

APPENDIX



PROBLEMATIZING PREVALENCE OF *RASA* IN THE PLAYS OF MAHESH DATTANI

Dr. Anshu Surve

Ms. Garima Hariniwas Tiwari

Abstract

Natyashastra theory of *Rasa* is a spirit so abstract that can only be suggested, not described in any work of visual, literary or performing art. *Rasabhasa*, a concept from Bharata Muni's *Rasa* theory, alternatively nomenclated as a semblance of *Rasa* interestingly appears parallel to *Rasa* but is not *Rasa*. Bharatmuni reiterates the relishing of *Rasa* or *Rasabhasa* from a conditional amalgamation of *Bhava* (emotions), *Alambana Vibhava* (protagonist), *Uddipan Vibhava* (environment) and *Vyabhicharibhava* (transitory emotional feelings) in the protagonist i.e. the one who leads (*NayatiItiNeta*). The conditionality is further enunciated emphasizing that not all protagonists relish *Rasa* or *Rasabhasa* distinctively in a dramatic performance. Modern plays with their stark distinctions from the ancient Indian plays like *Abhigyanashakuntalam* portray multilayered characters dealing with the questions of identities in various spatialities and temporalities at a glance do not seem insinuated with the characteristics underpinned in *Natyashastra*. These distinctions and coming away from the thematic contextualization of ancient Indian plays enshrouds the idea of *Rasa* Relish. Dattani's *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* and *Seven Steps around the Fire* explicitly raise gender and identity issues of LGBT community, in dealing with their thematic structure and characterization reveal relishing of *Rasa* or *Rasabhasa*. The paper critically problematizes the translational affinities between *Rasa* and *Rasabhasa*, also aspires to explore two plays by drawing on the concept of *Rasabhasa*. (Re) interpreting *Rasa* and *Rasabhasa* in the context of modern LGBT plays is the central premise of this research paper.

Keywords: LGBT, *Rasa*, *Rasabhasa*, Gender Studies, Indian English Drama.

Introduction

Among the many notions about the modern Indian English drama, one significantly draws line of demarcation from the ancient Indian drama in the sense that the modern Indian English drama does not exhibit congruence with certain elements and features of classical (Sanskrit) drama as well as theatre. Mahesh Dattani being the vanguard of modern Indian drama portrayed modernity in tangentiality with Mahesh Elkunchwar through characters and language distanced from traditional drama in Sanskrit, revealing various untouched dimensions and trajectories of the urban spaces with all its anxieties, conflicts, angst, questions of identity, precarity, prominent in his compositions – *Final Solutions*, *Dance Like a Man*, *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*, *The Big Fat City*, *Seven Steps around the Fire*. An unwelcoming response towards *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*, from the Heterosexuals as well as Homosexuals of society left Dattani puzzled, and a tale of *hijra* Community beset with realistic challenges of a eunuch's life and society's impenetrable attitude towards them in *Seven Steps around the Fire* are the compass to (re) interpret *Rasa* and *Rasabhasa*. The main premise of this paper is rooted in a debatable idea, whether these plays, based on the lives of men and women in present times, when analyzed through the critical lenses of *Rasa* theory, which might seem as an attempt (questionable though) to bring two poles, two binaries on one forum, evoke *Rasa* or are instrumental in evoking *Rasabhasa*. Evoking of *Rasa* and *Rasabhasa* in the plays foregrounded in the socio-cultural, political and legal contexts of the LGBT is permeated with multifarious research questions - What are the historical and evolutionary interpretations of *Rasa* and *Rasabhasa*?; *How is Rasa different from Rasabhasa*?; How do the LGBT plays of Mahesh Dattani engage with *Rasa* experience or semblance of *Rasa*?; and the paper attempts to find answers to these questions.

Indian Drama: A Brief History

'Indian Drama' cannot be restrained into a definition as it encompasses the entire gamut of Indian culture - the myths, the folklores, the history and the ethos of the nation. 'Modern Indian English Drama' has evolved over the ages for not to be compartmentalized, promising insightful reflection of the present-day life with all its simple complexities and complex simplicities. The history of Indian drama can be traced back to the Vedic era where plays had religious bearings, the fervor of faith, beliefs and their influence in life. It is widely agreed that akin to the English Morality and Miracle plays, Indian drama is also substantially religious in nature; Indian drama was set in motion with a performance in the court of God, when Gods led by Indra solicited Brahma to induce something pleasing and gratifying to

both the senses - eyes and ears. A belief is that the '*Indradhwaja Mahotsava*' was celebrated to commemorate the joyous occasion of the creation of the fifth *Veda* - the *Natyaveda*, the narration of this unique event flushed with dance and music is found in the Bharata Muni's encyclopedic work *Natyashastra*. The prime contributors of Indian drama, known for borrowing and popularizing plots and stories from history (now ancient history), folk legends, epics, and wars, full of aesthetic sublimity are *Mahakavi* Kalidasa, Bhasa, Shudhraka, Harsha who have penned emotions, experience, psychology, culture, traditions and beliefs in their rich dramatic works. The trajectory of Indian performative and stage art in the states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra and Gujarat was predominated by Sanskrit plays till the 15th century, thereafter, continuous and consistent foreign invasions curtailed the prosperity of performative art and culture. Drama emerged from its dormancy in the form of People's Theatre, popularly known as *Loknatya* in the 17th century and flourished in the form of *Bhavai* of Gujarat, *Nautanki* of North India, *Raas* of Rajasthan, *Tamasha* of Maharashtra, *Bhangra* of Punjab with the Brechtian reformatory impulse. The roots of Dance Drama - *Loknatya* can be traced back to *Natyashastra* (200BC) where Bharata Muni made a passing reference to *Nrut* and *Nrutya*, Dhananjaya conceptualized and theoretically located these two terms in his *Dasharupakam*, according to which *Nrutya* is based on *Bhava* (emotion) and *Nrut* is based on *Laya* and *Taal* (rhythm). Drama to lyrical performances of *Ramayana*, *Krishnalila*, *Devi Bhagwata*, *PrithvirajRaso* by Chandra Bardai and *Padmavat* by Malik Muhammad Jayasi are distinctive examples of *Nrutya* whereas *Raas* and *Garba* are based on the performative postulates of *Nrut*. The spread of Indian freedom movement in the nooks and corners of the nation can be contributed to these *Loknatya*.

Theatre in India took a modernist turn during the British rule when the modern proscenium theatres dawned on Indian soil with Calcutta and Bombay being the prominent centres. A Dramatic Performances Act – 1876 was implemented to stop the Indian theatrical and street performances, encouraging freedom struggle against the British rule in India. Dramatic performances known for their poetical excellence, thematic variety, symbolism and morality contributed significantly in the growth of Indian English drama where Sri Aurobindo's *Vasavadutta*, Rabindranath Tagore's *Chitra*, and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya's *Window* were meant to be read, not performed. Later on, Vijay Tendulkar, Girish Karnad and Mahesh Dattani in their dramas (to be performed) voiced the unheard voices of anxiety, subjugation and marginalization, caste and class discrimination, problematizing socio-political actualities deeply permeated in the fabric of the nation, brought about a reformatory turn paving way for completely new age themes of gender, identity, child abuse, precarity etc. foregrounded in the

critical domains of post colonialism, Marxism, Feminism, Modernism and Realism. The modern Indian English drama, especially Mahesh Dattani's plays sketch the complexities of Indian society on the canvas of a stage with all the shades dismissing the traditional character portrayal (belonging to royalty or nobility) on the grounds of the Aristotelian norms or the postulates of Indian *Natyashastra* thus, humanizing and democratising the textual and performative characterization. Since then, modern Indian drama has augmented in terms of technological advancements, relevant furnishing, lights and backdrop serving as ambience on stage entirely in contrast to the theatrical practices of demonstrating the shifting of scenes either through dialogic representations or placard formations on a unidimensional stage.

The literary trajectories permeated with the critical percepts from the beginning theory to either the death of theory or the death of the author, from Freud's Psychoanalysis, Weber's Industrial Isolation, Maslow's *Need Hierarchy theory* to Homi Bhabha's *Hybridity*, Gayatri Spivak's *Can The Subaltern Speak* to Sudhir Kakkar's *Indian Psyche* have induced a change in the ways of thinking which echoes in the literary works. In the pursuit of interrogating the complexities of human life on the lines of these critical discourses, Rasa theory with all its simplicities has got decimated to a mere application to texts addressing the east-west binaries or to bridge the philosophical divide of the west and the global south. This decimation seems to reflect on the theory of Indian aesthetics being obsolete but, it also cannot be denied that present is, if not the product but an extension of the past and establishing the relevance of the poetics of Indian aesthetics offers a fresh interpretation of not only the theory itself but also an opportunity to re-comprehend the Rasa discourse in the light of modernity as well as modernism in English literature.

Rasa Theory: An Overview

It has been observed that Rasa theory of Indian Aesthetics erroneously translated/interpreted as a juice, a flavor, emotions, feelings, sentiments, taste, sap, aesthetic mood, essence, fluid, due to its versatility and significance in the present world. An equivalent of *Rasa* doesn't exist, *Rasa* cannot be translated or interpreted or transliterated due to its cultural rootedness. *Natyashastra* theory of *Rasa* is a transcendental pleasure, a spirit that can only be suggested, not described. *Rasa* relishes when one leaves his/her individual, egoistic, pragmatic persona of modern, self-centered world and assumes an impersonal contemplative attitude - free from all craving, striving and external necessity. *Rasa* can be understood as a dynamic experience among the character, an artist (actor/performer), and an audience; *Rasa* has

travelled a remarkable journey starting from the emanation of the word to its acceptance as a substantial and universal theory, to ascertain its meaning in each era.

As a fundamental concept and *Rasa* as a word is believed to be coined for the first time in the *Taittiriya Upnishadaas*— “रसोवैसःसंहोवायंलब्ध्वानन्दीभवति” (Being means of eminence pleasure, *Rasa* and soul are equal) (1985), signifying that *Rasa* and pleasure are coupled, *Rasa* is a charioteer of eminence pleasure which is not easy to attain in this materialistic, multi-dimensional, capitalist, modern, vibrant world. Historically decisive treatise – the *Agnipurana* penned by Vyasa classifies *Rasa*, as –“ वावैदग्धप्रधानेऽपिरसएवात्रजीवितम्” (Though the *Kavya* is full of beauty of language, but *Rasa* is the reason behind aliveness of *Kavya*) (1966), *Rasa* has been characterized as nectar(ethereal in nature) of literature.

A formula (*Sutra*) of *Rasa*, acknowledged as *Rasasutra* in the 6th chapter of an encyclopedic treatise –*Natyashastra* provides absolute perception of *Rasa* – “विभावानुभावव्यभिचारिसंयोगात्रसनिष्पत्तिः”.The aesthetic relish is produced (*Rasanishpattih*) by a combination of the determinants ((*Vibhava*), consequents (*Anubhava*), and transitory states or fleeting emotions (*Vyabhicharibhava*)) (1971), which has been further re-constructed by successors of Bharata Muni in their interpretations of *Rasa* or *Natyashastra*. Bhatt Lollata, the successor of Bharata Muni defines निष्पत्ति as उत्पत्ति in interpreting *Rasasutra* and suggests that *Rasa* relishes in the characters like Ram and in the actor; conceivably, it is a source of pleasure and the final stage of emotions and feelings lies in the literal characters and actors. Shree Shankuk, a follower of Bhatt Lollata adds the theory of *Chitraturagnyayato* relish *Rasa*. One of the path breaking scholars - Bhatta Nayaka argued that *Rasa* does not only relish in a character, but relishes in the audience along with the actor and the character, a satisfactory and absolute argument, as the earliest drama was performed to entertain and please the audience (Gods). Bhatta Nayaka exhibited that *Rasa* cannot be expressed; it can only be felt. Abhinavgupta Padacharya, a believer of *Dhwani* and a profounder of अभिव्यक्तिवाद disseminated forever existence of *Rasa* in the heart of humans as *Sthayibhava*, which relishes as *Rasa* through the process of साधारणीकरणin audience.

After Abhinavgupta, there has not been a significant theoretical contribution to expand the horizons of *Rasatheory*; no paradigm shift seems to visibly mark the *Rasa* theory. The scholars and authors, such as Dhanamjaya, Vishvanatha, Mammata, Jagganatha, Ramchandra Gunchandra have all-inclusively rewritten theory of *Rasa* in their respective historically significant and individually indifferent treatises. It is widely agreed as well as explicitly visiblethat there came stagnation in the development of *Rasa* as a theory, no valuable

absorption was brought after *Abhinavbharti* of Abhinavagupta, the next-in-line scholars have discussed *Rasa* with no groundbreaking historical, chronological, semantic, psychological underpinnings.

For a considerable period of time, *Natyashastra* and theory of *Rasa* developed in the form of a culturally and literary acceptable translation in various regional languages in India. In pre-modern and modern age, the scholars and researchers of distinct disciplines, such as Performing Arts, Literature, Medicine, Computer and Civil Engineering have tried to interpret *Rasa* in their own trajectories catering to the need of time and politics of closely associated subjects. Availability of scholarly articles on *Rasa* theory in number of disciplines, languages, contexts, subjects, indicates recognition and relevance of *Rasa* theory in the contemporary literary and theoretical world: A Professor of Columbia University - Sheldon Pollok's *A Rasa Reader*, a translated compilation of several prevalent Indian treaties/texts and scholarly interpretations available on *Rasa* with its limitations though, brought around the interest in *Rasa* Studies. The other renowned treatise in consideration is Dr. Nagendra's *Rasa Siddhanta*, a magnificent treatise with valuable insights, flooded with contributions and interpretations of *Rasa* in the 20th century world. An application of *Rasa* theory in a Chinese text, Novels of Hardy, Poems of Tennyson, and Novels of R.K. Narayan and so on is a popular practice, making attempts to understand and demonstrate relevance of *Rasa*, hence, contemporizing it in an absolutely diverse era far distinct from the era of *Natyashastra*-deancientizing *Rasa*, *Rasa* Experience and *Rasa* Relish.

Shringara, *Hasya*, *Raudra*, *Karuna*, *Veera*, *Adbhuta*, *Bhayanaka*, *Bibhatsa* and *Shanta* are the nine *Rasa*; except *Shanta*, other eight are predominant in drama, accumulation of *Vatsalya* and *Bhaktias* *Rasa* in the inimitable list of Nine *Rasa* from the original *Shringara* *Rasa* occurred with the need and demand of time, at the time of *Bhakti* Movement in India.



Figure 1: Nine *Rasa*

Rasa cannot be defined or understood in an isolation because of its enormity and close association with physiological and psychological framework, such as - *Sthayibhava*, *Anubhava*, *Vibhava*, *Vyabicharibhava*, *Alambanavibhava*, *Uddiponavibhava*, *Satvikbhava*,

etc. Male and female protagonists are *Aalambanavibhava*; an isolated place, wonderful atmosphere, beautiful river bank, or garden are examples of *Uddipanavibhava* with reference to *Shringara Rasa*. *Anubhava* is perceived because of *Aalambana* and *Uddipanavibhava*. *Anubhava* appears to be a physical activity, whereas *Satvikbhava* is a plausible mental activity. *Stambha*(Paralysis), *Pralaya*(Fainting), *Romancha*(Thrill), *Sweda*(Sweating), *Vaivarnya* (Change of Color), *Vepathu*(Kampa) (Trembling), *Ashru*(Weeping) and *Vaisvaryaya* (Change of Voice) are eight *Satvikbhava*. *Vyabhicharibhava* are 33 in number, such as *Nirveda* (Discouragement), *Glani*(Weakness), *Shanka* (Apprehension), *Shrama*(Weariness), *Dhruti*(Contentment), *Jadta*(Stupor), *Harsha*(Joy), *Dainya*(Depression), *Ugrata*(Cruelty), *Chinta*(Anxiety), *Trasa*(Fright), *Asuya*(Envy), *Amarsha*(Indignation), *Garva*(Arrogance), *Smruti*(Recollection), *Marana* (Death), *Mada*(Intoxication), *Supta*(Dreaming), *Nidra*(Sleeping), *Vibodha*(Awakening), *Vreeda*(Shame), *Apasmaara*(Epilepsy), *Moha*(Distraction), *Mati* (Assurance), *Aalasya*(Indolence), *Aavega*(Agitation), *Vitrka*(Deliberation), *Avahittha*(Dissimulation), *Vyadh*(Sickness), *Unmaada*(Insanity), *Vishaada*(Despair), *Aautsukya*(Impatience), *Chapalata*(Inconstancy). *Sthayibhavas*, also known as permanent and durable states of humans, *Sthayibhavas* are always, already present in human and relish as *Rasa*, *Rati* (love) for *Shringara*, *Hasa* (mirth) for *Hasya*, *Utsaha* (energy) for *Veera*, *Smaya*, *Vismaya* (astonishment) for *Adbhuta*, *Krodha* (anger) for *Raudra*, *Shoka* (sorrow) for *Karuna*, *Bhaya* (fear) for *Bhayanaka*, *Jugupsa* (disgust) for *Bibhatsa* and *Nirveda*(tranquility) for *Shanta* are *Sthayibhavas*.

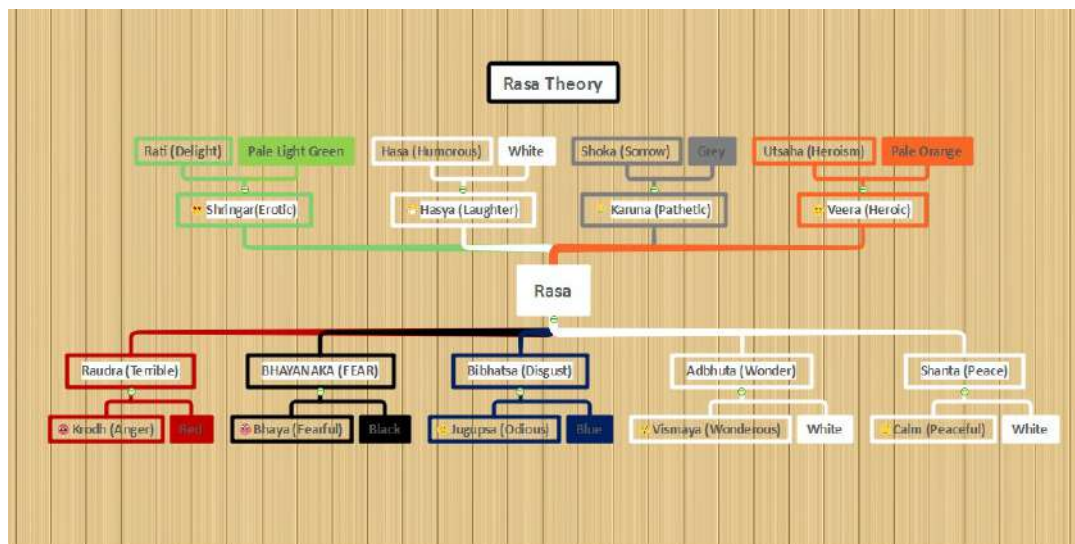


Figure 2: Rasa, Sthayibhava, Deity, Colour

Rasa, a psychologically important concept has associated deity and a colour, as shown in the diagram. Apart from Sri Krishna, the Supreme God, all other gods and goddesses are entities of the *guna* ranging from divine (*sattvic*), semi-divine (*rajasic*) or evil (*tamasic*). Colours like green, orange, black, blue, white, red, etc. is a charioteer of an associated *Rasa* in the form of *Alambanavibhav* and *Uddipanavibhav*. Thus, *Rasatheory* has multiplied directly or indirectly associated theories with it; a debatable theory of *Rasabhasa* is one of them.

Rasabhasa: A Debatable Theory

A Sanskrit multifarious word consisting of two terms - *Rasa* and *Aabhasa* is termed as *Rasabhasa* - a semblance of *Rasa*, at a fleeting look, *Rasa* and *Rasabhasa* cannot be differentiated effortlessly, especially with reference to modern Indian English drama which has various modern characters (homosexuals) as protagonist, bizarre but relatable themes unlike ancient Indian drama. The Mirage is a semblance of water but actually it is not water, in the same way *Rasabhasa* appears to be *Rasa* but actually it is a semblance of *Rasa*. In the 6th chapter of *Rasa* theory, Bharata Muni (200 BC) subsequently conceptualizes *Rasabhasa* in *Natyashastra*, but somehow the term and concept of *Rasabhasa* was not reflected upon and discussed by scholars, except Abhinavagupta, Mammata and Jagganatha, there has been a paucity of critical scholarly work on *Rasabhasa*.



Figure 3: Mirage

Rasabhasa is often discussed in the context of *BhaktiRasa* in the contemporary world, *Rasabhasa* in *Bhakti* signifies semblance of *Bhakti Rasa*, rather than aesthetic rapture of *Rasa* because the experience is not related to God, i.e. When Narada (*Bhakta*) saw two parrots in Vrindavan reciting *Vedanta* he was astonished (*Adbhuta*), but because his astonishment was not in relation to Lord Krishna, it is a source of *Rasabhasa*. It is believed that when demons or comic characters appear in *Krishna-lila*, *Rasa* such as laughter (*Hasya*), fear (*Bhayanaka*) relishes in an ordinary person, only devotees can experience *Bhakti Rasa*.

A conditional coalesce of *Vibhava*, *Anubhava*, *Vyabhicharibhava*, *Satvikabhava* and *Sthavibhava*, relishes *Rasa*, otherwise it results in *Rasabhasa*. To distinguish *Rasabhasa* from *Rasa*, immaculate perceptive of *Sthayibhava*, *Anubhava*, *Vibhava* (*Alambana* and *Uddipana*), *Satvikabhava* and *Vyabhicharibhava* is indispensable, a knowledge of the physical or mental states of humans. *Rasabhasa* patently based on impropriety of *Alambanavibhava* (male or female protagonist) of drama. Propriety or impropriety is contextual and keeps changing with time, and place as asserted by Dr. Nagendra (2019), which can also be modified with culture, tradition, person, education, background, etc in the modern and postmodern, open, uncertain world. With the legalization of LGBT in India, homosexuals have been considered as a part of the society; whether characters of LGBT community can relish *Shringara Rasa* in the literature and considered propriety for other *Rasa* is one of the central questions of this research paper.

On a Muggy Night in Mumbai and Seven Steps around the Fire: The Narrative

According to Stephen Bruckner of The New York Times, Mahesh Dattani is ‘a canny and facile writer’ who is considered to be the first Indian English playwright and a recipient of the Sahitya Akademi Award. Dattani’s writing echoes the themes of the present day like gender and religious issues, sexuality and similar related subject matters as evident in his stage plays, screen plays and radio plays which are of utmost importance to contemporary urban India without diverging from the “classic concerns of world drama” which are personal and moral choices apart from human relationships. Dattani’s composition includes stage plays, screenplays and radio plays, in which his craft of projecting social reality and related issues has been used. Dattani’s group was founded in 1984 and the first and foremost play was *Where There’s A Will*. Mahesh Dattani has produced brilliant masterpieces such as *Tara*, *Bravely Fought the Queen*, *Final Solutions*, *Dance Like A Man*, *On A Muggy Night In Mumbai*, *Thirty Days in September*, *Where did I Leave My Purdah?*, *Seven Steps around the Fire* and several others out of which some are critically-acclaimed. He has transformed the urban theatre of India with his dramatic vision and skills. Dattani believes in the philosophy of reviving the empathy in humans with his work. Alyque Padamsee, a prominent theatre persona and a recipient of Padma Shri epitomizes Dattani as “a playwright who gives 60 million English-speaking Indians an identity”.

On a Muggy Night in Mumbai (1998), the first Indian play about homosexuality, deals with the acceptance of homosexuality with Mumbai city as its backdrop, on the other hand *Seven Steps around the Fire* (1998) is a protest play against the social exclusion of the *hijras*. Both

the plays exhibit Mahesh Dattani's skill of dealing with challenging LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) issues falling under the category of gender issues. Indian (English) writers (playwrights, poets, novelists) who used to think twice before writing and possibly still require a lot of guts to compose significant literature on the LGBT theme, whereas Mahesh Dattani writes and stages two plays in the year 1998, the plays with unconventional protagonists (not as proposed in *Natyashastra*), fighting for their rights directly or indirectly in the heterosexual (so-called normal) society despite of belonging in LGBT community.

On a Muggy Night in Mumbai



Figure 4: Stage Performance of *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*

On a Muggy Night in Mumbai has been the first Indian drama, dealing with homosexuality explicitly on the Indian stage with the theme of homosexual love and vulgarity among the youths in a materialistic present world. The protagonists - Kamlesh and Prakash are passionate lovers, Prakash is ashamed of homosexuality, so he accepts life of a heterosexual and falls (or pretends to be) in love with Kamlesh's sister Kiran. On the other hand, Kamlesh's (who still loves Prakash) sexual needs are being fulfilled by Sharad, incidentally, Prakash once again enters in the life of Kamlesh as a lover of his sister Kiran. When Kiran (as a heterosexual) comes to know about homosexual relationship of Kamlesh and Prakash, she shows all compassion for homosexual relations.

Seven Steps around the Fire



Figure 5: Stage Performance of *Seven Steps around the Fire*

Seven Steps around the Fire revolves round an enquiry about the murder of Kamala, a beautiful *Hijraby* Anarkali. A transgender is not allowed to marry (take seven steps around the fire) in the society, the seven steps around the fire (a marriage) of Kamala with Subbu (a son of a Minister) results in her murder, an evidence of their marriage, the fire turns in Kamala's destruction. Uma, a research scholar and a wife of a Chief Superintendent of Police, a daughter of Vice Chancellor and a daughter-in-law of a DSP uncovers the truth behind a brutal murder in the city's *hijra* community.

***Rasa* and *Rasabhasa* Theory based Analysis**

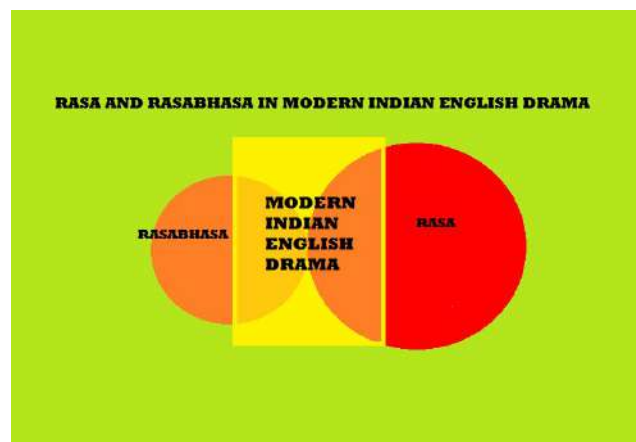


Figure 6: *Rasa* and *Rasabhasa* in the Modern Indian English Drama

According to dramaturgical rules of *Natyashastra*, plot and characters of a drama determines *Rasa* (Muni, 1971), the ancient Indian drama projected selective best types of characters as a protagonist to relish particular *Rasa* (as depicted in *Natyashastra*), but Bharata Muni has not referred to transgender as a protagonist, despite of presence of transgender in that era. On the other hand, Mahesh Dattani, the modern Indian playwright, in his plays deal with modern

characters and themes, and life of the character of LGBT community (Homosexuals) is discussed in detail. According to Indian Aesthetics, the protagonist is one who leads (*NayatiItiNeta*), signifying that a leading character or a protagonist of the drama should have leadership quality, male/female protagonist should be an ideal person, only specific kind of protagonist can evoke and relish determined Rasa, i.e. Bheem relishes *Veera Rasa*, Krishnaevokes *Shringara Rasa*, Durvasa sage raises Bhayanaka Rasa. The protagonist is synonymous to *Alambanavibhava*, an impropriety of which leads to *Rasabhasa*, whereas propriety or impropriety is a subject to change according to time and society.

Following rules of *Rasa* theory, in the context of *Shringara Rasa* - *Sthayibhava* is *Rati*, *Alambanavibhava* is male and female protagonists (characters), *Uddipनाविभवा* is background of a garden and *Anubhava* is an experience of watching male and female characters in the garden. Both of the plays - *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* and *Seven Steps around the Fire* by Mahesh Dattani's characters are in deviation from the list of the characters mentioned in the category of protagonist in the *Natyashastra*. Even after legalization and acceptance of LGBT community in India under the section 377 of IPC, whether homosexuals and transgender can be the protagonist in the context of *Rasa* theory is a debatable question, an answer of that lies in a textual study of *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* and *Seven Steps around the Fire*.

Kamlesh and Ed (homosexuals) are sitting in the garden and a conversation of love between them (or Kamlesh and Sharad) can be a source of *Shringara Rasa* for homosexuals, but it may relish *Rasabhasa* or *Hasya Rasa* or *Bibhatsa Rasa* in the people of different sexual orientation as Dattani rightly discuss people's response to the play in his *Me and My Plays*—
“*On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* was received with dismissal mostly. ... Most people chose to ignore it completely, as if they had never watched it.” (Dattani, 2014, p.36)

i.e¹. -

“Kamlesh: Every Single Word

Ed: Let me hear your story.

Kamlesh: No. not tonight. Hold my hand.

...

...

Ed: Come closer...closer.

Kamlesh: If only they could see how beautiful we are together.” (Dattani, 2000, p.81)

Similarly, Subbu's love for Kamla, a beautiful *hijra* can't be a source of *Shringara Rasa* for heterosexuals.

i.e². -

“Subbu: I am leaving you all! You can’t keep me away from Kamla.” (Dattani, 2000, p.39)

In such situations, which *Rasa* will be relished in an audience? is a question. When it comes to aesthetic experience of *Shringara Rasa*, can such (LGBT) characters evoke *Rasa* is a question, an answer of which lies in a theory of *Rasabhasa*. Either *Rasa* or *Rasabhasa* relishes at a time from the *Sthayibhava*, *Rasa* and *Rasabhasa* cannot be relished together in a person but a piece of art/literature/drama can be a source of *Rasa* and *Rasabhasa* both in the context of LGBT plays for different individuals with different sexual inclination and members of completely different society. When one steps into the shoes of a character to experience *Rasa*, the difference lies between whether we sympathize (relate) or empathize.

At the same time, a question raises that - whether *Rasa* is gender neutral or not, the answer is - *Rasa* has not been discussed in the light of gender by any of the Indian theorists or scholars so far, which indicates that *Rasa* is gender neutral for male and Female, two genders of the *Natyashastriya* era. An investigation of *Rasa* in these plays answers that all *Rasa* can be gender neutral except *Shringara Rasa*. In the depiction of *Shringara Rasa*, *Alambanavibhava* that means the absence of male and female protagonist cannot be ignored. Indian citizens, an audience of multifarious web series of different languages, cultures, traditions, and characters may accept LGBT community, may accept plays or any literature based on the life of LGBT community but relish of *Shringara Rasa* is not possible because it is not relatable or cannot be empathies with the character. In such situations, *ShringaraRasa* relishes only when one is unaware of the sexuality of the LGBT character, but when the truth reveals it gets converted in *Hasya Rasa* or *Rasabhasa*.

i.e. –

“Ed: (disappointed) Oh.

Kiran: It-it’s my fault.

...

...

Kiran: I don’t want to be fussy, Ed.

Ed: Baby, please be fussy. I like you when you are fussy.

...

...

Ed: (pats her cheek) Relax, I can take care of you. (Exits)” (Dattani, 2000, P.52)

One may sympathize with Kiran and Ed at the beginning of the play, unaware of Ed's truth, as a result of which at a glance that appears to be *Shringara Rasa* is actually *Rasabhasa* or vice versa in the context of *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*, Homosexual theme based plays.

In the framework of other *Rasa*, presence of unconventional protagonist (LGBT) may not matter because of an acceptance of LGBT community as part of society; being an audience, one can experience *Karuna Rasa* just by observing their suffering, when Bunny, a successful TV actor (as an ideal father and a husband), accepts heterosexuality for gaining respect from the society.

i.e. –

“Bunny: I know. Just as the man whom my wife loves does not exist. I have denied a lot of things. The only people who know me-the real me-are present here in this room. And you all hate me for being such a hypocrite. And I continue to lie to millions of people every week on Thursday nights. There's no such person...” (Dattani, 2000, P.102-103)

Karuna Rasa can also be experienced, when Anarkali, a head of *hijra*, shares her experience and unravels a tale of Kamla's suffering.

i.e. –

“Anarkali: Would you have believed me? So many times I warned her. I fought with her. I scratched her face, hoping she will become ugly and Subbu will forget her. I told her to run.” (Dattani, 2000, P.41)

Hasya Rasa also relishes, through the presence of Sharad's character and his gestures and dialogue delivery, which creates more impact because of his homosexuality, following a principle of performativity. On the other hand, the other kind of individual may consider the same as an insulting statements for heterosexuals and may it be a source of *Raudra Rasa*.

i.e. –

“Sharad: Oh, my Gawd! Those heterosexuals are at it again!

Kamlesh: If you can see them, they can see us. ...

Sharad: Are you crazy? Just look at them! Yeech! That guy is just bad news.

Kamlesh: ...

Sharad: Of course he is her husband! He is too fat and bald to be her lover.” (Dattani, 2000, P.53)

Modern drama have absolutely dissimilar themes than ancient ones, based on realistic incidents/events in the life of the any kind of person of the society, be it rich or poor, heterosexual or homosexual. Modern drama hardly deals with the themes of war or fight, in that case, until and unless, one is a policeman or an army officer cannot be an exponent of

Veera Rasa. When in the modern drama, one fights verbally or may be raises voice against society for own rights or truth or justice, can also relish *Veera Rasa*, a fight of Champa and Anarkali for their rights the marriage of Subbu, a son of the Minister, is such an instance.

i.e. -

“Champa: May God bless this house with many children!

Anarkali: May God always smile upon this house!

...

...

Champa: Do not be so angry, sir. It is a happy occasion.

...

...

Champa: Thank you, sir, but we must sing and dance to bless this house and the handsome couple.” (Dattani, 2000, P.38-39)

Propriety or Impropriety is contextual, in very near history when lesbian and gay marriages were not legally permissible in Indian society but were acceptable in the other parts of the world, even today, there are countries, where it is still not legal/ acceptable. Technological advancements have converted the world into a global village, it is an era of translation, it is a time of world literature, and it is a time of web series, nothing is limited to a place, region, country or a continent due to which humans of a specific place/continent are exposed to others’ beliefs, traditions, culture and customs, which is one of the reasons behind accepting LGBT. There is a huge difference between accepting and adapting something and *Rasa* experience is based on adaptation not acceptance.

Conclusion

It is alleged that, if something is required to be followed by the society, either it needs to be legalized or religionised, as part of which LGBT has been legalized in India under the section 377 of Indian Penal Code on 6th September 2018. When it comes to aesthetic experience, *Rasa* or *Rasabhasa* in the context of the contemporary and permissive society, which is ready to accept homosexuality as part of society and literature, due to which such homosexual characters can also be a charioteer of *Rasa*. Another possibility, especially in the context of *Shringara Rasa* is that the homosexual or transgender, whose sexual orientation is different, watches plays with romantic dialogues among homosexuals, he would experience *Shringara Rasa* but when a person with heterosexual inclination watches such plays the experience that relishes is not *Rasa* but *Rasabhasa* or *HasyaRasa* or *Bibhatsa Rasa*. Due to the experience of

Rasabhasa or *Hasya Rasa*, it appears to be a black comedy but at the same time it's a story of certain individuals who experience the same.

Through a detailed study of *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* and *Seven Steps around the Fire*, a conclusion can be drawn that the modern Indian English drama cannot be an exponent of only one *Rasa* for the diversified audience of the present world, encountering number of various performances by different drama companies in different regions or through different mediums such as – street plays, theatrical performances, Television performances, etc, unlike the ancient Indian drama. Individuals from diverse group may experience different *Rasa* or *Rasabhasa* from the very same drama or the scene or a line, based on their associations, psyche, understanding, experience, etc. Thus, a theory of *Rasa* and *Rasabhasa* is relevant in the modern Indian drama but needs to be modified or certain new insights need to be drawn to make it more relevant in the present world.

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank all the anonymous reviewers of this article for providing their valuable comments and suggestions.

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Dr. Anshu Surve

Assistant Professor, Department of English

The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vaodara

&

Ms. Garima Hariniwas Tiwari

Research Scholar

Department of English

The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara

Email: garima.tiwari-eng@msubaroda.ac.in

COMPREHENDING CONCEPTUALIZATION OF DHANAMJAYA'S *DASHARUPAKAM*

Dr. ANSHU SURVE

Assistant Professor, Department of English,
The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda

Ms. GARIMA HARINIWAS TIWARI

Research Scholar, Assistant Professor, Department of English,
The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda

Abstract

Bharata Muni's *Natyashastra* (200 BC) is a remarkable ancient encyclopedic treatise influencing dance, music and literary traditions in India with a primarily goal of lifting and transporting the experience of spectators into ultimate reality and transcendent values. After him, Dhanamjaya's *Dasharupakam* (10th Century) achieves popularity among the successors and theatre artists of the era because it puts into a string four prominent dramatic constituents - plot, character, and types of play, *Rasa* and presents *Dasharupakam* as an abridged and upgraded version of *Natyashastra* in the field of Indian Dramaturgy. It is widely agreed that literary theories pertinently change understanding of a literary work. Understanding (Indian) literature under the light of Indian literary theories is neglected. This critical study is an attempt to reappraise and simplify *Dasharupakam* and bring in a limelight for readers and researchers to comprehend its nuances.

Key words: *Natyashastra*, *Dasharupakam*, Indian literary theory, Literary tradition, Dramaturgy, Types of play, *Rasa* Theory

Introduction

(Kalidasa's *Malivikagnimitram*) (Rajan1, 7) is indicative of the fact that *Namyā* (Drama in this

context) induces pleasure and entertainment with equal intensity to people of diverse interest. Modern Indian Dramaturgy with definitive objectives of inducing pleasure traces its roots to the Classical Indian/Sanskrit Drama (*Natya*), classifying drama in ten main and eighteen sub-types, comparable to the categorization of Drama in the poetics of the West as comedy, tragedy, tragicomedy, one act play, five act play, shadow play, farce, opera, melodrama, music drama. The Aesthetics of Indian Poetics is laid down by Bharat Muni in *Natyashastra*; Vishwanatha in *Sahityadarpanam* and Abhinavgupta in *Abhinava Bharti*; whereas, *Dasharupakam* has rarely been explored despite of its conciseness, originality, consistency of subject matter and comprehensibility. This critical study is an attempt to reappraise and simplify *Dasharupakam*.

Dashrupalakam by Dhanamjaya and Dhanika

Dasharupakam has 300 *Karikas* (verses) spread over four *Prakashas* (chapters) dealing with four key constituents of drama. *Dasharupakam* can be conceptualized as Chapter 1: Plot and structure; Chapter 2: Characters; Chapter 3: Types of Play; Chapter 4: *Rasa*. Locating *Dasharupakam* in terms of its contribution to Indian Dramaturgy can be comprehended as: "The excellence of

Dhanamjaya's presentation and its convenient form gave the *Dasarupaka* a prominence that it has retained to the present day." (Hass); "*Trimurti Granth of Sanskrit Natyashastra*." (Kane).

Dhanamjaya, a son of Pandit Vishnu, a Sanskrit scholar, a poet of *Kavya Nirnaya*, a *Natyacharya*, a composer of *Dasharupakam*, was a jewel in the court of Malwa's King Munja in the 10th century. There is a paucity of information on Dhanamjaya due to the principle of anonymity followed by Sanskrit Scholars.

Dhanika, younger brother of Dhanamjaya; a member of King Sindhuraj's court; an author of *Navsahasank Charit*, *Viddhashala Bhanjika* and *Karpur Manjri*; a contributor of *Avaloka* commentary (*teeka*) on *Dasharupakam* is attributed for bringing Aesthetics of Sanskrit Dramaturgy in the public domain by writing *Avaloka* in Sanskrit and Prakrit language for theatre artists of the period to democratize Poetics.

There are two Janus faced controversies associated with *Dasharupakam*, the first one is related to the identity that Dhanamjaya and Dhanika were the same person or not; similar to who is Shakespeare? The second one is that commentaries might be written on *Dasharupakam*, but politics of inclusion and language have not allowed to preserve and bring in the forefront for literary discourse or *Dasharupakam* has been written in such a simplistic and lucid manner that it does not require any commentary. Researchers believe that six commentaries were written but only *Avaloka* is obtained.

Historical Roots and Chronological Study of *Dasharupakam*

Natyashastra, Indian Poetics, a voluminous, larger-than-life, equivalent to Veda

text is an inquiry into topographies of drama, an enclosure of all art forms, a study of the theatrical techniques, Psychology of the performers, architecture of theater brought paucity in the development of Indian Dramaturgy due to its encyclopedic nature. *Natyashastra* was incomprehensible for a reader as well as a theatre Artist without eloquent commentary as the concepts and terms far removed from the 10th century. The exposition of Indian Dramaturgy that Dhanamjaya provides in *Dasharupakam* by bringing a fresh life into theories and performing arts, after more than thousand years of *Natyashastra* is to be understood in terms of time, social norms, language, culture and tradition of the 10th century, where drama form was declining and dance centric one-act play in the regional languages was only survived form. *Dasharupakam* with classification of plays in ten categories has saved and reenergized drama (performing art) by providing a four chaptered manual of Indian Poetics. The revolutionary work has also paved a way for post - *Dasharupakam* treatises: *Sahitya Darpanam* of Vishvanatha, *Ekavali* of Vidhyadhar, *Natyadarpana* of Ramchandra Gunachandra, *Natyapradeep* of Sundarmishra, *Rasarnava* Sudhakar of Shingbhupal who used text by citing rules and definitions.

Semiotics of *Dasharupakam*

Dasharupakam: *Dash* + *Rupakam*, is a study of ten types of drama (*Rupakam*), instead of 28 *Natyashastriya* drama, is an attempt to bring paradigm shift by democratizing *Natyashastriya* ideas in the colloquial languages: simple Sanskrit and Prakrit instead of archaic Sanskrit. *Dasharupakam* exhibits Dhanamjaya's art of presenting ideas in nut-shell by summing up *Natyashastra*'s thirty-seven chapters in four.

Dr. Manjul Gupta, in her *A Study of Abhinavabharati on Bharata's Natyasastra and Avaloka on Dhananjaya's Dasarupaka* – writes, "Dhanika's commentary is indispensable and it helps us a lot in understanding the meaning of Dhananjaya's otherwise short and pithy sentences. Sometimes, we could not even guess the meaning of Dhananjaya if Dhanika would not have offered us help." This puts forward importance of the commentary, a later part of all published books on *Dasharupakam*.

Pre-*Dasharupakam* era had a tradition of paying homage to either Vishnu or Shiva, by paying homage to Lord Ganpati in the *Mangalacharan*, Dhananjaya brings in a new trend. *Dasharupakam* also worships Shiva as an exponent of *Tandava*, Saraswati as a Goddess of muse and compares ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu with ten types of play.

The fourth *shloka* discusses drama's origin and puts forward a motive behind an incarnation of *Natyashastra* and *Dasharupaka*. (*Dasharupakam* is for benefiting 'slow-wit' (*manda-buddhinam*) who are likely to get confused (*mati-vibhramah*) by the diffused and

1. Plot

Dhananjaya proclamation of types of plot: Famous, Original and Mix (in the 68 verses of the first chapter) is similar to Aristotle's depiction of Simple and Complex plot.

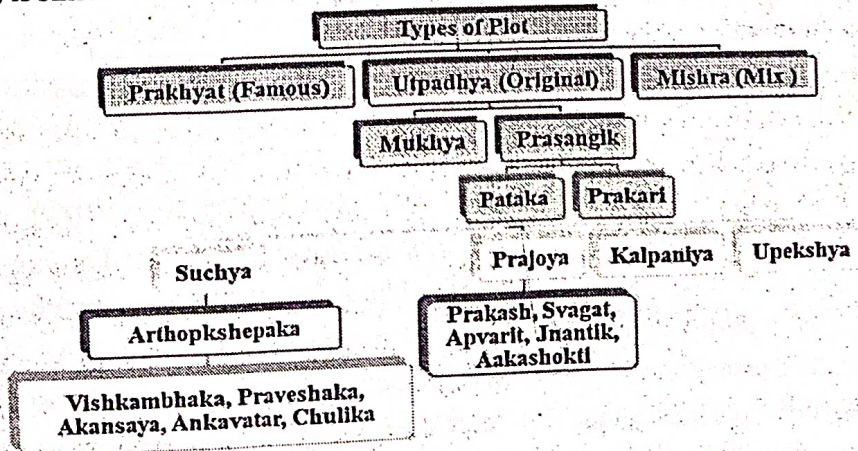


Figure 1: Types of Plot

elaborate treatise. He further elucidates that text is not only to render knowledge or produce theory but also to transmit happiness.) He also critically construes who are disinterested in drama or literature.

Dealing with such a vast area of Indian Poetics with due simplicity after Bharata Muni presents Dhananjaya as a Lesser God or Lesser Canon. Canonical authors/poets/theorists: Shakespeare, Keats, Wordsworth; are prescribed in the syllabus of Indian universities, it is difficult to commercialize or prescribe such Non-canonical texts. *Dasharupakam* has been prescribed as a text of Sanskrit course/s but unavailability of the text in (quality) English translation forbids its National and International popularity.

Dasharupakam

Dasharupakam has four chapters: Plot, Character, Types of play and *Rasa*; similar to *Poetics*' six constituents of drama: plot, character, thought, diction, music, and spectacle. The primary goal of the text is to lift and transport the spectators unto the expression of ultimate reality and transcendent values.

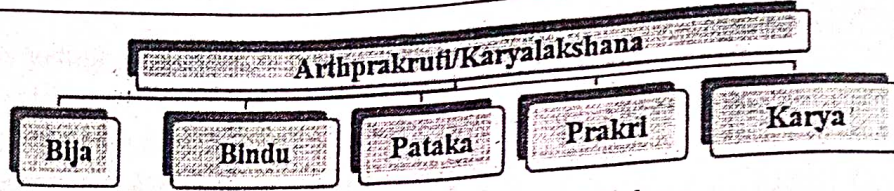


Figure 2: Arthprakruti / Karyalakshana

The same chapter discusses five *Arthaprakritis/ Karyalakshana*: the process of unfolding the story.



Figure 3: Karyavastha

Dhananjaya further discusses five *Karyavastha*: an action in which the protagonist attempts to accomplish his purpose on the way to the goal.

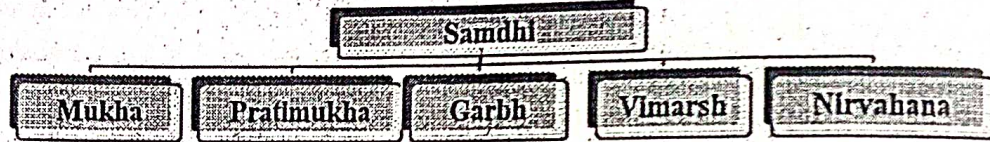


Figure 4: Samdhi

Consequently, Dhananjaya explains *Samdhi* (junctures): creating links to connect two scenes and knitting structural divisions of a drama.

Dhananjaya draws a distinction between prominent forms of the 10th century - *Nrtta* and *Nrtya* (in chapter one): *Nrtta* depends on rhythm and tempo (*Nrttam tala-laya ashrayam*) and *Nrtya* depends on emotion. (DR.1.9)

2. Character

The second chapter (72 verses) briefly defines necessary characters of a literature, starting from types of protagonist, female protagonist, villain to supporting male and female characters.

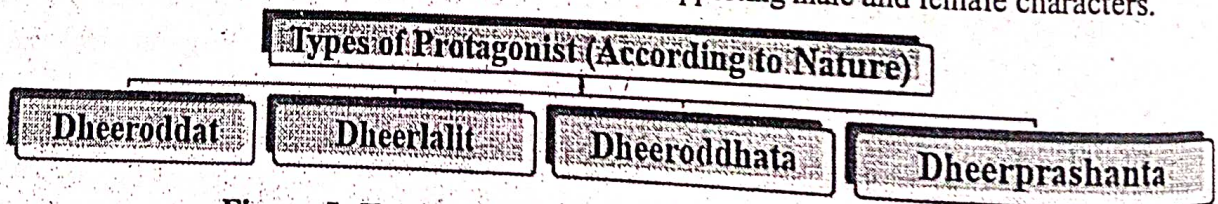


Figure 5: Types of Protagonist (According to Nature)

Dhananjaya mentions four kinds of protagonist: *Dhira-lalita* is light-hearted protagonist, who is fond of arts and stays happy, gentle, and stress-free like Shree Krishna; *Dhira-shantha* is calm and self-controlled protagonist who possesses all qualities of a *Nayaka* like Shree Ram; *Dhirodatta* is self-controlled and exalted protagonist, who is firm, patient, resolute, excellent and self-assertive like Yudhishtira; *Dhiroddhata* is passionate protagonist who is dominated by pride and jealousy, devoted to magical practices, deceitful, self-assertive, fickle, and boastful like Bheemsen.

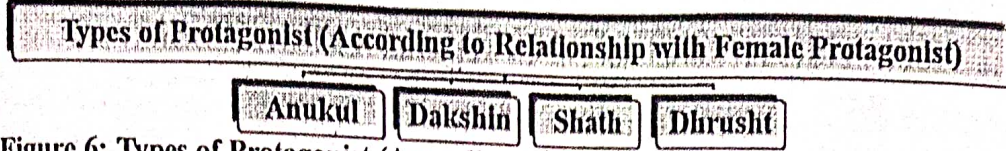


Figure 6: Types of Protagonist (According to Relationship with Female Protagonist)

Dhanamjaya further furnishes four kinds of protagonists on the basis of their relationship with the female protagonist: *Anukul* stays impassioned in a relationship with only one female protagonist, for an instance the character of Ram in the *Ramayana*. *Dakshin* is sensitive about a relationship with the first female protagonist; Udayana of *Swavnavasavduttam* is such character. *Shath* is the one who has a secret love affair with the second (another) female protagonist or the other lady, for example Pururava of *Vikramorvashtyam* who is secretly in love with Urvashi despite of the existence of his wife Aushinari. *Dhrusht* is one, whose sexual inclination for the second female protagonist is visible like a character like King Dushyanta in *Abhigyanashakuntalam*.

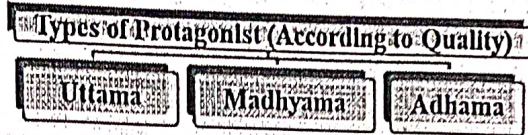


Figure 7: Types of Protagonist (According to Quality)

Dhanamjaya also provides classification of protagonist based on relationship and behavior with a female protagonist. *Uttama* is the best character like *Purna Purushottam* Ram. Pururava of *Vikramorvashtyam* respects and cares for his wife Aushinari even after falling in love with Urvashi is *Madhyama*. *Adhama* is the worst person that cannot be found in a drama because such characters cannot be put in the category of a protagonist; Villains can be *Adhama*.

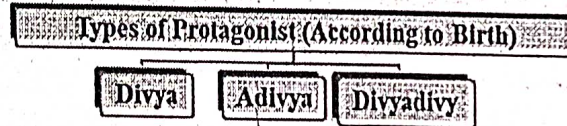


Figure 8: Types of Protagonist (According to Birth)

Dasharupakam classifies protagonists based on their birth as a human or deity. *Divya* is like Shiva of *Kumarsambhava* who is a God not a human. *Adivya* is Pururava of *Vikramorvashtyam* or Udayana of *Swavnavasavduttam*, a human being as a protagonist. *Divyadivya* is a combination of God and human, characters like Shree Krishna or Ram can be placed in the category.

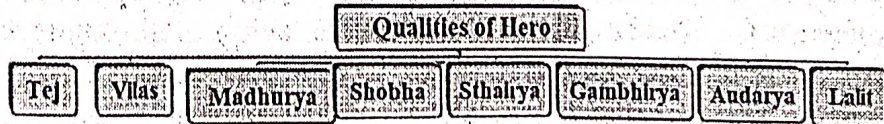


Figure 9: Qualities of the Protagonist

Furthermore, Dhanamjaya flows *Nayati Iti Neta* (Protagonist should have a leading quality) and throws light on qualities require in a character to be a protagonist/*Neta*.

Besides this, Dhanamjaya emphasizes on the types of female protagonists according to their state of mind, relationship with the protagonist, situation and quality.

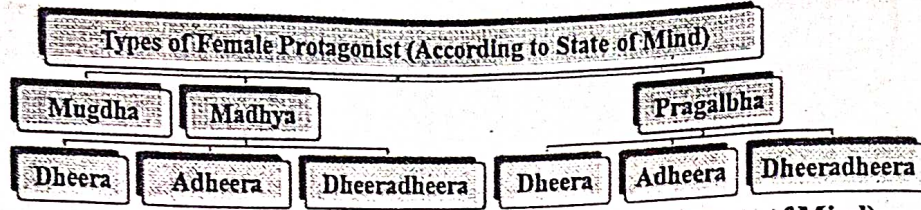


Figure 10: Types of Female Protagonist (According to State of Mind)

Dhananjaya classifies female protagonists based on state of mind in a relationship. *Mugdha* refers to Shakuntala of *Abhigyanshakuntalam* who is too young to fall in love and naïve. *Madhya* means a matured lady; this further gets classified in the categories of *Dheera*, *Adheera*, *Dheeradheera*. *Madhya* – *Dheera* scolds protagonist in an ambiguous language like Vasavdutta of *Swapnavasavduttam* (who scolds Udayan). *Madhya* – *Adheera* scolds the protagonist for his incorrect action, such character is difficult to find in drama. *Pragalbha* is an expert and experienced in the art of lovemaking; this further gets classified in the categories of *Dheera*, *Adheera*, *Dheeradheera*. The stage doesn't permit to have such characters, Dhumini's character from *Dashkumar Charit* (Prose) can be placed in this category.



Figure 11: Types of Female Protagonist (According to relationship with Protagonist)

Dhananjaya again classifies female protagonist in three kinds: *Swakiya*, *Anaya*, *Samanya* (*Ganika*) based on a relation with the protagonist: *Swakiya* is the wife of the protagonist, for example, Sita of the *Ramayana*; *Anaya* is not a wife but the unmarried female protagonist like Shakuntala of *Abhigyanshakuntalam*; and *Samanya* is also known as *Ganika* (a prostitute) like Vasantsena of *Mrichchhkatika*.

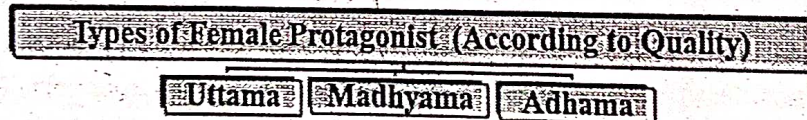


Figure 12: Types of Protagonist (According to Quality)

Dhananjaya also classifies female protagonists in *Uttama*, *Madhyama* and *Adhama* category based on quality they possess: Vasavdutta of *Swapnavasavduttam* is *Uttama*, who is ready to do anything and everything to win the kingdom back for her husband Udayan; Shakuntala of *Abhigyanshakuntalam* is *Madhyama*, who follows her mother and does not wait any more for Dushyanta; *Adhama* cannot be obtained in a drama but Dhumini (who tries to kill her husband) is such a character.



Figure 13: Types of Protagonist (According to Situation)

Dhanamjaya classifies female protagonists in eight categories based on the situation with or without the protagonist. *Proshitpriya* is Vasavdutta of *Swapnavasavduttam*, who is waiting for husband (who is out of town) to return. *Vipralabdha* is Shakuntala of *Abhigyanashakuntalam*, whom Dushyant has promised to meet but he does not return. *Kalahantita* fights and disrespects the protagonist, like Iravati of *Daskumar Charit*. *Virhpotkanthita* keeps waiting for protagonist who never comes, for example - Nimbvati who is waiting for her husband. *Vasaksajja* gets ready (dresses well) and eagerly waits to meet her lover, Padmavati of *Swapnavasavduttam* falls under this category. *Svaadhinabhartuka* is the female protagonist whose husband loves only her unconditionally, like Sita of the *Ramayana*. *Abhisarika* is the heroine who gets ready to meet her lover (especially) at night and sends a message through a messenger. Urvashi of *Vikramorvashiyam* is *Abhisarika*.

3. Types of Rupaka (Drama)

The title: *Dasharupakam* derived from the third chapter (72 verses) that depicts ten (*Dasa*) varieties of *Rupaka* instead of Bharata Muni's ten main and eighteen sub types of play.

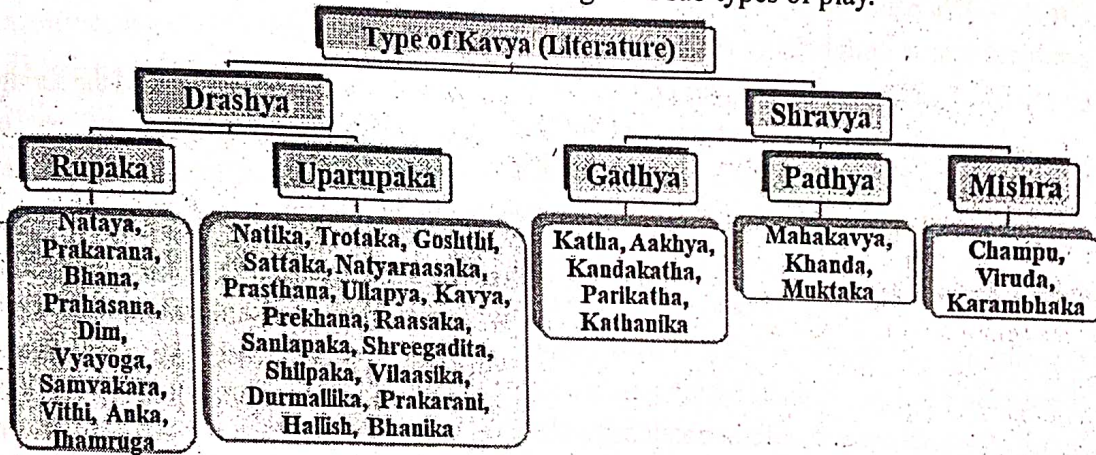


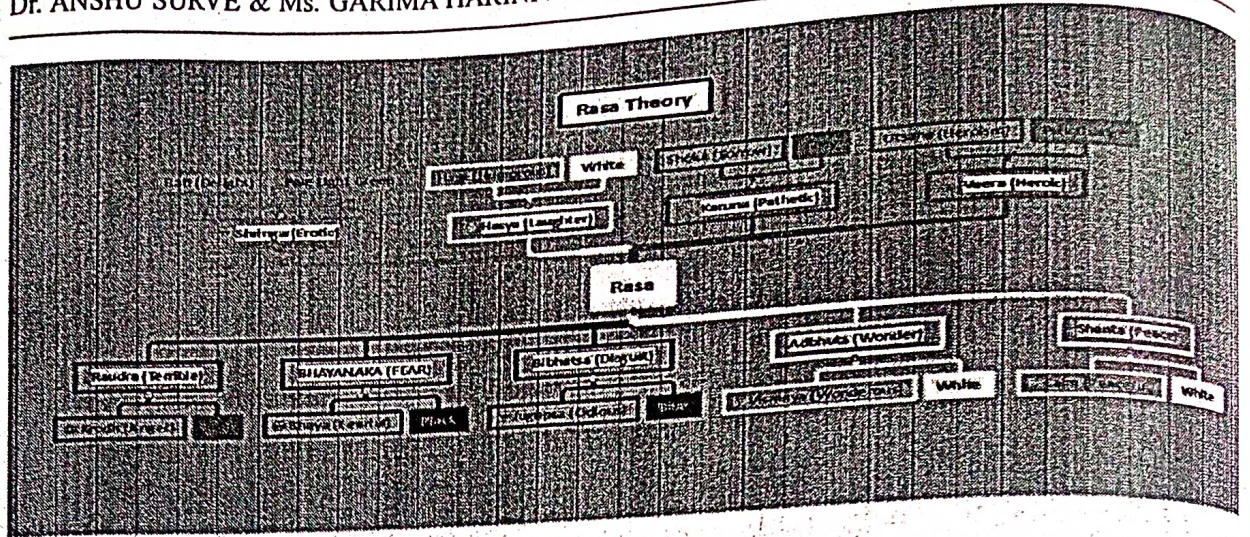
Figure 14: Type of Kavya (Literature)

Dhanamjaya says, "If a playwright, having gained the proper understanding or the essence of the *Natyashastra*, diligently applies to his work the series of definitions of the ten forms of drama (*Dasarupa*) as prescribed in the *Natyashastra*; and, if he also studies the works of great poets, he would undoubtedly be able to produce, a literary work of great merit. That is adorned with rhetorical embellishments (*Alamkara*), sweetness (*Madhurya*), clarity (*Prasada*), loveliness (*Lavana*) and eloquence (*Abhijata*), composed in leisurely paced (*Manda-kranta*) meters."

Nataka is regarded as a complete, best and the most commonly used form of drama in comparison with other nine forms. Even movies of the 20th and 21st century follow rules of *Nataka*.

4. Rasa

The fourth chapter throws light on aesthetically important *Rasa*, running on 86 verses. Dhanamjaya discusses *Bhava*, *Vibhava*, *Anubhava* and *Vyabhichari bhava* and follows definitions of the eight *Rasa* – *Shringara*, *Hasya*, *Veera*, *Raudra*, *Karuna*, *Adbhuta*, *Bibhatsa*, *Bhayanaka* as furnished in *Natyashastra*.

Figure 15: *Rasa* Theory

For *Rasa* Dhananjaya says, “Whether one takes a subject that is delightful or disgusting; exalted or lowly; cruel or kindly; obscure or adapted; or whether one take a subject created by the imagination of a poet, there is no subject that cannot succeed in conveying the *Rasa* among mankind.” Although, Dhananjaya has tried to yield a brief account of *Rasa* in addition to that Dhanika has also produced “occasionally lengthy discussion of disputed and obscure points ... many of which are valuable in obtaining a clear conception of the principles of Sanskrit Dramaturgy.” (Gupta) but circumscribed reading of *Rasa* is not sufficient to comprehend an unabridged idea of *Rasa*.

Conclusion

Dasharupakam, an abridged version of the *Natyashastra*, a highly compressed manual written in not-so-difficult Sanskrit and Prakrit language for masses and theatre artist at large to renew the theatre of the era. An original or translated version of *Dasharupakam* can be used even today to guide theatre and movie artists as well as directors to come up with a piece of art (drama/movie), as it extensively discusses

important constituents of any play: plot, *Rasa* and characters.

Dhananjaya carried the abridgment work so far but it lacks in important arenas: consistency in the treatment of topics, extensive explanation of definitions or technical terminologies and presenting *Arthaprakrti*'s importance in the play or its correlation with the *Avastha*; that can be understood in correlation to *Natyashastra* or Indian Poetics. George C O Haas has rightly observed that in many instances, brevity was achieved at the cost of clarity. Shortcomings and the absence of fair treatment makes *Dasharupakam* incomprehensible without *Avaloka* commentary. *Dasharupakam* can serve a purpose of a hand book for the theatre artists for whom *Natyashastra* is a voluminous treatise.

Dhananjaya and Dhanik have also paved the way for successors in the area of Indian Poetics. *Dasharupakam* has been used as a comprehensive and useful source material. The sixth chapter of Viswanatha's *Sahityadarpana* (14th century) has extensively used citations from *Dasharupakam* to describe *Drasya* aspect (of dramaturgy).

Despite of having all the qualities, *Dasharupakam* has not gained wide popularity among the scholars, playwrights and even readers because of the easy language, being non-canonical text, lesser commentaries, comparatively insignificant work, condensed subject matter and most significantly it has been overshadowed by the predecessors and successors.

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