

7. Film and Video

Synopsis

This module provides an introduction to the moving image, audio-visuals, film and video. It also introduces film appreciation through a few films .

Lectures

- 7.1 The Moving Image
- 7.2 The Auteur School of Thought
- 7.3 The Rasa Theory
- 7.4 Film Appreciation

7.3 The Rasa Theory

The ancient Indian thinker, Bharat-muni, wrote a treatise called the *Natyashastra*, in which he developed a theory called the theory of *rasas* that pertains to the enjoyment of works of art . The word *rasa*, means juice and in essence the theory suggests that any artistic creation has to be infused with *rasa*, in order that it may provide aesthetic enjoyment to the *rasika* or the viewer. It is suggested that both the creator and the viewer need to carry a refinement that allows proper engagement with a work of art.



Fig. 7.3.01

The concept of *Rasa* is manifest in all creative efforts – music, theatre, painting and films. The miniature painting above is imbued with *shringara* *rasa* that depicts love in its various manifestations.

The rasa theory may be extended to the making and viewing of films. The treatise on rasas identifies nine distinct human emotions. It is possible that one may find a parallel between the genre based classification and the nine emotional states identified by Bharat. The nine rasas are: i. shringara (evokes love)

- ii. adbhuta (evokes wonder)
- iii. vira (evokes valour)
- iv. rudra (evokes anger)
- v. hasya ((evokes laughter)
- vi. bhayanak (evokes fear)
- vii. bibhatsa (evokes disgust)
- viii. karuna (evokes compassion)
- ix. shanta (evokes calmness)

Films are often classified according to genre's such as adventure, romance, suspense, horror, tragedy, comedy, and so on. One may draw a parallel between the different genres and the different emotions identified by Bharat. Just as an accomplished playwright could possibly write a play that evoked one or more of these rasas, a scriptwriter or a director could make a film that is a love story / a science-fiction that evokes wonder / an adventure film full of heroism and bravery / a film against corruption that evokes anger and so on.



Fig. 7.3.02

The Mahabharata is an epic and the various events and incidents in it evoke all the rasas. What is the primary rasa evoked by the films 'Pyasa' and 'Mother India'?

Typically, a plot for a play (or a film) would have one dominant rasa – comedy (maps onto hasya) and a few other rasas that contrasted and complemented the central theme. There is no evidence however to suggest that a knowledge of the rasa theory enables the creation of some engaging play (or film). An accomplished film director, could be called upon to direct a film belonging to a particular genre. For example, one associates Hitchcock with horror films, or Chaplin with humour and comedy, but one cannot say that Hitchcock would have been able to make an 'funny' film as well as a film on horror.



Fig. 7.3.03

Films in three different languages that evoke the heroic sentiment (*vira rasa*). A genre based classification would put them under the adventure / action category. Most heroes thrive on adventure and courage in the face of impossible odds.

The theory developed for performances in theatre, suggests that a creative expression has to be imbued with a 'rasa' that may be enjoyed by the 'rasika'. One may loosely interpret the word 'rasa' as an essence or an emotion that entertains and enlightens the 'rasika' (a viewer / a connoisseur). Both the creator and the audience occupy a central position in this theory. For some expression or communication to be enjoyable and effective the creator should know how to infuse the creation with rasa and the rasika should know how to respond.

Some contemporary aestheticians have suggested a new rasa for our times – the rasa of alienation. A lot of creative works in contemporary times speak of a sense of loss and alienation.

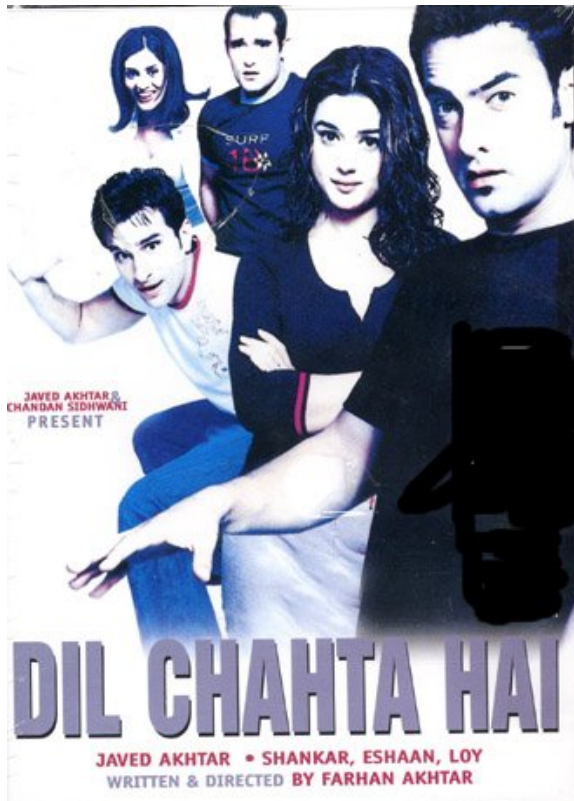


Fig. 7.3.04

It has been suggested that a tenth rasa of 'alienation' is a new rasa that characterizes our times. A film like 'Dil Chahta Hai' is possibly illustrative of such a rasa.