Chapter 6

KANT AND ABHINAVAGUPTA: COMPARATIVE STUDY

I

Agreement in Basic Issues

The aesthetic theories of Kant and Abhinavagupta agree in certain areas of fundamental importance. The areas in which they agree are of such value in aesthetics that the aestheticians who came after them, in the Western countries as well as in India, have devoted much thought on the fundamental concepts and principles used by them, and subsequently, assimilated and applied them in the development of new aesthetic theories and the solution of aesthetic problems. Just as Kant shaped the course of Western aesthetics, Abhinavagupta channelised the steady flow of Indian aesthetics.

It is really fascinating to find that the aesthetic theories of Kant and Abhinavagupta, which were developed independently, converged on many important issues. Kant and Abhinavagupta were separated by a wide margin of time and space. Abhinavagupta grew up and worked within the cultural and religious climate of medieval India, whereas Kant developed and performed his philosophical activities inside the perimeter of the cultural and intellectual milieu of the 18th century Germany. How the two thinkers expressed almost similar view, is a difficult question to answer. It might not, however, be the case that Kant knew Abhinavagupta's
aesthetic views. Perhaps Kant has no acquaintance with Abhinavagupta's aesthetic theory. It appears that Kant has no thorough knowledge of the traditional Indian thought. He has, however, general knowledge of Indian history, mythology, etc., which he has gathered as an avid reader. In his Philosophical Theory of Religion, Kant refers to Hindu mythology and religion. He writes, "That the world lieth in wickedness is a complaint as old as history, even as what is still older, poetry; indeed as old as the oldest of all poems, sacerdotal religion. All alike, nevertheless, make the world begin from good; with the golden age, with life in paradise, or one still more happy in communion with heavenly beings. But they represent this happy state as soon vanishing like a dream and then they fall badness (moral badness, which is always accompanied by physical), as hastening to worse and worse with accelerated steps; so that we are now living (this now being, however, as old as history) in the last times, the last day and the destruction of the world are at the door; and in some parts of Hindostan the judge and destroyer of the world, Rudra (otherwise called Siva) is already worshipped as the God that is at present in power; the preserver of the world, namely Vishnu, having centuries ago laid down his office, of which he was weary, and which he had received from the Creator of the world, Brahman."¹

As the reference to Hindu thought in the above quotation seems to be casual, we cannot determine the depth of Kant's knowledge about traditional Indian thought and culture. But it is quite likely that his knowledge in this field is limited.

II

Critical but Constructive Approach

As great encyclopaedic minds, Kant and Abhinavagupta have looked at the aesthetic issues from the widest philosophical perspectives. In their approach both the thinkers are critical as well as constructive. Although they take tradition into consideration, they do not follow it blindly. They are opposed to dogmatic standpoints. According to Kant, dogmatism is the acceptance of a doctrine without the attempt to justify it rationally. He maintains that such uncritical assumption of a point of view is against the spirit of free, unbiased and legitimate inquiry. According to Kant, "All previous philosophy so far as it had not been sceptical, had been ... dogmatic." 2 Although Kant says that skepticism is more thorough than dogmatism, he is opposed to the skeptical approach also. Skepticism has doubted and denied man's capacity for knowledge just as uncritically as the dogmatist has believed and presupposed it. The skeptic's

2. R. Falekenberg, History of Modern Philosophy, p. 321
attitude is that of sheer distrust. He has not entered into the fundamental question of the possibility of knowledge. We have discussed earlier how Kant has criticised the dogmatic standpoints of empiricism and rationalism, while at the same time opposing the skeptical attitude as barren.

Abhinavagupta's spirit of inquiry is also open and unbiased like that of Kant. He does not hesitate to criticise tradition and authority if they go against the dictates of reason and common sense. In this regard he has championed the cause of reason like Kant. He possesses the revolutionary spirit of Kant, who has brought about a "Copernican Revolution" in the history of Western philosophy. Abhinavagupta is ready to overthrow even the most respected authority in his endeavour to serve Truth. He says, "We don't care in the least if it is described in this way in the Ramayana itself. In fact, it might be described in the Veda itself, and we won't be stifled by this fact."

(Ramayanepi tathā varnītāmītī cetkivittatāḥ/
Vede-πi tathā varṇyatām na vayamatī vibhīmatāḥ//)

- Abhinavabhārati, Vol. III, p. 74

Abhinavagupta's love of truth above every thing reminds us of the statement ascribed to Aristotle - "Amicus Plato, amicus Socrates, sed magis amica veritas." Thus for Abhinavagupta

3. Quoted and translated by Masson and Patwardhan, op. cit., p. 2ff
4. This Latin rendering may be translated as - "Plato is dear to me (or my friend), Socrates is dear, but truth is dearer still." - Chamber's English Dictionary.
(and Kant as well) truth is dearer than authority.

But it does not mean that Kant and Abhinavagupta have totally rejected the theories of their predecessors. Instead, in their writings they have consulted the works of their predecessors and picked up the thread where it was left by their predecessors. They have discussed the theories of their predecessors minutely, and sympathetically, and have weeded out and rejected the weak points and have taken the strong points into their own systems. This is the constructive and synthesising element in the thoughts of Kant and Abhinavagupta. And if we mean by "dialectic" the synthesis of opposite standpoints, then we may rightly say that the reconciliation of empiricism and rationalism by Kant in his Critical Philosophy, and the reconciliation of the conflict standpoints of the early aestheticians in Abhinavagupta's aesthetics are dialectical in approach.

III

Kant consulted His Predecessors

Kant has thoroughly scrutinised the chief currents of the early 18th century aesthetic thoughts. The 18th century has seen the development of two main schools of aesthetics, namely, the Empiricist School in England and the Rationalist School in the continent parallel to the development of British Empiricism and European Rationalism in the history of Western philosophy. The prominent thinkers among the
empiricist aestheticians are David Hume and Edmund Burke. Hume's views are clearly stated in his famous essay "Of the Standard of Taste." Hume maintains that beauty cannot be defined; it is discerned "only by taste or sensation." Beauty is constituted by the pleasure it gives the beholder. It has its source in the sentiments or feelings of the individual. Hume recognises the fact of the diversity of tastes, but has a real concern to show that there is some measure of uniformity in our standards of taste. He believes that although we cannot attain certitude in the sciences and philosophy, aesthetic judgments based on feelings may yield more immediate certainties. Feeling and not reason is the criterion for our judgments in aesthetics. Instead of arguing for some a priori rules of artistic form, Hume emphasizes the claims of feeling and imagination. According to Hume beauty is always something that resides within the individual. Hume argued that a standard of beauty is more attainable for the individual than is a standard of intellectual judgment. Our failure to appreciate a work of beauty results merely from our insensitivity to beauty - to a certain lack of delicacy. The fault lies within the subject, rather than within the principles of aesthetic judgment. Hume has argued convincingly, true to the spirit of his empiricism. These issues raised by Hume in aesthetics have been considered seriously by Kant.

5. Included in Hume's Essays Moral, Political and Literary, (London, 1898)
Edmund Burke, like Hume, has raised important aesthetic issues, which has deep influence upon Kant. In his *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), Burke has contended "that the standard both of reason and taste is the same in all human creatures." His aim is to work out a "Logic of Taste." Burke distinguishes between the beautiful and the sublime — a distinction which has been subsequently accepted by Kant. According to Burke, the beautiful is based upon positive pleasure and refers to "all such qualities in things as induce in us a sense of affection and tenderness or some other passion the most nearly resembling these."  

The sublime, on the other hand, is based upon the feeling of self-preservation. It excites in us the feeling of delight when there is the idea of pain and danger without being actually so. He maintains that "whatever is in any sort terrible or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime ... ."  

Burke's ideas on the beautiful and the sublime has produced scintillating effect on Kant, although Kant is against Burke's empirical approach to aesthetics.

In Europe, in the 18th century, some rationalist thinkers following Descartes' ideal of clear and self-evident knowledge, hoped that reason could be used in the field of

6. E. Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry etc.*., p. 24
7. *ibid.*, p. 39
arts and appreciation of the beauty of the art works.

Alexander Baumgarten has worked out a rationalist theory of aesthetics based on Cartesian philosophy. He has coined the term "aesthetics" and aimed at developing a "perfect sensate discourse" of art. He defines aesthetics as "the science of sensory cognition" (scientia cognitionis sensitivae) in his book, Aesthetica (1750, 1758). He maintains that the object of logic is to investigate the kind of perfection proper to thought, and the object of aesthetics (co-ordinate with logic) is to investigate the kind of perfection proper to perception. Thus, Baumgarten has the ambitious plan of developing a rationalist aesthetics which is as perfect as logic.

Kant is thoroughly familiar with the trends of the empiricist and the rationalist aesthetics in his time. He has carefully studied the claims of each school of aesthetics. He has recognised the elements of truth in both while at the same time rejected those points which are not supported by reason. Kant aims at setting at rest the controversy between the two opposite camps. He has also evolved principles through which all the problems of aesthetics can be solved. As Prof. M. C. Beardsley says, "... he (Kant) conceived of his own work not only as a capstone to his system but as a much needed answer to questions raised by his predecessors. Most especially, he hoped to provide a theory of the aesthetic judgment that would

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8. M.C. Beardsley, Aesthetics, etc., p. 158
justify its apparent claim to inter-subjective validity, and escape the temptations of scepticism and relativism . . . ."^9
Thus, Kant has taken up the questions raised by his predecessors as the first step to his own inquiry, set the contending schools in battle array, judged their respective capabilities, and arranged proper negotiation.

IV

Abhinava examined His Predecessors' Views

Abhinavagupta's approach to aesthetics is like that of Kant. He does not at once present his own theory. Instead, he takes up the questions raised by his predecessors, such as, Bhaṭṭa Lollata, Śrī Saṅkuka, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, and Bhaṭṭa Tauta. The main issue before these thinkers is the interpretation of Bharata's aphorism on Rasa, and the aesthetic problems related with the realization of Rasa. Rasa is the starting point for the Indian thinkers because all of them recognise Rasa to be "the aim per excellence of the artist."^10 The task of the artist is to convey the appropriate sentiment to the spectator.

In tackling the aforesaid issue of Rasa Abhinavagupta has given due weightage to the views of his predecessors because he has felt that in the search for true knowledge one must use the ladder of thought already constructed by the

9. ibid., p. 210
10. M. Hiriyana, Art Experience (Extract from V. Raghavan and Nagendra (eds.) An Introduction to Indian Poetics, p. 15)
previous thinkers. He says, "When intellectual curiosity (dhīḥ) climbs higher and higher and sees the truth (arthatatvā) without getting tired, this is because of the ladders of thought built by earlier writers."

V

Kant and Abhinava provided Philosophical Basis of Aesthetics

We have already discussed how Kant raised aesthetics to the level of philosophical respectability. Although the empiricist as well as the rationalist aestheticians tried to systematise this discipline, nobody before Kant could evolve aesthetics as a systematic branch of knowledge by codifying its central tenets. Similarly in the sphere of Indian aesthetics Abhinavagupta has raised aesthetics to the status of a systematic discipline. As Professors Masson and Patwardhan write, "Abhinavagupta was without doubt the greatest example in Indian history of a literary critic who was also a philosopher of repute. Pandits will often say of him that:  

alamātrāstrāṃ tenaiva prapitām - "He alone turned poetics into a science'. There are virtually no important ideas in

11. Ūrdhvordhvamārūḥya yadarthatatvam
dhīḥ paśyati śrāntimavedayanti/
Phalam tadādhyaiḥ perikalpitaṁ
Vivekasopānaparamparaṅgam//
- Abhinavabhārati, I, p. 278

- Quoted and translated by Masson and Patwardhan, Sāntarasa etc., p. 2f
later Sanskrit poetics that do not derive from him (or from his influence).  

Indian poetics before Abhinavagupta lacks the philosophical foundation. It was concerned with the technical issues pertaining to *alamkāra, gūpa, rīti*, etc. Abhinavagupta has provided it with the philosophical foundation which it needed. He is concerned with the introduction of the philosophical and religious values in literature. As Masson and Patwardhan write, "Abhinava is concerned with providing a stable philosophical foundation for his theories. ... Abhinava draws on *Sāntarasa* for his major contribution to Sanskrit aesthetics, the theory of *rasa*. Reduced to its bare essentials the theory is as follows: Watching a play or reading a poem for the sensitive reader (*sahṛdaya*) entails a loss of the sense of present time and space. All worldly considerations for the time being cease. Since we are not indifferent (*tatasthā*) to what is taking place, our involvement must be of a purer variety than we normally experience. We are not directly and personally involved, so the usual medley of desires and anxieties dissolve. Our hearts respond sympathetically (*hrdayasāsvāda*) but not selfishly. Finally the response becomes total, all engrossing, and we identify with the situation depicted (*tanmayībhāvāna*). The ego is transcended, and for the duration of the aesthetic experience, the normal waking "I" is suspended. Once this actually happens, we suddenly find that our responses are not like anything we

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12. Masson and Patwardhan, *Sāntarasa, etc.*., Introduction, p. VI
have hitherto experienced, for now that all normal emotions are gone, now that the hard knot of "selfness" has been united, we find ourselves in an unprecedented state of mental and emotional calm. The purity of our emotion and the intensity of it take us to a higher level of pleasure than we could know before - we experience sheer undifferentiated bliss (ānandaśikāghna) for we have come into direct contact with the deepest recesses of our own unconscious where the memory of a primeval unity between man and the universe is still strong. Inadvertently, says Abhinavagupta, we have arrived at the same inner terrain as that occupied by the mystic, though our aim was very different from his. Such an experience cannot but make us impatient with the ordinary turmoil of emotions that is our inner life, and though Abhinava never explicitly says so, one cannot help feeling that he expects the reader to search out now these experiences on a more permanent basis.  

Abhinavagupta has furnished the philosophical foundation for literature and the other arts because his aim is to establish unity among the arts. He has felt the necessity of providing such a unified theory of Rasa because he thinks that all arts aim at the realisation of the Supreme goal of life, namely, Ātmananda (the experience of bliss from the realization of self). His theory of Rasa shows that this goal, that is, Ātmananda can be achieved through Rasānubhava (aesthetic enjoyment).

Difference in Philosophical Orientation

Thus, both Kant and Abhinavagupta have given philosophical orientation to the problems of art and aesthetics, although there is difference in the stress they lay on such orientation. According to Kant, aesthetics is an integral part of philosophy. In our discussion on Kantian aesthetics we have already seen that aesthetics, which is concerned with the critique of the judgment of taste and the sublime, forms an inalienable aspect of Kant's Critical philosophy.

On the other hand, Abhinavagupta does not treat his aesthetic theory as a part of his Pratyabhijñā Saiva philosophy although he has raised the theory of Rasa to the level of philosophical speculation. He even compares aesthetic experience (Rasānubhava) to the mystic experience of the Ultimate Reality, Śiva. He has maintained that aesthetic experience (of Rasa) is a kind of revelation (abhivyakti) of the true nature of consciousness. It is a kind of self-revelation which dawns upon the mind after removing certain obstacles (vighnas) and shedding the limitations of individuality. This self-revelation in aesthetic experience is comparable to the knowledge of the true nature of self, which, according to Abhinavagupta, is Recognition (Pratyabhijñā) of the Supreme Self after removing the veils of ignorance. Yet, Abhinavagupta does not identify self-revelation in aesthetic experience with the mystic experience of the Absolute. Thus, Abhinavagupta does not consider aesthetics as a part of
philosophical system although he has provided it with philosophical foundation. It may, however, be said that his theory of Rasa is closely related with his philosophical standpoint. In this regard he has followed the Indian tradition which separates the aesthetic problems from those of general philosophy, although, however, he has advanced one step ahead of the tradition in furnishing a firm philosophical foundation for aesthetics with a view to setting at rest the controversies on the process of aesthetic experience and enjoyment. Following the Indian tradition Abhinavagupta never lost sight of the intimate relation between art and life, and as such he does not relegate the discussion on the problems of art and art experience to mere abstract philosophical speculation.

VII

Mystical Tendency in Kant

In our discussion of Kantian Philosophy in its architectonic whole, we have seen that Kantian philosophy reduced to its bare essentials shows that there is a harmony, purpose or design in the working of the entire universe. That there is such harmony or design is evident from the logical analysis of the different facets of human experience - cognitive, practical (moral), aesthetic, etc. Through logical analysis the universal and necessary elements of these

14. M. Hiriyana, ibid., p. 9
experiences may be brought to the surface. Kant holds that the *a priori* elements of experience are the universal and necessary elements. Kant has adopted the transcendental (or the presuppositional) method to bring out the *a priori* elements in the cognitive, moral, and aesthetic experiences. But as his philosophical inquiry proceeds further and further, Kant has realised the necessity of presupposing a sphere of the supersensible to serve as the general foundation of the teleology of nature and as the substrate of the order and unity within our own experience. As Kant says, "The subjective principle alone, that is the indeterminate idea of the supersensible in us, can be considered the only key able to unlock this faculty springing from a source we cannot fathom: excepting by its aid, no comprehension of it can possibly be reached." Thus, Kant has presupposed the concept of the supersensible or the Transcendental to account for harmony and design in every aspect of existence and thought. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant holds that there can be no theoretical knowledge of the transcendental, although Reason through its *Ideas* aspire after it. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, however, Reason finds some justification for presupposing it as the realm of Freedom revealed by the moral law. And in the *Critique of Judgment* (which consists of the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* and the *Critique of Teleological Judgment*) reference is made repeatedly to the supersensible as

the source of the harmony and design in nature. As Kuno Fisher, while presenting the Kantian view, puts it: "even in our observation of natural phenomena, we judge their forms aesthetically, and their life teleologically." According to Kant, in aesthetic experience, the universal is perceived in the particular, the infinite is known through the finite, and the harmony and design of the universe as a whole is apprehended through the harmony and design of the beautiful objects, whether of art or of nature. We find that Kant comes closer to mysticism as his search for the mystical "something" (aptly called the "numinous" or the "mysterium tremendum" by Rudolf Otto) advances. This "tendency to mysticism" appears to be the culmination of Kantian enquiry. We may even say that Kant's philosophical inquiry which is started as a scientific investigation has landed ultimately in mysticism (and religion). Some people may object to this observation in view of the rationalist background of Kant. But we feel that we are justified in making this observation considering the sequence of Kantian thought concerning the source of teleology. Thus, like the Early Wittgenstein, (and also like Plato), Kant has ultimately kicked out the ladder of logic and landed himself in mysticism (of some sort) flapping his wings like "the light dove" (referred to in the first (Critique) in absolute freedom. The mystic tendency which remained implicit has been made

16. Quoted by J.H. Bernard, in Kant's Critique of Judgment, translated by Bernard, p. xxv
17. B. Croce, ibid., p. 282
manifest in the works of the post-Kantian aesthetic thinkers, from Schiller to Schopenhauer. As Benedetto Croce writes, "To Schopenhauer, no less than his idealist predecessors, art beatifies; it is the flower of life; he who contemplates art is no longer an individual but a pure knowing subject, at liberty, free from desire, from pain, from time." 18

There are many other factors in the Kantian philosophy that have diverted from the spirit of his critical undertaking, leading towards mysticism of some sort (if the word "mysticism" has been "loosely used for esoteric, gnostic, theosophical types of "knowledge" not capable of verification",19 and for the proclivity towards the "irrational"). We do not mean, by this remark, to label Kant as a mystic; we mean simply to say that mystic tendencies are suggested by certain aspects of Kantian philosophy. Thus, Kant's acceptance of the "thing-in-itself" as the source of the manifold of intuitions in that early section of the Critique of Pure Reason entitled "the Transcendental Aesthetic", is an instance of such a tendency. Kant has left the nature of the "thing-in-itself" to anybody's guess; he does not describe its nature. He says that it is unknown and unknowable; and there the story is ended. If we link this account of the "thing-in-itself" in the first Critique with the account of the supersensible in the second and (especially) the third Critiques we find that there is a very

18. B. Croce, op. cit., p. 306
19. D. D. Runes (ed.), The Dictionary of Philosophy, article on "mysticism".
wide gap. In the third Critique, Kant claims that the "supersensible" (or the "transcendental") is "teleological". And certain features such as infinity, timelessness, order, harmony, design, etc. are ascribed to the "supersensible". In the Critique of Pure Reason, Kant maintains that, in spite of the aspirations of the Ideas of Reason, Reason cannot establish the knowledge of the Self, the universe and God. The ambit of rational knowledge is, according to Kant, confined to narrow precincts. If reason tries to transgress it to reach "the moon", "the totality" of the mental states and processes in the Idea of the Transcendental Self, "the totality" of the things and beings in the Idea of the Transcendental Cosmos, the source of everything in the universe in the Idea of a Supreme Being, Reason falls back into antinomies, contradictions and paradoxisms. But the Critique of Practical Reason shows that in the sphere of man's moral life (experience) the Idea of God, the Supreme Being, should be presupposed as the source of the moral law, in the light of which freedom is to be explained. Further, in the Critique of Aesthetic Judgment, Kant claims that we can have a glimpse, or rather, an access to the "supersensible" in aesthetic experience. The harmony, design and order in the sphere of the transcendental or the supersensible can be seen in the harmony and order of beauty whether of nature or of art. Lastly, in the Critique of Teleological Judgment Kant analyses the reflective teleological judgment to exhibit (and to establish) that there is design in the universe. These developments in Kantian philosophy clearly suggest the mystic tendency in Kant. They also have hinted that there are many more lessons to be learnt from "the
irrational" than what are taught by reason and logic.

There are certain passages in the *Critique of Aesthetic Judgment* that exhibit mystic element in Kant. Thus in one place Kant writes, "Nature is no longer estimated as it appears like art, rather in so far as it actually is art, though superhuman art; and the teleological judgment serves as basis and condition of the aesthetic, and one which the latter must regard." Kant maintains that the teleology of Nature is at the basis of art. He has exhorted that the presupposition of teleology should be the condition of aesthetics because aesthetic judgments demand this conception of nature. Thus, when we say "this is a beautiful woman", we merely mean that "nature beautifully represents in the form of this woman her purpose in the construction of the female body." This means that nature manifests her design and purpose in the beautiful form of the beautiful woman.

In the context of the analysis of the "sublime" also, Kant constantly refers to the "Infinite", "Supersensible", "limitless" "Superhuman", "Transcendent" Reality which, according to Kant, lies at the basis of teleology, harmony and order in the universe. Kant maintains that in the experience of the beautiful and the sublime we have to presuppose the "supersensible substrate" as the ultimate ground. We may, therefore, conclude that Kant's metaphysical commitment on the

20. Critique of Judgment, Meredith trans., 48, P. 173
21. loc cit.
nature of the "supersensible" reality is at the basis of his aesthetics.

VIII

Aesthetic Experience and Mystic Experience

Kant and Abhinava

We are laying stress on the mystic element in Kantian philosophy (i.e., that the "supersensible" is the ground of aesthetic experience), because it is one of the most important points for the comparative study of Kant and Abhinavagupta. In our discussion on Abhinavagupta’s aesthetic theory we have already stated that, according to Abhinavagupta, aesthetic experience is closely related to the mystic experience of the Ultimate Reality. We have also stated that Abhinavagupta’s theory of aesthetic experience is founded upon the metaphysic of Pratyabhijñā Śāiva Philosophy. Moreover, Abhinavagupta maintains that aesthetic experience of Rasa is the realization of Paramātman (Śiva) in some sense. In aesthetic experience one has the realization of the true nature of the supersensible and Transcendental Reality. In other words, the nature of Reality is suggested (vyanga) in aesthetic experience. Abhinavagupta holds that the Ultimate Reality is Cāmatkāra (perfect self-consciousness) and Vimarśa (perfect self-illumination). In aesthetic experience, therefore, the nature of one’s own true consciousness dawns forth before the mind. When one has this experience one has the feeling of complete
beatitude (ānanda). Abhinavagupta holds that aesthetic experience is associated with complete pleasure devoid of pain. Now this is, more or less, the standpoint of Kant also. Kant has maintained that aesthetic experience is always accompanied by pleasure, which is neither sensual pleasure nor pleasure derived from the performance of a moral act, but a purely spiritual one - spiritual in the sense that it is the pleasure (or delight) generated by the awareness of the harmony and design of the supersensible in the form of the aesthetic object. Kant has even maintained that the ultimate source of our pleasure in the beautiful is in the sensible awareness of the idea that nature is designed for us. We call the sensible object of appreciation beautiful, "only symbolically", but what is beautiful in "the deeper sense" is the ultimate design. Kant has repeatedly maintained that the concept of beauty is associated with the concept of harmony and that the pleasure associated with aesthetic experience is the pleasure arising out of the consciousness of the harmony. Kant even says that the cognitive power (that is, the power for consciousness of the harmony) itself must be harmonious and in free play, not determined by concepts.

Further, the Kantian thesis that in aesthetic experience there is the awareness of the design of the supersensible Reality is also supported by Kant's account of the aesthetic experience of the sublime. According to Kant, "the sublime is to be found in an object even devoid of form, so far as it immediately involves, or else by its presence..."
provokes, a representation of \textit{limitlessness}, yet with a superadded thought of its totality."\textsuperscript{22} The sublime is regarded "as a presentation of an indeterminate concept of reason."\textsuperscript{23} According to Kant, "the most important and vital distinction between the sublime and the beautiful is certainly this: that if, as is allowable, we here confine our attention in the first instance, to the sublime in objects of nature, (that of art being always restricted by the conditions of an agreement with nature), we observe that whereas natural beauty (such as is self-subsisting) conveys a finality in its form making the object appear as it were, preadapted to our power of judgment, so that it thus forms of itself an object of our delight, that which without our indulging in any refinements of thought, but simply in our apprehension of it, excites the feeling of the sublime, may appear indeed, in point of form to contravene the ends of our power of judgment, to be as it were, an outrage on the imagination, and yet it is judged all the more sublime on that account."\textsuperscript{24} Thus, in both the aesthetic experiences of the beautiful and the sublime, Kant maintains, we are conscious of the harmony, the supersensible, superhuman, infinite, unlimited and transcendental character of Reality. \textbf{Aesthetic experience, therefore, is some kind of spiritual experience in so far as we can have access to the supersensible Reality through it. Hence, we may say that for Kant aesthetic experience in so far as we can have access to the supersensible Reality through it. Hence, we may say that for Kant aesthetic}

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\item \textsuperscript{22} op.cit., 23; p. 90
\item \textsuperscript{23} loc.cit.
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experience is akin to the mystic experience of the supersensible Reality which is teleological by nature. This standpoint is, as we have discussed already, similar to the standpoint of Abhinavagupta and the other Indian thinkers (Viśvanātha to Jagannātha).

IX

The Aesthetic is morally Good: Kant and Abhinava

Another interesting contention of Kant (again very close to that of Abhinavagupta) is that taking an immediate (i.e., spontaneous) interest in the beauty of nature is always the mark of a morally good human being. Kant says, "It has been with the best intentions that those who love to see in the ultimate end of humanity, namely the morally good, the goal of all activities to which men are impelled by the inner bent of their nature, have regarded it as a mark of a good moral character to take an interest in the beautiful generally."25 This amounts to stating that those who are endowed with the capacity to have aesthetic experience, in other words, those who are endowed with the power to know the true nature of Reality (through aesthetic experience), are expected to be people possessing sterling moral qualities.

This contention of Kant is not different from that of Abhinavagupta. Abhinavagupta and all the Indian aestheticians

25. op.cit., 42; p. 157
maintain that the aim of art is the attainment of the four ends of life (Purūṣārthas). They hold that the attainment of liberation (mokṣa) through self-realisation is the ultimate end of life, and that aesthetic experience is one of the paths to the attainment of liberation. The Indian thinkers prescribe strict discipline - intellectual, moral and spiritual - for the seeker after self-realisation. The teachings of the gita in this regard has been accepted by all. Moreover, for the traditional Indian thinkers the trium of ultimate values - Satyam (Truth), Śivam (good) and Sundaram (Beauty) - are inseparable. Indian thinkers prescribe moral purification as essential for self-realization through aesthetic experience.

Another important aspect of aesthetics in which Kant and Abhinavagupta shared similar view is the distinction between artistic creation and appreciation, a distinction which is very important in aesthetics and art activities. However, the distinction between the two is not exclusive since creation and appreciation are interdependent. Kant has assigned the task of creation to the talented genius who is endowed with the faculty of creative imagination. Appreciation which is expressed in the judgment of taste is the act of representation of the aesthetic object through the cognitive power of the imagination and understanding.
Kant's Concept of 'Genius' compared with 'Pratibhā'

Kant's conception of creative or productive genius finds its counterpart in Abhinavagupta's conception of Pratibhā. "Genius", according to Kant, baffles mere scientific explanation. For though the genius employs a definite technique the value of his work lies not primarily in its technical excellence but in its "spirit"; though nature is his model he does not copy nature slavishly; and though each work of art which he produces is an expression of his artistic insight, he is himself more often than not unaware of what he meant to say until, in the finished product, it has said itself. Such unique activity can be accounted for only in terms of inspiration. Genius is the vehicle of a supraindividual force whose comings and goings the artist himself can only partially control. Works of art are the phenomenal expression of the noumenal realms of value. A work of art is creative when it successfully expresses value. And the success of the expression lies in the spontaneity of the representation of values by means of imagination. Kant says, "The imagination (as a productive faculty of cognition) is a powerful agent for creating, as it were a second nature out of the material supplied to it by actual nature." If the expression fails, then the artwork is said to be soulless. As Kant writes, "A poem may be very pretty and elegant, but is soulless. A

26. op. cit., 49; p. 176
speech on some festive occasion may be good in substance and ornate withal, but may be soulless. Conversation frequently is not devoid of entertainment, but yet soulless. Even of a woman we may well say she is pretty, affable, and refined, but soulless. Kant maintains that the "Soul (Geist) is an aesthetical sense, signifies the animating principle in the mind." This view of Kant is very close to Abhinavagupta's view that Rasa is the Soul (Atma) of a creative work. All the Indian aestheticians after Abhinavagupta subscribe to this view.

The conception of the artist as the creator has been upheld by the Indian aestheticians in general. Thus, it has been said about the poet (as an artist): "In the infinite world of poetry the poet is the unique creator. Everything becomes transformed into the way he visualises it. If the poet is emotionally moved (by srungāra, love) in his poem, then the whole world is infused with rasa. But if he be without an interest in the senses (vitarāga), then everything will become dry, devoid of rasa (nirasa)." The end (prayojana) of poetry

27. op. cit., p. 175
28. loc. cit.
29. The word "Kavyasyatma" (soul of poetry) is used in the verse (quoted supra, Chapter V):

"Kavyasyatma sa evārthastathā cādikave pura/ etc.
   - Dhványaloke, p. 84
30. For instance, Visvanātha's definition of poetry: "Vākyam rasātmakam" ("Poetry is the expression the soul of which is rasa")
31. "Apare kavyasamsāre ... sarvameva tat" -Dhványaloke, loc. cit.
is the attainment of ānanda through poetic creation. Mammata compared poetic creation with the creation of the world by Lord Brahmā. He says that Brahmā's creation follows fixed rules, but the poet's creation transgresses the rules (that it is not rule-bound). Moreover, the creation of the Supreme Creator is associated with pleasure (sukha) and pain (duḥkha); all creatures are subject to pleasure and pain. But poetic creation is above the distinction of pleasure-pain; it gives pleasure only (hlādaikamayi), because its aim is the attainment of bliss (ānanda). In poetic creation, the poet gives ānanda in the mind of the readers even in the description of pathetic (karunādāvapi) situation involving the tragic separation between two lovers. In the Uttararāmacarita, for instance, the description of the pathetic lamentation of Rāma in being separated from Sīta, instead of arousing painful emotion, gives ānanda in the form of Karuna-rasa. Further, whereas, the

p. 49; also quoted in the Agnipurana, 339, 10-11

32. As Mammata writes in Kavyaprakasa, 1/2
"Sakala prayojana-maulibhutam samanantarameva
rasasvadanasaumudbhutam vedhyantaramanandam"

33. "Niyatikrta niyamabhitam
hlādaikamayimañyanaparastantram/
Nava-rascalairam nirmiśadadhati bharti kaverjayati//"
- Kavya Prakasa, 1/1

34. Thus Visvanatha wrote:
"Karunādāvapi rase jayate yatparam sukham/
Sachetasaamanubhavah pramanam tatra kevalam//"
- Sahityadarpana, 3/4-5
Supreme Creator's creation is bound by Prakṛti, Karana, and similar other categories, the poet's creation is independent (ananya paratantrata) of the categories. Poetic Creation is the product of the Poet's creative imagination and talent.

Like Abhinavagupta and his followers, Kant maintains that genius is not rule-bound. Since genius is the product of talent coupled with creative imagination, it transgresses the fixed rules of art. Kant writes, "The poet essays the task of interpreting to sense the rational ideas of invisible beings, the kingdom of the blessed, hell, eternity, creation, etc. Or, again, as to things of which examples occur in experience, e.g., death, envy, and all vices, as also love, fame, and the like, transgressing the limits of experience he attempts with the aid of an imagination which emulates the display of reason in its attainment of a maximum, to body them forth to sense with a completeness of which nature affords no parallel; and it is in fact precisely in the poetic art that the faculty of aesthetic ideas can show itself to full advantage. This faculty, however, regarded solely on its own account, is properly no more than a talent (of the imagination)." 35 This passage from the Critique of Judgment is closely similar to the standpoint of Abhinavagupta and his followers. Like Abhinavagupta, Kant maintains that aesthetic experience is always associated with pleasure, and no feeling of pain follows from it. He holds that the feeling of pleasure

35. Critique of Judgment, 49; Meredith trans., pp. 176-7
follows from aesthetic experience (taste), and the pleasure which thus follows appeals universally. Kant says, "... This purely subjective (aesthetic) estimating of the object, or of the representation through which it is given is antecedent to the pleasure in it, and is the basis of this pleasure in the harmony of the cognitive faculties." Kant's account of genius suggests an illuminating explanation of the universality and communicability of taste. It is due to the presence of the supersensible or the noumenal in each of us that we are able to apprehend and enjoy the beauty which genius has created. Genius, moreover, provides us with the key to natural beauty. For nature is not beautiful to the aesthetically untutored mind; the artist teaches us to find beauty in it and in so doing opens up to us a new and deeply satisfying approach to nature. In the aesthetic experience, natural objects are apprehended not as embodiments of universal law, but on the analogy of art, concretely each object being regarded as complete and perfect in itself.

The term "Pratibhā", which we have compared with Kant's concept of "genius", is a very important term in Indian aesthetics. Before Abhinavagupta, we find its use in the works of Bhāmaha, Dandin, Vāmana, Rājasekhara, Ānandavardhana, Bhaṭṭa Tauta, and others. Following Ānandavardhana,

36. *op.cit.*, 9
37. *op.cit.*, 9; pp. 58-59
38. T.M. Greene, "Kant's Critique of Judgment" in Handy and Westbrook (eds.), Twentieth Century Literary Criticism, p. 15
Abhinavagupta says, "Like the creator the poet creates for himself a world according to his wish. Indeed he is amply endowed with the power of creating manifold, extraordinary things, originating thanks to the favour of the Deity, the Supreme Vocality called Pratibhā and continually shining like his heart." It is surprising that this statement of Abhinavagupta closely resembles the statement of Kant on poetic creation, which we have already quoted. Regarding the meaning of the word "Pratibhā" in Indian philosophy, Pandita Gopinātha Kavirāja writes, "The word Pratibhā, which literally means a flash of light, a revelation, is usually found in literature in the sense of wisdom characterised by immediacy and freshness. It might be called supersensuous and suprarational apperception, grasping truth directly, and would therefore seem to have the same value, both as a faculty and as an act in Indian philosophy, as Intuition has in some of the Western systems." Abhinavagupta and the Śaiva (Āgama) philosophers use the word 'Pratibhā' to mean the power of self-revelation or self-illumination of the Supreme Spirit. Thus, the word "pratibhā" is an important word in both literature and philosophy. In literature, as we have stated already it is used in the sense of creative imagination, and in this sense, it carries almost similar meaning to the word 'genius' as it is used by Kant.

39. Abhinavabharati, 1.4

40. Gopinātha Kaviraj, "The Doctrine of Pratibhā in Indian Philosophy", Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pathak Commemoration Volume.
Kant's recognition of genius as the faculty creative imagination or creativity is really a diversion from the path of rationalism to the path of intuitionism and mysticism. And in so far as Kant has admitted that aesthetic experience is the gateway to the knowledge of the 'supersensible', the recognition of creative imagination (or intuition) in aesthetics means the acceptance of intuition (implicitly or indirectly) as the means for realizing the nature of the supersensible Reality. It comes to that unless Kant adopts this position (i.e., the acceptance of intuition) there is no other way for the realization of the supersensible Reality.

XII

Kant's View on the 'Four Moments' compared with Abhinava's Standpoint

There are some other aspects of the Kantian aesthetics which may be compared with the view of Abhinavagupta. In his analysis of aesthetic experience and the judgment of taste, Kant has recognized four "moments" or characteristics (as we have already discussed in the chapter on Kantian aesthetics) - namely, disinterestedness, universality, finality, and necessity. These moments or characteristics are also recognized by Abhinavagupta in his account of the aesthetic experience, which, according to him, is the experience of Rasa. Kant maintains that matters of personal interest or concern are completely banished from aesthetic experience and
the judgment of taste. Aesthetic experience must be
classified by *disinterestedness*. In other words, there
must be a psychic or aesthetic distance from the aesthetic
object in aesthetic enjoyment and appreciation. Abhinavagupta
also maintains that psychical distance should be kept in
aesthetic enjoyment. He contrasts *Rasa* with worldly pleasure
and pain by pointing out how *Rasa* is different from pleasure
brought about by the happy news, such as, "*Putraste jātah*
('A son is born to you') in ordinary life. *Rasa* is said to be
an experience transcending (*alaukika*) the distinctions of
friend, foe and the neutral. Aesthetic objects are presented
for contemplation without special attraction or aversion for
them. The aesthetic attitude towards the objects is free from
all personal reference. Aesthetic experience is *unique* because
it is *suigeneric*.

In the words of Prof. M. Hiriyana: "The aim of art
is to secure for man a unique form of experience. Art
experience consists in the disinterested contemplation of
beauty. The intrusion of any aim is sure to vitiate it, and
make the pursuit of art unsuccessful. Secondly, the aesthetic
attitude stands higher than that of common or everyday life
which is invariably characterised by more or less mental
tension."41 Accent is given by Kant on the same points
contained in the above quotation.

41. M. Hiriyana, *Art Experience*, Adapted in Raghavan and
Nagendra (eds.), *An Introduction to Indian Poetics*, p. 12
Concerning the second moment, the moment of universality, Kant maintains that the judgment of taste requires the agreement of everyone; and he who appreciates an object as beautiful claims that everyone ought to give his approval to the judgment that the object is beautiful.\textsuperscript{42} When we judge an object beautiful, we speak as though beauty were a property, though actually the judgment is subjective since it connects the object with aesthetic satisfaction. But since such a satisfaction does not depend on any individual peculiarities or preferences (being disinterested), it is natural for us to suppose that we have found in the object a ground of any one's satisfaction - something that can be enjoyed in that way universally. We, therefore, impute the same judgment to everyone. That is why we use the impersonal mode of speech and say "This is beautiful" rather than "This gives me a disinterested satisfaction". The judgment of beauty, being conceptless, cannot claim the objective universality of a logical judgment, but it lays a claim to the "title of subjective universality."

\textbf{XIII}

\textit{The Concept of Sādhārapākaraṇa and the Moments}

The moment of disinterestedness together with the moment of universality in Kantian aesthetics may be compared

\textsuperscript{42.} Critique of Judgment, 6
with the concept of *Sādhāranīkarana* adopted by Abhinavagupta and other Indian aesthetician in the characterisation of aesthetic experience. Generality (*sādhāraṇya*) is an important feature of aesthetic experience. In a dramatic performance, the actor who is playing the part of Rāma, for instance, does not appear to us in his actual individual character, and it does not also appear to us that he cannot be Rāma, the hero of the drama. The actor's role lies midway between the pure actuality and the pure ideality. The actor's performance along with the accessories like scenic arrangements, exhilarating background music, dance, etc., transforms the actuality of the material arrangements on the stage, and transports the minds of the spectators to a remote ideal situation beyond the limitations of space and time. As Prof. S.N. Dasgupta says, "The past impressions, memories, associations, and the like, which were lying deeply buried in the mind, became connected with the present experience and thereby the present experience became affiliated and perceived in a new manner resulting in a dimension of new experience, revealing new types of pleasures and pains, unlike the pleasures and pains associated with our egoistic instincts and the success or failures of their strivings. This is technically called *Rasāsvādana*, *Camatkāra*, *Garvāna*, which literally means the experiencing of a transcendent exhilaration from the enjoyment of the roused emotions inherent in our own personality. A play or a drama is the objective content of such an experience .... .... This experience is, therefore, nothing else but the
enlightenment of a universal." \(^43\)

The spectator enjoys the play from a detached angle, and with the necessary psychical distance (tatasthyya). When he enjoys the play in this manner the real beauty of the dramatic theme is revealed to him and he receives the highest aesthetic enjoyment. Since the latent emotions (sstayins) of all human beings are more or less similar in nature, inherited from previous existences, the response of all spectators to a play is also practically uniform. According to Mamata, the situation represented by Sādhārānapākaraṇa (generality) "is independent of such specifications as 'This concerns me', 'This concerns my enemy', 'This does not concern a person who is indifferent to me'. Generality is thus a state of self-identification with the imagined situation devoid of any practical interest and from this point of view, of any relation whatsoever with the limited self and as it were impersonal." \(^44\) Thus all worldly and personal associations are shed in the realm of art because of this universalisation. Thus, Sādhārānya (generality) is one of the criteria of the universal acceptability of a judgment of taste.

The moment of finality in Kant’s analysis of aesthetic experience also finds its parallel in the aesthetic theory of Abhinavagupta. According to Kant, "the sole foundation of the judgment of taste is the form of Finality, of an object (or

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\(^43\) S.N. Dasgupta, History of Sanskrit Literature, Vol. I, p. 603

\(^44\) R. Gnoli, Aesthetic Experience according to Abhinavagupta, p. 51ff
mode of representing it)." Kant maintains that aesthetic judgment is connected with purposiveness, but it is not concerned at all with particular purposes, for then it would be conceptual, and thus would not be disinterested. What gives us aesthetic satisfaction is the mere form of purposiveness in the representation by which an object is given to us, so far as we are conscious of it. To this kind of purposiveness, Kant has assigned the famous phrase, "purposiveness without purpose" (Sachwissenschaft ohne Zweck).

The "moment" of finality also receives adequate consideration at the hands of Abhinavagupta and Mammata. Mammata uses the expression "Sakala-prayejanāmauli-bhūta", i.e., the end (or goal) of all the ends (or that which is not the means of anything else). Aesthetic experience has as its essence pure joy, which transports the reader or spectator to pure ecstasy that fills his whole physical frame, banishing all other thoughts. As Prof. R. Gnoli says, "Artistic intuition is a particular hypostasis of universal or total intuition, that is to say of consciousness as a force which creates and continually renews the universe." Both Kant and Abhinavagupta maintain that art has an end for itself and by itself. Art has a purpose, but this purpose is not conditioned by external factors and circumstances.

45. Critique of Judgment, 11; Meredith trans., p. 62
46. loc cit.
47. R. Gnoli, op. cit., Introduction
According to Kant, the fourth moment of the judgment of taste considered from the standpoint of modality, is necessity. Kant thinks that the beautiful has a necessary reference to satisfaction, that is to say, in judging a thing beautiful we assume that there is a necessary connection between our representation and the pleasure (or delight) which is felt by us. Kant holds that there is a claim "that everyone ought to give his approval to the object in question and also describe it as beautiful." The necessity or obligatoriness, implicit in the judgment of taste presupposes a "common sense" (sensus communis) - the state of mind "resulting from the free play of our cognitive powers" in all men. This common sense is a necessary condition of the communicability of knowledge itself.

XIV

The Concept of Sahāryās and the Moments

The moment of necessity expounded by Kant has its parallel in the expression "sakala-hṛdaya-samvādabhāk" as applied to Rasa which has in view the power of art to enter all responsive hearts. Rasa is the blissful experience excited by artistic situations. When the appropriate situations are presented the Rasa-bhāvās are necessarily produced in the minds of the Sahāryās (those who are sensitive

48. K. Krishnamurthy, Dhvanyāloka and its Critics, p. 317
enough to appreciate beauty). As Prof. K. Krishnamurthy says, "... Sanskrit theorists draw a line of distinction between the personal emotion of the poet (which is only bhāva) and the aesthetic experience of the reader (which is Rasa). But at the same time they are not oblivious of the fact that such aesthetic experience is vouchsafed only to a select few whose tastes are cultivated and cannot be shared in equal measure by all and sundry. They take pains to point out that poetry can be appreciated only by true Sahādayas, i.e., those who possess similar emotional sensibility as that of the poet himself. The essential unity of genius and taste was fully realised."\(^{49}\)

While writing about the moment of necessity Kant maintains (as we have stated) that in judging a thing beautiful we assume that there is a necessary connection between our representation of it and the pleasure which is felt by us. This kind of necessity affords additional reason for the universal validation of the judgment of taste, which although it is subjective judgment has objective claim to validity.

Abhinavagupta also subscribed to the view that there is a kind of necessity involved in the relationship between the emotional situations represented in the art works and the delight associated with them. Abhinavagupta's standpoint in this regard has been explained by Prof. A. Sankara\(^{\text{\textsuperscript{a}}}\), thus: "Soul is immortal, and all souls, particularly of the Sahādaya or responsive critic, have in them implanted certain vāsanās or

\(^{49}\) ibid., pp. 323-4
instincts and these are called in the language of criticism 'sthayibhāvas'. When there is a vivid representation of the vibhāvas, anubhāvas and vyabhicāribhāvas this instinct in us is called forth and developed to that climax when it is realised by us, invariably accompanied by a thrill or joy. Thus, Abhinavagupta agrees with Kant that there is necessary relation between the aesthetic experience and the accompanying joy or pleasure.

Kant and Abhinava: Differences

We have compared the aesthetic theories of Kant and Abhinavagupta laying more stress on those aspects in which they express almost similar views. We have found that they agreed on many important aesthetic issues. We shall now be concerned with those (equally) important issues related with the nature of aesthetic experience in which they expressed different views.

In our discussion of the Kantian aesthetics we have stated how Kant tried to improve upon the empiricist and the rationalist aesthetics, and also how he raised aesthetics to the level of philosophical respectability. We have further explained how Kant tried "to bridge the gulf (between nature and freedom, sein and sollen), to resolve the antitheses.

50. A. Sankaran, Aspects of Literary Criticism, p. 104
between liberty and necessity, teleology and mechanism, spirit and nature", and how he introduced significant aesthetic concepts and principles to account for aesthetic experience and judgments of taste.

But in his treatment of aesthetic problems Kant has regarded aesthetics as a philosophical discipline. Kant's inclination is towards the rationalist school, which lays emphasis on form rather than on content. As we know already, Kant's desire is to integrate his whole metaphysical system to fulfill the task of his architectonic scheme which incorporates in it the cognitive, moral and aesthetic experiences. Like other rationalists (from Plato downwards) Kant has deepest regards for form because he thinks (like other rationalists) that form alone can give universal and necessary knowledge. Kant's purpose in aesthetics, as in the case of the other sciences, is to furnish universal and necessary knowledge (in the special sense) concerning the beautiful. He has used the a priori method in his search for the truth in the sphere of aesthetics, and in that way he is a staunch advocate of formalism in aesthetics. As a formalist he believes "that form, as the one rational element in sense experience, is the only element worthy to be aesthetically enjoyed." He thinks that what is enjoyed in aesthetic experience is not sense pleasure but some kind of intellectualist delight (because

51. B. Croce, Aesthetics, etc., p. 283
52. B. Dunham, "Kant's theory of Aesthetic form", Whitney and Bowers (eds.), The Heritage of Kant, p. 362
metaphysical) in the experience of the finality (design) of the supersensible. Kant has, therefore, banished from aesthetic experience and the judgment of taste all the sensuous material, feelings, emotions and sentiments. Kant says, "Emotion, i.e., a sensation in which pleasantness is produced by means of a momentary checking and a consequent more powerful overflow of the vital force, does not belong at all to beauty. But sublimity (with which the feeling of emotion is bound up) requires a different standard of judgment from that which is at the foundation of taste, and thus a pure judgment of taste has for its determining ground neither charm nor emotion, in a word, no sensation as the material of the aesthetic judgment." In support of his intellectualist view of art, according to which the formal and the a priori alone is said to be beautiful, Kant says, "In painting, sculpture, and in all the formative arts - the delineation is the essential thing; and here it is not what gratifies in sensation but what pleases by means of its form that is fundamental for taste. The colours which light up the sketch belong to the charm; they may indeed enliven the object for sensation, but they cannot make it worthy of contemplation and beautiful. In most cases they are rather limited by the requirements of the beautiful form; and even where charm is permissible it is ennobled solely by this." Kant has maintained that the form alone is relevant; emotion and charm are irrelevant to the aesthetic. Thus Kant has

53. Critique of Judgment, 14; Bernard trans., p. 76
54. op.cit., p. 75
completely excluded the world of sensibility from the basis of the aesthetic judgment. Sensation and emotion have nothing to do with beauty, because beauty lies in the harmony which blends imagination, understanding, and representation in the enjoyment of form.

Kant's intellectualist and formalist approach to aesthetics is the subject of controversy and criticism among the post-Kantian European aestheticians. Kant's abstraction of form from the sensual content is aesthetically impossible, because the form has significance only in relation to the content. The form cannot be separated from the content. With regard to the artworks it is difficult to abstract the forms from the sense qualities, although the sense qualities have to be transcended for the perfection of the work. Further, it is out of place to describe the nature of aesthetic experience in abstraction from experience; some element of sense experience must be present, as the initial data. Kant's puritanism in art (i.e., emphasis on form alone) has robbed art of the real life. As Israel Knox says, "(Kant) divorces the aesthetic experience from all content and meaning and transforming it into a 'no man's land' of detached and abstract feeling. His sole concern seems to be to establish the identity of the aesthetic judgment with pure subjective feeling, dissociated from sensation, also from the socio-ethical problem of life." 55

55. Israel Knox, The Aesthetic Theories of Kant, Hegel and Schopenhauer, (New York, 1936)
Again Kant's view that beauty is a matter of contemplation is a barren academic view on the nature of beauty and aesthetic experience. Contemplation is required in aesthetics as in philosophy, but contemplation alone is not enough to produce creative works, and to appreciate beauty. In order to create, the mind must be pregnant with productive imagination; and in order to appreciate the mind must be sensitive and responsive.

XVI

Kant fails to recognise the Role of Emotion

Moreover, although Kant was right in warning against the excesses of romantic emotionalism and the follies of undisciplined genius, "he failed to recognise the essential role of emotion in both artistic creation and aesthetic response." The rejection of the role of emotion in the production of art works and appreciation is really unfortunate, because what actually is highlighted in most art forms is the emotional content. The artist aims at evoking the right type of emotion commensurate with the artistic situation. Aesthetic rupture is, more or less, heightened emotional rupture (considered as a kind of sublimation of the situation. It is, therefore, unfortunate that Kant has not dealt with dominant emotional moods like the heroic, pathetic, erotic, humorous,}

56. T.M. Greene, "A Reassessment of Kant's Aesthetic Theory", Whitney and Bowers (eds.), The Heritage of Kant, p. 329
etc. in his aesthetic theory. Kant would have dismissed even the concept of Rasa and their different kinds as psychological aberration or emotionalism. Further, Kant's unwillingness to openly admit the role of intuition in aesthetic experience is another drawback. We have shown that, according to Kant, aesthetic experience is akin to spiritual (or mystic) experience. He has stated that in aesthetic experience we are directly aware of the finality (design) of the supersensible. But, instead of maintaining that we have immediate apprehension (i.e., intuition) of the nature of the noumenal reality in aesthetic experience; Kant talks in a round about way that the finality of the supersensible is manifested in the form of the beautiful object, thereby making the aesthetic serve the task of the metaphysical. This way of speaking, no doubt, arises from Kant's eagerness to integrate the whole of his metaphysics. But in the process he has failed to do justice to art and aesthetic, which Kant has ontologised. And as a matter of fact, every attempt to ontologise art ends in sounding the death knell to art. This is true of Kant, as it is true of Hegel.

Again, when Kant characterised judgment of taste and aesthetic experience, he has referred to certain noble qualities like disinterestedness, unselfishness, etc., which are supposed to be present in the character of the aesthetically responsive individual. But Kant is silent about how these virtues should be cultivated.
Kant must, however, be credited with making significant innovations in the field of modern aesthetics in terms of important ideas, profound orientation, systematisation and clear-insight into the aesthetic problems. But the drawbacks and the limitations in the Kantian aesthetics have to be removed in order to evolve a satisfactory aesthetic theory capable of presenting a lucid and authentic account of aesthetic experience. It has been rightly remarked about Kantian aesthetics that "If the Critique of Judgment could be rewritten and the inconsistencies removed, there would remain the broadest and profoundest study of aesthetics the world has yet known."[57]

Abhinava's View is not Formalistic and Abstract

Kant's over-intellectualist, formalist, abstractionist and anti-emotionalist view of the nature of aesthetic experience is in contrast with Abhinavagupta's view. Although Abhinavagupta considers philosophy as the foundation of art and aesthetics, and although he has averred that aesthetic experience is akin to the mystic experience of Paramāṭma, Abhinavagupta's aesthetic is by no means intellectualistic, formal and abstract. He means by aesthetic experience the actual realisation of Rasa.

57. Barrows Dunham, "Kant's Theory of Aesthetic Form", Whitney and Bowers (eds.), The Heritage of Kant, p. 375
This consists in actual tasting of Rasa (rasapratīti); not mere intellectual contemplation. On the part of the artist as creator, the experience is the result of creative imagination (Pratibbā), which is a kind of cognition (Prajñā), namely, the cognition of artistic truth, which reflects the true nature of Reality. And on the part of the responsive appreciator (reader or spectator), the Sahāryā, the experience is a spontaneous one if and only if the right type of aesthetic elements are combined, just as the right types of ingredients make a delicious dish. But in both creation and appreciation, enjoyment of the state of bliss is involved. In both imagination is involved. Rājasēkhara calls the poet's imagination Kārayitrī-Pratibhā (creative imagination) and the connoisseur's imagination bhāvyitrī-Pratibhā (contemplative imagination). Abhinavagupta also recognises similar distinction, but maintains that both creation and production are similar in essence, because in both Rasa is realized, the only difference being that the appreciator recreates the situation created by the poet or artist.

XVIII

The Merits of Abhinava's Rasa Theory

For Abhinavagupta and the Indian aestheticians the distinction between form and content is immaterial.\(^{58}\)

\(^{58}\) In Europe two schools of Aesthetics, based on the distinction between content and form appeared after Kant. They are known as – the Aesthetic of Content (Gehaltsästhetik) and the Aesthetic of Form (Formästhetik).
word "Rasa" serves many purposes. It entails several things - knowledge, sublimated feeling or emotion, state of bliss, etc. The experience of Rasa, therefore, involves the experience of both content and form in the ideally combined way. The balance is always maintained.

Abhinavagupta's psychological and philosophical analysis of the state of mind in aesthetic experience will definitely baffle the psychologists and the logicians. He looks at the issue from different angles. His analysis of the mental state far surpasses that of any Western aesthetician, including Kant. Considering the depth of knowledge that the traditional Indian authorities exhibit in dramaturgy, S. K. Langer, an eminent contemporary Western aesthetician, has admitted that Indian aestheticians of drama "were able to understand much better than their Western colleagues the various aspects of emotion in the theatre." Abhinavagupta's analysis of emotion is detailed and thorough.

Abhinavagupta has categorically emphasised the true role played by imagination, emotion and intuition in aesthetic experience. The theory of Rasa, which he has developed is comprehensive and all-embracing. It has truly characterised the nature of aesthetic experience.

Like other Indian aestheticians, Abhinavagupta considers art as Sādhana (spiritual discipline) for the realisation of the higher ends of life (Purūṣārthas). Art

59. S. K. Langer, Feeling and Form, p. 323
aims at the realization of ānanda. But ānanda cannot be attained by anybody and everybody. In order to realize it one must undergo rigorous intellectual, moral and spiritual discipline. Besides, the obstacles (vighnas) to the realization of ānanda with the help of art experience should be removed first. Thus, Abhinavagupta systematically lays down the techniques and procedures for cleansing the mind and heart to enable the aesthete to realize ānanda through aesthetic experience. In this manner Abhinavagupta shows the way for the realization of the state of beatitude through aesthetic experience.

In our comparison of the aesthetic views of Kant and Abhinavagupta we have stated that for both the thinkers, aesthetic experience is akin to mystic experience, and that the nature of the joy (pleasure) that accompany aesthetic experience is spiritual in nature. But we have to say that the Kantian view on this matter is not explicit, since it is presented in the form of a mere suggestion. It is not as categorical and clear as that of Abhinavagupta. Kant also did not clearly distinguish between the aesthetic experience and the spiritual (or mystic) experience. But Abhinavagupta clearly brought out the points of similarity as well as difference between aesthetic experience and mystic (turiya) experience - between rasasvādana and brahmaśvādana. 60

60. Masson and Patwardhan, Aesthetics etc., pp. 161-4
Abhinavagupta maintains that in both mystic experience and aesthetic experience, we forget the empirical self, avoid the hope of material gain, transcend the limitations of time and space, remove ignorance (avidyā) by adopting the spiritual means (upāya). Both experiences lead to Ānanda (bliss), which is free from pain, both are ānandaikāghana (thick with beatitude), and both are alaukika (transcendental).

The difference between the two experiences is stated thus: In aesthetic experience there is contact with the aesthetic object; but there is no contact (uparāga) with object in mystic experience. Hence, the latter is pure (suddha). When the seeker achieves mystic experience, his whole being and attitude towards life is transformed; but this is not the case in aesthetic experience. The sahyāda after relishing Rasa remains the same individual, although that experience may have some impact in his attitude towards other people in his personal life. However, in spite of these apparent differences aesthetic experience and mystic experience are very close to each other.

Mention may also be made of Abhinavagupta's acceptance of Sāntarasa, which synthesises and incorporates all the other Rasas in it. This standpoint is in agreement with Abhinavagupta's consideration of aesthetic pursuit as a form of spiritual pursuit. According to Abhinavagupta, Śāma is the sthāyin of Sāntarasa. Śāma is the state of perfect mental harmony. Only when the mind is in this state, creative works can be produced. When the mind is in the state of
turmoil and strife no creative work can be taken up. Creation of good art works, as well as appreciation thereof, can be done only when the mind is reposed peacefully, that is to say, when the element of Sattva predominates over other gunas. Disinterested and detached actions and contemplation will become possible only under such mental state. In failing to point out this important condition as the condition for undertaking aesthetic and art activities, Kant has left a big hole in his aesthetic theory, nay in his philosophy. Sáma, again, is the ideal state of mind which serves as the prerequisite to spiritual realization. In the Gītā Lord Kṛṣṇa advised Arjuna to maintain the steady state of mind, to be in sáma, because sáma is the prelude to self-realization.

Santarasa, whose sthāyin is sáma unifies all the Rasas. It alone accounts for both aesthetic experience and spiritual experience.