



Bharata's Natyashastra: A Comprehensive study

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ABSTRACT:

The proposed research work is an attempt devoted to a comprehensive study in the field of dramatic art in the Eastern traditions. The study is, however, delimited to the prominent theorist of drama and theatre, who representing ancient Indian tradition of dramaturgy and In the succeeding paragraphs a brief note is furnished concerning the outstanding theorist – Bharatmuni (500 BC). In ancient Indian drama and theatre it seems certain that long before Bharatmuni and Sanskrit plays dramatic shows in dialects (varieties of regional Prakritas) were in existence in the form of sattakas, uparupakas and jatras. Those dramatic shows in vernacular forms of Sanskrit represented the earliest form of Indian theatre, which might have produced the earliest Sanskrit plays (Rangacharaya 2-3). The Natyasastra analyses all aspects of the performing arts. In it one finds a thorough discussion of the rasas, bhava, mode of acting by various kind of actor or emotions that characterize human life as well as arts.

Key words: Concept of Natyashastra, Rasa, Bhava, Abhinay

Introduction:

In Indian tradition the first extant and comprehensive work on dramaturgy is Natyasastra of Bharatmuni. He narrates, in the first chapter of his Natyasastra, the story of divine composition of natya and relevant shastra (Natyasastra) first by God Brahma in Treta Yuga. Thereafter, the task of simplifying and systematizing it was assigned to him to make it practicable and useful to humans, as well.

Concept of *Natyashastra*:

Going by Bharatmuni's verdict one may gather that the idea of composing a shastra on Natya first came to God Brahma when the gods solicited Him (natyasatra 1/11), thereby meaning to devise for his creatures some diversion in visual and audible form accessible to all, which could be soothing, enlightening and elevating in an age in which people have fallen to vulgar ways by becoming prone to greed, avarice, jealousy and offence. These miserable things they have not encountered in satayuga. Brahma couldn't dishearten the creatures so devoted to Him. He created "fifth Veda" or "natya Veda" which was meant to be sarvavarnika or accessible to all.

The Prajapati Brahma extracted from Rigveda, Samveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda four components – text, song, abhinaya and rasa respectively – and integrated and fused them to compose a hybrid variety of new veda, known as 'punchamveda' or 'natyaveda'. The three modes of dramatic representations were initially invented. They were – natya, nritya and nrta. Their first performers were gandharvas and apsaras duly trained by Bharatmuni. The first performance was given at Indra's heavenly abode before the audience comprised of gods and demons. To the above ancient Hindu dramatic system two more forms were soon added: Tandava by God Shiva and Lasya – by goddess Parvati. This is the mythological part of Bharatmuni's narrative.

Scholars also hold that vedas, which occurred nearly 500 years before Natyasastra, contained some traces of dramatic forms. However, the clear presence of these forms can be located in the great epics Ramayana (2/69; 67; 15), Mahabharata (1/51/15;3/16), Asthadyayi of Panini (shilali & Krishna natyasutra), Arthashastra of Kautilya (1/2/27; 2/5/3), and Puranas (Harivansha puran 2/88-93; Markandevya Puran 20/4 and Bhagvat (1/11/20). Usually the plays were staged either in palaces or temple yards or also in open spaces during the occasions of festivals and journeys.

The Natyasastra, which is primarily about drama and its various elements, contains 36 chapters and it is largely composed in the sloka metre. The work discusses various aspects of drama, such as chapter VI and VIII, discuss rasa and formation of rasa process; chapter XVIII is devoted to 'rupaka' and its parts; and chapter XX takes up natya vritiyan: bharati, sattvati, kaisiki and arbhati. According to Krishnamoorti the general aim of all drama to Bharatmuni is to provide entertainment to people at large weighed down by their trials and tribulations in life. This is achieved by anukarana or anukirtan by the actors impersonating characters (such as Rama) in action in dramatic enactment. The characters usually chosen were either mythological or legendary or invented by the playwright. In Bharatmuni Anukarana is not crude imitation or mimicry, but an imaginative re-construction or representation (cited in Chaitanaya 4). This may sound like Aristotelian imitation of replica of life in action.

Rasa:

According to the ancient Indian tradition of dramatics the three internal elements of drama are vastu, neta and rasa. Of the three the rasa is ascribed the status of the soul of drama. The rasa is defined as jL;r bfr jl&& that which can be tasted is rasa, and it forms the key-concept of Indian dramatics and poetics. In Indian tradition navarasa are the mainstay of natya or performing arts.

The definition of rasa is given by famous poet Vishwanatha in his book Sahitya Darpan as mention following lines:

वभावेनानुभावेन BयQः संचा वभावेनानुभावेन BयQः संचा-रणा तथा । -रणा तथा ।

रसतामेित रयादः ःथायी रसतामेित रयादः ःथायी रसतामेित रयादः ःथायीभावः सचेतसाम ॥ भावः सचेतसाम

(Natyashastra,230)

According to Indian Aesthetic theory “rasa is an instrument for this transition from subjectivity to objectivity or from privacy to publicness. It was used for a medium of communication, which linked A’s thoughts or reaction to B,C,D. (13)

Bharatmuni explains the definition of rasa as: ‘विभावानुभावव्यभिचारिसंयोगाद्रसनिष्पत्तिः’

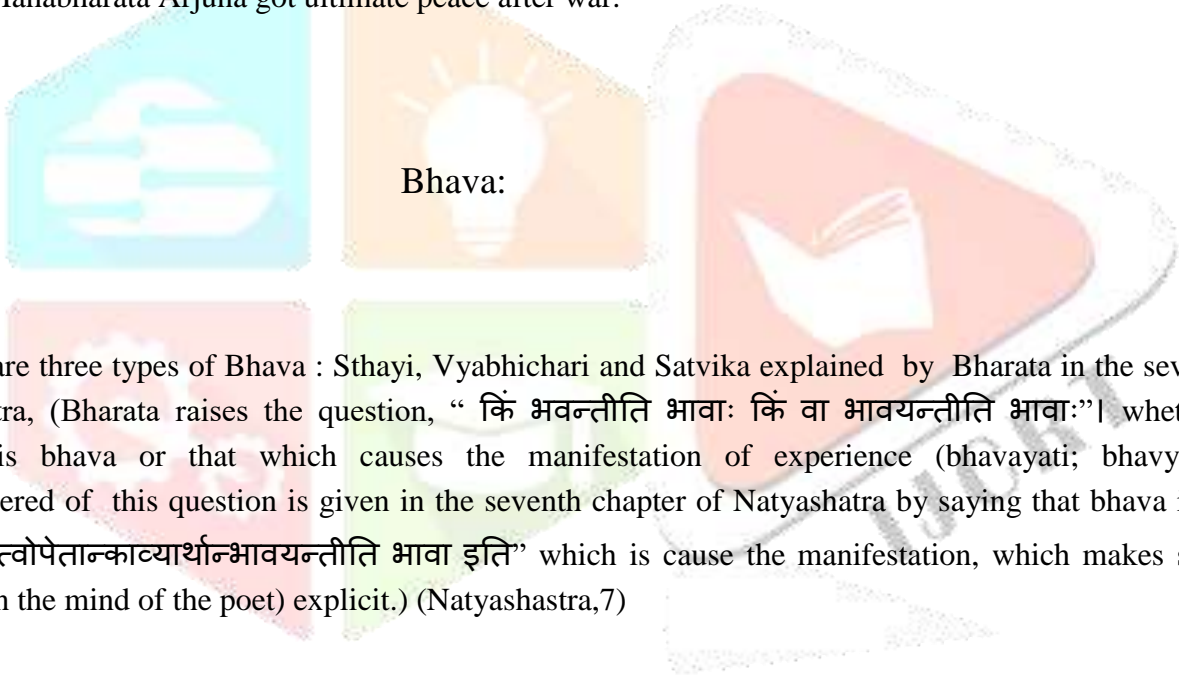
In Natyashastra Bharatmuni point out that the rasa is the central point of Natya without rasa there is no meaning or existence of Natya. “न हि रसादृते कश्चिदर्थः प्रवर्तते” (82)

There are eight types of rasa discuss by Bharatmuni in the Natyashastra in the chapter six:

शृङ्गारहास्यकरुणा रौद्रवीरभयानकाः ।

बीभत्साद्भुतसंज्ञौ चेत्यष्टौ नाट्ये रसाः (218)

Shringara,Hasya,Adbhuta,Raudra ,Veera ,Karuna ,Bhayanka ,Vibhatsa and lator on, Bharata introduces nineth rasa as Shanta rasa. Rasas are the direct product of dependent co-production of determinants,consequents and the transitory mental sttes. However, Shantih is the ultimate peace and tranquility which is a state of perfection of mind as in the Mahabharata Arjuna got ultimate peace after war.



There are three types of Bhava : Sthayi, Vyabhichari and Satvika explained by Bharata in the seventh chapter of natyashastra, (Bharata raises the question, “ किं भवन्तीति भावाः किं वा भावयन्तीति भावाः”| whether that which happens is bhava or that which causes the manifestation of experience (bhavayati; bhavyant) is bhava. And answered of this question is given in the seventh chapter of Natyashatra by saying that bhava is that “उच्यते - वाग्ङ्गसत्त्वोपेतान्काव्यार्थान्भावयन्तीति भावा इति” which is cause the manifestation, which makes something (that which is in the mind of the poet) explicit.) (Natyashastra,7)

There are forty nine bhavas which classifies under three categories as mentioned in the Natyashastra which participated in the process to create rasa: 1-Sthayi bhava 2-Sanchari bhava 3-Sattvika bhava. All three bhavas helped to get aesthetic pleasure. One can get these aesthetic power by the suffering of human beings.

Bharatmuni has mention eight kinds of sthayi bhavas in chapter six of Natyashastra:

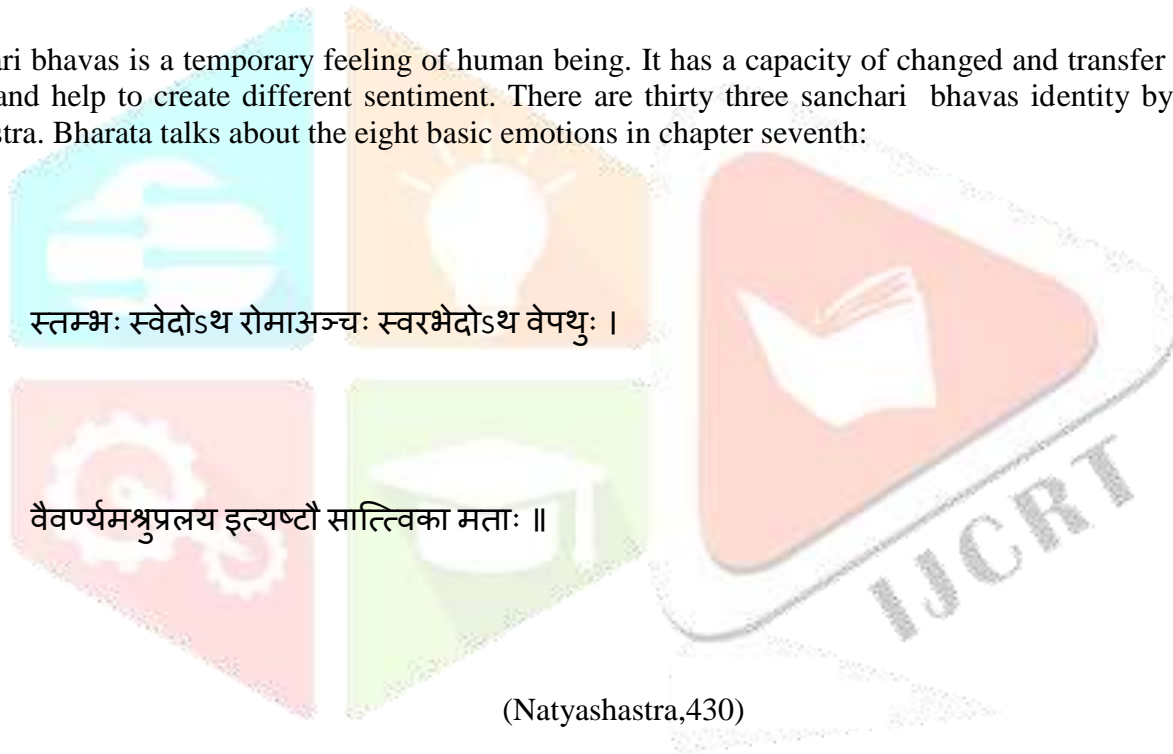
रतिहासश्च शोकश्च क्रोधोत्साहौ भयं तथा ।

जुगुप्सा विस्मयश्चेति स्थायिभावाः प्रकीर्तिताः

(Natyashastra,221)

These sthayi bhavas are Rati, Hasya, Shoka, kaurda, utsah, jugutasa and vismay. These sthayi bhavas are already present in human body and shows mental state of human being but according to the situation these takes its place. Sthayi bhavas create a thought or feelings by which one can act different part of human body as facial expression eyes and our activities help to understand the different bhavas.

Sanchari bhavas is a temporary feeling of human being. It has a capacity of changed and transfer according to the situation and help to create different sentiment. There are thirty three sanchari bhavas identity by Bharatmuni in Natyashastra. Bharata talks about the eight basic emotions in chapter seventh:



(Natyashastra,430)

There are eight types of sattvika bhavas: Stambha, Sveda, Romanca, Svarabhanga, Vepathu, Vaivarya, Asru, Pralaya. (Indian Aesthetic Theory, 37)

According to Bharatmuni Sattvik bhava is originated from the concentration of mind. There are other bhavas 'Vibhava' Bharatmuni explains in the seventh chapter of natyashastra. He asked the question what is vibhava and he answered it as: Vibhava are two types: 1-Uddipana vibhava 2-Alambana vibhava. Alambana is responsible to awakening of sthayi bhavas. Uddipana- which is responsible to excites a rasa. (Sahitya darpan,3)

The anubhava, however are not causes. They are bodily reaction by which vibhava and the bhavas are understood or recognized when somebody weeps or laughs, the physical counterpart of what is called the state of weeping or laughing, is understood in its passive or objective aspect. It is anubhava. (A modern introduction to Indian Aesthetic Theory, 48-49)

According to Vishwanath: “anubhava is called that outer sources of the feelings which is aroused in that heart from the alambana and uddipana”.

Abhinav says,“All Rasas are dominated by pleasure, because of being the manifest and uninterrupted form of one's own consciousness” (Ghosh M.M. 1950:8)

Mode of Acting:

Bharatmuni prescribed four modes of acting in natya, angika, vachika, aharya and satvika. The relevant sloka is:

vkf³xdkso kfpdJSo ;kgk;Z% lkfRodLrFkkA

Js;LRofeu;ksfoizJrq)kZifjdhfrZr%AA (Natyasastra,2.5)

Bharata says that the entire nature of human beings as connected with the experience of happiness and misery, joy and sorrow presented through the process of histrionics (Abhinaya) is called Natya. अभिपूर्वस्तु णीञ् धातुराभिमुख्यार्थनिर्णये ।

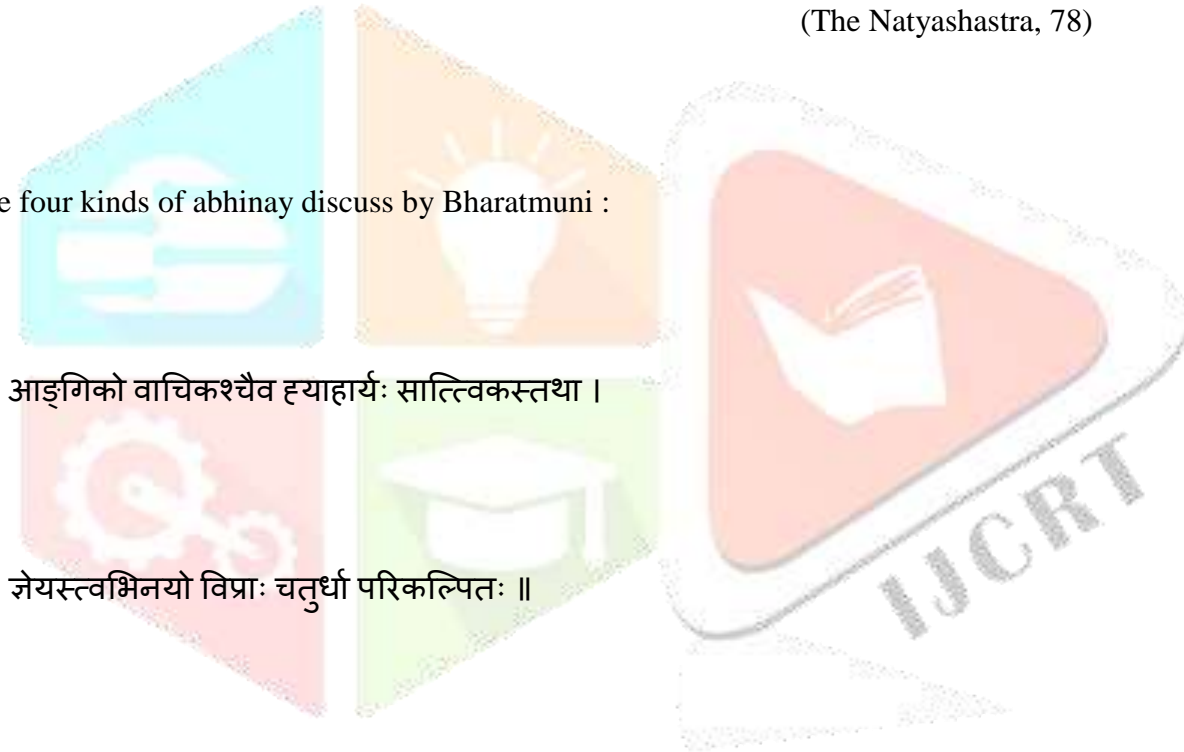
यस्मात्पदार्थान्नयति तस्मादभिनयः स्मृतः ॥

(The Natyashastra, 4)

According to Bharata Abhinay is derived from the rootwhich means to take or carry, with the preposition abhi- meaning towards.' This is what the traditional sloka-s say, "The root ni with the preposition abhi which means towards, gives the word abhinaya because it carries (ni-) the performance towards (the audience).

(The Natyashastra, 78)

There are four kinds of abhinay discuss by Bharatmuni :



आङ्गिको वाचिकश्चैव हयाहार्यः सात्त्विकस्तथा ।

ज्ञेयस्त्वभिनयो विप्राः चतुर्धा परिकल्पितः ॥

1-Angika abhinay 2- vachik abhinay 3- Aharya abhinay 4- Sattvik abhinay

Angika Abhinay describe by Bharatmuni that in the Angik abhinay the every part of body shown by the actor. Natyashastra mention three part of angik abhinay: Body, Face and other movements and activities. Again Bodily abhinaya divided into three parts: Anga, Upanga, Pratyanga. Anga (Main parts)

Satvika Abhinaya is given the foremost place among the four ones: Such mode of acting emanates from the concentration of mind and soul.

It is through actor (neta) impersonating a character in natyabhinaya that spectator/audience or rasika reaches the state of realization of 'rasa'. This state is believed to be an "egoless" state of being, in which the sahridaya or rasika, that is the reader/audience reaches a state of self-forgetfulness, and imaginatively and emotively gets transported to some other time and place. In Coleridgean phrase it is a state of "willing suspension of disbelief" at both ends in literary communication: artist's creativity and reader's receptivity. In this state of elsewhere, transcendence of temporal time and space takes place, the subject (the reader/audience) and the object (the work of art), the consumer and the product become one, samarasa, which leads to rasavastha culminating in rasananda, the bliss of aesthetic experience as acknowledged by common consent.

The difference between Brahmananda and Rasananda is that while the former is experienced when vasanas are uprooted, the latter is realized when the vasanas are purified. The sthayee bhavas exist inside the human mind in the form of vasana or memory. It is the vibhava that makes the sthayee bhava taste worthy and brings forth the rasa. The vibhava line catalysts trigger the sthayee bhava converting them in the rasa. This is the process of rasa formation in nut shell, according to Bharatmuni. Further, the taste of rasa is an experience and the Rasika to be able to go through a rasa – experience requires herself /himself to be placed on a specific plane with respect to the kavya.

Conclusion:

Thus in Indian dramaturgy Bharatmuni is the first author to propound the theory of 'rasa' in his Natyasastra postulating the rule of rasa as : foHkkokuqHkkoO;fHkpkjhla;ksxkælfu"ifr (6-22). This rasa sutra means that a combination of vibhavas, anubhavas and vyabharibhavas leads to the formation of rasa both in the performer and the audience. The rasa formation in an expression, a completion, a bearing of fruit. Poetry takes the forms of vachikabhinaya in "rupaka", a Sanskrit term synonym to "drama" in Western tradition. Bharata leaves deep influence on the subsequent Sanskrit critics like Abhinav Gupta, Manmohan, or Vishwanath in Indian aesthetics.

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