

An Investigation into the Efficacy of Applying the Principle of *Rasa* in Formulating Television Advertisements

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Abstract

Rasa element in turn consists of ten parts, namely, *Srunjaarö*, *Karuna*, *Wiirö*, *Biibathsö*, *Shaanthö*, *Haasyö*, *Raudrö*, *Bhayanakö*, *Athbhuthö* and *vatsalyö*. Objectives were to find whether or not ‘*Rasa*’ in Indian poetics can be used as an effective audio visual tool in the selected advertisement samples from Sri Lankan television and to make commercials more interesting by mixing existing Indian poetic theory with better understanding of the aesthetic sentiment known as ‘*Rasa*’. For the purpose of this research, specific advertisements have been selected from Sri Lankan television with special attention given to the ten elements of ‘*Rasa*’. Out of the ten elements of ‘*Rasa*’ *Karuna* and *Shaanthö* have not been found. There yet remains scope for improvement in the field of audio visuals with a better knowledge of Indian poetics and in conclusion it can be stated that any future studies done in relation to aesthetic sentiment or ‘*Rasa*’ will not be limited to benefitting the field of advertizing but would additionally benefit film making and the creation of videos for social awareness as well.

Keywords: *Aesthetic sentiment, Indian Poetics, Rasa, Sri Lankan Television Commercials*

Introduction

The relationship between audio-visual theory and Indian poetics has been an under-researched phenomenon. Indian poetic theory which has its origins in the time of Bharata Muni, has evolved a great extent and is applicable on various levels in the modern world. This theory consists of six elements, namely, *Rasa*, *Alankar*, *Dhwani*, *Reeti*, *Wakrokti* and *Auchitya*. Of these, the element of *Rasa* was first developed as a pioneering literary concept by Bharata Muni himself and it can be defined as the ‘aesthetic sentiment’. The ‘*Rasa*’ element in turn consists of ten parts, namely, *Srunjaarö*, *Karuna*, *Wiirö*, *Biibathsö*, *Shaanthö*, *Haasyö*, *Raudrö*, *Bhayanakö*, *Athbhuthö* and *vatsalyö*. The following research would thus focus on these elements and whether or not a better understanding of the subject matter can be useful in developing modern Sri Lankan television advertisements.

Method

Primary and secondary data for the following research comprise of selected advertisements produced by commercial advertising firms (JWT and Trad lanka) in Sri Lanka and internet sources (YouTube). Indian Poetics related to *Rasa* were also considered in the analysis to examine the selected commercial advertisements in Sri Lankan television. In order to get knowledge of the theory of *Rasa*, studied relevant books in Hindi. This is done by choosing ten elements namely, *Srungeerö*, *Karuna*, *Wierö*, *Biibathsö*, *Shaanthö*, *Haasyö*, *Raudrö*, *Bhayanakö*, *Athbhuthö* and *vatsalyö* respectively.

Results and Discussion

Sanyoga Srungarö focuses on the happiness generated through the intimate conducts of lovers such as embracing and kissing. *Rathi* is the concealed emotion that is converted to *Srungeerö Rasa* after a specific process. *Rathi* is generated from the feelings that you have towards the person that you are sexually attracted to. However, *Rathi* lies dormant within the mind. This state in which the *Rathi* lie dormant within the mind is known as the *Sthayee Bhava*. *Rathi* begins its process to change in to the *Srungeerö* when it first meets the *Alambana*. *Alambana* can be defined as the reason that causes the latent *Rathi* to change. For example: for a boy it can be the girl that he is attracted to. Also there is another factor that acts simultaneously with the *Alambana Vibhava* to accelerate or decelerate the *Rasa* process known as the *Uddiipana Vibhava*. The *Uddeepana Vibhava* can be the external factors that contribute to the stimulation of the *Rathi* towards the *Srungeerö*. If we take the previous example environmental factors such as whether the girl is alone when the boy approaches her can accelerate the transformation of the *Rathi*. *Anubhava* is the reaction of the person when the *Rathi* is awakened through the *Alambana* and *Uddeepana Vibhava*. In other words we can call the *Anubhava* as the external manifestation of the internal *Rathi*. Meanwhile, the other less significant feelings that accompany this main expression are called the *Sancharee Bhava*. *Sancharee Bhava* are short lived feelings that are not as lasting as the *Anubhava*.

In an advertisement made to market a cement product in Sri Lanka we can see this same process of the *Rathi* converting into the *Srungeerö* depicted during first few frames. In the said advertisement two young lovers are shown who meet over a hedge in secret. The girl approaches the boy very cautiously looking over her shoulders and shows pleasant surprise when she is offered a flower. If we breakdown these actions and reactions we can see these very scenes using *Sanyoga Srungarö*. First of all the two lovers can be taken as the *Alambana* or the factor which causes the dormant *Rathi* within them to be provoked. Secondly the girl looking around to make sure that there is no one

in the vicinity shows how she is concerned about external factors, in other words the *Uddeepana Vibhava*. Here we are able to see that the absence of anyone in the vicinity leads the girl to move forward and accept the flower offered by the boy. Here external factors contribute to the acceleration of the conversion of the *Rathi* and should be defined as the *Uddeepana Vibhava*. Finally the boy offering the girl the flower with a smile is the *Anubhava* where the internal dormant *Rathi* is externally manifested. The brief surprise that is emoted by the girl can be taken as the *sancharee Bhava*, or the accompanying emotions that are short lived. Therefore in this exchange we are able to see the *Srungara Rasa* generated not only through the girl and the boy but also in the viewer.

If the feeling that is generated through the fulfillment of the *Rathi* is the *Sanyoga Srungaraya* then the emotion that is generated upon it not being fulfilled can be taken as the *Viyoga Srungaarö*. Manifestation of the *Viyoga Srungara* is also through the *Alambana*, *Uddeepana*, *Anubhava* and the *Sancharee Bhava*. In the aforementioned advertisement the second act depicts this same *Viyoga Srungara* being generated. In the second act the two lovers are discovered by the girl's father who hastily approaches them and then drags the girls away by force to lock her away in a confined room where she is shown crying at the window looking on at the direction of her lover. Here the *Alambana* is the act of the two lovers being forced apart and the *Uddeepana* or the background which accelerates the *Viyoga* is the fact that the girl is trapped in the room and is unable to reach her lover. Secondly the *Anubhava* or the external manifestation of the *Rathi* not being fulfilled is the girl crying. The *Sancharee Bhava* in this instance can be the girl's mixed emotions that are depicted in her expressing sudden fear and her concern over what might happen to her lover.

Through depicting these feeling of the *Sanyoga Srungara* and the *Viyoga Srungara* the advertiser has proven successful in attracting the attention of the audience towards the drama within the advertisement. This is helped by the fact that the audience in turn can be engaged in the action through imagining the effects of the *Srungara*. Then this attention is tactfully directed towards the cement product that is being advertised.

Karuna Rasa

Karuna Rasa is generated from the *Sthayee Bhava* or the dormant feeling of *Shokah*. *Shokah* is the potential for grief that exists within us. The *Alambana* for the *Karuna* is the loss of something that is dear to a person. This could be material or immaterial, a person or a thing. The *Uddeepana* for the *Karuna Rasa* is the background in which this feeling is felt. For example: a person who is suffering from the untimely death of a loved one could feel a heightened sense of sadness than what she would feel if that person passed away at a

later stage in life. As *Anubhava* we can take outward reactions such as tears, wailing, screaming, and shivering etc. Here the *Sancharee Bhava* can be the random feelings like anger that is expressed towards someone who is blamed for the death and or sudden laughter expressed when something pleasant about the deceased is remembered. However, the *Karuna Rasa* has not been found in advertisements in Sri Lanka.

Veera Rasa

The *Sthayee Bhava* for the *Veera Rasa* is *Veertha*. In other words it's the dormant feeling of heroism. In a certain LP Gas advertisement symbols of the countries heroism and pride were used. In the advertisement statues of stone lions are shown waking up and roaring. The *Alambana* for the *Veera Rasa* here is the statue of the stone lion that is considered a symbol of valor worldwide especially in Sri Lanka. The *Uddeepana* is the lion standing up and roaring. The *Anubhava* here is generated from the viewer who would feel feelings of patriotism and bravery being invoked within them. This is expressed through them widening their eyes or even standing up. The *Sanacharee Bhava* here could be brief moments of courage that the viewer feels within them.

This advertisement attempts to market the product to a target audience by invoking feelings of patriotism and heroism through the *Veera Rasa*.

Biibathsö Rasa

Sthayee Bhava for the *Biibathsä* rasa is *Jugupsa*. This can be defined as the revulsion that a person carries for various objects or persons within himself. Further, similar to previous instances *Bibathsä Rasa* lie innate till provoked by the appearance of an *Alambana*. In a toothpaste advertisement a man is offered a badly made cup of tea by his wife that he immediately spits out. Then the man runs to the bathroom to brush his teeth with the advertised product in order to remove the disgust that he felt towards the tea and pretends to his wife that the tea was very good.

In this advertisement the *Alambana* that generates the *Bhibhathsä* is the badly made tea. The *Uddeepana* that accelerates this effect is the bad taste of the tea. The *Anubhava* or the reaction to this is him spitting the tea out as soon as he took it into his mouth. The *Sanchareebhava* is the unhappiness that he felt which prompted him to brush his teeth immediately. Usually, the *Sanchaaree Bhava* for the *Bibathsä Rasa* would be anger towards the person who made you feel the *Biibhathsä Rasa*. However, the advertisement attempts to promote the toothpaste by showing that it can remove the anger and disgust generated and thereby help to control the *Biibathsä Rasa*.

Shantha Rasa

Shantha Rasa is the feeling of spiritual satisfaction. The *Sthayee Bhava* or the dormant state of the *Shantha Rasa* is known as *Nirvedha*. *Nirvedha* can be defined as the inner feeling that lies dormant within people which removes a men's need to attach themselves to worldly things. The *Alambana* which provokes this can be coming into contact with something or a person that prompts spiritual satisfaction like a place of worship or a religious leader. The *Uddeepana* in such a case would be the message that the person receives from such a place of worship or religious leader. The *Anubhava* or the reaction in this instance could be worshipping, entering a meditative position, reciting religious words or making religious gestures such as drawing a cross in the air. The *Sancharee Bhava* can be the happiness or satisfaction that is felt by the man after such encounter. However, *Shantha Rasa* could not be found in advertisements in Sri Lanka.

Haasya Rasa

Haasya Rasa is generated from the innate emotion or *Sthayee Bhava* of *Haas*. *Haas* is the capacity within us to enjoy humor. In a motorbike commercial we see humor being generated by mocking the poor performance of a bike which is later replaced by the advertised product. In this instance the *Alambana* is the poor performing bike which gives many problems like high fuel consumption, not starting and etc. The *Uddiipana* in this instance is the user's silly behavior as he attempts to cope with the problems generated by his poor performing bike. The *Anubhava* is the reaction of others to the poor performing bike and the humorous way in which the user struggles to make it work. The *Sanchaarii Bhava* in this instance are the various reactions experienced by those who look on as the bike fails to function such as suspicion and sadness over their needs not being fulfilled. In this instance the *Haasya Rasa* is used to highlight the disadvantages of other motorbikes against the motorbike brand that is being advertised.

Raudra Rasa

Raudra Rasa is generated from the dormant anger within a person. The *Sthayee Bhava* which leads to the *Raudra Rasa* is known as *Krodha*. A commercial advertising a satellite TV connection shows how a group of viewers in Sri Lanka gets into an argument about politics in another country. This argument provokes one of the members in the gathering to attempt to assault another. In this instance the *Alambana* is International politics, namely an election race between politicians in that country. The *Uddiipana* are the contradicting political view of various people in the gathering as well as the fact that one

woman mocks one of the men during the argument. The *Anubhava* is the reaction of the man who was mocked as he topples the checker board that he was playing and threatens the woman. The *Sanchaarii Bhava* are the emotions expressed during the clash such as fear and suspicion over the man's violent attempts. In this advertisement the *Raudra Rasa* is used to highlight how people using the advertised satellite TV connection are exposed to the world and thereby have become global citizens.

Bhayanaka Rasa

Bhayanaka Rasa is the dormant feeling of fear. The *Sthayee Bhava* of *Bhayanaka Rasa* is *Bhaya*. In an advertisement promoting a cement brand a lorry without brakes is shown speeding towards a young school girl crossing the street. A group of construction workers working on a high building notices this and one of them throws a packet of cement in front of the lorry preventing it from running over the child. The *Alambana* for this instance is the fact that a lorry with malfunctioning breaks is about to run over a little school girl. The *Uddeepana* which accelerates this fear are facts such as the absence of a person to save her, people screaming for her to get out of the way while the lorry gets closer and closer destroying a pile of bricks. The *Anubhava* or the reaction that shows the fear is the child screaming and the *Sanchaaree Bhava* are emotions such as concern whether the child will die and the misgiving that the lorry will hit the child. In this advertisement the *Bhayanaka Rasa* is used to create an increased positive impression about the cement product as something exceedingly better than any other regular cement.

Adbhutha Rasa

Adbhutha Rasa is the dormant feeling of surprise that is within a person. The *Sthayee Bhava* or the innate stage of *Adbhutha Rasa* is *Vishmaya*. In an advertisement to promote a commercial lottery a man sees a deity in his dream who tells him that his fortunes will change for the better. Once the man hears the news he runs and buys the lottery that is advertised. In this advertisement the *Alambana* that provokes the action that receives the *Adbhutha Rasa* is the visit of the deity in the dream. The *Uddeepana* that increases this is the message of the deity who tells the man that his fortune is about to change for the better. The *Anubhava* or reactions are the man's expression such as gapping his mouth and jumping out of bed and running. The *Sancharee Bhava* are the man's excitement, thrill, happiness and anticipation of a better fortune. In this advertisement the *Adbhutha Rasa* is used to highlight the surprise that the man feels and the happiness that follows due to his fortune changing and thereby establishing the message that the advertised lottery can change a man's fortune.

Vaathsalya Rasa

Vaathsalya Rasa is the affection that people have towards the babies and small children. The dormant form of this or the *Sthayee Bhava* is known as *Vathsala*. In an advertisement promoting a milk powder for babies the affection and protective feelings that a mother has towards a child are displayed to say that the advertised milk powder will boost the child's immunity. In the advertisement the *Alambana* is the mother's love for her child. The *Uddeepana* which increases the affection is the child's lovable behavior and playfulness. The *Anubhava* or the reaction towards this is the mother kissing the child, lifting him up and playing with him. The *Sancharee Bhava* can be recognized as the mother's concern for the child's protection, her fear that some harm may come to the child and the happiness she feels by looking at the child's behavior. The said advertisement uses the *Vathsalya Rasa* to promote the message that the milk powder will protect the child from internal harm just like the mother would protect the child from exterior harm.

Conclusion

Through these observations we can conclude that advertisers in Sri Lanka have used the effect of the '*Rasa*' to make their advertisement more effective tools of marketing. It is difficult to determine whether this is always done through a proper understanding of the *Rasa* or not. In the event that this was not done with an understanding of that then it can be deduced that a broader knowledge of the *Rasa* could have yielded better and far outreaching results. However one discovery of this research was the absence of the *Karuna* and *Shaantha Rasa* in Sri Lankan advertisements. If all the eight *Rasa* were used and employed with the proper knowledge in them then it can be a great benefit for advertisers in developing better branding and more effective marketing campaigns.

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