Abstract

A Critical Study of Bharat’s Rasa Theory and Hans Robert Jauss’ Reception Theory

The present research work aims to study of Bharat’s Rasa Theory and Jauss’ Reception Theory. The research also insists on the principles of the theories and their relevance through comparative study. It highlights the similarities and dissimilarities between Rasa and Reception Theory as these theories are formulated by different philosophers at different region, period, language and culture. This research work is limited to Bharata’s rasa theory propounded in Natyashastra and Jauss’ reception theory explained in his essay entitled, Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory.

Chapter 1: Introduction to Critical Theory

Chapter first of the present research introduces various critical theories in India and western world. The word ‘theory’ is generally used in the various disciplines of knowledge. It is always read with certain assumption such as, theory as a set of rules, a set of principles or a philosophical foundation of any practical work. Literary theory is the process of understanding the nature of literature, the function of literature, the relation among the language, author, text, reader, history and society. Basically, literary theory is the principles of the interpretation of literature and literary criticism. Literary criticism is a practice of judging a work of art to interpret, analyze and evaluate it. The
chief objective of criticism is to provide a particular judgment. The relationship between literary theory and literary criticism can be defined as; the Literary Theory is bedrock of Literary Criticism. A standard literary theory always incorporates some parameters such as; it is valid, universal, objective, impartial, practical applicable, double potential, general applicability, and flexible enough to interpretation and newer needs.

Section B of the Chapter highlights some recurrent Indian Literary theories from Bharata to Spivak and Aijaz Ahmad. The brief introduction of Indian theoretical tradition shows that Indians have produced very rich and significant literary approach such as rasa theory, theory of universalization and Anekantvad. Today Indian literary critics and philosophers are divided into groups. They have different disposition regarding the purification and the review of (Sanskrit) native traditions of criticism. These conflicting tendencies have failed to play important role to upkeep the creative literature in Indian languages. Today the common charge being leveled against Indian literary studies is that it has not practical application. There are two reasons, probably the lack of written record of the practice of Indian Literary Theories and its oral commentary. Modern Indian scholars have lost touch with the Sanskrit language and so with Sanskrit literature and criticism.

Section C is about the short introduction of western literary theories. Western literary theory has rich and long tradition in the history. One can divide the tradition of western literary theory in four major parts according to the period. The first phase, classical literary criticism includes the ancient philosopher like Plato, Aristotle, Longinus
and Horace. These philosophers discuss about author, poet and their qualities. They also determined the principles and merits of good poetry. The second phase, criticism of early centuries includes the philosopher and critics such as Thomas More, Ascham, Sir Philip Sydney and Ben Jonson. They talk about drama as separate form of art, values of poetry and the Three Unities. The third phase, criticism of middle centuries includes the neo-classical theorists such as Dryden, Pope, Dr. Johnson, Wordsworth, Arnold and Walter Peter. These philosophers and critics put their views on the nature of poetry and dramatic poetry, methodology and standards for the literary criticism, merits of literary composition, and poetic diction. They also talk on the theory of art, imagination, fancy, the ways of writing poetry and the problems of criticism. The fourth phase, criticism of modern and postmodern period which begins from the Russian Formalism and it continues to the postmodern theories like eco-criticism and techno-criticism. These theories are developed with their own ideologies and principles. Some postmodern theories find reader as a central part of interpretation and evaluation of a literary text. It is rightly said that, to decide the relevant literary theory for the perfect judgment of literary art is difficult but we also don’t have the definition of perfect judgment. All these western literary theories try to reach at the perfection to the logical judgment of literature and their significance lies there.

Chapter 2: The Rasa Theory

The second chapter of the thesis deals with the Bharata’s rasa theory. Rasa theory is originated in India, during the ancient period. Bharata, an Indian rhetorician is considered as the founder of the rasa
theory. He has written a text called *Natyashastra* which is considered as fifth Veda of Vedic tradition. Bharata has explained the theory of rasa in the sixth chapter of the *Natyashastra*. It is said that Bharata was asked to write a text which would be considered as fifth Veda for to direct the playwright to write a good play and make its successful representation.

Rasa is roughly translated as aesthetic rapture, pleasure, or relish. It is derived by perceiver from a work of art. According to Bharata aesthetic pleasure rises from the combination of bhava (in the work).

*Vibhanubhav-vyabhicharibhav-samyogadrasanispattih*

Bhava is translated as psycho-physiological states of human mind. These bhava are of three kinds- Sthayibhav, Sancharibhav (Vyabhichyaribhav) and Sattivikbhav. Sthayibhav are permanent or stable states and are those which dominate or persist throughout a literary work. They set the mood of literary work such as; anger, sad, terrifying, etc. Sancharibhav are short lived mental states which are generated along with them (sthayibhav) for example; panic, fear, anger, trembling, paralysis etc. Sattivikbhav are similar to sancharibhav, they are difficult to imitate in dramatic representation. There must be a cause or stimulus to generate these emotions which give rise to an effect in the character or the subject. These causes or stimulus are known as Vibhav; for instance; a tiger in the forest can be the cause of fear in a lonely traveller. In this case, the tiger and the man’s aloneness can be considered the vibhav which generate fear. And the consequences manifestation or effects of fear will be many like trembling, panic, horripilation, paralysis etc. these are known as anubhav. These states of mind may or may not be perceivable to our senses directly, for example...
anger in one subject cannot be communicated direct to another but it can be suggested through various manifestations. Patnaik says (8), thus whereas vibhav and anubhav can be seen or observed directly, the states or bhava need not necessarily be directly perceivable. It is, in fact, to suggest the bhava or psychophysiological states.

1. Rati (Love)
   
   a. Vibhav (causes): stimulus would be season, flower, ornaments or anything beautiful or desirable.

   b. Anubhav (involuntary reactions): looking sideways, coy glance, sweet words etc.

   c. Sancharibhav or Vyabhicharyabhav (transitory feelings): lassitude, suspicion, jealousy etc.

2. Hasya (Humor)
   
   a. Vibhav: peculiarity of dress or speech etc.

   b. Anubhav: spouting, mimicking etc.

   c. Sancharibhav: smile, snicker, laughter, guffaw etc.

3. Karuna (Compassion)
   
   a. Vibhav: loss, death, calamity, leaving up etc.

   b. Anubhav: tears, fainting, lamentation etc.

   c. Sancharibhav: sorrow, trembling, fear etc.

4. Rudra (Horror)
a. **Vibhav**: anger, violence, treachery etc.

b. **Anubhav**: red eyes, rubbing hands, biting lips etc.

c. **Sancharibhav**: sweating, excitement impatience etc.

5. **Vira (Heroic)**

a. **Vibhav**: determination, strength, bravery, courage etc.

b. **Anubhav**: courageous act, generosity etc.

c. **Sancharibhav**: decision, arrogance etc.

6. **Bhayanak (Fear)**

a. **Vibhav**: frightful things, lonely sights, darkness etc.

b. **Anubhav**: trembling, pallor, loosing voice etc.

c. **Sancharibhav**: fainting, hurrying, standing rooted etc.

7. **Bibhatas (disgust)**

a. **Vibhav**: bad news, loud lamentation etc.

b. **Anubhav**: repulsion, spitting, turning up nose etc.

c. **Sancharibhav**: fainting illness, death, hate etc.

8. **Adbhuta (awesome or wonder)**

a. **Vibhav**: seeing unusual things, achieving the desired, magic.

b. **Anubhav**: wide or staring eyes, thrill, exclamation etc.

c. **Sancharibhav**: standing stunned, over-joy etc.
Bharata explained the rasa theory in the context of drama. But in latter it has been applied to all kinds of literature and particularly to the poetry. Rudrata, Anandvardhan, Abhinavgupta try to explained rasa theory in the context of poetry in a very significant manner. Our teacher said that rasa arises in a poem if we see things as if they were happening before our very eyes. (Patnaik, 8) So, rasa can be applied not only to drama and poetry but also to all the kinds of literature which completes the above conditions.

The principles of rasa theory are very much sustaining; therefore they are independent from all the boundaries of period, region and culture etc. Rasa is universal and independent in its nature.

**Chapter 3: The Reception Theory**

Third chapter of the thesis is about Jauss’ Reception Theory. Jauss is the founder member of Konstanz School in Konstanz German University. Jauss and other philosopher brought memorandum for the reform in the study of linguistic and literature, in which they argue for the methodological changes in the university courses. The methods and values of teaching literary contexts have been doubted by German literary studies. They come to a point of crises within the current paradigm by which it was being practiced. They also questioned the sociological and formalist approach of literary history which suppressed and concealed the role of a reader while the reader is an indispensable element to any act of interpretation. Jauss published an essay entitled as “Literary History as Challenge to literary Theory” in which he gives a historical dimension to reader oriented criticism. He tries to achieve a
compromise between Russian Formalism which ignores the history and social theory which ignores the text. Jauss states that; it is an attempt to bridge the gap between literature and history, between historical and aesthetic approach, begins at the point at which both school stop. Their methods understand the literary fact in forms of the circular aesthetic system of a dimension which unalterably belongs to its aesthetic character as well as its social function: its reception and impact. Reader, listener and spectator- in short the audience play extremely limited role in both literary theories.

Jauss derives the term ‘paradigm’ from the viewpoint of science which refers to systematic basis of concepts and assumptions working in a particular period. Everyday science does its experimental work within the mental world of a particularly paradigm, until a new paradigm displaces the old one and throws up new problems and establishes new assumptions.

Jauss uses the term ‘horizon of expectations’ to describe the criteria readers use to judge literary texts in any given period. The criteria will help the reader decide how to judge a poem. The original horizon of expectations only tells us how the work was valued and interpreted when it appeared, but does not establish its fixed meaning i.e. forever and open to all readers in any period: a literary work is not an object which stands by itself........not a monument which reveals its timeless essence in a monologue. It means, that we shall never be able to survey the successive horizons which flow from the time of a work appeared down to the present day and then. So the questions rise whose
authority are we to accept, that of the first reader, or combined opinion of readers over time or present reader?

Jauss answers these questions from the philosophical hermeneutics as Gadmer argues; all interpretations of past literature arise from a dialogue between past and present. Our attempts to understand a work will depend on the present. Our attempts to understand a work will depend on the questions which our own cultural environment allows us to raise. At the same, we seek to discover the questions which the work itself was trying to answer in its own dialogue with history. Our present perspective always involves a relationship to the past, but at the same time the past can only be grasped through the limited perspective of the present. Put in this way, the task of establishing knowledge of the past seems hopeless. But a hermeneutical notion of ‘understanding’ does not separate knower and object in the familiar fashion of empirical science; rather it views understanding as a ‘fusion’ of past and present: we cannot make our journey into the past without taking the present with us. The ‘fusion of horizons’ is not, it seems, a total merging of all the points of view which have arisen but only those which to the hermeneutical sense of the critic appear to be part of the gradually emerging totality of merging which make up the true unity of the text. (Raman Seldom, 60-62) Literary history should be rewritten on this premise, further; he suggests seven theses that provide a systematic approach to rewriting of literary history according to aesthetic of reception and its impact.
Chapter 4: Comparative Study of Rasa Theory and Reception Theory

The fourth chapter of the thesis aims at the comparative study of both the theories. There is a discussion on the various principles and aspect of the Rasa Theory and Reception Theory. The chapter also focuses on similar and dissimilar aspects of both the theories. The process of comparison or comparative includes: an art of comparing for the examination of two or more objects, ideas and people. It is intended to note the similarities and differences between or among the objects, ideas or people. Comparative theory is one of the methods of study in different branches of knowledge. Comparative study develops two or more than two objects, theories, literature in comparison at the same time. It has multi-dimensional aspects such as linguistic, cultural, religious, economic, social and historical facts of different societies. The task of comparison becomes more difficult when a comparator has to take into consideration such factors or aspects.

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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Bharat’s Rasa Theory</th>
<th>Jauss’ Reception Theory</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Similarities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Rasa theory puts perceiver at the center point of the discourse.</td>
<td>Reception theory puts reader at the center of the whole argument.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Literary experience: rasa means experience of aesthetic pleasure.</td>
<td>Literary experience: the aesthetic of reception means a</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Aesthetic quality of literature: rasa theory claims that literature has an aesthetic quality which appeals the perceiver’s bhava. (state of mind)</td>
<td>Literature has the aesthetic quality that takes reader to his live praxis, expectation and impacts on his social behavior.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Dialogue: rasa theory insists on the dialogic relationship between the incident performed on the stage and perceiver.</td>
<td>Reception theory also assumes that there is a dialogic relationship between reader and text which involves reader in the process of aesthetic of reception.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Psychological aspects: rasa theory deals with the psychological aspects of human being such as Bhava (sthayibhav, Vibhav, Anubhav and Vyabhichyaribhav). Bharata states that the proper combination of sthayibhav with other three bhava through work of art leads to the manifestation of rasa.</td>
<td>Reception theory also incorporates the psychological aspect of a reader that is horizon of expectations which denotes the criteria which the reader use to judge literary work of in any given period. These horizons of expectations are determined by the previous experience, literary value and artistic principles of a reader.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Social function of literature: rasa theory assumes that literature has the capability to bring change in perceiver’s life. Perceiver enters into his daily life through the principle of Sadharanikaran (universalization or generalization) and finds the solution for his own difficulties from new experience.</td>
<td>Social function of literature manifests itself when the literary experience of a reader enters into his horizon of expectations of living life performs his understanding of the world and thereby also effect on his social behavior.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Process of literary creation: The entire process of literary creation from its conception to final perception by perceiver is taken into consideration in the rasa theory.</td>
<td>Though reception theory deals with only the text and reader relationship, Jauss states that author is also reader before response relationship to literature become productive again.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Rasa theory accepts the varieties of perceiver. According to Bharata perceiver are of different kinds for ex. they can be classified by the guna that they have most in quantity such as sattva, rajas and tamas.</td>
<td>Jauss also accepts the individuality of the reader according to his expectations determined by his previous literary knowledge, his socio-cultural, economical and historical background.</td>
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<td>Combination/Fusion (literary experience): rasa is manifested thorough the proper combination of sthayibhav to vibhav, anubhav and Vyabhicharibhav in an action performed on the stage.</td>
<td>Similarly in the reception theory reader communicates with text continuously and enters in his horizon of expectation where he finds the solution that what he expects (Fulfillment of expectation) simultaneously meets new challenges (change in expectations)</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Perceiver/reader: Bharata calls perceiver as ‘sahardya’ i.e. the person with certain poetic sensibility or generous/magnanimous person.</td>
<td>Jauss assumes every reader as an individual reader with certain horizon of expectations with some artistic value that he has come across at his previous reading or experience.</td>
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**Dissimilarities**

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<th>Origin: rasa theory has been originated in ancient period of India in the work of Bharat’s Natyashastra.</th>
<th>Reception theory has been originated in Germany in the essay written by Hans Robert Jauss entitled as “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory”</th>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Objectives: rasa theory is a part of Natyashastra which is</td>
<td>Jauss wants bridge the gap between Marxist and formalist</td>
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<td>intended to prepare the essence of writing a good play. Rasa theory not investigates the whole play but studies the role of perceiver in its manifestation.</td>
<td>approach of writing literary history. He aims to design a model for rewriting literary history and to establish new literary canon according to reception of literary text and its impact.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Background: Bharata’s rasa theory has been formulated with not much scholarly established background on literary theory and criticism.</td>
<td>Jauss reception theory has a very strong background of Reader Response Theory. In fact reception theory is considered as the historical application of reader response theory.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Rasa theory has been formulated independently and it is not intended to find out the solution on the question that previous theory has raised or created.</td>
<td>Reception theory has been developed to overcome the problem of rewriting literary history and to get rid from the traditional approach such as Marxism and formalism of writing literary history as they lack their relevance.</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>The psychological aspects (Sthayibhav, Vibhav, Anubhav and Vyabhichyaribhav)</td>
<td>Jauss concepts ‘horizon of expectations’ which has some psychological implications, is</td>
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<td>discussed in rasa theory are universal and commonly present in all human being. They are inborn and deeply rooted in human’s unconsciousness.</td>
<td>depend upon the external aspects as readers previous literary knowledge, socio-economical background which is very much individual and not universal.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>The element of bhava is inborn in its nature and it lies in human unconsciousness permanently, it can be appealed by the vibhav intermingled in the action performed on the stage.</td>
<td>Jauss concept horizon of expectations is not inborn in its nature but it is determined by reader’s external aspects like previous knowledge etc. the continuous dialogue between text and reader leads to the readers expectations.</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>In rasa theory it is literary work that appeals to the perceiver’s sthayibhav and takes him to the realization of rasa. (aesthetic of pleasure)</td>
<td>In reception theory reader engages himself in a dialogue with a text and tries to meet his expectations and new challenges. (Literary experience)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Rasa theory deals with the perceivers state of mind i.e. bhava and does not think about the other aspect of literary work such as authors background and</td>
<td>Reception theory signifies the role of reader in the reception with his expectation and also tries to determine the historical significance and place of literary</td>
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Chapter 5: Conclusion

The fifth or last chapter of the thesis makes comment on the previous chapters. The concluding note highlights the co-relation and co-existence of both the theories in present scenario. The rasa theory is one of the ancient literary theories India. Bharata has expounded it in *Natyashastra*; it deals with the entire discussion on dramaturgy and the essence of good writing. As Bharata argues, rasa theory deals with different kinds of emotions, their depiction, inclusion and transmission through a work of art. Rasa theory views literature as it is about life and emotions. The function of playwright is to observe these emotions in a play and represent it successfully. The theory deals with the common element to all mankind at all times i.e. emotion. The validity of rasa theory lies there.
Rasa theory is impartial and objective in its nature. It deals with the bhava and states of mind i.e. common to all human being at all times. The bhava discussed in rasa theory are inborn, permanent and lives in human unconsciousness. Critics don’t have scope to put their personal judgment and conclusion. Rasa theory helps to eradicate the subjectivity and partially from the process of criticism.

Rasa theory can be applied to any kind of literature as literary theory is about literature primarily. One can observe the various bhava or can experience them own self. The theory considers the entire process of literary work from its very conception in the mind of an artist to its perception by perceiver or spectator. It leads to an excellent text which has capacity to transport the principle of aesthetic pleasure i.e. rasa. Rasa theory allows one to see how emotions are suggested through the actions or words and finally the audience who perceives the pleasure. The rasa theory acknowledges all the factors for their indispensability. The theory provides a total vie which makes up this coherent theory. As P. Patnaik says (2) rasa theory has tremendous linguistic potential, for an emotion cannot be shown or communicated directly. It can only be suggested (dhvani) through words or their equivalents. Rasa theory has double potential, it provides a background for many other literary theories in later period and to newer philosophical speculation at the same time it can applied to any literary art.

Rasa theory is generally applicable to any literary work of art. The rasa i.e. aesthetic pleasure exists in music, dance, sculpture and painting because all these form of art capable to suggesting the bhava or psychophysiological states of mind. Rasa theory is flexible enough in is nature,
it has developed over the centuries, more than thousand years and become authentic and more complete. The rasa such as shanta rasa and bhakti rasa have been contributed by later philosophers.

Reception theory is one the modern literary theories in western tradition. Jauss has formulated it in his essay entitled “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory”. It includes the discussion on rewriting literary history according to aesthetic of reception and its impact. It deals with the thesis that creates an approach for rewriting an approach for literary history. It minimizes the role of literary historian by leaving his own literary value and judgment out of the process, and forces him to incorporate the relationship between a literary work and a reader. Reception theory deals with the horizon of expectations of the reader which is built by reader’s previous literary experience and artistic value. It is common in all the readers that they possess some expectations before they begin to read a new text. The authentic, impartial and objective nature of reception theory is depend upon whether the literary historian able to determine the objectifieable (common) horizon of expectations. Every reader differs from each other on the ground of their previous knowledge and experience about the literary genre is going to read. Therefore it is difficult define authenticity of the reader and finally it becomes difficult to determine the historical significance and place of literary text in its literary series. Rewriting of literary history of any nation, language, culture etc. through this approach is possible only if the historian could catch the expectations of readers that succeeding the particular literary tradition.
Reception theory has been intended to develop a model for rewriting literary history and to establish new literary canons according to aesthetic of reception and impact. Jauss theory is not as the other literary theories but it is historical applications of Reader Response oriented theory. In take into consideration the process of a literary text from its publication to the reception by the reader and its recognition of historical significance. Jauss not discusses about the author, forms and content of a text in detail but insists only on the reader’s role in the reception process. Jauss aesthetic of reception is applicable to all forms of literature. But, its application to other forms of art is questionable because the objective expectations of the perceiver regarding the forms such as music, dance painting etc. are subjective again. It is not flexible enough as rasa theory. It has not rich tradition and full-fledged attention by other literary philosopher. It has historical application and not much literary approach as it tries to bridge the gap between Marxist and Formalist approach of literary history.

Both these theories have some common elements such as suggestiveness of literature, role of perceiver, literary experience, reception and impact. They differ on the ground of their aims and objectives. Rasa theory is a part of Natyashastra which is written as guide book of writing a good play. The rasa theory originally developed as a study of human mind and its role in the literary experience. If one studies rasa theory separately from the Natyashastra it looks like a literary theory with all relevance. Reception theory has been formulated on the background of Reader Response Theory. Jauss has tried to see literary history through the principles of reception of literary text and its
impact on the reader. The reception theory also not developed for any kind of literary criticism but it is developed for the rewriting of literary history through the reader’s perspectives. At the same time it questions the traditional literary canons established according to socio-economical and textual perspectives. Jauss argues on this premise and ask to reestablish literary canons according to reception of the text and its impact.

The relationship of the rasa theory and the reception theory can be summarized as two boats in the same river, loaded with same content, moving in the same direction but leading to different goals.