CHAPTER III

STHĀYIBHĀVA
Here I take up the discussion of two related questions raised in the previous section viz. Can specific expressive properties be attributed to a piece of music? And secondly, is the specific expressive property so attributed dependent on any particular or specific aspect of the musical piece?

1. Music expresses emotions — not the particular emotions of the composer or the performer, but emotions which are in a sense, "in" the music. Music distils as it were ordinary subjective emotions, and capturing the fleeting nuances of emotions, presents the very life (prāna) of an emotion, or as S. K. Langer puts it, music expresses the 'forms of feelings', it reflects the 'morphology of feelings'. And this presentation of the "life" or "prāna" of an emotion is what Bharata elaborates in his theory of Rasa in the Natya Sastra.

Bharata shows that the function of an 'aesthetic object', (Bharata refers primarily to drama, but the same could be extended to music as well) is not just to cause a pleasurable sensation in the perceiver of the object — the function is much more profound. Bharata holds that the aesthetic object is a configuration of various
elements and the configuration expresses the 'rasa', or the quintessence of an emotion or what some call the aesthetic fact.

Rasa, as already stated, literally means 'juice', 'extract', or that which gives relish and in the aesthetic context it is that which gives life or vitalizes an emotion. The function of all art and music is the presentation of rasa or the resultant of the aesthetic configuration which "consists of situations, mimetic changes, transient emotions and basic emotions, so harmoniously mixed up that the configuration presents to the aesthete something which is entirely different from that which results from the mere juxtaposition of various elements". Realizing the flavour or rasa of a melody could be likened to wine tasting in Europe or to the cultivated sensitivity possessed by some Chinese for the assessment of the tactile qualities and the appearance of jade, but of course, it is much more subtle, for whereas one could describe the flavour of a new wine accurately enough to enable the experienced wine taster to know what to expect it is impossible to realize rasa merely from descriptions, or by being told by another. Again rasa is essentially a product of dramatic art and music and not
to be found in the "creations" of nature:

It is not pure unity but unity in multiplicity. The unifying factor in the multiplicity is a basic state of mind (sthāyibhāva) which binds together in an organic whole (1) The emotive situation in human setting, consisting of the physical cause of the basic mental state (vibhāva); (2) the mimetic changes, which are inspired by the aroused basic mental state and as such are indicative of the internal state (anubhāva) and (3) the transient emotions (vyabhicāribhāvas).

To understand clearly the concept of rasa then, one must first understand how the sthāyibhāva keeps the unity of a work of art or a musical composition, and also what is (if any) the musical element in a musical composition in which the sthāyibhāva is embodied. And of course to understand the concept of sthāyibhāva one must also understand what is vibhāva, anubhāva and vyabhicāribhāva.

2. In a typical emotive situation in real life three essential features are clearly discernible. Firstly, there is the cause of the emotion — here a distinction is made between cause as reason, and cause as a specific object or a situation with a focal point. Wittgenstein distinguishes between an object of fear and the cause of fear, saying that a force which inspires fear or delight is not on that account its cause, but its target. The object
of fear, of which the following questions can be asked — "On what grounds do you believe this?" or "From what are you now deducing it?" etc. can be said to be the reason. In the Indian context however, no such distinction is made for the cause of an emotion which is called kārana. It seems to cover both cause (reason) and object. Then it is seen that the particular emotion caused, expresses itself in various physical changes e.g. change of colour, palpitation of the heart etc. and these physical changes which may be said to be the effects of the emotion are called kārva. Then lastly it is seen that the persisting emotions are invariably accompanied by various transient emotions—the invariable concomitants or sahaçāris. When an emotion is expressed or presented as expressed in an aesthetic situation (more precisely in drama) the same distinction can be made but here the situation is slightly more complicated because here the emotions are not really felt but merely presented, for instance, in drama the actor enacting the role of the historical Rama cannot feel for the enacted Sita the same love that the historical Rama felt for Sita rather the actor might feel for Sita not love but reverence considering that Sita is a much revered historical character. Thus in an aesthetic situation since the cause is not there neither can the effect be there in the typical way it is in real life.
The important point to note here is of course, that although the actor enacting the role of Rama does not experience the love which the historical Rama felt for Sita, yet it cannot be said that what the actor presents on stage is not love but merely the pretense of love, for by expression of emotions in an aesthetic situation we do not mean mere expression of feelings but the articulation of the forms of feelings — not self expression of love, neither the pretense of love, but the expression of love itself, or as Langer puts it, art reveals as it were the "rationale of feelings". Moreover, if the expression of emotions in an aesthetic situation were nothing but a pretense, in drama one would not talk of authentic or honest acting, yet very often the greatness of an acting is judged on the basis of authenticity and honesty.

Because the kāraṇa, kārya and sahañcāri does not adequately describe the expression of emotions in an aesthetic situation Bharata has substituted for these terms the more technical terms — vibhāva, anubhāva and vyabhicāribhāva, and the emotion itself — the sthāvibhāva.

3. VIBHĀVA, ANUBHĀVA & VYABHIÇARIBHĀVA: Corresponding to kāraṇa in real life, in an aesthetic situation there is
vibhāva, which stands for the emotive situation and which in real life could be said to be the cause of the emotion. But as already stated in an aesthetic situation the relation between emotion and situation is not one of cause and effect, rather the relationship is that of a medium to a state of mind in quite the same way as the relationship between the mystic medium and the experience got through it. Vibhāva has two important aspects: (i) alambana - or the object which is primarily responsible for the arousal of the emotion and on which the emotion is dependent for its being and (ii) uddipana - or the idyllic surrounding which enhances the emotive effect of the object.

Corresponding to kārya in real life in an aesthetic situation we have what is termed anubhāva which broadly speaking is the expression of feelings. Anubhāva is an immediate and as it were momentary response. In drama anubhāva is presented through behaviour and action by the actors, and it is through anubhāva that the idea of the emotion is communicated. The two terms vibhāva and anubhāva are also translated as determinant and consequent – vibhāva is then that state of affairs that initiates a response and anubhāva is the response. Anubhāva literally means
to apprehend or feel, and here, anubhāva implies that the artiste perceives or apprehends the rationale of feelings to be expressed and having so apprehended, expresses it. This type of expression is then different from both self expression and a mechanical well rehearsed expression. The actor or the musician expresses the essence of love through anubhāva thereby giving his expression the artistic warmth which is so essential in all aesthetic experiences. Artistic warmth is something which cannot be planned or assured by anything technical but it is indispensable, for it is that which makes a piece of music "alive" and gives it the quality of "impassioned utterance."

In music to bring out this quality of impassioned utterance the musician must have a proper understanding of what his piece of music expresses, i.e. what he expresses must be within his "emotional ken". It is not important that the artist must actively have experienced every feeling he expresses for as long as he can grasp the "form of the feeling" he expresses, his expression will have "vital import". Anubhāva then adequately covers the concept of artistic or aesthetic expression of feelings.
Vyabhicāribhāvas are the transient emotions in an aesthetic situation. As they correspond to sahacāris in real life they are the invariable concomitants of a persistent or basic mental state. Like the comic relief in a drama, the vyabhicāribhāvas may be directly opposite to the basic mental state, but this opposition itself enhances or brings out the effect of the sthāvibhāva more prominently. Vyabhicāribhāva raises the "sthavīn from being a mere matter of inference and brings it as it were directly before the spectator".²

Sthāvibhāva: At the heart or core of an aesthetic configuration is the sthāvibhāva or the basic persisting emotion which binds the total aesthetic situation of a musical composition together. In the Nāṭya Śāstra, it is said that — with actions, speech, bodily actions, natural reaction, the vibhāvas and anubhāvas articulate a meaning which is intelligible — that meaning is bhāva and sthāvibhāva is thus the most important aspect of an aesthetic situation and the objective of the other bhāvas is really to focus one's attention on the sthāvibhāva. The sthāvībhāva has thus been likened to a king with all his paraphernalia. Here although the regalia of the king is not totally insignificant they play only a subordinate role,
the centre of attention is obviously the king and the
importance of all the paraphernalia lies only in that
they help to focus attention on the king thereby increa­sing his importance. In an aesthetic configuration it is
the sthāyībhāva which keeps the unity of the work toge­ther while all the other emotions are like "... waves
which arise from the ocean of the basic mental state and
subside into it". It is the sthāyībhāva which commands or
guides the entire structure and form of an artistic crea­tion. It can thus be likened to Berlioz's "idea fixie",
or Langer's "commanding idea", for in its expression the
entire structure of the composition is created. As Langer
says...." The great moment of creation is the recognition
of the matrix for in this lies all the themes — a theme
may be imported if it fits the place — but the tendencies
of the piece, the need for dissonance and consonance,
novelty and reiteration, length of phrase and timing of
cadences". 3 This 'seizing of the motif', which thereto
becomes the guiding force, from the patterns of sounds
and colours is the most vital point in an artistic crea­tion.

4. In the initial stage of an artistic creation, various
themes and bhāvas may figure together in a loose fantasy
until one idea or bhāva takes over, and as a result, a definite structure emerges from the wandering sounds and from then on the musician or artist composes or creates guided by the structure and form of this basic idea or emotion.

Although this basic idea or bhāva puts a check on artistic imagination it is not restrictive, or restrictive only in a limited sense i.e. only in so far as it structures too free an artistic imagination. And precisely because of imposing this restriction the sthāyibhāva or "commanding idea", is immensely generative. By restricting too free an imagination the sthāyibhāva helps the musician to spontaneously, but with understanding, compose something which is infinitely rich and distilled. Having got a basic guide the musician’s mind does not wander from theme to theme, key to key, or mood to mood, or perhaps if it does wander from one mood to another in a single musical piece, say Raga Nalkauns whose principal mood is utsaha or zeal, but in the exposition of the raga the moods of śoka, or grief, or vairāgya or renunciation may also be expressed, but once the principal mood of utsaha, has been grasped the other moods are brought in only to accentuate the basic mood and add to its expression.
The way sthāyibhāva restricts yet generates is especially marked in Indian music, for Indian music to the uninitiated is seemingly unstructured. An Indian recital has unforeseen possibilities and yet though the structures are so flexible that there seems to be no structure at all, yet there is in the exposition of a raga an inner logic, which is essentially dependent on how the sthāyibhāva has been grasped by the performer.

The sthāyibhāva is embodied in the entire work of art, permeating and unifying the work say a raga but at the same time not restricting creativity, rather providing the musician with an inexhaustible source of inspiration to create. I say the source of inspiration is inexhaustible, for the sthāyibhāva as seen is an emotion, and not only is the very concept of emotion, a very complex one but the connotations of a single emotion are infinite. Taking a single emotion, love: in expressing it we can express the joy of love, the ecstasy of love, the yearning of love, the tragedy of love, the expectancy of love and so on. Earlier I had likened man's emotive life to the sea, maintaining that if man's emotive life were projected on a graph, the graph would be assorted sometimes with peaks and pits, sometimes the graph would rise to
sublime heights and then subside to serene cadences, sometimes there would be gentle ripples and its resolutions and sometimes there would be the merest hint of a rise. This imagery gives the idea of how an emotion operates but an emotion in real life is of course much more complicated and complex. It is not always the case that there is an emotion which brings about tensions, and in expressing the emotion the tension is resolved.

Very often in real life due to various factors, social or otherwise, an emotion is not allowed expression either by the individual himself or by society. But the tension of the emotion can only be resolved if it is expressed, and if it reaches that point on the graph where it is normally resolved then it has to be resolved in the only way it is normally resolved. To prevent emotion X from reaching this point, counter tensions are set up which, as it were, draws the original emotion X from resolution point P, and draws it in some other direction. The original emotion drawn in an opposite direction may not reach the peak where it is entirely resolved but it may be gradually resolved in parts, and in fact in cases of wilful resolutions of tensions the emotion is usually resolved in parts rather than as a whole, and these parts
In turn, set up counter currents and waves which criss cross and overlap one another and form infinite number of combinations. Music articulates these countless intricacies and ambivalences of emotions.

When it is said that the sthāyibhāva of a piece of music is love, the reference may be to a more specific aspect or aspects of love. A raga does not express love so much as it expresses a mood of love and not a general mood of loving or being loved but a more specific mood — take Raga Yaman, this late evening raga sung after the day’s fevers and frets are over, suggests an idyllic setting of repose and indolence which gives rise to a yearning for love and one’s loved one. The vādi or sonant note of this raga is Ga and the sāvyādi or consonant note is NI. All the other notes or svaras are śuddha except Ma which is tīvra (sharp). Generally speaking ragas with a dominance of the śuddha svaras are likely to have romantic associations, but in this raga because the Ma or the fourth note, is tīvra or sharp the mood is not merely one of romantic passion or ecstasy but contemplative and pensive too. The stress on Ni and Ga also induce this mood of quiet contemplation of love, which in turn give way to yearning for one’s loved one. The sthāyibhāva is thus
Love's longing and this is the mood which permeates the entire rendering of the raga.

But even such a specific mood as "love's longing", may be variously expressed depending on the intensity of the yearning. Raga Mian Malhar also expresses "love's longing", but here the yearning is quite different from Raga Yaman. Mian Malhar is a raga of the rainy season which follows the scorching Indian summer heat, and which brings with it life and jubilance and at the same time accentuates romantic yearnings. The rains bring respite from the heat but also brings about separation of lovers, as there is work to be done and thus the heart's yearnings are more acute and poignant. This intense yearning and poignancy is the mood expressed in Raga Mian Malhar.

The vādi and samvādi notes of this raga are Sa and Pa respectively. Ga is komal (flat) and both the nishāds or seventh notes are used. The passion and intensity of love's yearning is presented through the use of both the nishāds in different combinations and the descent from Ni to Pa with a gamak and from Pa to Ga (koma) with a meend brings in the feeling of brooding intensity. The prolonged use of both the nishāds traversing several
śrūtis increases the tension of yearning before the tension is released in the vādi note Sa.

Having said that the sthāvibhāva of Raga Yaman and Raga Mian Malhar is "love's longing," one would be faced with the question, what are the musical elements in a raga through which, the permanent mood or sthāvibhāva is presented, and the most obvious choice would be that the vādi and the samvādi notes being the dominant and subdominant notes of a raga express the sthāvibhāva, which in turn keeps the unity of the raga. In fact the traditional imagery used to describe the vādi and samvādi notes also correspond to the description of the sthāvibhāva, for the vādi is said to be the king, the samvādi the commander-in-chief, the anuvādi an ally and the vivādi or discordant note an enemy. But in spite of these factors I do not feel that the vādi or the samvādi notes can by themselves express the sthāvibhāva of a raga. To bring out the intricacies of the mood of an emotion something much more intricate and subtle is needed.

5. In Indian music the unity of the entire rendering of a raga is a flowing unity and it is the śrūtis which give this flowing quality to a raga. The coherence of a raga is achieved through "...balance of expressions inherent
in the specific intervals of a particular raga..." An octave in Indian music is subdivided into 22 microtonic divisions called śrūtis of which twelve are named and ten unnamed. In Indian music a note or svara is hardly ever used by itself — the quality and colouring of each note is invariably established by the śrūtis and it is the unnamed śrūtis which give life and lustre to a raga, and in the rendering of the raga bring out the intricacies of the principal bhāva. These unnamed śrūtis are manifested in a raga are referred to by such technical terms as "duran", "muran", "gamak" or a "meend". The first two are tonal graces used in the dhrupad style of singing. The gamak is a fast movement from one note to another note in which the intervening śrūtis are used quite audibly though not with the same ease as in a meend, which is a gentle tapering of one note into the other during which the intervening śrūtis are used successively. The audial impression of a gamak is that of a fast vibration between two notes while in a meend, it is that of a single note being stretched over several śrūtis. It is these subtle intricacies of expression of different śrūtis which gives each raga an individual character and which helps to present the delicate nuances and
shadings of the mood of the particular emotion which is expressed in a raga. And in musical terms, it is not the vādi or samvādi which can present this but the pakad or the catch phrase of a raga. The pakad usually consists of both the vādi and the samvādi plus other notes, thus the pakad of Raga Yaman is NiReGa, but of course this Ni Re Ga does not and cannot be translated into its Western counterpart of B D E on the piano, rather it would be in the form of a meend traversing several śrūtīs. Roughly speaking Ni would probably include śrūti 1 in the madhya sāntak and śrūtīs 22 21 20 of the mandra sāntak, all sung in a circular manner around the fixed śrūti of Ni i.e. śrūti 21 of the mandra sāntak. Then Re again would include śrūti 21 in the mandra sāntak and then rise up from 1 to 7 in the madhya sāntak and back again to śrūti 5 which is the standard śrūti position for Re. Ga is then sung at its original śrūti position the 8th, before it sweeps downwards with a langurous sweep traversing several śrūtīs to rest at tonic Sa. These langurous sweeps of the pakad itself then suggests and presents the mood of repose and indolence which as indicated earlier are the moods Raga Yaman evokes. The meend over Ni used variously bring out the yearning quality of the raga.
This yearning is not heart reading, it is more like cajoling and this is effected through the use of gamaks. The pakad sung in the form of a gamak would give the effect of cajoling. The gamak is not always jerks, sometimes the jerks are given a slight caress of a meend and this given a kind of tenderness to the cajoling.

In Raga Mian Malhar which also expresses 8 "love's longing" the pakad Ni Dha Ni Pa Ma Pa Ni Dha Ni Sa Pa Ga, by using different variations of both Nishads. Here Ni would start from śruti 21 of the manda saptak and go down to about śruti 17 and then back to Ni and repeat this circular motion before going right down to śruti 14 and then rising up again in the same circular motion caressing śruti 22 before rising through 22 to the tonic of the madhya saptak. Then with a sudden gamak Pa, and then the descent to Ga (komal) which brings out the brooding intensity of the yearning. Of course here it must be mentioned that only for theoretical purposes I have thus broken down or elaborated the pakad. In practice it cannot be thus broken, i.e. one cannot understand the pakad without having heard it, nor can one learn to perform merely by looking at the notations. The lucidity and expressive quality is something which is to be experienced immediately.
It is seen then that the meend and the gamak play a very integral role in Indian music for the successful presentation of a sthāvibhāva of a raga is dependent on how proficiently and with what artistry the performer uses the different śrūtis. The musician has to employ the śrūtis in such a way that although different svaras suggestive of different emotions are put together, the continuity of the basic mood is maintained and the overall effect is one of an unbroken totality. Grace which is achieved through meends and gamaks thus seem to be absolutely essential in Indian music. The stress here is not what notes are being used for many ragas may have similar notes, even similar vādis and samvādis e.g. Raga Hindol and Raga Hamir have vādi Ga and samvādi Dha, but rather on how the notes are being used — whether it is by slurring upward to a certain note or by "breathing" a gentle hint of many overtones", before coming to a rest. The meends and gamaks thus seem to breathe life into a raga.

It is perhaps impossible to capture these fleeting elusive movements between tones and semitones on the tempered Western scale but Peggy Holroyde suggests that in Bach and Handel there are many moments where, like in the hearing of a raga, the ear longs to be drawn to a resolu-
tion of the preceding sounds as in a cadence towards the tonic. Bach too seems to be slurring over the tonic and withholding the resolution.  

6. "The principles of articulating music are so various that each composer or performer finds his own idiom even within the traditions he happens to inherit". The sthayibhava or the commanding idea may inspire different performers in different ways, thereby making the performer bring to his music that elusive tough which enhances the spirit of the music. In Indian music where every performance is itself an act of creation, each musician may bring out different aspects of the same raga, by his relative use of śrutiś and the varying emphasis he gives to different notes and this is dependent on how the sthayibhava has moved him. Thus Raga Marwa played by Pandit Ravi Shankar evokes and austere, impressive and devotional mood, whereas Ustad Amir Khan transforms it into a tender, sensuous raga. Another apt example is Raga Malkauns which has been rendered by almost all the great artistes, and each one given to it a different flavour. Ustad Amir Khan aspiring for depth and repose brings out the profundity of the raga while Pandit Yeshwant Rao Purohit with his typical style brings out the fluidity and poignancy of the raga. Bade
Ghulam Ali Khan's powerful rendering makes it an epitome of *utsaha* and *veera*, while Pandit Bhimsen Joshi through his resilient style and creative use of *śrutis* makes it sublime.

In fact the same performer at different sessions may also create different moods depending on how the *sthāyibhāva* has moved him. Thus in Raga Mian Malhar, at one session the performer might stress on *Ni* thereby increasing the poignancy of the raga, while at another the stress would be on *Pa* and *Ga* (*kōmal*), which brings in a sense of brood. A *raga* then, can be presented in an infinite variety of ways and no way will be wrong as long as the musician is guided by the *sthāyibhāva* in such a way that the inner spirit..."the fragile intangible core of *sukshan svāraṇ*" is presented i.e. as long as *rasa* which is the resultant of the organic whole is presented. A similar view is expressed by Susanne Langer when she says:

As soon as a musical idea acquires organic character... it expresses the autonomous form of a work, the commanding form, that controls its entire subsequent development. It is the comprehension of this organic unity and individuality that enables a composer to carry out a protracted piece of work on the strength of one initial inspiration, and make the produce more and more integral, instead of less and less so,
by the constant importation of new ideas, sometimes even themes that occurred to him long ago, developments he has used elsewhere, traditional preparations — all to be assimilated and transfigured by the unique composition. As long as he can keep the musical organism alive in his imagination he needs no other rule or goal.

7. My discussion of the sthāvibhāva will, I hope, have thrown some light on how expressiveness is effected in a piece of music. My purpose has been to show both that a specific expressive property is attributable to a piece of music, and also that although I have said that in Indian musical terminology it is the pakad through which the sthāvibhāva is presented my intention is not to suggest that these musical elements can be separated from the whole. A raga is an organic unity and the pakad enhances and accentuates the sthāvibhāva of the raga, but the sthāvibhāva is not confined to particular aspects only but permeates the entire rendering. Besides this, my discussion I hope, has clarified the point that the sthāvibhāva is not the rasa, but rather that it is that which determines the basic form and structure of a musical piece while rasa is the resulting relish which the said mood brings about. Rasa is not any individual feature but the resultant of all the ingredients put together
in a concoction, using a simile from food, it is not that which is better, or sweet or sour or savoury, but that which gives relish. In music it is that which gives prāna to a raga and makes it "vivant". This distinction between the sthā vibhāva and rasa is also clearly made in the Nāṭya Sastra, for there a list is given of the eight sthā vibhāvas with their corresponding rasas. Thus we have śṛṅgāra and rati, hasya and hasa, karuna and đoka, raudra and krodha, veera and utsaha, bhavānaka and bhava, vibhatsa and jugupa, abhuta and vismaya.

Rasa then, is not an emotion, not even a primary emotion but that which vitalizes and emotion. The important point in an aesthetic configuration is the context i.e. it is not so much what emotion is being expressed but how the emotion is presented. Thus when it is said that Raga Malkauns expresses Veera rasa Raga Gaur Malhar expresses śṛṅgāra rasa, what is meant is that in these ragas the quintessence of heroism and love has been captured. The dominant rasa of the Abhī Māna Śākuntalam is undoubtedly śṛṅgāra and śṛṅgāra is presented as a result of the depiction of the myriad facets of love in the work. From the beginning till the end the different aspects of love — first there is the bashfulness, then the expectancy,
the fulfillment followed by ecstasy, then the anguish of separation, the hurt of rejection, the grief of dejection, the regret, the remorse, then the joy of reunion and finally the tranquility of mellowed love — are presented such that the overall relish is that of love or śṛngāra.
REFERENCES

2. Ibid., p. 29.
5. Feeling and Form, p. 130.