

## Literature and Rasa Theory's role in shaping Societal, Moral Understanding of AI

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### ABSTRACT

Literature has always been a mirror of human experiences, shaping societal values, cultural identities, and ethical perspectives throughout history. As we step into the age of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Generative Text Models, the role of literature remains crucial. While AI can generate stories, poems, and narratives, it often lacks the emotional depth and moral understanding that are inherent to human expression. This paper examines the importance of integrating literary principles into AI development to enhance its ability to grasp emotions, ethics, and societal nuances. By doing so, we can create AI systems that produce more authentic and meaningful literary content while adhering to ethical and moral standards. The collaboration of literature and AI has the potential to preserve the human touch in an increasingly automated world, ensuring that technology continues to serve as a tool for meaningful and empathetic communication.

### KEYWORDS

Artificial Intelligence, Dystopia, Literature, Mapping, Rasa, Universal Emotional Reactions

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Literature defines and builds the society. Literature from the time of stone age to medieval and to the modern age, has a foundational role in the making and shaping of societal understanding, collective moral values and cultural identities. From ancient oral traditions to modern digital narratives, literature has played a primal role in shaping societal norms, challenging ideologies, and fostering empathy. The advancement of AI and Technology does need Literature at its core. Literature's presence and importance cannot be ignored even in this new AI age.

In the contemporary age of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Generative Text Model, where various tools, software or say AI models are generating stories, plots, poems and texts

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of their own. The very closeness from a human brain expression of new Literature is still afar. The rightful understanding of emotions like a mirror reflecting human experiences, influenced thoughts, behaviours, ethical evolution needs deeper understanding by the AI. In this paper I introduce several methods to improve the understanding of Artificial Intelligence on deeper level, to perpetuate AI in the right direction ethically and morally, making it more genuine. It will also have the impact on the process of new automated literary creation by the AI.

## **2 | HUMANS AND AI**

The relationship between humans and Artificial Intelligence has become one of the most pressing questions of the modern era. AI which was built as a mirror of human intelligence, started as a mere tool of computation, has now permeated almost in every aspect of life. Prima facie it was used in automation and data analysis. Now it has stepped into creative arts and human interaction as well. At its core, Artificial Intelligence is an amplification of human capabilities. AI-driven models can analyse vast amounts of data, detect patterns beyond human capacity, and even assist in artistic endeavours—writing, painting, and composing music. The results that we get are very human-alike from a long time, but the question that arises is how much close the works of AI gets to originality.

With the rise of automation, many fear job displacement, as machines outperform humans in tasks that once required cognitive effort. Moreover, AI's ability to replicate human-like responses in conversation, creativity, and decision-making raises the question of authenticity—if AI can simulate art, emotions, and reasoning, what distinguishes human intelligence from machine intelligence? The growing reliance on AI also raises concerns about bias, surveillance, and loss of human agency, as seen in Orwellian fears of AI-powered authoritarianism.

Today we have to accept that AI is now an inseparable part from our life and future. We only need to thrive upon making it efficient, better and closer to human empathy. Thus, it brings us to a very crucial point, rather than focusing or dwelling on the impact or effect of AI in society or literature, it is more important to shift our focus on developing the societal, empathetical understanding of AI. Hereafter, in this research the methods to get closer to develop that understanding has been discussed. There are two paramount methods to do so. One is linking/mapping of Rasa Theory in development of Emotional understanding of AI and another is Literature and more notably thorough understanding of several emotions through Literature.

## **3 | RASA AND UNIVERSAL EMOTIONAL REACTION**

### **3.1 | NATYASHASTRA AND RASA THEORY**

Natyashastra is a famous work of Dramaturgy, written by Bharata Muni, between 200 BCE and 200 CE. It is one of the most significant texts in Indian aesthetics, drama, and performance theory. In this work Bharat Muni defines: The Aesthetics of Human Emotion in Performance and Literature - Rasa Theory.

The literal meaning of the word Rasa is taste or savor. The term Rasa inflicts "a fluid that tends to spill, a taste such as sour, sweet or salty, the soul or quintessence of something, a desire, a power, a chemical agent used in changing one metal into another, the life-giving sap in plants, and even poison!" In its aesthetic employment, the word rasa has been translated as "mood," "emotional tone," or "sentiment," or more literally, as "flavor," "taste," or "juice". The gustatory character of the term resembles that of the Western aesthetic term "taste." However, rasa is not a faculty, as is Western "taste"; it is literally the activity of savoring an emotion in its full flavor. (Higgins 46)

Each of the rasas corresponds to a sthayibhava (as given in table below), an emotion that can serve as the affective tone of an entire play. The ingredients—a combination of Vibhavas (determinants), Anubhavas (consequents), and Vyabhicharibhavas (transient psychological states)—are conjoined and altered through the chemistry of acting into a form that can be aesthetically relished by the audience. This passage is one in which the Natyashastra equates the bhavas (that is, Sthayibhavas) with rasas.

Rasas	Sthayibhavas (Durable Emotions)
Sringāra (The erotic)	Rati (Erotic love)
Hāsya (The comic)	Hāsya (Mirth)
Karuna (The pathetic, or sorrowful)	Soka (Sorrow)
Raudra (The furious)	Krodha (Anger)
Vira (The heroic)	Utsāha (Energy)
Bhayanaka (The terrible)	Bhaya (Fear)
Bibhatsa (The odious)	Jugupsā (Disgust)
Adbhuta (The marvelous)	Vismaya (Astonishment)

In a dramatic production, the sthayibhava (durable emotion) is the overarching emotional tone of a play as a whole. And it is used to denote the essence of poetry. It signifies the peculiar experience that poetry affords us<sup>1</sup>. For ultimately everything is an experience, such as a colour, taste, or emotion, and can be known as it is in itself only through direct acquaintance.

The AI cannot have this direct experience. That is why, we have classes of similar experiences, each class being represented by a general idea of it (and by a word), and we have a descriptive knowledge of it in terms of phenomena which are found to be its natural correlates or determinants. The rasa school holds the essence of poetry to be a quality distinct from its determinants which are more commonly known characters, such as natural situations, human actions and emotions (Chaudhury 147). The Natyashastra, while rooted in Indian aesthetics and dramaturgy, describes a universal theory of human emotions (Rasas) and their expressions (Bhavas). Though it originates in India, the fundamental emotional responses it outlines—love, laughter, sorrow, anger, heroism, fear, disgust, wonder, and peace—are not exclusive to any one culture.

### 3.2 | UNIVERSAL EMOTIONAL REACTIONS

Psychological and neuroscientific research suggests that humans across cultures share similar emotional responses due to common biological and cognitive mechanisms. For instance:

- Paul Ekman's research on universal facial expressions shows that emotions like joy, sadness, anger, and fear are recognized across all cultures.
- Neuroscientific studies on mirror neurons indicate that humans have an innate ability to empathize with and react to emotions, regardless of cultural background.

Does a particular facial expression signify the same emotion for all peoples? Does an expression composed, for example, of a raised brow, widely opened eyes, and a dropped-open mouth always signify surprise? Might the same facial expression signify sadness and have no emotional connotations whatsoever in some other culture?

A long-continuing dispute has been waged over the question of whether there are universal facial expressions of emotion or whether facial expression of emotion is specific to each culture. The argument stems from differing theoretical explanations of how facial muscular movements become related to emotional states. Most universalists maintain that the same facial muscular movement is associated with the same emotion in all peoples through inheritance. Relativists view facial expression as in no way innate, but akin to language and learned within each culture; therefore, only through a highly unlikely coincidence would a facial expression be found to have the same emotional meaning in two independent cultures.

In his research conclusion Paul Ekman derived that "We believe, then, that we have isolated and demonstrated the basic set of universal facial expressions of emotion. They are not a language which varies from one place to another; one need not be taught a totally new set of muscular movements and a totally new set of rules for interpreting facial behavior if one travels from one culture to another. While facial expressions of emotion will often be culture-specific because of differences in elicitors, display rules, and consequences, there is also a pancultural set of facial expressions of emotion."

Our findings, supported by those of others, now provide the basis for settling the old dispute as to whether facial expressions are completely specific to each culture or totally universal. Our neuro-cultural theory maintains there are both universal and culture-specific expressions. The evidence now proves the existence of universal facial expressions. These findings require the postulation of some mechanism to explain why the same facial behavior is associated with the same emotion for all peoples. Why are observers in all these cultures familiar with a particular set of facial expressions (a set which is only a fraction of the anatomically possible facial muscular configurations)? But they are not merely familiar with these facial expressions. Regardless of the language, of whether the culture is Western or Eastern, industrialized or preliterate, these facial expressions are labelled with the same emotion terms: happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust, and surprise. And it is not simply the recognition of emotion that is universal, but the expression of emotion as well (Ekman 278).

Although Rasa Theory of Natyashastra is an Indian perspective but it comprehends to universal emotional response of all mankind. For AI to comprehend and replicate human emotions at a nuanced level, it requires a structured framework that categorizes emotions in a way that aligns with human experience. The Natyashastra's Rasa Theory provides an emotion-based classification system that can be mapped onto modern psychological models.

#### 4 | MAPPING RASAS TO MODERN EMOTIONAL MODELS FOR AI INTERPRETATION

AI systems, such as Natural Language Processing (NLP), Affective Computing, and Emotion Recognition AI, must understand emotions not just as binary states (happy/sad) but as complex, layered experiences. American psychologist Robert Plutchik's says emotions are adaptive—in fact, they have a complexity born of a long evolutionary history--and although we conceive of emotions as feeling states, Plutchik says the feeling state is part of a process involving both cognition and behaviour and containing several feedback loops.

Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions, 1980 is a graphic depiction to describe how emotions are related. Dr. Plutchik proposed that there are eight primary emotions that serve as the foundation for all others: joy, sadness, acceptance, disgust, fear, anger, surprise, and anticipation (Plutchik 530). Below is a mapping of Bharata's Rasas with Plutchik's Emotional Model and AI Interpretation of modern psychological and computational method:

Rasa (Aesthetic Emotion)	Sthayi Bhāva (Core Emotion)	Plutchik's Emotional Model	AI Interpretation (Text, Speech, Vision)
Śṛṅgāra (Love, Delight)	Rati (Romance, Devotion)	Love, Joy	Soft speech, metaphorical text, warm facial expressions
Hāsyā (Laughter, Comedy)	Hāsa (Mirth, Humor)	Joy	Upbeat tone, exaggerated facial gestures, light hearted language
Karuṇā (Compassion, Sorrow)	Śoka (Sadness, Grief)	Sadness	Slow speech, downward gaze, melancholic expressions
Raudra (Anger, Fury)	Krodha (Rage, Wrath)	Anger	Loud, sharp tone, clenched fists, harsh words
Vīra (Heroism, Courage)	Utsāha (Enthusiasm, Valor)	Confidence	Steady voice, upright posture, strong vocabulary
Bhayānaka (Fear, Terror)	Bhaya (Fear, Anxiety)	Fear	Stammering, wide eyes, defensive body language

Bībhatsa (Disgust, Aversion)	Jugupsā (Repulsion)	Disgust	Raised eyebrows, withdrawal, avoidance gestures
Adbhuta (Wonder, Amazement)	Vismaya (Astonishment)	Surprise	Raised eyebrows, wide eyes, exclamatory language
Śhānta (Peace, Tranquility)	Nirveda (Serenity)	Contentment	Calm voice, slow and rhythmic speech, meditative tone

This categorization helps AI "read" and "respond" to human emotions by analysing: Text-based cues (word choice, sentence structure, tone), speech variations (intonation, pitch, pace) and facial and body expressions (eye movement, muscle tension, gestures). This mapping thus provides a structural framework to develop the societal, empathetical understanding of AI on a deeper level. This will also lead to a better understanding of various literature used as database for the AI.

## 5 | LITERATURE

In literature part, there are two aspects that are needed to be taken in account while finding its role shaping the empathetical and moral understanding of the AI. First is the how over the period Artificial Intelligence has been shaped and presented in Literature and narratives. Second is the categorization of several literature in accordance with the mapping of different Rasa with emotional model and interpretation.

We have to explore "literary" perspective on the history of artificial intelligence. On the one hand, this means a literary-historical retrospective of the decades since the Second World War, but it also emphasizes the basic probabilistic trait of artificial intelligence, which becomes recognizable especially against the background of current technological developments (von Hermann 11).

### 5.1 | AI IN NARRATIVES

The representation of Artificial Intelligence has varied over time from the early fiction till now. But more or less, where it mainly found its existence in the narratives, it has been in the Dystopian Fictions. Literature has long explored the moral, ethical, and existential dilemmas posed by artificial life and intelligent machines.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) is often considered the first science fiction novel, presenting one of the earliest explorations of artificial creation, wherein a scientist creates the monster by bringing life into a dead person. Interestingly, when we look at the mythical stories or folk literature magic and mysticism has always been central part of the stories. H.G. Wells, one of the pioneers of dystopian fiction, imagined the consequences of unchecked technological progress. *The Time Machine* (1895) and *The War of the Worlds* (1898) explore themes of technological superiority, the loss of human control, and mechanization's impact on society. George Orwell's *1984* is one of the most influential dystopian novels that, eerily predicts the rise of algorithmic surveillance and AI-driven authoritarianism. The omnipresent AI-like surveillance systems, controlling information, manipulating history, and enforcing

ideological conformity. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) presents a dystopian society where technology is used not for control through fear (as in Orwell's *1984*), but through pleasure and artificial happiness. Though AI is not explicitly mentioned, the novel envisions a future where technology, automation, and psychological conditioning dictate human behavior.

The progress in the broad field of artificial intelligence (AI) seems to be catching up with many films of the science-fiction (SF) genre, in which we have been watching humanoid robots and powerful computers for decades. Interpreting science-fictional AI too literally as serious representation of the technology can have the following implications: First, taking fictitious humanoid robots and autonomous machines in SF for real disregards of the technical limitation of AI, obscures the chances and risks already at stake and might mislead the public as well as policy makers. The chances of AI are manifold, for example optimization and improvement on a global scale in areas such as health, agriculture, infrastructure or environmental protection. AI cannot be a simple technical solution to a problem but is a social negotiation of goals set by humans. Moreover, the fact that AI is built by humans and trained with human-defined and human-collected data can lead to various kinds of biases in AI systems that entrench asymmetric power structures (Hermann 327).

Over time, dystopian novels have consistently remained at the forefront of literary focus representing Artificial Intelligence. These narratives have portrayed artificial intelligence often as a tool of control, surveillance, or dehumanization. While some narratives explore AI's potential for autonomy and rebellion, most highlight its role in amplifying dystopian fears, questioning the loss of human agency and moral boundaries in a hyper-technological future.

## 5.2 | CATEGORIZATION OF LITERATURE

For AI to develop a constructive and continuous Societal and Empathetical Understanding it is impetus that an in-depth categorization and beforehand classification is done to several Literary text. These Literary texts which further would act as data, an unbiased data for an ethical and moral development of understanding of AI.

Knowledge acquisition is a difficult and time-consuming task. The difficulty raises because experts do not report on how they reach a decision. As a consequence, the decision is acquired out of its context when experts rather justify why the decision is correct within a specific context. Context in knowledge acquisition is generally considered either before the building of the system or during the use of the system.

In artificial intelligence, the efforts concern mainly the representation of context nested with the knowledge. Some of the questions that must be addressed are: Does part of the context belong to the knowledge base or a particular context base? What are the relationships between context and meta-knowledge, context and knowledge representation, context and time, context and decision? (Brézillon 20).

This knowledge based or context-based contents are to be categorized for AI understanding. Several narratives with different tones, varying motives carry several emotions. These different levels of emotions, each emotion different from the other is to be

taught or fed to the AI as a professor teaches an Art student. For example, a father cries over mourning a dead daughter feeling one emotion. A father cries on the news of becoming a father to a daughter. A father shed tears if a daughter wins on something. A father also cries walking the aisle giving away her daughter on her marriage. On each incident the reaction of crying is the same. The subject is the father, the object is the daughter and the reason is different each time. On each incident what the father is feeling deep inside his heart is written or expressed in narratives differently. Each emotion felt by the father is different from the other, although they all lead to same reaction i.e. crying. But on each incident the tears come out in different ways, the facial expression takes different way as each feeling is distinct on various levels. This categorization with the association of release of different Rasa, different expression of emotions is to be needed to be done on Literature and further AI understanding of empathy, morality, society shall develop.

## 6 | CONCLUSION

Art and literature are the cornerstones of societal understanding, shaping human thought, ethics, and cultural evolution across generations. Literature, regardless of language, preserving histories, philosophies, and emotions that define civilizations. Through storytelling, poetry, drama, and visual arts, societies engage with moral dilemmas, social injustices, and existential inquiries, fostering critical thinking and ethical awareness. From ancient epics like the *Mahabharata* and *The Iliad* to modern literary works addressing gender, race, and identity, literature has consistently questioned, influenced, and redefined societal norms.

While AI revolutionizes industries and redefines human interaction, it still requires literature at its core to navigate ethical dilemmas, instil creativity, and preserve the emotional depth of human communication. The ability of literature to question, critique, and inspire ensures that even in a world increasingly driven by algorithms and machine intelligence, the human narrative remains central. Thus, literature is not just a product of civilization—it is an active force in constructing and sustaining it.

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