

*Samāveśa*  
**(CONCLUSION)**

There is a close affinity between Śaivāgama and literature: no ontological barrier as such exists between them. Śiva is the abode of all the fine arts, including language (grammar) and literature. Due to the centrality of *pravṛtti* (inclination towards the mental modes) *ābhāsa* (appearance) *svātantrya* (freedom of absolute will) and the unique concept of Universal and individual self, Śaiva philosophy of Kashmir acquires a conspicuous position not only in the taxonomy of Indian philosophical systems but also in the twin domains of aesthetics and poetics. Many core issues and assumptions in poetics and aesthetics such as — nature of verbal discourse, validity of literature as discourse of knowledge, creative process and the process in reception of work of art — all have sound philosophical support of the Trika system which is preceded by a long tradition of *āgamic* thought itself. Mahāmāheśvara Śrī Abhinavaguptapādācārya is its most authoritative exponent beyond doubt. These issues inherit their inspiration and theoretical support from the Trika philosophy of Kashmir.

Trika philosophy holds that the manifest world is contracted and gross, very much like a work of literature or *objet d'art* fossilised in its semantic and experiential contents. Nevertheless, both are very much real and identical with the Universal or the individual self. The Universal Self has a desire to project Himself (*sisṛkṣā*). One may ask as to why He has it in the first place. The response from the Śaiva theoretician is two-fold. Firstly, for him, this question is redundant. It is His *dharma* or *svabhāva* (essential nature) as the *svabhāva* of fire is to illuminate. Secondly, it is

His principle of absolute free will<sup>1</sup> to manifest the world. The message in this assumption is that an attempt to approach/read His world/work, as a *message* or as *intention* is just a concealment of its very nature and may generate scores of unfinished debates. What we know as creation (also as a literary creation) is only the ultimate contraction<sup>2</sup> of its creator. The creative principle necessarily involves a sequence, a sequence from *śiva* to the earth principles, from the subtlest to the ultimate possible gross, from unlimited and unbound to limited and having ‘a local habitation and a name’. Though both the creator and his creation are essentially one like the image and counter-image but they can never be equated and this makes the involvement of an experiencer/reader even more crucial and complex. It is now the role of the reader/experiencer to deconstruct or disseminate its content. One may understand the reason, as to why there is such a great emphasis on the qualification of the recipient or the viewer in philosophy and literary theory, from their very formation as intellectual discourses in India. This is the response of the reader or viewer that is going to make the creative process complete and meaningful. His/her journey will begin against the current, i.e. from gross to the most subtle. It is in this sense, art acquires a form of *yoga*—the deep concentration of the receptive self and giving up all the distinctive marks (*sādhāraṇikṛta*) that are only the forms of bondage, a viewer/reader becomes the part of this process of reception. The creative and receptive processes are not two, but are complementary to each other and are

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<sup>1</sup> *PH 1. citiḥ svatantrā viśvasiddhihetuḥ*

<sup>2</sup> *Parama saṅkoca*; in the Śaiva ontology, the grossest form of the Universal Consciousness/ Paramaśiva is earth. Manifestation takes the course from subtle to gross.

rooted in the same substratum. It is this very demand that the Indian literary and aesthetic theories make on its audience or readers. Like grammar, a notion of *śiṣṭa*, in the sense of *ideal* is implicit in poetics too. Only a *sahṛdaya* can fulfill this function. He/she must be capable of receiving the *pratibimba* (counter-image) and to become one with the object of art (*sādhāraṇīkaraṇ*, *tanmayībhavana*, *nairmalya*).

Every *ābhāsa* (appearance) partial or whole is real as it is the manifestation of the real substratum (Paramaśiva) in this system. Later on with this philosophical support Rājaśekhara declares that mere appearances suffice for a literary composition.<sup>3</sup> Ānandavardhana quotes a verse in support of his argument of the freedom of absolute creative will<sup>4</sup>. One may ask where this inspiration and theoretical support comes from. We do not hear any discussion in any of the other sixteen philosophical systems (vide Śrī Mādhavācārya's *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*) except the Trika philosophy of Kashmir, emanating from the *āgamic* systems.

In fact, literary and aesthetic experiences cannot be explicated in dualist or dualist-cum-non-dualist or other systems. It is irrelevant to think of those systems that believe the world either to be a product of *māyā* or is *māyā* itself and hence

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<sup>3</sup> Rājaśekhara' KM Ch.9.

<sup>4</sup> *DĀ (L)* Ch. III *apāre kāvyasaṅsāre kavirekaḥ prajāpatiḥ/  
yathāsmāi rocāte viśvaṁ tathedaṁ parivartate//*

(Same two verses, another which follows that quoted above, are also found in *AP* 339.10-11). In fact, Rājaśekhara with great courage accepts *kavisamaya* (poetic conventions) as *pramāṇa* (a valid means of knowledge) (ibid, Ch. 18 on Division of Time) *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* of Kālidāsa has been quotes as an *ārṣa* (source) text by Abhinavagupta himself in his philosophical expositions for the support of his thesis.

unreal. It is even not possible in the system, which brings in the notion of duality. A coherent aesthetic/literary theory puts forth certain conditions for its emergence from a specific system of thought as follows:

1. That the world of our experience is real, knowable and can be named and expressed in language. In other words, the system must accept *vivarta* as ontologically real and also that it deserves epistemic value (unlike the Buddhism and Vedānta philosophy).
2. That the individual is equally independent to constitute his/her own semiotic universe, which is no less real. An artist is not necessarily bound to follow the law of nature like cause and effect (*vinā kāraṇa kalām<sup>5</sup>; niyatikṛta niyamarahitam<sup>6</sup>*) (as it is necessary in the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika systems. Abhinavagupta refutes *anumitivāda*; the Inferential Theory of Aesthetic Experience of Śrī Śaṅkuka).
3. Where the concept of Universal Self is dynamic (like the cosmic dance of Śiva; a creative principle in itself) and there is perennial unity of *prakāśa* (power to illuminate) and *vimarśa* (consciousness), *śabda* (word) and *artha* (meaning), *śiva* and *śakti* (unlike Sāṃkhya philosophy; Abhinavagupta rejects Bhaṭṭanāyaka's Bhogavāda/ theory of aesthetics based on Sāṃkhya).

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<sup>5</sup> *DĀL* I.1

<sup>6</sup> *KP* I.1. The first verse of *KP* is almost a reproduction of the opening verse of *DĀL*. I.

4. Where the partial manifestation (like the 16 *kalā* of the moon or reflection of the image in the mirror) also holds integrity and completeness with the whole.
5. The system must accommodate the instinctive modes of mind and involves a cognitive mechanism of purification of *ásuddha vikalpa* (impure mental constructs)<sup>7</sup>.
6. Where the self and the universal self exist face to face (like the image and counter-image in a mirror) and recognize each other as one (*advaita*).
7. Where the experience is essentially of the nature of *ānanda*.<sup>8</sup>
8. The Vedic metaphor of two friendly birds sitting side by side on the same branch of the tree — one is the experiencer and the other is just the witness. For the aesthetic experience, this picture/metaphor needs to be modified.<sup>9</sup> The witness bird is also aesthetically involved as a *sahṛdaya* — *sahṛdaya* whose heart is not devoid of desire or not defiled by impure uncontrollable desires. It is full of *śuddha vāsanā*.<sup>10</sup>

Such conditions constitute the environment for the emergence of aesthetic and poetic theories with a sound philosophical support. These get fulfilled in the non-dualist *āgama* only of which the Trika system is a splendid development. This is the reason why only the Trika system could formulate the theoretical concerns of art and

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<sup>7</sup> TS Ch 4

<sup>8</sup> KP I.2 *sadyaḥ paranirvṛtaye*

<sup>9</sup> *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* III.1.1.

<sup>10</sup> See Dr. Ramamurti Tripathi, “*Rasa tattva, rasānubhūti aur āvaraṇabhāṅgā*” in *Pūrvagraha* (112) May-March, 1999.

aesthetics with great sophistication and excellence. It applies the same principles, concepts, devices and modes of exposition as in poetics and aesthetics. The poeticians, directly or indirectly belonging to this system, brought out more illuminating and comprehensive discussion on art and literature. Abhinavagupta and Mammāta are the two magnificent examples.

There is no evaluative parameter involved in considering and examining a work of art. A work of art that allows the knower/experiencer (*sahrdaya*) to become one (*tanmayībhūta*) with it is 'ideal'. A *naṭa* (performer) is also not concerned with the audience but only his/her own sphere of activity, i.e. perfecting his/her performance. The audience has to be a *sahrdaya*. Moreover, the poet/performer, viewer and the work of art itself must be free from all the delimiting factors (seven types of *rasa-vidhāna* enumerated by Abhinavagupta)<sup>11</sup> that obstruct to bind these three elements into one. The dissolution of this trinity (*tripuṭi laya*) is a must for undergoing an aesthetic experience.

As discussed above, aesthetic theory emerging from the Śaiva system poses strict qualifying conditions on the audience as well. He/She must be *sahrdaya* (literally 'of the same heart'), capable of becoming one with the object of art with effortlessness (*anupaya*). To experience a work of art, to which we all have instinctive inclination, means to experience the primordial unity of Śiva and Śakti

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<sup>11</sup> Abh.Ch.6

*tattva* (principles) who have been characterized by *cit* and *ānanda śakti* (powers of foundational consciousness or the unchanging principle of all change and blissfulness)<sup>12</sup>. This is identical with the experience of the self (*ahampratyaya*) — knowledge of the nature of the recognition (*pratyabhijñā*). To experience the aesthetic content of a work of art one has to become a *pramātā*<sup>13</sup> (knower/experiencer) of *vidyeśvara*<sup>14</sup> where the experience of the self and the universe are both distinct and equally matched. But the universe appears as our own aspect of the self.

Art, in this regard, is a form of yoga<sup>15</sup>, rather a *sahajayoga* (concentration, effortless concentration). This thesis also gets support of Vāmana who brings the concept of *avadhāna*<sup>16</sup>, i.e. the concentration or focusing of the receptive self on the desired object in poetics. In this process the mind becomes like a clean mirror — capable of receiving the reflection of the object. But this is just one aspect of the self i.e. the aspect of *prakāśa*. The other essentially integral aspect of the self is *vimarśa*, the absolute power to manifest, generate and reconstitute the experience received from the various external or internal sources. This aspect of the Universal/individual

<sup>12</sup> *TA* III.210, *IPV* I.5-14, *VBh.*73 Śrinivāsācārya in his commentary on *Abhijñānaśākuntalam* quotes from some authority that wherever a histrionic representation takes place, Śiva dwells there. This has also the support from *NS* Ch. 35/36 in the context of *pūrvaraṅga*. See in the Glossary appended to this work.

<sup>13</sup> *PH* 3. (See also the endnote by Jayadev Singh (1980) p.130)

<sup>14</sup> G.T. Dashpande (1995) *Abhinavagupta* (Hindi), p. 72. This is the view of Jayratha expressed in his commentary on *AS(V)*

<sup>15</sup> Vāsaspati Misra prefers the etymological derivation on of the term *Yoga* from the verb root √yuj-a (*Dhātūpāṭha* IV.68 'to concentrate' than the verb root √yuj-i (*Dhātūpāṭha* VII.7 'to join yoke').

<sup>16</sup> *KLS* I.3.7

self is also known as *pratibha*<sup>17</sup> that brings about a greater synthesis among the discrete elements (such as individual words in a sentence, or many *karaṇa* and *aṅgahāra* in histrionic representation) and constitutes cognition or experience. In aesthetics this power of the individual has been termed as *carvanā* (literally chewing; relishing, enjoying) and *hrdaysamvāda* (dialogue with the self). Abhinavagupta maintains that such person possessing intuitive power is qualified (*adhikāri*) for the reception of aesthetic content.<sup>18</sup>

*Tanmayībhāvana* is a central concept and one of the most recurring topics of discussion in the *āgamic* literature and poetics. *Tantrāloka* and *Tantrasāra* and also other *āgama* like *Vijūānabhaira* return to this topic quite often. It is the goal of both the *āgamic* rituals and literature. *Nāṭya* is also a form of ritual through which we give up our narrow self and experience *mahābhāva*<sup>19</sup> — abode of all aesthetic experience.

Abhinavagupta's exposition of *dhvani* and *rasa* are only the two aspects (like *prakāśa* and *vimarśa*) of the same aesthetic or poetic principle. Word/Signs are essentially of the nature of *saṅketa* (indicators). In a great poetry there is an optimal exploitation of this *saṅketa śakti/vyañjanā śakti*. According to Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta (also Mammāṭa), it is this suggested sense or meaning that constitutes

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<sup>17</sup> *Vimarśa, pratibha, citi, evātamtrya, spanda, śakti*-all are synonymous in the Trika philosophy.

<sup>18</sup> *DĀL* 1.1

<sup>19</sup> *mahābhāva* is a technical term in the philosophy of Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. The concept of *mahābhāva* in this philosophy is also relevant in the exposition of aesthetic experience. However, the term has been used here taking some technical/semantic liberty.

the soul of poetry<sup>20</sup>. To grasp this subtle charm (*lavanya*) of poetry the experiencer must be endowed with *vimalapratibhā* (undefiled intuition).

The cosmic dance (*natya*) of Śiva, like the given reality is always present, but to be a part of it one needs to be endowed with a 'vision' or to liberate himself/herself at least partly from the binding principles (*aśuddha advan*), rest of the task is to be left to the magnificent art of the Śiva itself.

Literature and art in this system emerge as a valid means of knowledge. The literary experience is *alaukika* but not in the sense of *divine*. It is simply for the reason of categorical inadequacy. This pertains to the inexplicable nature of experience of Brahman as well. Hence both share the same category. Ānanda is the essential nature of Brahman and this is the ultimate goal of all works of art and literature too.

A theoretician who brings about a coherent synthesis of multiple discrete viewpoints is greatly valued in the Indian intellectual tradition. Differences, discreteness and individuation have never been the objectives of our thinkers. In such elements have been thought to be the products of *māyā*. There is no claim of originality or authority. There is no author involved in creation whose meaning or intention needs to be explored. Abhinavagupta, like Bhartrhari and Ācārya Śaṅkara is

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<sup>20</sup> DL I.1 and *Locana* thereupon

a great synthesizer. His synthetic creative vision encompasses all the branches of the Trika system. It is in this theoretical background he makes such brilliant exposition of *rasa* and *dhvani* theories.

Scholars have also recorded the disadvantages of Abhinavagupta's literary theory<sup>21</sup>, which may be summarized as follows:

1. There is a kind of reductionism, which operates through Abhinavagupta's poetics and aesthetics. He reduces literary experiences to a single *śānta rasa*.

Exponent's view: The same charge can be levied on Bhavabhūti (*karuṇa rasa*) and Bhoja (*śrīngāra*) as well. In fact, there is no reductionism involved in this theoretical assumption. The mode of Indian thought is essentially of non-dualist. To strive for a common substratum does not mean denial of difference or multiplicity. It a way to find a universal/deep structure where all such differences get contextualized. *Citta* (the receptive self) is the abode of all the literary experiences. To receive and enjoy the art experience *citta* has to stay in its calm and pristine form. Abhinavagupta holds that only knowledge emanating from *nirveda* (of the Universal Self) can bring about this

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<sup>21</sup> See Masson and Patawardhan (1969) *Śānta Rasa and Abhinavagupta's Philosophy of Aesthetics*, pp. xvi-xvii.

necessary condition. We have already expounded the affinity of art and yoga.

2. He himself is not a good poet and artist.

Exponent's view: The same Classical opposition of philosophy and literature inspires this view. There is no space to accept Pāṇini, Dharmakīrti or even Ādi Śaṅkara as poets in this paradigm for the simple reason that they were primarily a grammarian, a logician and a philosopher respectively. By the same logic it denies Kālidasa or Śriharṣa to be a great philosopher as well. It is also the refutation of the fact that literature and philosophy (*darśana*/'vision') are so closely knitted together. Such framework has hardly any applicability in the Indian verbal discourses. Abhinavagupta's devotional compositions are not in any way inferior in literary merit compared to any such compositions written in world literature.

3. He confuses art and life when he insists on the primacy of *sāntarasa*.

Exponent's view: This view is again an outcome of the duality of life and art. For Abhinavagupta at least we do not observe any ambivalence in his theory and its application. Art and life are not 'yoked together by violence' and the highest goal of art is the highest goal of life also, i.e.

*mokṣa*. He holds that where *pravṛtti* is the goal of all the eight *rasa*, *nivṛtti* is domain of *sānta rasa*. Experience of any *rasa* is impossible unless the recipient is stable at his/her self only<sup>22</sup>. Abhinavagupta does not confuse art with life. He transcends the formal division of life and art and in this way he expands not only the domains of life but also that of art.

4. His religious bent of mind often becomes a hindrance to his literary exposition. He adds more importance to the non-worldly experiences rather than those that are common place. In his view *ānanda* is greater than *prīti* and *vinod*.

Exponent's view: The signified of the term *bhakti* cannot be religion as recorded here by the opponent. *Rati* and *bhakti* are essentially one in the Indian aesthetic paradigm. In fact, while making the exposition of literary experience, the Indian theorists do not maintain any such distinction as worldly or non-worldly. They are simply concerned with the experience of the self. The denial of *sānta rasa* and *bhakti* in life and art will only demean the concerns of life and would invite Plato's serious objections to art and literature. Moreover, aesthetic theory strictly sets the qualification for the viewers. He need not belong to a

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<sup>22</sup> *Abh.* VI.15.

particular community and culture to experience the literary/aesthetic content. On the contrary, he must give up all such distinctions to experience the work of art and its universality.

Such disadvantages of Abhinavagupta's theory are the outcomes of a comparative reading of him and also accommodating him in an alien cultural context. For this reason only the comparative method has well been avoided in the methodology of this study.

Here the limitations of the present study must be recorded. This study has been carried out in a limited time and space. In addition, there are certain methodological problems. Sometimes it is difficult to find any expressed relationship between the obscure nature of the *tantra* and literature. For this reasons other traditions of *āgamic* literature could have been a valuable help. The glossary of the work need to elaborated further. Furthermore, to examine the applicability and comprehensiveness of the category of *dhvani* as enumerated by Ānandavardhan, Abhinavagupta and Mammaṭa- an analysis of modern poem of the traditions other than Indian should have been carried out.

To study Abhinavagupta after a millennium is a greatly refreshing, enriching and rewarding experience. There are many more aspects of his creative faculties, which need to be studied with a fresh outlook. We often tend to take a morphological

approach in examining our great thinkers. This approach results in fragmenting the integrity of thought and system of a theoretician like Abhinavagupta. Syntactic or discursal approach will always be one of the major requirements to study not only Abhinavagupta but also the other important theoreticians in the Indian intellectual traditions.

*// tanme manaḥ śivasankapamastu //*