

Review of: "Power of musical sound and its impact on the psyche: an Indic perspective"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The authors begin with the sweeping claim that rational beings are moved by music. Certainly, compositions can be aesthetically judged as having an sweet and blissful power. Though the idea that there is a special and emotive intersectional power of music is compelling, the critical analysis needs more work. Do “irrational beings” matter more here?

The relevant passages from Nāṭyaśāstra, Chapter 28 on music ought to be referenced. If we are to infer the presence of *rasa* in music from the effect on the patient, and *sattva* is also a constituent of the patient, not the music, then what is the therapeutic value of the music? From a philosophical perspective, it is furthermore necessary to establish the basis of a therapeutic cause, since the claim in this article is that there is a logical pervasion relationship that “directly correlates with humane psychology” between music and the affective conditioning of the listener. Essentially we need to know why music is not different from medicine in this picture, and if there is metaphysical, not just metaphorical continuity.

The authors might instead begin with a supportable premise that those who already have an overflowing of blissful *sattva* may appreciate music easily. Such a toned-down claim would actually entail that yogic-therapy is useful for aesthetic appreciation and not the reverse. In which case, we first cultivate *sattva* in life so that we can enjoy *Madhura*, etc. in music. Having “a polished mirror of the heart,” pace Abhinavagupta, is to be erudite. Giving up all such goals also leaves open the possibility that our ability to appreciate music is fine.

Main critical issue: Starting with the introduction, some clarification is needed in the writing. The substantial claims are too fast and simple (that music makes one feel delighted). Nor do persons always claim ignorance as to why one is delighted by some kind of music. The authors might appeal more to our interests in appreciating emotive conditions of sentient beings which has an intersection with philosophy as a way of life and aesthetic theory beyond the narrow scope of art-therapy.

The authors of this paper are sensitive enough to relate some unique emotional atmospheres of music, and one should hope that they revise this submission to include more examples of the power in aesthetic enjoyment to which they refer. It is interesting to see the shorthand analysis the authors give as a reflection on the *rasa* experience itself. However, they should also demonstrate a wider range of different music experiences in which the power is manifested, and clarify the conditions of aesthetic experience, in order to support a problems-based approach to using *rasa* in a cross-disciplinary analysis.

