-depth content of south and north Portrayal of women in India. The Ornaments & costumes used to portray the Feminine in Amrita Sher –Gil belong to the period after 1900. The culture feel in the minds of the Viewers. The Paintings are so lively it creates a meaning to the artwork, which gives an emotional feel to the viewers. The Paintings gives a clear picture of the people living on both the Northern & Southern of India Women play a vital role in her paintings their faces reflects a sense of pity. Portrayal of women in her paintings has a high respect which indirectly denotes the importance of women living a life of poverty. The two south Indian paintings done by Amrita Sher -Gil has children characters in it. In both the paintings, the children have been depicted without clothes, which give a look of poverty. She uses a brown shaded background in almost all of her paintings. In particularly culture of Mughal style in the North India paintings considering the dressings and the makeover of the poor villagers.

It cleanly understood through the depictions that such a colour tone is used by the painter to define an Indian. Most of the paintings gives a symbolical representation of emotions through the dresses, facial expressions and postures of the characters. G Chadha (2016) pointed out that her painful life experiences both in forms of physically and psychologically. Her sketches means of overwhelming her pain in the form of lost love, fight with her physical ailments and her personal loss. She has internalized her sadness and pain conveyed it into her portraits.

7. Conclusion

The study it is analysed that the paintings of Amrita Sher-Gil have the perfect sense of Indian culture. It reaches the viewers with Great attraction. The way the subject in the painting

is portrayed has several Semiotic meaning .The object in the frame also convey the perfect reflection of the Indian art in term of Red colours for high symbolic and emotive value. Portrayal of women some of whom were fully autonomous and authorized. the women's represented by Amrita Sher-Gil have all unbroken their gender at its own place and haven't tried to flee from it, that makes these representations exceptional and distinguishes Each and every painting reminds the traditions of India and thoughts of Indian artist who wants to reform the women in India. Amrita fell beneath the social stereotypes, but she had the proficient, freelance and powerful lady that caught the eye of her creative work.

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