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The emotional value of a sound according to Sanskrit treatises on the theory of literature

The present article consists of two parts. The first part presents Bharata's concepts of a sound value concerning production and representation of *rasas* – sentiments. English terms for Sanskrit terminology used in the paper come for the most part from Manomohan Ghosh's English translation of the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (NŚ).

The second part consists of statements of post-Bharatian theorists, who paid more attention to particular embellishments used in evoking emotions through literary texts. This type of ornate texts, called generally *kāvya* literature, was not supposed to be acted out on the stage. Nonetheless, such texts were usually presented in a form of recitation and so verbal representation played a huge role in influencing the audience. The second part of the paper is based mainly on three publications and selected Sanskrit texts. These three publications are:

- a) *Concepts of rīti and guṇa in Sanskrit Poetics* by Prakas Chandra Lahiri;
- b) *Abhinavagupta on Phonetic Texture* by Gary A. Tubb and
- c) *A Glossary of Indian Figures of Speech* by Edwin Gerrow.

It is said that Indian stage performance has two levels. A simple visual one dedicated to average, uncultured spectators, children and women and a deeper, psychological one perceivable for highly educated representatives of the society. In a classification of *kāvya* literature drama is always described as something to be seen (*dṛśya*). Also, in the opinion of some contemporary theorists on ancient Indian drama Indians from very early times considered a play to be essentially 'a spectacle' or something to be visualized (*prekṣā*). In this respect people attending a performance of a play were always referred to as 'spectators' or 'observers' (*prekṣaka*) and never as an 'audience' (*śrotr*).

How then is it possible that the value of a sound in its different aspects finds so many explanations in Bharata's treatise? It is clearly evident that the visual aspect of a drama is crucial but not sufficient. Indian drama without music and verses composed in particular metres would be only a silent pantomimic spectacle. Bharata himself claimed that it was the speech which distinguished Indian drama from the simple dance performance. Bharata compared dramatic words to the body of the *nāṭya* and repeated frequently that the other elements of scenic representation were there merely to illustrate and help to relish the full meaning of the words.

The play-texts were composed in Sanskrit and Prakrits in a mixture of prose dialogues and metrical verses. Indian playwrights discouraged long and frequent prose passages on the grounds that these might prove tiresome to spectators. Another reason for providing metrical verse interpolations was their potentiality of evoking particular *rasas*. The structure of metres varied in caesura as well as the number and sequence of *guru-laghu* – heavy and light syllables in a *pāda* or foot.

The instructions of Bharata concerning particular metres corresponding with appropriate sentiments are not very precise. Surprisingly Bharata instructed us that sentiments depend mostly on the number of syllables consisting in each *pāda* and not necessarily on other elements of metrical patterns. According to that he claimed that

the heroic sentiment – *vīrarasa* should be accompanied by metres of the *jagatī*, *atijagatī* and *saṃkṛiti* types. When the description of battles and tumults is represented, the *utkṛiti* metre type should be rendered. The same specimens apply to the furious sentiment – *raudrarasa*.

Jagatī is a metre consisting of twelve syllables in each *pāda*. Among them Bharata enumerated *toṭaka*, *kumudanibhā*, *candralekhā*, *pramitākṣarā*, *vaṃśasthā*, *hariṇaplutā*, *kāmadattā*, *aprameyā*, *padminī*, *paṭuvṛtta* and *prabhāvatī*, all of them having a different metrical pattern as far as sequence of syllables is concerned.

As an example of the *atijagatī* type metres of thirteen syllables he mentioned only two, namely *praharṣaṇī* and *mattamayūra* and as an example of *saṃkṛiti* of twenty four syllables he presented only the *meghamālā* metre.

He added in another passage that the description of any act of boldness in connection with the heroic and the furious sentiments is to be given in the *āryā* metre not limiting its usage to any of its five presented types. What is even more unexpected is that almost none of the examples given by Bharata, while illustrating all the mentioned metres, describes a battle or tumult scene. Only one illustrating metre, *meghamālā*, seems to correspond with *raudrarasa*.

The metres of the *śakkarī* and the *atidhṛiti* types were considered suitable for the pathetic sentiment – *karuṇarasa*. *Śakkarī* is a metre consisting of fourteen syllables and in NŚ is represented by the *vasantatilakā*, *asambādhā* and *śarabhā* verses. *Atidhṛiti*, composed of nineteen syllables, is illustrated only with the use of the *śārdūlavikrīdita* verse pattern. Examples given by Bharata are more accurate here and indeed illustrate the pathetic sentiment.

Composition meant to express the erotic sentiment – *śṛṅgāra-rasa* should be expressed in gentle meters as Bharata laconically stated. The sentiments not mentioned should be expressed in a manner suitable to the intended meaning but no particular metre was indicated by the author of NŚ.

Additional directions which could appear helpful for playwrights were that the poetical composition in connection with the heroic (*vīra*), the furious (*raudra*) and the marvellous (*adbhuta*) sentiments should consist mostly of light syllables (*laghvakṣarāṇi*) and should include similes (*upamās*) and metaphors (*rupakas*). In the odious (*bībhatsa*) and the pathetic (*karuṇa*) sentiments the composition should likewise consist mostly of heavy syllables (*gurvakṣarāṇi*).

Bharata also gave special instructions concerning prolated vowels (*plutākṣarāṇi*) as efficacious in expressing particular emotional states. He claimed that poets should use short, long and prolated vowels for representing different sentiments and psychological states. In pronunciation, a vowel consisting of one matra is short, of two matras is long and of three matras is prolated. In recollecting anything, in expressing displeasure, in despair or when the Vedas are read by brahmins, prolated vowels occur. Details on this matter vary according to different editions of NŚ. According to one edition, syllables appropriate in those situations would be *a* in remembering, long *ū* in indignation, *hā* with long *a* inserted in lamentation and *om* in the reading of the Vedas by brahmins. According to another edition, short *a* and *hā* are replaced by long *ā* and *hum* respectively. Connexion of these particular emotional states with distinctive sounds is only partially attested by the *Amarakośa* text. There a long *ā* indeed means recollection, but *hum* corresponds with doubt, interrogation or aversion and not with despair as Bharata stated.

Bharata further described so called qualities of recitation (*pāthyaguṇāni*). He presented them as follows. Among qualities of recitation there are seven notes (*svara*), three voice-registers (*sthāna*), four types of modulation (*varṇa*), two ways of intonation (*kāku*), six *alamkāras* and six limbs (*aṅga*). Most of them are closely associated with evoking sentiments.

The seven notes are: *śadja*, *ṛṣabha*, *gāndhāra*, *madhyama*, *pañcama*, *dhaivata* and *niṣāda*. These are to be used in different sentiments. In the comic and erotic sentiments the notes should be

madhyama and *pañcama*. In the heroic, the furious and the marvellous sentiments they should be made *ṣadja* and *ṛṣabha*. In the pathetic sentiment the notes should be *gāndhāra* and *niṣāda* and in the odious and the terrible sentiments, they should be *dhaivata*.

In recitation the types of modulation are: acute (*udātta*) suitable for all sentiments except pathetic, odious and terrible, where grave (*anudātta*) along with circumflex (*svarita*) and quivering (*kampita*) is applied. *Svarita* also accompanies the comic and erotic sentiments while *kampita* is connected with the heroic, furious and marvellous ones.

The usage of the note *alamkāras* is described in detail along with types of voice register, ways of intonation and complementary psychological states (*vyabhicāribhāvas*) corresponding with particular *rasas*. The six *alamkāras* are: high (*ucca*), excited (*dīpta*), grave (*mandra*), low (*nīca*), fast (*druta*) and slow (*vilambita*).

The high note, which proceeds from the head register and is of high pitch, as well as the excited note, which proceeds from the head register and is of extra high pitch, correspond with the heroic, furious and marvellous sentiments. The low note, which proceeds from the chest register and has a very low pitch, as well as the fast note proceeding from the throat register are suitable for the odious and terrible sentiments. The slow note proceeds from the throat register and being of slightly low pitch is adequate for the comic, erotic and pathetic sentiments. And finally, the grave note proceeds from chest register. This one is not directly ascribed to any sentiment but is to be used in states of melancholy, weakness, anxiety, impatience, depression, sickness, deep wound from weapons, fainting, intoxication, communicating secret words and the like.

All the statements of Bharata concerning phonetic level of a scenic representation, called generally *vācīkābhīnaya*, were strongly connected with observations made by his predecessors and presented in forms of *chandas* and *śikṣā*. Nonetheless, it was he who first defined all these *chandas* and *śikṣā* rules as efficacious in evoking particular emotional states and sentiments.

I will now try to explain what the approach of alamkaraśāstrins to the problem of the value of the sound was.

Post-Bharatian theorists of literature focused their attention on quite different aspects of a sound as productive in the process of creating literary composition. As was said at the beginning of this paper, they put stress on virtues (*guṇas*) and embellishments (*alamkāras*) of literary texts. Both stylistical devices were usually divided further in two types. Namely those concerning the meaning (*arthguṇas* and *arthālamkāras*) and those connected with the phonetic texture (*śabdaguṇas* and *śabdālamkāras*).

I would now like to deal with the latter type and present the examples of *guṇas* and *alamkāras* which were useful in realisation of sentiments.

Dhvani and *postdhvani* theorists judged value of *guṇas* and *alamkāras* in terms of the part they played towards the creation of *rasa*. Three particular *guṇas* were considered by them as strictly applicable to *rasas*. These are: *ojas*, *prasāda* and *mādhurya*. *Mādhurya* resides in a poem where *śṛṅgārarasa* prevails, *ojas* where *vīra* is prevalent and *prasāda* accompanies all the *rasas*. Mammaṭa, who systematized the teachings of the *dhvani* school, following the authors of *Dhvanyāloka* specified it. As he stated, *mādhurya* generally resides in *śṛṅgārarasa* but appears also in *karuṇa*, *vipralambha śṛṅgārarasa* and *sāntarasa*. *Ojas* residing ordinarily in *vīra* is present also in *bībhatsa* and *raudra rasas*. *Prasāda* is common for all sentiments.

According to Mammaṭa, two of these *guṇas*, namely *mādhurya* and *ojas*, can be produced by particular arrangement of letters. Sounds convenient for *mādhurya* are all *sparsā* letters – mutes from *ka* to *ma* combined with the last letter of their respective *varga* or class, except those constituting cerebral *ṭa-varga*. Also, consonants *ra* and cerebral *ṇa* with short vowels appeared to be effective in the matter in the opinion of the author of *Kāvya prakāśa*. As an example he introduced the following Sanskrit verse abounding in *ṅa*, *ṇa* and *ra* sounds:

*anaṅgaraṅgapratima tadaṅga bhaṅgībhiraṅgīkṛtamānatāṅgyāḥ|
kurvanti yūnām sahasā yathaitāḥ svāntāmi śāntāparacintanāni||*

Additionally, absence of compounds or usage of their short forms were perceived by Mammaṭa as adequate for *mādhurya guṇa*, which was the most characteristic feature of *mādhurya* in Abhinavagupta's opinion.

Ojas is based on the combination of the first and the third letter of a *varga* with the letters immediately following them, namely with the second and the fourth letter respectively. Similarly, the letter *ra*, a combination of similar letters, palatal and cerebral sibilants and letters of cerebral *ṭa-varga* except for *ṇa* are effective in producing *ojas guṇa* in Mammaṭa's opinion. An accompanying illustration, in which sounds of *ta-varga* in different configurations are employed, is as follows:

murdhnāmudvṛttakṛtta|| (KP VIII. 75)

The distinguishing characteristic of the *śabdaguṇa ojas* according to another theorist, Vāmana, was phonetic tightness or compactness, which in the interpretation of Sushil Kumar De means 'greater employment of consonant clusters'. Abhinavagupta agrees that consonant clusters are involved but only those in a specific combination: when consonant clusters come immediately after short vowels. As an example *vilulitamakarandā mañjarīr nartayanto* can be provided. From Abhinava's viewpoint the sound *ra* depends here upon the sound *nda* in order to be a heavy syllable. The sounds *na* and *ya* depend upon the sounds *rta* and *nta* respectively. And the *nto* at the end depends upon the recitation of the second quarter of the verse, without which the *-aḥ* cannot be pronounced as *-o* immediately after it.

As regards *prasāda* considered as *śabdaguṇa*, it appears when there are no consonant clusters and when the division between words is easily discernible or when the words appearing are well known and obvious.

Another phonetic feature of literary compositions broadly discussed by various Indian theorists connected more indirectly with sentiments are the alliterations – *anuprāsas*. Alliteration can take the form of:

- a) repetition of phonetic features,
- b) repetition of phonemes or phoneme clusters,
- c) variation of vowels within similar consonant strings and vice versa,
- d) or repetition of words or morphemes.

Alliteration is carefully distinguished from *yamaka* – cadence. *Anuprāsa* comes into existence when the phonemes or phonetic features are repeated, and not verses or verse parts as in *yamaka*.

Some kinds of alliterations are called *vṛtti*. According to Udbhata and Mammaṭa there are three different *vṛttis* subordinate to *rasas*. Namely: *upanāgarikā*, *paraṣā* and *komalā* called also *grāmyā*. The diction which is characterised by letters indicative of *mādhurya* is called *upanāgarikā*. That which is characterised by letters suggestive of *ojas* is known as *paraṣā* and that characterised by letters other than those mentioned before is *komalā*.

All alliterations are treated differently by Daṇḍin. He considers them as aspects of *mādhurya guṇa*. Sushil Kumar De has shown that the term *rasa* as found in Daṇḍin's treatment does not involve the technical sense in which it is used by the *rasa* and *dhvani* theorists. For him it has a non-technical sense of pleasing poetic flavour generally. The *vāg-rasa* involved in his *mādhurya* consists of repetition of sounds belonging to the same *śruti* (*śrutyānuprāsa*). This is the name given to the specific arrangement of similar sounds which exists in letters belonging to the same *sthāna* or place of utterance. The appropriate example here is *eṣa rājā yadā lakṣmīm prāptavān brāhmaṇa-priyaḥ*, where the use of cerebrals: *ṣa* and *ra*, palatals: *ya* and *ja*, dentals: *ta*, *da* and *la* as well as *pa* and *ba* produces *śrutyānuprāsa*. It involves an economy of effort in pronunciation, and thereby gives a special pleasure to the Vaidarbhas, who avoid monotony of repeating similar letters (*varṇānuprāsa*). The Gauḍas,

however, are fond of *varṇānuprāsa*, where the repetition of *ca*, *ba*, *ma* and *na* in the words produce the desired alliteration.

The concepts presented in this paper concerning phonetic texture in the texts of Bharata as well as later theorists were meant to convey the theory of unity of sentiments with sound. All of them were, in the opinion of ancient Indians, crucial for issuing something that we can call the emotional melody of a text. Texts based on these instructions were not only agreeable to the ear, but also pleasing to different tastes.

APPENDIX

1. Metres corresponding with particular *rasas* (sentiments) according to *Nāṭyaśāstra* (NŚ XIV. 116-120; XV. 54-92, 122-123, 141-143; XVI. 50-51, 53):

Sentiment	Type of metre	Name of metre	Number of syllables in a foot
<i>vīrarasa</i> <i>raudrarasa</i>	<i>jagatī</i>	<i>toṭaka, kumudanibhā, candralekhā, pramitākṣarā, vaṃśasthā, hariṇaplutā, kāmādattā, aprameyā, padminī, paṭuvṛtta</i> and <i>prabhāvātī</i>	12
	<i>atijagatī</i>	<i>praharṣaṇī</i> and <i>mattamayūra</i>	13
	<i>saṃkṛīti</i>	<i>meghamālā</i>	24
<i>karuṇarasa</i>	<i>śakkari</i>	<i>vasantatilakā, asambādhā</i> and <i>śarabhā</i>	14
	<i>atidhṛīti</i>	<i>śārdūlavikrīdita</i>	19
other sentiments	not specified		

Aryā metre which corresponds with *vīra* and *raudra rasa* is not specified in the table above because its metrical pattern is based on criteria other than number of syllables in each foot. Details on its structure and types can be found in NŚ XV. 195-227.

2. Light and heavy syllables appropriate for particular sentiments (NŚ XVI. 115-116):

a) light syllables (*laghvakṣarāṇi*) – the heroic (*vīra*), the furious (*raudra*) and the marvellous (*adbhuta*) sentiments;

b) heavy syllables (*gurvakṣarāṇi*) – the odious (*bībhatsa*) and the pathetic (*karuṇa*) sentiments.

3. Prolated vowels (*plutākṣarāṇi*) efficacious in expressing particular emotional states:

a in recollecting

ū in expressing displeasure

hā in lamentation

om in the reading of Vedas by brahmins

according to Parimal Publications, Delhi Edition of NŚ XVI. 126

ā in recollecting

ū in expressing displeasure

hum in lamentation

om in the reading of Vedas by brahmins

according to Nirnay Sagar Press, Bombay Edition of NŚ

ā in recollecting

hum in doubt, interrogation, aversion

according to *Amarakośa* (AmaK III. 4. 2., III. 4.14.)

4. Qualities of recitation (*pāṭhyaguṇāṇi*) appropriate for particular sentiments (NŚ XVII. 102-109, 113-129):

a) seven notes (*svara*),

b) three voice-registers (*sthāna*),

c) four types of modulation (*varṇa*),

d) two ways of intonation (*kāku*),

- e) six *alamkāras* and
f) six limbs (*aṅga*).

Sentiment	Note	Type of modulation	<i>alamkāra</i>	<i>aṅga</i>
<i>śṛṅgārasa</i>	<i>madhyama pañcama</i>	<i>udātta svarita</i>	<i>vilambita</i>	<i>arpaṇa viccheda dīpana praśamana</i>
<i>hāsyarasa</i>				
<i>vīrarasa</i>	<i>ṣaḍja ṛṣabha</i>	<i>udātta kampita</i>	<i>ucca dīpta</i>	<i>viccheda dīpana praśamana anubandha</i>
<i>raudrarasa</i>				
<i>adbhutarasa</i>				
<i>karuṇarasa</i>	<i>gāndhāra niṣāda</i>	<i>anudātta svarita kampita</i>	<i>vilambita</i>	<i>dīpana praśamana</i>
<i>bībhatsarasa</i>	<i>dhaivata</i>		<i>nīca druṭa</i>	<i>viccheda visarga</i>
<i>bhayānakarasa</i>				

5. *Śabdaguṇas* corresponding with particular sentiments according to Mammaṭa *Kāvya prakāśa* (KP VIII. 68-70):
- ojas* – *vīrarasa*, *bībhatsarasa* and *raudrarasa*;
 - mādhurya* – *śṛṅgārasa*, *karuṇarasa* and *sāntarasa*;
 - prasāda* is common for all sentiments.
6. Sounds convenient for *mādhurya* and *ojas śabdaguṇas* according to Mammaṭa (KP XVIII. 73-75):
- mādhurya*:
 - *sparsā* letters (mutes from *k* to *m*) combined with the last letter of their respective *varga*, except *ṭa-varga*,
 - consonants *r* and *ṛ* with short vowels.

Example abounding in *ṅg*, *nt* and *ra* sounds:

*anaṅgaraṅgapratima tadaṅga bhaṅgībhiraṅgīkṛtamānatāṅgyāḥ|
kurvanti yūnām sahasā yuthaitāḥ svāntāmi śāntāparacintanāni||*

b) *ojas*:

– combination of the first and the third letter of a *varga* with the letters immediately following them namely with the second and the fourth letter respectively,

– letter *r*,

– combination of similar letters,

– palatal and cerebral sibilants,

– letters of *ṭa-varga* except with *ṅ*.

Example:

murdhnāmudvṛttakṛtta||(KP VIII. 75)

7. Example of *ojas* according to Abhinavagupta, *Abhinavabhāratī* (AB VI. 105-106):

vilulitamakarandā mañjarī nartayanto

8. Alliterations – *anuprāsas* corresponding with particular *śabdaguṇas* (KP IX. 80):

a) *upanāgarikā* – *mādhurya*,

b) *paruṣā* – *ojas*.

9. *Śrutyānuprāsa* according to Daṇḍin, *Kāvyaḍarśa* (KA I. 53):

eṣa rājā yadā lakṣmīm prāptavān brāhmaṇa-priyaḥ

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