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### The Concept Of Rasa In Nattyashastra: A Philosophical Analysis

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#### Introduction

The Nattyashastra, an ancient Indian text attributed to the ancient sage Bharata Muni, is a foundational work on dramaturgy, aesthetics, and performance arts including dance, music and theatre. The text consists of 36 chapters and approximately 6,000 poetic verses covering various aspects of performing arts such as theatre and stage, Dance and acting, Music and instruments, costumes and make up etc. Design, construction and consecration of the stage, Techniques, styles and expressions of Dance and acting, Theory, practice and instrumentation of music, design, significance and application of Costumes and make up are explained in detail.

The Nattyashastra has had a profound impact on Indian performing arts, including classical dance forms like Bharatanatyam, dissī and Kathakali. It's principles and concepts continue to guide artists and performers today.

The nattyashastra of Bharatamuni is considered as a sacred text by actors and dancers and its influence can be seen in various art forms across India and beyond. It's comprehensive approach to performing arts, including theory, practice and aesthetics makes it a fundamental text for understanding Indian arts and culture.

One of its most significant contributions is the concept of Rasa, which refers to the emotional essence or flavour that an artwork evokes in the audience. This paper will provide a detailed philosophical analysis of the concept of Rasa in Nattyashastra, exploring its theoretical foundations, implications, and relevance to contemporary aesthetics.

**Key Words:** Nattyarasa, Rasanishpati, vibhava, anubhava, Aesthetics, Abhinaya, Nattyasangraha.

#### History of the theory of rasa

The sixth chapter of Nattyashastra summarizes its topics like this.

रसा भावा ह्यभिनया धर्मी वृत्तिः प्रवृत्तयः

सिद्धिः स्वरास्तथातोद्यं गानं प्रवृत्तिरेव च

उपचारस्तथा विप्रा मण्डपाश्चेति सर्वशः

त्रयोदश विधो ह्येष ह्यादिष्टो नाट्यसङ्ग्रहः (नाट्यशास्त्रम् 6- 9,10)

If we summarize thirteen subjects such as rasam, bhavam, abhinayana, dharmi, vritti, prakti, siddhi, swaram, atodhya, sangam, prakti, upacharam, mandapam, it becomes naatyam.

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The other 12 subjects are just elements to generate rasa. Bharata clearly states this when he begins his description of Rasa in the sixth chapter itself. Among the compositional systems accepted in Sanskrit literature, the theory of rasa is superior. The concept of rasatva is reflected in a developed manner in Natyashastra, so the science of drama emerged even before the writing of Natyashastra. During the Vedic period, knowledge about poetry was in the form of theory. But it must be thought that the unique use of the word rasa in the Vedas prompted the commentators to choose this word in the theory. This word is used in the Vedas in the meanings of water, milk, broth, etc. This word is also used for passion, desire, and love. The word rasam is also used in the Thairiopianishad to describe the bliss that can be experienced during the realization of the Supreme Truth, Brahman. This context and expression may have inspired poetry critics to describe the experiences that arise during the enjoyment of poetry. Valmiki, who gave a hymn to grief, is considered the informal originator of the theory of rasa. No other book has been found attributed to Valmiki other than the Ramayana. However, it is not difficult to determine that some lines in the Ramayana were written by someone who knew the secrets of the theory of Rasa. The death of the Krauncha bird shook his heart. This poetic secret has been understood by the poet Kalidasa, the universal poet. When the poet's mind, steeped in grief, re-expresses his own feelings through verse, the same feelings awaken in the heart of the reader and take the form of rasa.

### The Concept of Rasa

Rasa is a complex and multifaceted concept that encompasses various aspects of emotional experience. According to Bharata Muni, Rasa is the result of the combination of three essential elements:

विभावानुभावव्यभिचारिसंयोगाद्रसनिष्पत्तिः- ( नाट्यशास्त्रम् 6-31)

1. Vibhava (Determinants): The stimuli or causes that evoke emotions. Examples:

- Alambana Vibhava (Object of Emotion): The beloved in a romantic play.
- Uddipana Vibhava (Stimulus): A beautiful sunset or a romantic song.

2. Anubhava (Consequents): The physical and mental expressions of emotions. Examples:

- Bodily expressions: Tears, laughter, or gestures.
- Verbal expressions: Words, dialogue, or poetry.

3. Vyabhichari Bhava (Transitory Emotions): The fleeting emotions that arise during the experience. Examples:

- Nirveda (Disillusionment): A feeling of disappointment or disillusionment.
  - Glani (Fatigue): A feeling of exhaustion or weariness.
- These elements combine to create a specific Rasa, which is experienced by the audience as a distinct emotional flavor.

### Types of Rasa

The Natyashastra identifies eight primary Rasas, each associated with a specific emotion:

1. Shringar Rasa (Erotic): Associated with love, attraction, and beauty. Example: The love scenes in Kalidasa's play "Abhijnanasakuntalam" evoke Shringar Rasa.

- Vibhava: The beautiful scenery, music, and gestures of the actors.

- Anubhava: The tender words, loving glances, and gentle touch of the lovers.

2. Hasya Ras (Comedic): Associated with humor, laughter, and playfulness. Example: The comedic scenes in the play "Mrichchhakatika" by Shudraka evoke Hasya Rasa.

- Vibhava: The witty dialogue, comedic situations, and physical antics.

- Anubhava: The laughter, smiles, and playful gestures of the actors.

3. Karuna Rasa (Pathetic): Associated with sorrow, compassion, and empathy. Example: The tragic scenes in the play "Uttararamacharita" by Bhavabhuti evoke Karuna Rasa.

- Vibhava: The tragic events, sorrowful music, and mournful expressions.

- Anubhava: The tears, lamentations, and sorrowful words of the characters.

### Philosophical Analysis

The concept of Rasa in Natyashastra has several philosophical implications:

1. Aesthetic Experience: Rasa theory emphasizes the importance of emotional experience in art, highlighting the role of the audience in creating meaning.

2. Emotional Catharsis: The experience of Rasa can lead to emotional catharsis, allowing the audience to process and release pent-up emotions.

3. Universal Emotions: The Natyashastra suggests that certain emotions are universal and timeless, transcending cultural and historical boundaries.

4. Contextualism: Rasa theory acknowledges the importance of context in shaping emotional experience, highlighting the role of cultural, social, and historical factors.

### **Relevance to Contemporary Aesthetics**

The concept of Rasa remains relevant to contemporary aesthetics, offering insights into:

1. Emotional Intelligence: Rasa theory highlights the importance of emotional intelligence in art, emphasizing the need for artists to understand and evoke emotions effectively.

2. Audience Engagement: The concept of Rasa underscores the importance of audience engagement, recognizing that the audience plays an active role in creating meaning.

3. Cultural Significance: Rasa theory provides a framework for understanding the cultural significance of art, highlighting its role in shaping emotional experiences and cultural values.

### **Conclusion**

The concept of Rasa in Natyashastra offers a rich and complex understanding of emotional experience in art. Through its philosophical analysis, we can gain insights into the nature of aesthetic experience, emotional catharsis, and the universal and contextual aspects of emotions.

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