

GEORGE KEAYT'S PAINTING AND ITS INDIANNESS

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George Keyt's paintings, as similar works of many others, have been subjected to criticism and appreciation on the basis of many theoretical constructs. His works have been analyzed and appreciated both in the light of Hindu Aesthetic and Philosophical concepts as well as European art forms. Some have traced the inspiration he drew to Buddhist paintings of both India and Sri Lanka and those of Hindu tradition as found in Khajuraho, Bhuvaneshwari and Konarak temples. The latter displays tantric practices of medieval Hinduism. (Sunil Goonesekera, Albert Dharmasiri) Some see parallels of European arts such as cubism, expressionism and impressionism in Keyt's paintings. However, when we consider the origin and transition of Keyt's paintings, such comparisons show that they take into consideration only some aspects of it. That could be seen only at a given time in the evolution of his craftsmanship. But my venture in the present study is to investigate for a theoretical basis that could accommodate all his paintings, both at the levels of analysis and appreciation of his art.

Seeing the unity in diversity and universality in complexity is the main feature of Indian aestheticism. In my view, the theory of *Rasa* could play a major role in the analysis and appreciation of Keyt's art. Whatever the tradition, be it Buddhist, Tantric or Hindu, the major thread that connects all his painting appears to me to be the Indian theory of *Rasa*, which plays a dominant role as a background for all his paintings.

In this paper I shall attempt to analyze the paintings of Keyt on the basis of their formal features and evaluate their aesthetic leanings on the basis of the *Rasa* theory mentioned above. I shall also make use of his poetical compositions to substantiate my view.