CHAPTER – II

From Ego Consciousness to Aesthetic Consciousness

There is a desire deep within the soul which drives man from the seen to the unseen, to philosophy and to the divine (Gibran, Wisdom 80).

2.1. Introduction

This chapter entitled, “From Ego Consciousness to Aesthetic Consciousness” traverses the realm of aesthetics, touches upon implicitly the rasa experience derived from a work of art, records the constraints, comments on the flows and forces both on Gibran and of Gibran, situates itself within the Indian Rasa-dhvani doctrine, assimilates it and applies it to two works of Gibran that have remained relatively partially explored till date. Also the artistic experience in his paintings is studied here. A thin strand from the Tamil Canon Tholkāppiyam is intertwined in the study and all these are done with no claim to expertise. The chapter also posits how one’s attention from the objective world of emotions, thoughts and feelings, gets deflected from the temporal in search of the eternal.

A creative genius enhances the ability of his/her readers to access the transcendent which is the first step towards knowing oneself and reaching the full potential. His/her creativity capable of recognizing the essence as pure creativity, devises new situations, circumstances and contexts to unfold an entirely new universe, with renewed hope and meaning to humanity. According to Albert Einstein “No problem can be solved from the same level of consciousness that created it” (qtd. in Chopra 102). So the understanding is that God consciousness alone can be a panacea to all social evils.

The goal of all true artists becomes the understanding of consciousness and their own creative urge is a leap in consciousness that helps humanity to expand, adapt,
transform and evolve. Their epic quest is to redeem humanity from suffering and help them get grounded in the basic nature of existence. Their inspirational artistic oeuvre endows humans with wings to soar into the spacious firmament of love and freedom and help in capturing joy beyond the dimensions of the mind.

Through his inspirational writings, Gibran has tried to capture the totality of human experience and to help them identify the universal consciousness by the dissolution of the ego. Gibran knew that his own awakening is a possibility inherent in the entire human race. Moved by love, compassion, grace, understanding and empathy, he attempts to awaken the quivering spring that slumbers in every writer’s heart. He has succeeded in splitting the seeds of the ego in aesthetic rapture by intuiting certain stable truths. With an intensified sensitivity, he questions authority, defies rules, violates protocols, only to help humanity step into subtler realms and unfold their capabilities. In Thoughts and Meditations under the title “The Giants” he says:

> From the heart of life, from deep within the universe where the secrets of creation are stored, the giants rise like winds and ascend like clouds, and convene like mountains. In their struggles age old problems are being brought to solution. But man in spite of all his knowledge and skills, and notwithstanding the love and hatred in his heart, and the torments he endures, is but a tool in the hands of the giants, to reach their goal and accomplish their inevitable high purpose. (S.T. bk. 3.99-100)

This inevitable high purpose is the realization, which is a happening, a wave of the manifest, rising up in the unmanifest. Gibran rises to the level of his “Giant-self” and the universal consciousness vibrates through and echoes forth its music through the corporeal flute of Gibran. Through his creative output he has endeavoured to blur the self-generated conceptual boundaries of his fellow travellers who are resting on the cusp of an
Armageddon of the soul. From their endless wars in pursuit of endless peace, and endless trials in pursuit of truth, Gibran directs them to the true wonder of the universe, where everyday existence is inspired and every challenge is embraced with confidence and creativity. His inspirational words pour like ambrosia into the fragmented and fractured collective souls of humanity. Deepak Chopra, feels that “To be inspired means to be literally ‘in spirit’ or in synchronicity with the greater universe” (109). Gibran becomes spiritual, primordial and unlimited and turns out to be an explorer of frontiers and new Infinite possibilities. In his letter to his first cousin, Nakhli Gibran, Gibran says, “Will Gibran ever be able to deflect the people’s eyes from the skulls and thorns towards the light and the truth?” (Self, S.T. bk. 4. 28).

With the unfolding of his universal consciousness, the ego sense born of endless identifications get dissolved and with an expanded consciousness he speaks to humanity to bring them out of their regimented inner life. The ego becomes the door to the Self. He aids humans to see ego as it should be seen, and get acquainted with it, so that the known becomes a door to the unknown. Through his words he tries to settle the activities of the mind of the reader/sahrdya. The subject is beyond the realm of ratiocination but there is a state of awakening and sensitiveness which enables one to discern what is suggested by his words. It becomes a state in which the reading is converted into a realization or an experience. To humans, who limit their lives within the bounds of their own ego, the works of Gibran come as an antidote and the power of his words culled from a dualistic world carry the potential to lead them towards a non-dual state. While some literary works impart only knowledge, the repertoire of Gibran gives understanding, apprehension and a direct contact with life. It facilitates the spiritual journey through aesthetic rapture and eco-spirituality and this becomes the focus of study here. It is a movement from knowledge to understanding and in the words of Gibran:
Present knowledge of the people
Is a fog above the field,
When the sun mounts the horizon
To its rays the mist will yield. (Mirrors 54)

The word ego is used in a variety of ways in modern psychology, psychoanalysis, metaphysics and colloquial language. This chapter treats ego consciousness as the property of individuation that generates a boundary of “I”-ness and separates one’s own Self from all others and creates an individual entity. In Sanskrit it is known as ahamkar. Frontiers of knowledge keep expanding, and no one can ever touch these velocities and therefore, the mind and the intellect are limited but there is a way identified and experienced by great sages, seers and prophet poets, to blow out the consciousness of ego and reach the state of higher consciousness. The Quest for truth is as intrinsic to every human being as the drives for self-preservation and social action. While the West approaches this quest from an objective, theoretical and pluralistic standpoint, the ancient East has approached it in a subjective, experimental and holistic way. While the former is based primarily on dialectics and discursive deductive speculation, the latter is based on introspection and direct intuitive insight. Today, the quantum field theory and the theory of relativity towards the essential unity of all things and the disciplines of Physics and Metaphysics are thus forming a common ground.

A transition from materialism to idealism, from the outer to the inner, from the literal to the abstract and from the intellect to the universal intelligence is seen in the works of Gibran. His works bear a marked resemblance to the ancient yogic works of art in essence and appearance, and therefore, in an effort to discover the embedded reality in his works, the scholar has turned to the Eastern evaluatory tools to investigate the subtleties of life, beyond the mind. The ethical footing, the practical techniques and the
positive cosmology of the Indian aestheticians are resorted to, though the basic assumptions of the Eastern and the Western approach to a work of art are becoming less divergent.

The imaginative structure of human civilization is said to rest mainly on poetry and art. Like the majority of mystic poets, Gibran believed poetry to be the “Word” that was with God and that this “Word was God.” Hence his writings reflect wistful beauty, lofty majesty and the abiding peace that the Eastern wisdom has achieved through its meditative foundation. In the words of Sartre “One is not a writer for having chosen to say certain things, but for having chosen to say them in a certain way” (16). Sartre also adds that an inspired writer “neither focuses nor conjectures but he only projects” (30), and that “Good writing becomes an exigence and an act of faith” (47). To him reading turns out to be “an exercise in generosity, and what the writer requires of the reader is not the application of an abstract freedom, but the gift of his whole person with his passions and prepossessions, his sympathies, his sexual temperament and his scale of values in full play” (37). To Nietzsche “words are only symbols for the relations of things to each other and to ourselves, and at no point do they touch upon the Absolute truth” (qtd. in Pasley 14).

Gibran’s map of the world through words is highly symbolic, yet capable of giving warmth, light, truth, beauty and bliss to a dedicated discerning reader. The meaning of the text is only the outer vesture and the emotions become the true content. Gibran has woven his rich conceptions born out of his surplus emotions into verbal patterns. His unhampered self-expression, his perpetual voice for the hushed voices, for the masked and the unavailable freedom, his conquering of his passions, race, class and community, his final conquering of human hearts, his strongest aesthetic emotions handled with a sovereign calm, his harmony between subjectivity and objectivity, his
universal appeal and his shaking the people from their collective cultural amnesia, 
deserve and demand a deeper study. In a society where citizens are slowly becoming 
netizens and where values are on the wane, a writer like Gibran, if understood in the true 
spirit of his writings, can help foster universal peace and harmony.

2.2. Psychology and Aesthetics

This chapter is an attempt in a modest measure to view the works of Gibran in the 
light of the Indian Rasa-dhvani doctrine, and it proceeds to say how the aesthetic 
experience of the reader/sahṛdya can make him/her slip into a state of bliss or ānanda, 
while savouring his wisdom literature in all their inspirational intensity.

Gibran’s collective unconsciousness is seen overflowing through every warp and 
woof of his utterances and his gift to humanity is capable of promoting the quest in his 
readers by ripping open the words to see the realities pointed out by them. Through the 
tears of yearning and restlessness open the door to peace. By turning the searchlight 
inward through art experience one arrives at the joy of oneness, bliss, union and self-
realization. Gibran offers food for the soul suffering from divine discontent, in its failure 
to grasp the whole through imperfect resources. The call to humanity is to develop a love 
for freedom and the Infinite and to cultivate the courage to see with open eyes, the 
limitations of the body and the mind and to transcend all the constraints put up by the ego. 
His words are designed to deflect humanity’s powers and attention away from the 
phenomenal world which is in a state of flux, towards the real world with its universal 
intelligence intact. The artistic process is analogous to the movement from impurity to 
purity, from grossness to subtlety, from individuality to universality and from multiplicity 
to unity.

In the words of Tagore, “…where there is an element of the superfluous in our 
heart’s relationship with the world, Art has its birth” (qtd. in Sharma 7). Psychologists
have assessed the creative process, but the very essence of a creative work defies
definition and poses a challenge to the psychologists and the academia. While Freud feels
that every awe inspiring art can easily lend itself to simple material analysis through
psychology, Carl Gustave Jung posits, “Only that aspect of art which consists in the
process of artistic creation can be a subject for psychological study, but not that which
constitutes its essential nature. The question of art in itself can never be answered by the
psychologist, but must be approached from the side of the aesthetics” (Jung 76).

Great poetry draws its strength from humanity and one may completely miss the
meaning if one tries to derive it from personal factors. Psychology also has it that when
the collective unconsciousness becomes a living experience, and is brought to bear upon
the conscious outlook of an age, this event, turns out to be a creative act which is of
importance to a whole epoch, and a whole work of art is born which carries a message for
generations to come (115).

Even Freud who considered art as “substitute gratification” and “an illusion in
contrast to reality,” is not in reality insensitive to art. Freud’s admiration for writers is
recorded by Lionel Trilling in his essay “Freud and Literature,” where he says, “Of
artists, especially of writers, he speaks with admiration and even a kind of awe, though
perhaps what he most appreciates in literature are specific emotional insights and
observations, as we have noted, he speaks of literary men, because they have understood
the part played in life by the hidden motives, as the precursors and coadjutors of his own
science” (Lodge 281). He also adds that “…it is only fair to say that Freud himself was
aware both of the limits and limitations of psycho-analysis in art…” (283).

Art may be related to psychology in unraveling the mystery of the creative
process, but the creative work which is a means to unravel the unmanifest and the
Infinite, generates a state of consciousness – where the practical “personalities” of the
readers, different, each from the other, are momentarily eliminated giving rise to a
“knowing subject” which is unique, generalized and not circumscribed by any
determination of space time etc. It is a state of consciousness expanded, free of obstacles
and pervaded by beatitude. A particular view of psychology holds that one’s personality
is constituted both towards its motivation and intellection of a few primary emotions
which lie deep in the subconscious or unconscious strata of one’s being. According to
Kapila Vatsyāyan, “Life phenomenon itself is abstracted into the principal categories of
love, pathos, heroism, fierceness, laughter, humour, jealousy, disgust, fear, wonder etc.,
all ultimately leading to equanimity and harmony” (138). Later aesthetic psychologists
have added to it the peaceful, the devotional, and the filial and other varieties of emotions.
When these emotions are aesthetically excited rasa ensues, which has to be experienced
and enjoyed. It is the transcendent exhilaration from the enjoyment of the roused
emotions inherent in one’s own personality and consequently, a unity is effected between
the individual’s own experience and the expression of the art.

In trying to portray the creative mind in all its amazing intricacy, what gets
 crucified is the essence of the work of art. The personal psychology of the artist may shed
light on many aspects of his work, but not the work itself. Again, Jung insists:

The creative urge which finds its clearest expression in art is irrational and
will in the end make a mock of all our rationalistic undertakings. All
conscious psychic processes may well be casually applicable, but the
creative act being rooted in the immensity of the unconscious, will forever
elude our attempt at understanding. It describes itself only in its
manifestations; it can be guessed at, but never fully grasped. Psychology
and aesthetics will always have to turn to one another for help and the one
will not invalidate the other. (102)
As true arts are said to be imitative of the art of the divine creator, symbolic and anagogic, ancient Indians pursued them prayerfully and religiously as their dhyana-mantras - the result of meditation. In the Rig Veda a kavi is a seer, one who has seen and he is also a darshanika, i.e. one who shows the way. He sees himself and helps others to see. Therefore, it is appropriate to measure the works of Gibran, with the Indian critical evaluative tool which enjoys a critical intelligence of the highest order. Vatsyāyan observes that this theory has its foundations in The Taittiriya Upanishad’s dictum, Raso vai sah. Like the Absolute, it is self-luminous and self-conscious, devoid of all duality and multiplicity. It emerges from a single unified source which has the potency of multiplicity (151).

From time immemorial, aesthetic experience has been regarded as an important dimension of one’s experience of art and therefore, the focus of this chapter is confined to the study of the works of Gibran in the light of the Rasa-dhvani doctrine formulated by the ancient Sanskrit scholars and developed and modified by other Indian aestheticians. Having assimilated the profound depths of Indian philosophy that integrates into its framework, the Vedic literature, The Upanishads, the seven major systems of philosophy - nyāya, vaiśeṣika, saṃkhya, yoga, mīmāṃsā, Vedānta and Buddhism, and also the refined thoughts from the sages, the Indian poetics is so vast, eclectic and encyclopaedic. Bharata’s Nātyaśāstra says:

*Rasa* is the cumulative result of *vibhava* (stimulus) *anubhava* (involuntary reaction) and *vyabhicāribhāva* (voluntary reaction). For example just as when various condiments and sauces and herbs and other materials are mixed, a taste (different from the individual tastes of components) is felt … so also along with the different *bhāvas* (emotions) the *sthāyibhāva*
becomes a “taste” (*rasa*, flavor, feeling). Because it is enjoyably tasted, it is called *rasa*. (qtd. in Rajan 48)

While ego consciousness falls within the ambit of psychological studies, aesthetic consciousness slips out of its stranglehold and enters the realm of the science of the soul, to be understood in all its essence, for this is a state of consciousness that can temporarily open the doors of the soul to the divine. The Mundaka Upanishad states:

As long as we think we are the ego,
we feel attached and fall into sorrow.

But realize that you are the self, the Lord
of life, and you will be freed from sorrow. (192)

Probing into the human determinants in a work of art may not be beneficial because a work of art is not a human being, but it is something “supra-personal” and therefore, it is better to see the special significance of a true work of art in the fact that “it has escaped from the limitations of the personal and has soared beyond the personal concern of its creator” (Jung 83). Further, Jung is of the view that creative writing is a startling phenomenon and it uses the artist as a “nutrient medium” as it springs from his pen in all completion and perfection, making him empty and stupefied. In his opinion:

An unseen current sweeps him along and when he speaks in primordial images, he speaks with a thousand voices; he enthralls and overpowers, while at the same time he lifts the idea he is seeking to express out of the occasional and the transitory into the realm of the ever enduring. He transmutes our personal destiny into the destiny of mankind and evokes in us all those beneficial forces ever and anon have enabled humanity to find a refuge from every peril and to outlive the longest night. (Jung 96)
It is an established fact that the Indian field of criticism has a wide spectrum of
critical theories with its multiple sub-systems. Among the Pan-Indian, region specific or
epoch specific critical movements, Indian poetics is a major critical movement capable of
measuring up to global standards. Further, it is resilient, receptive, pliable and
accommodative, and the possibility of its expansion and inclusion makes it a viable
Indian alternative to the more rigid and abstract intellectual Western critical tools.
P.K. Rajan in his article entitled “Paradigms in Plurality: Search for a Regenerative
Principle in Indian Criticism,” says:

Indian critical scene presents a very wide spectrum of enterprises, with
Pan-Indian, or region-specific or epoch-specific critical movements, which
include varied schools such as Sanskrit Poetics, Tamil Poetics, Anglo-
American based systems, Euro-centric schools, East-West synthesis, Folk
aesthetics, Comparative criticism, Nativistic school, Dalit poetics,
Feminist and Marxist schools, etc.. (349)

Much in the works of Gibran is a resonance of the primordial word, and the
richness of its variegated form and meaning could not possibly be reflected in one mirror.
Yet the province of literary science and aesthetics can aid a reader in forming certain
points of view with regard to the visionary experience of Gibran. Through acquaintance
with his works of art, one can hope for the highest awareness. To Gibran, “Art is one step
from the visibly known toward the unknown” (*Mirrors* 71). An awakened consciousness
is fed by his works, and the *rasa* experience derived from them, universalizes the
emotions and make them lose their sting. Consequently, the quester/reader gains a
momentary understanding of the unconscious and instead of resisting its force with
egoism and turning them into problems, one sees it as false, till the vibration of truth
dawns on him/her. Through his soothing, flowing and tranquil words, the reader is taken
to metaphysical explorations. In a meditative and quietened state, everything becomes a happening and an experience. The seed of the ego dissolves and enters the soul of silence and at this noble moment of aesthetic relish, there is no subject or object. It becomes an immersion in the highest – an enjoyment that is eternal and becomes a state akin to the experience of the Brahman (Absolute) (Gnoli 77-78).

The Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Literary Criticism defines aesthetics as, originally, that which pertains to the beautiful as conceived variously by artists and especially, philosophers with reference to noble aspects of experience beyond superficial appearance or more prettiness. (Shaffer 7) The theme preoccupied philosophers in ancient Greece. The term “Aesthetics” originally derives from the Greek word aisthetikos which means “sense perception” or “sensory cognition.” In the middle of the eighteenth century this term was adopted by Alexander Baumgarten as the label covering the philosophical study of art. According to him works of art primarily addressed sensory perception and very low level forms of cognition.

Apart from literature, other fields like television, videography, photography, cartography, music and other performing arts too have their own aesthetics. In literature, authors use a variety of techniques to appeal to our aesthetic values. In literary aesthetics the study of “effect” is supposed to illuminate the deep structures of reading and receiving literary works. While “Catharsis” is said to be the effect of dramatic completion of action in time, Kairosis is said to be the effect of novels whose characters become integrated in time and Kenosis becomes the effect of lyric poetry which creates a sense of emptiness and timelessness.

In the West, ancient Greeks were the first contributors to the aesthetic theory. Aristotle did serious investigation of the aesthetic phenomena so as to develop by scientific analysis certain principles of beauty and art. Aesthetic value to Immanual Kant
becomes the fitness to please, as object of pure contemplation. His main service to aesthetics consists in the preliminary critical determination of its aim and its fundamental problems. To Hegel, the form of the beautiful becomes the unity of manifold. Schopenhauer exalts the state of artistic contemplation as the one in which, as pure intellect set free from will, the misery of existence could be surmounted and something of blissful ecstasy attained. Schiller is of the view, that aesthetic subjects are pervaded with the spirit of Kant’s philosophy. The elaborated systems of aesthetics in French literature elucidates the higher and spiritual element in aesthetic impressions, and appears to ignore any capability in the sensuous material of affording a true aesthetic delight. The inquiries of English thinkers are directed to modest problems as the psychological process by which one perceives the beautiful. Besides these theorists, there are the intuitionists, like Hutcheson who sees the cause of beauty in a certain order among the parts or “uniformity amidst variety.” Reid sees beauty residing in the faculties of the mind, while Sir. W. Hamilton superficially resembles Kant and Ruskin who have distinguished between typical and vital beauty. Also the analytical theorists, like Addison, Hogarth, Burke, Alison and Spencer have made their contribution to the field of aesthetics (Encyclopedia of Aesthetics 28-40). Yet, all these theories, take us only a little way towards an adequate understanding of our aesthetic experience. With regard to the works of Gibran, what M. H. Abbrams says will be of more value, The criterion of the validity of a critical theory “is not the scientific verifiability of its single propositions, but the scope, precision, and coherence of the insights that it yields into the properties of single works of art and the adequacy with which it accounts for diverse kinds of art” (Lodge 3).

The Western formulations generated in a specific milieu, in particular historical situations, in their respective societies get juxtaposed in this study to find out how the
Eastern critical theory gains prominence in comparison. According to M. Hiriyanna, the saint and the aesthete both realize and enjoy unity in diversity:

While in one case what is realized is the truth of nature, it is in the other, the truth of art. The latter, no doubt, is a lower truth; but there is yet a close resemblance between the two attributes and we may well compare the person appreciating art to jīvanmukta (one that has realized the goal of life) he does indeed get a foretaste of moksha (true freedom) then, but it is not moksha in fact because it is transient, not being based upon perfect knowledge. (Qtd. in Valli Rao 60)

To have a proper understanding of an artist like Gibran who has assimilated the best of the East and the West in his writings, and who has transcended the rigidities of unevenness between the West and the rest, the Western canons of criticism alone may not suffice. One has to respond to his writings in a larger world context and not through “stock responses” and therefore, this thesis leans on the Rasa-dhvani doctrine that has the capacity to lead the reader away from ego consciousness to a state of rest or lysis. This theory may not be exhaustive or authoritative but it is one of the ancient enriched legacies that has some common elements with the West while retaining its own distinct sensibility. Gibran himself is of the view that criticism should proceed from the light of one’s own inner light and not through the help of acquired taste. In his letter to Mikhail Naimy, he asserts, “The spiritual light that comes from within is the source of everything beautiful and noble. This light turns criticism into a fine and noble art. Without this light, criticism is compulsive and boring and lacking the positive note of decisive persuasion” (Self, S.T. bk. 4.78).

Aesthetics is a sub discipline of axiology, a branch of philosophy and is closely associated with the philosophy of art. It studies new ways of seeing and perceiving the
world. As per the observation of Noël Carroll, “However, they are not the only ones, nor the only legitimate ones, nor are they even the most important ones with respect to every single art work” (200). V.K. Chare in his book Sanskrit Criticism states, “The essential human experience that literature communicates is not historically or culturally, conditioned but appeals to what is most basic and elemental in human nature” (qtd. in Narasimiah 39).

According to Rajasekhara, a reader needs Bhavayitri Pratibha (responsive imagination) to understand and re-live the Karayitri Pratibha (creative imagination) of the artist. The Indian poetics treats a poet as the spokesman of the eternal spirit of beauty and delight who shares the highest creative and self-expressive rapture which is close to the original ecstasy responsible for existence – the divine ānanda. Ordinary life values get converted into soul values in the hands of a literary artist. In the words of Aurobindo, “The ancient Indian critics defined the essence of poetry as rasa and by that word they meant a concentrated state, a spiritual essence of emotion, an essential aesthetics, the souls pleasure in the pure and perfect sources of feeling” (412).

Gibran is a living page in the book of the universe and has presented in the delightful literary form of the parable a heritage of the venerable Aramaic tradition. His penetrating vision and objective understanding and his aesthetic principles become a spiritual quest towards a new unified and undivided humanity. The ontological status of his works trans-personalize one’s emotional experience. Gibran was also aware of the translucent element within every individual that “acts and moves” without one’s knowledge. In his letter to May Ziadeh in 1920 he has recorded his musings thus, “The translucent element in us is mysterious May, and multitude of its activities are unknown to us. Whether we come to recognize it or not, it remains our hope and our goal, our destiny and our perfection, it is our very selves in our divine state” (33).
Gibran’s entire works are oriented towards this translucent element born of a
deep rapture and not from the surface strings of the ego consciousness. The Indian
theory of poetry and art has constituted *rasa* as the essence of poetic experience, and one
has to concentrate on the analysis of constituents of *rasa* in order to understand the proper
definition of the nature of aesthetic experience. As Gibran says in *The Prophet*:

I only speak to you in words of that
which you yourselves know in thought
And what is word knowledge, but a
shadow of wordless knowledge?
your thoughts and my words are
waves from a sealed memory that keeps
records of our yesterdays. (89)

Thus, Gibran’s writings have a great appeal to humanity capable of directing them
to the deepest springs of life. They help humanity find a way to connect with the stillness
that resides within them. In his works, Gibran could conjure up the forms in which the
age was most lacking. He was able to set aflame the primordial image in the unconscious
to compensate the inadequacy and one-sidedness of his age, and drape his scientific
hypothesis in beautiful poetic language. His *rasa* filled heart was trying to create the same
*rasa* experience in the minds of his readers. Unless a reader knows intellectually that
there are higher levels of reality beyond mundane phenomena he/she cannot begin the
quest to experience those levels of reality.

Gibran’s words are significant symbols with high potency and the Nyāya system
of philosophy speaks of poetry to be the will of God. His sentences fulfill the four
conditions laid down by the Nyāya system of philosophy to express the intended meaning.
There is ākāmāṣa, yogyatā, sannidhi and tātparya which prove him to be a trustworthy
The poet (*apta*) who has translated his realization of truth into words. The common objects of the ordinary world, beings, events, feelings and actions are connected in extraordinary relationship and to use the words of Paul Valery, they become “musicalized, resonant and as it were harmonically related” (Lodge 254).

2.3. **The Rasa-dhvani doctrine**

If one conceives of human life as a rich fabric, one can say that it gains its colour and texture from the various events which shape it. Ordinary everyday actions in life as well as extra ordinary occurrences could be viewed as threads woven into this tapestry. These threads evoke in humans different feelings in different circumstances. It is these sentiments that give life, its hues, its salt or savour. What artists do is to present to the reader/sahṛṛdya a slice of life, making use of these rasas. The Indic tradition of art is inclined towards resisting any work of art that has little reference to or affinity with life. According to A.S. Dasan, in his *The Rains and the Roots*:

> Rasa siddhānta, the Indic principle of *rasa* which states that ‘every experience alters the self of the experience,’ facilitates the reader to have rasānanda, the joy of experiencing sentiments of *karuṇa*, compassion through *rasa-dhvani*, suggested or evoked meaning or *vakrokti*, deviated or arched meaning. This is where and how art-emotion becomes epiphany. Knowledge of life that is fragmentary points to the temporal, meaning brutality, pain and anguish but knowledge that connotes epiphany points to the yonder, meaning a poetic idealization of life full of compassion. (14)

Roughly defined *rasa* is aesthetic rapture. It is a dominant and sustained emotional and mental state which is the result of an aesthetic experience. It is an emotion excited by artistic circumstances or situations. No emotion is *rasa* unless it is aesthetically excited and the term *rasa* is associated with Bharatamuni. *Nātyaśāstra* is the first extant
work in which rasa is used in an aesthetic context and with an aesthetic purpose. References to the word rasa are seen in the Vedas and in The Upanishads. However, the context in the Vedas and the Upanishads where rasa is mentioned are not exactly aesthetic but carries in its umbra, the vibration of its earlier meanings and the potential of what it is going to mean in the future. Initially rasa had meant “water,” “juice,” “wine,” “cow’s milk,” “soma” and “flavor.” It has also figured in the ancient treatises on chemistry and medicine. Ultimately, even when it filtered into the field of aesthetics, it had meant many things at many times. For Bharata, it was a distinctive way of working at and perceiving aesthetic objects, and later in the hands of Bhāmaha it was a mere figure of speech. By the turn of the tenth century, it combined with dhvani to mean something more in the hands of Ānandhavardhana. Thus, in a temporal flow there has been really no end to its meanings. Though only one chapter is devoted to rasa in Nātyaśāstra, it is here that all the different meanings are seen to be lurking in its shadow. It is here that rasa is used both in a concrete culinary and an abstract aesthetic content. Rasa being a connotative word has an essence that underlies its various uses and most of its meanings presuppose the quintessential quality of rasa as essence. This rasa theory was revived after a period of lull for more than six centuries, by aestheticians like Abhinavagupta, Rāja Bhoja, Viswanātha, and Jaganatha Panditraja. With its concurrent dimensions and levels of meaning and latent capacity for much interpretations and inbuilt rigorous flexibility, it can become the fountain head and source for other simultaneously running streams.

The eight sentiments recognized by Bharata are erotic (sṛṅgāra) comic (hāsya), pathetic (karuṇa) furious (raudra), heroic (vīra), terrible (bhayānaka), odious (bibhātsa) and marvellous (adbhuta). Later writers have added one more rasa (sānta) to this number. Also he speaks of the dominant states (sthāyībhāva) which give rise to this rasa.
and they are love, mirth, sorrow, anger, energy terror, disgust, and astonishment. The thirty three transitory states (Vyabicāribhāva), the eight temperamental states, (sattvika bhāva) are also elaborated by him. (Sethuraman 20). To Kapila Vatsyāyan: “The Nāṭyaśāstra does serve as the Kalpa vrkṣa tree, or the lake we spoke about, for these different shoots to grow into independent trees or as streams to flow, to sustain both a bonding with the source and a continuous dynamism” (129). Thus, Bharata’s approach is eclectic and his text has the vitality and resilience with an ability to sustain perennial flow and continuous change.

The technical term for rasa is sentiment. In English language, it is translated as aesthetic enjoyment, aesthetic bliss, poetic relish, poetic delight, poetic delectation etc., Bharata has condensed this psychological phenomenon in one sūtra (aphorism) which says, “Vibhāvānubhāva-Vyabhicāri-samyogād rasa-nīspattih.” It interprets that the rasa (aesthetic pleasure) manifests itself when the sthāyibhāva, i.e. emotion of a reader or a spectator is correlated with the following three aspects expressed in a piece of creative literature: (i) excitant (ii) ensuant response and (iii) transitory feelings – and all these three should be accumulated as one. (Choudhary 67). On the one hand bhāvas mean all the elements having the energy or power to manifest rasa; on the other they stand for emotions and moods,

Sthāyibhāvas are permanent emotions that are inborn, fed by a number of minor feelings called transitory, accessory or auxiliary feelings. Some rhetoricians have identified three more emotions. i.e. Nirveda, (detachment from the wordly affairs) Vātsalya (affection for children) and Sneha or Sāhacarya (desire for the company of a particular friend of any sex). The transitory feelings are born out of these emotions themselves. The cause of any basic emotion when presented in a piece of creative literature becomes the vibhava (excitant) and the effect of any emotion is called anubhava
(ensuant response). It is said that when these three excitant, ensuant response, and
transitory feelings are correlated with any permanent emotion of a sahrdaya (an aesthete),
it is manifested, transformed or converted into poetic pleasure in the same way, as milk,
when mixed with anything sour, is converted into curd or cheese (Choudhary 70).

A clear-cut definition for rasa is impossible as it is an abstract phenomenon like
God, soul, truth, duty etc.. It is known to be indivisible as it is a blend of the three
elements. It is self-manifested as the emotion itself, turns into such sort of pleasure. It is
free from the touch of perception as it demands an extreme type of concentration and
above all it is a pure state of consciousness. It is neither a mundane pleasure nor a
spiritual pleasure, yet it is akin to the ecstasy of joy obtained by a contemplator out of
perception of Brahman. While worldly emotions are confined to a particular time, space
and individual, they escape these limitations in a literary work. In the words of Susan
Langer, “all the pleasures of earth and heaven were not equal to a tithe 1/10th of what rasa
could give” (qtd. in Narasimhaiah 6). From a general viewpoint, rasa is the approximate
name for all the mental modes which the reader tastes in poems and plays. Sreekantaiyya
maintains:

The poet composes poems and plays by selecting and combining
Vibhāvas, anubhāvas and the rest in a form that expresses the rasa that he
has experienced in the world. Hence he is the mainspring of all this
experience of rasa. Unless the poet contemplates the world with his eyes
suffused with rasa, no poems and plays can arise. (Balasubhramaniya
333-34)

The Sanskrit poetics bears a close resemblance to Tholkāppiam which says that
parts are expected to display emotions in literature capable of playing on the feelings of
audience and readers. Tholkāppiam has given eight kinds of meyppādus39, has elaborated
the four sources from which each meyppādu springs, and has spoken of the channeling of emotions experienced by a reader while enjoying a piece of literature. It says, “They say laughter, weeping, despisedness, wonder, fear, fortitude, anger and delight are the eight, meyppādus. (Tholkāppiyam 213). Thus, “The abstraction of ‘life’ into primary moods, sentiments, primary emotive states, is basic and universal to all humans. It is not culture specific or individual or particular. Yet, culture specific, the individual or society are embodiments of the universal human psychical states” (Vatsyāyan 64). In a work of art, emotion embodies itself in the thought and words. In his essay “The Appreciation of Poetry,” Gurrey opines:

In true art the emotions are not only stirred they are also brought into artistic relation with other elements of the experience by the power of the poet’s words. The emotions are held to the experience and worked into its unity because they go to intensify the thought and imagination and thus vitalize those activities. (qtd. in Ilakkuvanār 457)

It is said that while tasting rasa, the mind sheds its natural fickleness and resides solely in it with single minded concentration. Its other names are carvanā (tasting), camatkāra (delight), āsvāda (relishing) ānanda (joy) and viśrānti (repose). C.D. Narasimhaiah has glorified rasa saying:

May I say without sounding rhetorical: if I had many lives to live I would devote them all to impress on the world the supreme end of a work of art is the realization of rasa (sap, juice), India’s greatest contribution to the world of aesthetics, though inadequately realized by Indians themselves and hardly understood in the West. (Narasimhaiah 6)

Since the rasa theory deals with the “emotive content” of a work of art, its universality and its applicability to any Eastern or Western classical work, would be
personally satisfying to any ardent researcher as it is intellectually stimulating, emotionally uplifting, ethically enlightening, and socially relevant and appealing. To Bhatta Nayaka, “a proper aesthetic creation has the peculiar function of generating in the reader a new and spiritual creation and the reader in turn has a special function by which he can enjoy it” (Raghavan and Nagendra 38). He distinguishes poetic language from ordinary language and postulates two functions for poetic language – \textit{Bhāvakatva} and \textit{Bhojakatva}. \textit{Bhāvakatva} is the power of universalization, which strips the \textit{vibhāva}s, \textit{sthāyibhāva}s etc. of their individual and personal aspects and generalizes them in the minds of the spectators endowed with power of imagination; and \textit{Bhojakatva} is the power by which the \textit{sthāyibhāva} reaches its climax and is enjoyed by the spectators.

The enlightenment of \textit{rasa} is not the subject of ordinary psychology, but aesthetic psychology. Emotions are the manifestations of the heart and they are the very rudimentary things, whereas rhetoric is a social vehicle. Whatever is great, noble and pure belongs to the heart. What moves on in the hearts of people with artistic sensibility get translated into the private language of the poet. Unlike a lay person’s experiences and emotions that are clouded in mist, the poet’s vision is clear and lucid and in his genius there is a mystery that is far more profound than the mystery of life itself. A genius leans towards the beautiful, seeks for the source and thirsts for that which is eternal. When he/she speaks, it is as if the river of nectar has started to melt and flow in a cascade down the mountain top right into the valley of the readers’ heart. They moisten human emotions, lift them from the actual temporal and spatial character of the situation, and the emotion that is suggested therein loses its sting, assuming a purely universal character. It is devoid of the pathological touch, and what the reader experiences is the aesthetic rapture. According to Gibran, “creative thinking is the expression of what floats, moves and becomes an essence in one’s soul while research is the expression of what floats,
moves and becomes an essence in society” (Love 5). Even in creative writing, the area of reality that is pictured is limited and Gibran was well aware of the acres of the ineffable that enshrined the describable.

Gibran’s expressions strike a responsive chord in the readers’ hearts and make it vibrate with musical melody. It becomes an essence in the readers’ souls – an essence that is capable of exciting aesthetic rapture and elevating him/her to the state of ānanda or bliss. There is a kind of pleasure, comfort and tranquility, which is beyond explanation and analysis, but one simply knows that it is there. When immersed in this state one finds in it, the fulfillment of all their desires.

In his lovely presentation of the landscapes, botanical observations and allusions to the different seasons, Gibran reminds one of the Tamil literary strands in the fabric of Indian literary criticism. With his live vocabulary of symbols, the actual objective landscapes of Lebanon become the interior landscapes of his poems, short stories, novella, parables, maxims and narrations. The materials of his poem throb with, mutal (the first things i.e. time and place), karu (the “native elements”), and uri (the “human feelings”). In his works one could deduce the details of the action from the details of the setting. Gibran’s works also abound in “metonymous metaphor” which is a special feature of classical Tamil forms. In his The Broken Wings, he says:

The mountains, trees, and rivers change their appearance with the vicissitudes of times and seasons, as a man changes with his experiences and emotions. The lofty poplar that resembles a bride in the day time, will look like column of smoke in the evening; the huge rock that stands impregnable at noon, will appear to be a miserable pauper at night, with earth for his bed and sky for his cover; and the rivulet we see glittering in the morning and singing hymns of eternity, will, in the evening, turn to a
stream of tears wailing like a mother bereft of her child, and Lebanon, that had looked dignified a week before, when the moon was full and our spirits were happy, looked sorrowful and lonesome that night. (S.T. bk. 1.78)

These lines suggest the love-in-separation of the “star-crossed lovers” bidding a sad farewell to each other. The heroine Selma Karamy becomes a victim of man-made laws, at the Bishop’s mansion. Her meeting with her former lover takes place in a solitary house in the midst of a beautiful garden filled with “the scent of roses, gardenia and jasmine” (32), which is very much akin to the aham poems of classical Tamil poetry, where the five landscapes – kurinchi, mullai, marutham, neithal and pālai play a pivotal role. In this novella the author has inverted the hierarchy of components as follows: the human elements (uri), come first followed by the native elements (karu) and the first elements (mutal).

The Buddhist canonical work Kavi-sutta in Pali speaks about four types of poets - They are: (i) The Meditative (Cintākavi), (ii) The Scholarly (Sattakavi), (iii) The Inspired (Pratibhanakavi) and (iv) The Missionary (Atthakavi). In Gibran, we find all the four fused into one exhibiting a rare pratibha (creative imagination) and his prose and poetry carry literary excellences such as clarity (sphutata), sweetness (madhurya), figures of speech (alankāra), oblique expressions (vakrokti), style (riti) etc. (Devy 318). His poetry springs from his rich reservoir, from his afflatus of rasa and ultimately culminates in the rasa of the reader. His poetic beauty (saundarya) is composed of several elements, some relating to form, some to content, some to style and yet others to traditional conventions. One could perceive and enjoy the sensuous beauty of sublimity perceived in the objects of nature (prakriti-saundarya). In the poem “Earth,” Gibran extols the patience and sublimity of mother earth, glorifies it as an “atom of dust raised by the feet of God when
he journeyed from the East to the West of the universe,” wonders at it as a “spark
projected from the furnace of eternity,” as the tree of God, as a “drop of blood” in the
“veins of the giant of giants” and as a “bead of sweat upon the brow.” The rhetorical
questions raised, reverberate with wisdom. His identification with the earth is the
culmination of his deep love for the created world. When he says, “You are ‘I,’ Earth,”
the reader wonders at his ecological insight and indivisible oneness (Thoughts, S.T. bk.3.
111-112)

Gibran’s voice is as beautiful as the voice of Tagore in his Gitanjali. There is
extreme beauty of thought, which exercises a deeper enchantment and the aesthetic
ecstasy in the reader. Forty days after Gibran’s death his friend Mikhail Naimy, delivered
an address to the Syrian-Lebanese community in Brooklyn:

Gibran Kahlil Gibran was one of those souls that experienced moments of
utter clarity in which Truth delights to be mirrored. In that was Gibran’s
glory. In that was his pain…In revealing himself to himself Gibran reveals
us to ourselves. It would seem that all-seeing eye perceived our spiritual
drought and sent us this rain-bearing cloud to drizzle some relief to our
parching souls. (qtd in Bushrui and Jenkins 283)

Gibran emerged from the East that had nursed so many prophets, and had fanned several
sacred flames. The East had been a melting pot of religious cultures and ideas. He was a
gifted son of the East whose heart was aflame with rasa and only sensitive readers with
hearts aflame like that of the poet can hear its melody in the silence of their souls. Bhaṭṭa
Nāyaka says:

Any form of pleasure is an epiphany, even if distant and colourless, of the
divine beatitude, which is the very essence of consciousness. Aesthetic
experience, being characterized by disinterested and impersonal pleasure is
a modality *sui generis* of the unbounded beatitude that appears to the
Yogin in his ecstasy and, in his eyes, transforms *Saṃsāra* into *Nirvāṇa*.
(Raghavan and Nagendra 77)

Gibran has plunged into the healing and redeeming depths of the collective psyche, where one is not lost in the isolation of consciousness and its errors and suffering but where all humans are caught in a common rhythm which has allowed them to communicate their feelings and strivings to mankind as a whole. His is a re-immersion in the state of “participation mystique” (Jung 95) and at this level of experience it is no longer his personal weal or woe, but it is the life of the collective, and that is why his great works *The Prophet* and *Jesus The Son of Man* are highly impersonal, objective and profoundly moving. The phenomenology of his psyche is so wonderful, colourful and variegated in form and meaning that its richness cannot be explored or reflected fully in a single canvas. Though a complete theory of poetic creativity is impossible at least partial shedding of light on a work of art can be done, with the Indian *Rasa-dhvani* doctrine.

Gibran brings before the reader the enchanting world that lies far beyond the realms of thought, of science, of reason, research and logic. In “The Death of the Master,” Gibran has recorded his artistic fullness in the following words:

The tree of my heart is heavy with fruit, come, ye hungry ones, and gather it. Eat and be satisfied… Come and receive from the bounty of my heart and lighten my burden. My soul is weary under the weight of gold and silver. Come, ye seekers after hidden treasures, fill your purses and relieve me of my burden…

My heart overflows with the wine of the ages. Come all ye thirsty ones, drink and quench your thirst. (*Voice*, S.T. bk. 2.29)
This is the cry of a soul that has experienced a spiritual explosion. It is a spiritual communication aiming at a communion. It is an invitation to all seekers to flow with the universal goal and quench their thirst. Gibran invites them into his innermost realm to join the mystery and get dissolved and this he does with mystical beauty and suggestive majesty.

Ānandhavardhana’s *The Dhvanyāloka* is a huge compendium of poetry and poetic styles, which refers to numerous views, scholars and poetic texts mostly by way of illustration. The theory proposed by him is called *Dhvani* which means the suggestive quality of poetic language. His proposition is that the suggested content is of paramount importance in a poetic work and that in the sublime poetry the suggested emotional mood captivates the entire consciousness of the reader enabling him to savour the delight of aesthetic experience. In his scheme of the theory of *dhvani*, he recognizes the speculations of the earlier theoreticians and lays emphasis on the poetic figure, diction, metre and technique employed in poetry, only so long as they contribute to the paramount importance of *rasa*. While some critics consider suggestion as the soul of poetry, there are others who aver its non-existence, yet others who regard it as something logically implied and still others who consider its essence as lying beyond words. Suggestion has two aspects namely the explicit and the implicit. Just as a man who is interested in perceiving objects in the dark seeks the help of a lamp, so also any reader who is interested in the suggested meaning should proceed by first evincing interest in the conventional meaning.

Words conveying a charm and incapable of being replaced by another, and which are pregnant with suggestive force deserve the title “Suggestive.” Even ancient writers have resorted to suggesting metaphors instead of expressing them. A great artist always aims to adopt an indirect method in dealing with his material. The modern scientific writer, Otto Jesperson in his work “The Philosophy of Grammar,” speaks of three distinct
things in all forms of speech – expression, suppression and impression and he adds that “suggestion is impression through suppression” (Sethuraman 173). The greatness of a writer or a speaker lies in the degree of suppression or subtext adopted by him in his communication. The theory dhvani is not a peculiar discovery of the critics alone but it is also a principle accepted and recognized by every student of philosophy, of logic and of language. It is a principle raised to the rank of a special principle, an important doctrine in the realm of literary appreciation. Roughly the subject of first rate art is divided in a triple way – rasa-dhvani, alamkāra-dhvani and vāstu-dhvani (Raghavan and Nagendra 15).

Discussing the dhvani theory of Sanskrit poetry George L. Hart III observes

One naturally wonders whether this technique

Could have been influenced in some way by the

Poetry of South India, in which it is found

Several centuries before its appearance in Sanskrit and Prakrit literature. (qtd. in Marudanayagam 33)

P. Maruthanayagam also adumbrates that on close examination iraicci appears to be more akin to dhvani than Uḷḷurai, the one vital difference between the Tamil and Sanskrit concept being that dhvani may not depend on similes or metaphors. However, while iraicci is confined to akam poetry alone, dhvani is applicable to all kinds of subject matter (33). Tracing iraicci in Gibran’s works would unfurl deeper meanings, interpretations and scientific truths. The suggestion of moods, objects and figures of speech used by Gibran ultimately terminates in the experience of rasa. Like rasa, dhvani is also a comprehensive concept. It stands for the suggesting words, the suggested meanings, the function of suggestion, the suggested experience and the poem which suggests. In Gibran’s works, meanings should be grasped as symbols of a complex experience. Around the logical meaning of each word, there floats an emotional and
mystical aura that envelops and penetrates it. For example, in “The Day of My Birth,” he says that his soul yearns for an understanding of the Eternal Law, “As the hollow grotto reverberates with the echo of the waves of the sea, but never fills” (*Secrets, K.G. Reader.* bk. 2.257). Here, the external law is the breath of God that passes through a soul that has emptied itself of its “ego” and it is consciousness in its pure state and it is “nirvichāra samādhi,” the no-thought state where there is not even a ripple to disturb the vastness.

Gibran’s poetic works belong to the superior kind of art and in his works he employs this suggestion to a great extent, which in turn has opened avenues for the synthesis between law and liberty. He succeeds in establishing a relationship between expression and impression, between the speaker and the listener. There is also a phenomenal synthesis and a wonderful connection with the artist’s mind, the aesthetic sense of artistic expression, the art and the reader/sahādya. His anticipatory imagination throws open the gates for anticipatory realization on the part of the reader. The reader partakes of the delight of a larger self-realization and enjoys an enlargement of consciousness that brings him/her into close contact with the Supreme Being and the bliss of Supreme realization. Unlike science and logic which resort to methods of dissection, and fragmentation, Gibran’s works deal with the reality and joy grasped by the artist as one harmonious whole, free from contradictions and hence ineffable. In this regard, Tagore states, “That which is not known by logic, which defies definition, whose value is not in any practical use, but which can only be intimately felt, finds its expression in literature, is the subject of aesthetics” (Sharma 13).

Gibran’s literature is born of moments of spiritual realization and when his spiritual reservoir starts overflowing, the vagrant waves merge with the boundless ocean sweeping along with it all likeminded souls willing to partake of this spiritual expedition. In the depth of this great ocean one can experience the quietistic emotion (śānta) and the
Rasa-dhvani doctrine that pervades the power packed lines in his works, leads the reader to the comprehension of the unexpressed that ultimately fills him/her with aesthetic realization. Abhinavagupta posits that “knowledge of truth is the canvas behind all emotions and so it is the most stable of all sthāyibhāvas” (Devy 67). He also says that “ātman alone possessed of such pure qualities as knowledge, bliss etc. and devoid of enjoyment of imagined sense objects is the sthāyibhāva of sānta” (Devy 67). Sānta becomes the source of all other rasas. The soul has many emotions superimposed on it which give their tinge to it but once it shines through the knowledge of truth and once the clouds dissipate, it is identical with the consciousness of the realization of the highest bliss. Though most of his works overflow with sānta rasa, owing to academic constraints, only two of Gibran’s works The Prophet and his short story “Madame Rose Hanie” are taken up for major treatment here.

In Gibran’s magnum opus, The Prophet the principle of propriety is beautifully followed – the function of suggestion is all pervasive, the literary structure is properly knit, the art symbol is amazingly constructed and the aesthetic unity emerging from the merging of all these poetical elements manifests itself in its full splendour. Gibran’s mystical drawings and magical chantings in The Prophet belong to a higher plane of reality. It brings to cognition the quietistic emotion (śānta rasa) after effecting revelation of the sneha supported and highlighted by the eight main rhetoric sentiments. His ideas and verse flow quite unhampered. His sneha is similar to the Hebrew agapé – love that is unconditional, love that stimulates one’s better Self to welcome gifts of divine love, and enables one to see as much as the Gods.

2.4. Aesthetic experience in The Prophet and “Madame Rose Hanie”

Like Bharata’s The Nāṭyaśāstra, Gibran’s The Prophet has implicit and explicit layers. The unsaid in the text speaks very clearly of its cosmological status. Implicitly it
suggests an *adhidaivika* level (super mundane). It is a book born of a divine a causal, intuitive experience connecting the celestial and the terrestrial. *The Prophet* sweetens our consciousness with its style, rhythm, music and drawings, and it is no wonder considered as one of the greatest treasures of English literature. After reading the text what one experiences is a state of calm or of equilibrium, a state of quiet or of repose, and this is achieved through a positive transcendence. In *Sand and Foam* Gibran states, “He who listens to truth is not less than he who utters truth” (*G.W*. bk. 3.65). Though the book consists barely of twenty thousand words, its philosophical nature, mystic tone, and life affirming message given in twenty six poetic sermons have elevated it to the status of a unique universal text.

Śānta is always spoken of as unique among the rasas, because *Nātyaśāstra* says, “all the rasas arise from it and finally merge into it. Both in *Nātyaśāstra* and in *Abhinavabhārati* it is considered the original or ‘natural’ state of mind from which, due to various causes (desires or the obstruction of desires), the different emotions arise” (qtd. in Patnaik 226). Śānta rasa leads one away from the emotions and according to Abhinavagupta, śānta has “right knowledge” or sāma as its sthāyibhāva. *Nātyaśāstra* states, “Now śānta which has sāma for its sthāyibhāva, and that which leads to bliss arises from vibhavas such as the knowledge of the truth, detachment, purity of mind etc.” (227).

Śānta rasa is closely connected with truth and has the property of highest happiness. Attaining liberation after the realization of the oddity of things, seeing the whole world as lamentable (śoka) perceiving the happiness of the world as harmful to one’s own spiritual being and moving away in anger (krodha) resorting to extra ordinary energy (vīra) dominated by the absence of delusions (in order to overcome worldly temptations) feeling afraid (bhaya) of all the objects of the senses and moving away from
them, or fear intermixed with disgust can all lead to disillusionment and hence to \( \text{sānta} \).

In *The Prophet* it’s not through disgust (*jugupsa*) but through a positive transcendence that the \( \text{sānta rasa} \) is experienced. The following lines from *Nātyaśāstra* indicate the cause (*vibhava*), primary state (*sthāyibhāva*) and the result (*anubhava*) of \( \text{sānta rasa} \).

“\( \text{Sānta rasa} \) is to be known as that which arises from a desire to secure the liberation of the Self, which leads to a knowledge of the Truth and is connected with the property of highest happiness” (237).

This desire to secure the liberation of the Self is sparked off from the very beginning of the text in the heart of the reader/sahṛdyā as he/she listens to Almustafa – a liberated soul whose utterances bear a close resemblance to Christ’s Sermon on the Mount – an eloquent guidance for humanity. Like Christ, Gibran perceives the Kingdom of Heaven in man’s own heart, a world of beauty, of goodness, of reality, of truth (Bushrui and Jenkins 229). The message of *The Prophet* is that “man’s end is nothing short of omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence and immortality” (qtd. in Bushrui 224).

In his book *Vedanta* Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh says that the words omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient are a mystery to English linguists. In his opinion they must have originated from the word *aum*, which the scientists have identified as the only one energy in existence. (466) Apparently in *The Prophet*, Almustafa may stand for Gibran himself. The city of New York may be Orphalese and Almitra may be his personal friend Mary Haskell. Almustafa’s isle of birth may refer to Lebanon and the twelve years that he had spent in Orphalese may be the twelve years spent by Gibran in New York before the publication of *The Prophet*. At a deeper level Almustafa is the awakened one trying to leave the tangible for the invisible. He is the symbol of the handful of the awakened flames in the midst of thousands who have remained in sad stupor. He has allowed the universe to flow through him and has achieved the state of \( \text{sānta} \) and represents the
central core of pure religiousness. He has become the purest expression of the innermost experiences. Almustafa thus proves to be a suggestive metaphor for the awakened one.

The beginning of the text overflows with suggestive meanings, and suggestive expressions. Almustafa’s departure for “the isle of his birth” symbolizes his longing to return to the source, to the unborn state, to that state of innocence to the tabula rasa from where he would be reincarnated. He has realized his “winged word” and is therefore, ready for his homeward journey. The Prophet reverberates with lofty Biblical language, aphoristic articulations and epigrammatic style. The spirit and message also bears close resemblance to Sufi literature. All the major Sufi ideas of the universal Self, unity of life and death, unity of body and soul, unity of good and evil, unity of time and place, the divine in the human soul, the relationship between essence and form, unity of human kind and collective responsibility etc. find a wonderful expression in The Prophet, helping and guiding humanity in its journey from the “Pigmy self’ to the God self.” Almustafa is the ripe emancipated soul ready for his union with God. The people who have left their plough in mid furrows and others who have stopped the wheels of their wine press gather at the great square. The different sthāyībhāvas, that lead to the corresponding states of the Rasas of the erotic (śringāra ), comic (hāsya), compassionate (karuṇa ), furious (raudra), heroic (vīra), terrifying (bhīyānaka), disgusting (bibhatsa) and awesome (adbhuta) are experienced by them during their brief stay with him. The moment of separation becomes the hour of painful realization that they have failed to identify him for the past twelve years. Their hearts overflow with love, and for the first time discern what is right, pure, shining and beautiful. In Aesthetic Rapture, Masson J.L. and M.V. Patwardhan have recorded the following: “Of the various rasas, the erotic one arises from the sthāyībhāva of love. Whatever in the ordinary world is bright, pure (medhya), shining or beautiful is associated with love…” (qtd. in Patnaik 71).
Almustafa “the pure consciousness” evokes all that is bright and beautiful, and it is with hearts overflowing with love that the people of Orphalese gather to listen to him. Almustafa’s compassion churned out of the crucible of love, finds him shedding tears for the people who have come to him for guidance. The raras – karuṇa and śṛṅgara reach their peak in The Prophet and slowly lead the reader towards mental equipoise. Of course, the work has other raras too that are woven into the text in all subtlety and dexterity.

Almustafa sympathizes with the crowd and identifies himself with them. The agony of the people and the sorrowful spirit of Almustafa get converted into a pleasurable experience to the reader as he is both distanced and at the same time is intensely participating in a more objective manner. The reader is tuned to think consciously, systematically and constructively, is directed to be in harmony with the universal intelligence or the soul of the world and is made to come to an understanding that the world is made up of the beating hearts of humanity. The arrived soul leads humanity towards the perception of truth, towards a direct and immediate experience of the sacred. The dominant mood is one of calm, though the text throbs with explorative search, uncertainties, questions and doubts. Rather they are the nature of doubts which come at the end of worldly desire, from seeking something that had always been within them. The group has picked up the courage to meet Almustafa, get at the truth, and their courage (vīra) is akin to that of the reader who is temporarily detached from the ego, and is interested only in finding the truth. Almustafa, The Prophet speaks in parables, for great truths can only be given in parables. After a long waiting with trust and hope, his ship has come to take him back to his “origins” to the source of life. From his “walled city” he has reached “his centre,” has become fully aware, alert and conscious and has completed his pilgrimage successfully from the unconscious to consciousness, from ignorance to light and from death to eternity. He has moved from passion to compassion, has achieved blissfulness, peace and
serenity. The others are still in their seed form. The East has always been bothered about the other side of one’s being, the lighter side, i.e. moving from the conscious to collective super conscious and from collective super conscious to the cosmic super conscious.

In *The Garden of the Prophet*, Gibran says, “…if but one of your windows is open to the East, you will never be empty” (39). Almustafa is the realized man, possessed by the divine. Along with the crowd, the reader also recognizes his/her ignorance and that is a sure indicator that they too have started moving towards the path of self-realization. Just like the gathering, the reader becomes open, available and receptive, with a sense of wonder and mystery. But there are also others who come and entreat him. In the words of Gibran: “And others came also and entreated him. But he answered them not. He only bent his head: and those who stood near saw his tears falling upon his breast” (*Prophet* 7).

The word “others” suggest people who are the cultured and learned lot, caught in the web of power and knowledge that are detrimental to openness, receptivity and surrender. His tears are also suggestive of the compassion with which he views them because they are the intellectuals who are like the learned Nicodemus who meets Jesus only in the secrecy of the night for fear of being identified by others. But the ship that would arrive only twelve years later had already arrived for Almitra on the first day. A woman is of the heart, she is the cosmic womb and the only language known to her is love – a love that is not narrowed down to any relationship, but one that radiates unaddressed, is life affirmative and a by-product of her illumined interiority. She says, “Deep is the longing for the land of your memories and the dwelling-place of your greater desires and our love would not bind you nor our needs hold you. / Yet this we ask ere you leave us, that you speak to us of your truth” (8).

Almitra entreats Almustafa with great insight because she has had a glimpse of his truth on the very first day. Therefore, she says, “Disclose us to ourselves,” because she
knows that a master cannot give his/her truth but can only trigger a journey in others towards the ultimate shrine. In her journey to find that which is between “birth and death,” she needs a master who would simply wake her up to her own reality (8). The receptive, sensitive and perceptive reader gets ready for the *satsang* along with Almitra and by now, all their emotions lose their sting, and they begin looking inwards. It is a seasoned trust that had waited patiently for the deepest layers to be penetrated to reach the *asamprajnata samādhi*. When these suggested and hidden facts start surfacing, the text assumes a greater significance and the realized “soul” starts disburdening its rich harvest to the seekers. The suggested emotional mood in this sublime text grips the total consciousness of the connoisseur enabling him/her to savour the delight of aesthetic experience.

To Ānandhavardhana, *dhvani* also signifies the symbolic content, and the scheme of *dhvani* theory also includes all the poetic elements recognized in the speculations of the earlier theoreticians. In *The Prophet* what is most striking is that the poetic figure, the diction, the metre, the technique, the style and the language contribute to the paramount importance of *rasa*. The intensity of emotion (*rasa*), the function of suggestion (*dhvani*), the observance of the principle of propriety (*aucitya*) and the character of the poetic texture and the nature of the real art symbol (*vakra*) residing in the text kindle the emotive feel of love, mirth, sorrow, anger, energy, terror, disgust and astonishment.

The Hebrew *agapé* or the unconditional love, that stimulates Almustafa to welcome gifts of divine love, is almost akin to the *sthāyibhāva* (essential element) called *sneha*. It is Almustafa’s *sneha*, his love, trust and wish for the well being of his people that gives him the impetus to open his mouth in sweet conversation. When he gets ready to embark, he realizes his pain, sorrow, and love for the people whom he is going to leave
behind. Here, the initial central emotion is sorrow or pathos born of the pain of separation. Nāṭyaśāstra says (VI.61):

Now (the rasa) known as karuṇa arises from the permanent emotion of sorrow. It proceeds from vibhavās such as curse, affliction (klesa or affliction of curse), separation from those who are dear, (their) downfall, loss of wealth and imprisonment or from contact with misfortune (vyasana), destruction (upaghāta) and calamity (vidrava). (Patnaik 122)

It is a sort of love in separation vipralambha, śringāra (devoid of the sensual) that has great affinity to karuṇa rasa. Almustafa is in a state of nirveda (detachment). His suffering has given him intense awareness. He reads the hope in the people’s eyes, who are ready to participate in his courage, in boarding the ship to reach the land of his longing, because his longing had been very deep. To Almustafa the moment of departure is like “tearing the skin with his own hands” (2). The people’s emotions of sorrow are purged by their sympathetic participation. In their grief they say “Suffer not yet our eyes to hunger for your face” (6). Abinavagupta commenting on Dhvanyāloka in his Locana says that sorrow which is sthāyi of karuṇā, has been capable of being aesthetically appreciated through sympathy and identity. Once it is aesthetically enjoyable it is karuṇa rasa – when the sorrow (felt) is different from the ordinary sorrow one feels in everyday life. (Patnaik 141). The sorrow that surfaces at the hour of separation makes them realize the depth of their love and it is this sorrow that is aesthetically transmitted. Throughout the book the dominant emotion is sneha which like a thread strings the delicate emotions of the heart of the beholder or reader. Here, it is Almustafa’s selfless and incomparable love for his people that makes him tarry a while and give them an insight into the wisdom that he has gained and the rasa that is experienced is preyan rasa.
The crowd has gathered around him in a sort of devotion and deep veneration. His highest wisdom is revealed to the earnest seeker. As Ayyappa Paniker in his foreword “The Cry of the Soul,” in *The Prophet* opines, “The suggestive power and the sonorous magnificence of his language arise from deeply felt personal experience, but the truth it adumbrates is universal and supra-rational.”

A prophet who does not wish “to freeze and crystallize and be bound in a mould” has to seek the “ether alone” (12) and what had been in a dream state for twelve years in Orphalese has suddenly turned to an awakening and Almustafa is ready to join the Great sea. Perhaps it is the state of *asamprajnata samādhi* and it is in this state of consciousness that he is ready to help the hibernating humanity to stir from their wintry beds. It is with compassion that he inspires the group with his patient answers. In the Indian context, Almustafa the seer is dissolved, the objective world is set at rest, and the text has a remote reference to the final struggle of his ego for existence. He says, “only another winding will this stream make, only / another murmur in this glade, / and then I shall come to you, a boundless drop to a boundless ocean” (3). Responding to the earnest entreaties of the congregated men and women, he wonders how he is going to dispense with confidence what he had gleaned in his solitude. To condense his message, it would be befitting to use the words of Osho who says, “seeker is the sought, the observer is the observed and the knower is the known” (Osho 121). In Gibran’s words, “the hunter was also the hunted” (93).

Gibran’s saga of relinquishing the individual consciousness to embrace universal consciousness has to be imparted to the eager gathering to facilitate the dissolution of their ego centres. The state of *nirvāna* or liberation can be addressed with various terminologies like Kingdom of God, *kaivalya*, *mukti*, *mokṣa*, *sūnyata* etc.. Almustafa who is in such a state of consciousness is seized with a genuine sorrow. His source of
compassion lies in the dislodgement of his ego. When Almustafa goes beyond the mind and silence after twelve years, people are impelled to throng around him like devotees and he is forced to open up his channels of communication out of his sneha for them. With all extraneous identifications dissolved, Almustafa’s infinite capabilities are unfolded and he in humility responds to the queries of the priestess, the women, the old inn keeper, the ploughman, the rich man, the mason, the weaver, the merchant, the judge, the lawyer, the orator, the teacher, the youth, the scholar, the astronomer, the elder, the hermit, the poet, and the old priest. His realization of truth will be handed down to generations. Through the twenty six sermons respectively on love, marriage, children, giving, eating and drinking, work, joy and sorrow, houses, clothes, buying and selling, crime and punishment, laws, freedom, reason and passion, pain, self-knowledge, teaching, friendship, talking, time, good and evil, prayer, pleasure, beauty, religion and finally death, he has assiduously perfected the unity of a message, that is mirrored through his text and the pictorial medium. The permanent dominant emotion (sthayibhava) is sneha or vātsalya. The feeling of pain at the parting of their “dearly beloved son,” becomes the excitant (uddipana bhāva) and their curiosity and eagerness become the transitory feelings (vyabiśari bhāva), which nourish their dominant emotion of pain.

From the beginning of the text till the end, the dominant rasa is śānta which according to Abhinavagupta, is the greatest rasa because of its relation to mokṣa. All poetic pleasure is alaukika (that which transcends the mundane) and here the dominant mood is sāma (tranquility). The work is also rich in figures of speech and it abounds in Alamkārās, mainly rūpaka and upama. To him beauty is “eternity gazing at itself in a mirror” (77) and also “a heart inflamed and a soul enchanted” (76). When he speaks of love he says, “Like sheaves of corn he gathers you unto himself” (9). Every word is
charged with music, mystery and also vātsalya rasa. It is the yearning of a cosmic father for his children with whom he leaves his dreams before parting, hoping that at the right time they will sprout and become actualities. It is vātsalya in action in the following lines:

   And your heart-beats were in my heart, and your
   breath was upon my face, and I knew you all.
   Ay, I knew your joy and your pain, and in your
   Sleep your dreams were my dreams. (87)

Almustafa promises to lift the cloud that veils their eyes so that they shall see, and to pierce the clay that blocks their ears so that they shall hear. He does not fail to remind them of his return when he says:

   Forget not that I shall come back to you
   A little while, and my longing shall gather dust
   and foam for another body.
   A little while, a moment of rest upon the wind,
   and another woman shall bear me. (98)

As per the Sufi tradition, Almustafa has reached the stage of fana – a state of immersion in unity, where he is dead to himself and other experiences of the phenomenal existence. Sufism speaks of abiding in God (baqa) after having been lost to the “self.” It is in this unitive state that Almustafa is set out to manifest unity in plurality and of such a person in the unitive state Ruysbroeck’s says:

   he goes towards God, by inward love, in eternal work, and he goes in God, by his frutitive inclination, in eternal rest. And he dwells in God, and yet he goes out towards created things in a spirit of love towards all things, in the virtues and in works of righteousness. And this is the most exalted summit of the inner life. (qtd. in. Masani 10)
These views cannot be a by-product of any ordinary life but it is the essence of life that is eternal, whose recognition is here and now of all things in the Self and the Self in all things. Like his Almustafa, Gibran had a purpose towards created beings which he executed with love and compassion. To quote from The Prophet:

Wise men have come to give you of their wisdom. I came to take of your wisdom:

And behold I have found that which is greater than Wisdom.

It is a flame spirit in you ever gathering more of itself,

While you, heedless of its expansion, bewail the withering of your days.

It is life in quest of life in bodies that fear the grave. (89,90)

What he wants to give is a new dimension to the acquired wisdom in which humans fritter away their energy. Idle thoughts, worldly dialogue, logical disputations piled up information, assimilated details, lost innocence, lost humility and egoistical leanings in pursuit of intellectual and cultural advancement, have deterred humanity from having trust in their own entelechy. He is bent on fanning their “flame spirit” before his hour of departure. Gibran’s literature helps humanity in its spiritual endeavour or self-education. The aesthetic principles of Gibran have the capacity to permeate one’s life, create a restless eagerness and yearning, to search out the meaning of life, and to dwell in that śānta which had evaded one’s permanent grasp. Just as the meeting between Almustafa and his people is an experience, the reading of The Prophet seems to be an experience to a seeker, raising Gibran to the status of a “Guru” in the Indian context. The
aesthetic experience derived from it, lies beyond the language to describe, and obliterates the sense of an ego related to, or identified with a name and form. Gibran becomes the voice of pure consciousness with no sense of “I” or “my” anywhere in his utterances. It is a movement from ahaŋkār to asmita. The curiosity that has led a reader towards collecting and reading the works of Gibran turns to a quest on experiencing an awakening. That is how The Prophet carries in it, the potentiality for a true quest towards Infinite consciousness. It is with one’s whole being that he/she relishes the text, and that is why rasāsvādha is said to be similar to brahmāsvādha. An unbroken and uninterrupted stream of peace flows though one’s personality as the spiritual experience of Gibran continues to exist in the form of waves or vibrations in the text. With every reading the reader gets closer to the universal consciousness as his signals and codes are forever fresh, appealing and beckoning. In proportion to the intensity of one’s quest, the text breathes beauty and music, fragrance of unity and truth. It has the power to heal and purify the psycho-physical vessel of life.

The final part of the text is a farewell paean to the people of Orphalese by Almustafa. The captain of his ship is “patient,” “over patient” (96). The stream is ready to reach the sea, the source of its origin. Till then, existence had waited in patience just as it does in the case of every human being. By now the reader/sahṛdya has undergone an adequate degree of intelligent and emotional response, has established a rapport with the poet, has developed a samāna dharma (the nature of the poet himself); of course with a difference of degree but not of kind in sensitivity and capacity for imaginative contemplation. When Gibran bids farewell to his people saying,

Fare you well, people of Orphalese.

This day had ended.

It is closing upon as even as the water-lily upon
its own to-morrow. (96)

the reader in a state of equanimity realizes the indubitable possibility within him/her opening towards higher consciousness. The water-lily’s opening and closing is closely associated with the sun, and it is a beautiful metaphor. Aristotle has recognized metaphor as the “distinctive language of poetry” and says that “in such phrases as sun God and tree God, language of metaphor is interdependent with the language of myth” (Lodge 440). The water-lily closes its petals upon itself, upon its tomorrow, but the sun is sure to rise the next day and so Gibran gives hope to humanity that nothing is lost if that particular day is lost. Whatever he had given to them were not his own words, and if they had failed to create ripples, he gives them a promise:

What was given us here we shall keep,

And if it suffices not, then again must we come together and together stretch our hands unto the giver.

Forget not that I shall come back to you. (98)

Gibran had belief in the circular movement of time and in reincarnation and all his trusts, experiences, losses, hopes, conquests, love, laughter and tears had been incarnated by him into artistic form. Even his polemical attacks in “Khalil the Heretic” and The Broken Wings have an aesthetic beauty about them. Perhaps, Gibran is sure that he has sown the seed of longing, for eternity in the hearts of his readers. The aesthetic experience has kindled the eternal thirst for the eternal waters, and to Gibran, that is enough for the moment, and the assurance that he gives is, that if this does not suffice, then another day, he would meet them and together they would then raise their hands to the giver. The text assumes a symbolic significance here because Gibran reminds humanity that such mystics, seers and prophets would keep on working for the evolution
of consciousness; but the tragedy is that whenever they make their appearances they are hardly understood by humanity. In *Jesus the Son of Man* he says, “Many times the Christ has come to the world, and he has walked many lands. And always He has been deemed a stranger and a madman” (19).

The ship moves “Eastward’ and this is highly suggestive of the glories of the East. The East is the sacred source of life, and it is not only the direction of sun-rise but the birthplace of mystics, prophets, seers and poets in large numbers. It is here that Buddha, Mahavīra, Jesus, Prophet Muhammed, Lao Tsu, Baha Ullah, Krishna, Shri Shankara Ayya Vaikundar and Swami Vivekananda were born. Again it had been the East that had seen the beginning of civilization, culture, continuity and spiritual odyssey. The suggestive expression and the suggested content (*dhvani*) conjointly constitute the content of a single aesthetic experience.

To Gibran, the East; and especially the Middle East was then experiencing an awakening. In “New Frontier” he says, “there is on the horizon of the Middle East a new awakening. It is growing and expanding, it is reaching and engulfing all sensitive, intelligent souls, it is penetrating and gaining the sympathy of noble hearts” (*Mirrors* 60). It is this awakening that has drawn the West towards the East and the East thus assumes a symbolic significance with the unveiling of its implicit meaning. It is a shift from *vācyārtha* to *vyāngārtha* that gives the work its embedded mystical meaning. When Almustafa’s ship starts moving Eastward, the people set a loud cry, but Almitra alone stands silent, gazing after the ship until it has vanished into the mist. In her heart she hopefully remembers his saying, “A little while a moment of rest upon the wind and another woman shall bear me” (100).

These last lines show his capacity in handling language powerfully with suitable vocabulary of words of fine shadings. This delicate tone, warmth and beauty and melody
have the capacity to move the readers to tears of ecstasy. It shows his deep reverence for
women, his belief in reincarnation, his mystic compassion to hound humanity until they
arrive at Infinite consciousness. He has showered his love unconditionally to disburden
himself. Almitra is the cosmic mother, the womb that has nurtured all mystics, prophets,
poets, painters and singers, down the years. Gibran considers women as the light, and life.
Joseph Sheban, in his biographical notes in *Mirrors of the Soul* says how Gibran
recognized the influence of women in his life. He once wrote:

> I am indebted for all that I call. ‘I’ to women. ever since I was an infant.
> Women opened the windows of my eyes and the doors of my spirit. Had it
> not been for the woman-mother, the woman-sister and the woman-friend, I
> would have been sleeping among those who disturb the serenity of the
> world with their snores. (84)

Almitra is also the representative of all women, women as the source of love,
intuitive wisdom, light and life. Almitra is the first one to identify the greatness of
Almustafa, “for it was she who had first sought and believed in him, when he had been
but a day in their city” (7). She is the symbol of love sans logic, which is viewed by
Almustafa with “utmost tenderness.” While the crowd congregates to listen to Almustafa
only at the last moment of his departure, Almitra had recognized his awakening and the
odyssey of his soul, from the very beginning. She has believed him to be a precious
miracle that could become a door to millions towards the divine. Gibran’s legacy to
humanity is his dreams which he had left behind through his prophet. He succeeds in
leading his readers towards transcendent exhilaration from the enjoyment of roused
emotions inherent in his/her personality and *The Prophet* turns out to be an objective
content of such an experience. The readers view it as a spiritual expression throbbing and
pulsating with love, life, joy and music. Consequently, the reader experiences a unity that
is effected between his/her own experience and the experience of art. Gibran’s works address the universal and ongoing concerns of humanity and are meant for all. The guidelines given by Patanjali, in his *Yoga Sutra*, may be applied to the aesthetic experience that marks a movement in consciousness from *samprajnata samādhi* to *asamprajnata samādhi* (Osho, *Science of the Soul* 6-15).

After listening to the 26 sermons of Almustafa what the reader experiences is the quietistic emotion (*śānta rasa*) where one’s being experiences perfect mental equipoise or apatheia, which if entertained in all sincerity would lead one to *nirbheej samādhi*. Gibran’s drawings and paintings belong to a higher plane of reality deciphered only by a questing mind. When he speaks of love he says:

> For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify
> you. Even as he is for your growth so is he for your
> pruning.
> 
> Even as he ascends to your height and caresses
> your tenderest branches that quiver in the sun,
> 
> So shall he descend to your roots and shake them
> in their clinging to the earth. (*Prophet* 9)

These lines contain the whole alchemy of man’s transformation. Love can crown one’s future only by crucifying one’s past. Love is both a crowning and crucifixion. The “real” in one’s being will be crowned and one’s false personality will be crucified. Ugly things like jealousy, domination, ego will be pruned and one would be shaken to the very roots, to relieve him/her of her imprisonment. Love is shorn of its emptiness and shown in a new light. Again he says:

> Like sheaves of corn he gathers you unto himself.
> 
> He threshes you to make you naked.
He sifts you to free you from your husks.

He grinds you to whiteness.

He kneads you until you are pliant;

And then he assigns you to his sacred fire, that

you may become sacred bread for God’s sacred

feast. (9)

These are power packed lines, where the word “whiteness” indicates a great synthesis of all the colours of life, and it also stands for positivity, life, God and love. Love is bliss and it is the ultimate benediction. This is the message of love which Gibran is trying to impart to humanity through his mouthpiece “Almustafa.” At the hour of separation, he has gathered his people like sheaves of corn, is going to strip them of their masks, make them naked, sift them from their husks, grind them to whiteness, knead them and then make them the sacred bread for God’s sacred feast. Jesus being stripped before His crucifixion is also highly symbolic. Thus, he is going to lead them to the secrets of their hearts and in that knowledge, they would become a “fragment of life’s heart.” (10)

His is the experience of a mystic overflowing with love and compassion hoping against hope to plant the same seeds of love in the hearts of his own tribe. A heart that is filled with love is the abode of God, and is almost on the threshold of enlightenment. Such a person is on his/her onward journey from potentiality to actuality. His words are living flames which consume the real seeker. “The Seer” is for the seeker who is trying to reach the peak of consciousness. This is a love that would be wounded by its own understanding of love, and would bleed willingly and joyfully, like that of Jesus, Buddha and Mahavīra. As Vālmiki’s compassion for the shot bird ended up in the Mahākāvyā Rāmāyana, Gibran’s compassion born of sneha or vātsalya has given humanity, great texts like The Prophet, Jesus the Son of Man, The Wanderer (His parables and sayings),
Sand and Foam, The Madman (his parables and poems), The Earth Gods, Nymphs of the Valley, Tears and Laughter, Between Night and Morn, Secrets of the Heart, Spirits Rebellious, The Broken Wings etc. The emotive feel, the laughter, indignation, compassion and ethical considerations that lace the narration are cognized by the appreciative reader. Woven with the warp of love and the woof of compassion, shot through with the gleaming skein of the highest form of bliss, Gibran’s Prophet invites one not to “think about” and judge but to “feel into” or “become” – to realize a complex experience that is given in words.

From Blake’s command over psychic realms, Wordsworth’s hold over spiritual experiences, Coleridge’s authority on supernaturalism, Shelley’s grip on imaginative transcendence, Keats’ veneration of beauty, and Byron’s titanic energy, poetry has risen to greater heights and in the hands of Gibran it communicates something vast, something cosmic. The best words are arranged in the best order, they throb with life and breathe pure music. With every sermon the reader enters into the quietistic mood (śānta), and his lines can penetrate one’s heart like Beethoven’s deathless music. The Rasa-dhvani doctrine propounded by our Sanskrit scholars aids one to gain a better understanding of the universe, of the universal, of the neglected plenty and of the reality outside or beyond the work itself. It is a sacred experience that penetrates appearance (pratibhāsika sattā) to reach the essence (tattvārthika satta). Gibran says:

It was the boundless in you;
The vast man in whom you are all but cells and sinews;
He in whose chant all your singing is but
A soundless throbbing.
It is in the vast man that you are vast,
And in beholding him that I beheld you and
loved you.

For what distances can love reach that are not in
that vast sphere? (87-88)

Thus, Gibran has registered his love for his fellow beings in whom he sees the
stamp of the divine. The rhetoric questions reverberate in the hearts of the connoisseur.
His perceptions are beautiful because they embody feelings. To be able to see things
without feeling them, or to describe them without being moved by their image is a
disciplined and derivative accomplishment which is alien to Gibran. His words embody
wonder, interest, charm and beauty and every ardent seeker is excited to recollect them at
his will and pleasure and enjoy the “bliss.” When a youth asks Almustafa to speak of
friendship, he says, “When you part from your friend grieve not, for that which you love
most in him may be clearer in his absence, as the mountain to the climber is clearer from
the plain” (69). Every word of Gibran conspires toward the artistic end. It becomes the
tool of his aesthetic life. With a strong power to move and please, his expressions restore
health of mind, reaffirm the rationality of existence, views facts in its larger relations,
stabilizes and clarifies the experiences of the reader and leads him/her from intellectual or
emotional experience to aesthetic experience.

Through The Prophet, Gibran has opened up his voice in a language that is not his
own, it is not a hasty or befuddled jotting but a well spiced insightful work meant for
aesthetic relish. The suggestions thrown out by Gibran can be carried to the farthest limits
by a Sahrdya who is a competent reader, critic and aesthetician rolled into one. He can be
called a “complete reader” as F.R. Leavis uses the word. A Gibran reader could discern
the plain meanings of the text including sense, feeling, love and intention and could even
rise beyond that to see the gaps and silences without any difficulty in sensuous
apprehension. Gibran’s is a “new voice,” a “new experience” difficult to be “pigeon holed” by the world (Lodge 122). As per the observation of I.A. Richards in his essay, “Communication and the Artist,” “The difficulty is that nearly all speculations as to what went on in the artist’s mind are unverifiable, even more unverifiable than the similar speculations as to the dreamer’s mind” (Lodge 109).

The Rasa dhvani doctrine can be applied to Gibran’s short stories, plays, poems and novellas too. “Madame Rose Hanie,” one of the short stories in the collection Spirits Rebellious is also analyzed here to show how the reader can respond to different literary forms enjoying the rasas in their varying shades. In this short story Gibran has employed art as a shortcut to the ultimate value of life, bypassing logic. He gives direction by indirection and this he does through different figures of speech. The suggested meaning emerges from the referential and contextual meanings. From the primary sense one can move on to the suggested sense. The reader then rests on the aesthetic configurations, and enjoys a reposeful consciousness.

Before love could open her eyes, the eighteen year old Madame Rose Hanie is trapped in marriage to a forty year old wealthy man, and later leaves him for the man in whom she finds the spiritual law of love and affection. Having ceased to sell her body for shelter and her days for clothes to the man chosen by society to be her husband, this innocent victim of human law, finally “unties her wings from the swaddles of weakness and arises into the spacious sky of love and freedom” (6). To Rashid Bey Namaan, his wife turns out to be an adulteress, an unfaithful woman, who has flown away from his cage into another cage, to share the “destitution of another man” and partake his evil bread kneaded with shame and mixed with disgrace (3). The conflict arises out of the interpretations given to the narrator both by the husband and the wife, each one trying to justify his/her stand. The entire story is an extraordinary expression that rests purely on
the genius of Gibran who finds deviant non-judgmental ways to drive sense into the heads of the hibernating humanity. The reader/sahrdya is powerfully initiated into its intricacies and with such comfort is able to identify himself/herself with the feelings and moods expressed in the story.

Rudrata, the Indian theorist has recognized infinite number of rasas, and according to him even the subtest nuance of an emotion, can become rasa if it is portrayed and apprehended in a work of art as relishable. What is here imaginatively recreated gains aesthetic quality. The readers psyche is liberated and is in a state of sublimation when in the end the narrator says, “Is it permissible for a woman to buy her happiness with her husband’s misery?” And then his soul adds, “Is it lawful for a man to enslave his wife’s affection when he realizes he will never possess it?” (Spirits, K.G. Reader. bk. 1.14). This is the moment of illumination for the reader. These are words of a master-narrator who is not identified with anybody, any instinct, thought or desire. The reader is at the verge of transcendence. His final statement creates an opening for the reader to move into his/her being after the crystallization of the ego. The narrator’s very being has wrought a deep change within the reader who learns from the non-judgmental attitude of the narrator.

Though “Madame Rose Hanie” is in the form of a short story, it reads like poetry and the sentiments enumerated give the satisfaction of watching a play in two acts with a prologue and an epilogue. The protagonist Madame Rose Hanie refers to her story as “a drama enacted by the black nights upon the stage of a woman’s soul, whose body is tied up into a man, known to her as husband, ere she perceives God’s meaning of marriage.” Also she says “This is my drama which the people of Beyrouth call ‘A curse upon the lips of life,’ and ‘an ailment in the body of society’ ” (12).
By its very nature *rasa* can only be suggested and in this short narration the rise and fall of a mood, the suggested meanings, the pain and frustration that follows ‘love in separation’, the celestial bliss and satisfaction that accompanies love-in-union, and the ultimate clarion call of the author to humanity to wake up from stupor are felt by the reader in every fibre of his/her being and they feel the original inspiration in their nerves. Conflicts are established through the use of dialogue between the first person narrator Rashid Bey Namaan and Madame Rose Hanie. Moreover, the story reflects the luxurious life-style of religious leaders, women’s lack of rights and man-made stifling laws.

With the faggots of his imagination lit up by an initial emotional thrill, and being borne aloft by the current of *rasa*, Gibran succeeds in seeking, selecting and weaving it into a verbal tapestry that triggers the readers appreciative activity, and evokes the same imaginative response felt by its creator. The suggested sense predominates the literal sense. *Rasa* is evoked through the judicious fusion of several different kinds of emotions and a host of feelings. The eight lasting emotions or permanent states in conjunction with their associated groups of feelings evoke eight different forms of *rasas*, and finally merge into *śānta rasa*, at least a partial and temporary blissful state for an amateur reader, holding the possibility of a total transcendence.

To Bay Namaan the emotion of love is accompanied by transitory feelings, like, longing, anxiety, raving, insanity, fever, stupor, death and painful reflections due to painful memories, demoniac fancies, impatience and disgust. Having disburdened his pain with a distressed and faltering voice, Rashid Bey Namaan stands shaking like a reed between the North and South wind. His emotional turmoil is described as follows:

*His wrinkled face was livid, his eyes grew larger as he stared a few moments, and it seemed to him as if he saw a demon appearing from non-existence to take him away, then he fixed his eyes on mine and his*
appearance suddenly changed; his anger was converted into keen suffering and distress, and he cried out saying…(3)

He is disgusted, hides his face as if he wants to protect himself from himself, and appeals to the narrator, “Do not make a crying voice of my calamity, but let it rather be mute misfortune, perhaps it will grow in silence and deaden me away so that I may rest at least with peace” (P 4). This is the last cry of the ego to a master who has listened and responded with compassion to his throbbing, vibrations and statements. The very being of the narrator has wrought a deep change within him. Rashid’s contradictions have dissolved his own complaints and have demystified things for him. The narrator makes a poignant statement after listening to Rashid Bey Namaan’s story. He says, “my words had no power to console his wounded heart, and my knowledge had no torch to illuminate his gloomy self” (4). But the implication is that his pain would ultimately seek the silences of the soul because he has emptied his heart to a man of “being” and not a man of knowledge. This reminds one of Perunthinai (mismatched love) mentioned in Tholkāppiyam. Like the aham poet, here Gibran does not speak in his own voice, and the reader hears only what the character speaks to the narrator or to themselves. All the eight sthāyiḥbhāvas in this short narration hold the possibility of the perception of truth, about the real nature of the world, and they gradually lead to the sthāyiḥbhāvas of sānta or sama (a state of calm).

The story begins to transcend physical love and thus holds the possibility of transcending śringāra through itself towards sānta rasa. Gibran’s “Madame Rose Hanie” is a drama of the soul, and it must have been a transmutation of an excruciatingly painful experience into a spiritual experience. Nātyaśāstra (VI.45) says “As for love in separation it should be acted out by anubhavas such as world-weariness, physical weakness, anxiety, envy, fatigue, worry, longing, dreaming, awakening, sickness, insanity, apoplexy,
lifelessness and death” (qtd. in Patnaik 86). When Rashid Bey Namaan is separated from his wife, hope and despair (born of fear) alternate and when gripped by intense despair slides into an attitude of abandon, of renunciation in order to get relief from the excruciating and agonizing pain of separation and it is here that the possibility of śānta may be discerned.

While the first part of the story dwells on viprālambha śṛṅgāra or love-in-separation, the second part speaks of sambhoga śṛṅgāra or love-in-union. Madame Rose Hanie’s love, for her beloved is the “flame of sacred fire” and a spiritual hunger that draws her to the man she loves, and she feels that they have sprung as “one torch from the hand of God before the beginning of the world” (7). The union is perfect as two souls merge into one, although it may be an instance of love, deviant in the eyes of society, there are no imperfections or deficiencies in their relationship. Though Gītā Govinda speaks of the deviant love between Krishna and Radha, the aesthetic rapture that it provides is irresistible. Similarly, here the manifestation of love has been successfully handled by Gibran, as the narrator listens to Madame Rose Hanie’s justification saying that if she had desired she could have satisfied herself secretly while at her husband’s home with the many men who were willing to be slaves of her beauty and martyrs of her love but then she was a miserable woman who sought only happiness, found it and embraced it, and for this simple and plain truth she is disrespected by society. The reader along with the narrator learns to live in the “spirit for the spirit” and to turn his/her “eyes towards the sun” (15). One is reminded of the words of D. H. Lawrence in his “Morality and the Novel” where he says, “Men and women will be forever subtly and changeingly related to one another; no need to yoke them with any bond at all. The only morality is to have man true to his manhood, woman to her womanhood, and let the relationship form of itself in all honour. For it is, to each, life itself” (Lodge 131).
While śṛṅgāra rasa reaches its peak in the work “Madame Rose Hanie,” the other rasas also manifest themselves explicitly or implicitly, to make the story so absorbing and natural. There is hāsyā rasa in Madame Rose Hanie’s description of the miserable and hypocritical life of the women and men living in magnificent buildings, majestic mansions and sublime palaces. She calls them “plastered graves in which Treason of the weak woman hides behind her kohled eyes and crimsoned lips” (P 9). These impregnable buildings reek with hatred, deceit and corruption. The subtle humour embedded in her comments is excited in us by the artistic circumstances presented in the story. The entire story is more than a physical occurrence - a pure spiritual enlightenment, a spiritual experience throbbing and pulsating with a new type of music, joy and contemplation. A sort of unity is effected between the reader’s own experience and the expression of the art. The commingling of the universal artistic situation and the stirred up emotio-motive complexes produce in the reader a special aesthetic attitude called camatkāra or alaukika i.e. transcendent.

The furious sentiment (raudra) has as its base the dominant state or emotion of anger and Rashid Bey Namaan’s anger is obvious when he stands shaking like a reed between the North and South wind. When the terrible is born of the dominant state of fear, he starts seeing demons that have come to take him away. This characterizes his natural fear and out of this sentiment, he moves to the odious (bibhatsa) which has disgust as its base. He is disgusted with the entire world, grows pale and thin and his face starts showing “the spectre of bitter disappointment.” His “sorrowful eyes” speak of his “crushed heart and melancholy soul” (2). Gibran’s words are loaded with spiritual strains and while reading him, one’s mind opens to an unprecedented largeness of vision of the greatness of the worlds, the wonders of a simple life made complex, the mystery of the spirit and the long forgotten treasure troves containing ancient and native wisdom. His
words seem to hold the key of a greater life for the human race. The protagonist is disillusioned as a result of the realization of the gap between the ideal and the real; between what ought to be and how things really are. There is a sort of reconciliation on the part of Rashid Bey Namaan and this is surely born of disgust at the distortion of things. When a new spiritual world order tries to replace the fossilized religious order it adds to one’s insecurities, disjunction, displacement and incongruity, and after enduring and experiencing excruciating pain, Rashid moves towards transcendence.

Further, the entire story seems to move on the pivot of adbhutha rasa or the emotion of wonder, and this has greater affinity to śānta than any of the other rasas. The heroic sentiment (vīra) displayed by Madame Rose Hanie in stepping out of slavery and emerging courageously from the corrupt laws of humanity generates surprise, delight and wonder in the reader. The story is viewed as an art work dealing with possibilities, the latent possibilities of doing things in a phenomenal way. By the end of the story the reader reaches the same wavelength as the narrator and decides to abide by the laws of nature, from which emerge the glory and joy of liberty. He/she is set to trespass the earthly law, and come out of the narrow and painful prison walls, the self-forged shackles. The ultimate decision is to turn the eyes towards the infinite space and not to remain in “self-confinement” till the end of the world. The element of wonder arises from the determination of a young woman who has awakened to the reality of a spiritual love – love that is capable of subduing her heart before subduing her body in marriage. This adbhuta rasa is akin to bibhātsa, bhayānaka and hāsyā as they all suggest something which is out of the mundane and ordinary. But unlike fear and disgust which are negative states, laughter and wonder are positive ones. The aesthetic experience here is not the experience of a personal emotion, but it is an experience of a liberated state of mind. It is beyond happiness and unhappiness, it is neither tense nor relaxed, but exists in a state
where agitations have seized. Thus, it is the story of growing more and more in awareness, consciousness and alertness. At a deeper level this is also the story of the ultimate culmination in the crescendo of a spiritual being, where the male becomes the female as much as the female becomes male. It is the story of a woman who has transformed her unconscious into consciousness, irrationality into reason, her faith into inquiry and her waiting into a movement. On the other hand, it is also the story of a man’s movement into rest, his restlessness into tranquility and his doubt into acceptance. It is the movement into the asexual.

His novella *The Broken Wings* and other short stories like “Khalil the Heretic”, “The Cry of the Graves,” “Ashes of the Ages and Eternal Fire,” “Martha,” “John the Madman” etc., uphold larger social purposes within their canvass. He is an artist with a close rapport with the *Zeitgeist* (the spirit of the time) and has his affinities with certain humanistic stances in tune with the aesthetics of the twin cultures that shaped him. In these stories, he has successfully filtered contrasting emotions to convey a sense of hope against the discomfiture of the present and the anxiety of the future. In the *Secrets of the Heart* he says, “When the heart becomes congested with secrets, and the eyes begin to burn from the searing tears, and the ribs are about to burst with the growing of the heart’s confinement, one cannot find expression for such a labyrinth except by a surge of release” (*K.G. Reader*. bk. 1.155). This surge of release perennially born of sorrow is an outcome of the primary *rasa of raudra* or anger – rather the holy anger of a prophet at what “man has made of man.” Bharata’s *Nāṭyaśāstra* states, “The result (*karma*) of the furious should be known as the aesthetic experience of compassion” (qtd. in Patnaik 122).

Though Rasheed commits a mistake, his broken state arouses sorrow and though he himself is the cause for his grief, he is not totally condemnable. By inducing a peculiar kind of introspection, the heart of a reader becomes a receptacle of another worldly bliss.
The message that runs hidden throughout the story is that man is responsible for his own fate. Like in Greek and Renaissance literature it is man’s flaw that leads him to his downfall. In love-in-separation (viprālambha śṛṅgāra) there is no hope or possibility of any re-union. Along with the narrator the reader understands the situation and his higher aesthetic response is wholesome. In the Indian context a sahṛdyā is also a sympathetic reader who is capable of going beyond lexical meanings on the pages of the text. As Aristotle has pointed out in his theory of purgation, the negative emotions in the perceiver are purged out by sympathetic participation.

2.5. **Rasa in Gibran’s paintings**

Gibran has succeeded in transferring to his canvas, the beauty of eternity and mystic truths, to be preserved, relished and understood by humanity. Through his works of art he has enhanced his aesthetic capacity and experience which have an enduring appeal. His works compel a new way of seeing things as one can read the universe into it. In essence it points to the beyond in its own language which at times becomes inaccessible to cognitive approximation. He has unfolded in his canvas the sights that unfolded in the deep layers of his psyche. The mode of expression allows the connoisseur not just to understand the figures conceptually but to have a glimpse of the state of mind which the artist had, while creating it. Though the recurrent themes in his paintings are pain and death, it leads one to śānta rasa just as Gautama Buddha’s knowledge of pain, death and suffering landed him in enlightenment. There is also an awareness of the discrepancy between the ideal and the real. Through his visual art Gibran succeeds in giving a “soul” or a “spirit” to what would otherwise have remained uninspired. His aesthetic ideas become a counterpoint to rational ideas and his figures are miraculous expressions of his ineffable excited, and exalted state of mind. The lines and earthly shades suddenly vibrate with life and intrinsic value, and his bold intriguing, meditative
strokes offer an inexhaustible mine of aesthetic relish. Though it gives rise to different explanatory hypothesis to different connoisseurs of art, the ultimate appeal is the same because of the mental equipoise experienced, at the end of an enlarged experience capable of pushing experiential frontiers.

After twenty years of continuous writing and painting, Gibran still felt that his ideas had not ripened, and that his net was still submerged in water. (Self, S.T. bk. 4.48). In his letter to May Ziadeh he bemoans his helplessness thus, “I was born to live and suffer and to say one living and winged word, and I cannot remain silent until life uttered that word through my lips” (92). In Sand and Foam he observes, “I long for eternity because there I shall meet my unwritten poems and my unpainted pictures” (G.W. bk. 3.83). His art gallery comprising of portraits and drawings, some of which were faithfully attested by Mary, carry the secrets of life that could not be verbalized. His contours and lines, shades and tones and the mystical ambience are seen to be advanced concepts, beyond common understanding as they are deliberately rendered in terms of apparently naive symbols. Only an enlarged consciousness can decode it and reach the beautiful, meaningful and unified scheme. Whether it is deliberate camouflage or allegory, his imaginative compositions are suffused with the untranslatable language of the invisible world and the effulgence of divine light. There is no daub of paint on his canvas into which one cannot dream the entire world. The extended hands, and the movements suggested reveal that the senses are gathering experiences to be had within. The powers lying within the human body and mind, and the unlimited powers beyond the body which are immanent in every atom of the universe, the relationship between these two powers which culminates in a relationship between the corporeal frame and the universe are beautifully outlined. Even the back drop is composed of human figures be it earth, clouds, space or water, perhaps to show how the composition of the human body is in tune with
existence with all the elements intact. Like his writings, his aesthetic principles in paintings also become a spiritual quest towards universal humanity.

With the disobedience of God’s injunction, Adam and Eve found themselves abandoned by existence and in shame and agony they ran to hide their genitals. What Gibran wants to prove through his naked figures is that humans in their innocent state are pure and beautiful and need no habiliments to cover their thoughts, which are like clouds over a clear blue sky. In his canvas, emotional states are depicted in rhythm, balance and harmony and the figures seem to be in touch with solitude, silence and space. They are forever receiving vibrations from the forces flowing outside their body to reach the “within.” Whether alone or in a group in action, or in stillness, they are all attuned to the universal consciousness, and their solitude and silence are perhaps rehearsals of death in their waking state. In his portrait “Towards the infinite,” he acknowledges that he has depicted “the last moment of his mother’s life over here and the first moment of her life over there” (Love 31). Some of his other paintings are “Spirits of Night,” “Fountain of Pain,” “Mary,” “The Dance of Thoughts,” “Micheline,” “The Three Women,” “Fredericka,” “Mother of Heaven,” “The Lamb Prayed in His Heart,” “Consolation,” “The Beholder,” “The Crucified” etc. Here, except in the portraits the images are like the cosmic pillars connecting earth and heaven. They appear to be mortal and immortal, the created and the creator, and the micro and the macro. Gibran’s artistic genius seems to be a sensual, a local, intuitive and meditative. The two levels of undifferentiated state of oneness and the differentiated states of diversity and multiplicity appear connected in his paintings. Together with Gibran the connoisseurs become a participant in a transmundane experience, have a flash like momentary glimpse of the divine and retreat into 

hrdyaviśrānti (quietitude, tranquility). The implicit and explicit meaning of his drawings with its concurrent dimensions and levels of meaning, and latent capacity for multi-
interpretations demand a deeper investigation. Gibran has depicted the human body not merely as something sensuously beautiful but as expressive through gesture, pose and countenance, delineating their complex essence as eternal spirits, viewing birth and death as entry gates from eternity and towards eternity. Thus, Gibran’s paintings are a special mode, a form of bringing to consciousness and expression, the deepest interests of humanity. The aesthetics of his paintings is predicated upon ontology and some of the existing theories that are applicable to literature may be applied to his paintings too. M.H. Abrams in his “Orientation of Critical Theories,” quotes Simonides, “painting is dumb poetry and poetry a speaking painting” (Lodge 10). A.K. Awasthi, in his article, “Art, Aesthetics and Rasa” says:

Rasa is a state, which cannot be known objectively because it cannot be an object of knowledge, its perception is existence itself giving super sensuous wonder; it is represented by the eternal symbol and sound aum (OM), which means all in one, all as one and one as all comprising Brahman (the eternal) and sahodara (twin), lokottar ānand (supreme bliss beyond the mundane world) symbolized by bhog (enjoyment) of naad (celestial feel of the primeval sound of creation). It implies, therefore that Rasa is an experience – an experience of Reality, Absolute, Truth or Beauty. (Rastogi 47)

2.6. Conclusion

In a modest measure this chapter is a brief study of the power literature engineered by Gibran with special reference to the Rasa-dhvani doctrine. Like all theories, this theory needs growth, yet its dynamism has the potential to embrace even Western classics as it is based on emotions. Artworks can be treated as opportunities to undergo a contemplating state, and they are primarily esteemed by the readers – the audience as
potential sources of these self-rewarding aesthetic experiences. Therefore, it is logical to hypothesize what artists intend to do through artworks is to afford this opportunity for readers to have aesthetic experience. This aesthetic experience is the disinterested and sympathetic attention to and contemplation of the artwork whatsoever for its own sake, and be actually aware of its details. Studying a pioneer artist with inadequate intellectual tools have posed barriers during this study, and therefore, it is with reservation that this study lays claim to general validity or to make one point of study into a general binding truth. However, this study is done with all sincerity for the enlargement of taste and to show new ways of seeing and perceiving the world through the words of Gibran who has tapped into a collective intelligence that reveals itself in his confidence, precision, integrity and charisma.

Apart from the aesthetic intention, there are also other dominant intentions in the works of Gibran, which can be satisfactorily analyzed only by the comprehensive Rasa-dhvani doctrine which is also a doctrine of divine unity and peace. Today, everywhere the cry is for peace and as Abbas Dalal, in Ethics in Persian Poetry has quoted, “The peace that man seeks is possible if the total needs of man not only in his capacity of a thinking animal but also a being born for immortality are considered” (14).

It is a surprising fact that the valid rules discerned by Bharata for artistic success have a thin strand that merges the Indian poetics with the Western formulations. As G.B. Mohan Thampi posits:

Geographical qualifiers like Eastern or Western should not blind us to the universality of poetics. The universality of scientific laws is predicated upon the homogeneity of matter throughout the universe. Mankind is one; man is a species – being; human experience at the elemental level, is universal. Therefore, theories in human sciences, to deserve the name of
science, must claim and achieve universal validity. Theories in human sciences stand or fall by virtue of their truth or falsity, not by their association with particular hemispheres or nations. (Narasimhaiah 36)

However, tracing the similarities between the East West poetics, or trying to integrate them is not the focus of study here. This study shows with discernible limitations, how the Indian theory of aesthetics with its enriched legacy and cardinal concepts like \textit{rasa}, \textit{dhvani}, \textit{aucitya} and \textit{vakrokti} is capable of harnessing the larger meaning resting in the works of Gibran.

If a critical terminology mediating an oriental experience with its language, rhythm, imagery, symbol and style is of Aristotelian or of his legacy, the artistic success and value of the art work cannot be justifiably assessed. That is why this thesis employs mainly Bharata’s \textit{rasa} and Ānandhavardhana’s \textit{dhvani} theory supported by Kshemendra’s \textit{aucitya} and Kuntaka’s \textit{vakrokti}. \textit{Aucitya} and \textit{vakrokti} are supposed to be the same concept of \textit{dhvani}, and are treated as necessary elements for the comprehension of \textit{rasa}. The ancient Indians regarded criticism as the sum of all learning. It is \textit{samastih sarvāṣṭrānam sāhityamitiṣatiyati} (qtd. in Ramachandra 1). It was referred to as \textit{alaṅkāra śāstra} which meant the science of poetry or the study of beauty in poetry, and the principles of \textit{alaṅkāra}, approximates to the modern conception of imagery in poetry. \textit{Alaṅkāra}, literally means ornament or embellishment, and was originally a synonym for beauty. To Prof. Hiriyanna there seems to exist a relationship between beauty and reality, aesthetics and Metaphysics; for he says, “The pursuit of the beautiful may help the attainment of the ideal. By carrying us to the threshold, as it were of the ideal and giving us a glimpse of it, art but inspires us with a desire for realizing it” (qtd. in Ramachandra 3). Further, according to him, in the supreme aesthetic moment, a reader is supposed to
attain the status of *sivakalpa samādhi* in which one loses his ego when in contemplative union with the object (4).

The state of transcendence reached through the *rasa* experience and the bliss that has started surging would gather more inner alchemical force in the next core chapter where the intelligence of nature would lead one to the field of awareness. Having tasted the essential in the egoless state, the reader’s soul has to co-exist with all of God’s creations, and Gibran’s eco-spirituality would open doors for the same in the third chapter entitled “From Aesthetic Consciousness to Eco-Consciousness.” However, the map is not the terrain.