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RASA THEORY



Supervisor

Dr. Rajesh Joshi

C. U. Shah University

Co-Supervisor

Dr. Manish Padia

C. U. Shah University

Mr. DEVANG RAVAL

Department of English
VBT's Institute of Arts &
Humanities

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Abstract:

Bharata Muni(200B.C), the Indian performance theorist and philosopher, is credited with the formulation of the ultimate text of performing arts as well the rasa theory and is aptly celebrated as the father of Indian performative arts. Bharata(trans.1995) in *Natyasastra* has strongly argued that the ultimate sensation depends upon the emotion felt by the human beings. Bharatamuni believes that the dramatic form of aesthetic experience is the most perfect fruition of aesthetic activity because drama is the synthesis of all arts.

According to Abhinav Gupta (one of the famous critics of *Natyashastra*), Rasa is the simplest and most bewildering expression in the Sanskrit language. Anyone can experience it but cannot define it precisely.

Key Words : - *Rasa, Bhava, Emotions, Sentiments, Pleasure*

Introduction

The ultimate reality in poetics is aesthetic pleasure derived from creation or appreciation of poetic composition. The author obtains the joy of creation and the appreciator receives the pleasure of appreciation. The very creativity process is experience of aesthetic pleasure. The aesthetic pleasure derived from the artistic circumstances is called *Rasa*.

Pioneer:

In the history of Sanskrit Poetics, *Rasa* has been described in different forms. It is believed that the Acharya Nandikeshwara has invented the *Rasa* theory according to *Kāvya-mimāṃsā* by Rajshekhara, but there is no data available on the name of Nandikeshwara. Thus according to the sources available provides the name of Bharatmuni as the pioneer of the *Rasa* Theory because in the *Nāṭyashāstra* every detail has been described in direct or indirect form, about *Rasa* by Bharatmuni.

Features of Rasa Theory

- Rasa means aesthetics, juice, essence, taste in performance.
- Rasa is an undefinable realization and intense feelings with detachment.
- It is the flavor (general) or aesthetic emotion (metaphorical).
- It is the soul of poetry.
- It is the pleasure experienced by each class of people.
- No other word can define Rasa completely.



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- Rasa is not experienced in common situations but only in the art form.
- According to Bharatmuni, the **realization of Rasa results from the Union of Vibhavas, Anubhavas, and Vyabhikaribhavas**. When Sthaibhavas unite with others, the three Bhavas, one attains the quality of Rasa.

CONFIGURATION OF RASA:

The theory of *Rasa* relates to the inner aspect, such as theme, matter, meaning, value, experience, feeling, plot, the subject matter etc., of poetic composition. This content is based on the primary emotion (*Bhāva*). *Bhāva* is emotions of a poet that conveys the meaning of poetry. This expression in the form of poetry pervades the mind of an appreciator. According to Abhinavgupta it is the state of mind of both, the poet and the appreciator. The poet aims at suggesting the emotional mood, which issues out from the proper conjunction of *Vibhāva*, *Anubhāva* and *Vyabhicharibhāva*. Bharatamuni delineates it in *Nātyashāstra* as *Vibhāvānubhāva-vyabhichari-sanyogād-rasa-nispatih*. Which means *Rasa* arises when the *sthāyībhāva* in the individual is awakened by his perception of the *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, *vyabhichāribhāvas*, and *sāttvika bhāvas*.

1. *Vibhāva* (determinant/ stimuli) a thing that evokes latent emotions

Vibhāvas are the elements on which *Rasa* is dependent, the stimuli or the causes such as the story, the stage, the objects, the actors and other existing circumstances responsible for the awakening of the *Sthāyībhāva*, i.e. the latent sentiment (existing but undeveloped) in the spectator. In the example of Dushyanta's love for Shakuntala, Shakuntala's natural beauty evokes *Shringār-rasa* in the appreciator.

The *vibhāvas* are of two kinds:

Ālambana Vibhāva: a person or persons with reference to whom the emotions manifest itself, for example Dushyanta and Shakuntala or Rama and Sita are *Ālambana Vibhāva* for each other. It is the basic stimulus capable of arousing the sentiment.

Ālambana Vibhāva is of two kinds :-

- Visaya*, which is the sentiment, and
- Āshraya*, a person in whom the sentiment manifests.

a. **Uddipana Vibhāva** : the enhancing stimuli, the circumstances that excite the emotion. It is the



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environment in which the basic stimulus is located. A man may feel attracted towards a woman if the circumstances are cooperating. It is easy for the man to feel attracted towards a young damsel if they are alone, in the beautiful scenery, the moon peeping through clouds, gentle breeze blowing with the fragrance, cuckoo bird is singing, and so on.

Uddipana Vibhāva must suit the time, place, tradition and appropriateness for the situation.

2. *Anubhāva*: (consequents)

Anubhāva means Histrionic Representation. It consists of the various gestures and glances etc. of the actor which are intended to develop the basic stimulus or the *Vibhāva*. It is the bodily expressions by which the emotion is known to the appreciator. If *Vibhāva* is the cause of emotion, *Anubhāva* is the result of the emotion. For example, a curved stance of a lady or her inviting smile may be regarded as an *Anubhāva*.

Bharatamuni has classified *Anubhāva* into three categories :- (i) *Angika* (ii) *Vachika* (iii) *Sattavika*. Later (iv) *Aharya* also was added.

- Angikā*: bodily expressions like smile, tears, arch glance, tossing up of hands, etc.
- Vāchikā*: the expressions through spoken words, such as dialogues, monologues, lecturing, speaking in dream etc, can be regarded as *Vachikānubhāva*.
- Sāttvika*: *sattva* is invisible in nature that originates in mind and emotion. The physical expression on the stage is very difficult. The *sattva* is performed by concentration of the mind of the skilled artists. It cannot be mimicked by an absent-minded or distracted actor. The *Sattva* is desired in a play because of its imitating human nature.

Bharatamuni lists eight *sāttvikabhava* in *Nāṭyashastra* are as follows:

- Stambha*: being motionless or stunned (*Paralysis*)
- Romancha*: horripilation, each hair of body standing erect in excitement
- Sveda*: perspiration
- Svarabhanga*: change in the voice (or broken sentences)
- Vepathu* (*Kampan*): trembling, shivering



(vi) *Vaivaranya*: change in complexion

(vii) *Ashrupāt*: tears, Weeping

(viii) *Pralaya*: fainting

Aharyānubhāva: the dress, ornaments etc. are included in this type. An old man in torn out clothes arises pathetic emotion.

3. *Vyabhichāribhāva* / *Sanchāribhāva*:

(Complementary psychological states that a character performs on the state and helps the spectator feel the particular rasa at an intense level)

The impermanent feelings called *Sanchāribhāvas* are referred to as *Vyabhichāribhāva*. They are temporary, supporting the main or the principle *Rasa*, and do not last for long. They always follow the dominant emotions and may vary from time to time, person to person and place to place. These transitory states help the permanent psychological states to mature into *Rasa* or the aesthetic delight in the spectator.

E.g. if the basic mood is love, *rati*: joy in union and anguish in separation will be the accompanying ancillary emotions (*Vyabhichāribhāva*).

The difference between *anubhāva* and *vyabhichāri bhava* is that the former is a physical reaction whereas the latter is a mental reaction or a psychological state.

Sanchāribhāva according to Bharatamuni are thirty three in numbers. [sloka: 18-21]

*Nirveda*¹ (complete indifference, disregard of worldly objects),

*Glāni*² (physical or mental fatigue),

*Sankā*³ (doubt),

*Asuya*⁴ (jealousy),

*Mada*⁵ (intoxication),

*Shrama*⁶ (toil),

*Ālasya*⁷ (indolence),



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<i>Dainya</i> ⁸ (feebleness),
<i>Chintā</i> ⁹ (anxiety),
<i>Moha</i> ¹⁰ (infatuation),
<i>Smruthi</i> ¹¹ (thinking/recollection),
<i>Dhriti</i> ¹² (contentment),
<i>Vreedā</i> ¹³ (sense of modesty/shyness),
<i>Chapaltā</i> ¹⁴ (inconstancy),
<i>Harsh</i> ¹⁵ (joy),
<i>Āvega</i> ¹⁶ (agitation),
<i>Jadatā</i> ¹⁷ (stupor),
<i>Garva</i> ¹⁸ (arrogance),
<i>Vishāda</i> ¹⁹ (dejection),
<i>Autsukya</i> ²⁰ (eagerness),
<i>Nidrā</i> ²¹ (sleepiness),
<i>Apasmāra</i> ²² (epilepsy/forgetfulness),
<i>Supta</i> ²³ (dreaming),
<i>Vibodha</i> ²⁴ (enlightenment),
<i>Amarsha</i> ²⁵ (annoyance),
<i>Avahittha</i> ²⁶ (hide/disguise one's thoughts or feelings),
<i>Ugratā</i> ²⁷ (ferocity/violence),
<i>Mati</i> ²⁸ (determination),
<i>Vyādhi</i> ²⁹ (torment/sickness),
<i>Unmada</i> ³⁰ (insanity),
<i>Marana</i> ³¹ (death)
<i>Trāsa</i> ³² (fright),
<i>Vitarka</i> ³³ (deliberation)



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Sthayibhāva

Sthayibhāva are permanently latent emotions in the mind. They manifest themselves according to occasion. They are eight in numbers. Sentiments (*rasa*) arise from the Psychological States (*bhava*) for they make feel sentiments with various modes of dramatic representation.

(i) *Rati* (Love), (ii) *Hāsa* (Mirth), (iii) *Krodha* (Anger), (iv) *Utsāha* (Courage), (v) *Bhaya* (Fear), (vi) *Jugupsā* (Aversion), (vii) *Vismaya* (Wonder), and (viii), *Soka* (Sorrow)

There are four original Sentiments e.g. Erotic, Furious, Heroic and Odious. The Comic Sentiment arises from the Erotic, the Pathetic from the Furious, the Marvellous from the Heroic, and the Terrible from the Odious.

The discussion on *Rasa* was started by *Abhinavagupta* in his commentary on Bharatamuni's work. In *Rasa* theory *Rasa* is considered as the soul of poetry. Poetry, miraculous with words and meaning but sapless, cannot satiate the appreciators. In this accordance Acharya Vishwanath defines, *vakyam rasatmakam kavyam*

Bharatamuni's *Rasa mimansa* is chiefly concerned with drama in mind, although almost all the critic poets have accepted the importance of *Rasa* in one or the other way. The prominent critics of the *Rasa* Theory are Bhatt Lollata, Sri Shankuka, Bhattanayaka, and Abhinavagupta.

Rasas in Indian Aesthetics

Shringar Rasa :

Means the *rasa* indicating romance and love. It can be seen in many of the dramas dealing with love stories and it is easily visible in Indian retro movies which had loud expressions like drama. Lord Vishnu is the Presiding deity and the colour representing romance and love is green colour.

Hasya (Joy):

This *Rasa* connects us to our sense of humor through laughter, happiness and contentment. When we laugh, it is the easier to slip into a no-mind state, because the mind has been freed from its usual workload of thoughts, and we can simply be open, free and happy in that moment



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It is the comic elements. It happens by showing unseemly dress, ornaments, quarrels, defective limbs etc..

Raudra Rasa :

Denotes fury or anger. The presiding deity is Lord Shiva also known as Rudra. It is believed that Lord Shiva is very innocent and so he can be easily pleased and he gets very furious quickly. At the same time he is very generous towards the good people. Red colour indicates the raudram rasa. In western culture also red indicate poverty and violence or bloodshed and thereby supporting this concept

Red eyes, knitting of eyebrows, biting of lips, determination, energy, restlessness and trembling are **Vyabhikari Bhavas**.

Karunya Rasa :

The feeling of compassion is felt when one offers protection from any distressful situation. Introverted planning; all kinds of disaster shelters just by virtue of their purpose; serve as good examples.

It is pleasurable as it has the power to meet the human heart.

Bhibhasam Rasa :

Synonymous to a sickening distaste or dislike; deep aversion and repugnance it would be difficult to imagine which client would desire such architecture. Possibly the only example befitting this typology would be incidental architecture born more out of some freak accident rather than anything else

Bhayanaka Rasa :

Shows horror and terror . Bhayanaka is the feeling of panic and dread brought on by the anticipation of danger. It denotes a weakness of heart and a want of strength in character. Fear is the base emotion of the Bhayanaka rasa. It is denoted by the black colour.

Veera Rasa:

Symbolizes or portrays heroism. Its presiding deity is Lord Indra, who is the king of heaven and it is believed that he is responsible for bringing the rain and thunder. It is expressed using saffron colour.

Veera is heroism. It represents fearlessness, self-assurance, determination & valor. Strength and guts are the trademarks of a Veer or a fearless person.



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Adbhuta Rasa :

Expresses wonder and amazement. It has the creator Brahma as its deity. Yellow colour is used to express this rasa.

It is your playfulness and innocence. You enter into complete appreciation and become an explorer or adventurer. It is magic

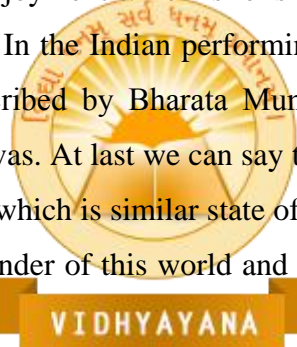
Shant Rasa :

Which indicates peace, Lord Vishnu is the presiding deity of Shant rasa and it is indicated with white colour.

In peace you become so full that you are empty. You will not find peace anywhere but within

Conclusion

In conclusive words rasa is that internal enjoyment which is relished after the generalization of a person who generalizes himself with all the situation. In the Indian performing arts, a rasa is an emotion inspired in an audience by a performer. They are described by Bharata Muni in the Nāṭyasāstra, an ancient work of dramatic theory. Rasas are created by bhavas. At last we can say that this aesthetic experience takes a person to the absolutely indivisible state of mind which is similar state of mind of the great creator of this world and ultimately he enjoys the indescribable wonder of this world and wants again and again to achieve this type of state of mind.



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