
UNIT 1 BHARATA ON RASA

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1.0. OBJECTIVES

The principal objective of this unit is to introduce you to the concept and theory of *Rasa* as propounded by *Bharata* Muni in *Natyasastra* (hereafter NS). which is known to be one of the first, most comprehensive and luckily largely extant treatise on *Natya* Drama, Music and Dance. It is primarily aimed at offering an exposition of the principles and canons of theatrical presentation to the practitioners of these art forms, *Natya* was *Bharata*'s prime interest but as the concept of *Rasa* was potent enough, it rose to the status of one of the most foundational concepts of Indian art and aesthetic tradition. This unit will make an effort to explain why *Rasa* is so important to *Natya* and how could it earn for itself, later, the status of the soul of theatre.

Since various basic concepts of *Rasa*-principle are so interlinked that it is not easy to understand one without understanding the others. This unit will introduce you to some such key concepts enabling you develop a comprehensive understanding of *Bharata*'s theory of *Rasa*.

By the end of this unit, we are sure, you should be able:

- to gain a basic understanding of the *Bharata*'s concept of *Rasa*
 - to comprehend the meaning and significance of the key concepts of *Rasa*-theory.
 - to know the elements and the process of realization of *Rasa*.
 - to learn the intent and significance of *Bharata*'s theory of *Rasa*.
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1.1. INTRODUCTION

As you open Chapter I of NS which discusses the origin of *Natya* you find sage *Atreya* accompanied by some fellow sages visiting *Bharata* Muni. Normally introductions do not begin with questions but that could well be said about ordinary treatises. NS is no ordinary treatise and we see an extra-ordinary question-answer session begin in the beginning itself. More than just a question-answer session it appears as if a performance of a *Natya on Natya* has begun. The protagonist *Bharata*, responds to the queries of the sages almost like a personified tradition of *Natya*. Move further and you see him in multiple roles – sometimes he prescribes like a seasoned instructor, sometimes he comments like a true visionary and sometimes he elaborates a technique

like an experienced performer, while his detailed instructions are benefiting the practitioners of *Natya* his pregnant statements are throwing challenging art scholars to reveal the underlying aesthetic principles. *Rasa* is one such principle. When *Bharata* states – There is no *Natya* without *rasa*, he clearly reveals the significance he attaches to *Rasa*. The script has evidence of no such question being asked by someone but even if some one has asked *Bharata* - It there *Rasa* without *Natya*? He would definitely not have said No? The tradition that was established is a proof. *Rasa* was destined to cross over- forms, influence other media and become one of the most significant concepts of Indian Art and Aesthetics. Scholars know it that the *Rasa* theory is founded on a deep study of our internal stimuli, psychosomatic and behavioural patterns, expressions, gestures, attitudes, postures, bodily movements, language of humans, even colours, costumes, embellishment and music were not left out. *Bharata*'s entire endeavour was aimed at developing a semantic of emotive communication (Rekha Jhanji, 1985) through which live actors would reproduce this world to live spectators in a living theatre (Promod Kale, 1979)

In what follows we shall try to find answers to some very simple but significant questions viz.– What is *Rasa* ?, What constitutes *Rasa* ?, What is its nature ?, How it is produced ?, How it is related to its constituents ?, Does it happen to every body ? Besides, we will also be trying to see how and why Aesthetics and Art should move together.

1.2. THE NATYASASTRA – A CURTAIN RAISER

Even at the cost of repetition we say NS is one of the earliest surviving and most comprehensive practical treatise on *Natya*, primarily addressed to the practitioners. Written in Sanskrit, this encyclopaedic work is quite unique in many respects. In its presentational style and mythological content it appears to be closer to a *Purana*, in its prescriptive nature and practical approach (more so due to its own title) it effuses the credence of a *Sastra*. Above all the text itself refers to a fifth Veda – *Natyaveda*, created by Brahma by taking words from *Rgveda*, music from *Samaveda*, movements and make-up from *Yajurveda* and emotional acting from *Atharvaveda*. This *Natyaveda* was created so that it should be accessible to all the four varnas. On this ground many deem it to be a work based on divine revelation. Keeping several factors and elements like use of vocabulary, study of rhetoric and metrics, figures of speech, mythological references, references or allusions in the then contemporary works, review of contemporary dramatic literature, *arya* verses mentioned in NS, techniques and styles etc. many scholars have acceded that original compilation must have been accomplished not earlier than 2nd century B.C. and not later than 3rd century A.D. Scholars also largely agree that the extant versions of the text are reconstructed from some texts which might have been available in 7th or 8th century A.D.?

The issue of its authorship may not be of much philosophical significance but it is an issue which has really drawn the interest of many scholars. It is true that the text itself talks of a *Natyaveda* originally created by Brahma but since the referred *Natyaveda* is not available, nothing could be said about this mythological reference and thus *Brahma* is not accepted as the author. Alternative names of *Adi Bharata*, *Ṣaṭsaḥasrikara* also crop up in the researches but scholars largely agree that *Bharata* Muni could be the author or the compiler of this text. Authorities like *Adya Rangacharaya* maintains that *Bharata* may not have been the name of any one individual rather

the name could stand for the descendents of a clan or it could be a family name directly associated with the practice and promotion of stagecraft.

‘*Abhinavabharati*’- Abhinavagupta’s most famous, most elaborate and most respected commentary on NS, mentions some names of the scholars like Matr̥gupta, Bhattodbhata, Bhattalollata, Srisankuka Bhattatauta and Bhatta Nayaka, who attempted commentaries on NS, unfortunately none is extant (You will read more about some of these commentators in the following units.) The extant versions of NS have come to us through the great retrieving efforts of many eastern and western scholars. NS is a comprehensive treatise extending to 36 (also 37 in a few versions) Chapters. Starting from the origin of Drama to the construction of theatre. *Tandava Nr̥tya*, *Purva Ranga*, *Rasa*, *Bhava*, *Abhinaya*, stage walk, *Pravṛtti*, *Vritti*, Nature of Drama (*Lokadharmi and Natyadharmi*). The plot, *sandhis*, *siddhi* music, to descent of drama on earth, NS has it all. However, for our present concern we can refer to Chapters on *Rasa and Bhava*.

1.3. THE TERM RASA

The journey of the term *Rasa* in different worlds of tradition has been marked by some interesting excursions, some metaphysical highs and finally a confident entry in to the world of Art and Aesthetics. At the extreme end of the range of its connotation, *Rasa* stands for the Absolute (*Raso Vai Sah – Taittiriya Upaniṣad* (II-7)) and at the other extreme it stands for Soma Rasa-a divine intoxicant. In Ayurveda it stood for mercury (parad), in Kamasutra it was used to mean Eros/love/passion, In Samkhya philosophy *Rasa* figures when the evolutes of *Prakṛti* are discussed. Well aware of these diverse meanings *Bharata* very rightly picked up the concept of *Rasa* to stand as the very purpose of *Natya*, the very essence of *Natya* and the very touchstone of *Natya*. *Bharata* discusses *Rasa* in Chapter VI popularly called *Rasadhyaya* and here the first significant and a very poignant statement he makes is - There is no *Natya* without *Rasa* (NS, VI-31) and a little later he submits a very simple definition of *Rasa* – because it is enjoyably tasted, it is called *Rasa* (NS, VI-3) So one could say that for *Bharata* *Rasa* meant the essence of the play without which no meaning would proceed and if there is no *Rasa* no *Natya* will exist. *Bharata* may not have explicitly stated in NS but what he meant by the term *Rasa* could be the state of enjoyment, the aesthetic experience of the spectators.

1.4 THE RASA SUTRA

Rasadhyaya carries a quintessential aphorism which could well be said the blue-print of *Bharata*’s concept of *Rasa*. It states – “*vibhavanubhava vyabhicarisamyogad rasaniṣpattih*” (VI, 31) and its literal meaning is-“From the union of *vibhavas* (Determinant conditions) *anubhava* (consequents) and *vyabhicari bhavas* (ancillary emotions), *rasa* (aesthetic delight) is realised” This *Rasa* sutra, cryptic, yet subtle, spells out the recipe of the realisation of *rasa*. It states that different elements of *natya* like *vibhavas*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicari bhavas* conjoin to bring out *Rasa*. It is believed that *Bharata* has conspicuously omitted *sthayibhava* from this aphorism besides not spelling out anything concerning how the union of all the elements take place and finally after the union takes place how the *rasa* is realised.

Omission of *sthayi*, from the *rasa sutra* did inspire a lot of debate later but scholars largely seem to agree that it is *sthayibhava* only which finally evolves into a *rasa*. Besides the mention of three vital components of *rasa*, *Rasa sutra* also mentions two more terms ‘*Samyoga*’ and ‘*Rasa-Nispatti*’ which *Bharata* leaves to the wisdom of the practitioner. However, eventually both these terms turned out to be polemical and lead them to a productive *Rasa*-debate. It could well be said *Bharata* may not have given a theoretical elaboration of the *sutra* alright but he did compile one full treatise for the benefit of the practitioners to find out how the three elements i.e., *vibhavas*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicari bhavas* should conjoin to effectuate *Rasa*.

1.5 THE KEY CONCEPTS OF RASA THEORY

Rasa theory is built around some very significant key concepts. All these concepts represent vital elements of theatre contributing their own significant inputs to produce a *Natya* aiming at realising *Rasa* for refined spectators. A thorough understanding of these concepts will help us to understand the *Rasa* theory better. In what follows we will study some such key concept of *Rasa* theory.

1. *Bhavas* – *Bhavas* are called so because they become or bring into being (*bhavyanti*) and help convey the desired meaning. They enable the *natya* to realize its *rasa* to ensure that its poetic meaning has been conveyed. *Bharata* gives a lucid definition of *Bhavas*: “That which conveys the meaning intended by the poet through words, physical gestures and facial changes is a *Bhava*.” (NS VII/3). Broadly speaking *Bhavas* refer to all the elements like *vibhavas*, *anubhavas*, *vyabhicari bhavas* and *sattvika bhavas* but in the Chapter VII on *Bhavas* *Bharata* largely discusses *sthayibhavas*, *vyabhicari bhavas* and *sattvika bhavas* totalling to 49 in all. In a broader sense *Bhavas* mean the originating cause of actualisation and evocation of *rasa*. *Bharata* made a clearcut distinction between real life emotions (*Bhavas*) and emotions depicted in drama (*Natyabhavas*) *Natya* being an imitation of life, real *Bhavas* can have their counterparts as *Natyabhavas* as well.
2. *Vibhavas* and *Anubhavas* – *Vibhavas* are made of patterns of life and serve as cause or stimuli of emotions. Explaining its etymological meaning *Bharata* states – The word *vibhavas*....is synonymous with *Karna*, *nimitt* and *hetu*. As words, gestures and the representation of the emotions are *vibhayate* (determined) by this it is called *vibhavas* (NS VII/3). These are elements which produce a desired emotion and determine the nature of consequent representation of emotions. Like manhandling, dragging, insult quarrel or debate and similar factors will act as *vibhavas* to evoke in us a feeling of wrath (*Krodha*). These stimuli could be external, existing in the external world or internal existing in the mind. (See table to find out different *vibhavas* for different *sthayibhavas*).

Anubhavas are *bhavas* which ‘show up’ on characters after some stimuli (*vibhavas*) has had their impact. They include the bodily movements, attitudes and facial expression by which the feelings are expressed by the artist and made to be ‘felt’. To manifest a feeling of wonder, widely awake eyes, raised eye brows, constant gaze etc. are some of the *anubhavas* used by actors. *Anubhavas* are the outcome of *vibhavas* and make the spectators aware concerning the dominant emotions, theme of the play. They can be those behavioural patterns which represent the evocation of similar emotions in spectators. *Anubhava* is considered fact

constitute the real skill and art of the performers. *Bharata* talks of four types of *Abhinayas* (Histrionic representations) *Angika* (Bodily) *Vacika* (Verbal) a *Sattvika* (involuntary acting) and *Aharya* (Back stage inputs) Performers are directly involved with the first three types of *Abhinays*.

3. *Sthayibhava* (permanent emotions) – Human life has some fixed emotive patterns, universally present and integral to our life They are a set of eight permanent emotions, which are subtle in nature and depend on other elements for their representation. Etymologically *sthayi* stands of abiding and continuing and *bhava* means existent. These innate, enduring, assimilative and dispositional traits of human nature are dormant and when activated they develop into an expressive and distinct emotive pattern which get manifested through some minor transitory states, bodily movements and involuntary actions.

The eight *sthayibhavas* are - 1. *Rati* (love), 2. *Hasa* (laughter), 3. *Soka* (sorrow), 4. *Krodha* (anger), 5. *Utsaha* (enthusiasm), 6. *Bhaya* (fear), 7. *Jugupsa* (disgust), 8. *Vismaya* (astonishment)

Being universally present the artists use them as objectifying principles to give their art work structural unity by unifying other elements of the work through them. *Bharata* did not give any specific reason why are *sthayibhavas*, *sthayi*. Giving the illustration of a king and the subject he explains one may each *sthayi* is a king because of its position and rest of the minor *bhavas* are its subject. In other words *sthayibhavas* being subtle, they cannot express themselves, they gets manifested through these *vyabhicari bhavas* only. It is very interesting to learn that like (8) *sthayibhavas*, *Bharata* enlists a limited 33 number of *vyabhicari bhavas* only. At times *vyabhicari bhavas* serve multiple *sthayibhavas*. (See table-I). King *sthayibhavas* do share their limited *vybhcari* subjects with other king *sthayibhavas*. Today, when we categorises plays, stories and even films we refer to the dominant emotions they delineate. For example we talk of a tragic play, a comic story, a romantic poem or a horror film. We must accept that modern art- forms have gone beyond these eight *sthayibhavas* now.

4. *Vyabhicari Bhavas* (also called *Sancaribhavas*) – Besides these limited number of *sthayibhavas* *Bharata* talks of 33 transient, ancillary, temporary, fleeting emotions which do not just accompany *sthayibhavas* but represent, reinforce and re-echo them. These emotions are minor, temporary and transitory, they emerge and fade and in the process portray the dominant emotions. *Soka* for instance could be expressed through some of the following *vyabhicari bhavas* - *indifference, anxiety, delusion, weeping and change of colour* (here *sattvikabhavas* are acting as *vyabhicari bhavas*) (See table-I for more similar examples). By working out a calculated conglomeration, of course, based on a careful observation and analysis, *Bharata* has worked out a very brilliant schema for the manifestation of *sthayibhavas*. *Natya* is a mirror of life, *Bharata* holds, through these well worked out recommendations of combination of different *vyabhicari bhavas* to evoke a particular *sthayibhavas* *Bharata* tells actors precisely how it can be done. But he cautions actors also that he is not formulating absolutely exhaustive and closed set of combinations of these *vyabhicari bhavas*, rather he accords some good creative freedom to the practitioners of these art form.

It is quite interesting to note that *Bharata* allows, at times, some *sthayibhavas* also to perform a double role as *vyabhicari bhavas*. *Bhaya* is a *sthayibhava* but in the manifestation of *Soka* it acts as a *vyabhicari bhava*. (See table for more similar examples). The role of a *vyabhicari bhava* and their prescribed arrangement in the manifestation of dominant emotions could be likened to the role of a WORD in discursive language. Like words the meaning assigned to one *vyabhicari bhava* could also be altered according to a different context. There are some *vyabhicari bhavas* which appear for three or four *sthayibhavas*.

Vyabhicari Bhavas

1. Nirveda (discouragement), 2. Glani (weakness), 3. Sanka (apprehension), 4. Asūya (envy), 5. Mada (intoxication), 6. Srama (weariness), 7. Alasya (indolence), 8. Dainya (depression), 9. Cinta (anxiety), 10. Moha (distraction), 11. Smṛti (recollection), 12. Dhṛti (contentment), 13. Vṛīḍa (shame), 14. Capalata (inconstancy), 15. Harṣa (joy), 16. Avega (agitation), 17. Jaḍata (stupor), 18. Garva (arrogance), 19. Viṣada (despair), 20. Autsukya (impatience), 21. Nidra (sleep), 22. Apasmara (epilepsy), 23. Supta (dreaming), 24. Vibodha (awakening), 25. Amarṣa (indignation), 26. Avahittha (dissimulation), 27. Ugrata (cruelty), 28. Mati (assurance), 29. Vyadhi (sickness), 30. Unmada (madness), 31. Marana (death), 32. Trasa (Fright), 33. Vitarka (deliberation)

5. *Sattvika Bhavas* – Some *bhavas* which are involuntary responses and manifestations which we employ to communicate our deeply felt emotions in a complex and deep emotional situation are termed as *Sattvika Bhavas*. While human beings undergo such states certain unconscious changes driven by hormonal discharges happen to them on which they do not have much conscious control e.g. blushing, tears, perspiration, horripilation. Darwin had quipped once that one can laugh when tickled but nothing can get a blush like this. *Bharata* talks of eight *Sattvika Bhavas* –

Sattvika Bhavas - 1. Stambha (paralysis), 2. Sveda (perspiration), 3. Romāñca (horripilation), 4. Svarabhanga (change in voice), 5. Vepathu (trembling), 6. Vaivarnya (change of colour), 7. Asru (weeping), 8. Pralaya (fainting)

The poet, the performer and the spectators all share these *sattvika bhavas*. These expressions specially help the performers to achieve objectification while retaining their subjective nuances. *Bharata* clearly states – “The temperament (*sattvika*) is accomplished by concentration of the mind. Its nature (which includes) paralysis, perspiration, horripilation, tears, loss of colour and the like cannot be mimicked by an absent minded person”. (NS VII-93) Through these *bhavas* the performers ensure to convey the immediacy, vibrancy, candidness and subjectivity of the emotions. *Bharata* instructs actors to undergo a set of rituals to clear the minds from personal and worldly involvements and preoccupations so that the depiction of such emotions is as true to life as possible. Like our *sthayibhavas* they are also integral and innate to our emotional complex.

Check your Progress I

1) If we express the *Rasa*-sutra in a mathematical expression it will be like one of the four equations given below. Identify the correct equation.

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| a) <i>Vibhava</i> + <i>Sthayi</i> Bhava + Vyabhicari Bhava | = <i>Rasa</i> |
| b) <i>Vibhava</i> + <i>Rasa</i> Bhava + Sattvika | = <i>Rasa</i> |
| c) Vyabhicari Bhava + <i>Sthayibhava</i> + Anubhava | = <i>Rasa</i> |
| d) <i>Vibhava</i> + Anubhava + Vyabhicari Bhava | = <i>Rasa</i> |

2) Differentiate the following:

- Rasa* from *Sthayi* Bhava
- Sthayi* Bhava from Vyabhicari Bhava
- Vibhava* from Anubhava

1.6 BHARATA'S RASA THEORY

Bharata declares that *Natya* is an *anukarana* (imitation) of life and the entire enterprise of *Bharata* in NS is aimed at instructing the practitioners to 'recreate' or 'reproduce' life by putting up a production through their enactment and several other theatrical elements. All this is aimed to create an aesthetically relishable unique experience called *Rasa*. What is this unique relishable experience called *Rasa*? Let us see.

Bharata opens his *Rasadhyaya* by asking these questions "what constitutes *Rasa*?" "What are the *Rasas* expert speak?" and a little while after he introduces a simile drawn from the word of cuisine to explain what he means by *Rasa*, he explains, *Rasa* is said so because it is something to be relished. Like various condiment, spices, herbs and other food items are blended and cooked to prepare a delicacy which is ready for a relishable tasting, similarly performers produce *rasa* out of the union of *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicari bhavas*. What comes out after this unifying, creative, assimilative and engaging enterprise is an aesthetical state for the spectators to be relished and known as *Rasa*. *Bharata* did not elaborate much on *Rasa*, like a good chefs, he was more concerned with giving a good recipe for a good delicacy. Chefs do not talk of good flavour and good taste they are sure of it. So was *Bharata* of his *Rasa*. His recipe of allowing a prescribed union of *vibhava*, *anubhava*, *vyabhicaris* to arouse *sthayi* so well worked out that *Rasa* has to emerge to enchant the refined spectators. One can easily make out his *Rasa* is a state of mind, nothing like any mundane state it, a state of intense absorption which is emotionally charged and an essentially delightful savouring experience.

Bharata never attempted writing or even working out a formal theory of *rasa*. It is probably later thinkers, more so his commentators, who were rather amusingly inspired by the ambivalence of some of his concepts that they started looking for a theory of *Rasa* in an out of out practical treatise. In the *rasa-sutra* mentioned earlier you must have noticed how *Bharata* talks of the production of *Rasa*. The union of all the three vital ingredients untiedly awaken the *sthayibhavas* of the refined and involved spectators. The awakened *sthayibhava* gets metamorphosed in to *rasa* – an experience which is pure pleasure par excellence. For theoretical interest two problems of this theory are of great interest. i) How the *Rasa* is Manifested (*Rasa-niṣpatti*). ii) How the *Rasa* emerges from the union of the three vital elements of *natya* (*Samyoga*) of *Vibhava*, *Anubhava* and *Vyabhicari Bhavas*. As said earlier much of later commentators based their commentaries on answering these questions

Another issue of theoretical interest is what is the basis of *Rasa*? Nowhere *Bharata* seems to mention that it is the *sthayibhava* which is going to evolve into a *rasa* but when he likens *sthayi* to a king he makes his intent clear. Obviously out of all 49 *Bhavas* all *bhavas* cannot be portrayed, the artist has to focus some where. His observations were based on human psychology, modern psychology has so much to speak on these issues today, prompted him to select only those feelings which are more prominent, more dominant, more visible and more live in the world. Hence he considered only eight *sthayibhavas*. Since these *sthayibhavas* are just latent to human psyche they need to have external manifestations through certain minor and transient emotions. He gives a whole list of such transient emotions and even works out their prescribed combination to depict the desired *sthayi*. But even this depiction cannot achieve the desired goal of achieving *rasa* so he brings in the services of *sattvika bhavas*. These emotions lend vibrancy and truthfulness to the emotional depiction. Besides these emotional elements he had a lot many theatrical devices like costumes, stage, accessories, music, dance which he integrated into the theatrical rendering. *Rasa* is realized only when all these elements are set according to the prescribed cannons which are based on observations of the way of word.

Although referred as traditional this verse seems to sum up a *Bharata's* idea of *Rasa* in a very vibrant manner. “A meaning which touches the heart creates *Rasa*; the entire body feels the *rasa* like fire consuming a dry stick” (NS VIII/7). *Rasa* is what embodies *Natya*, *Rasa* is what the artists strive for and *Rasa* is a state of consciousness wherein the spectators have not only apprehended the import of the artists but also felt its experiential aspects in a blissful state.

Kind of Rasas

Bharata mentioned eight *Rasas*, *Adbhuta*, four as major *rasas* and four are subsidiary *rasas* which come from their corresponding major *rasa* are considered. *Hasa* comes from *Srngara*, *Karuna* comes from *Raudra*, *Adbhuta* comes from *Vira* and *Bhayanak* comes from *Bhibhatsa*. Given below is a brief introductory account of the major *rasas* you may refer to the Table for a glimpse of the remaining for subsidiary *rasas*.

1. *Srngara Rasa* – *Srngara* is stated as the most important *Rasa* in NS. Since love is the most dominant feeling in life its representation in theatre, obviously, draws, a lot of attention. Based on the *sthayibhava* of *Rati* it is, set in beautiful surroundings to delightful music on beautiful location. It is depicted by men and women of healthy youth by raising eyebrows, side glance,

graceful steps and except laziness, cruelty and disgust all 30 *vyabhicari bhava* could be seen in action. It is of two kinds: *Sambhoga* (fulfilment) and *Vipralambha* (separation).

2. *Vira Rasa* - *Vira Rasa* has *utsaha* (enthusiasm) as its *sthayibhava* and it is normally associated with noble and brave individuals and their heroic deeds. Its stimuli include, determination, courage, justice, strength, bravers etc. and it is expressed through fearlessness, steadfastness, skilfulness, unrelenting nature. Its *vyabhicari bhavas* are self confidence, excitement, memory, self consciousness, self command. It could be acted out by throwing challenges, courageous deeds, showing boldness and expressing self confidence.

3. *Raudra* - *Raudra* emerges from the *sthayibhava* of *krodha* (anger) which is normally associated with evil persons of violent nature, who cause fights, its stimuli are harsh words, cruelty, spite provocation etc. It is acted through beating, hitting, dragging, bloodshed, inflicting pain and its emoteds through red eyes, knitting of eyebrows, puffiness up of cheeks etc. Its *vyabhicari bhavas* include energy, cold-blooded animality, excitement, intolerance, cruelty along with sweating and stammering.

4. *Bibhatsa* – Emerging from the *sthayibhava* of *Jugupsa* (disgust) *Bibhatsa* is stimulated by listening or touching, even tasting, smelling or seeing, undesirable, loathsome, ugly things, in evil settings. It is represented by withdrawing the body, by leering, spiting and showing agitation, holding nose, hanging the head or walking stealthily. Its *vyabhicari bhavas* includes agitation, lots of memory, excitement, confusion, sickness, death etc.

<i>Vibhavas</i>	<i>Anubhavas</i>
1. <i>The season (spring) garlands, anointment. Putting on ornaments, company of dear ones, living in beautiful abodes, gardens, witnessing pleasant things, indulging in sports and games etc.</i>	<i>Playfulness of eyes and eyebrows side glance graceful steps and gestures etc.</i>
2. <i>Disfigurement of dress, decoration, queer behaviour, distorted speech, disfigured gestures, imprudence, greediness, mistakes etc.</i>	<i>Expanded lips, nose and cheeks, wide staring and contracted eyes, sweating or red face holding the sides etc.</i>
3. <i>Curse, pain, calamity, separation from dear ones, loss of wealth, death, execution, imprisonment, exile, accident and misfortunes etc.</i>	<i>Tears, crying, losing colour of face, drooping limbs, sighs, absent mindedness etc.</i>

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|---|---|
| 4. <i>Anger, boldness, insult, lies, injury, provocation, harsh words, cruelty revengefulness etc.</i> | <i>Reddening of eyes, knitting of eyebrows, grinding of teeth, biting of lips, puffing up of cheeks, rubbing of palms, etc.</i> |
| 5. <i>Having a clear mind, determination, discipline, modesty, strength, bravery and brilliance etc.</i> | <i>Display of courage, and steadfastness, boldness, large mindedness, skills etc.</i> |
| 6. <i>Hearing strange voices, seeing strange objects, fear of jackals and owls, deserted house or lonely forests, hearing about execution or imprisonment of dear ones etc.</i> | <i>Trembling of hands and legs, fast to and fro moving eyes, gooseflesh covering the body, pale face, breaking voice etc.</i> |
| 7. <i>Hearing or seeing or feeling of undesirable, ugly and evil etc.</i> | <i>Withdrawing body, nausea, leering, agitation, face pinched, walking stealthily, holding nose etc.</i> |
| 8. <i>Sight of divine persons, fulfilment of desires, large assemblies, tricks and magic, entering beautiful temples or gardens etc.</i> | <i>Unwinking and widening of eyes, words of appreciation, exclamations, joy, trembling, stammering, thrilled body, tears etc.</i> |

Table depicting Rasas, their *Vibhavas*, *Anubhavas*, *Sthayi bhavas*, presiding deities and colours.

	Vyabhicari Bhava (also <i>Sthayi</i> in the capacity of Vyabhicari)	<i>Sthayi</i> Bhava	Presiding Deity	Colour	<i>Rasa</i>
1.	All vyabhicaris except indolence and cruelty. Also all <i>Sthayis</i> except fear and disgust.	Rati (Love)	Viṣṇu	Dark Blue	Srṅgara (Erotic)

2.	Weakness, apprehension, envy, weariness, indolence, inconstancy, sleep, dreaming, dissimulation.	Hasa (Laughter)	Pramatha	White	Hasya (Comic)
3.	Discouragement, weakness, depression, anxiety, stupor sickness, death, weeping (sattvika)	Soka (Sorrow)	Yama	Pigeon Colour	Karuna (Pathetic)
4.	Cold-bloodedness, energy, excitement, intolerance, deceit, cruelty, vanity, sweating and stammering.	Krodha (Anger)	Rudra	Red	Raudra (Furious)
5.	Understanding, poise, arrogance, vengeance remembrance excitement, horripilation and change of voice (both sattvika)	Utsaha (Enthusiasm)	Mahendra	Yellowish	Vīra (Heroic)
6.	Death, fright, also perspiration, horrification, change of voice, trembling or change of colour (All <i>sattvikas</i>)	Bhaya (Fear)	Kala	Dark	Bhayanka (Terrifying)
7.	Intoxication, despair, Epilepsy, sickness, madness, death also fear (<i>sthayi</i>)	Jugupsa (Disgust)	Mahakala	Blue	Bhibhatsa (Odious)
8.	Distraction, joy, agitation, also stupor, paralysis, perspiration, horripilation, fainting (all <i>sattvikas</i>)	Vismaya (Astonishment)	Brahma	Yellow	Adbhuta (Marvellous)

Table depicting Rasas, their *Vibhavas* , *Anubhavas* , *Sthayi bhavas* , presiding deities and colours.

1.7 LET US SUM UP

Bharata's NS, the oldest surviving practical treatise on stagecraft establishes *Rasa*, to be the desired objective of a production, performers and spectators. After introducing the concept of *Rasa* and its key elements the unit sketches out *Bharata's Rasa theory* which is largely based on the observations of the ways of the world and application of psychology of human emotions. It further delineates the process how *vibhava*, *anubhava*, *vyabhicari bhavas* conjoin together to produce *Rasa*, which went on to become one of the central concepts of Indian art and aesthetic.

1.8 KEY WORDS

Anubhava – (consequents/sensors) Response of emotions external manifestation, deliberate involuntary through which feelings are represented.

Bhava – (feelings/states/emotions/modes of being) A wider term referring to *Vibhavas* , *Anubhavas* , *Sthayibhavas* , *Vyabhicari Bhavas* and *sattvika Bhavas* .

Natya – (drama/play) Composite theatre of drama, dance and music.

Rasa – (flavour/taste/essence/integral/aesthetic experience/dramatic emotions) NS talks of eight such *Rasas*, realization of which is the objective of the performers and the experience of which draws spectators to theatre.

Sattvika Bhavas – (Psycho-physiological response/spirited modes) Certain involuntary consequents depicted by highly involved and concentrating actors, like sweating, weeping etc to create realistic effects in theatre.

Sthayibhavas – (permanent mood/dominant emotion/fundamental mental states) NS talks of eight of such dominant emotions which are universally present in all human beings.

Vibhavas – (determinants/indicators/stimuli) The causes (the human and the material) which determine the evocation of desired feelings in the audience.

Vyabhicari Bhavas – (transitory/complimentary/ancillary/states of emotions/inconstant modes)

1.9 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 2: THEORIES OF RASA

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of writing this unit is to make you see how the school of *Rasa*, instituted by *Bharata*, took its first steps towards developing into an influential tradition. Transcending beyond the boundaries of *Natya* the influence of *Rasa* spread to other art forms like Painting, Architecture and Poetics. More noticeable was its entry into the hallowed circle of Philosophical reflections. Hailing from the nurturing ground of a rich tradition of poetics-Kashmir three scholars of repute, each following a different philosophy, pursued one common goal-study *Rasa*. Bhatta Lollata took the lead in this direction followed by Sri Sankuka and Bhatta Nayaka. This unit makes an effort to outline their interpretations of *Rasa*-theory and highlight their contributions towards its advancement. We are sure after reading this unit you should be able to:

1. have an overview of the theories of *Rasa* propounded by:
 - a) Bhatta Lollata
 - b) Sri Sankuka
 - c) Bhatta Nayaka
2. have a basic understanding of the principle of *Sadharnikarana*.

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The rise of *Rasa* to achieve the status of a foundational concept of Indian poetics is a historical fact but how it happened is an area of interesting study. As an aesthetic principle *Rasa* gained an easy entry in to the world of Painting and Architecture but its tryst with sanskrit poetics had not been affable in its initial phase. Eminent Sanskrit poetic scholars and advocates of *Alamkara* school, *Bhamaha* and *Dandin* did take note of *Rasa* and also casually mentioned it in their expositions also but *Rasa* remained a stranger to the Sanskrit poetics for quite some time. May be it needed an equally potent concept of 'Dhvani' to do the honour of breaking the deadlock and also provide some missing links. Finally, it was Abhinavagupta who really paved the way for *Rasa* to gain a respectful entry into the world of poetics. However, much before all this happened Bhatta Lollata, Sri Sankuka and Bhatta Nayaka were taking different kinds of initiatives to obtain *Rasa* an entry into the hallowed world of Philosophical reflections. The threesome endeavoured to raise some significant issues, which *Bharata* had just touched, redefine some crucial key-terms and offer their own versions of *Rasa* Theory.

These three commentators, known as *Rasa* theorists had so much in common among themselves. - All the three hailed from Kashmir, all the three wrote their commentaries on NS, none of their commentaries is extant today and all the three got adequate mention in *Abhinavabharati*. All of them sharply focussed on two key terms of *Rasa* theory – *Nispatti* and *Samyoga*. While they were giving their interpretations they also raised many other significant issues. One by one we shall be introducing you to their expositions and step by step you will be able to see the ascendancy of the influence of *Rasa*.

2.2. BHATTA LOLLATA AND HIS UTPATTI-VADA

In the early 9th century A.D., Bhatta Lollata a philosopher from Kashmir, a fervent follower of *Mimamsa* and known to be a contemporary of Bhatta Kallata, produced a commentary of *Bharata's Rasa* theory and earned the distinction of being the first to initiate philosophical reflections on it. None of his work is extant and whatever we know of him and his views on *Rasa* come to us through the writings of Abhinavagupta. (*Dhvanyaloka Locana* and *Abhinavabharati*), Raj Shekhar (*Kavya Mimamsa*) and Mammatta (*Kavyaprakasa*). As you are aware India had a strong oral-tradition and mostly the texts were orally passed from one generation to the next generation. It is nothing strange that none of his writings are extant but what must be kept in mind is most of his views come to us through the writings of Abhinavagupta, who, in scholars like S K De's views, was one of his 'adverse critics.'

This first *Rasa*-theorist tried to give his interpretation to the *Rasa-sutra*, which apparently carried quite a few ambivalent issues. Being a *Mimamsaka* himself and in the absence of the idea of *Dhvani* (poetic suggestion) which took centre stage through the writings of Anandavardhana a little later tried he to extend the literalism to *Bharata's Rasa* theory and wanted to explain - what *Samyoga* stands for? What is meant by *nispatti*?, what is the significance of *Sthayibhava* in the realization of *Rasa* ?, how the two are related ? and what is the locus of *Rasa* ?

Lollata maintained that *Rasa* is an effect while *Vibhavas* are its direct cause. He held that *Rasa* is nothing more than an intensified and heightened *Sthayibhava* as a result of the combined effects of the play, the players and various theatrical devices. He further maintained that *Rasa* is located primarily in the characters. His *Rasa* is in fact real life *Sthayibhava* which is intensified, nurtured and heightened by *Vibhavas*, *Anubhavas* and *Vyabhicari Bhavas*. *Rasa-nispatti* (realization of *Rasa*) in Lollata's interpretation of *Rasa-sutra* becomes *Rasa-utpatti* (production of *Rasa*) or *upaciti* (intensification of *Sthayibhavas* culminating to *Rasa*). The imitation of the characters by actors who acquire this through their process of training and the other theatrical devices employed during the production of the play become a source of *Rasa* for the spectators. Lollata in his quest to learn more about the production of *Rasa* even spelled out the process and its stages, *Vibhavas* awaken, *Anubhavas* support and *Vyabhicaris Bhavas* strengthen the *Sthayibhavas* and enable it to attain the status of *Rasa* which then becomes relishable. The locus of *Rasa* and focus of attention are characters, the imitating actors come secondarily. The spectators are charmed by the grandeur of theatre and the performing skills of the actors and what they are enjoying are not their own permanent emotions but the *upacit sthayibhava* (intensified permanent emotions) of the characters and indirectly of actors. This communication happens through the actors and their acting skills. Lollata was probably echoing the views held by Dandin in the *Kavyadarsa* and also by the author of *AgniPurana*.

Before we critically analyse his interpretation of *rasa* which is mainly based on the points of criticism raised by his predecessors Sri Sankuka, Bhatta Nayaka, Bhatta Tauta and Abhinavagupta, we highlight below some of his significant assertions and achievements.

Initiated the Philosophical Reflection on *Rasa*

Bhatta Lollata, the first *Rasa* theorist is also credited with the commencement of philosophical reflections on *Rasa* theory. He not only spotted the ambivalent key terms of the *Rasa* theory but also raised the issues of their philosophical significance. It was his critical comments which attracted scholars like Sri Sankuka and Bhatta Nayaka to forge ahead the critical tradition.

Brought the Spotlight on *Sthayibhavas*

Bharata's Rasa-sutra is conspicuously silent on the role of *Sthayibhava* in the realization of *Rasa*. Even if we presume that *Bharata* simply could not have missed *Sthayibhava's* contribution towards *Rasa*, he did not explicitly state how it is related to *Vibhava* and *Anubhavas*. However, Lollata was more explicit in focussing the spotlight on *Sthayibhava* and giving it the distinction of being a potential *Rasa*.

Rasas are innumerable

Bharata talks of eight *Rasas*, in fact, initially he mentions only four basic *Rasas* out of which the remaining four emerge. Not even once the question regarding the number of *Rasas* is raised in NS. Lollata, however, clearly mentioned that the number of *Rasas* could be innumerable. He also might have been thinking the way Rudrata might have thought that *Rasas* are heightened *Bhavas* and there is no limit to the number of such *Bhavas*. Later on Abhinavagupta strongly criticised Lollata on this issue, and it is interesting to learn that himself did add the ninth *Rasa-Santa* to the existing tally.

Locus of *Rasa*

Lollata also raised the issue of locus of *Rasa* and stated that *Rasa* is primarily located in the historical characters e.g., Rama and *Dusyanta* and also manifested through various theatrical representations. However, Lollata is unable to explain how the actors are charmed by these representations.

Explained the Process and Meaning of *Rasa*-Realization

Lollata clearly mentions his three stage process of heightening of *sthayibhavas* and finally its intensification into a full fledged *Rasa*. His *Rasa-nispatti* becomes *Rasa-utapatti* (production of *Rasa*).

Critical observation

Sri Sankuka, Lollata's predecessor did not appreciate much of his efforts and based most of his theory on the criticism of Lollata's *Rasa*-theory. Abhinavagupta articulates Sri Sankuka's demolition of Lollata's theory in the following eight steps:

- a) The cognition of *Sthayibhavas* is not possible without *Vibhavas* as *Vibhavas* are the *linga* through which the *Sthayibhavas* are cognized.

- b) While the *Rasa* is realised as a direct experience rather their knowledge is based on denotational meaning so how could *Sthayibhavas* be *Rasa* later, even when they are intensified.
- c) Sri Sankuka also questioned Lollata's standpoint that if *sthayi* or in its intensified state *Rasa* already exists then what is the need of working out various combinations of *Vibhavas* etc.
- d) Sri Sankuka believed that *Rasa* is in an absolute unitary state not allowing any variations. If *Rasa* is considered to be the intensified *Sthayibhavas* it will have to entertain the gradual process of intensification which is not possible at all.
- e) Sri Sankuka extends the same logic to prove the redundancy of the six varieties of *hasya Rasa*- *smita*, *hasita*, *vihasita*, *upahasita*, *apahasita* and *atihatita*.
- f) Like *Hasya Rasa* Sri Sankuka pointed out that we will have to allow innumerable *Rasas*, due to ten states of *Kama*.
- g) On the same ground Sri Sankuka, questions the validity of *Soka* becoming and *Kaurna Rasa* because contrary to Lollata's principle *Soka* in fact wanes as it progresses whereas it has to intensify if it has to achieve the status of *Kaurna Rasa*.
- h) Finally *Sthayibhavas* like *rati*, *utsah* and *krodha* also do not attain intensification instead it is known that as they evolve further they eventually subside.

Notwithstanding these points of criticism - raised by Sri Sankuka we must accede that Lollata rightly deserves the credit of bringing the spotlight on *sthayi*, emphasizing its vital role in the *Rasa*-realisation. Of course he could not realize that aesthetic communication is not yet another kind of intellectual discourse, *Rasa* is also not a real life permanent emotion in its intensified state. Lollata's *Rasa*-theory has its own merits. He was the first thinker who drew the attention of later thinkers on the ambiguity of certain key terms in the *Rasa* theory. He did raise the issues of locus of *Rasa* and the experience of *Rasa* by the spectator. He might not have been successful in providing satisfactory answers to the key issues he himself raised but his predecessors seized the opportunities created by him.

2.3. SRI SANKUKA AND HIS ANUMITIVADA

A younger contemporary of Lollata, a 9th century AD Naiyayika from Kashmir was the second *Rasa*-theorist who guided the *Rasa*-debate to the next level. Almost exactly like Lollata none of his work is extant and all what we construe about his ideas is sourced from the writing of Abhinavagupta, Mammata and Hemachandra. Sri Sankuka literally demolished Lollata's *Rasa*-theory to advance his own arguments. In doing so he did try to answer some questions raised by his able processor and took the debate to the next level. Outrightly rejecting Lollata's central idea that *Rasa* as an effect is only an intensified *sthayi* caused by the *Vibhavas* belonging to the characters and also the performers, Sri Sankuka offered an improved version of *Rasa* theory with a view to bring back the *Rasa* to where it belonged, redeemed *Rasa* to become a unique experience meant to be savoured by the spectators, reinstated the significance of the performing skills of the actors and finally raised the status of the aesthete to be more proactive so as to be able to infer the *Rasa* from the presented *sthayi-Bhavas* and enjoy it too. He brought back the primacy of *bhava* in relation to *Rasa*. He further tried to establish the *Rasa*-realization to be a unique process of inference unlike any other accepted forms of cognition. You have already seen

how scathing was Sri Sankuka's criticism of Lollata's views now let us find out what new interpretation he offered to the *Rasa* theory and how tenable it itself was.

Sri Sankuka strongly criticised that *Rasa* is not a matter of production or intensification of *sthayibhavas*. Instead the *Rasa* is inferred. The *sthayibhavas* actually do not inhere in the actor but it is inferred to be the trained actor will his perfect rendering by means of blend *vibhavas*, *anubhavas* and *vyabhicaris bhavas* along unreal, creates an imitation of *sthayibhava*. The realisation of *Rasa* takes place when the audience infer the existence of *sthayi*. It is interesting to note that this type of cognition is unique, unlike any other accepted form of cognition. To expand his point further he offers an analogy of *citra-turaga nyaya* which stands for the analogy through which one can learn that the horse in the picture is actually called a horse.

His elaboration of *sthayibhava* and its relation of *vibhavas* etc. and *Rasa* are significant. He also raised another significant issue that direction cognitions of *sthayibhava* are not possible it can only be apprehended through its *vibhavas* etc. Unlike his processor he constantly talks of spectators and speaks of *Rasa* from the point of view and savouring of spectators. Besides he expects his spectators to be constantly ready to employ his ration faculty to infer.

Significant assertions made by Sri Sankuka

1. Clarified the relationship of *sthayibhava* and *vibhavas* - Sri Sankuka clearly emphasised that only through *vibhavas* only the spectators infer a *sthayi* in the actor which is reality is not there.
2. The realisation of *Rasa* is a process of logical inference - For Sri Sankuka *nispatti* of *rasa* takes place in the form of an inference where the *vibhavas* are *anumapakas* and *Rasa* is *anumapya*.
3. Imitation of *sthayibhava* leads to *Rasa* - *Sthayibhava* are real life permanent emotions which are imitated by actors. Actors are trained in the art of impersonation and through their artificial renderings they imitate the *sthayibhavas*. Spectators finally enjoy *rasa* through the imitation made by actors.
4. The cognition of the inference is unique - Sri Sankuka uses an analogy of '*citra-turaga-nyaya*' to prove that cognition obtained from inference is unique and absolutely unlike is unique and absolutely unlike the commonly known forms of cognition.
5. Raises the status of the spectator - Bhatta Tanta and other later critics had serious reservation about his theory. Considering *Rasa* to be an imitated form of *sthayi* was totally unacceptable to them. The meaning Sri Sankuka wanted to assign to imitation was too restricted. Even his original idea of inference of *sthayibhavas* was also not tenable. Bhatta Nayaka pointed out that the inference was not possible because the character was not present before the audience. None the less the points he raised and the status of aesthete he elevated helped later thinkers to explore deeper and further on *Rasa*.

2.4. BHATTA NAYAKA AND HIS BHUKTIVADA: THE CULMINATION RASA DEBATE

Towards the end of 9th century A.D. the *Rasa* debate reached its culmination with the entry of Bhatta Nayaka – a Kashmiri scholar of repute. He was an accomplished Alamkarika and an ardent adherent of Samkhya philosophy. His work '*Hrdaya Darpana*', in which he is known to have demolished Ananda Vardhana's theory of Dhvani, is not available today but it has got some considerable mention and citation in *Abhinavabharti* and *Kavyaprakasa*.

In the on going *Rasa* debate earlier his processors Bhatta Lollata and Sri Sankuka had raised some significant issues in *Bharata*'s theory, pointing at inherent ambiguities and even asked some fundamental questions. Bhatta Nayaka changed the course of the discourse. On the strength of his arguments and doctrines *Rasa* scaled new sublime heights to claim its likeness to the mystic experience endowed with unalloyed bliss.

His greatest contribution came in the form of the principle of *Sadharnikarana*, (mostly translated as Universalisation/Generalisation/Transpersonalisation of emotions in Arts) which enabled poets, performers and aesthetes to create, manifest and enjoy the universalised emotional complex of artwork without any personal consideration. After *Rasa* and *Dhvani* *Sadharnikarana* was another foundational concept which later thinkers found hard to overlook. *Rasa* debate till then had seen two divergent interpretations which did generate some interest but engendered many questions too. Advocate of the first *Rasa* theory Lollata maintained that a theatrical situation *Vibhava* act as the efficient cause (*Karaka Hetu*) to produce *Rasa* which primarily emerged in the character and secondarily in the actors who were playing those historical characters. One could say Lollata's *Natya* was being played. The *rasa* was being realised too but it was not meant for the spectators.

Next *Rasa*-theorist started by strongly criticising his processor but offered a theory which did not convince many including Bhatta Nayaka. Sri Sankuka maintained that *Vibhava*, *anubhava* and *Vyabhicari Bhavas* conjoin to reproduce the *Sthayibhava*. Trained actors reproduce these unreal *Sthayibhavas* with their skills and theatrical devices for the audience to infer *Rasa* from the reproduced *sthayi-bhavas*.

Bhatta Nayaka clearly saw both the theories were unable do justice to *rasa* and he was not even convinced of the power of *Dhvani* too. So he advocated a three function theory through which language, specially in poetry, accomplished its desired task. These three functions or as he called them *Vyapars* were-

The *adhibha*, the literal meaning of *adhidha* would have only incorporated its denotative function only but Bhatta Nayaka went a step further that his *Abhidha Vyapars* was also endowed with the capacity to indicate also. In the words his *Abhidha* did contain *Laksana* (indication) also. This first function enables the poet and artist to convey the ordinary meaning at the level of intellect only. II-*Bhavakatva* or *Bhavna vyapar* refer to the emotive meaning which normally defies its expression through *Abhidha* and *Laksana*. It is this power of our emotional complex which help *Vibhavas* etc. to become universalised/generalised (*Sadharnikrta*) and attaining the unique status to belonging to 'none' but still be relishable by one and all. It is this function which allows the artist to imbue general characteristics in a situation, character or feeling. Through this principle the personal affiliations give way to universal elements so that the aesthete relishes his aesthetic experience without any personal involvements. We shall read more about an off shoot of this principle in the form of *Sadharnikarana* a little later. III-The third *vyapara* is called '*Bhogikarana*' or '*Bhojkatva*' through which the aesthete relished (*Bhoga*) the unalloyed bliss out of the artistic creation of the artist. This is the final stage where the spectators simply enjoys the art-work, poem, theatre an immerse themselves in its *Bhoga* which has a predominance of

sattva guna in it. Elaborating further he clarifies that this state is neither like *anubhava* nor like *smarana* but it is a state where one feels totally immersed and totally expanded. Its blissful experience is so subtle that it is beyond description and beyond this world.

Significant assertions by Bhatta Nayaka

***Rasa* is a state of blissful consciousness**

Bhatta Nayaka becomes the first *Rasa* – theorist to highlight the sublimity, dominance of *sattva*, unalloyed nature and akinness to mystic experience of the highest order of *Rasa*-experience.

Analysed the process of *rasa*-realization

Talking of the three function of poetic language viz. 1) *Abhidha* 2) *Bhavnavyapar* 3) *Bhojkatva*. He clearly laid bare how the process of realization of *rasa* take place. He clearly stated *rasa* is not just produced on inferred it in fact awakens as an aesthetic creation through the performance of these functions in the appropriate sequence.

The doctrine of *Sadharnikarana*

The doctrine of *Sadharnikarana* which ensures that a poet has creatively de-individualised the emotions, shorn them of their pain-pleasure association and made them universal enough to be savourable by one and all. Abhinavagupta has quite a few problems in accepting Bhatta Nayaka's views irrespective of the fact he did endorse some of his thought and even adopted them in his aesthetic principles. Being a hard-core *Dhvani* advocate Abhinavagupta was very critical of Bhatta Nayaka's *Bhavnavyapara*. It was common knowledge that Bhatta Nayaka created his *Hrdaya Darpan* only to demolish *Dhvani*. Abhinavagupta wanted to accept *Bhavana* only on the ground of it means '*vyanjana*' and he declared when a similar concept already existed what was the need of talking of a new concept.

Those who say that with Bhatta Nayaka the *rasa* debate rose to its culmination seem absolutely right. In fact it was Bhatta Nayaka and his three functions theory which answered any questions which were raised by his processor and also put the *Rasa* in the right perspective. Bharata has not talked much about the experiential aspect of *Rasa*. Bhatta Nayaka accomplished it to his best.

A Comprehensive Table outlining and contrasting three Rasa theories

Rasa-theorist	Rasa Theory	Philosophical affiliation	Idea of Rasa	Unique contribution
Bhatta Lollata (Early 9 th century A.D.)	<i>Utpatti-vada</i> or <i>upaciti-vada</i>	<i>Mimamsa</i>	Intensified, supported and strengthened by <i>Vibhavas</i> , <i>Anubhavas</i> and <i>Vyabhicari Sthayibhavas</i> become <i>Rasas</i> .	The first to offer Philosophical commentary to <i>Rasa</i> -theory. Highlights the significance of <i>Sthayibhava</i> in <i>Rasa</i> -realization. Did not believe in restricting number of <i>Rasas</i> to Eight only. Raised the issues of communication of <i>Rasa</i> to spectators and difference between <i>Rasa</i> and <i>Sthayibhava</i> .
Sri Sankuka (Mid 9 th century A.D.)	<i>Anumiti-vada</i> or <i>Prativada</i>	<i>Nyaya</i>	Imitated <i>Sthayibhavas</i> of characters become <i>Rasa</i> . While actors reproduce, the spectators infer <i>Sthayibhavas</i> .	Advanced Philosophical reflection of <i>Rasa</i> to next level. Highlighted the role of actor's performance. Reiterated the primacy of <i>Sthayibhavas</i> in <i>Rasa</i> -realization. Maintained Actor to be active inferers than passive receivers.
Bhatta Nayaka (Late 10 th century A.D.)	<i>Bhuktivada</i>	<i>Samkhya</i>	<i>Sthayibhavas</i> experienced through <i>abhidha</i> and <i>bhavakatva</i> and relished as a transpersonalised and extrawordly bliss akin to Brahmananda is <i>Rasa</i>	Highlighted the real significance of Imagination (<i>bhavanavyapara</i>) as integral to aesthetic experience. Introduced the Principle of Universality of emotions (<i>Sadharnikarana</i>). Tilted later deliberation towards subjective aspect. Established <i>Rasa</i> to be essentially Blissful and akin to Brahmananda. Contributed significantly towards analysis of aesthetic experience.

2.5. SADHARNIKARANA

Bhatta Nayaka presented his doctrine of *Sadharnikarana* more than 600 years after *Bharata* had advanced his *Rasa*-theory. In between the first two *Rasa*-theorists seen to struggle hard in the absence of a 'missing doctrine'. This was one doctrine which even *Bharata* would have readily incorporated in his original *Rasa*-theory. This is one doctrine to which even an adverse critic like Abhinavagupta could not ignore. However, it is interesting to note that this doctrine is a kind of a corollary emerging from the second of the three *vyaparas* or functions or processes of poetry which one could accord to poetry. There are no denials Bhatta Nayaka will long be remembered for such a brilliant contribution to the advancement of *Rasa*-tradition.

In our day to today lives we live our emotions along with their associated personal considerations, may be with their pleasure, pain and other concerns. A tragic situation in our life does make us feel sad and yield us pain too. Similarly a happy situation does the opposite. Now, try to recollect an instance from your life when you watched a play or a film and encountered a tragic-scene. Did that tragic situation also yield you pain like your real life encounter? Your answer would definitely be no? But why? The doctrine of *Sadharnikarana* has the answer to this question. While going through the basic *rasa* theory presented by Bhatta Nayaka we learnt about three functions or *Vyaparas* ascribable to the language of poetry. The second function – *Bhavakatra* or 'Bhavn-vyapara' provides the premise for the doctrine of *Sadharnikarana*. It is this power which enables the *vibhavas* in theatre to disassociate themselves from their worldly afflictions, personal egoistic considerations. Metaphors, figures of speech, absence of *dosa*, appropriate *gunas* in poetry and stylized movements, costumes, music, gestures, dance and other practioners to achieve *Sadharnikarana*. The process can be understood in this manner, a sympathetic spectator experiences the intensity of the emotions of the *vibhavas*, he ultimately forgets himself and identifies himself with the state of the *vibhava*. By doing so he is living the emotions but he is not being impeded by any associated affection. Such a feeling which is shorn of its association becomes a *type* which becomes an emotion having an eternal and universal appeal. But these *Sadharnikrit natyabhavas* (universalized theatrical emotions) do not loose their appeal, they do not become un-individualized, vague, devoid of their essential 'life and vibrancy'. These feelings continue to retain their concreteness but they have been emancipated from their personal and egoistic pleasure and pain giving associations.

It is interesting to note that *Sadharnikarana* emerges from the second function to poetry, which clearly indicates that after the aesthete has fully comprehended the denotation and indicative meaning to aesthete is now ready to insulate himself from the impact of feelings which might impede his aesthetic experience. At this second stage the doctrine helps the aesthete to break down the barriers of our psyche which do not allow the aesthetes to relive and relish the theatrical situation. On the strength of this principle the performer elevate the nature of *vibhava*, make it universally available and transform the *natyabhava* turning them into sharable common experience for one and all.

Students of comparative aesthetics will be familiar with some similar attempts made in the western world also. Thomas Aquinas' 'Reposeful contemplation', Kant's 'Disinterested satisfaction' and Edward Bullough's 'Psychical Distance' could be some close similarities. However developments happened much later in the western world. *Bharata* did not mention

anything akin to this principle in his NS but his entire enterprise takes into account that *Natyabhavas* are an imitation of our day to day *Bhavas* but all his efforts to develop conventions, evolve symbolic tools, employ dramatic accessories, use stylized costumes, use of music, dance, *purva ranga* rituals are indications that he wanted to theatrics situations to be objective situation with out loosing their immediacy and life.

Sadharnikarana as a principle aptly complimented *Rasa* theory and boldly answered questions like how and why a tragic situation is a relishable experience. Abhinagupta did raise some objection to this principle but finally he adopted into his own theory too. *Dhananjaya* the legendary another of '*Dasarupaka*' also readily accepted this principle. We can conclude by saying that if *Rasa* is the destination *Sadharnikarana* is the pathway. Bhatta Nayaka must get the credit for this achievement.

Check your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) While offering a new interpretation to *Rasa-theory* who emphasised the significance of acting? Name him and outline his *Rasa theory* in the space provided here.

2) Whose *Rasa* theory is better known as *Bhuktivada*? Name him and state his central idea in the space provided below.

3) Name the Kashmiri scholar who is credited with the distinction of being the first one to initiate the philosophical discussion of *Rasa-theory*. Outline his viewpoint in the space provided here.

4) Define *Sadharnikarana*. State its central principle in the space provided here.

2.6 LET US SUM UP

This unit introduced you to three earliest *Rasa* theorists who laid the course of philosophical reflections of *Rasa* theory. First in the series, Bhatta Lollata, unlike *Bharta* himself, clearly stated that it is *Sthayibhava*, adequately intensified by *Vibhavas*, *Anubhavas* and *Vyabhicaribhavas*, which becomes *Rasa*. Subsequent commentator Sri Sankuka rejected Lollata's argument and declared that *Rasa* realization is not intensification but a process of logical inference. Finally Bhatta Nayaka stated that *Rasa* is *Sthayibhava* experienced through *abhida* and *bhavakatva* and relished as an extra worldly blissful experience by experiencing transpersonal feeling. In the end we introduced you to the principle of *Sadharnikarana* introduced by Bhatta Nayaka which stands for generalization of emotions and emancipating the artist and spectators from the personal and egoistic associations of feelings which might hamper the savouring of aesthetic delight.

2.7 KEY WORDS

Abhidha :The first of the three processes of language art to convey denotative and also indicative meanings.

Anumiti : Act of inference of *Sthayibhava* in the actor.

Rasa-Nispatti :(realization/manifestation/completion of *Rasa*) The process as to how the different elements of *Natya* conjoin and result in manifestation of *Rasa*.

Sadharnikarana: The process of de-individualising and universalising the emotional complex of an art work for a detached appreciation for one and all. (universalization/generalisation/impersonalisation/transpersonalisation of emotions)

Samyoga : (conjunction) Conjoining of different elements viz., *Vibhavas*, *Anubhavas* and *Vyabhicari Bhavas* according to the canonical prescriptions with an objective to manifest *Rasa*.

Utapatti/Upaciti :The production or intensification of *sthayibhava* to achieve realization of *rasa*.

2.8 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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UNIT 3

INDIAN AESTHETICIANS

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- 3.2 Concerns of Indian Aestheticians
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3.0 OBJECTIVES

In the list of human values (*purusarthas*) known as *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (desire) and *moksa* (liberation), the concept of beauty did not occur. However in the Platonic conception of values beauty is included besides truth and goodness specially studied by aesthetics, logic and ethics. The non-inclusion of beauty among the human values paved the way for criticism that Indian Philosophy did not give adequate importance to aesthetics. However mere non-inclusion of the term beauty in the list of values does not mean that the Indian philosophers were not at all aware of the term beauty. In order to substantiate the metaphysical doctrines Indian Philosophical texts like *samkhyas-karika* and *pancadesi* draw parallels from art. Several Sanskrit works dealing with beauty especially from poetics and dramaturgy are technically called as *alankara sastras* and the aestheticians who did the job of making a critique of aesthetics are known as *alankarikas*. Samkhya and the Vedanta systems directly and explicitly discuss the issues of aesthetics from their own metaphysical perspectives, while other systems indirectly and implicitly refer to the subject matter of aesthetics.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the west, we come across two types of problems discussed in aesthetics. First, beauty as such as been derived from the objective side of the matter. It becomes a necessary pre-supposition that the recognition of beauty in the object enables us to understand the experience of the subject. Ancient Greek thinkers like Plato and Aristotle subscribe to this view of the objective side of beauty. The other view is that one can deny the unique feeling of pleasure being produced in the subject by the beautiful object. Thinkers starting from Croce treat the subject matter of aesthetics as exclusively a subjective phenomenon. For the aesthetic experience, leading to enjoyment of pure joy is exclusively a psychological factor. On the other hand, Indian aestheticians do not discriminate between the objective and subjective factors involved in the study of aesthetics. According to them, the subject matter of aesthetics is neither purely objective nor purely subjective. A kind of inseparable relationship prevails between the two. Indian aestheticians develop the idea of objective-side of aesthetic experience from the concept 'beauty'. Since the term, 'beauty' has reference to the objective aspect. For without an object, no significant quality can attract us. The expressions such as *sanndarya*, *ramaniyata*, *carutva*, etc. indicate the attractive aspects of beauty in the objects. However, the Indian aestheticians did not ignore the effects of the objects on our minds while enjoying the objects of beauty. Since the quality in the

object is felt as elusive, we have to acknowledge the major role played by the mind in receiving the impressions from the objects and converting them as sources of inspiration for aesthetic enjoyment. The term 'beautiful' indicates the psychological experience leading to grant pure and self-forgetful joy. The expressions such as *ananda*, *asvada*, *rasa* etc., refer to the subjective aspect of aesthetic experience. Since the ultimate objective of life is the attainment of *moksa* according to Indian thinkers, they developed epistemological, metaphysical, ethical and religious doctrines elaborately to reach the goal. Since the enjoyment of beauty offers temporary solace from the stress of ordinary life, Indian aestheticians regarded beauty as a pointer to *moksa* through the art object and art experience. Even truth, goodness and beauty, the major three values are the stepping-stones to the attainment of *moksa*.

3.2 CONCERNS OF INDIAN AESTHETICIANS

Through the inventions of *bhava*, *rasa* and *dhvani*, the Indian aestheticians have contributed immensely to the field of aesthetics. Especially the *santa rasa* and *bhakti rasa*, i.e. the experience of calmness, quietitude and pure love or devotion to God, are very much related to religion in India. Bharata, the forerunner of Indian aesthetics, in his *Natyasastra* has expounded eight *sthayibhavas* (permanent or abiding emotions) and their corresponding *rasas*, the emotions experienced by the audience. It was the firm belief of the Indian aestheticians that both art object and art experience point to liberation. Contemplation of artistic creation causes a kind of wonder, awful experience and makes the mind to a state of stillness, i.e. equivalent to yogic experience like *dhyana* etc. This kind of emotional type of art experienced by the aesthetics will culminate in moral reformation and in turn to salvation. The later *alankarikas*, the art critics, felt the necessity of including *santa rasa* and *bhakti rasa*, since they play a vital role in the pursuit of *moksa*. The former describes the nature of *moksa*, while the latter, the means to attain it. The inner peace, which annihilates the disturbance in the mind, is an essential pre-requisite for the desire for *moksa* (*mumuksutva*).

In spite of the opposition of including *santa-rasa* in the list of Bharata that this *rasa* cannot be portrayed in art as its theme, though it may be a basic emotion, *the Indian critics of art have accepted santa rasa as a separate rasa*. The *alankarikas* ensure that this *rasa* can be represented in art, but in different names. For instance, *Anandavardhana* calls this ninth *sthayibhavas* as *trsnaksayasukha*, which means the derivation of joy after the annihilation of desire. *Abhinavagupta* calls it *sama* which has several connotations such as 'tranquillity,' 'cessation of spiritual grief,' 'spiritual peace,' 'absence or restraint of passions;' etc. He also calls it in other names such as *atma jnana* (self-knowledge) and *tattva-jnana* (knowledge of reality). Other *alankarikas* also call this emotion with several names such as *samyag jnana* (immediate knowledge), *sarva-citta-vrtti-rasana* (the quietening of all the modifications of the mind), and *nirvises-citta-vrtti* (that mental form which has nothing particular for its object). However, all these expressions point to a singular meaning stillness of all emotions after the withdrawals of all temporal events. When a work of art, like a drama or a poem, depicts a situation characterised by this *sthayibhava*, the *rasa* produced is called *santa*, i.e. what relates to *santi* or peace. Further those works of art leading to calmness in the hearts of the audience are having certain educative value especially through literature, besides producing joyful experience like other works of rasa-centred arts such as *puranas*, *itihasas* etc.

When conjugal love, *rati*, leading to *sringara rasa* is extended to deep-rooted devotion to God, it becomes *bhakti-rasa*. *Bhakti rasa* is a kind of pleasant experience, which results from the appreciation of a work of art, which has for its theme the love of humans towards the divine. Rupagosvamin, an *alankarika*, influenced by theistic Vedanta called *bhagavati-nati* as its *sthayibhava*. Madhusudana Sarasvati, the advaita philosopher in his *Bhagavad-bhakti rasayana*, considers *bhakti* as a *rasa* having it *sthayibhava* in the name of *bhagavadakara-citta-vrtti*. This means the modification of the mind taking on the form of God.

Indian aestheticians had very much related religion and art to the extent that they emulate *santa* and *bhakti rasas*. Essentially the term 'religion' means a discipline which will dissipate all earthly desires and pave the pathway to liberation. Atheistic religions promote the religious fervour in the absence of God, but elevating human to the heights of divine through the efficacy of perfect living. The theistic religions firmly believe that by the grace of a Supreme God alone one can overcome painful existence and attain blissful state of existence viz., *moksa*. As far as art is concerned, it has wider themes besides religion. The artist whose intention is to portray the mysterious activities of Gods like Śiva, Rama, Krishna, Kali, Muruga and others, will take up the emotional themes as the material for his idealisation. For this purpose the scriptural sources are really resourceful for the artist. When the scenes of Ramayana and Mahabharata are staged through the artists showing the characters in person, the spectators are thrilled to visualize the divine drama and enjoy the presence of divinity through humanity culminating in religious fervour, moral reformation and above all aesthetic enjoyment. The literary merit of sacred scriptures are converted as works of art making an emotional appeal through the idealization of characters since they produce *santa* and *bhakti rasas*.

In the *Buddha-carita* of Asvaghosa, the life of the Buddha has been depicted and it has also been known through painting and sculpture causing the *santa-rasa* leading to spiritual peace. In Jainism too we come across the artists portraying life stories of the saints and their preaching as well. When the theme of the art is God-centred it leads to *bhakti-rasa*, thereby making religion more attractive and blissful. In the same manner several devotional utterances, when played with musical instruments, they become immensely appealing to the hearts evoking both devotional and aesthetic experience.

In the history of Indian philosophy of art the role of aestheticians may be classified as three major periods;

- a) The period of formulation – this period ranges from first century B.C.E to the middle of the ninth century C.E. Only during this period Bharata formulated the concepts of *bhava* and *rasa* and *anandavardhana* established the significant features of *dhvani*.
- b) The period of Consolidation – This period ranges from the middle of the ninth century to the middle of the eleventh century. In this period the aestheticians had hectic time to defend the concept of *dhvani* from the opponents.
- c) The period of Exposition – This period ranges from the middle of the eleventh century to seventeenth century. In this period a kind of relationship has been promulgated among the concepts of *bhava*, *rasa* and *dhvani*.

3.3 BHARATA'S CONTRIBUTION

Now we shall endeavour to have a study of the concept of *bhava* and *rasa* as formulated by Bharata, the pioneer author in the tradition of Indian Aesthetics, in his *natyasastra* which has enunciated two important concepts known as *bhava* and *rasa*. The former refers to the content of a work of art which is essentially emotional. The latter indicates the highest delightful experience produced in the mind of the appreciator. Only later a few *alankarikas* have invented the method of converting the *bhava* into *rasa* and named it as *dhvani*. In the *natyasastra* which has become a unique guide for the later artists, Bharata has considered drama as producing a variety of *rasa* since it incorporates other arts like dance, music, dialogue, gestures, etc. Abhinavagupta, the expert commentator of Bharata's work has given an excellent elucidation of the constituents of *rasa*.

Outwardly, the basic emotion which forms the major theme of the work of art is known as the *sthayibhava*, which has been considered as the material cause of producing *rasa* (*upadana karana*). There are three objective factors mentioned by Bharata which are termed as *vibhavas*, *anubhavas* and *vyabhicaribhavas* and these are responsible for transforming the *sthayibhavas* of the spectator into *rasa*. These three *bhavas* together regarded as the efficient cause (*nimitta karana*) of *rasa*.

In actual life an emotion directly affects the individual depending upon the situation, whereas in art experience, especially in witnessing a drama, or dance the emotion indirectly affects the audience. For the emotion is passed onto him in an idealised form and he is expected to exhibit only delightful, joyous experience. According to Bharata, the term *bhava* means 'to happen' (*bhavanti*) since it causes an emotion both in the character of an artist and in the spectator. The character directly exhibits the emotion, while the spectator indirectly apprehends the emotion and rejoices at it. If the emotion is personalized it cannot be treated as having an aesthetic appeal, but will cause an emotion experienced in ordinary life. *Vibhava* means the cause of an emotion which is excited and articulated. It enables the character to manifest the motion according to a given environment. *Vibhava* is of two kinds: a) *alambana vibhava* (human element in the situation, like hero) and b) *uddipana vibhava* (natural element in the situation like time, place, circumstance etc.)

The indication of an emotion (*bhava*) which is shown outwardly is known as *anubhava* which means manifestation or effect of an emotion. It refers to the physical charges made either voluntarily or automatically. The former is known as *non-sattvakanubhavas* which can be produced at will like movement of the eyes etc. Voluntary *anubhavas* are known as *sattvikanubhavas* which arise spontaneously like trembling or sweating. Bharata gives its list as eight in number: stupefaction, perspiration, hiccups, voice-change, trembling, change of colour, shedding tears and fainting. In this context it is inevitable to know the abiding and permanent emotions in art (*sthayibhavas*) as well as their corresponding *rasas* which are also mentioned by Bharata as eight in number:

<i>Sthayibhavas</i>	<i>Rasas</i>
Conjugal love (<i>rati</i>)	<i>Sringara</i>
Mirth (<i>hasa</i>)	<i>hasya</i>
Sorrow (<i>soka</i>)	<i>Karuna</i>
Anger (<i>krodha</i>)	<i>Raudra</i>

Fortitude (<i>Utsaha</i>)	<i>Vira</i>
Fear (<i>bhaya</i>)	<i>Bhayanaka</i>
Disgust (<i>jugupsa</i>)	<i>Bibhasta</i>
Wonder (<i>vismaya</i>)	<i>Abhuta</i>

A third variety of the constituent of *Rasa* is *sancaribhava* or *vyabharibhava* which means 'not to abide' or transitory mental disposition like anxiety, excitement, discouragement etc. which appear and disappear depending upon the situation. The spectator is also expected to have experienced the *sthayibhavas* at one stage or the other, so that as when the scene is shown in the play the emotion can be easily understood and enjoyed. The dormant basic emotion of the spectator gets manifested when stimulated. Another important subjective factor for the constitution of *rasa* is imaginative insight or fertile imagination known as *pratibha*. The presence of the emotion according to the situation is to be quickly apprehended so that delightful joy emerges instantly.

The Indian aestheticians develop a kind of dispute regarding the number of *rasas* based on their metaphysical bent of mind. The Samkhya for instance believe in the pluralism and the aestheticians owing allegiance to this system of thought treat that *rasas* are many since each one is so unique and produces a distinct kind of emotion in the audience in accordance to the *sthayibhavas*. Thus we have pleasurable and painful *rasas* and Bharata also gives eight kinds of *rasa*. But the vedantins, especially who subscribe to the monistic trend of metaphysics insist that the list of *rasas* given by Bharata is in correspondence to the list of *sthayibhavas*. If the definition of the term 'rasa' is that which gives a joyous delightful enjoyment, then there must be only one *rasa*. For the sake of understanding academically Bharata had enlisted eight kinds of *rasas*. He himself calls *rasa* in the singular term. Only in common life we have personal experience of a variety of emotion, whereas in art experience, especially in emotional themes whatever may be the emotion exhibited, the prime obligation of the observer is to show only happiness and should not, on any account react personally to the *sthayibhavas*. For they become impersonal while getting transformed as *rasa*.

3.4 OTHER AESTHETICIANS

Among the Indian aestheticians especially known as the *alankarikas*, we come across several of them emerging as Aestheticians after following certain metaphysical grounds. Similarly there are other aestheticians who first commence their profession as *alankarikas* and then proceed to some philosophical traditions. Thus we have the following aestheticians turned philosophers:

- a) Sri Sankuka and Mahima Bhatta were much influenced by the Nyaya Schools of Indian philosophy known for its logic and epistemology.
- b) Bhatta-Nayaka was influenced by Samkhya System of thought known for its dualism and the theory of evolution.
- c) Anandavardhana was influenced by the Pratyabhijna school of Indian philosophy also known as Kashmiri Saivism.
- d) Rupagosvamin and Jagannatha were influenced by the Vedantic schools. These Alankarikas after a deep study of the structure and function of art intended to enter into the deeper problem of its meaning for life. Hence they were drawn towards one school or the other of Indian philosophy also known as *darsanas* to substantiate their aesthetic perspectives.

In the same way we come across several philosophers entered into the arena of art as the *Alankarikas* after understanding the nature and significance of art. The following are such thinkers who wanted to appreciate the nature of reality through aesthetic appeal:

- a) Abhinavagupta, a very great exponent of Kashmir Saivism contributed in a larger extent to the field of *Alankara Sastra*.
- b) Appayya-Diksita also became an *alankarika* after writing treatises on Advaita Vedanta.

Thus the Indian philosophy of art has gained momentum through the successful writings of both the *Darsanikas* and *alankarikas*, each class complementing the other. The relationship among these two categories of scholars is based on the fundamental issues, viz., character of art and its significance, but in fact both the questions are interconnected. Character of art resulted in the expounding of a distinct discipline known as *alankarasastra*, leading to the aesthetic of art. The discovery of *dhvani* is the unique contribution of the *alankarikas*. Regarding the significance of artistic beauty, the philosophers developed a theory known as the meta-aesthetics of art.

The philosophical commitment of the *alankarikas* has been reflected in their theoretical standpoints pertaining to *rasa* and *dhvani*. As soon as the constituents of *rasa*, viz., *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicaribhava*, the *alankarikas* in India with their philosophical bent of mind have endeavoured to expound several theories of *rasa*, especially from the perspective of the process of appreciation. Since the whole process culminates in *rasa*. The theory of *rasa* emerged due to the various commentaries to Bharata's *Natyasastra*. It was actually Anandavardhana who resolved the problem of the transformation of *bhava* as *rasa* by inventing a new concept called *dhvani*. The mode of communication of the emotional theme of art to the audience so that they develop a joyous delightful experience (*rasa*) is *dhvani* which suggests to the spectator regarding the type of emotion presented (*sthayibhava*). *Rasa*'s theory comprehensively elucidates the process of appreciation with reference to the content of the presentation, the method of presentation, the preparedness of the appreciator to receive and estimate the motion and the nature of *rasa*. A theory of *rasa* promulgated by the Indian Aestheticians is the nature and interconnection among the above processes.

Bharata and Anandavardhana have contributed to a great extent to formulate the criteria of a theory of *rasa*.

- a) Idealization is the foremost criterion to enjoy the work of art based on the *sthayibhava*, transmitted through the constituents of *rasa*, viz., *vibhavas*, *anubhavas* and *sancaribhavas*.
- b) In order to distinguish between the content and emotion of an work of art it has to be recommended that the communication of the work of art is to be made in an indirect way as suggested by Anandavardhana.
- c) According to Bharata, the viewer must also recognize the basic emotion with regard to the nature and intensity of the artistic presentation. For *rasa*, the material cause is the work of art.
- d) A theory of *rasa* should explain the very nature of *rasa* itself. The problem is with reference to the relation between the artist and the audience. Before Anandavardhana Indian aestheticians did not focus much attention on this issue. It was he who contemplated seriously upon the content of the *rasa* type of art and its actual mode of transmission. Bharata explained the nature of *rasa* both of its nature and content

including the spectator's alertness for *rasa*. But what actually *rasa* is and how is it related to the person of the audience was developed in various theories of later *alankarikas*.

3.5 ABHINAVAGUPTA'S CONTRIBUTION

There are four major theories of *rasa*:

- a) The theory of generation (*utpatti*)
- b) The theory of inference (*anumitti*)
- c) the theory of enjoyment (*bhukti*)
- d) The theory of revelation (*abhivyakti*)

Abhinavagupta has made two commentaries on Bharata's *Natyasastra* in the name of *Abhinava-bharati* and *natya-veda-vivrti*. In these commentaries he has given a extensive treatment of the first three theories of *rasa* and undoubtedly his own theory also. Now we shall briefly present them.

The generation theory of *Rasa* (*rasotpattivada*)

This theory was propounded by an aesthetician known as Bhatta-Lollata. His view is called the generation of permanent emotion since it emanates from the original character. In his *kavyaprakasa*, Mammata, an *alankarika*, states that *Bhatta-Lollata* develops his theory of *rasa* from the generation of permanent emotion in the original character pertaining to nature and human elements in collaboration with physical expression and transitory emotions. The spectator secondarily is made to recognize the emotion expressed in the original character.

However, this theory has some defects. The other aestheticians point out that if the emotion leading to *rasa* is obtained from the originals character, then the enjoyment will be of particular and personal in nature. But aesthetic enjoyment leading to *rasa* experience should be universal and impersonal in nature. Further there is no reference to the *sthayibhava* of the spectator in the Bhatta-Lottata's theory of generation. The spectator cannot whole heartedly enjoy the emotion exhibited through the original character.

The inference theory of *Rasa* (*rasanumiti vada*)

The spectator infers the presence of the emotion through the actor presented in the form of *bhavas* like human or nature. The role played by the actor is the cause for leading to *rasa*. The audience infers the presence of such emotion not in the actor himself but through the *bhavas* presented by him. Since Sri Sankuka and Mahima Bhatta were trained in the Nyaya school of Indian philosophy, the latter was influenced by the former in formulating a similar theory in an elaborate way in his *vyaktiviveka*. All the requirements of *anumana* are fulfilled in the process of *rasa* experience.

But inference is concerned with intellect and logic pertaining to language and not to be applicable to art experience. There is no inclusion of generalization of emotion, but only the emotion presented by the actor. However, the method of communication is indirect. Though this

alankarika has hinted at the emotion presented by the actor, he did not extensively explain the emotional status of the spectator.

The enjoyment theory of *rasa* (*rasa-bhuktivada*)

This theory has been promulgated by Bhatta-nayaka, according to whom *rasa* is enjoyed by the spectator as pure joy with self-forgetful nature through the general character of the *sthayibhava* in the actual play or poem. If the emotion is of personal nature, then there cannot be uniform, but indifferent enjoyment to the emotion. Hence, he proposes this theory which clearly envisages that *rasa* or aesthetic enjoyment is possible only when the spectator or the reader keeps his mind calm and quiet without any practical interest. A mood of composure is essentially required and the situation must be idealised so that idealised emotion is shown through the actors. As far as the method of communication is concerned, Bhatta-nayaka has discovered a unique concept known *bhava-katva*, a special power in language that enables the reader or spectator to discover the presented emotion leading to delightful experience through the impact of generalization (*sadharanikarana*). This special power of language transcends space and time and produces idealised conditions of the emotions by exposing the circumstances as well as physical expressions.

However, the introduction of the concept called *bhavakatva* seems to be arbitrary. Since none of the *alankarikas* have recognized nor re-considered it. On the other hand, even if admitted this concept will be applicable only to the art pertaining to language and literature. Further this concept is applicable only to the generalised situation and not to generalized emotion. Again aestheticians have not recognized the existence of a *sthayibhava* in the spectator similar to the one that is shown in the play. Since he is committed to Samkhya theory of duality in Indian philosophy he could not appropriately explain the nature of *rasa*. Since *buddhi* is predominant in *purusa* to associate with *prakrti* to produce pleasure and pain. But the *sattva* nature of *buddhi* plays a role in producing aesthetic enjoyment known as *bhogakrtva* which means, 'the power to create enjoyment.' As a rebuttal to this viewpoint Abhinavagupta gives an alternative theory from the vedantic perspective that the potentially inherent pure pleasure in the self manifests as *rasa*.

The revelation theory of *Rasa* (*Rasabhiviyaktivada*)

This theory has been developed by the chief exponent of Indian aesthetics, Abhinavagupta. According to this theory, *rasa* is manifested or revealed the moment all defilements of the self are annihilated and the blissful state of existence is achieved which is latent in the self and not brought from outside. He agrees with Bhatta-Nayaka that the *sthayibhava* has been presented as the theme of the artistic creation in a general and idealised form. With reference to the nature of *rasa*, he argues that there is an identity between the basic emotion of the artists and the fertile imagination of the appreciator. The artist suggests the emotion and the appreciator realises, apprehends and enjoys the same through his powerful imagination. Thus the manifestation of *rasa* is due to the total response from the qualified appreciator. The *vibhavas*, *anubhavas* and the *vyabhicharibhavas* that are shown in the stage through the characters of the actors become ideal in essence and he establishes an inseparable relation with the character affected by an emotion ideologically. Subsequently the spectator develops a kind of delightful emotional experience, which is not personal but impersonal marked by generalization. As the spectator is freed from his ego, he is free to appreciate the emotional presentation. When the *sthayibhava* of the audience

rasa is emanated. As the exponent of Kashmir Saivism (*pratyabhijna*), Abhinavagupta was able to fulfil all the requirements of the theory of *rasa*. The method of communication is *dhvani* or suggestion. Hence this theory has been recognized as a standard one.

3.6 THE CONCEPT OF *DHVANI*

The Indian aestheticians had discovered the concept of *dhvani* which suggests the hidden meaning of emotion especially the literary themes. Anandavardhana had recognized that *bhava* or emotion, is the perfect theme of literary works especially poems. In order to explain the mode of communication of the emotional content of a poem, the later *alankarikas* have discovered the concept of *dhvani*. Since *dhvani* involves language, the meaning of words becomes significant. There are two types of meaning viz., primary meaning (*mukhyartha*) and secondary meaning (*lakshyartha*). Each word has its specific and unique meaning and when conjoined in a sentence there is a very different meaning, a combined single meaning is obtained. When the primary meaning of a sentence is contradictory, then we resort to the secondary meaning. For example, the statement 'he is an ass' is contradictory since he refers to a human and 'ass' indicates an animal. How can a human being be an animal. Hence the secondary meaning, the behaviour of that person is similar to that of an ass. Similarly in the expression, 'there is a hut on the Ganges,' does not convey a proper primary meaning. For how can be a hut on the running stream of the river Ganges. Then we resort to the secondary meaning, there is a hut on the banks of the river Ganges. Aesthetically speaking what does this statement suggest? This question leads the *alankarikas* to discover a new kind of meaning, *vyangyārtha* or suggested meaning. The secondary meaning is implicitly contained in the primary meaning or rather the secondary meaning is the sequel of the primary meaning. But the implied meaning or the suggested meaning is not directly obtained from the first two kinds of meaning. It is a totally new meaning.

The suggested meaning is a new derivation from the given statement. In this case the hut on the banks of the river Ganges is as cool and as holy as the river. Here the terms cool and holy are derived from the statement which are not directly or indirectly stated. In poetry we come across several instances of *vyangyārtha* where the theme of the poem is emotion. One type of poetry is picture-like poetry (*citra kavya*). Here the method is direct presentation of emotion especially the object phenomena which involves only figure of speech. There is another kind of poetry which develops ornate description which contains *alankara* or figure of speech. This type is known as *gunibhuta-vyanjya-kavya* which falls between *citra kavya* and *dhvani kavya*. As this type of poetry cannot be identified with *dhvani* type of poetry since lesser amount of suggestive element is available. Only embellished description is used here. The fine variety of poetry is *dhvani* type which involves more suggestion as the major method (*dhvani* or *vyangyārtha*). In order to describe the situation and the emotional content, poetry has to resort to the method of suggestion. Fact and images in poetry would cause delight when suggested in an implicit manner. This is considered as the best form of poetic method to cause *rasa* in the minds of the audience, by the Indian aestheticians.

The grammarians in Indian philosophy of language have introduced the concept of *dhvani* in language in connection with the *sphota* theory which links the words and their meaning. In the *dhvani-kavya* the method of *dhvani* is applied by the *alankarikas* in a three-fold way, a) that which suggests (*vyanjaka*), b) that which is suggested (*vyangya*) and c) the process of suggestion

(*vyanjana*). *Vyanjaka* is the primary meaning pertaining to the description of the situation. *Vyangya* refers to the *bhava* either *sthayibhava* or *vyabharibhava*. The process of suggestion or *vyanjana* indicates the suggestion of the emotion through the primary meaning. We have a kind of *dhvani* known as *vastu dhvani*. When the suggested element is a fact (*vastu*), when an image is suggested it is known as *alankara dhvani*. In the process of suggestion, if there is only primary meaning, then it is known as *abhidhamula dhvani*. In the case of secondary meaning, it is known as *laksanamula-dhvani*.

Even though *dhvani* has been recognized as a valid method of causing *rasa* by Anandavardhana, several Alankarikas and philosophers in India have criticised *dhvani* and substituted several other concepts in its place. Early poets, who were not aware of the notions of *bhava* and *rasa* have attributed the method of poetry to a) word, b) explicit meaning, c) excellence and d) figure of speech. Hence there is no need for *dhvani*. This view shows the ignorance of the importance of *bhava*. A few critics identified *dhvani* with certain aspects of expression. A few Alankarikas like Vamana and pratiharenduraja equated *dhvani* respectively with secondary meaning, (*lakshyarth*) and figures of speech (*alankara*). Some critics offered alternatives to *dhvani* like Bhatta-lollata, Sri Sankuka, Bhatta-Nayaka, Dhanika and Mahima-Bhatta. It was Abhinavagupta who cleverly argued against their view-points and established the significant role of *dhvani* in transmitting *bhava* into *rasa*. Mahima-Bhatta and Jayanta-Bhatta under the influence of Nyaya have reduced *dhvani* to inference. Ultimately Anandavardhana proves beyond doubt that the scope of *dhvani* is wider than language especially linguistic embellishment through words and figures of speech. He presumed that the concept of *dhvani* is applicable to all kinds of art creation and merely to literary art.

Indian aestheticians in consonance with the Upanishadic thought equated art with the highest reality, viz., Brahman. Thus we have, *Rasa-brahma-vada*, *sabda-brahma-vada*, *Nada-brhma vada*, *Vastu-brahma vada*.

Rasa-brahma vada is pertaining to the enjoyment of art appreciation as *rasa* in its peak experience. *Brahmanubhava* or experience of Brahman after the annihilation of the defilements leads to the enjoyment of unalloyed bliss. In the same way, the *rasa* experience leads to a self-forgetful joy.

Sabda brahma vada is an identification of sound or *sabda* with the supreme reality. The grammarians consider *sabda* as the highest phenomenon in the world from which words, sentences, meanings etc. emerge so that people can communicate with each other. In literary art, words, sentences and meanings are explicitly and implicitly used and hence the aestheticians treat art experience with *sabda brahma vada*.

Nada-brahma vada is an offshoot of *sabda brahma vada*. Since music is a part of *sabda*, when we listen to music we develop a kind of *rasa anubhava* leading to a kind of self-forgetful, joyous enjoyment similar to that of Brahman experience which culminates in *sat*, *cit* and *ananda*. *Ananda* aspect is blissful state of experience. Vocal music and instrumental music are equated with *nada-brahma vada*.

Vastu-brhma vada refers to the materials of the world which are used for construction as to enable human beings live safely with security and comfort. Since matter is 'given' to the human

beings by the Supreme Being it is called as 'vastu' and associated with Brahman. Construction is a two kinds: one, divine oriented like temples, etc, and the second, domestic oriented like houses, bridges, etc.

3.7 LET US SUM UP

We have seen in this unit how different aestheticians contributed to the development of Indian Aesthetics.

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UNIT 4 ABHINAVAGUPTA'S PHILOSOPHY OF RASA

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4.0. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this Unit is to introduce Abhinavagupta's *Rasa* and examine certain concepts connected to it in terms of its importance within the broader area of aesthetics. In the growth and development of Sanskrit literary criticism we distinguish two distinctive stages: the first is represented by the early writers on poetics who preceded Anandavardhana, and the second by later aestheticians like Abhinavagupta who made outstanding contributions to the revision of Indian aesthetics. Further, this chapter proposes to illustrate the role of *sahrdaya* and his en route to the ultimate goal of experiencing *rasa*. By doing so, we expect to understand some of the characteristic features of Abhinavagupta's contribution to aesthetics.

Thus by the end of this Unit you should be able:

- to have a basic understanding of Abhinavagupta's *rasa* aesthetics;
 - to identify the role of *Bhavas* in producing *rasa*;
 - to be able to understand the nature of *Sahrdaya* and his *Rasana*
 - to comprehend the nature of *Dhvani* and *rasa dhvani*;
 - to understand the concept of *alaukika rasa*
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4.1 INTRODUCTION

The term '*rasa*' literally means taste or delight in, and is employed to denote the essence of poetry; the peculiar aesthetic experience that art gives us. The doctrine that *rasa* is the essence of art begins from first century A.D. with Bharata. "No composition can proceed without *rasa*," claims Bharata in his famous treatise on dramaturgy, *Natyasastra*. In the chapter called *Rasadhyaya* in *Natyasastra* VI Bharata explains: '*na hi rasadrte kascid arthah pravartate*' meaning "every activity (on the stage) is aimed at the creation or generation of *rasa*." He also sets forth his *rasa-sutra* : *vibhavanubhava- vyabhicari-samyogad rasa-nispattih*, that is, "out of the union or combination of the *vibhavas* (determinants), the *anubhavas* (consequences) and the *vyabhicarihavas* (transitory feelings) *rasa* arises or is generated". The ancient writers on dramaturgy invented an entirely new terminology to distinguish between the real life and the life depicted in the creative imagination. They however correspond to *karanas*, the *karyas*, and the *sahakarikaranas*. The *rasas* correspond to *sthayibhavas* (the dominant or permanent emotions). The *vibhavadis* are therefore called *alaukika* (nonwordly, extrawordly or transcendental.) Therefore *rasa* is applied both to denote the quality of taste and relish as experienced, as well as for the object of relish. In the context of art it stands for the aesthetic object as presented by the

artist through various techniques. It is the sum total of that aesthetic condition united by a persistent emotional quality. Primarily the Rasa School in Indian aesthetics gives importance to the experiential or subjective side of poetic sense. They hold the view that the essence of poetry to be a quality distinct from its determinants which are more commonly known as human characters, such as natural situations, actions or emotions. *Rasa* is realized when an emotion is awakened in the mind of a *sahridaya* in such a way that it has none of its usual responsive tendencies and is occurred in an impersonal and meditative level. An emotion aroused in this peculiar manner is caused by demonstrations in art of those objects, which excite it in nature, such as natural situations, persons of known characters, their actions and physical expressions of emotions. These representations, through words in case of poetry and through both words and concrete presentations in case of drama, are generalized and so idealized aspects of objects masquerading as particulars. They are significant neither cognitively nor conatively, for they belong to a higher world. The representations have only emotive significance and the emotions appearing through their medium are not suffered in the ordinary or passive way but enjoyed very actively with coherent self-awareness and knowledge. The secret of this extraordinary mode of experiencing emotions lies in the dissolution of the practical and egoistic side of our self in the poetic attitude and the consequent appearance of the universal contemplative self. Emotions are latent in the self in their generalized form as dispositions connected with their general, not particular associations. So, when generalized objects and situations are presented in poetry, they awaken the generalized emotions, which are felt in an impersonal and contemplative manner. They do not relate specifically to any individual or any object. *Rasa* is realized when, because of the factors related above, the self loses its egoistic, pragmatic aspect and assumes an impersonal contemplative attitude, which is said to be one of its higher modes of being. *Rasa*, thus, is a realization of the impersonal contemplative aspect of the self, which is usually veiled in life by the appetitive part of it. As the contemplative self is free from all craving, striving and external necessity, it is blissful. This bliss is of a different quality from the pleasure we derive in life from contentment of some need or passion. Now it may be noted that *rasa* as realization of one's contemplative and blissful self is fundamentally one. But this realization is associated in poetry with an understanding by this self of some emotion in its generalized form. The gradual evolution of *rasa* theory spans several centuries, and contains several landmarks such as the *Natyasastra* of Bharata, but it is generally agreed that it was at the hands of the Kashmiri Saiva philosopher Abhinavagupta that it attained classical formulation in the eleventh century A.D. A high sensitivity and refinement of analysis in the development of the most complicated concepts of aesthetics and a tendency toward religious interpretation of those are characteristic of Abhinavagupta. He is also known as a philosopher of the Vedanta school.

In his two path breaking commentaries, *Dhanyaloka Locana* on Anandavardhana's *Dhvanyaloka* and *Abhinavabharati* on Bharata's *Natyasastra*, Abhinavagupta sets forth his theory of *rasa*. It is rightly regarded as his major contribution not only to Sanskrit literary criticism but also to Sanskrit aesthetics as a whole. Abhinavagupta primarily developed his theory from a close understanding and revision of the forms, techniques, and values of drama, poetry, music, and other related art forms of the theatre. Abhinavagupta in these two commentaries has discussed a series of questions relating to beauty and *rasa*: What is the nature of beauty? Whether it is subjective or objective or a combination of both? What are the true features of the sensitive spectator? Whether *rasa* is *laukika* (worldly) or *alaukika* (transcendental)? Another important question regarding *rasa* discussed by Abhinavagupta is about the *asraya* (location or seat) of

rasa. Could it be the poet himself or the character who plays the role of characters or spectators themselves? Further *rasa* is meant to provide sheer pleasure to the spectators or are also meant to give moral instruction? etc.

4.2 RASA AS SUI GENERIS

The starting point of Abhinavagupta's aesthetics is his repeatedly stated belief that the aesthetic perception as well as the pleasure which accompanies it creates an enjoyment which lasts only so long as the perception lasts. This enjoyment is self generative or *sui generis*. This uniqueness of *rasa*, Abhinavagupta maintains, is an unmistakable "datum of our consciousness." And because *rasa* is unique, its emergence cannot be elucidated using causal, inferential, or any other regular terms. In *Dhanyaloka Locana* (2.3.) Abhinavagupta held this doctrine that "There is no poetry without *rasa*." According to him, the *rasa* or aesthetic experience is not the experience of basic emotion (*sthayi bhava*) in isolation from situation, mimetic changes and momentary emotions, but in union with them. Abhinavagupta explains: "what is aroused...is simply the tasting; the form of existence...of this tasting, is called *Rasa*," by which he appears to mean that *rasa* is the perception of an entity containing beauty and does not denote anything distinct from that special brand of perception. Bharata mentions eight kinds of *rasa* such as the erotic, the comic, the pathetic, the furious, the heroic, the terrible, the odious,- and the marvelous are transformations of our natural human feelings of love, laughter, sorrow, anger, effort, fear, disgust, and surprise brought about by dramatic art. The question whether there is a ninth *santa rasa* apart from these eight has been a debatable point among medieval Indian aestheticians. Abhinavagupta, however, holds that there are several levels of aesthetic experience such as sense, imagination, emotion, catharsis, and transcendence. At the highest level of transcendence *rasa* experience is one of perfect repose and serenity (*sinta*) no matter what the emotion involved is. Therefore, at the transcendental level there is only one type of *rasa* which is one of unmixed bliss where the duality of subject and object disappears and the self is merged in the absolute giving rise to pure spiritual rapture. Such an experience is supposed to be out of this everyday life.

Abhinavagupta on Bhavas

The foundation of all discussions on *rasa* is with the sutra formulated by Bharata. Though by *rasa* Bharata means only *natya rasa* other aestheticians apply it to poetry or creative literature in general. Abhinavagupta says that a refined reader gets *natya rasa* even when he 'reads' a play. Bharata defines *bhaava* as the basis of *rasa* as one which brings into existence the sense of poetry through four kinds of representation:

1. Imitation by speech (*Vancika*)
2. Imitation by costume (*Aahaarya*)
3. Imitation by gestures (*Aangika*) and
4. Imitation by psychic change (*Sautvika*)

Bharata does not explain *sthayibhavas* nor does he draw any distinction between *sthayibhava* and *vyabhicarihavas*. He point out that there are eight *sthayibhavas* and thirty three *vyabhicarihavas*. Abhinavagupta says that *sthayibhavas* are many coloured strings to which remain thinly tied the *vyabhicarihavas* having their parallels in stones of diverse hues. Just as the colour of the string reflects itself on the stones, the *sthayibhavas* reflect themselves on the *vyabhicarihavas*. As the stones of different shades tinge intervening threads with their attractive

hues, similarly *vyabhicarihavas* in their turn influence *sthayibhavas* and make them appreciable to the spectators. Abhinavagupta gives a clearer exposition of *sthayibhavas* than any other aesthetician of his period. Everyone avoids contact with pain and tends towards experiencing happiness/pleasure. All desire to enjoy themselves, this is because of *rati* or delight. All people think highly of themselves and laugh at others. This is because of *hasa* or laughter. Everyone feels sorrow when he is deprived of the object of longing. This is *sooka* or sorrow. He is enraged at the loss of something close to his heart. This is *kroodha* or anger, when he realises his inability he becomes subject to fear. This is *bhaya* or fear. Then he resolves somewhat to get over the difficulties. This is *utsaha* or enthusiasm. He has a feeling of repulsion when he meets with repugnant objects. This is *jugupsa* or aversion. He may be filled with wonder on certain occasions. This feeling is *vismaya* or astonishment ultimately he wants to abandon something. This is *saama* or serenity. After describing these permanent mental states, Abhinavagupta distinguishes them from transitory mental states or *vyabhicarihavas*. These transient *bhavas* do not leave any *samskara* or impression in the mind. On the contrary, the permanent states like *utsaha* leave their impressions in the mind. Even amongst the *sthayis*, Abhinava chooses four viz., *rati* (delight), *kroodha* (anger), *utsaha* (enthusiasm) and *nirveeda* (disinterested serenity) born out of philosophical knowledge. Even these are subservient to one another. In accordance with the type of the drama one of the *sthayibhavas* would be principal and the rest of it would be subservient. The *sthayibhava* and *vyabhicarihava* constitute the external factors leading to aesthetic realization. *Vibhava* is not something in the mind of the poet or the reader. It represents the external factors of the experience. The word *Vibhava* stands for the dramatic situation. It is not the cause, but only a medium through which emotion arises in the actor. *Vibhava* arouses emotions in the reader in a manner quite different from that in which emotion arises in actual life. *Vibhava* is represented as having two aspects; one is *alambana*, the object which is responsible for the arousal of emotion or that on which the emotion depends for its very being. The other is *uddipana*, the environment, the entire surrounding which enhances the emotive effect of the focal point. All the physical changes which are consequent on the rise of an emotion and are in actual life looked upon as the emotion are called a *anubhava* to distinguish them from the physical effects of emotion which arise in real life. The physical changes and movements which follow the rise of an emotion are of two kinds, voluntary and involuntary. The voluntary physical changes are called simply *anubhava*, but the involuntary ones are called *satvika bhavas*.

Sahrdaya and His Rasana Experience

Before going into detail about the experience of *rasa* it is necessary to think about the one who experiences it- the *sahrdaya*. The word *sahrdaya* literally means 'one who is of similar heart'. Abhinavagupta defines *sahrdaya* as "those people who are capable of identifying with the subject matter, as the mirror of their hearts has been polished through constant repetition and study of poetry, and who sympathetically respond in their own hearts-those people are known as *sahrdayas*- sensitive spectators." A poet communicates with a reader who has more or less a similar sensibility. He must be a *sahrdaya*, one who has the same mind, and the heart as the poet; like the poet, the *sahrdaya* also should be gifted. Abhinavagupta provides us with a detailed explanation of the process of aesthetic enjoyment by the *sahrdaya*. A play or a poem or a true aesthetic object raises the reader from the level of the senses to that of imagination. As a result the personality of the reader changes and he gets transported to higher plane. The point is that a true aesthetic object primarily stimulates the imagination of the poet through the senses. As his imagination is stimulated he concerns himself not as much with a sensibility present as with the

imaginatively grasped. The world created by the *sahrdaya* at the stimulation of the aesthetic object is his own. In it he meets with a dramatic personality which is the focal point on the whole. It is the ideal realized. He therefore slowly and gradually identifies himself with it. When *Vibhava*, *anubhava*, and *vyabhicarihavas* combine they produce *rasa* in the *sahrdaya*. We cannot qualify any person as *sahrdaya* at will. *Sahrdaya* should have a taste in poetry and a sensitive heart. He should also have a close acquaintance with poetical works. He is the one who has the capacity to identify himself with poetical or dramatic works and to experience the delight of cognitive tasting. The *sahrdaya* experiences *carvana* or cognitive tasting which is precedent to *rasa* experience. This cognitive tasting is different from ordinary cognition. As already pointed out the *sahrdaya* also should be a gifted person. Only an accomplished reader can fully appreciate either a play or a poem. A *sahrdaya* is one whose aesthetic susceptibility is on a par with that of the poet. According to Abhinavagupta, a *sahrdaya* must have the following qualities. A *sahrdaya* must have taste or *rasikatva*, *sahrdayatva* or aesthetic susceptibility, power of visualisation, intellectual background, contemplative heart, the necessary psycho-physical condition and the capacity to identify oneself with the aesthetic object.

Rasa sutra says that *rasa* is *nispati*, which is neither generation nor knowledge. According to Abhinavagupta the reference to *nispati* in the sutra is not to '*rasa*', but to *rasana* or to the powers of cognitive tasting whose object is *rasa*. In this way, the life of *rasa* is solely dependent upon *rasana*. *Rasana* is neither due to *pramaana vyapara* (means of knowledge) nor due to *karika vyapara* (verse). *Rasana* is not the effect of a cause. It is self generative, it is *sva samveedana siddhavat*; *rasa* experience is '*sui generis*'. *Rasana* is not an object and it does not reside in any work or any mind. It is a dynamic process in which the mind enjoys equilibrium and peace. Abhinavagupta admits that *rasana* is a 'form' of knowledge. It is *boodha* or consciousness of itself, but it is different from other forms of knowledge usually recognised. The difference consists in its means, namely the *vibhava*, *anubhava*, and *vyabhicarihava*. These are different from other means of knowledge in common practice. So the claim of the sutra is that *rasa* is an extraordinary entity which is the object of *rasana* or cognitive tasting. Abhinavagupta also explains how a *sahrdaya* experiences the poetic delight. When a *sahrdaya* reads a poem or witnesses a play, the *sthayibhava* remaining in the form of a latent impression in his mind is awakened by the depicted *vibhava*. It is taken in its general form without specific connection. The generalization that takes place excludes the individuality of the character as well as the *sahrdaya*. This experience overcomes all obstacles producing *viita vigna pratiiti*. The generalised *vibhavas* and the rest call into play the latent *sthayibhava* in the spectator/reader and this also is understood in a general way. *Rasa* is something different from *sthayibhava* or permanent mood. *Rasa*, as we have seen is a process of enjoyment or relish brought about by commingling of *sahrdaya*'s sensibility and the *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicarihava*. It is neither *loukia* nor empirical, on the other hand it is *aloukika* or transcendental. *Rasana* is not an abiding state of mind but a process. "The realisation of *rasa* depends on the comprehension of *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicarihava*. This lasts only so long as cognition of these factors lasts and ceases to exist when these factors vanish". *Rasa*, Abhinavagupta observes is suggested by the union of the permanent mood with the *vibhavas* through the relation of the suggested and the suggestor (*vyangya vyanjaka bhauvu*) in the other words the *pratiti* of *rasa* is nothing other than *abhivyakti* a manifestation through the power of synthesis, resulting in an extra-ordinary state of relish, known as *rasana*.

Check Your Progress I

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Explain *rasa* as *Sui genres*?

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2) Explain how *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicarihava* create *rasa* experience?

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3) Who is a *sahrdaya*? What are his basic qualities?

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4.3 THE CONCEPT OF RASA DHVANI

Though it is Bharata who is credited with having originated the *rasa* theory it was Abhinavagupta who widened it into a systematic poetic principle. Anandavardhana was the chief exponent of the *Dhvani* theory but later Abhinavagupta made significant contributions to it. According to both Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, the language of great poetry is not explicit, but implicit and that the soul of great poetry is implicit *rasa* or *rasa* that is suggestive. According to Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, the language of poetry crosses the bounds of empiricism; it crosses the realms of both *abhidha* and *lakshana*. According to Anandavardhana, the category of poetry in which the suggested element is dominant is of the highest type. In such poetry the expressed sense subordinates itself to the implied sense. Abhinavagupta declares that there cannot be any poetry without a touch of the charm of the implicit. Abhinavagupta turned his attention away from the linguistic aspects and related abstractions while enjoying art, which had preoccupied even Anandavardhana, focusing his attention instead on the workings of human mind, specifically the mind of the reader or viewer of a literary work. The first step in Abhinavagupta's aesthetic scheme involved the recognition of the theory of *rasadhvani*. *Rasa* experience could not be understood as a theory of abstract linguistic structure. Rather, it only could be understood as a theory rooted in the way people respond to literature. In other words, *rasadhvani* had to be conceived in psychological terms. According to this system the reader becomes the central focus of literary criticism. The aim of *kavya* is to give pleasure, but this pleasure must not bind the soul to the body. Thus he attributed the state of tranquility or divinity to arts and considered *Santa rasa* as the ultimate *Rasa*. According to him the pleasure one derives out of a real work of art is no less than divine pleasure.

Abhinavagupta elucidates his concept of *Dhvani* in *Dhvanvaloka Locanam*. “To be a poem per se *rasa dhvani* is a must according to Anandavardhana”. For Abhinavagupta both *sabda sakti moola* (word) and *artha sakti moola* (meaning) plays a key role in *dhvani*. Abhinavagupta explains the word '*dhvani* in two different ways'. The first is *dhvanat iti dhvani*: that which sounds or reverberates or implies is *dhvani*. The second is *dhvanyate iti dhvani* or *dhvani* is what is sounded or reverberated or implied. This derivation explains *dhvani* as something which is implied. This is *dhvani* proper. This double derivation of *dhvani* is necessary to keep the two meanings apart to avoid confusion. The one suggests an agent or the power of suggester, the other is what is suggested. All the three types of *dhvani*, *vastu dhvani*, *alankara dhvani* and *rasa dhvani* come under '*dhvanyate iti dhvani*' or that which echoes. Abhinavagupta Gupta accepts the general three-fold classification of *dhvani* as given by Ananda. However he adds some other explanation to it. For him the *pratiyamana* or implied sense is described as two-fold of which one is *laukika* or the one that we meet in ordinary life and the other is *kavya vyaapaara gocara* or one which is met only in poetry. The *laukika dhvani* in poetry is two-fold; the one that suggests *vasthu* or some matter is called *vastu dhvani*. The other which suggests a figure of speech is *alankara dhvani*. In both instances the *laukika dhvani* is explicit. The form of *dhvani* possible in poetry is called *rasa dhvani*. According to Abhinavagupta this alone should be regarded as authentic *dhvani*. He holds that *rasa dhvani* alone constitutes the soul of poetry.

Check Your Progress II

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) Define *Rasana*?

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2) Explain *rasa dhvani*?

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4.4 ALAUKIKA RASA

Broadly speaking, there are two schools of Sanskrit aesthetics regarding the nature of *rasa*: whether it is *laukika* (of everyday life, worldly, normal, as in actuality) or *alaukika* (different from everyday life, extra worldly, supra-normal). Abhinavagupta in his commentary on Bharata's *Natyasastra* makes a categorical statement that all the *sthayins* when presented on the stage are pleasurable and that all *rasas* too are pleasurable. Further the view of Abhinavagupta that all the eight (or nine) *rasas* are pleasurable and that even sorrowful situations in actuality acquire pleasurable quality through the aesthetic treatment they undergo in a work of art, would certainly appeal to large majority of *sahridayas*. In the course of his discussion of the *sthayin* of the *santa rasa* Abhinavagupta clearly distinguishes between a *sthayin* and its corresponding *rasa*. One is *siddha* (already present and accomplished thing) the other is *sadhya* (to be affected, to be brought about). Then there is *laukika* and the *alaukika*; next is *sadharana* (common, ordinary), and *asadharana* (unique, uncommon).

Although there is no such clear distinction to be found in Bharata's text and although there is no prominent mention in it of the identity between *sthayins* of our everyday life and their corresponding *rasas* we do come across a few indications in Bharata's writing which lead one to assume that he believed that it is merely the *sthayibhava* of the world that is called *rasa* when imitated or represented on the stage; and that some *rasas* are pleasurable and some others sorrowful. Abhinavagupta states again and again that *rasa* is *alaukika*. The *pratiyamanartha* (suggested sense) is of two kinds *laukika*: bare ideas (*vastu*) and images (or *alamkaras*) may be suggested but they are at the same time *vacya* (expressible) also and *kavya-vyaparaika-gocara* or *vyanjana-gocara* or *alaukika* what can only be suggested; only emotion, in its essence, directly describable. It is not communicable like a fact or idea and image. *Rasa* according to Abhinavagupta is never seen in a dream *sva-sabda-vacya* – conveyed by the mere naming of the emotion (to be suggested). For the *rasika* (sensitive spectator) practical interests are of no significance when he goes to the theatre. He feels he would listen to and see something marvelous which is beyond his *locottara* (everyday experience), something worthy of his attention, something whose essence is from the beginning to the end, sheer delight. He would share this experience with the rest of the spectators. Engrossed in the aesthetic enjoyment of appropriate music, both vocal and instrumental, a man completely forgets himself and is aware then of nothing beyond the object or the situation portrayed by the poet or dramatist. His heart becomes like a spotless mirror. It facilitates *hrdaya-samvada* (sympathetic response) and *tanmayibhava* (identification). what he sees is divorced from space and time. His apprehension of *rasa* does not fall within the ordinarily recognized categories of knowledge like true knowledge, false knowledge, doubt, probability. He is so engrossed in what he sees and is so carried away by an overpowering sense of wonder that he identifies himself with the principal character and sees the whole world as the character saw it.

Abhinavagupta pointedly refers to some of the important steps in the aesthetic experience, the attitude of a true spectator, the generalized nature of what he sees on the stage, the extraordinary nature of the cognition of *rasa*, absence of any physical activity on the part of the spectator and the presence in him of a contemplative attitude. *Rasa* is nothing but aesthetic enjoyment and this enjoyment consists exclusively in a kind of knowledge or consciousness. If it were possible to convey *rasa* through words alone we would have been possibly forced to admit that *rasa*, like the denoted sense, *laukika*. But we do find that *rasa* is capable of being suggested by alliteration, gentle or harsh, which is devoid of any denoted sense. But in everyday life we never come across a thing which could possibly be suggested by *anuprasa*. This is therefore, an additional proof for the doctrine of the *alaukikatva* of *rasa*. Abhinavagupta's *alaukikatva* of *rasa* doctrine may briefly be stated as follows: "Objects in the world of poetry and drama have no place in the everyday world of our space and time. Owing to this lack of ontological status the question of reality or unreality does not apply to them. This however does not mean that they are unreal. They are drawn from life but are idealized. They however do not become false or illusory through idealization. A reader or spectator who mistakes them for real objects or views them as unreal or false is no true spectator- *sahrdaya*. The objects depicted in poetry or drama, assume a unique character which the spectator can describe as neither real nor unreal. To take a logical view of the things portrayed in poetry or drama or to adopt a strictly philosophic approach to literature would only invite ridicule. In a passage from *Abhinavaguptabharati* he says: *Rasa* is completely different from the permanent emotions like love, sorrow, etc., and it cannot be maintained, as Sankuka did, that *rasa* is the apprehension of the permanent emotion of somebody

else and that it is so called because it is an object of relish. For if it was so then why the permanent emotion of real life should be not called *rasa*? for if a non-existing (unreal) permanent emotion in the actor be capable of being the object of aesthetic relish, a real permanent emotion has all the more reason for being so capable. Therefore the apprehension of the permanent emotion of another person should be called only inference and not *rasa*. For what aesthetic relish is involved in this kind of inference.

These important passages from the works on literary and aesthetic criticism throw sufficient light on *alaukikatva*, a key term for Abhinavagupta. It would be evident to a careful student of these passages that Abhinavagupta uses the term *alaukikatva* with different shades of meaning. In one or two places this term is used to distinguish the process whereby *rasa* is achieved from other worldly *laukika* processes. It is achieved by the power of suggestion which is peculiar to poetry or creative literature and not by the commonly known processes *abhidha* (power of denotation) and *lakṣṇa*, *gunavrtti*, or *bhakti* (secondary usage). Occasionally he uses this term *alaukika* to point out the mundane and earthly things are completely transformed by the magic touch of the activity of the poet's creativity.

Check Your Progress III

Note: Use the space provided for your answers.

1) What are the two different schools of Sanskrit poetics?

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2)) Explain the concept of *alaukika rasa*?

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4.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have tried to outline Abhinavagupta's theory of *rasa* through defining certain concepts in his aesthetic canon. We started with the idea that *rasa* should be evaluated as self generative-Sui generis. We have also elaborately considered certain concepts like '*Sahrdaya*' and His *Rasana* Experience, '*Dvani* and '*rasa Dhvani*' etc. Finally we conclude the unit with an examination of the concept of *alaukikatva rasa*.

4.6 KEY WORDS

Sahrdaya: Sensitive spectator who is capable of enjoying *rasa*

Dhvani: Denotes the implied meaning in poetry

Rasana: Cognitive relishing by the spectator

4.7 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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