Rasanubhava in Kudiyattam on Theoretical Perspectives

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The word Kutiyattam has been subjected to different etymologies. Here I take, the play (a.ttam) by the union (ku.ti) of characters, performed individually earlier. By this we can introduce the basic structure of Ku.tiya!.tam. Suppose, a character, Rama, in Ascaryacudamaqi, entering to the stage. The actor enacting as Rama has to conduct a lot of duties, His entry is technically known as Purappad. On first day the actor, with the costumes of character, will perform some ritual Nritta, known as kriya.. From next day onwards, Nirvahaqa starts.lt can be classified into three parts.-

(1) Anukrama- By this actor, now exists as a narrator, will bring back the pre-history of the character through an interrogative method.

(2) Samksepa — It is a brief narration of the character's pre-history.

(3) Nirvahana — It is an elaborate description of the pre history upto the present condition.

For this many days may be required. The sequence of Purappad - Nirvahaqa is essential for every character. After this, the characters will assemble on stage to resume the play. Ku.tiya.t.tam begins with this. By this method a very short play Bhagavadajjukam Prahasanam will take 35 days to complete the entire plot.. Ramayananatakam, performed as a yajna, ritual sacrifice, with 21 acts-7 acts each of Pratima, Abhisheka, Cudamani within an year. Now we can analyse how Ku.tiyat.tam performance, produces Rasanubhava from different angles of poet--actor —spectator.

Take AscaryacudamaQI for an example. Saktibhadra wrote this following theatric instructions of Dramaturgy developed on that time. The drama is based on well known plot and hero. "Praghyatavstuvisayam. Praghytodattanayakam". (Natyasastra. 18.10) Main Rasa should be Vira and the rest are subsidiaries. Adbhuta should be inserted in concluding part

"Eko rasongikartavyah vira syngara eva va
Angastvanye rasah sarveh kuryannirvahanedbhutam"
(Dasaruupakam, 3-33,34)

This drama does not present, non-permitted incidents on stage. But it makes some imaginative diversions from Ramayana, in the middle, to mould the central Rasa, focusing on the title. Hence the drama, from the poet's point of view, experiences Vira Rasa following the rules of Dramaturgy

Now we can move on to the presentation of the drama. It is an actor's theatre. The presentation is not known by the name of drama., but by the acts (ankam). Parnasalankam, Surpanqkhankam, Mayasitankam, Jatayuvadhankam, Asokavnikankam, Ankuliyankam and Ezhamankam are different . Each Kuliya.t!ams will take many days with its mode of presentation referred earlier. Hence by the text of drama loses its identity. Now the actor takes limitless freedom to present his interpretation. If you take every act independently you will lose traditional concept of hero. Main actor will not take the role of hero, Rama, in the presentation of the acts. On contrary, they will take the challenge of antiheroic characters as Surpanokha,. Ravaqa or Pataka. heroes (subordinate character) as Hanuman

We can think about the state of actor According to the presentation style of this art form, actor's histrionics should concentrate on eye gestures. He has to express the emotions bearing a heavy costumes and facial make up. For this a rigorous training is essential. There is a belief that after tying the head ribbon to start the make up he will not be affected by external world. But when he is on the stage he is inducted with different personalities. On Nirvahaqa, he will enter as the character Rama. When he narrates the pre history of the character he is the actor. On this occasion, he cannot use the word 'I', but Rama. Next, he will be transformed as a performer of rituals, kriyanrtta. Amidst these conditions he cannot be completely detached from his personal feelings. Hence, what will be the state of an actor. We can ascribe a Yukta- Viyukta Dasa (involveduninvolved state) as in Sama. (Sahityadarpana, 3.150) Here we can refer two comments-
"Kaavyaarthabhavanasvado nartakasya na varyate"

(Dasarupaka 4.42)
"Nayakasya kaveh srotuh samanonubhavastatah"
(Locanam, karika, 1.6)
How this art form makes anubhava on the audience. You can see the limited space for the audience in Kuttampalam. The lamp will have three wicks — two directed towards the eyes of the performer and one towards the audience, Kulasekhara who put the base for this art form, classifies the audience into two- Nanaloka (general), and Preksaka (elite) The former class will understand the primary meaning of the presented matter by Abhinaya and the elite class should know the inner meaning though Sthayibhava, For this the actor should express the inner meaning through the eye gestures. This is indicated in his Vyangyavyakhya. Elaborate style of presentation through improvisations, addition of tales and sub tales, regional language, etc, forced the audience to be more endured, more studious, more scholarly. They have to accept whatever the actor presented. Hence Ku.tiya.ttam has been an actor oriented theatre. This unchallenged position of the actor on the stage resulted the outburst of Natankusa. He questions kriya, induction (Pakarnna!.tam) of other characters, exclusion of the characters referred in drama, from stage, usage of regional language, etc. He makes criticism based on Rasa experience. All these improprieties break the Rasa experience

Now we can go through the present situation. According to Paimkulam Rama Chakyar, lengthy Nirvahana can be omitted to present the full play. By this Natyarasa could be maintained. (Kutiyattathinte Puthiya Mughangal, P-35). He limited Bhagavadajjukam, a 35day long play, into a night long Kuliya.t.tam performance Recent developments in art form begins with this. Now we can see different views on new choreographies-

1 . Presentation of Dramatic text omitting Nirvahana, long descriptions like Vanavaroana, Soundaryavarnana, etc. Eg- SakuntaJam, Karnabharam It makes the experience of Prabandharasa.

2. Presentation, strictly following the traditional style of PurappadNirvahana, in more than a day, eg- Nirvahaqa of Mandoodari and briefing the structure in a day without omitting the parts, Eg- Ma-

yasirass This create Prakarana Rasa (Rasa related with context), and Anush!haana Rasa (ritualistic experience)

3. Themes from different culture were experimented. Eg-Macbeth, Desdemona, Kmqaki. Presentation was based on Sanskrit translation. It faced the challenges of costumes, behaviours, descriptions, etce Here, the presentation demands a cultural compromise with the audience.. Ku.tiya.t!am transforms a drama of different region to a Kerala context. Eg- Madhavya of Sakuntalam is presented as Namputhiri of Kerala. We enjoy this with this understanding. Such a compromise is needed for the Rasanubhava of the Non -Indian subjects.

Hence Rasa experience can have new interpretations with contemporary views.

Bibliography

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