Importance of *Abhinavabhārati*

*Abhinavagupta* is the greatest example in human history of a literary critic who is also a philosopher of high repute. He is concerned with providing a stable philosophical foundation for his aesthetic theory. As such he is the first writer in India to deal with the subject of aesthetics combined with Realistic Idealism. He was not only a man of versatile genius but also a philosopher. By the time of his death, he had attained the state of the liberation-in-life (*Jīvanmukta*).\(^1\) *Abhinavagupta* had great interest in drama resulting from his deep concern with *Tāntric* ritual and the religious aspect of aesthetic experience. Towards the end of his famous *Tāntric* work, *Abhinavagupta’s* style and mood became more poetic and extremely complex in style. In all his writings *Abhinavagupta’s* obsession with three issues become obvious. They are authenticity, unambiguity and communicability.\(^2\) In interpreting a text, he firstly edits it. If there is confusion or differences of opinion, he examines the various interpretations and finally puts his stamp on one.
He has dealt with almost every important aspect of Indian aesthetics in his two commentaries – *Abhinavabhārati* and *Locana*. These are the two known aesthetic works of *Abhinavagupta* for which he is renowned as the principal exponent of aesthetic theory. *Abhinavagupta* is quite aware about the importance of earliest works, which has been used by him to build his own theories on the foundation laid by others.³ *Abhinavabhārati* is the best guide to understand *Bharata*. He takes from different sources what he needs for his interpretation. He took his theory of suggestion from the *Dhanyāloka* of Ānandavardhana and ideas on *Rasa* from *Bharata*. He became the most important critic of this school because of his philosophic acumen and poetic insight. Though *Abhinavagupta* explains the ideas of *Bharata* rightly most of the time, sometimes he appears to be deviating from *Bharata*. This may be because he takes every possible aspect of the problem and deals with all the important views that existed at that time. K.C.Pandey observes, “*Abhinavagupta* interpreted *Nātyaśāstra* of *Bharata* to show how dramatic technic brings about universatization by purifying both the subject and the object from all that is impure in them”.⁴ *Abhinavagupta*’s commentaries are characterized by lucidity of expressions and
authenticity of arguments which left nothing in confusion. He mentions 36 Tattvas, one for each chapter in the Abhinavabhārati. Though almost a thousand years have gone by since Abhinavagupta wrote in Kashmir there has hardly been any serious challenge to his interpretation of Nātyaśāstra and Dhvanyāloka. Srikrishnamisra comments on the eminence of Abhinavagupta, “All the critics of the world shall have to yield the palm to the great critic, poet, philosopher and saint of India; Abhinavagupta”

The Summery in a Nutshell of Abhinavabhārati

Nātyotpatti is the subject matter of the first chapter of the commentary of Nātyaśāstra. At the beginning of the first chapter Ātreya and other sages ask five questions to Bharata about Nātya. Abhinavagupta mentions that the answers to the five questions are scattered over the whole work. The commentary of his first chapter starts with six maṅgala slokas to praise the great God Śiva. In the second verse, he mentions his philosophy and also indicates that Nātyaśāstra contains thirtysix chapters. He himself asserts the authority of his work Abhinavabhārati. He positively stressed the importance of the
role of Śiva in the Nātya. He deals with the differences of Nātya and states that the theoretical performances are important because they educate not only the higher class but also ordinary people. It attracts and pleases everybody because there is no restriction and all those works are made to make man perfect in thought, feeling and behaviour. In Nātyaśāstra, Bharata attributes mythical origin to Nātya. Brahmā ordered Bharata to produce a fifth Veda meant for all Varṇas. He took the matter of recitation from the Rgveda, music from the Sāmaveda, the Abhinaya from Yajurveda and the Rasa from the Atharvaveda. Based on his concept of Realistic Idealism, Abhinavagupta offers a superior analysis at every point on the discussion of Nātya and clearly presents his philosophical ideas about Nātya and Rasa in the first chapter.

The manuscripts of the second chapter of Abhinavabharati show many omissions, several incorrect readings and much confusion. This chapter mainly relates to the construction of theatres for the dramatic performance and it is highly scientific and technical. It has amazed even Abhinavagupta. Bharata describes the characteristics and varieties of the playhouse and dwells on two types of theatres mainly of three different shapes and sizes. Abhinavagupta remarks that all such theatres would
not be useful, but they are mentioned only to maintain the tradition. Regarding the construction of the stage proper, there exists differences of opinion. Abhinavagupta gives his own account of Raṅgapiṭa. The playhouse is described by Bharata as Dvibhūmi which is explained by Abhinavagupta by analyzing conflicting and controversial views of several scholars. There are many technical terms relating to the construction of theatres. Though Abhinavagupta has not clarified or suggested the exact meaning for these technical terms, he has explained the measurements of the different parts of the theatres.¹²

The third chapter emphasizes the essentiality of the worship of deities such as Mahādeva, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Indra, Guha, Sarasvatī, Lakṣmī and the like. Bharata gives the first preference to the God Paramaśiva. Abhinavagupta admits that it is very proper and suitable¹³ and then deals with the proper place of the deities in the backside of the Raṅgapiṭa.

In the fourth chapter, a play called Amṛtamathanam is performed before the Gods. After the performance of this Samavakāra, a Dīma named Tripuradahana is performed in the presence of God Śiva. Then Bharata is advised by Śiva to introduce dancing in the Pūrvaranīga and he
has deputed Tanḍu to teach the Tāṇḍava dance. Abhinavagupta deals with the definition\textsuperscript{14} and division of 108 Karaṇas which constitute the fundamental dancing poses. This portion is heavily damaged and largely corrupted. Abhinavagupta comments on seven divisions of Nṛtta. The first three are to be used in independent Laukika dance and are made for the satisfaction of the deities. The last four are employed in the preliminaries. After the discussion of Karaṇas, Abhinavagupta deals with the definition and division of Arigahāra.

The fifth chapter contains many inaccurate readings and scribal errors. The commentary of the fifth chapter is not complete because a small portion is missing at the end. It deals with the preliminaries of the performance of the play and remarks on dramatic terms like Pūrvarāṅga, Nāndi, Dhruva etc. Dhruva is discussed in detail which is the song to be sung in the course of the play.

The sixth chapter is described as Rasādhyāya because it prominently treats Rasa. In this chapter, Abhinavagupta interprets mainly eleven elements of the Nātya. They are Rasa, Bhāva, Abhinaya, Dharmi, Vṛtti, Pravṛtti, Siddhi, Svara, Ātodya, Gāna and Raṅga. Among them the Rasa is the most important part of the Nātyaśāstra. Bharata says that there can
be no work of art without the delineation of sentiment in it.\textsuperscript{15} According to him \textit{Rasa} is the final end of all arts. A majority of portions in \textit{Nātyaśāstra} deal with the dramatist and the actor. In chapters sixth and seventh, he analyses the emotional effect of the audience. He is the first author who discusses \textit{Rasa} in relation to drama. He has accepted \textit{Rasa} as the soul of the drama. J.L. Masson and M.V. Patwardhan remark that among the all chapters of \textit{Nātyaśāstra} the most important is the sixth chapter.\textsuperscript{16} A knowledge of the sixth chapter is essential for anybody who wishes to understand Indian aesthetics. \textit{Bharata’s Rasasūtra} is the starting point of the discussions on Indian aesthetics. \textit{Abhinavagupta} has commented on this \textit{Rasasūtra} elaborately quoting various commentaries by \textit{Bhattachalollaṭa}, \textit{Śrīśaṅkuka} and \textit{Bhattachāryaka}. He interprets the Rasasūtra on the basis of \textit{Saiva Tāntric} philosophy of Kashmir. Thus, he was the first commentator who analyzed the \textit{Rasasūtra} in detail and gave a metaphysical face to the aesthetic experience on the basis of \textit{Pratyabhijñā} philosophy. He states that the poet’s experience is the seed of poetry, the poem he composes is the tree and the reader’s experience is the fruit of the tree.\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Bharata} and \textit{Abhinavagupta} emphatically claim that the \textit{Rasa} is the essence of art as well as its cause and its effect, its
means and its end. *Abhinavagupta* asserts that emotions as they are felt in life are different from artistic experience. Therefore, *Abhinavagupta* points out that *Rasa* is the summum bonum of everything which is called *Mahārasa*. He is more definite and clear than the western critics. He presents the ontological, epistemological and psychological aspects of poetry and drama in a more integrated way than is done by any western critics. *Abhinavagupta* was able to provide a philosophical basis to aesthetics by imparting philosophical ideas into literary issues. He deals with almost every important issue of Indian aesthetics. From the *Abhinavabhārati*, it is known that there are two recensions of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, one dealing with nine *Rasas* and the other speaking of only eight *Rasās* by excluding *Śāntarasa*. *Abhinavagupta* has supported the view that *Śānta* is the ninth *Rasa*.

*Bhāva, Vibhāva, Anubhāva, Sthāyin, Vyabhicārin, and Sātvikabhāva* are dealt with in the seventh chapter. The commentary in the seventh chapter of *Abhinavabhārati* is incomplete. *Abhinavagupta*, at the beginning of the seventh chapter, explains the nature of *Bhāvas* and *Vibhāvas* on the basis of his philosophy.
The eighth chapter of the commentary, *Abhinavabhārati*, is not discovered completely. This chapter discusses the detailed description of the four kinds of acting and describes the various gestures of head, eyes, brows, lips and neck. It also deals with two types of *Arigābhīnaya*. The first one analyses the movement of the principal and subsidiary limbs and the second deals with the combination of these primary movements such as *Cāri* and *Manḍala*. The topics in chapter eight are directly connected with the general discussions in the first five chapters and therefore, the eighth chapter is the continuation of the first five chapters.

Various movements and positions of the hands are discussed in the ninth chapter. *Abhinavagupta* adds here that gestures which are indicative of the inner moods, are to be used because they are like the consequents. After discussing the *Samyutahasta* he explains *Nrīttahasta*, Abhinavagupta states that it is different from *Abhinayahasta*.

The tenth chapter deals with the chest, waist and hips. *Abhinavagupta* interprets the second type of *Arigābhīnaya-cāri*.* Carīvidhāna* and the divisions and definition of *Cāri* are also dealt with in detail. The eleventh chapter of *Abhinavabhārati* interprets
Maṇḍalavikalpanam and deals with ten types of Ākāśamanḍala and ten varieties of Bhaumamanḍala.

A discussion of the different types of Gati (gait) is found in chapter twelve. Abhinavagupta states the reasons for these varieties. The gaits are to be used according to their qualities; otherwise it is improper. Abhinavagupta quotes Kohala while discussing the gaits and suggests specific Tālas and Layas in connection with specific gaits. He has given some Tālas, which are not found in the Nāṭyaśāstra and hence, they seem to be later developments.

In the thirteenth chapter of Abhinavabhārati, Abhinavagupta interprets the Kakṣyā divisions and their importance. Then he analyses the ‘Vṛttis’ and their varieties. After the discussion of Vṛtti he deals with the Dharmi and their divisions such as Lokadharmi and Nāṭyadharma.

Abhinavagupta comments on the importance of Vāgābhinaya or Vācikābhinaya in chapter fourteen. He clearly interprets and emphasizes the view of Bharata. It also contains Candovidhāna.

Chapter fifteen is called Candoviciti because it contains different types of Vṛttas, but the major part of the chapter deals with the definition
of metres. They are defined as qualities of Guru and Laghu. In some versions of this text, they are defined as Gaṇas or three lettered qualities.

Abhinavagupta comments on different types of Alaiṅkāra and Guṇas in the next chapter. He gives the definition of Guṇas and states that Mādhurya and Audārya are the most important among the Guṇas. He also compiles different views about Lakṣaṇa before presenting his view.

The seventeenth chapter treats Bhāṣāvidhāna, Sambuddhividhi and Kākuvidhāna of Abhinavagupta’s text. Therefore, this chapter is called Kākusvaravyaṇjana. In Abhinavagupta’s text all these three subjects go in one chapter while in others, the chapter closes after Bhāṣāvidhi and Sambuddhividhi and Kākuvidhi are treated in a fresh Adhyāya. Abhinavagupta in this chapter discusses the grade of characters who are to speak in Sanskrit, Prākrit or other dialects. He defines the Prākrit language and Pāṭhya. Abhinavagupta while commenting on the use of the seven Svaras, rejected the musical employment of Svaras in Pāṭhya. He argues that Pāṭhya is different from Gāna which is the Dhruva song proper. The chapter also deals with the various modes of high addressing high, middling or low characters. The seven musical notes, three Sthānas
and four Svaras are interpreted by him in this chapter. Abhinavagupta explains that Varṇas are Svaradharmas or qualities of sound because they have clear and special meaning. Then he interprets the Kāku and its divisions

The ten varieties of Rūpakas and their definitions form the content of chapter eighteenth. Abhinavagupta explains the definition of Daśarūpaka generally and discusses the special features of each Rūpaka. He also mentions the different views of his predecessors and states that it was possible to have the features of one Rūpaka in other. Nātyaśāstra gives in detail the representation of death while describing the Abhinaya. But Abhinavagupta points out that such discrimination is improper because the spectators would lose their interest. Hence death as such should never be represented on the stage. According to the view of Abhinavagupta, the number of heroes is twelve in each act and records the views regarding the number of heroes.

The nineteenth chapter contains the description of the plot of the drama and structural analysis of the play. Abhinavagupta interprets Sandhis, Avasthas, Arthaprakṛtis, Arthopakṣepakas and the like. When he explains the Arthaprakṛti, Abhinavagupta’s view seems to be different
from those of Bharata. In the commentary of Anusandhis, his ideas become vague and contradictory. Unlike Bharata he accepts five kinds of Arthopakṣepakas. Abhinavagupta considers plot as the body of Nāṭya and the Rasa as its soul. Then he explains how the plot creates beauty.

Abhinavagupta concentrates mainly on Vṛttis and their definitions in chapter twenty. He indicates the importance of Vṛttis in Nāṭya. Vṛttis are of four types: Bhāratī, Sāttvatī, Kāśīkī and Ārabhatī. According to Bharata these Vṛttis originated from Vedas. But Abhinavagupta comments upon Vṛttis in a reasonable way. Bharata’s definition of Sāttvatī is entirely different from the view of Abhinavagupta. According to Bharata, Sāttvatī has exuberance of joy and absence of sorrow. But Abhinavagupta explains Sāttvatī from Sattva or mind and Sāttvatī Guṇa as mānasovāpāraḥ. He claims that Sāttvatī is endowed with Sāttvata quality.

In the twentyfirst chapter, Abhinavagupta elucidates how dramatic representation is centered in Āhāryābhinaya which is based on Nepathya. He also dwells on the different types of costumes of various characters, their makeup and stage setting. Abhinavagupta comments about the reason of later discussion of Āhārya Abhinaya among the other three
Abhinayas. He stresses the importance of Āhārya among other Abhinayas. After the description of the different kinds of costumes of various classes, he deals with the various types of dresses which should be used in dramatic representation.

Alaṅkāras of young women are dealt with in the beginning of the twentysecond chapter. Then Abhinavagupta describes the qualities of men, ten kinds of Kāmāvasthas, eight kinds of Nāyikas and also discusses the acting of various types of women. The feminine graces of young women are meant to support sentiments in drama and they consist of changes in respect of their faces and other limbs. But Abhinavagupta maintains that these graces of women pertain to the body only and they are not the nature of the mental mood. The physical graces are Bhāva, Hāvā and Hela which arise from one another being different aspects of Sattva. Here Abhinavagupta’s explanation of bhāva is not the same as the one given in connection with the Rasa theory. Then he explains the ten natural graces of women and eight qualities of men.

The twentythird chapter called Vaiśika contains the discussion of Vaiśika – natural qualities of women and 5 types of men. Abhinavagupta
defines the *Vaiśika*. Then he deals with the messenger in love affairs and discusses the three types of women according to their qualities.

The twentyfourth chapter deals with the classification of women, men, hero, heroine, goddesses, dancer, king and ministers. This chapter is called as *Strīpumṣopacāra* by *Abhinavagupta*. But, it is attached by some others in thirtyfirst chapter.

At the beginning of twentyfifth chapter of *Abhinavagupta*’s commentary, there is the explanation of *Citṛābhinaya*. He clearly explains the *Vibhāva, Anubhāva* and *Bhāva*. Then he explains the difference between *Apavārita* and *Janāntika*. In the former, the speech is concealed from all others as it is intended to be listened to by the particular character, while in the latter it is concealed from the particular character only. *Abhinavagupta* mentions the representation of some other objects and ideas like God *Skanda, Goddess Sarasvati* etc. according to the view of *Kohala* and others.

The twentysixth chapter is called *Prakṛtivikalpana* by *Abhinavagupta*. It is attached by others in the thirtyfourth chapter. The verses are arranged in different order in different texts. *Abhinavagupta* begins his commentary on three types of natural of characters. He deals
with the Sukumāraprayoga, Svabhāvamadhuratvam of women, definition of Alāikāra, two divisions of Prayoga and qualities of Ācārya and Śīṣyas.

At the beginning of chapter twentyseventh, Abhinavagupta comments on Siddhi which is related to Nāṭya. Siddhi is divided into two – Daivī and Mānuṣī. He also gives the definition of Siddhi and their divisions.

In chapter twentyeight, the definition of the Jātis are given in prose by Abhinavagupta while in other texts they are in Ārya metre. He deals with Jātis, four kinds of musical instruments, seven Svaras and their description. Nāṭyaśāstra describes the theory and practice of the vocal and instrumental music in seven chapters beginning from chapter twentyeight. Three Kutapas are mentioned – Tatā, Avanaddha and Nāṭyakṛta. In the Tatā group, the vocal musicians and the players of the stringed instruments and the flutists are included. In the Avanaddha, the players of Mrdaṇga, and the Dardura are included. Bharata and Abhinavagupta called the music as Gāndharva because it belongs to Gāndharvas and was very dear to Gods. Gāndharva is based on the Svara, Tāla and Pada and various musical instruments. Mūrechanā is explained by Bharata as the gradual Āroha and Avaroha of the seven
notes. But according to Abhinavagupta the order is explained by Āroha and Avaroha note by Mūrcchanā. Bharata treats eighteen Jātis which are the modes of music. Abhinavagupta has given the use of the various Rāgas indetail and orchestra which consisted of four kinds of musical instruments Tāla (stringed), Suśira, Ghana and Avanaddha (drums).

Chapter twentynine mainly contains four Varnas and thirtythree Alāṅkāras based on them and their definitions. In Abhinavagupta’s text Āroha and Avaroha, Alāṅkāras are not defined while other texts do so.

In chapter, thirty of Nātyaśāstra one more verse is added which is not found in Abhinavagupta’s text. It was probably an interpolation by Kirtidhara. This chapter explains the hollow musical instruments and flutes. The flute was the most ancient musical instrument in India. Abhinavagupta says that the Viṇa, Flute and the vocal music should be in perfect harmony. He also deals with the manner of producing different notes in flute playing.

Chapter thirtyone of Abhinavagupta differs from the other texts both in the number of verses and in definition. In this chapter, he mainly deals with Tāla and Laya and also discusses observations of time
in songs and playing of instruments and characteristics of some minor plays. According to him, Tāla is the foundation of music. He also explains Kala which is the measure of time in the musical sphere. He interprets the Mārgas of rhythm which are of three kinds – Citra, Vṛtti and Dakṣina. Tālas are of two types, Tryasra and Caturasra. Laya is of three kinds- Druta, Madhya and Vilambita.

Twelve more definitions and examples of Dhruvas are given in the thirtysecond chapter of other texts than in Abhinavagupta’s text. Bharata has not recognized Mātrāvrttas as Gāthas in Dhruvagāna as they involve Layabhaṅgas of minute distinction. Layabhaṅgas come strictly under Deśītāla. Though Abhinavagupta defines the main divisions of them in chapter thirtyone and points out their uses in chapter twelve. It deals with discourse on Dhruvas six qualifications of the teacher of music and the pupil. He also interprets Dhruva songs and their definitions and gives examples of Dhruva songs to be sung during the performance of play. In Nātyaśāstra, Bharata devotes one long chapter in full for the treatment of Dhruvas. According to him Dhruva is so called because in it the word, Varna, Alankara, Yati, Pāṇi and Laya are harmoniously fixed. But Abhinavagupta suggests that they are so
called because they stabilize the production or their themes are of fixed significance. *Dhruva* songs are of five types in accordance with their place and mood. *Abhinavagupta* interprets it as referring to the song that helps the sentiment and mood.

Chapter thirtythree is read with chapter thirtytwo in all other texts while in *Abhinavagupta’s* text, it forms a separate chapter. This chapter mainly deals with the *Avanaddha* type of instrument such as *Mrdanga*, *Dardura* and *Panava*. *Mrdanga* and *Panava* are drums with two heads while *Panava* is thinner in the middle part and fastened with strings. *Dardura* is a drum with one face shaped like a *Ghaṭa*. *Abhinavagupta* explains the four *Mārgas* of drum playing and discusses the six *Karaṇas* in connection with drum. He also discusses the eighteen rhythmic *Jātis* of drum playing.

*Abhinavagupta’s* commentary on the thirtyfourth chapter of *Nāṭyaśāstra* contains three kinds of *prakṛtis* among men and women and their characteristics. He also remarks on five kinds of heroes in plays, different kinds of women in plays such as *Mahādevi*, *Devi*, *Nartika*, *Paricārika* and characteristics of *Nṛpa* and his associates. The distribution of roles in the play, qualification of actors like *Sūtradhāra*,
etc. are elaborated by Abhinavagupta in this chapter. Definitions given for eighteen Jātis in chapter thirtyfour differ in Abhinavagupta text while in others they seem to be more elaborate.

The subject matters of thirtyfifth and thirtysixth chapters of the text of Abhinavagupta differ from that of other texts. In these chapters, he deals with several members on the staff of a dramatic troupe and their characteristics. He also interprets the qualification of Sūtradhāra, Paripārśvika and actors like Viṭa, Śakara, Vidūṣaka, Ceṭa, Nāyika and Gaṇika. It also explains the three types of impersonation in the play such as Anurūpa, Rūpānurūpa and Virūpa.

Abhinavagupta’s text ends with chapter thirtyseven while most of the other texts end with the thirtysixth. The reason for the extension of the number in Abhinavagupta seems to be the introduction of the thirtysix Tattvas one for each chapter by him. The commentary of the thirtyseventh is headed by the verse indicating Anuttaramdhāma of the Pratyabhijñā School. At the beginning of this chapter, Abhinavagupta explains how Nātya came down to the earth from heaven through Nahuṣa who had encouraged Bharata to promulgate Nātyaśāstra on the earth.
A critical analysis of various interpretations of *Rasasūtra*

According to *Bhaṭṭalollaṭa*, Rasa primarily belongs to the hero like Rāma. The spectator ascribes the Rasa to the actor after appreciating his performance which actually belongs to the character like Rāma. The spectator experiences delight by his knowledge about Rāma’s love for Sīta. That love is called *Sthāyin*, which becomes full–fledged by *Vibhāva*, *Anubhāva* and *Vyabhicārin*. *Bhaṭṭalollaṭa* does not account for the apprehension of Rasa by the spectator or the aesthete. According to him Rasa is apprehended in the character and the actor —

‘mukhyayā vṛttyā rāmādau anukārye’ nukartaryāpi
cānusandhānabalāt’.  

Mukundamadhavasharma remarks that according to *Bhaṭṭalollaṭa*, Rasa is produced by a connection of the *Sthāyin* with *Vibhāva*, *Anubhāva* and *Vyabhicārin*. Therefore, this view is called *Utpattivāda*.  

G.V.Davane remarks that *Bhaṭṭalollaṭa* speaks of the superimposition of *Pātrasthāyībhāva* on the nāta just as an *Advaita Vedāntin* speaks of the *Adhyāsa* of Jagat on Brahman. He characterizes him as a *Mīmāṃsaka* because in his spirit to refute *Vyañjana* he includes it under *Abhidhā* accompanied by *Arthāpatti*. *Bhaṭṭalollaṭa* underlines the necessity of the
identification of actor with the role. He holds that Rasa is superimposed on the actor by the spectator who believes that the actor himself is the original personage. Walimbe holds that Bhaṭṭalollāta was the first commentator of Nāṭyasāstra to accept the importance of the actor in the process of Rasa.\textsuperscript{24} Though fallacious, it is the spectator’s total identification with the actor who enacts the character that produces Rasa.

Bhaṭṭalollāta’s interpretation of Rasa is criticized by Śrīśaṅkuka who argues that there is no basis to infer the existence of the Sthāyin because it has no contact with Vibhāva, Anubhāva and Vyabhīcārin –

‘Vibhāvādyayoge sthāyinah lingabhāvenāvagatyanupapatteḥ’.\textsuperscript{25}

Bhaṭṭalollāta’s contention that Sthāyin is intensified by Vibhāva which results in Rasa is questioned by Śrīśaṅkuka who has argued that this intensification of Sthāyin takes place in respective degrees which totally goes against the process of Rasa and claims that Rasa does not admit of any division. The stages of intensification of Sthāyin being innumerable, the stages of a Rasa like Śrṅgāra can also be innumerable. Both Śrīśaṅkuka and Abhinavagupta have not given to Bhaṭṭalollāta any credit for his two very remarkable insights into the nature of Rasa – (i) that it is primarily the emotion of the original character in the
story that the actor tries to convey to the spectator and (ii) that the actor
can achieve this only when he merges himself in the personality of the
character viz, in his role.

Śrīśaṅkuka’s view on Rasa is based on Anumāna and is called
Anumitivāda and he is designated as Naiyyāyika. According to
Śrīśaṅkuka, the actor imitates the actions of the hero to whom a certain
Sthāyin belongs or it is an imitation of the character’s Sthāyin
‘Sthāyībhāvo mukhyarāmādigasthāyyanukaraṇarūpaḥ’.26
When Sthāyin is inferred by the spectators it is called Rasa—‘Anukaraṇa-
rūpatvādeva ca nāmāntareṇa vyapadiṣṭah rasah’.27 It means that the
spectator cognizes the Sthāyin as belonging to the hero imitated by the
actor who is the most important factor in this process of Rasa.
Śrīśaṅkuka holds that the Sthāyin is not provided by the play but it is all
the while implied—‘Sthāyī tu kāvyabalādapi nānusandheyah’.28 The
Sthāyin of the character being imitated by the actor leads to Rasa.
Śrīśaṅkuka argues that the peculiar apprehension that the spectator avails
is of the identification of the actor with the character particularity situated
as ‘that Rāma who is happy is this one’—‘Na cātra nartaka eva sukhīti
pratipattih. Nāpyayameva rāma iti. Na cāpyayam na sukhīti----yah sukhī
śrāmāḥ aśāvayamiti pratītirastūti'.
Śrīśāṅkuka observes that the spectator does not have the apprehension of the actor’s sentiment. He also asserts that what is apprehended by the spectator is the actor’s imitation. According to Śrīśāṅkuka, the Sthāyin, which is brought to knowledge by Vibhāva, Anubhāva and Vyabhicārīn, is Rasa because it can be relished. If we accept the view of Śrīśāṅkuka, we have to treat the inference of ordinary experience of life as Rasa. The realization of Rasa differs from the mere inferential knowledge of a Sthāyin because it is direct experience.

Śrīśāṅkuka’s famous simile of the painted horse and his vivid distinction between the verbal expression of a sentiment and its dramatic representation on the stage are also points which have a considerable validity in the analysis of dramatic experience. Walimbe observes,

“When Śrīśāṅkuka says that the actor imitates the character’s sentiment, what he perhaps means is that the actor tries his best to convey the sentiment as convincingly and vividly as possible, which, for the spectator, obliterates the distinction between the original and the actor”.”
Bhaftatauta, Abhinavagupta’s teacher refutes Šriśaṅkuka’s theory, which lacks an adequate philosophical basis — ‘tadimāmapyantastattva-sūnyam na vimardakṣamam’. When something is called an imitation of anything else, it must be supported by evidence. The imitation of an object is apprehended on the basis of that of the self – same object, as it obtains in reality. He observes that there is no basis to believe that the actor imitates the character such as Rasa because nobody has previously seen the sentiment of love as belonging to Rama. Bhaffalollaṭa holds that where the knowledge of the indicative cause is wrong, the inference of something possessing a similar appearance also does not stand to reason – yatrāpi lingajñānam mithyā tatrāpi na tadābhāsānumānamayuktam’. He objected the possibility of Rasa being the actor’s imitation of the original character’s sentiment from the point of view of the spectator’s apprehension. Šriśaṅkuka argues that the actor imitates the character and the aesthetic state is apprehended through imitation. It is a causal relation. Hence the spectator’s or the reader’s behaviour cannot be reduced to an act or imitation. Some modern critics argue that Bhaftatauta’s criticism of Šriśaṅkuka’s theory is not completely valid.
Abhinavagupta does not accept the view of Śrīśaṅkuka because all imitation is devoid of any meaning and value in the aesthetic experience.

The third view of the interpretation of Rasasūtra that Abhinavagupta mentions is that of the Sāṁkhya philosophers. According to Sāṁkhya’s view, Rasa is of the nature of pleasure and pain – Sāṁkhyaśrṣā sukhadukhasvabhāvo rasah. All things in the world possess the cause of pleasure and pain which is not an unmixed one. Therefore, the aesthetic experience based on pain and pleasure and it is bound to be a mixed one. Sāṁkhyaśas do not distinguish between Sthāyin and Rasa. According to their formulation, some Rasas may contribute to the happiness of the spectator while others give rise to his unhappiness; thus this view is not practical and reasonable because it is impossible to have a one-sided and uniform aesthetic or dramatic experience.

Bhaṭṭalollāṭa was the first person to propound a theory based on the similarity of yogic ecstasy and aesthetic experience. Abhinavagupta’s comments clearly show that he had a high respect for Bhaṭṭalollāṭa who treats Rasa as an experience belonging to the spectators. His analysis shows how a dramatic performance appeals to the spectators. He
combines the elements of both *Mīmāṃsa* and *Sāṃkhya* philosophy. According to *Bhaṭṭalollāṭa*, *Rasa* is neither directly apprehended nor produced nor known. *Rasa* is not *Vyarīgya* because suggestion or *Vyarīgya* of *Rasa* is possible if it already exists. It can be relished only in two ways either as belonging to the actor himself and as belonging to the spectator himself or as belonging to someone else. The apprehension of *Rasa* can not be properly said to take the form of direct experience or remembrance etc.–‘*Tanna pratītirunabhāvasmrtyādirūparasasya yuktam*’. Spectator will be totally indifferent to another person’s emotion – ‘*svagatavaparagatavādi ca pūrvavad vikalpyam*’.

According to *Bhaṭṭalollāṭa* *Rasa* in dramatic art or poetry goes through two stages:– that of realization and that of being realized. It is brought by a special process or function known as *Bhāvakatva* which is described as the power of generalization. It is quite different from the process of *Abhidhā*. After the function of this *Bhāvakatva*, the *Rasa* is relished by another process known as *Bhojakatva or Bhoga* (delectation). The function of delectation is quite different from the ordinary means of knowledge like direct experience, remembrance etc. *Bhojakatva* or the attribute of *Sattvagyuna* which resides in the mind of aesthete is brought to
prominence by subordinating the elements of Rajas and Tamas. The delectation is also characterized by perfect repose in the spectators own consciousness and the nature of this consciousness is that of the joy of illumination due to the predominance of the element of sattvāguṇa. The delectation approximates the relish of the bliss of Supreme Absolute. So the spectator’s enjoyment is not Brahmananda itself but it comes nearer to Brahmananda—

‘Parabrahmāsvādasavidhena

bhogena param bhujyate’. 36

Abhinavagupta argues that this kind of enjoyment of Rasa is possible in the world as it cannot be apprehended, produced or revealed. He emphasizes that the relish of Rasa is an apprehension only and it would only require a different name because of the difference of its means. Abhinavagupta makes it clear that in Bhaṭṭanāyaka’s theory, Rasa is the poetic content revealed by the process of Samvedana, being the object of supreme consciousness which consists of the experience of relish. He suggests that both these processes (Bhāvakatva and Bhojakatva) of generalization of dramatic substance through the artist’s skillful representation and of the relish ability of the emotions are achieved through Vyañjana or suggestion only. Hence, it is not necessary
to accept two separate processes, Bhāvakatva and Bhojakatva as argued by Bhaṭṭanāyaka. Both Bhaṭṭanāyaka and Abhinavagupta accept the principle of generalization of characters and their mental conditions. But according to Bhaṭṭanāyaka this generalization is achieved by a separate process known as Bhāvakatva. Bhaṭṭanāyaka’s pivotal view is that the apprehension of Rasa is an extra-ordinary process which is distinct from the ordinary process of apprehension. This apprehension reaches an ecstatic or transcendental level. This state of apprehension is accepted by Abhinavagupta in a rather modified form in the course of his own exposition of Rasa. Enjoyment of Rasa by the spectator is the main foundation of Bhaṭṭanāyaka’s theory which terms Rasanispatti as Bhukti of Rasa, and his theory is known as Bhuktivāda. It can be seen that the theory of Bhaṭṭanāyaka has really paved the way for Abhinavagupta’s Abhivyaktivāda. Most of the conclusions of Bhaṭṭanāyaka are acceptable to Abhinavagupta.

After giving the views of his earlier interpreters on Rasasūtra of Bharata, Abhinavagupta discusses his own position and his debt to his precursors. He explains that he is formulating his own theories on the basis laid by others and states that his views are only an
improvement on what has been said by earlier interpreters—

Āmnāyasiddhe kimapūrvameta-
tsamvidvikāse'dhigatāgamitvam.

Ittham svayam grāhyamahārhaheatu
dvandvena kim dūṣayitā na lokaḥ.

Abhinavagupta gives high tribute to his predecessors who have founded a kind of staircase on which any scholar can climb up, realize, and interpret the essence of art —

Ūrdhvardhamāruhya yadarthatattvam-
dhīḥ paśyati śrāntimavedayantī.

Phalam tadādyaiḥ parikalpitānām
vivekasopānaparamparānām.

The first attempt to do interpretation or a doctrine is like a picture without a prop. But once the right way has been seen, any one can construct bridges or finding out a place —

Citram nirālambanameva manye
prameya siddhaḥ prathamāvatāram.

sanmārgalābhe sati sethubandha-
purapratiśthādi na vismayāya.
Abhinavagupta says that what he now does is only improving upon the ideas of earlier scholars and not disqualifying or demolishing —

\[ Tasmātsatāmatra na dūṣitāni \]
\[ matāni tānyeva tu sodhitāni. \]
\[ pūrvapratि�ṣṭhāpitayojanāsu \]
\[ mūlapratिषṭhaphalamāmananti. \]

J.L. Masson and M.V. Patwardhan observe,

"Abhinavagupta is the first writer in India to deal with issues of religion in terms of literary criticism and vice versa. This marks his greatest departure from Ānandavardhana as indeed from all earlier writers". 38

A close reading of Abhinavabhārati reveals that Śṛiśaṅkuka, Bhaṭtalollata, Bhaṭṭanāyaka and BhaṭṭaTauta had the deepest influence on Abhinavagupta. According to Śṛiśaṅkuka, Alaukika is the nature of knowledge that the spectator enjoys in the theatre; an opinion which is also accepted by Abhinavagupta. In Abhinavabhārati we can see many references and quotations from Bhaṭṭatauta which show his impact on Abhinavagupta’s thought. Abhinavagupta’s Tanmayībhāva is to some extant equal to Ḥṛdayasamvāda or cīttavṛttisādhāraṇiḥbhāva of
BhaṭṭaTauta. Therefore, Abhinavagupta is more indebted to BhaṭṭaTauta than others.

According to Abhinavagupta Rasa is a meaning of Kāvya – ‘tatkāvyārtho rasah’.\(^{39}\) He explains that there is an additional idea or knowledge in Kāvya which is different from and additional to the primary meaning of the words and sentence. This idea occurs to the mind of the hearer or spectator. In the case of ‘Agnau prādāt’ and Rātrimāsata’ its literal meaning is related to the past tense. But there occurs a different idea in the reader’s mind in which the verbs are freed from the given tense and are suggested in the forms ‘āste’ and ‘pradāmi’. This additional idea is realized by the Sahṛdaya whose heart is moved to look into see them clearly – ‘Adhikārī cātra vimalapratībhānasāliḥṛdayaḥ’\(^ {40}\) To expose the additional meaning of poetry Abhinavagupta quotes a verse from Abhijñānaśākuntala—

Grīvābhangābhirāmam muhuranupatati syandane dattadrśṭiḥ
paścārdhena praviṣṭhaḥ śarapatanabhayād bhūyasā pūrvakāyam
darbhairūrdhāvalidhaiḥ śramavivṛtāmukhabhramśibhiḥ kīrnavartmā
paśyodagraplutavādiıyati bahutaram stokamurvyām prayāti.

(AS., 1, V., 7.).
Its literal meaning is the description of a frightened deer. From this verse, we get an additional knowledge which arises in the mind of an aesthete, which has Bhaya as its object. It means the Bhaya is free from spatio-temporal specialities—‘Bhayameva param desakālādyanā-lirigitam’. It means that the knowledge of a particular time and place obstructs attainment of the extra-ordinary knowledge. But the consciousness of an aesthete is not restricted by time and place. All the objects in the world have spatio-temporal relation. Here Abhinavagupta reaches very close to the philosophy of Kashmir Śaivism. In Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśini, Abhinavagupta explains the nature of the consciousness of an Adhikārin,

“Yataḥ samvitsvabhāvo asau samvidaśca na deśena
kālenā na svarūpena ko ’pi bhedō”.

When an aesthete sees a drama he is in a state which is outside both time and place and his heart is transformed. In the process of enjoyment of the play, his soul expands and he reaches a state of ecstasy. This endless or unobstructed cognition is experienced by the aesthete. It overwhelms the heart of the aesthete and he enjoys Bhayānakaraṇa, “Vighnabahulebhya vilakṣānam nirvighnapratītigrāhyam sākṣādeva hṛdaye niviśamānam
The Bhaya, which originally occurred in the deer, is also enjoyed by the aesthete. Abhinavagupta claims that this celestial mental state is universal and can be enjoyed by every one. ‘Sarvasāmājikānām ekaghanatā’. This is possible because of the transformation of the individual’s personality into universal or the Sthāyin being generalized. This universalisation is possible because of the similarity of the hearts of aesthetes (hrdaya samvāda) and their consciousnesses are also free from spatio–temporal limitation. The suggestive power used by the artist in the language and the histrionic talents and gestures on the part of the actors remove all barriers of space, time and individuality. Then the spectator is free from Duṣyantatva, Naṭatva or even his own identity. The generalized experience becomes the private experience of each one of the spectators immersed into it. This experience of one aesthete relates to hrdayasamveda of other aesthete which results in the uniformity (ekaghanata) of the imaginative experience of all spectators. This uniformity of feeling is a result of sympathy which is the basis of all human activities. This sympathetic induction has also been called empathy which is a mental state involving the identification of oneself.
with the mental state of another. This is an important characteristic of aesthetic experience. Therefore, Abhinavagupta says that the conscious experience of the individual is satisfied in the awareness, contemplation and enjoyment of these fundamental patterns of life. This joy is called as *Camatkāra* by Abhinavagupta. He defines *Camatkāra* as ‘bhuṅjānasyādbhutabhogaspandāvīśtasya ca manāḥkaraṇam camatkāra iti’, which means that it is a state of Alaukikānanda. Abhinavagupta in his commentary on Īśvarapratyabhijñākārika, clearly states that Vimarśa is *Camatkāra*. In *Abhinavabharati* he states that the word *Camatkāra* denotes the state of aesthetic experience. Viśvanātha also quoted a verse in his *Sāhityadarpa*, and indicates that the essence of Rasa is *Camatkāra* and it is found in all the Rasas—

\[
Rase sāraścamatkārah sarvatrāpi anubhūyate
taccamatkārasāratve sarvatrāpi adbhuto rasaḥ.\]

Therefore, *Rasānubhava* is identified as *Camatkāra*. In this state the finite consciousness of an aesthete becomes infinite consciousness, when the aesthete forgets himself and cognizes the *Sthāyin*, and this cognition of *Sthāyin* gives the aesthete an unmixed joy —

\[‘Sarvathā rasanātmakāvītavighnapratītigrāhyo bhāva eva rasaḥ.\]
According to *Abhinavagupta* *Rasa* is *Caitanya* and it reflects in the mirror-like heart of an aesthete. Therefore, he emphasizes the state of the mind or heart of an aesthete and defines it because it is essential for the appreciation of art when the state of the mind of an aesthete is cleared and free from prejudices and preoccupations he can enjoy the art. *Abhinavagupta* points out seven obstacles which generally stand in the way of *Rasa* experience. He states that *Vibhāvas* etc. remove the obstacles which stand in the way of *Rasa* experience — ‘*Tatra vighnāpasārakāḥ vibhāvaprabhṛtayah*’\(^{48}\) and when the aesthete’s consciousness is free from these obstacles he enjoys *Rasa*. *Rasa* is designated by various names such as *Camatkāra*, *Nirveṣa*, *Rasana*, Āsvādana, *Bhoga*, *Samāpatti*, Laya, Viṣrānti etc.\(^{49}\) The obstacles are the following: the first obstacle is the spectator’s incapacity for apprehension because the themes presented by the artist are unrealistic. Therefore, they are beyond the scope of the average reader’s imagination or sensibility —

‘*Samvedyamasambhāvayamānaḥ samvedya*  
*Samvidam viniveśayitumevana śaknoti kā*  
*tatraviśrāntiritipra thamo vighnaḥ*’. \(^{50}\)
Abhinavagupta suggests two remedies to remove this obstacle. Firstly, the spectator should widen the horizon of his vision and sensibility. Secondly, the artist must introduce convincing personalities and must create proper circumstances —

‘Tadapasārāne hṛdayasamvādo lokasāmānyavastuviṣayah’

‘Ata eva nissāmānyotkarṣopadeśavyutpattiprayojane nāṭakādau prakhyātavastuviṣayatvādiniyamena nirūpayiṣyate’.

Abhinavagupta, while stating the first obstacle, expresses his idea of aesthetic experience (kā tatra viśrāntiḥ) which shows the confluence of philosophy and aesthetics. Abhinavagupta’s concept of Viśrānti is used as equal to aesthetic experience. This philosophical term Viśrānti is explained in Tantrāloka. As one attains the state of complete repose then all phenomenal objects are merged into one’s own self. During the time of Rasa enjoyment, an aesthete attains the state of complete repose because he is free from spatio–temporal limitation preoccupation and individuality. He uses the word Viśrānti to explain the ultimate state of aesthete during the time of aesthetic experience.

The second obstacle is the absence of proper aesthetic distance between dramatic situation and the spectator. But for the enjoyment of
Rasa, the feeling of pleasure or pain as that of the poetical character alone is desired to be experienced by the aesthete. During the time of aesthetic experience, the aesthete must find himself free from his own temporal or spatial limitations and must find the character as someone belonging to the situation immediately present to the aesthete. As a result of this obstacle, the spectator identifies the various dramatic feelings within himself and experiences them accordingly. Abhinavagupta suggests various dramatic elements for avoiding this obstacle. He puts forward dramatic elements such as dance, music customs etc. and the elements of the theatre, which help and create a poetic atmosphere and draw the mind of the spectator away from his personal affairs and feelings for enjoying the supramundane, supreme bliss or supreme Rasa (Mahārasa).

The third obstacle refers to an aesthete who is afflicted by his own feeling of pleasure or pain. An aesthete has a sensitive nature who can empathize with the subject matter of drama and he can also identify himself with the feelings and emotions of the characters. Therefore, the person whose heart is free from personal feelings alone can relish the sentiment depicted in the poetry or drama. Abhinavagupta suggests that
this obstacle is overcome by the employment of certain technical devices such as music etc.

The fourth obstacle is the defect in the means of apprehension of Rasa. The process of cognition is an important factor for experiencing Rasa —

‘kimca pratītyupāyānāmabhāve katham pratītiḥ’.

Abhinavagupta argues that in the absence of the proper means of apprehension, the realization of Rasa cannot take place.

Lack of clear evidence or the absence of clarity is the next obstacle for the realization of Rasa. It means that the lack of evidences also affects the quality of the perceptions. The presence of clarity is sufficient for an aesthete to derive complete Rasa experience from a drama or poetry without its acting or recitation. The realistic representation such as Vṛttis, pravṛttis, Lokadharmi and Nātyadharmi is the means to avoid this obstacle —

Tasmāttadubhayavignavighāte ‘bhinayāloka-
dharmivṛttipravṛttypaskṛtāh samabhишicyante.

The sixth obstacle to the experience of Rasa is the lack of prominence given to the Sthāyin. The eternal illumination of Sthāyin is
essential in the Rasa realization. The Sthāyin pre-exists in the spectator in a latent state in the form of Samskāra or Vāsana. The latent emotions or Sthāyins become patent with the help of Vibhāva, Anubhāva and Vyabhicārin. The lack of prominence is accepted only in the case of Vibhāva, Anubhāva and Vyabhicārin. Therefore, Sthāyin is distinct from Vibhāva etc. Vibhāva, Anubhāva and Vyabhicārin should aim at predominantly depicting the Sthāyin. The aesthete gets the complete satisfaction only by finding the permanent mental states within him. This satisfaction or the realization of Rasa differs from the mere knowledge of a Sthāyin.

Apradhāne ca vastuni kasya samvid viśrāmyati
tadatiriktaḥ sthāyyevas tathā carvanāpātram.⁵⁴

The last obstacle in the realization of Rasa is the rise of a doubt or confusion as to the exact nature of the Sthāyin in an emotional situation. The Vibhāva, Anubhāva and Vyabhicārin are not separately restricted for any particular Sthāyin because they do not have any fixed relation with the Sthāyin ‘Tatrānubhāvānāṃ vibhāvānāṃ Vyabhicārinām ca prthak sthāyini niyamo nāsti’.⁵⁵ The unity of Vibhāva, Anubhāva and Vyabhicārin has been laid down for the removal of the obstacle as in the
case of a doubt. Referring to Abhinavagupta’s discussion of the seven obstacles and of the means of their removal, Walimbe remarks,

“Here he gives detailed instructions as to how each of the three human agencies involved in the process of \textit{Rasa} – the dramatist, the actor and the spectator or \textit{sāmājika} – should try to rise to the best of his skill and ability, how all their individual efforts should converge towards the apprehension of \textit{Rasa}, the collective experience of human emotion in the theatre”.\footnote{56}

Every aesthete has the ability to infer the mental mood of other people on the basis of his own experience which is seen in daily life. This causality when depicted on the stage is entitled as \textit{Vibhāvas}. The \textit{Vibhāvas} used by the poet are brought to a state of relish which is the nature of consciousness free from all obstacles. The relish is nothing other than a blissful consciousness. It means that blissful consciousness or blissful relish itself is \textit{Rasa} and not the object of the blissful cognition. Even in the case of \textit{Karunārasa} there is the same blissful relish. \textit{Karunārasa} is not painful because literary world is distinct from real
world. The blissful consciousness is the realization of the self by itself.

The Rasas are variously named as Śṛṅgāra, Karuṇa etc. only because of the consciousness effected by the Sthāyin at a certain stage of experience. This realization of Rasa is not as final stage. In the final stage of the realization of Rasa, there is the relish of Mahārasa alone. The greatest difference between Bhaṭṭanāyaka and Abhinavagupta is in respect of the Rasa realization. Abhinavagupta states that Rasa is suggested and it is relished in the manner of realization. This unalloyed relish is identical with the self. Therefore according to the theory of Abhinavagupta, Rasa realization means the realization of the self by itself. Rasa exists only during the time of its relish and it is totally distinct from the Sthāyin. Rasa is called as Rasa only so long as the apprehension of relish goes on —

Na tu carvaṇātiriktakālāvalambī
sthāyivilakṣaṇa eva rasah.⁵⁷

Therefore, Abhinavagupta does not accept the view of Śrīśaṅkuka and others that Sthāyin itself is designated as Rasa. If the Sthāyin itself becomes Rasa this relish of Rasa can occur everytime in our daily life – ‘Evam hi laukiko’pi kim na rasah’.⁵⁸ The cognition of
Sthāyin, which is obtained by inference, is not Rasa. Therefore, Bharata does not include Sthāyin in his Rasasūtra—

‘Tena sthāyipraśītirunumittitarūpā prācīyā na rasaḥ
ata eva sūtre sthāyīgraḥaḥam na kṛtam’.

Abhinavagupta clearly reveals that Rasa is different from Sthāyin because the sole essence of Rasa consists of aesthetic enjoyment –

‘Laukikacittavṛttyanumāne kā rasatā’.

Cittavṛtti means Sthāyin which is Laukika. But Rasa is non-worldly experience and it has nothing to do with worldly feelings like memory or inference. Therefore Abhinavagupta holds that the apprehension of Rasa is distinct from other cognitions –

‘Tenālaukikacamatkārātmā rasāsvādāḥ
smṛtyanumānalaukikasamvedanavilakṣaṇa eva’.

Abhinavagupta emphasizes that the relish of Rasa is distinct from the ordinary means of knowledge like memory, inference, worldly self-consciousness etc. This relish of Rasa is an expansion of the self and a transformation of the spirit brought forth by the artistic imagination.

After discussing the difference between Rasa and Sthāyin Abhinavagupta clears out the nature of the relish of Rasa and its
difference from general perception and extraordinary perception of a Yogin who has achieved spiritual perception. The relish of Rasa happens as a result of the identification of the aesthete with the situation and he infers the mental state of other people on the basis of his own observation of daily life and he perceives the Vibhāvas etc. not in an indifferent manner but by strength of his sensibility or the nature of his heart. It means that the relish of Rasa is the very essence of transcendental delight and is being effected on the strength of the unity of the extraordinary Vibhāva, Anubhāva and Vyabhicārin. 

‘Kintvalaукikaviбhāవādисamyогабалопанатаивеям carvaṇā’.

When the aesthete experiences the supreme Rasa or transcendental delight without employing the process of inference and recollection, it is not the product of some other valid means of cognition, ‘Na ca sā carvana prānimāntarāt yenādhunā smṛtih syāt’. This aesthetic experience or relish of Rasa is quite distinct from the worldly love etc. because they are produced by the ordinary means of knowledge like perception, inference, analogy etc. Likewise aesthetic experience also differs from the experience of a perfected Yogin in which the Yogin experiences the undifferentiated bliss of his self and it is free from sensual
attachment as he is detached from his own object of contemplation and absence of beauty –

‘Sā ca pratyāksānumāṇāndilaukkapramāṇajanitaratyādyā-
vabodhataḥ tathā yogipratyāksajanitataṭasthapara-
samvittijñānātsakalavaiśayikoparāgaśūnyaśuddhapara-
yogigatasvātmānandaikaghanānubhavācca viśiṣyate’. 63

Abhinavagupta clearly reveals the experience of a Yogi that there can be no beauty because there is no relation to objects.

After discussing the distinction between the aesthetic experience and the other experience, Abhinavagupta emphasizes the Supra-mundane, nature of the Vibhāvas. The Vibhāvas are not the material cause of the production of Rasa because Rasa is not Kārya – ‘ata eva vibhāvadayaḥ na niśpattihetavo rasasya’. 64 Eventhough there is the absence of the knowledge of Vibhāva etc., the Rasa exists. Therefore, they are not indicative or material cause of the Rasa —

‘Tadā bodhāpagame’pi rasasambhavaprasaṅgāt’. 65

Vibhāvas are not jñāpaka hetus because Rasa is not jñāpya. The function of the Vibhāvas etc is super-worldly and conducive to relish. They have no parallel in the world and the absence of parallel reveals their
uniqueness — ‘Kvānyatrettham drṣṭamiti cedbhūṣanametadasmākam alaukikatvasiddhau.’ 66 Here Abhinavagupta refutes the view of Bhaṭṭalollāṭa and Śrīśaṅkuka respectively because Vibhāvas are not the indicative cause of the production of Rasa. These Vibhāvas do not exist objectivity because it exists only during the time of aesthetic relish and so not persist for any time after the aesthetic emotion –

‘Siddhasya kasyacitprameyabhūtasya rasasya bhāvāt’. 67

Abhinavagupta asserts that Rasa consists in its ability to relish and not in its comprehensibility. The production of Rasa occurs in the Rasasūtra, means that the production is not of Rasa but of its relish —

‘Tarhi sūtre nispaṭtiriti katham.
Neyam rasasya, api tu tadvayarasasanāyāḥ’. 68

Abhinavagupta emphasizes that the relish of Rasa is not cognized by any means of proof or cause. It is cognized by its own consciousness and direct experience —

‘Sā ca rasanā na pramanāṇavyāpāro na
kāraṇavyāpāraḥ svayam tu nāprāmāṇikāḥ’. 69

Abhinavagupta says Rasanā ca bodharūpāiva. It means that aesthetic experience consists in knowledge and it is a state of pure and undefiled
joy or rapture. According to Kashmir Śaivism, the Absolute reality is not
different from pure knowledge. Likewise, the relish of Rasa is of the
nature of cognition but it differs from all other cognitions because
Vibhāvas are the means of its apprehension, which is different from the
worldly means of knowledge,

‘Kintu bodhāntarebhyo laukikebhyo vilakṣaṇaiva’.

Therefore, relish is produced because of the unity of the Vibhāvas etc. In
this discussion, Abhinavagupta establishes a philosophical basis for the
doctrine of Rasa.

Abhinavagupta discusses the nature of the universalisation of
dramatic experience of a spectator. During the staging of a play, the
spectator perceives that the consciousness of the actor is enveloped by the
dramatic devices like a crown, head, dress etc.

‘Mukūtapratiśiṛṣakādinā tāvannatabuddhirācchādyate’. 70

Likewise, the spectator gets the impression that Rasa exists even when he
knows that it is only a character that is depicted by the poetic genius of
the author—

‘Gāḍhaprāktanasamskārāca kāvyabalāniyamāṇāpi
na tatra rāmadhīrviśrāmyati’. 71
Literature refers to a particular time and place to the actor as well as the original character. But seeing a drama in the theatre the spectator lives neither in the time or space of the original character nor the actors.\textsuperscript{72} ‘Ata evobhayadesakālātyāgāh’. It means that the spectator is not restricted by time and place. In that state the spectator experiences an extraordinary feeling of harmony where all contradictions are resolved and the heart, mind and soul of the aesthete act in union—

‘Tatra svātmāvesena rasacarvanetyuktam’.\textsuperscript{73}

The sentiment of love, which is transformed into the aesthetic emotion of Srīgāra, is generalized by the Vibhāva, Anubhāva and Vyabhicārin.

Abhinavagupta cites three examples to explain the generalization of Vibhāvas, Anubhāvas and Vyabhicārins which helps the delineation of dramatic sentiment. The main content in the first verse is the charm of emotion which is constituted by the prominence of Vibhāva—

\textit{Kelikandalitasya vibhramamadadhuryam vapuste drśorbhangī}

\textit{bhaṅgurakāmakārmukamidam bhrūrnarmakarmakramahī.}

\textit{Āpāte (ghrāto)‘pi vikārakāraṇamaho vaktrāmbujanmāsāvah}

\textit{satyam sundari vedhasastrijagatīsārah tvamekā kṛtih.}\textsuperscript{74}
The second verse is quoted by *Abhinavagupta* from his own teacher *Indurāja* to illustrate the prominence of the *Anubhāva* with the union of *Vibhāva* and *Vyabhicārin*. Here the *Vibhāva* suggests only the quality of the poetic description but the principal thing in this verse is the charm of emotion which is constituted by the prominence of *Anubhāva*.

\[
\text{Yadviśramya vilokiteśu bahuśo nisthemāni locane}
\]
\[
yadgātrāni daridratipratidinam lūnāñjinīnālavat
\]
\[
dūrvākāṃḍaviḍambakaśca nibido yatpāṇḍimā gandayoh
\]
\[
krṣne yūni sayauvanāsū vanitāsvēṣaiva veṣasthitih. \text{75}
\]

As an illustration of the importance of *Vyabhicārin*, *Abhinavagupta* quotes a stanza, which is attributed to the poet *Kālidasa*. *Abhinavagupta* accepts the extra-worldly beauty of *Vibhāvas* and he remarks that the prominence of the *Vyabhicārin* is a result of the quality of their *Vibhāvas*.

The *Anubhāvas* are subservient to these *Vibhāvas*.

\[
\text{Āttamāttamadhikāntamīkṣitum}
\]
\[
kātarā śapharaśaṅkini jahau
\]
\[
aṅjalau jalamadhīralocana
\]
\[
locanapratīṣarīralāñchitam. \text{76}
\]
According to Abhinavagupta, the highest relish of Rasa is created by the equal prominence of Vibhāvas Anubhāvas and Vyabhicārins. He observes that even poetry, which contains any element of dramatic representation, enables the readers to relish Rasa. But a reader, who is quite sensitive, is led to the highest bliss and wisdom eventhough the poetry is without any element of dramatic representation. It is understood that both of them such as the sensitiveness of readers and the dramatic elements are important to enjoy the highest delight. It also suggests that the dramatic elements and sensitiveness produce the necessary purity of mind and heart.

After discussing the importance of sensitiveness and dramatic elements, Abhinavagupta discusses the sensitive readers (Sahrdaya) and also discusses the importance of drama. According to Abhinavagupta a reader, who is endowed with maturity of thinking and aesthetic sensibility, can visualize the whole emotional situation depicted in a poem. But an ordinary reader, who has not the quality of sensitiveness, cannot enjoy the complete artistic emotion. It means that drama gives the ability to relish Rasa not only sensitive but also insensitive equally and effectively by all spectators. During the visualization of a drama a
sensitive spectator acquires the highest purification of his mind, while for insensitive spectator it gives the necessary purification of mind for his essential enjoyment with the help of song, instrumental music, women etc.

Abhinavagupta concludes his interpretation on Rasasūtra of Bharata with his analysis in the nature of the spectator’s perception of the actor. Here Abhinavagupta clearly presents his philosophical ideology. He equates the actor to an idol of a God in the case of the contemplators.

In the third volume of Abhinavabhārati, Abhinavagupta says,

‘etad uktam bhavati yathā paramātmāsvacaitanyaparakāśam atyajannapi dehakañcukocitacittavṛttirūṣitam iva svarūpam ādarśayati, tathā nato’ pi ātmāvaṣṭambham atyajanneva sthāne layatālādyanusaraṇādyayogād dehaḥsthāṇīyena vartanādiveṣaparivartanena taducitasvabhāvālingitam iva svātmānam sāmājikān prati darśayati’.  

Abhinavagupta also equates the contemplators of the God to spectators. While seeing a Drama, the actor is the object of the spectator’s contemplation. The spectator is not aware that he is watching a drama but he is completely immersed in it by the performance of the actor. Even
though he lacks an appreciation of the real character, he enjoys real bliss. But the contemplators of the God, do not have the appreciation of God because it is the image itself. The devotees of contemplation do not make any distinction between the image and the deity. Likewise, the dramatic theme, which is the object of the relish of Rasa, arises from the actors acting which is not restricted by particular space and time. Thus, the apprehension of Rasa is of the nature of the character ‘Rāma’ and not ‘this is Rāma’.
REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. PT., V., 18, pp. 281-2.
5. Srikrishnamisra, Coleridge and Abhinavagupta, p.555.

7. ibid., p.1.

Śadtrimśakātmaka jagadgaganāvabhāsa-
samvinmarīcicaya cumbita bimbaśobham-
ṣaḍ trimśakam bharatasūtramidam vivṛṇva-
vande śivam śrutidardhataviveki dhāma.

8. ibid., p.2.

Maheśvarābhinavaguptapadapratisṭhaḥ
samśiptavṛttividhinā viśādīkaroti.

9. ibid.

Bhagavāmstvānanda nirbharatayā  ------
---------------------------namaskṛtaḥ.

10. ibid., p.35.

Nātye tu paramārthikam kiñcidadya me
Kṛtyam-----------------nātyāparaparyāyah.

11. ibid., p.48.

12. ibid.
13. ibid., p.72.

Parameśvarasmaranam ca prathamam ucitamiti.

14. ibid., p.91.

Kriyā karaṇam. kasya kriyā. nṛttasya gātrāṇām vilāsakṣepasya heyopādeya-
viṣayakriyādibhyah vyatiriktā yā tatkriyā karaṇamityarthaḥ.


Na hi rasādṛte kaścidarthaḥ pravartate.


17. AB., p.292.

Tadevam mūlam bijasthāniyāt kavigataḥ rasah.
Kavirhi sāmājikatulya eva tathā vṛksasthāniyam 
kāvyam tatra puspādisthāniyō abhinayādinaṭa-
vyāpāraḥ tatra phalasthāniyāḥ sāmājikarasāsvādah 
tenā rasamayameva viśvam.

18. ibid., p.266.

Tataścā mukhyabhūtāt mahārasāt.


Sattvato guṇah mānasā vyāpāraḥ 
tatsattvam prakāśah tadvidyate yatra
Tatsattvam manah, tasmin bhavah.
20. ibid., p.156.

\[ \text{Vāganāgī mukharāgenetyādipāthah param} \]

\[ \text{Bhāvādhyāyasloko nāsyā tulyorthastvanya eva.} \]


22. Mukunda Madhava sharma,

The Dhvani theory in Sanskrit poetics, p.158.


24. Walimbe, AIA., P.16.


26. ibid., p.272.

27. ibid.

28. ibid.

29. ibid.

30. Walimbe, AIA., p.35.


32. ibid.

33. ibid., p.275.

34. ibid.

35. ibid.

36. ibid., p.276.

37. ibid., p.277.


40. ibid., p.278.

41. ibid.


44 ibid., p.281

45. ibid., P.278.

46. SD., III.3.
48. ibid.
50. ibid.
52. ibid., p.280.
54. ibid.
55. ibid., p.282.
56. Walimbe, AIA., p.59.
58. ibid.
60. ibid
62. ibid.
64. ibid.
66. ibid.
68. ibid.
70. ibid.
72. ibid.
74. ibid., p.284.
76. ibid.
77. AB., Vol. III, p.124