

Role of Aesthetic in Understanding Literature: A Study of *Tempest*

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Abstract:

This paper aims to study Shakespeare's play Tempest through Rasa theory. Rasa is the study of universal human emotion. Aesthetic has always been the centre of Indian philosophy. The theory of rasa forms aesthetic, which is the foundation of all the Indian theatre and classical dance forms like Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Kathakali, Odissi, Manipuri and others. The Natyashastra portrays the bhavas used to create each rasa bhava or state of mind and rasa are the term concerned with Indian drama and literature. Rasas are created by bhavas. Bharata muni has described it in the Natyashastra, which is an ancient work on dramatic theory. A Rasa is the developed enviable state of permanent mood that is called sthayi bhava (permanent emotion). Rasa is not similar to the occidental aesthetic.

Keywords: Rasa, shringara, love, sentiment, romance, separation

Introduction:

Rasa etymologically means essence juice or taste. Rasa has been interpreted in numerous ways by different literary scholars and philosophers. In Natyashastra, Bharatamuni has dealt with almost all elements of dramaturgy. The word Rasa is being used in the context of all forms of arts simply.

Bharata muni explains about eight Rasa in Natyashastra.

Sringarah: love, romance

Hasyam: comedy, laughter

Raudram: fury

Karunyam: mercy, compassion

Bhayanakam: terror, horror

Bibhatsam: aversion, disgust

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Adbhutam: amazement, wonder

Veeram: heroism 5th-century Bhartrahari and the 9th century Anandavardhana are the most celebrated in Hindu tradition on the literary works and poetics. According to *Natyashastra*, Rasa is a phenomenon that is the goal of any innovative performance, painting, oratory, art or literature.

Bharata Muni was an ancient theatrologist, sage and musicologist. He is also known as the father of Indian theatrical art forms. He lived between 200 BCE to 200CE. *Natyashastra* is one of his most important works.

Shakespeare was a poet, actor, and playwright. He is known as one of the greatest dramatists. He is often known as the Bard of Avon and England's national poet. Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon. He married Anne Hathaway at the age of 18. He produced his maximum works between 1589-1613.

Shakespeare's works include 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two narrative poems, and many other poems. His legacy is as diverse as his works. His plays have propagated many adaptations across multiple genres and cultures. His works have made a lasting impression on English literature and theatre. Shakespeare's influence goes far beyond his homeland England.

Actor and theatre director Simon Callow writes, "this master, this titan, this genius, so profoundly British and so effortlessly universal, each different culture – German, Italian, Russian – was obliged to respond to the Shakespearean example; for the most part, they embraced it, and him, with joyous abandon, as the possibilities of language and character in action that he celebrated liberated writers across the continent. Some of Shakespeare's most deeply affecting productions have been non-English, and non-European. He is that unique writer: he has something for everyone."

Review of literature:

Dr Baburam swami says The Sanskrit word rasa first appears in the hymns of the Vedas. Its original meaning has to do with the botanical arena, its denotative purpose as simply the "sap" or "juice" from a plant, and by way of extension, the form in which sap or juice conduces to "taste," a strong connotative sense of the word. These original meanings are usually associated

with objects of this world. Rasa truly is that existence; once one here reaches that rasa, this person becomes completely blissful, the word rasa takes on a solid ontological dimension. The word's meaning as "essence" applied to botanicals in the Vedas is now applied to existence itself. The earliest-known developed theory of rasa as an aesthetic concept is found in *Nāṭyaśāstra*, attributed to Bharatamuni. The term is used to describe the cumulative aesthetic effect of a dramatic performance.

Mahendra Kumar Budhathoki explains that this pleasant aesthetic experience is rasa realisation, according to Bharata. Rasa deals with the emotions aroused in readers. Aesthetic experience is the *alaukika* (supra-mundane) experience. It is similar to Kant's concept of pure aesthetic experience, i.e. disinterested contemplation of the art and literature, which provides pleasure. The feeling of rasa does not occur from the external world. Still, a permanent sentiment of a person's sensitive heart aroused by clever means of *vibhavadi* of a play transforms itself into rasa. The experience of rasa is also disinterested to the mundane, worldly or personal feelings of desiring something to fulfil the needs of real life. "Any deep aesthetic experience involves a forgetting of both ordinary time and space; one loses oneself in the experience. One is steeped in that individual heightened state of aesthetic enjoyment."

Sangeeta Mohanty states that The Rasa produced can be dependent on several factors. One means of producing rasa is *dhvani*, but *dhvani* appeals only to a higher sensibility and may be lost to some. While being a powerful potent in producing rasa, *dhvani* may not necessarily create the desired effect as it may fail to reach all audience levels. If *dhvani* remains unrevealed in the dialogues. The resulting rasa may be different from the dialogue where *dhvani* is revealed. So *dhvani* might play a vital role in determining the rasa produced. Much also depends on the mental conditioning and thought process of the viewers. This is where the *Bhagavad Gita* comes in, playing a relatively important role in creating rasa in the (Indian) audience. The *Gita* interpretation is not a dramaturgical interpretation but might be relevant in determining the nature of the rasa produced.

Neethu Anna Tharakan says that In the realm of philosophy, particularly the philosophy of the beautiful, it is a drama that has provided the clue or set the pattern for ancient Indian thought. According to Indian aesthetics, the object of drama is not to add to man's confusion by posing

fresh problems but to help him transcend the turmoil and attain composure. Accordingly, the ideal of the Indian dramatist shifts from a mere character study to the evolution of *rasa*, a keyword of Indian culture. Whatever the particular emotion is underlying a play or a part of it, be it love, anger, or sorrow, when it strikes a corresponding chord in the spectator's heart, it gives rise to a state of relish or delectation ("asvada").

In the sixth chapter of *Natyasastra*, Bharata says, "Nahirasadratekascidartahpracvartate" (Nothing exist or excels without *rasa*). Bharata has also given a detailed account of *sthayibhavas* (permanent emotions) in his *Natyasastra*.

The world's most tremendous dramatist pens *Tempest*, William Shakespeare, introduced the concept of tragicomedy to drama literature. The play is set on a remote island, where Prospero, the rightful Duke of Milan and his daughter Miranda have resided for the past 12 years. Wrapped in magic and adventure, the fictional narrative traverses the readers through various themes of betrayal, power, unravelling romance between Ferdinand and Miranda, and a series of events that ultimately leads to a final face-off!

Enchanting the readers to a world of mysticism and power, the play pulls the readers into the depths of the imagination and lulls them to drown in their senses!

Y.V. Sudha Devi states that The science of Aesthetics, developed in Bharatavarsha through many centuries, says there can be no worthy literary creation unless it produces some sentiments or the other. It will not be out of place if we apply the doctrine of *Rasa* to the plays of the West. As the principles of literary art are universal, the doctrine of *Rasa* sentence or sentiment is also applicable to the literary creation of all countries. Shakespeare, one of the great masters of the West, shows an obsessive concern for family and human relationships, which give way to various sentiments. He is interested in man's relation to society, government, religion and economics. His interest in the institution of family and human emotion remains supreme. No play of Shakespeare can be called a social, religious, political or economic play with the same relevance. It can be called a family play or a drama of human emotions.

The objective of the Study

The purpose of the study is to exhibit the use of *rasa* theory in Shakespeare's play *Tempest*.

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to recognise rasas in Shakespeare's *Tempest* to investigate how rasas are used in it.

Research methodology of the study

This is qualitative research that aims at critical textual study based on a primary and secondary source. This paper is primarily based on literature review and data collection from different sources like newspapers, journals, websites, etc. This paper discusses the incorporation of rasa theory in Shakespeare's play *Tempest*.

Shringara Rasa in The Tempest

Love has been an omnipresent theme in the literature of the whole world. Sanskrit literature presents love as the king of emotion. Shringara Rasa is one of the nine rasas in Indian classical dance form. It simply means romantic love, beauty or attraction. Sthayi bhava of shringara rasa is rati. There is both samyog (union) and viyoga (separation) in the theme of love. Shringara rasa is a major rasa articulated in the play *Tempest*.

Shringara rasa can be classified into four heads:

1. Samkshipta- it means shyness
2. Sampanna- this is a reunion of couples after a long separation
3. Sambhoga-This is the central theme of shringara rasa. It means Union.
4. Vipralambha- This is the opposite of sambhoga. It means separation.

Based on deeds, shringara rasa is also divided into vak, napadhya, kriya. It means words, dress and action. Shringara rasa also has many bhavas. Alambana Bhava, Uddipana Bhava, Anubhava and Vyabhichari Bhava.

Rasa experience is not any mundane world experience but is an experience of sublime. It makes the audience and reader surpass the self. Not everybody can enjoy the rasa experience equally. Those who can sustain their monotonous feeling and emotion can experience rasa. Let us find out how rasas are produced in *Tempest*. Shringara rasa is one of the major Rasa articulated in the play *Tempest*.

Miranda and Ferdinand are one of significant characters in the play, and they fall in love at first sight. When Ferdinand saw Miranda for the first time, he was awestruck by her beauty and fell head over heels for Miranda.

For the first time seeing Ferdinand Miranda says
“ I might call him
A thing divine, for nothing natural
I ever saw so noble.”
Ferdinand said seeing Miranda:
“Most sure, the goddess
On whom these airs attend!—vouchsafe my prayer
May know if you remain upon this island,
And that you will some good instruction give
How I may bear me here. My prime request,
Which I do last pronounce is—O you wonder!—
If you be maid or no.”

And when Miranda replies that she is certainly a maid. Ferdinand’s happiness had no limits. Prospero is happy that Ferdinand and Miranda are attracted to each other. Still, he does not show his happiness and accuses Ferdinand of being a spy, and he takes him into his captivity as a servant. Miranda begs his father not to treat him like a servant, but Prospero doesn’t listen to his daughter and asks her to stay away from Prospero. Ferdinand happily agrees to be enslaved as long as he gets to see Miranda.

Back in Prospero’s cell, Ferdinand is working very hard. He takes over Caliban’s duties, and unlike Caliban, he does not curse Prospero because he feels like he is serving his woman. He is carrying a big log of wood, Miranda asks Ferdinand to take some break and let her work for him thinking her father is away, but Ferdinand refuses. He goes on to flatter her beloved and praises her beauty. Miranda also wants to praise him, but she eventually stops, remembering her father’s instruction that she should not talk to Ferdinand. Through the following lines, we understand what Ferdinand is thinking about Miranda.

There be some sports are painful, and their labor
Delight in the sets off; some kinds of baseness
Are nobly undergone; and most poor matters
Point to rich ends. This may mean task
Would be as heavy to me as odious, but

The mistress which I serve quickens what's dead
And makes my labors pleasures. O, she is
Ten times more gentle than her father's crabbed,
And he's composed of harshness. I must remove
Some thousands of these logs and pile them up,
Upon a sore injunction. My sweet mistress
Weeps when she sees me work, and says such
Baseness
Had never like executor. I forget;
But these sweet thoughts do even refresh my labors,
Most busiest when I do it.

In act 4, scene 1, Prospero gives his blessing to Ferdinand, saying he passed all the tests of his love and threatens him that there would be dire consequences if he would break the virgin knot of Miranda before marriage. Ferdinand takes the pledge to obey Prospero's wish. And they get married at the end of the play.

In *Tempest*, readers find that Ferdinand and Miranda are deeply in love. They also feel the same passion and emotion that lovers and beloved feel in the play. They derive the love and affection of society. Thus they realise that Srinagar rasa is making them enjoy the play *Tempest*. Shakespeare depicts the genuine emotion of the characters in the play.

Shringara rasa is also produced in act three, scene one, where Miranda meets Ferdinand in secret, thinking her father is away. They express their love to each other; both feel tormented because they are not allowed to meet.

Conclusion:

The reader of *Tempest* can draw many themes and ideas, i.e. love, jealousy, comic, surprise etc. The readers perceive various emotions and rasa while reading the play. The readers who experience shringara rasa come to understand the theme of love in the play. Rasa's experience aroused in the audience's heart gives life to the play. The readers experience the intensity of the play *Tempest* and find themselves sharing the emotion of the characters of the play.

Shakespeare aims to show the same level of love and emotion to society through his play *Tempest*.

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