CHAPTER-IV

CREATIVE APPLICATION OF SANSKRIT

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Not only were the works of translation of some particular treatises of Indian rhetoric done in the modern age or their evaluation from various angles, but also fresh discussion of literary principles or attempts at the formulation of few literary theories in the light of the theories of Indian rhetoric had begun towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth at the initiative of a few of Bengal’s great men of intellect. Of course, here the new aspects of poetics that were unfolded by the celebrated poeticians Rabindranath and Sri Aurobindo had their roots in the Upaniṣadas and the Vedas respectively. It may be mentioned here that Sri Aurobindo and Acarya Brajendranath seal had expressed their ideas on poetics only in English. Speaking about the fundamental aspects of the essence of poetry, in his book The Future poetry, Sri Aurobindo nowhere referred to any theory of Indian rhetoric as a matter of relevance to the subject, for his out-look had always been deeply entrenched in the Vedas.¹ But, in the first half of the Twentieth century itself we had come across one or two such rare intellectuals in whose writings there was enough evidence pointing to new aspects of poetics in the light of Indian rhetoric. As a matter of fact, in this particular sphere the achievement and contribution of Bengali geniuses is remarkable even in the perspective of the whole country. These men of genius amply demonstrated with evidence that the theories of Indian rhetoric not only had acquired any limitation in their static form, but that in the evolution of newer and newer
artistic forms we could also put them to our use. Notable among these great men of genius were Rabindranath Thakur, Silpacharya Abanindranath Thakur, Nalini Kanta Gupta etc.

In this context it may be mentioned that the Indian rhetoric was basically confined to the task of exploring the real nature of poetics and that of the connoisseurs of poetry. But, nowadays the discussion on art, culture, music, sculpture etc have also come within the purview of poetics. In this context regarding the scope of ancient Sanskrit rhetoric it has been commented - "The Sanskrit rhetoricians of ancient India accepted only the literary art as the subject-matter of aesthetics — the literary art which is constituted of sound and meaning. Right from Bharatacarya of Nāṭyaśāstra in the seventeenth century, Sanskrit rhetoricians accepted only poetry for their discussion".2

In the sphere of Western aesthetics what we observe is that the basic subject of its consideration had mainly been concentrated in the analysis of poetry and drama. The following portion having been quoted from Aristotle's *Poetics*, 'not only of poetry in general but also of its species and their respective capacities, of structure of the plot required for a good poem, of the number and nature of its parts" — it had been said about Plato and Aristotle — 'There is a study of particular art, poetry and rhetoric, but not in general.'3

This trend of keeping the discussion of literary principles confined within the limits of particular art (as opposed to generalization) continued in the writings of Vico, Herbert and others in the Western world till eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A general definition which would apply to all the arts was first framed in the writings of the two philosophers, Kant and Hegel. Of the artist it is said, 'Significantly, the artist—in the sense of one who works in any of the creative arts was virtually a nineteenth century invention.'4
The discussion on modern aesthetics in India started with Rabindranath Thakur’s articles on literature.\textsuperscript{5} The number was also not too small of those others who had come forward in this contemporary period with globalised outlook and prepared the ground for evaluation of poetry painting, sculpture, music and drama, Lyric epic, short story, novel etc. in literature. We shall analyse the discussion only of those who in the background of some particular theories of Indian rhetoric have brought to light newer and newer aspects in the discussion of aesthetics in the Bengali language. We have already mentioned that among the eminent intellectuals in this particular course of discussion were Abanidranath Thakur, Nalini Kanta gupta and Prabasjiban Chowdhury.

Discussing the attempt at bringing about a new poetics, on the basis of the theories of Indian rhetoric, as could be observed at the beginning of the twentieth century, Rabindranath Thakur as the father of original poetic thought must be referred to. Just as it was impossible on the part of Rabindranath who was exceedingly conscious of our ancient heritage, to move forward denying Indian rhetoric altogether, so also it was equally impossible for his original genius to follow the conventional Indian poetic thought. Apart from his books written on literary principles, viz, \textit{Sāhityer Pathe}, \textit{Sāhitya}, \textit{Sāhityer Svarūp\textsuperscript{8}} etc., his discussion on principles of literature crowded in scattering all over his writings. It may be mentioned that nowhere has he followed any theory of Indian rhetoric, as such in totality. Everywhere those ideas of Sanskrit rhetoric coming in contact with his genius had come to his aid in creating for him entirely new and original concepts.

In this context, we can cite an example: in 1936 in one of his letters to Amiya Chakrabarty he has written — “Expression of beauty is not the sole aim of
art. On this the last word has been said in our books of Rhetoric: \( vākyam rasātmakam kāvyam \). Immediately after this he has remarked – “Man has desired to realize himself in the unhindered sphere of \( Līlā \). Poetry is the creation of that vast world of Lila”\(^9\). It should be noted here that though the enjoyment of the delight in the mind of the \( rasika \) (the ideal enjoyer of art) which he has mentioned here has a clear resemblance with Indian \( Rasavāda \), his latter remark, ie, ‘Poetry is the creation of that vast world of \( Līlā \)’ has been presented with absolute sense of independence. Here, in spite of making use of Indian rhetoric actually he has given shape of his own realization or thought; this thought, however cannot be considered to be an enlarged form of Indian rhetoric. Rather, on many occasions Rabindranath’s remarks on the basis of Indian rhetoric seem to be opposed to Indian traditional aesthetics. For instance he has said, “In our rhetoric it is said — \( vākyam rasātmakam kāvyam \). Beauty has \( rasa \), but it cannot be maintained that \( rasa \) in the same way has beauty.”\(^1\) Here the statement that ‘beauty has \( rasa \)’ is not true, because according to Sanskrit rhetoric \( rasa \) does not exist necessarily where there is beauty. Bare description of beauty bereft of \( rasa \) does not turn out to be real literature or poetry. Again, the \( bhāva \) or mental states of grief, anger, fear etc. as spoken of in Sanskrit rhetoric when mingled with \( rasa \) may become \( Karuṇa, Raudra, Bhayānaka rasas \) respectively. Also, any creation which is permeated by \( rasa \) is considered to be beautiful. So according to Sanskrit aesthetics even, \( Karuṇa rasa \) (sentiment of grief) is also capable of producing a sense of pleasure: \( Karunādāvapi rase jāyate yat paraṁ sukham \)

\( Sacetasāmanubhavaḥ pramāṇaṁ tatra kebalam \) \( || \) (\( Sāhityadarpana, 3/3. \)) i.e., the wonderful sense of pleasure which is created by \( rasas \) like \( Karuṇa \) etc. has its proof only in the feelings of the heart of a sensitive person susceptibe to it. Of course, Rabindranath has also accepted this aspect of Indian rhetoric in a different way. In the verse quoted by us it has been said: \( sacetasāmanubhava, \) that is, ‘in the feelings of the heart of a sensitive person’\(^1\) which makes even
sorrow enjoyable to a person; so, Rabindranath also said it in another form—
“In every rasa, that is, in every perception or feeling of the heart, we only know ourselves in a special way, and in this knowing lies a special delight”. Here too, it could be observed that the heritage of Indian rhetoric had had its extension in Rabindranath also, but that its mode was completely the poet’s own. Thus it can be shown further that what Rabindranath mentioned as the joy of realization to be goal of poetry or fine arts, where the subject and the object merges into one another, was also the fundamental conclusion of Indian rhetoric. To drive home this idea of the oneness of the subject and the object Visvanatha Kaviraja wrote, 
*tadāsvāde bibhāvadeḥ parichheado na vidyate*; meaning, at the moment of the enjoyment of poetic or artistic delight the difference between the subject and the object of enjoyment ceases to exist. The matter called *sādhāraṇīkāraṇa* of Bhattanayaka, one of the rhetoricians of *Rasavādī* School, expressed basically the same view. This similarity between Rabindranath’s thought with Sanskrit rhetoric does not prove Rabindranath’s devotion to Sanskrit rhetoric even in the least. Everywhere Rabindranath’s thought has followed an independent path. In this context an example may be cited – in Sanskrit a definite gradation was followed in order to transform a *bhāva* into *rasa*; Though Rabindranath has spoken about *rasa*, but nowhere has he ever mention about this matter of ‘gradation’. Yet, in his discussion, even in his poetry the traces of Sanskrit rhetoric has been there in various ways, so much so that it cannot be denied; for example, what has been said about *Sahrdaya Sāmājika* (artistically sensitive person) has a hint in Rabindranath’s poem, *Gān bhanga*. There he has written: As the waves strikes the bank a bulbing music is created, as the wind blows through the forest a murmuring sound rises; in the same way the song can never be of the singer alone, when both the singer and the enjoyer of the song both participate, that is, one would sing with an open voice and the other (i.e. The hearer) would sing silently in his mind and there only the song will succeed. Here, it can be noted that Rabindranath is profoundly influenced by Indian
rhetoric. So, it can be said that though Rabindranath did not follow Indian rhetoric thoroughly, yet the essence of Indian poetic thought surely influenced him deeply. On many occasions Rabindranath had initially accepted Indian thought of Sanskrit tradition at the early stages, but left his mark of originality in his discussion of literature.

The great man of Bengal who in this modern age came forward to discuss the essential nature of art, its character and excellence etc and to give shape to a new aesthetics in the light of Indian as well as Western aesthetics was none other than Abanindranath Thakur (1871-1951).

In the language of Rabindranath he was the one who had saved the country from self-disparagement and self-disgust and restored her position of honour and dignity giving her equal right with others in the process of the self-realization of the world community of men. The same Abanindranath having been appointed to the post of Rani Bageswari professorship of Indian Fine Arts, and serving in that position from 1921 to 1929 he delivered 29 (twenty nine) lectures. These lectures were published in the journals such as Baṅgabāñī, Prabāśī, Bicitrā etc. Later, in 1941, Calcutta University had published these in a volume called Bāgeswari Śilpa Prabandhāvalī. This book is one of the most important contributions to the history of Indian aesthetics in the perspective of the whole country. From this book itself the theoretical discussion on art began in the Bengali language. Rabindranath's discussion on art had been mostly desultory and scattered and that of
Aurobindo had been in English. So in this particular field of studies i.e. on art in Bengali language, Abanindranath can be said to be the lone pioneer. Though in course of this series of lectures, he has said, 'I have got this assurance that for a few years to come I shall be able to go on rambling undeterred on whatever, whenever and in whatsoever manner pleases me, regarding the subject of art; of course as much as I know of that subject.' Yet, we must say, his discussion here is not just that kind of 'rambling' as mentioned here. What has come out clearly in these articles is subtle analytical discussion of theoretician on every subject and an attempt to formulate new theories of aesthetics. His discussion on aesthetics has remained circumscribed only within the limits of the evaluation of painting alone, and it helped in evaluating and in unfolding the mysteries of all the subjects of art like poetry, music sculpture, architecture, dance etc. What is more remarkable is that in this matter he depended basically on Indian rhetoric itself. In the article Raser Kathā, published in the journal Bhāratī, Abanindranath commented, 'Till now I have not heard the Pandits utter a word about how the theories of rhetoric of this country have been explaining art in between the lines.' This is a wonderful discovery. In our view, whereas Rasavāda Dhvanivāda Bakrokti, Rīti, Alaṃkāra etc. of Indian rhetoric are confined only within the limits of the evaluation of poetry, Abanindranath had demonstrated how Indian rhetoric could be easily applied also to the analysis of painting. Not only this, he also made use of the conclusions established by Indian rhetoricians as helpful means in unraveling the mysteries of the beauty of all arts irrespective of its different forms, such as, poetry, music, sculpture, architecture, dance etc.

As a matter of fact, in India Abanindranath was one of the representatives of that very trend of thought which was characterized by that secular approach towards the understanding judgment of art and literature
which had its beginning in the ideas of the Western aesthetists. About this modern aesthetic of the West it was said, 'Secular aesthetics of to-day looks upon (this) aesthetic joy as a mere psychological phenomenon divested of all ontological or metaphysical significance.' Regarding the fact that the beginning of this particular kind of approach had been there in our Sanskrit aesthetics itself, Abanindranath has commented, 'Considering art only as art, without mixing it up with religion, has gained grounds in Europe only in the very recent times.'

In ancient India also, the practice of looking at all the art forms from this kind of aesthetic point of view had been established by the rhetoricians. He sincerely perceived that these sūtras of rhetoric could be used in the evaluation of art in its different fields in stead of keeping the varied area of Indian aesthetics confined within the boundaries of poetry and drama alone; in this context he has commented thus; 'Rhetoric, Rasa Šāstra shall be of little use if they are wrapped up with the art of poetry alone. We shall obtain much better results by following the method of judgment of rhetoric in our understanding of the subject of art. The right way to get ourselves acquainted with the art of poetry, painting, a sculpted piece or even a toy is by following the process of rasa and bhāva.'

Just as there are characteristic differences between the language and mode of expressions of literature and those of other forms of art, similarly a kind of mutual interdependence between literature, painting, sculpture etc. can hardly be denied. In this context, Abanindranath commented, 'The language of picture is almost a universal language. The poet's language follows the path of sound through the passage of the ears leading towards the mind. The language of the picture is the language of the actor—which is going along depending on the path of form in movement and the act of looking and at the
same time dropping hints on the way. Again this language of speech, which is a mater for hearing, is now transmitted to the mind through the eyes, in the form or image of the printed letters e.g. the phrase — nabaghana śyāma at once evokes a sense of from and colour as soon as they are seen in print.\textsuperscript{22}

Abanindranath’s realization regarding the inter-dependence poetry and art which has added a new dimension to the discussion of the art of painting, had its root concealed in the Sanskrit Rhetoric. While discussing the three kinds of Riti Viz. Baidarbhi, Gauḍīyā and Pañcālī in his book, Alamkarasūtrabṛttī, Vamanacarya referred to the relation of rekha (line) with citra (drawing) in course of discussing the relation between poetry and riti as an example.

In this context, a critic, quoting from the books of Vamanacarya, Anandavardhana and Kuntaka has tried to show how Abanindranath’s new outlook on art had derived its inspirational material from Indian rhetoric.\textsuperscript{23} The very first quotation of the critic is from Vamanacarya’s Kavyālaṃkārasūtrabṛttī — etāsu tisṛṣu ritiṣu rekhaśvibā citraṁ kāvan pratiśṭhitamiti.\textsuperscript{24} Acarya Anandavardhana had named a type of poetry as Ālekhyapraekhya. In this naming itself the fact of mutual interdependence between poetry and painting has been indicated. Then, the critic, Bishnupada Bhattacharya has demonstrated, quoting from Kuntaka’s Bakroktijīvita, that the latter was also was certain about the fact that both music and painting could generate heavenly delight in the mind of a connoisseur. Prof. Bhattacharya has quoted then from Bakroktijīvita.

\begin{quote}
aparyyālociteipyarthe bandhasaukaryyasampada
\vspace{1cm}
gītabaddhrdayahlādam tadvidāṁ janayanti yat
\end{quote}\textsuperscript{25}
Comparing poetry, poetic elements, and the poet with painting, its elements and the painter respectively Kuntaka has mentioned the resemblance which exists between them and said –

\[ \textit{etena kāvya kavyopakarāṇa kabinām} \]

\[ \textit{citra citropakarāṇa citrakaraiḥ sāmyaṁ pradarśītāṁ}^{26} \]

Through these extracts prof. Bhattacharya has shown with supporting evidence that the ancient Sanskrit rhetoricians did not recognized any difference between poetry and the art of painting etc and has commented about Abanindranath — “Abanindranath had inherited that clear sightedness of the ancient acaryā and this was why instead of keeping the discipline of rhetoric within the limits of the Art of words only he could leave the mark of his liberality and firm conviction by extending it to the field of discussion of the arts comprising dance, music, acting, sculpture architecture etc.\textsuperscript{27} In fact, Abanindranath, who was well informed about Western aesthetics, had plunged into the liberal world of Indian rhetoricians and been disciplined by their ideas and it was only due to this that he could not recognize the art of painting as the sole, the best form of art. So, he has commented, ‘That painting is the only best form of art is totally untrue, because none of the arts like music, poetry, drama etc. lag behind.\textsuperscript{28} Abanindranath was indebted not only to our rhetoric and rhetoricians for getting himself initiated into this kind of liberal outlook, he also owed much to our ancient literature. Even before books on rhetoric were composed, references to art and words in praise of it were reflected in our Sanskrit literature itself. How lofty were the ideas of the sages of the Brahmanic Age can been found from a sloka of Aitareya Brāhmaṇa ātmasaṁśkritirbāva śilpāni

\[ Chandomayaṁ bā aityayajamāno ātmānaṁ saṁskurute i^{29} \text{ etc. — i.e.,} \]

‘Definitely arts constitute the cause of self-culture. The yajmāna or the one
who practices art turns his soul completely rhythmic through various forms of art’.

It has been commented on this quotation from *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* thus, ‘Here it has been beautifully described what art’s work is in bringing about self-culture, self-development and making one’s life rhythemical. The notion that the art of form and the art of acting also serve as means of culture is found here. Here Abanindranatha’s discourse on art has followed nothing else except Vedic ideas. In his article *Silpe Anadhikār* providing the Bengali translation of the quoted extract from *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* he has tried to prove that art is not merely ‘imitation’. Art is the culture of the soul itself, because art brings about the reformation of the self. In the same vein with *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* Abanindranath wrote: ‘It is this art, this aesthetics with the help of which the *yajmāna* filling his soul with rhythm attains true culture and unites speech with life force the mind with the eyes and the hearing with the soul.’

In his discussion on aesthetics Abanindranath had mentioned two terms with a specific purpose. These are *mat* and *mantra*. According to his view “*mat* is that in which there is ‘orthodoxy’, ‘narrowness’ and ‘egoism’ etc. *Mantra* on the other hand, is that alone which adheres to truth. In his opinion *mat* propagates the point of view of an individual, but *mantra* expresses itself in all respects depending on that which is a truth.” Abanindranath never wanted to concede that painting was the best of the arts either under the influence of orthodoxy or narrowness or for the sake of attaching greater importance to his own outlook Side by side, he accorded equal value to all the arts, viz. music, poetry, drama etc. In fact, being the inheritor of the liberal ideas of the ancient sages he had added a new dimension to the discussion of art. About him it has been rightly observed, Abanindranath had inherited that
clear-sightedness of the ancient preceptors. This was the reason why instead of keeping the discipline of rhetoric within the limits of the art of words only he could leave the mark of liberality and firm conviction by extending it to the field of other arts, Viz. dance, music, acting sculpture, architecture etc.\(^33\) In Abānindranath’s discussion of aesthetics it can be observed that following the theories of Indian rhetoric he added new dimensions to the studies of aesthetics. He looked more for that mantra itself in the individual opinion of the rhetoricians rather than in Indian rhetoric, because in these personal views a number contradictory ideas had found their place. There are some such statement there which shines exactly like mantra, which brings out the basic truth of all the modes of art in a very simple way. The authenticity of these are not circumscribed by the boundaries of time or place. One such mantra is a śloka mentioned in the first chapter of the first kārikā of Kāvyaprakāśa composed by Acarya Mammata of Kashmir. The subject described in it and the terms used therein had been utilized by Abanindranath in his discussion of art in various ways. This śloka is niyatikṛtaniyamarahitāṁ hlādaikamayīmananyaparatantāṁ

\[\text{navarasarucirāṁ nirmitimādhadhati bhārati kaberjayati } II^{34}\] etc.

He had applied the subject matter of śloka written by Mammata in the context of discussing poetry, to all kinds of artistic creations, be it painting or sculpture. He wrote, ‘We shall put into it things which are from beyond even the rules of Destiny ; human endeavours taken up in the domain of rules that moved on and on assuming newer colours and rhythms, crossing over all order of rules, beyond all fixed destinations. Whatever man has been able to gift to this world is this ‘creation’; he has been able to release what had been in the bounds of the measurable into unbounder waves of rasa, endowing it with the attribute of the immeasurable.'\(^35\)
Elsewhere, quoting this extract from Mammala, he has commented, 'The man who has lighted the sacred ‘gold Pañcaprādīpa’ (The sacred lamp of five flames) of the so-called mantra, not only for Indian art but also for all arts viz., poetry, painting, sculpture, music, dance etc.—of all other countries, is that person who had been outside India even for a day. Actually, he has used Mammala’s terms viz. niyatikṛta, niyamarahita hlādaikamayı ananyaparatratra, navarasarucirā, etc. in his discussion of art adding a new dimension to these. It can also be nicely understood from an interpretation of Abanindranath how this truth of Mammata’s statement has come out splendidly not only in the discussion of literature but also in the creation of beauties of painting, sculpture etc. In this context, a critic has quoted from Abanindranath thus — The outward appearance of the camel or the owl or the frog might have been to the liking of God, yet common men look away from them in aversion; so, these did not get the beauty that attracts the average man, but the skilled creator’s laws of creation of beauty, which are different from those of Fate or Destiny, made even the camel or the owl or the frog look so beautiful that none laughed at them any more."

".............The world of beauty (of form) found by the laws of God has in it another world which is the true world of beauty and which has been going on in accordance with its own laws, — not that fake world of Viśvamitra, Vyāsa Kāśī it is the true beauty coming into being, at times, obeying the laws of the Almighty at others following the rules of art."

In his discourse on art, on various occasions, Abanindranath has made use of another śloka of Mammata which goes thus:

Saktinipunata lokaśāstra kāvyādyabeksanat I
Kāvyajñāśātikṣayābhyāsa iti hetustadudbhave II
He has analysed and interpreted the above quoted *śloka* in various ways which, in most cases, are not in agreement with the interpretations of the commentators. In his article *Śilpe Kriyā Prakriyār Bhālomanda* commenting on how one has to achieve a lot of things in order to become an artist, he writes quoting this *śloka*: ‘First of all, the power and ability of dedicated pursuit of art is needed, then skill and complete command over the tools or implements are necessary, then analytical studies of aesthetics and familiarity with the elements of various other forms of arts through direct contact, then regular learning and practice under a teacher is required.’

Quoting a part of the same *śloka* he has commented in his essay titled *Rūpavidyā*: “Power of understanding or intellect follow the light of genius and skill follows intellect. So, the rhetorician has said, ‘Power of intellect with skill.’ Power of intellect with genius, skill, studies of poetry and *Lokāśāstra*, learning from the poets and practice—only when one gets involved with so many matters, one becomes an artist (or creator of beauty).”

In the sphere of creation whatever may be of importance of skill and practice at the root of all best creations there is genius. So Acarya Mammata also speaks of genius as *kavītavijā’m pratibhanām*. Acarya Abanindtanath characterizes genius as *atailapūra pradīpa* (i.e. a lamp without oil). In this context he says, ‘Accidentally there come same individuals bringing their talent to bear upon the world of beauty to guide men along the new path, from one ago to another, settling all accounts of knowledge and ignorance, superiority and inferiority, good and bad conduct. The man of genius had opened up a new path following which the course of human thought went forward for ages towards the goal of creating newer beauties on the way.’
It is to be noted that the power of genius which Abanindranath mentions in the context of painting, sculpture, poetry, music etc., has at its root the dictum from Indian rhetoric, i.e.—Prajñā navanavonmeṣasālinī pratīvā matāḥ. In his discussion we hear the echo of this part of the śloka itself. ‘There is a difference between the work of a man of genius who makes new paths and that of a man without talent who just causes something new to happen.’ Showing the difference between the creations of a genius and that of one who is not a genius Abanindranath has commented, “He who is a skilled artist (rūpakṣa), being endowed with extraordinary power, becomes skilled in the imagination of beauty; and the man who captured only the general feature of beauty and failed to see its totality—e.g. one who made an elephant a horse, a man or a tree and made them look exactly like they were in real life is just ordinary workman of beauty. The notes of music and the notes of music—both produced sounds but in two different ways—one in an extraordinary and the other in an ordinary manner. In respect of writing also there is this distinction between ordinary and extraordinary in the power of imagination of beauty and the inability to exercise this power. In this particular remark of Abanindranath, a critic has discovered the echo of the writer of Vyaktiveka, Rajanaka Mahima Bhatta’s description of the real nature of genius.

The saying which Abanindranath has quoted again and again as the main theme of his aesthetic judgement is Bākyam, rasātmakaṁ kāvyam, of Visvanatha Kaviraja, the author of Sāhityadarpaya. That this statement of Visvanatha made about poetry is also the best yardstick of judgement with regard to beauty of other arts like painting, sculpture, music etc. has been demonstrated by Abanindranath through various analyses. Bākyam rasātmakaṁ kāvyam if there is rasa, the image will be perfect, the painting will be real; it is so said because through this image or painting the attitude of the artist is being expressed.
(B) In poetry, art, music as well as human life having the taste for this *rasa* is the main thing to do

“……………… this predominance of *rasa* – it is this which all arts of this world are made of – it is this by virtue of which it is proved to a *rasika* (or one who can appreciate this *rasa*-element) what is real art and what is not or what is a totally separate thing”

(c) “The various roads along which men’s art is treading forward have an endless number of lanes and by lanes, the course of art is flowing along two channels mainly—of the existent and non-existent, of the event and of the non-event, but, to what goal is this course bent?— towards the ocean of *rasa*; where do these two have their origin? In the source of *rasa*; so, be it Indian or any other art, they will finally be judged on the ground of their relation with *rasa*.”

At the root of Abanindranath’s dependence on the concept of *rasa* so far as his discussion of art is concerned the book, Bharatacarya’s *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the writer being the earliest teacher of Indian rhetoric. In this context Bisnupada Bhattacharya has written— “There can be little doubt that the *mantras* of the last chapter titled *Rasa* of Maharsi Bharata’s *Nāṭyaśāstra*—viz. *Nahi rasāḍṛte kaścidārthāḥ prabartate, ‘yathā bijāḥ bhabed bṛksāḥ bṛksāḥ puspaṁ phalam tathā | tathā mūlaṁ rasāḥ sarbe tebhyo bhāvā byabasthitāḥ* etc. had specially inspired Abanindranath’s realization. As a reason behind this the critic has cited Abanindranath’s article *Bhāva* where the author has quoted these words of Bharatamuni verbatim— *bhābāyati padārthāṁ bhāvaḥ* and—“There is no *bhāva* without *rasa*, no *rasa* without *bhāva*” of Abanindranath is rather the thematic rendering of Bharatacarya’s—

Na bhāvahinoasti raso nā bhāvo rasabharjitaḥ |

*Parasparakṛtā siddhiranayo rasabhābayaḥ* ||
While discussing the inexpressible aspect of *rasa* Abanindranath has quoted a famous line from Acarya Mamnata's *Kāvyaprakāśa* and commented: "This taste for *rasa* that can be had of artistic creation, about this *rasaśāstra* has said that *rasa* in an inexpressible manner conveys its taste for the connoisseur of art (*rasika*) —

_Hṛdayamiba prahisān sarvāṅgiśamībhālingan_

_Brahmasvādamibānubhābayan—etc._

Quoting from the discussion that has found place in Indian rhetoric about the true nature of poetry and its evaluation and following it as a model Abanindranath has opened up a new horizon aesthetic discussion. In this context we can cite a few more examples. For instance, in his article *Asundar* where in his discussion of art he has dragged in the example of a boy playing with a wooden horse, in that place Prof. Bishnupada Bhattacharya's *Citraturaganyaya* which the latter mentioned in his discussion of the theory of *Rasa*. Regarding the inseparable oneness which Indian rhetoricians had shown between the propensities to *bhāva* and *rasa*, it has been found time and again in the discussion of Abanindranath that not only *rasa* or *bhāva* but he has also made use of the various terminological definitions of *Alamkāra Śāstra* itself in course of his discussion form the angles of *bhāva*, *rasa* and various other elements, viz. *bhāvabhāsa*, *bhāvodaya*, *bhāvasandhi*, *bhāva-sabalata* etc, etc.—

‘To keep the *bhāva* of poetry completely hidden vitiates the very purpose of painting or drawing; so, with the help of various suggestions (*byañjanā*), various attitudes (*bhaṅgi*) the work has to be managed by making *bhāva* more, apparent or clear. *Bhāva*, *bhāvabhāsa*, *bhāvodaya*, *bhāvasandhi*, *bhāvasābalatā* and carious such other aspects of *bhāva* have been spoken of in rhetoric and all have come to the use of the artist in his various kinds of work."
Just as Abanindranath has used this *rasa* of Sanskrit rhetoric as an evaluating standard in respect of poetry, dance, music, painting, so also he has shown how the rhetorical figure, *Upamā* of Sanskrit rhetoric, showing resemblance, has been used by the highly skilled artists in painting, poetry, music, architecture, etc. In this discussion he has upheld a new aspect of aesthetical discussion based on the theories of Indian rhetoric. In this context the remark of critic deserve to be quoted: “In course of his discussion of *Sādṛśya*, one of the six organs of art, Abanindranath has very deftly and delicately brought out its intimate relation with the figure *Upamā* and has also demonstrated through a very beautiful and subtle analysis that the realm of *Upamā* is extended not only over the art of word but also that it is important in various other arts viz. painting, sculpture, architecture, music etc. In most cases Abanindranath’s remarks in his discussion of aesthetics have come out as the vehicle of his new ideas; for instance, at one place he has shown that in the creative work of a true artist, when *bhāva* mingles with *Sādṛśya*, even gross *upamā* (ie. Of a low standard) also turns out to be beautiful, becomes favourable for *rasa*. Of course, between this contention of Abanindranath and the views of Indian rhetoricians there seems to be no contradiction. In this context we can quote a remark of Abanindranath himself: “An artist is like a go-between who works for bringing *upamān* and *upmeya* together. Just as the negotiator (*ghaṭak*) knows that there is hindrance on the way *naragan* and *rākṣasgan* being brought together in the same way that the artist also works with full awareness about which form of beauty (*rūpa*) has or hasn’t any hurdle on the way of coming together which other form.” In the discussion of *Sādṛśya* in art he has finally shown the difference of three levels, which is but an extended addition to Indian rhetoric. He has shown that in the field of art, *Sādṛśya* is of three kinds which are — event-based *sādṛśya*, imagination-based and thought-based *sādṛśya*. Only the sensitive individuals of artistic taste can realize the gradual perfection among these, because in his opinion, intimate relation of (gradual) *sādṛśya* with *rasa bhāvas* is
gradually increasing. He has given the example of these three types of sadṛṣya from painting. In order to make the point clear to us that thought-based sadṛṣya is the best compared to the event-based or the imagination-based sadṛṣya, he has come to take shelter under Rasavāda. His comment on thought-based sadṛṣya is — "Here rūpa (form) and kalpanā (imagination), both coming to the use of bhāva byaṅjanā and bhāva and rasa got all the prominence here above the two sadṛṣyas, namely, the seen (drṣṭa) and imagined (kalpita). This was a new creative step forward on the part of Abanindranath in the discussion of aesthetics with the help of Indian rhetoric. So far as his discussion of aesthetics is concerned, accepting on the one hand the Indian rhetoric and, on the other the mantra Raso bai saḥ of Taittirīya Upaniṣada, he came up to the side of an all-pervasive fountain of rasa. "Is he but a deceiver whom the sages of old (Ṛṣis) called — Raso bai saḥ? The form captured in lines etched on stone, lines framed in colour of a drawing or painting, words set to rhythm and harmony — all these of art are coming out in expression following the course 'making' where rasa is cascading day and night; these are but bright pieces or fragments of that indivisible whole of rasa, — it is like the small lamps in thousands lighted from one light—wonderful variety of expressions of one art." So, in the perspective of modern Indian thought his discussion on aesthetics, following the Indian tradition, had emerged as a wonderful stride forward. In Abanindranath there mingled an extraordinary feeling and sensibility with his inborn reverence and a genuine and profound empathy for ancient Indian poetry, art, culture and sastras. So, he could speak out loudly: "There is nothing, so to say, that we did not get through inheritance including poetry, literature, music, drama, dance, instruments (of music), painting, sculpture etc. No other country has left such vast wealth behind for her children."
We conclude our discussion by quoting a remark of a critic who, as a mark of Abanindranath’s success, cites his single minded devotion that he nourished for Indian rhetoric:

“We know not if this sort of unequivocal submission from the lips of any other magnanimous modern writer endeavored with the excellence of rūpa has ever been uttered, or if there is any possibility of such ejection in the near future.”

One who had displayed an extraordinary intellectual culture in the sphere of formulating theories on literary principles having accepted Indian rhetoric as the foundation was Nalini Kanta Gupta (1889-1984), an essayist, yogi and freedom fighter. This name is cannot be sidelined in the history of Bengali literature. One end of his touches that phase of Indian freedom struggle which had been fouled by the smell of gun powder and the other end has been nourished in the divine association of the architect of yoga life, Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. The writer of about 450 articles, a linguist versed in many languages, Nalini Kanta, in his life dedicated to literary pursuit, was a theoretician of literature, a critic, a philosopher, a poet, a writer of stories, a translator, an autobiographer, a commentator of the Vedas—all combined in one. Nalini Kanta Gupta, a versatile linguist, has framed some new theories of literary criticism, for the evaluation or judgment of literary merits on the basis of Indian rhetoric and in the perspective of world literature. Here, the achievement of Nalini Kanta Gupta deserves a foremost position not only in the sphere of Bengali language but also in the perspective of Indian literature itself.

His discussion of literary principles is nourished in the light of both Western aesthetics as well as Indian rhetoric. Whenever he has discussed anything new or referred to a new theory he has cited examples from the Vedas and the Upaniṣadas, from the Sanskrit literature down to the modern literature of the west. We have already mentioned the names of eminent writers like Atul
Gupta, Abanindranath, Surendranath Dasgupta, Sudhir Kr Dasgupta and others who have discussed Indian rhetoric and have held the discussion of Western literature of the same nature in order to bring out its resemblances with Indian thought. But, in this context, Nalini Kanta Gupta is altogether a separate kind of personality because his ideas are so original and intellectually rich that nowhere in his discussion has he given any quotation from Western aesthetics. He has rather tried to create poetics in the light of Western literature with illustrations from the same Western literature. In fact, there will be hardly any exaggeration of fact to say there is no second to Nalini Kanta Gupta as a theoretician and thinker in Bengali literature.

It can be shown here how his discussion of aesthetics and efforts of creating new theories of aesthetics on the basis of Sanskrit rhetoric has left mark of new thoughts and ideas. In this context, his essay, Dhvanirātmā Kāvyasya has to be mentioned. Though this title expresses his allegiance to Indian rhetoric, in the beginning of the essay, however, we notice that Nalinikanta Gupta’s discussion is not a carbon copy of Dhvaniyāda, because even at the outset he remarks—“The life of poetry is sound and echoe.” In the ‘foot note’ section he has given indication of a clear distinction between dhvani and rasa by characterizing dhvani as the life and rasa as the soul of poetry. Atul Chandra Gupta wrote: “Those who have begun by calling dhvani the soul of poetry have concluded by taking rasa to be the soul of poetry.” Abhinavagupta, the commentator of Dhvanyālaka O Locana was a direct Rasavādin. However, in this article Nalini Kanta Gupta has tried to show a distinction between dhvani and rasa by calling dhvani, the life, and rasa the soul of poetry.

Then, while discussing dhvani, the essayist has shown abhidhā, laksāṇā, byājījanā etc not only in respect of meaning, but extending his discussion into wider scope he has shown these three levels with regard to rhythm also. It has to be mentioned here that the father of Dhvaniyāda, Anandavardhana himself, or its
critic has not included rhythm into their discussion. Nalini Kanta has shown in his discussion that the first level of rhythm is a very gross one which the essayist has named — anukāra, of which the appeal is only to our hearing or ears. He has illustrated this from *Gītā Govinda Caranaraṇita Maṇiṇīpurayā* or from Bharatacandra *Chalacchala talaṭṭala kalakkala taraṅgā*. At the second level of rhythm gradually the reverberation of sound has become silent; what has become predominant is an inward vibration or a musical swing. Example here has been given from Rabindranath:

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he ādi janani sindhu, vasundharā santān tomār
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Then came the third level of rhythm, the inexpressible aspect of harmony. Again, he has illustrated this from the composition of Rabindranath:

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puratān dīrghapath pare āche mṛtabat

hethā hate kadādūr nāhi tār ṣeṣ
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Showing these three types of dhvani he has named them — the first as Pratyakṣa dhvani, the second as *kalpanā pratisthatā* and the third as dhyanapratiṣṭhā.66 It was observed how on the basis of dhvani of *Dhvanyāloka* Nalini Kanta Gupta had arranged three levels of rhythm of literature also and which was absolutely original and born out of the intellectual prowess of a true literary theoretician.

In the same article Nalini Kanta Gupta has pointed out three levels from the point of view of ‘meaning’ also which is totally different from Dhvanivādins abhidhā, lakṣaṇā byājanā etc. With regard to artha or meaning the first level he has named as Rūpaka (allegory). The want of touch or contact between bhāva or the outer covering of bhāva that is Rūp (form) is its characteristic. He has given an example from Herbert Spenser:

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“Full many mischief’s follow cruel wrath
Abhorred bloodshed and tumultuous strife
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Then he has said that here bhāva and rūpa (content and form) are clearly separate or so loosely placed that they can be separated at will. Again, elsewhere, it is seen that bhāva and rūpa, meaning (arthā) and its ‘image’ (form) or citra (i.e., form in painting) are so strongly and inseparably mingled together that the two cannot be put apart—as if the two were inseparable parts of the same feeling. This level he has named as ‘Sybolism’ or Pratika. Of this second level he has an example from Spenser:

“As faire Aurora in her purple pall

Out of the cast the dawning call —”

Then he has shown the third and final level of arthadhvani; — here meaning (arthā) and rūpa (form=dhvani) not only have merged with each other totally, they have intermingled in such a way that both have had a new birth; it is as if a new consciousness has come into being. An example has been given from the writings of Burns—

“The white moon is setting behind the white wave

And time is setting with me —”

Then he has referred to these three types of arthadhvani from the Vedas and the Upaniṣadas etc. following the meaning of poetry. After that he comments that with regard to the third level of arthadhvani there is a distinct difference detected between the poetry of the East and that of the West. He says that the inspiration of the poet is fundamentally pervaded with life whereas that of the poet in the East is permeated with knowledge—dissimilarities have arisen from here.67 It may be mentioned here that a sense of voidness is perceived by us because of the fact that world literature so far has not been evaluated in the light of Indian aesthetics. Speaking on this subject K. Krisnamurthy has said in his
presidential address at the 37th session of the All Indian Oriental Conference —
'the theoretical of formulation of Indian poetics has been more or less
exhaustively accomplished by purvasuris like Dr. Kane and Raghavan; but
practical criticism (of western literature) has not been inaugurated properly-----.
This is a virgin field which deserves a greater attention from the new generation
of scholars'.

It has to be mentioned here that one who was the pioneer to the work of
evaluation of English and American literatures and litterateurs"--------with
unmistakably Indian eyes and from the Indian point of view was none other than
Sri Aurobindo. Of course, in his discussion he did not proceed to examine
Western literature in the light of any conclusions established by Indian rhetoric.
In this field, his own apt disciple Nalini Kanta Gupta has played the role of one
of the pioneers. Not only in the light of Indian aesthetics but also in the
perspective of this sastra he has evolved newer theories and principles with the
help of which he discovered the ways leading towards the evaluation of world
literature and also helped in finding out the fundamental difference between
Western and Oriental literatures. It may be noted that, the nature of the course of
modern literature taken as the basis, he has rearranged Indian Dhvanivāda and
evolving some new principles he came forward to evaluate them. In this context
he has remarked—'Poet after poet through the ages has adopted one just
wonders, how many ways, means and techniques of various kinds, in order to
express this dhvani as the soul of poetry. The mode that has been captured by the
modern age is absolutely novel, incomparable, incomprehensible; the modern
belief is that it is for the first time after a long time at last that the most real and
the best poetry is going to be created in the world — a complete rebirth or
transformation of the goddess of poetry.' Keeping an eye to this transformation
he had brought about a reorientation of conclusion of Indian rhetoric. As a result
of this, the definitions of dhvani as presented and interpreted by Sanskrit scholars
found a new dimension in his discussion. He has formulated new definitions of
dhvani keeping an eye to the varieties of experimentation of the modern poet. He says, “the poetic essence of poetry, its vitality is basically dhvani what else is this but the grace of a deeper concentration of consciousness? It is the result of the extension and upward journey of consciousness. Poetic consciousness has attained such an expanse and fathomless depth, having crossed over its general narrow and shallow levels of consciousness that even when he turns his eyes to a common object, he looks at it through this vast and bottomless view point; so, this vastness and abyss like its own atmosphere surrounds everything—and dhvani is its name.”

Accepting the established view of the Indian rhetoricians regarding rasa to be the soul of poetry, Nalini Kanta Gupta has initiated in his article *Kāvyā O Mantra* a new discussion with the help of new terminology—extending the sphere of poetry. At the very beginning he concedes —“What is poetry? (It is) rasātmakavākya. There is a doubt whether a more appropriate definition has ever been there’. Agreeing to this he says—that though rasa takes form by establishing the vākya, the same vākya, depending on the same foundation not only can become rasātmaka but also a mantra. Mantra does not mean something of spiritual dedication or matters concerned with religious doctrines. Secular and totally mundane feelings can also become a mantra when the word does not assert itself, does not actively go out to show off its ingenuity neither forgets in the enjoyment of its ownself like a musk deer (Kasturi Mṛga) — when aim is not self but when his only aim is the rasa-bastu (rasa matter) of his heart where he is entrenched, like an arrow set absorbed in the bow, — when to express absolutely without any is the sole aim, then only creation becomes a Mantra (ie attains the character of an incantation).” He has given an example from Shakespeare—“And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain”—Here there is no trace of spiritualism, there is but very simple things spoken about common people; yet, it has become a mantra. “In the mantra the vākya (the sentence) has not preserved its independence, but has surrendered most obligingly to that
which is beyond words." It is to be noted here that Nalini Kanta Gupta has followed the foot-print of Indian rhetoricians in search of the soul of poetry and has recognized *rasa* as the soul of poetry; again, having made the concept of *rasa* more compact he has reached another most excellent level of poetry to which he gave the name *mantra*. Of course, it has to be mentioned here that in this he was basically influenced by Sri Aurobindo’s discourse on this subject. In his book *The Future Poetry*, Sri Aurobindo was the first to point out how the success of poetry lay hidden in its becoming *mantra*. Defining *mantra* Sri Aurobindo said: ‘The *Mantra* is a direct-most heightened an interest and most divinely burdened rhythmic word which embodies an intuitive and revelatory inspiration and ensouls the mind with the sight and presence of the very self, the inmost reality of things and with its truth and with the divine soul form of it, the God heads which are born from the living truth.’ Being inspired by this, Nalini Kanta Gupta has added a new dimension to this discussion of Indian rhetoric in Bengali language.

Nalini Kanta Gupta in his article, *Śāntam Sudaram* has cast a new and enlarged focus of light in the perspective of world literature on the basis of Śānta *rasa*. Nalini Kanta Gupta has basically moved forward following the discussion of Indian rhetoric.

No reference to Śānta *rasa* has been found in Indian rhetoric prior to the Seventh Century A.D. In Bharat’s *Nātyaśāstra* or Dandi’s *Kāvyādarśa* no mention of Śānta *rasa* was found; only eight *rasas* had been recognized there. Recognition to Śānta *rasa* was accorded first in the book *Bhāvaprakāśana* by Basuki. In the history of Indian rhetoric Abhinavagupta himself had given recognition to Śānta *rasa* being the best of all *rasas*. Nalini Kanta Gupta in his discussion has said echoing Abhinavagupta’s statement—*sarvarasānāṁ śāntaprāya ebāsvadahaḥ*—Śānta *rasa* is the basic *Rāga* depending on which other *rasas* create various wonderful waves of *rāginis*. In this context he further
adds—"The primary form of *rasa* may be *Sṛṅgāra rasa*, but its pure form, however, is *Śāntarasa*. From this point of view *Śṛṅgāra* is a primitive *rasa*, in his opinion, and *Śāntarasa* is the primary *rasa*.

This line of distinction which Nalini Kanta has drawn between these two *rasas* is not at all in agreement with Indian rhetoric, because according to Raja Bhoja’s view the basic meaning of *rasa* is faith in the self; in the opinion of Abhinavagupta also the aim of all *rasa* is the enjoyment of *rasa* of the real-self. So, there is no fundamental difference between *santa* and *Śṛṅgārarasa* in Indian rhetorical literature. Secondly, in Indian rhetoric *rasa* is dependent on *bhāva*. The sense in which Nalini Kanta Gupta has accepted *bhāva* is also opposed to Sanskrit rhetoric. According to him, the very first contradiction of the poet between truth and beauty is *bhāva*. As it is a matter of the soul, it is beyond the senses, even beyond the word and the mind too. But in the opinion of Bharatacarya or Abhinavagupta, though *bhāva* is born out of *bibhāva aloukika* etc. its root is entrenched in the natural world. But in the opinion of Nalini Kanta Gupta, *bhāva* is positioned higher above the *loukika* and *aloukika*. Here also, Nalini Kanta Gupta’s view deviated from Indian heritage.

And then his discussion on *Śāntarasa* has proceeded along an entirely separate direction. He has commented on the history of world literature and art on the basis of *Śāntarasa* saying that deep within the creations of the ancient time there was concealed a kind of profound peace; so, they could create the *Rāmāyana*, the *Mahābhārata*, the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*; and the Pyramid and the Konark had held their heads high. In the creations of the moderns, on the other hand, there is—"A kind of madness, unrest or peacelessness*. Here it may be noted that as his look is fixed at the source of creation, Nalini Kanta Gupta has perceived great peace at the leases of both the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*. On the other hand, as the vision of the Indian rhetoricians was concentrated in the maturity of the rasa. They could considered the *Mahābhārata* an epic of
Sāntarasa though the Rāmāyana according to their judgement was the source of Karunarasa.

From this angle Nalini Kanta Gupta has also evaluated the world of Indian art. “Indian artist’s main aim had been to represent the peace of existence or how meditative absorption could be kept unimpaired even where he had to depict the impulse of motion or the vortex of the action of power.”

In this article Nalini Kanta has divided the history of world’s art and literature on the basis of Sāntarasa into the four principal division of time viz. Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali etc. In his opinion the satyayuga of art and literature is ‘when the artist with a large vision of Samādhi directly looked upon truth and beauty and would realize them in art-form through the power of direct knowledge of Prasānta tapasyā. Vedic sages like Vyāsa, Vālmīki, Homer, Dante, Shakespeare are some of the icons of this age itself. According to Nalini Kanta Gupta’s view, this age is the best age of art and literature. The characteristic of this age on which there is utmost emphasis is the direct vision or direct knowledge of the artist as the creator.

After this the creative artist came down a step lower-and this was the beginning of the Tretāyuga. In lieu of the direct vision of the inner self there came ‘the impact of intellect, power of thinking etc. The artists of this age are Milton, Pierre, Corneille, Tasso, Sophocles, Kalidasa. The history of this age is known as classical age.’

Then, the inspiration of the artist further slid down another step, to the sphere of emotion of the heart. Nalini Kanta Gupta has named this age as Dvāparayuga; in the sphere of literature it has been called romantic age. In Europe Rousseau, in Sanskrit Bhavabhuti are the founders of this trend. The great peace of the inner self has departed from here. In the language of the essayist—“The excitement of the heart and emotion itself has turned out to be the source as well as the guiding force of artistic creation.” In his opinion Byron,
Shelley and even Victor Hugo — all are ‘angles of unrest’. Of course, even in this restless emotional state, Nalini Kanta has noticed ‘a certain greatness, an impact of great energy’.87

Then started Kaliyuga; the puruṣa of art, descending from his throne in the heart, came to the level of life-force or vital reality; this is the present age. Discontentment, regret, doubt, question, intense analytical mentality are some of the important traits of this age. In his language—‘With the modern there is curiosity, research, the power to discover new information, versatility, variety; may be the ones of technique, excellence etc, too — but no symmetry, perfect beauty which usher peace, love, satisfaction to the inner mind.’88 It was observed that Nalini Kanta Gupta succeeded in evolving certain new standards for the discussion of world literature and art on the basis of śāntarasa established in the literature of Indian rhetoric. The following remark of a critic about him is significant—“He has attained success in his daunting pursuit of arranging the literatures of the East and the West in the chronological order on the basis of śāntarasa, and has done so effortlessly because he had considered this matter sitting at the open window of his mind. Nalini Kanta is a true modern successor of Indian rhetoricians a rhetoric in his spontaneous analysis of the wonderful variety of literary creations in the wide arena of the world on the basis of śāntarasa, as mentioned in Indian rhetoric, going beyond the boundary of Sanskrit literature.’89

In this context another article based on the theories of Indian rhetoric must be mentioned. In Indian rhetorical literature Rajasekhara had imagined of Kāvyapuruṣa in the śloka śabdārthou te sarīrāṁ inserted in his book Kāvyaṁīṁāṁsā.90 In Visvanatha Kaviraja’s Sāhityadarpaṇa also, an imaginary puruṣa of this kind has been depicted in the śloka—Kāvyasya śabdārthou sarīrāṁ.91 Trying to identify the soul of poetry both the rhetoricians gave a form to the body of a puruṣa through their imagination. Following that tradition Nalini
Kanta gupta has commented in his essay, *Kāvyapurūsa* by way of analyzing the body of poetry: 'Poetry is a living body (*puruṣa*), it has a complete personality of its own.' However, this concept of *Kāvyapurūsa* or poetic personality is rather novel in comparison to that of Indian rhetorician. In Indian rhetoric the idea of *Kāvyapurūsa* was imagined with a view to referring to various attributes in the body of poetry, such as, *sābdah-artha, guṇa-alamkāra-rūti-doṣa* etc. In Rabindranath, only four parts or aspects of the body of poetry have been mentioned. In his own language “The body of poetry is sentence or words, its life is its rhythm, the meaning its mind and its soul is its bhāva or content”.

It has to be mentioned here that by recognizing bhāva as the soul of poetry Nalini Kanta has gone against the traditional view of Indian rhetoric, because no Sanskrit rhetorician has recognized bhāva as the soul of poetry. They claim that bhāva itself is the only first reaction in the unaffected mind (e.g. *nirbikārīmāke ciṭte bhābhaḥ prathama vikriyā*). In their opinion, bhāva is an absolutely mundane matter, and so it is not rasa. From this point of view Nalini Kanta’s outlook is quite different. Of course, it is to be noted that by bhāva Nalini Kanta did not want to mean mental or physical feelings or states. “Accepting the first reaction of the unaffected mind as self modification (*ātmābhṛtī*) he has denied the mental modifications generated by physical and mental feelings. He has said that the visual contradiction of the poet with the beautiful, *purvarāga* is what exactly means bhāva. But, to accept bhāva in this sense placing it above *loukika* and *aloukika* would make nine divisions of bhāva in Indian rhetoric impossible. He has remained silent with regard to this matter.

Then, taking this body of the *puruṣa* consisting of four organs or parts, Nalini Kanta classified the world of poetry into four categories or trends. Having got this cue of the so-called *Kāvyapurūsa* from Indian rhetoric he has set out on a completely separate journey and has attempted to frame a new standard of
literary judgement or of the division of the ages of literature. While analyzing the world of poetry on the basis of the four organs of the body of poetry, namely, sentence (vākya) or words, rhythm (chanda), meaning (ariha) and bhāva or content, he has begun his journey from the lowest level. Predominance of the sentence (vākya) or word is the characteristic of this level. In English this category of poetry is called ‘Rhetorical poetry’. In the language of Indian rhetoricians this is called Gaudīrīti and the creator of this type of literature is called Sabdakavi (word-poet). Poetry, here, is physical in nature, and if it has a heart that is only secondary. Jayadeva in Sanskrit, Vidyapati in Bengali literature, than Bharatchandra, Isvargupta etc; and in the modern age Satyendranath, Nazrul and others are the representatives of this trend or category.

Surpassing the body, poetry has become life-dependent at the second higher level of the world of poetry; at this stage the suggestion of rhythm directed to word has become prominent. The poets of this category are called rasakavi or poets of rasa and this kind of poetry is called romantic poetry. At this stage the mainstay of the poet has been rhythm; here the variety of the modes of expressions of the joy of life has rocked in the waves of rhythm. Representative poets of this school in English language are Shelley, in French Victor Hugo, in Bengali Rabindranath and Satyendranath, the later being the king of rhythm.

At the third level the poet has risen another step higher —to brains; at this level of grave meaning we have classical poetry. Words or rhythm are of secondary importance here. The subject or the content here has become most important. Browning, Goethe, Sophocles, Vyāsa represent this trend. The artist at this stage has become a philosopher. Then at the last stage the poet has come into sphere of bhāva or the reality of the soul. Nalini Kanta has called the poetry of this stage bhāvatmaka poetry, another form of which is known as ‘mystic poetry’ where the analytical aspect of intellect, skilled use of rhythm or the beauty of
word of words — are secondary in importance; What becomes mainly important in the language of the writer is —“.....An indefinite something, a super natural vision and perception of a far more distant, far deeper, and far higher reality— the devotion to something after---------”

In Indian rhetoric it was said that as the grace of the female body is something more than her actual physical appearance, similarly in the creation of the epic poets too there is perceived a kind of beauty which is something beyond the word and meaning. They named this as dhvani.

At this level the poet is ‘only the door-keeper of the palace’. Nalini Kanta has called the poet of these stage as ṛṣi or Seer —‘the Brahmavādin of poetry’. It may be mentioned that in the discussion of this level of poetry Nalini Kanta was basically influenced by Sri Aurobindo, because Sri Aurobindo had commented denying the faculties of intellect and imagination of the connoisseur of poetry as the receiver of poetic delight — “The true creator, the true hearer is the soul.” So, it is seen that Nalini Kanta has moved forward on a completely separate path on the basis of the concept of Kāvyapurusa of Indian rhetoric and has evolved a new standard of classifying and analyzing the history of world poetry from a new angle of vision. In this context it has been said —“It is undeniable that the kind of evidence which Nalini Kanta Gupta has left in respect of his free thought and judgment with regard to his thought on Kāvyapurusa, instead of allowing it to flow in the conventional channel of Indian rhetoric, has undoubtedly added a new dimension to the discussion of aesthetics and has shaken as it were like the commotion of a wave striking against our outlook made weak and powerless as a result of our conventional thinking.”

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Notes and References:


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