
Manifestation of Sringar Rasa in Alfred Lord Tennyson's '*Idylls of the King*'

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Abstract:

The purpose of the present work is to study Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* through Rasa Theory, i.e., Sanskrit literature. In fact, the Rasa Theory was postulated by Bharat Muni for Drama (Nataka) only. However, according to Abhinav Gupta, poems are also fit for the study of Rasa. He especially considers the narrative poems as affording sufficient room for the evocation of Rasa.

The Sanskrit language has been the vehicle of Indian thoughts in all their variations at all periods in our history. Bharat's aesthetic principal reigns supreme in Sanskrit literary criticism. His theory of Rasa is present in every work of literature. Rasa is the psychological study of emotions, which deals with the delight one takes in literature. Rasa has been translated by Haas as a sentiment, but the term sentiment does not seem to have been accepted as equivalent to Rasa by any of the later authors who have written on this subject in English, for they have freely used the Sanskrit term Rasa even in the midst of their English composition not substituting any English term for it. The Rasa theory is not known in the West, even though it is present in English literature. Why should we not apply our own theories to the western literature? With this feeling, an attempt has been made to explore the Rasas in Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*.

Keywords: Aesthetic Principle, Sentiments, Idylls, Narrative Poems, Evocation of Rasa

Rasa has two distinctly separate senses that are quite detached from each other. In the phrase Rasa-theory, Rasa means poetic relish, with reference to its constituents (Vibhavas, Anubhavas, etc.). The term conveys a sense of emotion. There is no single word in the English language that can denote both these senses. The term sentiment evidently has nothing to do with the former meaning of Rasa, viz., poetic relish; with the latter meaning, viz., emotion, it is sometimes identified and confused.

Aesthetics, or the theory of beauty in Art and Literature, has perhaps been one of the early pursuits of the human mind. An increasing interest in Sanskrit Aesthetics is being evinced by researchers in the field of English literature, and inter-disciplinary approaches to literature have become quite important. New aspects and meanings of literary pieces come to light through a discreet, inter-disciplinary approach. Comparative literature is evident from the expression itself, a study of literature in comparison, and one has to be very careful while comparing the literature of two different cultures. There are chances of distortion of the original beauty and meaning

of a piece of literature if the critic does not have an insight into both the literature.

The existence of Rasa dates back to the Vedic period. The Rasa is one of the oldest and most popular words in the Vedic as well as the classical phases of the Sanskrit language. The word Rasa was used in the sense of taste, sap of plant, or sometimes in the sense of milk. That prepares the ground for its use by writers in literary criticism from Bharata downward to signify aesthetic pleasure. Bharata, for the first time, posed the fundamental question — what is that essential quality of a work of art which constitutes its appeal? His solution lay in the evocation of a subjective state called Rasa. Dr. K Krishna Moorthy, therefore, aptly remarks, "Rasa is one of those words whose precise significance is as indefinite." (Rasa as a canon of literary critics, Essays in Sanskrit Criticism, p.65)

This was definitely formulated by Bharata in the well-known aphorism: "Vibhavanubhava Vyabhichari Samyogadrasanisattih" (Natyasastram, p.718) or out of the Union of determinants (Vibhavas), the consequents (Anubhavas), and the transitory emotions (Vyabhicharibhavas or Sancharibhavas), the birth of Rasa takes place. Then Bharata discusses in detail what these Vibhavas, Anubhavas, and Sancharibhavas are and how they help in relishing the Rasa by awakening and supporting the dormant emotions (Sthayibhavas), which are eight in number. He does not refer to the dormant emotion (Sthayibhava) in this context but does so separately. He says that "just as people enjoy the taste of delicious food prepared with

various spices and feel a kind of pleasure, similarly the sympathetic audience or readers enjoy the arousal of their various dormant emotions through words, gestures and changes in expression and have Rasa realization and Rasa enjoyment." (Natyasastram, Ch. VI, p.274)

A dormant emotion (Sthayibhava) is a latent impression in the mind of the perceiver and is called forth when he perceives a poetic phenomenon suggesting that particular mental state with the help of the determinants (Vibhavas), etc., a sentiment is a latent feeling of attachment of a particular idea exciting a particular emotion with a definite objective phenomenon. If the transfer of the dormant emotion (Sthayibhava), as it is intended to do in this section in considering Rasa and its constituents apart from their relish, from the perceiver to the poetical character, to whose mental state it refers in truth, even then it cannot be likened with sentiment. A sentiment necessarily presupposes the existence of a definite object, in the presence of which a particular emotion is liable to be called forth, while a dormant emotion (Sthayibhava), without presupposing the existence of any such definite object, indicates only this much that the person in whose mind it latently exists is susceptible to a particular feeling.

The theory of Rasa around the pivot of the Sthayibhavas themselves described Rasas because Rasas originate from Sthayibhavas. These are eight in number. (Natyasastram, Ch. VI, p.221)

Bharata has mentioned the following forty-one Bhavas, out of which, according to him, the first eight are Sthayis, and the rest

are Vyabhicharibhavas. These transitory emotions (Vyabhicharibhavas) are also called Sancharibhavas because they quicken and accelerate the movements of the Sthayibhavas. Love (Rati), humor (Hasa), grief (Soka), anger (Krodha), enthusiasm (Utsah), hate (Jugupsa), fear (Bhaya), wonder (Visrny), indifference (Nirveda) internal weakness (Glani), a reversion (Sanka), exhaustion (Srama), composure (Dhrti), stupor (Jadata), joy (Harsa), depression (Dainya), vehemence (Ugrata), worry (Chinta), terror (Trasa), jealousy (Asuya), anger (Arnarsa), pride (Garva), remembrance (Smriti), death (Marana), intoxication (Mada), dreaming (Supta), sleeping (Nidra), wakefulness (Vibodha), shame (Vruda), catalepsy (Apasmara), attachment (Moha), rationality (Mati), sloth (Alasya), agitation (Avega), reasoning (Tarka), dissimulation (Avhittha), sickness (Vyadhi), insanity (Unmada), dismay (Visada), curiosity (Autsukya) and inconstancy (Chapalata).

Rasa theory is a deep psychological study of universal human emotions, which become the source of aesthetic delight in literature. There are almost all Rasas in Tennyson's Idylls of the King, but two Rasas-Sringara and Veer are predominant in it. Sringara is the most passionate emotion of the universal experience. It sways over all other emotions and is common to animals, birds, plants, trees, flowers, human beings, and even gods. (Kavyanusasnam, p.106)

Sringara is the peak, and it takes a man to the acme of perfection or refinement. Visvanath holds that the term Sringara denotes the awakening of God of love or the emotion of sexual love. (Sahityadarpanam, p.106)

Sringara Rasa is based on the dormant emotion (Sthayibhava) of love (Rati); the Hero and heroine, deeply attached to each other, are the objects (Alambana Vibhavas) of Sringara Rasa, another man's Wife, and prostitute devoid of love cannot be its object (Alambana Vibhava).

The exciting factors (Uddipana Vibhavas) of Sringara Rasa are fourfold: the merits, the gestures, the ornaments of the objects (Alambana Vibhavas), and the independent factors of time and place. The merits of the Hero, such as cleverness in conversation, sense of gratefulness, statesmanship, self-confidence, brilliance, love of art, amiability of disposition, and other qualities of head and heart, will tend to excite the emotion of love in the heroine. Similarly, the physical charms of the female body, its age, lineaments, loveliness, beauty, agreeableness, sweetness, and delicacy will naturally evoke the emotional response of love in the Hero. The various embellishments (Alankaras) of young ladies will greatly intensify the emotion of love in young men, already evoked by their beauty and youth.

The Hero and the heroine are the objects (Alambana Vibhavas) of the Sringara Rasa. They are the object (Alambana) and the subject (Asraya) to enkindle the spark of love in each other. Their physical charms, youth, and the qualities of mind and speech are the internal excitants (Uddipana Vibhavas) of the Sringara Rasa. The moon, the solitude, the vernal season, etc., act as its external excitants (Uddipana Vibhavas).

The subject matter of the Idylls is Arthurian legends, which are mostly grouped about the achievements of different heroes.

Tennyson launched and concluded the main story so strongly (The Coming of Arthur and The Passing of Arthur) that the episodic nature of the treatment is largely compensated. His method also has the advantage of giving each of the twelve books a lively, independent interest.

"The Round Table" is the story of Arthur's knights, their achievements, love, and fighting. In "Gareth and Lynette", the first Idyll, there is the story of Gareth, the son of Lot and Bellicent who is Arthur's sister. Gareth wants to become a knight of Arthur's Round Table, but his mother loves him too much and prevents him from going there. She thinks him to be a child. He asks if she loves him, he should be allowed to go to Arthur's court so that he could prove his strength there and become a knight of Round Table. He does not want to stay for even an hour. So the mother spoke, looking at him:

Prince, thou shalt go disguised to Arthur's hall,
And hire themselves to serve for meats and drinks...
(Gareth and Lynette, Idylls of The King, p.289)

Gareth accepts it and serves it there among the kitchen knaves. One day, Arthur asks Gareth, who then tells the secret to him about how he became a kitchen knave. A girl named Lynette came to Arthur to seek help from the chief knight, Lancelot. She has come to combat for her sister, Lyonoros. The four knights besiege her to break her will and want her to marry the fourth knight. He is the mightiest among all. Arthur sends Gareth with her, and he then fights with all the

knights and defeats them. He falls in love with Lynette, who praises him for his bravery.

He thinks:

O Sun, that wakenest all to bliss or pain,
O moon, that layest all to sleep again,
Shine sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me.

O dewy flowers that open to the sun,
O dewy flowers that close when the day is done,

Blow sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me.

O birds that warble to the morning sky,
O birds that warble as the day goes by,
Sing sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me.

(Gareth and Lynette, Idylls of The King, p.312)

Here, the dormant emotion (Sthayi Bhava) is love (Rati), and Lynette is the source of arousing the dormant emotion of love in the heart of Gareth, who is the subject (Asraya) and Laynette is the object (Alambana Vibhava). The beauty of Lynette and her smile at the success of Gareth are exciting situations (Uddipana Vibhavas). The joy due to their smile is the consequence (Anubhava) of this inflamed emotion. Attachment (Moha), joy (Harsa), shame (Vruda), and impulsiveness (Chapalta) are the transitory feelings (Vyabhicharibhavas) that help the dormant emotion of love (Sthayibhava of Rati) in becoming, permanent and the relishing of Sringara Rasa by the readers.

The love of Queen Guinevere and Lancelot is spread all over the twelve Idylls.

There was an announcement in the kingdom for a joust at Camelot, but Queen Guinevere was ill, so the King asked whether she could move to see the joust of Lancelot. She said no, and the poet narrates:

... And the Queen,
Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly
On Lancelot, where he stood beside the King.
He thinks that he read her meaning there,
Stay with me, and I am sick; my love is more
'Than many diamonds' yielded, and a heart
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen
(However much he yearned to make complete
The tale of diamonds of his destined boon)
Urged him to speak against the truth and said
Sir, King, my ancient wound is hardly whole,
And lets me from the saddle; and the King
Glanced first at him, then her, and went his way.
(Lancelot and Elaine, Idylls of The King, p.369)

Here love has been shown between Guinevere and Lancelot. We have a beautiful depiction of love in Union (Samyoga Sringara). Both Guinevere and Lancelot are the subjects (Asrayas) as both are in love, and therefore, both acts as the objects (Alambanas) for each other Queen's sickness; her eyes when she sees Lancelot are excitants (Uddipanas). Denying Lancelot to go for joust that is so important and the Queen's continuously watching Lancelot are consequents (Anubhavas), Attachment (Moha), joy (Harsa), shame (Vruda) are the transitory emotions (Vyabhicharibhavas) which help the emotion of love to be relished by the readers.

It is the dictum of Sanskrit authors that without separation, love does not ripen and grow delicious, just as the cloth does not bear a faster color unless it is one-tinged. The Vipralambha Sringara or Viyoga Sringarag is a state of separation between two young persons who are smitten with an intense love for each other but fail to secure a Union because of so many obstacles. It is impossible to count the endless circumstances and infinite situations that are likely to bring about separation between lovers. The theorists have tried to classify them into several categories of love in separation (Vipralambha Sringara). (Natyasastram, Ch. VI, p.73)

In the Idyll "Geraint and Enid," Geraint loves Enid too much, but when he hears the rumor about Guinevere and Lancelot, he has doubts in his mind whether his Wife will remain true to him or not. When they are sleeping, Enid awakes and sits beside him. She is very sad that she is the cause of what people are saying about Geraint, that his powers have gone. She thinks herself to be responsible for it and says she is not a true wife. Geraint hears her last Words and thinks that his doubt is true. So, he is angry with Enid and says:
Not at my side, I charge thee ride before,
Ever a good way on before; and this
I charge thee, on thy duty as a wife,
Whatever happens not to speak to me,
No, not a word! and Enid was aghast...
(Geraint and Enid, Idylls of The King, p.330)

Here, the pang of separation in the heart of Enid is heightened when Geraint forbids her not to talk to him. Enid is the subject (Asraya) and Geraint is the object

(Alambana). He is responsible for the grief of Enid and the cause of this break in love. The anger of Geraint is the exciting situation (Uddipana Vibhava) and it increases the grief of Enid. Enid becomes terrified to see the behavior of his beloved husband, who loved her too much. She is 'aghast,' so her wonder and terror are the consequences (Anubhavas). The transitory emotions (Vyabhicharibhavas) are anxiety (Chinta), internal weakness (Glani), exhaustion (Srama), despair (Visada), depression (Dainya), and terror (Trasa). Here is the consummation of post-union separation (Pravasa Vipralambhaion) account of some confusion of some other emergency of life. The situation is that of confusion between Geraint and Enid.

Guinevere is highly suggestive of the emotion of love, but in separation, not in Union, words are few where feelings are deep. Tennyson further shows how they part:

... And then they rode to the divided way,
They kiss and part, weeping for the past,
love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen,
Back to his land; but she to Almesbury
Fled all night long by glimmering Waste and
Weald,
Moons as she fled.

(Geraint and Enid, Idylls of The King, p.330)

Guinevere and Lancelot act as both the subjects as well as the objects of the emotion of love (Rati). No hope of meeting in the future is an exciting factor (Uddipana Vibhava), and thus despair is heightened. Their kissing to each other and weeping bitterly at the time of parting fare consequents (Anubhavas). Attachment (Moha), despair (Visada), depression

(Dainya), and internal weakness (Glani) are the transitory emotions (Vyabhicharibhavas).

Now, it is clear that Sringara Rasa has been constantly heightened in these Idylls. It can be said that the readers experience the depth of this emotion when they identify themselves with the emotions of the poet and feel themselves sharing the emotion of love. He gives his readers full aesthetic pleasure and can be ranked among the great writers of English literature. His Idylls of The King appeal too much to our aesthetic point of view and prove true to Abhinava Gupta when he says that long narrative poems are also fit for Rasa's realization.

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