An Analysis of Aesthetic Cognition with Reference to Rasa Theory

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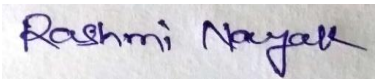

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Dedicated To

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0. Aesthetics Cognition: A Philosophical Inquiry

In the opening lines of Bharata's Nātyaśāstra (1st Century CE), Bharata is questioned about the origin and significance of drama by the sages such as Atreya.

योऽयं भगवता सम्यग्ग्रथितो वेदसम्मितः I
नाट्यवेदः ब्रह्मन्नुत्पन्नः कस्य वा कृते II

"O Brahman, how did the Nātyaveda, similar to the Vedas, originate, which you have properly composed? And for whom is it meant, how many limbs does it possess, what is its extent, and how is it to be applied?"[1]

These questions have sparked numerous philosophical reflections and theories, particularly in understanding the relationship between nāṭya and the Vedas. The assertion that nātya is similar to the Vedas (vedasammita) has triggered a philosophical inquiry into their interconnectedness. The Vedas are revered scriptures that delve into truths related to ethics, metaphysics, and epistemology. This comparison raises the fundamental question of how these two realms, Vedas and aesthetics[2] are interconnected, and whether this comparison is merely a bold claim or holds deeper philosophical implications.

This study aims to analyze aesthetic cognition through the lens of rasa theory. Aesthetic experience involves the engagement of a connoisseur with an art object, whether it be listening to music, admiring a painting, or experiencing a theatrical performance. This engagement entails a cognitive process that includes perception, comprehension, and interpretation of the object.

[1] Ghosh, Manmohan. (1950). *The Nāṭyasāstra of Bharat Muni*, Calcutta: The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, verse 1.4.

[2] From the Indian philosophy perspective, the term for the discipline of Aesthetics varies and includes Saundarya śāstra, Rasa śāstra, and Alamkāra śāstra, among others. These terms have evolved according to the dominance of certain concepts within the field. For instance, when the alamkāravādins were predominant, the discipline was referred to as alamkāra śāstra.

However, there is an ongoing debate about the nature of aesthetic experience and its relationship with cognitive processes. While aesthetic experiences involve cognitive engagement, not all cognitive experiences are aesthetic. This raises the central question: Is there such a thing as aesthetic cognition, or is the cognitive dimension merely a necessary condition and not a sufficient one for something to be called an aesthetic experience?

The challenge lies in the exploration of how the aesthetic and cognitive dimensions intersect and whether aesthetic cognition can be distinctly identified and defined within the realm of philosophical inquiry and theory.

Throughout history, philosophers have associated aesthetic experiences with various values, emphasizing the cognitive or epistemic aspects. These experiences are approached through different lenses, including content-oriented, affect-oriented, epistemic, and axiological perspectives.[3] Philosophers have long been intrigued by the cognitive value inherent in aesthetic encounters, reflecting their enduring concern with the interplay between aesthetics and intellectual understanding.

This thesis primarily focuses on investigating whether artworks harbour epistemic/cognitive value, which pertains to knowledge acquisition or truth claims, in contrast to the pleasurable experiences associated with aesthetic encounters. Specifically, it explores whether it is possible to derive knowledge from art, akin to epistemic or cognitive experiences, and whether aesthetic cognition is a viable concept.

The term aesthetic cognition was first introduced by Alexander Baumgarten in his book on Metaphysics of 1739. He described aesthetics is the study of the liberal arts, inferior cognition, the art of beautiful thinking, the science of sensual cognition and the art of thinking similar to reason. He distinguished between aesthetic cognition and ordinary cognition. According to him, *"aesthetic cognition is inferior or lower cognition whereas ordinary cognition is superior or higher cognition*". Regarding the question of truth claim in aesthetic experience, Baumgarten asserts that aesthetic cognition has its own truth claim. Though aesthetic cognition is an inferior cognition it includes truth claims like ordinary cognition. He held that different levels of truth

[3] Carroll, Noel. (2010). *Art in Three Dimensions*. New York: Oxford University Press. p.78.

claim correspond to the levels of cognition. A metaphysical truth that relates to God seems the equivalent of intuitive and adequate cognition. A logical truth is concerned with man's rational insights. The third truth (i.e., aesthetic truth) is the result of confused cognition. He elaborated on aesthetic truth by situating it between falsehood and the certainty we accomplish by the correct employment of our rational faculties. According to Baumgarten, aesthetic truth appears to be quite similar to rhetorical truth, namely, probability.[4]

Though the question was raised by 18th-century philosophers, it remains relevant: is an epistemic or cognitive value possible in aesthetics? Can we make a truth claim in the aesthetic experience similar to those in epistemic or cognitive experiences? This inquiry challenges us to consider whether aesthetic experiences, often seen as subjective and emotional, can also provide a form of knowledge or truth. Sheryle Bergmann[5] (1993) seeks to elucidate the epistemological significance of aesthetic experiences. She argues that art serves not only as a source of pleasure but also possesses inherent epistemological value. Bergmann suggests that justifying the inclusion of aesthetic experiences in educational curricula is more straightforward from an epistemological perspective rather than from an intrinsic standpoint. Sheryle Bergmann says that "I would not feel comfortable advocating *"art for art's sake."* Although, I am not denying that

[4] Hammermeister, Kai. (2002). *The German Aesthetic Tradition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p. 6-10.

[5]There are recent works delving into the inquiry of the relationship between cognitive and aesthetic experiences, with a particular focus on whether aesthetic value can influence cognitive value. Antony Aumann explores this issue from a unique perspective, investigating whether the aesthetic value of a work contributes to or detracts from its philosophical value, including factors such as the truth of its claims, the strength of its arguments, and its internal consistency. Aumann argues that aesthetic value does indeed impact cognitive value, with the aesthetic merits of some works aiding in preserving their consistency, while aesthetic defects in others render them self-contradictory.

Noel Carrol discusses various recent accounts related to aesthetic experience, including the cognitive and noncognitive versions of the valuing approach advocated by Gary Iseminger and Jesse Prinz, respectively.

Adele Tomlin, in her essay "Aesthetic Experience," describes aesthetic experience as engagement with art or nature, ranging from experiencing beautiful landscapes to contemplating exquisite artwork. She highlights the diverse interpretations of aesthetic experience, emphasizing its significant value for human beings.

Markovic Slobodan, in his essay "Components of Aesthetic Experience: Aesthetic Fascination, Aesthetic Appraisal, and Aesthetic Emotion," provides insights into the nature of aesthetic experience as a special state of mind distinct from everyday experiences. He discusses how aesthetic experience involves focusing attention on the object of interest while suppressing other concerns, as well as the unique subject-object relationship inherent in aesthetic situations. He exemplifies this contrast with Picasso's Bull's Head, illustrating how everyday objects can transform into objects of aesthetic interest when they transcend their pragmatic meaning.

B.M Chaturvedi, in his book "Some Unexplored Aspects of Rasa Theory," claims that rasa is the easiest means for acquiring knowledge. This assertion underscores the significance of rasa theory in understanding and appreciating aesthetic experiences.

aesthetic experiences may have intrinsic value, we would suggest that they also have an epistemological value and that the advocation of epistemological as opposed to intrinsic value is much more conducive to justifying aesthetic experiences in the educational curriculum."[6] Drawing inspiration from these divergent perspectives, an analysis of the rasa theory will be undertaken to investigate whether it accommodates the epistemic value of art. This examination will involve exploring whether the rasa theory, akin to Baumgarten's prioritization of aesthetic experience, assigns primacy to aesthetic appreciation while relegating epistemic value to a subordinate level, or if it contends that art is solely intended for aesthetic enjoyment, which is a unique in-itself and it does not require any other purpose to be fulfilled.

1.1. Background of the Problem Stated

The term rasa finds its origin in Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra. The essence of the concept is encapsulated in the rasa-sūtra, where Bharata explains that rasa is produced through the intricate interplay of three fundamental elements: determinants *(vibhāva),* consequents *(anubhāva),* and transitory states *(vyabhicāribhāva).*[7] This seminal concept forms the cornerstone of Bharata's comprehensive exploration of the emotional and aesthetic dimensions of dramatic performances.

Bharata introduces the concept of rasa, which is considered one of the most significant contributions to Indian aesthetics. He regarded Nāṭyaśāstra as the fifth Veda, named Nāṭya Veda, following the four Vedas: *Ṛg, Sāma, Yajur, and Atharva*. According to Bharata, Brahmā created Nāṭya at the request of the gods, who sought an entertainment form that could be both seen and heard. Thus, Nāṭya Veda was created as a means of recreation at the behest of the gods.

Bharata attributed various elements to different Vedas, borrowing effective speech from *Ṛgveda*, music from *Sāmaveda*, acting from *Yajurveda*, and rasas from *Atharvaveda*. Nāṭya, or dramatic art, is considered the highest form of art, invented by Lord Brahma for enjoyment and

[6] Sheryle. (1993). An Epistemological Justification for Aesthetic Experience. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education.* Vol.27, No.2, p. 107.

[7] Ghosh, Manmohan. (1950). *The Nāṭyasāstra, A treatise on Hindu Dramaturgy and Histrionics.* Calcutta: The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal.p.105.

as a means of instructing the audience.[8]

According to Bharata, dramatic art aims to entertain and instruct the audience. While all art forms aim to delight the human mind, drama excels in presenting various situations of life. Bharata emphasized the importance of the senses of sight and hearing in experiencing art. In Bharata's view, drama serves as a plaything *(kridānīyaka)* to divert the mind from anxieties or hardships. It indirectly instructs the audience by presenting appealing sights and sounds. He recognizes the importance of emotions *(bhāva)* on stage, as they are essential for conveying the correct expression of emotion, such as blushing in response to love. *Bhāva,* being a state of mind, enables the audience to experience rasa, or sentiment. Rasa, or sentiment, is considered the essence of drama, and Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra places great emphasis on it.

As a pioneer in Sanskrit poetics, Bharata extensively discusses various aspects of nāṭya (dramatic art). He outlines eleven key elements of drama, including rasa (sentiments), *bhāva* (states), *abhinaya* (acting), *dharmi* (the practice), *vṛtti* (the styles), *pravṛttih* (local usages), *siddhi* (the success), *svara* (the notes), *vādya* (the instrumental music), *gānam* (songs), and *ranga* (the stage). Among these elements, rasa holds a prominent position.

Bharata emphasizes the significance of rasa in drama, stating that "No poetic meaning [from speech] proceeds without [any kind of] sentiments (rasa)."[9] Rasa is considered the primary factor in concluding a drama, while the other elements serve as means to achieve that conclusion. The theory of rasa is extensively discussed in the sixth and seventh chapters of the Nāṭyaśāstra. Bharata succinctly encapsulates the relationship between drama and rasa by stating, "drama is rasa" i.e., *Nāṭyamevarasah*.[10]

Bharata emphasizes numerous benefits derived from drama, yet he accords primacy to the rasa experience. It is essential to distinguish these two facets of drama: the manifold worldly advantages it offers and the rasa (aesthetic experience), which is considered the essence of drama. As for the second aspect of drama, rasa, the question arises whether the rasa experience

[8] Pandey, K.C. (1950). *Comparative Aesthetics.* Banaras: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, Vol-I, p.4.

[9] Ghosh, Manmohan. (1950). *The Nāṭyasāstra of Bharata Muni,* Calcutta: The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, p.105.

[10] Mishra, Kailash Pati. (2006). *Aesthetic Philosophy of Abhinavagupta*. Varanasi: Kala Prakashan, p.62.

possesses any cognitive value or if it is solely a source of pure pleasure and aesthetic experience. Exploring the question of whether rasa can be interpreted as having cognitive content requires an examination of terms related to cognition or epistemology within the context of Indian philosophy and aesthetics.

1.2. Jñāna and Pramā

In Indian tradition, the equivalent term in Sanskrit for cognition is *jñāna*. The Sanskrit word *jñāna* is sometimes translated as knowledge. *Jñāna* is divided into *pramājñāna* (valid knowledge or true knowledge) and *apramājñāna* (invalid knowledge or false knowledge). However, in Western tradition, 'knowledge' is defined as truth, with no concept of invalid or false knowledge. To avoid such confusion, J.N. Mohanty, in his book 'Classical Indian Philosophy,' translated *jñāna* as cognition. Since cognition can be true or false, true cognition is called *pramājñāna* or *pramā*, and false cognition is called *apramā. Pramāṇas* enable us to gain *pramājñāna*.[11]

Pramāṇas literally means *leading to the knowledge of reality*. There are four aspects in the process of inquiry of knowledge i.e., *pramātā* (the apprehender), *prameya* (the known entity), *pramāṇa* (the cognition device/knowledge), and *pramā* (sound knowledge). *Pramātā* is a subject or knower which means the person who is grasping the object. The subject is the knower, who's aware that the object through the *pramāṇas*, functions on them, and reaps the benefits of its action. *Prameya* is the object or reality i.e.; the thing is grasped by the subject. It means the object of knowledge. The *prameyas* are the apprehender, cognizable entities that creates the world. Hence, *Pramāṇa* is evidence by which *pramā* or valid knowledge is acquired. It leads to know anything accurately. It provides us with accurate information. There are six *pramāṇas* in Indian Philosophy: *perception*, *inference*, *comparison*, *testimony*, *postulation*, and *non-perception*. Lastly, *pramā* signify valid knowledge *(yathārthanubhava),* which means obtaining knowledge as it, for instance, perceives a rope as a rope instead of snake.[12] *Apramā* is invalid knowledge *(ayathārthanubhava),* which means the object is not as it is, as the apprehension of

[11] Mohanty, J.N. (1992). *Reason and Tradition in Indian Thought*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.p.11.

[12] Virupakshananda Swami. (1995). *Samkhya Karika of Isvara Krsna with The Tattva Kaumudi of Sri Vacaspati Mishra*. Madras: Sri Ramasrishna Matha.p.12.

silver arising in a piece of mother-of-pearl. According to Nyāya, perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), comparison (*upamāna*), and verbal testimony (*sabda*) come under *pramā* whereas recollection (*smṛti*), indecision (*samsaya*), doubt (*bhrama*), and logical reasoning (*tarka*) come under *apramā*.[13] Similarly, for Vedānta *pramā* is that knowledge which has its object, something that is not already known and is uncontradicted. And *apramā* is that knowledge which is already known and contradicted.[14]

All *pramāṇas* have a process to arrive at a truth (claim). Whether it is perception, inference, or comparison there is a process. Perception includes the process that self comes into contact with the mind, the mind comes into contact with the sense organs and the sense organ comes into contact with the object. Inference is a process in which we figure out a thing depending on the apprehension of some sign (*hetu* or *linga* in *pakṣa*) by considering the relationship of invariable concomitance (*vyāpti*) between the middle and major terms.

For example- on the basis of the knowledge, the invariable concomitance between smoke and fire, we deduce knowledge of fire in the hill by the sense of smoke in it. In the same manner, there is a process of arriving at *upamāna*. *Upamāna* is derived from the similarity between the two objects which is learning about an unknown object by comparing it to something. For instance, someone has no idea what a zebra is but is informed by an authoritative figure that it looks like a horse with black and white lines on the body. Assume he encounters a horse-like animal with black-and-white lines across its body. In that case, he recognizes it as a zebra based on the similarity between the zebra's description and its actual presence in reality that is being observed.

1.3. Rasa and Pramāṇas

The question arises whether the process of *rasānubhuti*, the aesthetic experience, aligns with the *pramāṇas*, the means of valid cognition, and whether the *rasika* (the experiencer of art) engages with the truth and falsity of the art object. Typically, discussions around artistic cognition focus on pleasurable or non-pleasurable experiences rather than truth or falsity. In this context, can a

[13] Chatterjee, S.C. (1939). *The Nyaya Theory of Knowledge: A Critical Study of Some Problems of Logic & Metaphysics.* University of Calcutta.p.22.
[14] Datta, D. M. (1960). *The Six Ways of Knowing.* Calcutta: Calcutta University Press.p.27.

10th-century painting or Abhijñānasakuntlam hold any historical value, serving as evidence for past events?

In essence, while *rasānubhuti* and *pramāṇas* share aspects of cognition, they diverge in their focus. *Rasānubhuti* is primarily concerned with the aesthetic experience and emotional resonance with art, whereas *pramāṇas* deal with the validation of knowledge, including considerations of truth and falsity. Therefore, the *rasika* may not necessarily engage with the truth or falsity of the art object in the same way as with *pramāṇas*.

Regarding the historical value of artworks such as a 10th-century painting or Abhijñānasakuntlam, their significance lies more in their cultural, artistic, and aesthetic contributions rather than their role as direct evidence of past events. While these artworks can offer insights into historical contexts and societal norms of their time, their value as historical evidence is limited compared to textual records or archaeological findings. Thus, while they may provide glimpses into the past, their historical value should be understood within the broader context of cultural heritage and artistic expression rather than strict historical documentation.

Although some may argue that aesthetic experiences are disconnected from truth claims, the central query revolves around determining what the primary focus of a work of art is. To illustrate, consider attending a dramatic performance where a close friend portrays the character ‘Rāma’. Despite knowing the actor's true identity, during the play, we perceive them solely as the protagonist, not as our friend. The spectator is compelled to engage with the idea of ‘Rāma’ itself, acknowledging the actor’s portrayal as authentic within the context of the performance. However, outside of this theatrical realm, the actor remains our friend, not ‘Rāma’. This prompts the question: why do we choose to attend such a performance? If our intention were solely to spend time with our friend, we could easily meet in a coffee shop. The appeal of such experiences is rooted in the enactment itself, which goes beyond the individual actors involved, aiming to encapsulate the essence of the narrative through its characters. However, this leads to a central question: how do we perceive these characters? Are they real or unreal? And, we circle back to the original dilemma regarding the truth or falsity inherent in a work of art.

Śri Śankuka, a predecessor of Abhinavagupta from the 6th century, played a significant role in interpreting the rasa-sūtra in Abhinavabhārati. He offered a profound understanding of

the concept of real and unreal cognition. According to him, aesthetic experience cannot be categorized as valid, erroneous, doubtful, or similar, as per the classification in Indian epistemology.

In Indian epistemology, cognition is typically classified into four types: valid, erroneous, doubtful, and similar. However, aesthetic cognition stands apart from these categories. It can be likened to the concept of *"chitraturaganyāya"* or the logic of a painted figure. When we observe a painting of a horse, for example, we might question the reality of its existence, pondering whether the depicted horse is real or not.[15] However, aesthetic cognition transcends this binary categorization; it neither falls into the realm of real nor unreal.

This would be discussed in detail in the second chapter of the thesis; we explore how rasa theorists tackle the fundamental questions about the nature of drama. The aim is to discuss the various viewpoints put forth by different *rasavādins.* Aesthetic experience is indeed a form of direct experience. While it may share similarities with perception *(pratyakṣa pramāṇa),* it is not precisely the same. It stands apart from other sources of cognition such as inference or verbal testimony. Normally, when something is directly perceived, additional sources of cognition aren't necessary.

Abhinavagupta illustrates this distinction with the analogy of a fireball. When a burning stick is rapidly rotated, it appears as though there is a circle of fire (known as *alātacakra*). However, in reality, there is only a stick, not a circle of fire.[16] Similarly, aesthetic experience may resemble perception, but it operates differently from inference or verbal testimony. Abhinavagupta confirms that aesthetic experience differs from inference and verbal testimony but shares similarities with perception. He describes it as being similar to perception, highlighting its unique nature in the realm of cognition. *"अभिनयनं हि शब्दलिंगव्यापारविसदृशमेव प्रत्यक्षव्यापारकल्पमिति निश्चेष्यामः ।"*[17]

The distinction between *rasānubhuti* and *pramāṇas* needs to be explored. In the third chapter of the thesis, we delve into the nature of *pramāṇas*, with a particular focus on *pratyakṣa*

[15] Walimbe, Y.S. (1980). *Abhinavagupta on Indian Aesthetics.* Ajanta Publications.p.23.
[16] Sankaran, A. (1973). *The Theory of Rasa and Dhvani.* University of Madras.p.107.
[17] Visweswar, Acharya. (1960). *Abhinavabharati*. Delhi: Hindi Vibhaga, Delhi University.p.477.

pramāṇas. Aesthetic experience, being direct in nature, seems akin to *pratyakṣa pramāṇa*, and thus, it is essential to examine this relationship in order to elucidate the unique characteristics of *rasānubhuti.*

Even though some theoreticians view rasa differently from *pramāṇas*, they do not conclude it as mere useless entertainment or a waste of time. The negative answer to this perspective stems from the understanding that rasa, while beyond epistemology, does not lack significance; rather, it maintains a close connection with metaphysics. Rasa represents a distinctive state of mind, which Yoga terms as the *sāttvika* state of mind, where focus is directed towards a particular object. Bhatta Nāyaka, a predecessor of Abhinavagupta, asserted that aesthetic experience is characterized by a relaxation *(viśrānti)* in one's own sentience *(samvid)*, stemming from the developing state of *sattva.* For the aesthetic experience, or rasa, the mind must be at rest; this state is known as *'samvidviśrānti.'* It denotes a state of complete mental tranquillity. The concept of *samvidviśrānti* carries profound metaphysical implications, extensively elucidated in Kashmir Śaivism. As Abhinavagupta was a Kashmir Śaivite thinker, understanding the concept of *samvidviśrānti* is crucial. The foundation of *samvidviśrānti* can be traced back to the metaphysical principles of Kashmir Śaivism, which will be further discussed later in this chapter.

Bharata employed the term *viśrānti* in a general sense while discussing Nāṭya. He suggested that drama could alleviate stress and provides solace to those experiencing sorrows or enduring the miseries of separation from loved ones. *viśrānti*, in this context, refers to the cessation of misery, resulting in qualities like boldness. Watching a drama can instill courage in those in sorrow, divert the minds of the sick, provide pleasure to those fatigued from toil, and amuse ascetics. Therefore, in this context, *viśrānti* signifies the experience of happiness in the form of courage and other positive emotions through the alleviation of suffering. Indeed, Abhinavagupta delves deeper into the concept of rasa, defining it as *viśrānti,* which represents the inherent nature of pure consciousness. According to his interpretation, due to ignorance, the mind oscillates, leading to suffering. Rasa experience, in this profound sense, allows connoisseurs to temporarily transcend suffering by connecting with the essence of pure consciousness. Through this elevated aesthetic experience, individuals can attain a state of

mental tranquillity and liberation from the afflictions of the mind.[18]

1.4. Viśrānti in Kasmir Śaivism

The concept of *"samvidviśrānti"* can indeed be traced back to the metaphysics of Kashmir Śaivism. This philosophical tradition, championed by figures like Abhinavagupta, stands out within Indian philosophy as a non-dualistic or monistic system rooted in the Tantric or Agamic tradition. The term "Śaivism" derives from "Śiva," representing the ultimate reality from which everything emanates, according to this tradition. Kashmir Śaivism posits consciousness *(cit, saṁvit),* also known as "Śiva," as the ultimate reality. Śiva is identified as the understanding of one's own true self, making Kashmir Śaivism also known as *ĀtmaŚāstra*, or the inquiry into the self.[19]

The primary aim of Kashmir Śaivism is self-realization (*pratyabhijñā* or *ātmā pratyabhijñā*), which involves recognizing one's true nature by dispelling the veil of ignorance. Abhinavagupta, in his Iswarapratyabhijñākārika, asserts that *Maheśvara* (Śiva) exists as one's own self, functioning as both the doer *(kartā)* and the knower *(jñātā).* In this view, there's no need to seek Śiva externally; rather, Śiva resides within each individual, with the individual soul intrinsically being Śiva himself.[20]

The concept of *ānava mala* in Kashmir Śaivism pertains to the concealment of the true nature of the self. *Ānava mala* is characterized by a sense of non-fullness *(apurnatā),* wherein individuals identify themselves with limited individuality, commonly known as ego. The term *"ānava"* stems from *"anu,"* meaning a limited soul. Unlike absolute consciousness (Śiva), which remains unlimited, it is the individual soul that mistakenly perceives itself as limited or imperfect. *Ānava mala* thus represents the individual's internal impurity, hindering them from fully realizing their proximity to Śiva's consciousness. This impurity serves as the root cause of their inability to grasp this state of consciousness.

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[18] Chaturvedi, B.M. (1996). *Some Unexplored Aspects of the Rasa Theory*. Hyderabad: Vidyanidhi Prakashan.p.36.

[19] Mishra Kamalkar. (1992). *Kashmir Saivism: The Central Philosohy of Tantrism*. Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, Indian Book Centre, p.95.

[20] Tagare G.V. (2002). *The Pratyabhijna Philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers private limited, p.31.

To illustrate, consider the analogy of a king dreaming of himself as a beggar. Despite the dream's duration, the king does not actually become a beggar but merely experiences the illusion of being one. Similarly, the individual soul, inherently perfect as Śiva, erroneously identifies with a limited persona, leading to practical consequences. This misidentification fosters a sense of incompleteness, prompting desires for specific things as a means to achieve completeness. The feeling of lacking something stems from *ānava mala*, prompting individuals to pursue actions in search of fulfilment and progress to the next level of understanding.

Kārma mala, as described in Kashmir Śaivism, is intimately linked with actions. This impurity arises from *ānava mala*, the sense of incompleteness previously discussed. When an individual perceives themselves as incomplete, they feel compelled to engage in actions to fulfil desires and achieve completeness. In this state, actions are performed due to the ignorance of one's true nature.

The presence of *kārma mala* leads to an indefinite cycle of desires and actions. Individuals attribute feelings of luck or unluck, happiness or unhappiness, to the consequences of their actions. Pleasure and pain experienced as a result of these actions leave impressions on individual consciousness, contributing to the impurity of action *(kārma-mala).* These impressions, stored in individual consciousness, perpetuate the cycle of desires and actions driven by the erroneous belief in one's incompleteness.

Māyiya mala, according to Kashmir Śaivism, is an impurity that induces a sense of separation within one's consciousness. This subtle impurity stems from ignorance *(avidyā)* and manifests as dualism or contrasts between the self and others. In this state, individuals perceive distinctions such as "this house is mine, that is not mine" or "this person is my friend, that person is my enemy," leading to the belief in the inherent differences between oneself and others.

Māyiya mala fosters the notion of ownership and differentiation, where individuals believe that certain things belong to them while others do not. This impurity contributes to the perception of multiplicity within the ultimate reality, causing Lord Śiva, the embodiment of ultimate consciousness, to appear as numerous entities. As a result of this perceived differentiation, individual souls become entangled in a cycle of birth and death, experiencing the illusion of separateness from others and from the ultimate reality.

Due to these impurities *(malas)* in Kashmir Śaivism, the true nature of the self, represented by Śiva or consciousness, becomes forgotten and can only be realized once these impurities are removed. When the self is liberated from these *malas*, it can recognize its true nature as Śiva or pure consciousness, leading to a state of restfulness known as *samvidviśrānti.*

Similarly, in aesthetics, Abhinavagupta discussed the concept of *vighnas* (obstacles) and *malas* (impurities) in metaphysical terms. He posited that only when one overcomes these obstacles and impurities can they experience pure consciousness, which is inherent to the self. In Kashmir Śaivism, the ultimate reality, Śiva, is synonymous with pure consciousness.

Abhinavagupta also intertwined the concepts of Śiva and Rasa in aesthetics.[21] He asserted the metaphysical truth by implicating *śāntarasa* as the fundamental rasa from which other rasas emerge as modifications. *Śāntarasa* represents the primordial or natural state of mind where all emotions blend, devoid of pain, happiness, hatred, or jealousy. However, this notion is criticized by later rasa theorists, who argue for different fundamental rasas.

For example, Bhoja places the highest value on *śṛṅgāra* (erotic) rasa in his work Śṛṅgāraprakāsa. Abhinavagupta, on the other hand, acknowledges *śṛṅgāra* as the most essential of all rasas due to its common appeal and attractiveness, considering it the fruit of desire *(kāma).* These discussions on the fundamental nature of rasas and their significance continue to be explored and debated among rasa theorists.

However, ignorance in this context does not denote the absence of knowledge but rather false or incomplete knowledge *(apurna jñāna)* of reality, termed *mala* (impurity). This impurity obscures consciousness, akin to a curtain veiling the true nature of the self. There are three types of *malas: ānava mala, kārma mala,* and *māyiya mala*, each representing different forms of impurity that hinder the recognition of one's true self in Kashmir Śaivism's metaphysical framework. Rasa theory includes all these aspects and that's the concern to explore all of these aspects and for that, the distinction has been made. The purpose of the thesis is to bring to light the rasa theory, the process, and how it is different from ordinary cognition.

[21] Masson, J.L. & Patwardhan, M.V. (1969). *Santarasa & Abhinavagupta's: Philosophy of Aesthetics*. Poona-4: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.p.51.

Abhinavagupta asserts that *śānta rasa*, also known as the *mahārasa* or the greatest rasa, is intricately linked to the supreme goal of life, which is *mokṣa* or liberation. *Mokṣa* entails the purification of the mind and its afflicted states, including emotions, ultimately leading to the promotion of afflicted states into unafflicted ones. This purification process involves elevating the individual ego (mind) to the state of pure consciousness or supreme bliss.[22]

The concept of the ultimate reality, comprising *sat* (existence), *cit* (consciousness), and *ānanda* (bliss), is well-established in the Upanishads. It is believed that when an individual transcends the narrow confines of ego and selfishness and identifies with the universal and ultimate reality (Brahman), their experience is characterized by pure happiness. This state of *mokṣa*, or liberation from the bondage and sufferings of worldly life is achieved through this identification with Brahman.

In the realm of aesthetics, which is considered a form of wisdom, the ultimate aim is self-realization. However, the path to self-realization through aesthetics is characterized by emotive experience. Abhinavagupta suggests that aesthetic experience is akin to experiencing the ultimate reality through the promotion of emotions into pure consciousness. Rasa, in this context, signifies both the supreme reality and the state of *Sat-Cit-Ānanda*, embodying existence, consciousness, and bliss.

The research at hand focuses primarily on aesthetic experience, prompting the question of whether aesthetic experience and aesthetic cognition are synonymous or distinct. Central to this inquiry is the debate on whether aesthetic experience lays claim to truth or knowledge, or if it is merely pursued for the sake of pleasure. This discussion delves into the realms of metaphysics and epistemology.

In the context of epistemology, particularly within the Indian framework, the term directly alludes to *pramāṇaśāstra,* which is concerned with the knowledge of reality *(tattva jñāna).* The Upanishads assert *Sat-cit-ānanda* as a fundamental understanding, while Kashmir Śaivism emphasizes the realization of one's true nature as *Tattva- jñāna*. The question arises: Can this realization be achieved through *pramāṇas*? Different perspectives exist, with some asserting its feasibility and others challenging it.

[22] Sukla, Ananta. (2017). *Classical Indian Tradition and The Philosophy of Art.* Brahmi Academic Publishing. p.79.

One chapter of the research centres on *pramāṇas*, specifically *pratyakṣa pramāṇa*, as a means to explore the possibility of attaining *tattvajñāna*. Abhinavagupta, however, contends that it is attainable through aesthetic experience, particularly in the context of *śāntarasa.* The reflection of the true nature of the self, albeit momentary, can occur in aesthetic experiences.

The subsequent chapter aims to dissect the apparent similarities and differences between the processes of cognitive and aesthetic experiences. While both involve a reflective element, aesthetic experience is posited as not just a medium but an end in itself. Through aesthetic experience, there is a direct and immediate connection to the glimpse of *Sat-Cit-Ānanda*, distinct from the mediating role that *pramāṇas* play in acquiring knowledge about reality.

1.5. General Structure of the Research Work

The title of the thesis is ***"An Analysis of Aesthetic Cognition with Reference to Rasa Theory."*** The introductory chapter of the thesis is organized into five sections. There are four sections in the introductory chapter. The first section deals with the introduction of the research problem, the relation between aesthetic experience and cognition. In the second section, the relationship between *pramāṇa* and *rasa* has been shown. The third section deals with the centrality of *rasa* theory in context to Indian aesthetics and in the last section, the relationship between rasa and metaphysics have been discussed [Kashmir Śaivism and Vedānta].

The 2nd chapter "Aesthetic Cognition: Nature and Conditions of *Rasānubhava"* deals with rasa in detail. It is divided into two sections: pre-Abhinavagupta or early rasa theorists and post-Abhinavagupta or later rasa theorists. The pre-Abhinavagupta period consists of Bhatta Lollata, Śri Śankuka, Bhatta Nāyaka, and Abhinavagupta. Post-Abhinavagupta includes Dhananjay, Bhoja, Mammata, and Viśvanātha. There are many interpretations of it but our aim focus is on those aestheticians who have contributed by giving many turning points in the rasa tradition. Another most significant rasa theorist Ānandavardhan falls in the category of pre-Abhinavagupta period because he flourished in the 9th century. Bhatta Nāyaka and Ānandavardhan both were contemporary thinkers. But we shall discuss him after Abhinavagupta because till Bhatta Lollata to Abhinavagupta, there is a continuation. But Ānandavardhan started a discussion of rasa in the poetic *(kāvya)* tradition. It would be a privilege to explain these rasa theorists in the following chapter of this thesis.

As our objective is aesthetic cognition or an aesthetic experience to make any truth claim, so the 3rd chapter "*Pratyakṣa Pramāṇa*: An Exposition of Ordinary Cognition" contains a detailed discussion on ordinary cognition (*pramāṇas*), especially on *pratyakṣa pramāṇa* and how different philosophical systems deals with *pratyakṣa* when encountering ordinary object. The chapter is divided into three sections. The first section explores the foundational aspects of epistemology, the second section is dedicated to pratyakṣa pramāṇa (perception), and the final section examines the epistemological viewpoint of Kashmir Śaivism.

Subsequently, the 4th chapter, titled "Comparative Analysis between Pratyakṣa Pramāṇa and Rasānubhuti," serves as a critical component of this thesis. This chapter delves into a detailed analysis of the widely recognized concepts of aesthetic experience (Rasānubhuti) and ordinary experience (Pratyakṣa Pramāṇa). Drawing on the foundational discussions from the 2nd chapter, which focused on the nature and conditions of aesthetic experience, and the 3rd chapter, which examined the concept of perception (pratyakṣa) across various schools of Indian philosophy, this chapter aims to elucidate the connections and distinctions between these two forms of cognition.

The chapter seeks to uncover the underlying mechanisms that differentiate aesthetic experience from ordinary perception while also highlighting any parallels that might exist. By doing so, it provides a comprehensive comparison, addressing questions such as: How do the cognitive processes involved in experiencing rasa differ from those in ordinary perception? What conditions are necessary for each type of experience to occur? How do these experiences impact the individual's understanding of reality?

Lastly, in the concluding chapter, we shall synthesize our findings by examining whether aesthetic experience (*rasānubhuti*) provides any form of knowledge or if it is solely a source of pleasure. If aesthetic experience does indeed make a knowledge claim, we will explore the nature of this knowledge or what sort of knowledge is that.

CHAPTER 2

Aesthetic Cognition: Nature and Conditions of Rasānubhava

2.0. Introduction

This chapter aims to delve into the essence and circumstances of aesthetic experience (rasa) along with its diverse interpretations. As discussed in the preceding chapter, Bharata's rasa-sūtra stands out as the foundational sūtra on rasa. Initially introduced within the framework of Nāṭya in his Nāṭyaśāstra, Bharata's rasa-sūtra later evolved to become the cornerstone of poetic theory as well. While some aestheticians confined their discussions of rasa solely to the domain of drama, others addressed rasa from both dramatic and poetic perspectives. In this chapter, I will explore the concept of rasa (aesthetic experience) and the varied interpretations offered by different scholars. To facilitate a deeper understanding of rasa, let's begin with Bharata's renowned maxim: *"तत्र विभावानुभावव्यभिचारिसंयोगाद्रसनिष्पत्तिः"*

"The sentiment is produced *(rasanispattih)* from a combination *(samyog)* of determinants *(vibhāva),* consequents *(anubhāva),* and the transitory states *(vyabhicāribhāva)."*[23] Bharata's rasa-sūtra is exceptionally original and laden with profound meaning, prompting numerous scholars to interpret it diversely and formulate distinct theories of rasa.

This chapter is divided into two sections: pre-Abhinavagupta or early rasa theorists, and post-Abhinavagupta or later rasa theorists. It is essential to thoroughly examine the commentators of Bharata's rasa-sūtra and the aestheticians from the pre-Abhinavagupta period, such as Bhatta Lollata, Śri Śankuka, Bhatta Nāyaka, and Abhinavagupta, in order to fully

[23] Ghosh, Manmohan. (1950). *The Natyasastra, A treatise on Hindu Dramaturgy and Histrionics*. Calcutta: The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal. Vol-1, p-105

understand the discourse on rasa. The post-Abhinavagupta period includes scholars like Dhananjaya, Ānandavardhana, Mammata, and Viśvanātha. Specifically, Dhananjaya's departure from Bharata's perspective by introducing two new concepts will be analyzed. Subsequently, we will explore how Bhoja condensed all rasas into srngāra rasa, followed by an examination of the viewpoints of Mammata and Viśvanātha regarding rasa in both dramatic and poetic contexts.

2.1. Early Rasa Theorists or Pre-Abhinavagupta Period

The pre-Abhinavagupta philosophers have concentrated on deciphering the terms *"samyoga"* and *"nispatti"* as mentioned in the rasa-sūtra, shaping their interpretations based on their individual perspectives. As the four notable theorists among them include Bhatta Lollatta, Śri Śankuka, Bhatta Nāyaka, and Abhinavagupta, their diverse interpretations have led to the emergence of various rasa theories. Let's now delve into their viewpoints in detail.

2.1.1. Bhatta Lollata's Theory of Rasa Intensification

Bhatta Lollatta, a 9th-century philosopher from Kashmir and a devoted follower of Mimāṁsā, is renowned as the first interpreter of Bharata's Rasa-sūtra. He delved into the intricacies of realizing rasa and its abode, presenting his insights as follows: Rasa, he proposed, is the fusion of *sthāyibhāva* with *vibhāva, anubhāva,* and *vyabhicāribhāva.* In this process, the enduring mental states *(sthāyibhāva)* are stirred by determinants *(vibhāvas),* while consequents *(anubhāvas)* are not deemed causes but effects, arising from these mental states. Transient mental states *(vyabhicāribhāva),* though not concurrent with enduring ones, are linked through latent impressions *(samskāra)* in the subconscious.

Regarding the existence of rasa, Lollatta posited its primary presence in original characters like Śakuntalā and Duśyanta (in Ābhijñanaśākuntalam), and secondarily in actors portraying these characters. He equated rasa to the intensified flavor resulting from the combination of spices, asserting that when *sthāyibhāva* interacts with *vibhāva, anubhāva,* and *vyabhicāribhāva,* it intensifies to form rasa. This intensified *sthāyibhāva* constitutes rasa, distinguishing it from unstirred *sthāyibhāva*. Lollatta termed the process of realizing rasa as rasa-utpatti or upaciti, emphasizing the independent existence of *sthāyibhāva* before its intensification through *vibhāvas,* etc.

Lollatta emphasized the crucial role of an actor's identification with a character in evoking rasa. The aesthetic experience (rasa), he argued, hinges on this identification, where the actor embodies the permanent mental state *(sthāyibhāva)* of the character. This intensified *sthāyibhāva*, when combined with *vibhāvas*, etc., becomes rasa, while unstirred *sthāyibhāva* remains unchanged. His theory, termed as *utpattivāda* or *upacitivāda*, centers on the intensification *(upaciti)* of *sthāyibhāva* into rasa, elucidating the process of rasa realization *(nispatti).*

2.1.2 Śri Śankuka's Criticim of Bhatta Lollata

Śri Śankuka raises compelling objections to Bhatta Lollatta's perspective on rasa, particularly highlighting the absence of consideration for the spectator's role. He articulates eight main reasons why the intensification *(upaciti)* of *sthāyibhāva* should not be equated with rasa:

1. The experience of permanent emotions *(sthāyibhāva)* such as love *(rati)* and laughter *(hāsa)* arises from the combination of determinants *(vibhāvas),* yet before this amalgamation, the existence of *sthāyibhāva* cannot be inferred. Moreover, the emotions produced post-combination, like *rati* and *hāsa*, are rasas distinct from *sthāyibhāvas*. Stating that *sthāyibhāva* is synonymous with rasa is thus inaccurate.

2. Prior to the conjunction of *vibhāvas*, the experiential or cognitive understanding of emotions like *rati* cannot be classified as rasa. Such experiences, conveyed indirectly to others, do not constitute rasa for the recipient, as true aesthetic experience is always direct. Therefore, it is incorrect to equate *sthāyibhāva* with rasa.

3. If *sthāyibhāvas* alone were rasa, Bharata Muni's statement regarding the conjunction of determinants for rasa's emergence would be meaningless.

4. Assuming *rati*, etc., to be rasas would imply degrees of accumulation, resulting in varying degrees of rasa. However, rasa is inherently homogeneous and indivisible, thus contradicting the notion that *sthāyibhāva* is rasa.

5. Bharata Muni delineated six types of laughter *(hāsa),* corresponding to variations in *sthāyibhāva (hāsa).* If accept intensification of *sthāyibhāvas*, that will disturb the classification of six types of laughers.

6. The enumeration of ten types of romantic sentiment *(śṛṅgāra)* by Bharata Muni would be contradicted by the notion of *sthāyibhāva's* intensification leading to rasa.

7. Another objection is that not all *sthāyibhāvas* intensify to become rasas; some, like grief *(śoka),* may diminish over time, making it impossible for rasa to emerge solely through intensification of *sthāyibhāva*.

8. *Sthāyibhāvas* like anger *(krodha),* enthusiasm *(utsāha),* and love *(rati)* may decrease without corresponding actions *(anubhāvas),* yet in the realm of rasa, there are no degrees of increase or decrease. Thus, the intensification of *sthāyibhāva* cannot be equated with rasa.

Hence, Śri Śankuka critiques Bhatta Lollatta's theory, emphasizing discrepancies concerning the essence of rasa and the significance of *sthāyibhāva* within its framework.

2.1.3. Śri Śankuka's Rasa Theory through the Lens of Imitation

Śri Śankuka, like Bhatta Lollatta, delved beyond the mere creation of aesthetic objects to focus on the aesthetic experience they evoke. However, he diverged from Lollatta's perspective by proposing that rasa occurs in both stages: as an aesthetic object presented on the stage and as an aesthetic representation perceived in the mind of the spectator.

Opposing Lollatta's viewpoint, Śri Śankuka presented his theory, highlighting the conscious effort involved in the portrayal of rasa. He argued that through the deliberate execution of *vibhāva* (determinants), *anubhāva* (consequents), and *vyabhicāribhāvas* (transitory states), the resulting creation does not appear artificial despite its crafted nature through the skillful rehearsal of the actor.

In Śri Śankuka's view, *sthāyibhāva* exists within the character *(anukārya),* such as Kedar, and is emulated by the actor *(anukartā).* The enduring mental states of the character, like love *(rati)* or grief *(śoka)* are replicated by the actor, and this imitation of *sthāyibhāva* is given a distinct name: rasa.[24] Here, the actor's portrayal is so convincing that the imitated *sthāyibhāva* appears to be their genuine mental state.

In addressing how the imitated *sthāyibhāva*, termed rasa, is transferred to the spectator, I.A. Richards provides insight by describing the audience's cognitive process. Despite recognizing that the actor portraying Dusyanta is not actually Dusyanta, the spectator temporarily infers the actor to be Dusyanta while immersed in the performance, deriving pleasure from this inference.[25]

Śri Śankuka further elaborates on this process by suggesting that the determinants *(vibhāva)* can be comprehended through poetic description, the consequents *(anubhāva)* can be conveyed through the actor's skill and practice, and the transitory mental states *(vyabhicāribhāvas)* can be recognized through one's own responses. However, the basic mental state *(sthāyibhāva)* of the character, such as love *(rati)* or grief *(śoka)* cannot be directly realized through these methods; it exists independently beforehand and can only be inferred through the actor's performance.

According to Śri Śankuka, *rati*, *śoka*, etc., are conveyed directly through the actor's portrayal, but this communication is not verbal articulation in the traditional sense. Rather, it is the enactment of these emotions through the actor's performance that constitutes verbal articulation. In this context, only the representation of the imitated permanent mental state *(sthāyibhāva)* is considered rasa, while the underlying *sthāyibhāva* itself remains unchanged. This perspective is termed as *anumitivāda,* emphasizing the role of inference in understanding and experiencing rasa through the actor's portrayal of *sthāyibhāva*.

Śri Śankuka employs the analogy of *"chitra-turaga-nyāya"* to elucidate the dual nature of art experience, describing it as both real and unreal. Just as a painting of a horse is not an actual horse, yet it is accepted as one for the sake of pleasure, the actor portraying Kedar is recognized

[24] Deshpande, G.T. (2015). *Abhinavagupta*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi. p.73
[25] Prasad, Gupteswar. (2007). *I.A. Richards and Indian Theory of Rasa.* New Delhi: Sarup & Sons.p.11-12.

as Kedar for the sake of enjoyment. This duality in art experience challenges categorizations of validity or error, as it exists in a realm beyond *samyak* (valid), *mithyā* (error), *samṣaya* (doubt), or *sadṛsya* (similarity).

Śri Śankuka rejects the notion of intensified *rati*, asserting that rasa can be achieved through the imitation of emotions like love *(rati).* The crucial question then arises: how can such illusory representations lead to genuine enjoyment of rasa? Śri Śankuka addresses this by explaining that from an illusory or unreal object, real emotions can be evoked. He provides examples, such as mistaking a rope for a snake, where the perceived fear and other emotions are real despite the initial misconception.

Further, he illustrates the point with a scenario where individuals mistake rays of light for a precious stone or a distant jewel. Although their initial perceptions are incorrect, the subsequent actions prompted by these false beliefs are real.[26] Śri Śankuka aligns this with the Nyāya philosophy concept of *"pravṛttisāmarthya,"* suggesting that if the cognition of water in a desert quenches one's thirst, the initial false perception becomes valid due to the practical efficacy of the subsequent action. Therefore, Śri Śankuka's argument asserts that the experience of rasa can be authentic and profound, despite being based on illusory or unreal representations. As long as these representations evoke genuine emotions and actions in the spectator, the aesthetic enjoyment derived from them is real and meaningful.

2.1.4. Bhatta Tauta's Criticism of Śri Śankuka

Abhinavagupta, invoking the teachings of his teacher Bhatta Tauta in his renowned work Abhinavabhārati, challenged Śri Śankuka's perspective on rasa. Śri Śankuka posited that rasa takes the form of an imitation of *sthāyibhāva*. However, Bhatta Tauta questioned the validity of this notion by pondering whether the cognition of imitated *sthāyibhāva* originates from the spectator's viewpoint, the actor's perspective, the dramatist's standpoint, or even Bharata himself.

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[26] *मणिप्रदीप्रभयोर्मणिबुद्ध्याभिधावतोः।*
मिथ्याज्ञानाविशेषेऽपि विशेषोऽर्थक्रियां प्रति ।।
Dvivedi Parasnatha, Natyasastra of Bharata Muni, Sampurnananda Sanskrit University, Varanasi, Vol-II, p-41

Bhatta Tauta emphasized the first two possibilities, dismissing the spectator's perspective as irrelevant. He argued that imitation necessitates an object of perception, and since mental states like *rati* cannot be physically perceived, they cannot be imitated. To illustrate, he contrasted the imitation of a physical action like drinking wine, which can be replicated by drinking milk, with the imitation of a mental state like *rati*. He questioned whether elements like attire, headwear, crowns, or gestures in an actor could truly imitate mental states, which are intangible and experiential rather than physical and observable. Thus, Bhatta Tauta's critique challenges the fundamental premise of Śri Śankuka's argument by questioning the feasibility of imitating mental states in the context of rasa theory.

Furthermore, the mental state experienced by one individual cannot be replicated by another. In the context of *rasānubhuti*, the actor's mental state may be inferred through their performance. However, it is fallacious to claim that an actor can imitate the mental state of a character, such as Kedar's love for Gouri, as this mental state cannot be directly perceived. For example, how can the emotion of love *(rati)* be imitated? The knowledge of imitation assumes the perception of both the original and the copy, yet the spectator has never perceived the character's feelings, nor has the actor witnessed the character's emotions.

Śri Śankuka posited that the determinants *(vibhāva)* may be considered real in the character but not in the actor. However, even if these determinants are artificially created by the actor, the question arises as to whether they are perceived by the spectator as artificial or real. If perceived as artificial, how is it possible to experience rasa through artificial means? Śri Śankuka argued that the love *(rati)* apprehended through artificial means is not genuine *rati* but rather an imitation.

In response, Bhatta Tauta proposed that the cognition of love *(rati)* can be understood in two ways: through the general cause or the specific cause. For example, a layperson may understand the cause of malaria as the general biting of mosquitoes, while a specialist may identify the specific cause as the anopheles mosquito. Bhatta Tauta illustrated this with the analogy of a layperson attributing the creation of a scorpion to another scorpion, while a specialist may recognize the specific cause as the mixture of curd and cow dung.

From the spectator's perspective, genuine *rati* or love arises from the renowned cause, i.e., the real determinants, and is not considered imitation. Thus, Bhatta Tauta's argument challenges the notion of imitation in rasa theory by emphasizing the distinction between genuine and imitated emotions perceived by the spectator.

2.1.5. The Universal Essence of Rasa in Bhatta Nāyaka's Perspective

Bhatta Nāyaka, our third commentator in this discourse on aesthetic experience, offers a unique perspective rooted in the Sāṅkhya system. Before presenting his own views, he critically examines and opposes the positions of other scholars such as Bhatta Lollatta, Śri Śankuka, and Abhinavagupta. He challenges the notions put forth by these scholars, including *pratitivāda* (perception theory) proposed by Bhatta Lollatta, *utpattivāda* (production theory) advocated by Śri Śankuka, and *abhivyaktivāda* (expression theory) suggested by Abhinavagupta. According to Bhatta Nāyaka, none of these perspectives adequately capture the essence of aesthetic experience.

He argues that rasa, the central concept in aesthetics, cannot be confined to mere perception *(pratiti),* production *(utpatti),* or suggestion *(abhivyakti).* ***(Raso na pratiyate\| nautpadyate\|nabhivyajyate).***[27] Instead, Bhatta Nāyaka proposes a distinct understanding of aesthetic experience that transcends these limited frameworks, offering his own interpretation grounded in the principles of the Sāṅkhya system.

Bhatta Nāyaka critiques Bhatta Lollata's perception theory by pointing out contradictions. He argues that if rasa is perceived by the audience *(sahṛdaya),* then in *karuṇa* rasa (the emotion of compassion), one should experience sorrow rather than pleasure. Additionally, if spectators realize rasa within themselves, it leads to several issues. For instance, Sita and other characters cannot be the primary source of emotions experienced by the audience. Bhatta Nāyaka presents

[27] Dvivedi, Dr. Parasanatha. (1996). *Nāṭyasāstra of Sri Bharata Muni & Abhinavabharati by Sri Abhinavaguptacarya.* Varanasi: Sampurnananda Sanskrit University. Vol-II, p.52.

several arguments against the notion that rasa can be realized through perception, memory, or inference. Firstly, he highlights the significant disparities between the audience and the characters portrayed, making it challenging for the audience to fully relate to them. Secondly, personal relationships, like those with loved ones, are not factored into the aesthetic experience. Additionally, the actions of deities often diverge from human experiences, further complicating the audience's ability to identify with them.

Furthermore, Bhatta Nāyaka contends that if rasa were to be realized through verbal testimony or inference, it would not evoke the intended aesthetic response but rather emotions like guilt, anger, or envy. For example, witnessing intimate moments between a couple in real life may lead to feelings of awkwardness or shame, contrary to aesthetic appreciation. Bhatta Nāyaka extends this argument to theories of creation and manifestation, asserting that rasa cannot exist before or after the production of the artistic object in aesthetic experience. Thus, he concludes that rasa cannot be solely attributed to one's own experiences or those of others.

Bhatta Nāyaka diverges from previous commentators like Bhatta Lollatta and Śri Śankuka by placing significant emphasis on the spectator's experience in establishing his position. Unlike Lollatta, who overlooked the spectator's role, and Sankuka, who attempted but couldn't conclusively address it, Bhatta Nāyaka takes a novel approach. He argues that for aesthetic enjoyment, both emotions and poetic language are essential. Without accessibility to the language of poetry or any art form, the spectator cannot fully relish the experience of rasa. Bhatta Nāyaka's primary focus, as noted by Sheldon Pollock, is to establish rasa's ontology (how it exists) and epistemology (how it is known).[28]

Regarding ontology, Bhatta Nāyaka questions whether rasa exists within the character, the actor, or the poet. As for epistemology, he explores how rasa is apprehended, whether through perception, inference, or manifestation. By addressing these fundamental aspects, Bhatta Nāyaka aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of rasa that integrates both its nature and how it is experienced by the spectator.

[28] Pollock, Sheldon. (2016). *A Rasa Reader: Classical Indian Aesthetics.* New York: Columbia University Press.p.17.

2.1.5.1. Concept of Sādhāranikaraṇa

Bhatta Nāyaka introduces two additional functions, *bhāvakatva* (generalization) and *bhojakatva* (delectation), alongside *abhidhā* (the denotative meaning of a word), in the process of rasa or aesthetic delight.

As we know, every word has denotative or literal meaning; it conveys the actual meaning of a word. By which one can easily understand a word in a particular context. Sakuntala, for example, is the foster daughter of the sage Kanva and the wife of Dusyanta. However, this power is insufficient on its own. In poetical context, one should go further function i.e., *bhāvakatva* which universalizes the particular character, distinct from time and space, specific or particular thing transforms into a generalized form. *Bhāvana* is nothing but universalization of *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, *vyabhicāribhāva* etc. For example, through generalization, the character like Kedar and Gouri etc. ceases to be particular and it frees spectator from all types of profane activities. This process of upliftment is called as *Sādhāranikaraṇa* which plays the pivotal role in Indian aesthetics. When the *vibhāvas*, the *anubhāvas*, the *vyabhicāribhāvas* and the *sthāyibhāvas* have become universalized, then *bhojakatva* function comes. The role of this function is to suppress both the *rajas* and *tamas guṇa* and activate *sattvaguṇa*, where the mind of the spectators becomes pure and conveys the blissful nature of the self. By this process of *bhogikarana* spectator enjoys the aesthetic experience. Hence his theory is called as *bhuktivāda.* In this regard, B.M Chaturvedi cited an analogy, which is described by Bhavabhuti in his Uttararamacarita: on receiving the touch of Sita, Rama loses the cognition of everything else around him. This touch produces, in his mind, a peculiar effect which he is not able to describe in words, because the senses have ceased to function. Therefore, it is very difficult to describe this state whether it is pleasurable or painful; whether it is swoon or sleep; whether it is the effect of the poison or the intoxication of the drink. It is not easy to decide whether the experience in these states is pleasurable or painful. Its effect goes deep into the consciousness (*caitanya*). This is the reason in Bhatta Nāyaka calling it *Brahmasvāda- savidhā* (closer to the *Brahmānanda*). It is different from both the direct cognition and the recollection.[29] This type of enjoyment is different from ordinary experience and similar to the supreme experience. It can be

[29] Chaturvedi, B.M. (1996). *Some Unexplored Aspects of the Rasa Theory*. Hyderabad: Vidyanidhi Prakashan. p. 48.

compared with the *brahmasvādasahodara.* This containment of *bhoga* consists of two aspects that *bhoga* is the experience (*āsvāda*) of the rasa and that rasa becomes an object of experience through *bhoga*.

2.1.5.2. Abhinavagupta's Criticism to Bhatta Nāyaka's Perspective on Rasa

Though Bhatta Nāyaka's contribution to Indian Aesthetics was very significant but he still did not escape criticism. Mainly, Abhinavagupta attacks Bhatta Nāyaka's position in two aspects. At first, he criticized Bhatta Nāyaka's contention that rasa is not *pratiti, utpatti* or *abhivyakti* but *bhoga*. Abhinavagupta opposed that if so, then where does the so called *bhoga* reside apart from these three means? If it is said that *rasanā* is *bhoga* then it comes under the apprehension also. So, it is like one thing can be grasped by different means in ordinary cognition i.e., perception, inference, comparison, intuition etc.; furthermore, if production or suggestion is also not accepted then the question would be where rasa exists? The reply must be rasa will be eternal or not exists at all. Moreover, the thing which is not cognized cannot be brought into practice also. If it is argued that the rasa is not comprehended in the same way external things are, and in fact the perception is the pleasure of the rasa and that is in the form of *rati* etc., then more sentiments will produce more rasas by the nature of enjoyment. A myriad of actions can be conceived on the basis of the difference between the qualities i.e., *sattva, rajas* and *tamas*, being the primary and the secondary, so it cannot be reduced to only three concepts i.e., *Abhidhā, Bhāvakatva* and *Bhojakatva*. In the statement 'rasas are apprehended through poetry', if the meaning of bhavana is the aesthetic experience generated by *vibhāvas* when it becomes cognizable and relishable in nature, it can be accepted.

According to Abhinavagupta, another defect lies in Bhatta Nāyaka's introduction of the concepts of *bhāvakatva* and *bhojkatva* in poetic expression was considered a flaw. These concepts, which represent specific functions within poetry, were criticized by Abhinavagupta for their dualistic nature. Despite endorsing Bhatta Nāyaka's theory of universalization, Abhinavagupta disagreed with the dualistic context it presented. Abhinavagupta equated Bhatta Nāyaka's notion of *bhāvakatva* with *bhavanā*, emphasizing that, unlike Bhatta Nāyaka's perspective, *bhāvanā* leads not only to *sādhāranikaraṇa* (generalization) but also to the

experience of rasa. The concept of *'bhojakatva'* was introduced by Bhatta Nāyaka, which Abhinavagupta considered as cognition similar to *vyanjanā*, was merely a difference in terminology according to him.

Abhinavagupta proposed that both *bhāvanā* and *bhogikarana* (enjoyment) occur simultaneously, akin to savoring the taste of a mango while eating it. He argued that both processes could be reduced to a single concept of *vyanjanā* or suggestion, eliminating the need for establishing two distinct processes.

2.1.6. Abhinavagupta's Revelation Theory of Rasa

After denying the views of others, then the question put forth to Abhinavagupta that in actual sense where does rasa exists? Abhinavagupta argues that relying on someone's flawed position cannot establish the existence of rasa. Additionally, he acknowledges the common practice of challenging established facts. Abhinavagupta demonstrates that his understanding of rasa is shaped through the critique of other theories, indicating that his conception emerges from evaluating existing perspectives. The more we criticize or refute the fact, it means we are going deeper and revealing the nature of that fact. In the process of the criticism and refutation of the views the true nature of thing becomes clearer or more clearly manifested. In the beginning it seems that there is no base for the construction of a thing but when a foundation is laid down then the bridges and houses can be constructed very easily upon it. Similarly, based on the ideas propounded earlier, the intellect of the scholar rises up and becomes able to see the real nature of the object. In this process already established principles act as ladders. Although the stairs become irrelevant after you reach the summit, it is only because of them that you can get there. Abhinavagupta acknowledged that his aim is not to prove the predecessors as absurd but he has synthesized their views and collected the useful concepts to substantiate the real meaning of rasa.

2.1.6.1. The Significance of the Sahṛdaya (Appreciator) in the Manifestation of Rasa

Abhinavagupta cites Bharata's definition that the expression of the essence of poetry is known as the enjoyment or aesthetic experience of poetry. To truly grasp the essence of rasa, one must be an *adhikāri*, a qualified individual. Abhinavagupta emphasizes that not everyone can attain

rasa; specific qualities are required to relish it. A prejudiced mind cannot fully appreciate rasa. He emphasizes that the individual who relishes rasa must possess certain qualities, such as a pure heart *(nirmala)* and the power of intuition *(pratibhāna). (अधिकारी चात्र विमलप्रतिभानशालि हृदयः).*[30] Abhinavagupta references a verse from Kalidasa's Ābhijñānaśākuntalam to illustrate the capabilities of a qualified individual. Initially, the qualified person grasps the literal meaning of the words. Subsequently, upon comprehending the literal sense of the verse, a mental perception arises within the reader's mind. This perception, by its very nature, is a direct experience that transcends temporal and spatial distinctions inherent in the verse. R. Gnoli translates Abhinavagupta's description, clarifying that aesthetic experience is an inner or mental perception *(manasapratyakṣa).* According to Abhinavagupta, such perception is self-knowing *(svasamvedanasiddha).*[31] Abhinavagupta posits that in the enactment of Kalidasa's Ābhijñānaśākuntalam, specifically in the scene where King Dusyanta, depicted as a hunter, chases a deer in desperate flight, spectators do not directly feel fear. Nor is it the case that the deer or the actor portraying it experiences fear. Rather, the fear depicted transcends individual perspectives, evolving into a universal emotion that surpasses the constraints of space and time.

Abhinavagupta suggests that during this portrayal, our perception transcends mere sensory input and engages our mental faculties. We don't perceive fear as a personal, isolated feeling, but rather as a universal emotion free from individual biases or limitations. This profound realization of emotion in its purest form represents the epitome of aesthetic experience, identified as *bhayānaka* rasa.

Furthermore, in experiencing this particular type of fear, our consciousness remains fully engaged and does not dismiss the reality being portrayed, Abhinavagupta cautions that complete absorption or disregard of our consciousness could lead spectators to develop biases. Therefore, the process of generalization *(sādhāranikaraṇa)* of determinants should not be restricted but rather extensive. It does not pertain to a singular entity but encompasses all. Just like the inherent relationship between smoke and fire, or terror and trembling—where there is fire, there

[30] Dvivedi, Dr. Parasanatha. (1996). *Nāṭyasāstra of Sri Bharata Muni & Abhinavabharati by Sri Abhinavaguptacarya*. Varanasi: Sampurnananda Sanskrit University.p.470.

[31] Gnoli, Raniero. (1963). *Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta*. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Studies.p.54.

is smoke, and where there is terror, there is trembling. Abhinavagupta emphasizes the generalization of both subject and object.

This process of generalization unfolds through determinants and removes subjective, temporal, and spatial limitations as elucidated in poetry. The act of generalization becomes cherished through the separation of subject, space, time, etc., within poetry. This state fosters comprehensiveness and establishes uniformity *(ekaghanatā)* among the perceptions of all spectators. The question arises: why do spectators undergo the same aesthetic experience? The reason behind the uniform experience among spectators lies in the fact that they all harbor the same latent impressions *(vāsana, samskāra)* of a permanent mental state within their minds. However, possessing the same latent impressions does not guarantee identical aesthetic experiences for all. Another crucial element necessary for aesthetic experience is that the consciousness of spectators must be free from all prejudices and biases.

2.1.6.2. Camatkāra: The Essence of Aesthetic Rapture

When a spectator overcomes these barriers and reaches a certain state, it is termed as *camatkāra*. This state, characterized by changed expressions like trembling or horripilation, is also referred to by Abhinavagupta as a synonym for rasa. *Camatkāra* represents a state of special enjoyment *(bhogāvesa),* where the subject is undisturbed by any other content and is fully immersed in spontaneous activity *(spanda),* devoid of desires. This state may be described as a type of mental cognition, akin to direct experience *(manasadhyavasāya),* or as a form of imagination *(samkalpa),* or even as a form of remembrance *(smṛti).* However, it is crucial to note that this state is entirely distinct from its ordinary nature.[32]

In this context, Abhinavagupta illustrates that the content of remembrance *(smṛti)* differs from ordinary experience. To exemplify this, he quotes a remarkable verse from Kalidasa's Ābhijñānaśākuntalam: "When a person, however cheerful, becomes unsettled upon seeing beautiful objects and hearing exquisite music, then surely, though vaguely, he instinctively recalls deep-seated associations from past lives ingrained within him." A. Sankaran interprets

[32] Mishra, kailash Pati. (2006). *Aesthetic Philosophy of Abhinavagupta*. Varanasi: Kala Prakashan. p.110.

this situation as follows: Dusyanta, afflicted by Durvasa's curse, has completely forgotten his love for Sakuntala. However, upon encountering sweet music and perhaps also viewing some paintings in the hall, he experiences inner discomfort and vaguely realizes his love for Sakuntala, though he remains unaware of it consciously.[33]

Here the word *smṛti* is not meant like the logicians use it. According to Nyāya, *smṛti* is that which we experience before. In this stage, the subject has prior knowledge about the object. That means the subject has the knowledge of external object that remains in a dormant form in the intellect, and that form is called *samskāra* or latent impression. Later it gets awakened when it come across suitable reason. But in the context of poetry, it is not the case. In poetry, we have not experience before which enacted in the stage. One question may arise here that in whose context it is applicable, which is not experienced before? Is it from spectator, or from character or from actor? Or can we say that it is applicable for all the participants who are involved in this process. It is a form of perception in which what appears is just a feeling, say delight which is of the nature of tasting. As this perception is not conditioned by any specification, it becomes the object of a relish. Abhinavagupta says that such perception is neither erroneous, nor ineffable, nor similar to ordinary perception, nor of the form of super-imposition.

Hence, Abhinavagupta put forth his revelation theory of rasa. Revelation means promulgate of something which is latent or hidden. In this remark, he hypothesizes the involvement of unconscious memory traces (*samskāras*) in the arousal of rasa. Certain *bhāvas* are hidden in the spectator from the moment he or she is born. These *bhāvas* are impressions or inherited instincts (*vāsanās* or *samskāras*) that are produced as a result of worldly experiences, former birth, practice, education, and so on. The distinction between *sthāyibhāva* and *vāsanā*, on the other hand, is obvious. *Vāsanās* are intrinsic impulses or proclivities that are anchored in an individual's psyche and *samskāras* are learned impressions. They are sometimes used indiscriminately as synonyms. However, *sthāyibhāva* is dramaturgy word. It relates only to emotions of man as represented by actors in drama by their *abhinaya*. When spectators see these

[33] Sankaran, A. (1973). *The Theory of Rasa and Dhvani. University of Madras*. p.105.

emotions portrayed, they become tasteful or rasa. Because they are likewise human, they have their counterpart in germinal form in their own psyche. Thus, *vāsanās* or *samskāras* relate to life; while *sthāyibhāvas* relate only to emotions represented on the one and enjoyed on the other in drama. Rasa is only the emotional mood revealed in a blissful knowledge, devoid of any impediments to its realization. These barriers are overcome by the *vibhāvas* etc. In ordinary world also, knowledge devoid all limitations are called by different names, *camatkāra, rasanā, bhoga, laya, viśrānti* and so on. Now, what are these possible hindrances which occur in the process of the realization of Rasa?

2.1.6.3. Seven Types of Obstacles

Abhinavagupta identified seven types of obstacles, namely -

(1) *pratipattavayogyatasambhavanavirahonama* (the unsuitability or the absence of verisimilitude)

(2) *Svagataparagatatvaniyamenadesakalavisesavesah* (the involvement in temporal and spatial determinations)

(3) *nijasukhadivasibhavah* (being at the mercy of one's own sensations of pleasure etc.)
(4) *pratityupayavaikalyam* (absence of the appropriate means of perception)
(5) *sphutatvabhavah (*absence of clarity in perception or lack of evidence)
(6) *apradhanata* (lack of some predominant factor)
(7) *samsayayogascha* (presence of doubt).

He mentioned that eliminating these obstacles facilitates the experience of rasa. Among these hindrances, certain ones rely primarily on playwrights, some on performers, and the remainder solely on spectators. Let's examine each of them.

1. The unsuitability or the lack of verisimilitude: The first obstacle is like when the spectator cannot understand what is perceived and is not convinced with their knowledge, then how can they immerse their consciousness in the object present before them, accomplishment of aesthetic experience cannot happen. If one is not influenced of their likelihood of the things presented, how can they engross their attention towards it?

The means for the elimination of this type of obstacle is the consent of heart. When the ordinary events are represented in drama the consent of the heart of the spectator takes place easily as he takes it possible. But when an extra ordinary event like ocean-crossing is represented, as it is held an impossible action the heart of the spectator will not respond to it. In this situation if such extra-ordinary events are to be represented, it must be associated with extra-ordinary character like Rāma etc., whose names are famous for the extra-ordinary works. The belief that Rāma etc. are extra-ordinary persons and they can perform extraordinary actions is deeply rooted in the heart of spectators since ancient time as they have learnt such things from scriptures etc. So, the spectators can take these events to be possible, when represented on stage and they can have a mental perception of it and can experience the aesthetic taste.

2. The second obstacle arises when individuals are absorbed in their own personal joys and sorrows. In such a state, they become preoccupied with either preserving or avoiding the destruction of their pleasure. They yearn to replicate similar sensations, endeavor to evade them, seek to express them openly, or conceal them. To overcome this obstacle, theatrical conventions *(nāṭyadharmi)* are employed, which encompass various elements such as the delineation of zones *(kakṣya)* within the stage pavilion *(mandapa),* the layout of the stage *(rangapitha),* diverse forms of women's dances, the usage of different dialects, the attire and accessories worn by actors, as well as the introductory rituals *(prastāvanā)* and preliminary ceremonies *(purvaranga),* among others. The incorporation of these elements in drama serves to diminish the perception that a specific individual, in a particular place, at a given moment, experiences pain or pleasure, etc. This theatrical means obscure the true identity of the actor and the character assumed by the actor. Abhinavagupta asserts that Bharata introduced these theatrical conventions to foster universality and facilitate the emergence of Rasa

3. The third obstacle arises when spectators, instead of savoring the rasa, become overly absorbed in their own emotional experiences such as pleasure, pain, etc. In such a state, it becomes challenging for them to divert their attention to other matters. How can

someone overwhelmed by their emotions focus their mind on anything else? To overcome this obstacle, various means are prescribed to be incorporated into drama at appropriate times and locations. These may include music, both vocal and instrumental, adorned halls, skilled courtesans, and other theatrical devices. These elements aid spectators in disengaging from their personal mental preoccupations and tensions, allowing their hearts to resonate with the themes portrayed on the stage. Abhinavagupta suggests that the integration of music, dance, song, and other elements in theatre, which are meant to be appreciated by all spectators, possesses a captivating power. This power is such that even someone lacking aesthetic sensibility *(sahṛdaya)* can attain clarity of heart and become 'possessed of heart' *(sahṛdaya).*

4. The fourth obstacle pertains to a deficiency in clarity or perception during the aesthetic experience. When the means of perception are absent, the process of aesthetic enjoyment is hindered. It is understood that without the necessary means of perception, there can be no perception itself, thus impeding the possibility of aesthetic enjoyment.

5. The fifth obstacle resembles the previous one, wherein despite experiencing indirectly through inference or testimony, there remains a longing to directly perceive it. As Vātsyāyana noted, while cognition derived from testimony, inference, comparison, etc., is valid, it underscores the primacy of direct perception. Once an object is directly perceived, it cannot be altered by other means. It is an established fact that something directly perceived cannot be disproven by inference or verbal testimony. For instance, when a burning stick is swiftly rotated, it appears as a circle of fire *(alātacakra).* Though this may seem real at first glance, upon closer inspection, it is revealed to be otherwise. To overcome such obstacles (the fourth and fifth kinds), drama introduces four forms of representation (acting-*abhinaya*): styles *(vṛtti),* local customs *(pravṛtti),* and realistic portrayal *(lokadharmi).* Representation in drama constitutes a distinct activity from inference and verbal testimony. In theater, there is *pratyakṣakalpasākṣātkāra,* wherein the experience parallels direct perception. Drama stands apart from testimony and inference but shares similarities with perception. *अभिनयनं हि शब्दलिंगव्यापारविसदृशमेव*

प्रत्यक्षव्यापारकल्पमिति निश्चेष्यामः ।[34]

6. The sixth obstacle arises when the spectator regards rasa as a secondary byproduct, leading to difficulty in finding satisfaction in such a secondary element. According to Abhinavagupta, the experience of rasa *(rasānubhuti)* is primarily derived from *sthāyibhāva,* the enduring emotional state, and secondarily from *vibhāva, anubhāva,* and *vyabhicāribhāva.* Among these emotional states or bhavas, some contribute directly to the ultimate goals of human life and are therefore deemed significant. For instance, rati, primarily associated with desire *(kāma),* also holds secondary connections with righteousness *(dharma)* and material prosperity *(artha).* Similarly, while anger predominates in individuals focused on material pursuits *(artha and kāma),* heroism or courage transcends such pursuits and is universally present. Moreover, the pursuit of spiritual knowledge is predominantly characterized by *nirveda*, detachment or disillusionment, which aligns with the path towards liberation *(mokṣa).* Hence, emotions such as *rati, krodha*, *utsāha* (enthusiasm), and *nirveda* are considered predominant *sthāyibhāvas.*

   Although these four emotions predominate over one another, their manifestation in drama differs. For instance, a drama may primarily evoke the sentiment of love *(śṛṅgāra rasa),* while other rasas such as heroism *(vīra rasa),* tranquility *(śānta rasa),* etc., are secondary. In this context, all rasas ultimately culminate in pleasure. The essence of all rasas should be self-apprehension, inherent in all experiences, and ultimately blissful. It is observed that in the empirical world, individuals, particularly women, who possess kind-heartedness and are devoid of obstacles, derive pleasure even from sorrow. When the heart is at peace, it experiences pleasure, and the pain arises from the restlessness of the heart.
7. In the seventh obstacle, when there is no fixed correlation between the enduring emotional states *(sthāyibhāva)* and the determinants *(vibhāva),* consequents *(anubhāva),* and transitory states *(vyabhicāribhāva),* it cannot be asserted that these determinants,

[34] Visweswar, Acharya. (1960). *'Abhinavabharati'*. Delhi: Hindi Vibhaga, Delhi University.*p-477*

consequents, and transitory states arise solely due to a specific enduring emotional state. For example, tears, which are the psychophysical expressions of compassion *(karuṇa rasa),* can also arise from joy or due to an eye disease. This ambiguity raises doubts about whether the tears stem from compassion or another emotion. Similarly, if the determinant is a tiger or a dog, one person may respond with anger (the enduring emotional state of ferocity), while another may feel fear due to terror. Such ambiguity can lead to doubt. However, when there is a harmonious conjunction between the determinant, consequent, and transitory states, doubt is eliminated. For instance, when someone loses a loved one (determinant), expresses discontent or sorrow (consequent), and displays crying along with anxiety or misery (transitory states), the enduring emotional state must be sorrow *(śoka).* In such cases, there is no room for doubt. Establishing coherence between the determinant, consequent, and transitory states removes all uncertainties. It cannot be conclusively stated that determinants, consequents, and transitory states are exclusively associated with specific determinants.

Abhinavagupta emphasizes the importance of eliminating these obstacles, as their removal leads to the revelation of rasa in the spectator. This revelation brings about a state of tranquility, wherein the spectator experiences profound aesthetic bliss and harmony. For Abhinavagupta, tranquility indeed represents the essence of rasa, and it is highly coveted. Achieving a state of tranquility signifies the culmination of the aesthetic experience, wherein the spectator attains a profound sense of inner peace and harmony through the revelation of rasa.

Abhinavagupta indeed placed significant emphasis on the ninth rasa, *śānta* rasa. He regarded the relish of the state of aesthetic experience as *śānta* rasa. Abhinavagupta viewed śānta rasa as the foundational rasa from which all other rasas emerge as modifications. These other rasas develop from *śānta* rasa and eventually dissolve back into it once their respective functions are fulfilled. Thus, *śānta* rasa is considered the underlying essence from which all aesthetic experiences spring forth and ultimately converge. Abhinavagupta correlates the concept of *śānta* rasa with the highest values in life, known as *puruṣārtha*, particularly *mokṣa* or liberation. The experience of *mokṣa*, which is akin to the experience of *śānta* rasa, entails the realization of one's true nature. Its determinants *(vibhāvas)* include practices such as *japa*

(recitation of sacred mantras), *tapa* (austerity), meditation, etc., while its enduring emotional state *(sthāyibhāva)* is the state of *mokṣa* itself.

Abhinavagupta suggests that the spiritual experience of *mokṣa* and the aesthetic experience of *śānta* rasa share fundamental similarities. However, there is a crucial distinction: while the aesthetic experience of *śānta* rasa may involve latent impressions *(bhāvas)* in their dormant state, the spiritual experience of *mokṣa* entails the self in its pure form, free from any mental impressions.

Furthermore, while the aesthetic experience of *śānta* rasa is temporary and lasts only as long as its determinants endure, the spiritual experience of *mokṣa* is eternal. Abhinavagupta asserts that the essence of all rasas is of the nature of *śānta* because rasa itself transcends the worldly realm *(alaukika)* and is devoid of mundane elements such as desire and yearning. Hence, it assumes the form of *śānta*, signifying a state of serene tranquility and fulfillment.

2.2. Post-Abhinavagupta Period or Later Rasa Theorists

2.2.1. Dhananjaya's Perspective on Rasa

Following Bharata's Nātyasāstra, there emerged several works up until the time of Dhananjaya, primarily centered on poetics. Although some of these writings touched upon the principles of dramaturgy, they predominantly focused on poetry. Nearly all of these canonical texts discussed the concept of rasa to some extent. However, there is a dearth of intermediate dramaturgical works. Consequently, Dasarupaka stands out as a significant feature in the realm of dramaturgy after Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra. In my analysis, I will delve into how Dhananjaya interpreted rasa within the framework of Dasarupaka.

Dhananjaya, a prominent dramaturgist of the 10th century A.D., authored the Dasarūpaka, a treatise on dramaturgy, and Dhanika's commentary on it known as Avaloka. In Dasarupaka, Dhananjaya elucidates that drama, or nāṭyam, earns its name from its characteristic of representation *(rupaka),* wherein actors embody various personas, including those of gods, kings, and ordinary individuals. Furthermore, it is termed a "performance" because it is

observable. According to Dhananjaya, drama encapsulates the portrayal *(avasthānukṛtir)* of situations in a tangible, visual manner through the enactment of actors.

Dhanika, in his commentary, equates the terms *nāṭyam, rupam,* and *rupaka,* considering them synonymous. The ten forms of drama delineated by Dhananjaya are *Nātaka, Prakarana, Bhāna, Vithi, Dima, Ihāmriga, Samavakara*, *Vyayoga*, *Anka,* and *Prahasana*. Dhananjaya organizes these forms based on three fundamental elements: plot *(vastu),* hero *(netā),* and emotional essence (rasa). The plot serves as an essential foundation for drama, providing the narrative structure upon which the theatrical performance unfolds. Dramatists often draw inspiration for plots from sources such as the Rāmāyana, Mahābhārata, historical texts, or their own imaginative creations. Embedded within the plot is a profound message or moral that enriches the dramatic experience.

Dhananjaya underscores the significance of the hero within the dramatic narrative, emphasizing the pivotal role the hero plays in conveying the underlying message of the play. The hero is portrayed as a character possessing specific qualities and characteristics deemed essential for effectively communicating the intended message to the audience.

However, amidst the various elements that contribute to the richness of drama, it is the concept of rasa that occupies a central position. Rasa, the aesthetic essence or flavor of the performance, is paramount in evoking emotional responses and creating a profound impact on the audience. In our exploration, we shall delve deeply into the nuances of rasa, recognizing its indispensable role in the realm of dramatic expression.

Dhananjaya posits that rasa emerges when a permanent emotional state *(sthāyibhāva)* is elevated to the level of pleasure through the interplay of various factors. These include the determinants *(vibhāva),* the consequents *(anubhāva),* the involuntary physical manifestations *(sāttvika),* and the transient emotional states *(vyabhicāri).*

विभावैरनुभावैश्च सात्त्विकैर्व्यभिचारिभिः ।

आनीयमानः स्वाद्यत्वं स्थायी भावो रसः स्मृतः ।।

"Sentiment (rasa) results when a permanent state produces a pleasurable sensation through [the operation of] the Determinants, the Consequents, the Involuntary States, and the Transitory States."[35]

Dhananjaya's conceptualization of rasa diverges from that presented in Bharata's seminal rasasūtra. While Bharata's exposition does not explicitly incorporate the notions of *sthāyibhāva* and *sāttvikabhāva,* Dhananjaya integrates these elements into his definition. It is pertinent to underscore that Dhananjaya's discourse on rasa does not entail a commentary or explication of Bharata's rasasūtra; rather, it constitutes an autonomous delineation of the concept.

According to Dhananjaya, *sāttvika bhāvas,* classified as involuntary states, possess distinctiveness despite their categorization as consequents, owing to their derivation from Sattva, which aligns with the prevailing emotional state. Dhanika elucidates Sattva as the heightened responsiveness of the heart to the joys or sorrows experienced by others. He references Bharata's assertion, highlighting *sattva's* manifestation through tears in sorrow and trembling in joy. These physical expressions, arising from emotional states, are termed *bhāvas* and are considered *anubhāvas* due to their reflective nature. Dhananjaya concurs with Bharata's enumeration of eight *sāttvikas* and his characterization of *sāttvika bhāvas.*

Sthāyibhāva, the enduring mental state, is crucial in the experience of Rasa, which is the relishable essence of aesthetic enjoyment. Dhananjaya defines *sthāyibhāva* as a state of unimpeded delight that harmonizes with other emotional states, emphasizing the absence of contradictory emotions and interference among them. A permanent state serves the source of delight, is one which is not interfered with by other psychological states, whether favorable *(sajātiya)* or unfavorable *(vijātiya).*[36] Nonetheless, it possesses the capability to reconcile these diverse emotional states, fostering harmony within the individual's emotional landscape.

[35] Hass George C.O. (1912). *The Dasarupa: A Treatise on Hindu Dramaturgy by Dhananjay.* New York: Columbia University Press. P-106, verse no-4.1.

[36] Ibid. P-124, verse no-4.42

To elucidate the concept of *sthāyibhāva,* Dhananjaya employs the analogy of the sea or ocean. Just as under the sea, where waters of varying salinity mix together seamlessly, the ocean assimilates all elements and becomes self-contained. Similarly, *sthāyibhāva* is likened to a permanent emotional state that remains integrated and unaltered, irrespective of the presence of other emotions, whether favorable *(sajātiya)* or unfavorable *(vijātiya).* In essence, *sthāyibhāva* absorbs and transforms all other emotional expressions into its own form, embodying both favorable and unfavorable conditions that constitute a bhava. Dhananjaya elucidates Malatimadhava story: "Malatimadhava" is a famous play written by Bhavabhuti in the 8th century. It tells the story of Malati, the daughter of Padmavati's minister, Bhurivasu, and Madhava, the son of Vidarbha's minister, Devrata. The king of Padmavati wants Malati to marry a young man named Nandana. However, Malati is in love with Madhava from their first meeting.

When Madhava learns about Malati's marriage proposal to Nandana, he goes to a graveyard to gain yogic powers *(siddhi)* to marry Malati easily. Meanwhile, in the graveyard, there's a devotee of Chamunda Devi named Aghoraghanta and his student, Kapalakundla. They believe that sacrificing people in front of the goddess will please her. It's a horrifying scene, with people being killed and their body parts cut off.

Aghoraghanta and Kapalakundla kidnap Malati and try to kill her, but Madhava hears her cries and comes to rescue her. He fights Aghoraghanta and defeats him. Then Madhava and Malati get married. Despite facing many challenges, the two couples finally unite, bringing a happy ending to the play.

Throughout this intricate plot, the characters experience a variety of emotions—love, fear, bravery, and relief—all of which intertwine to form the overall emotional atmosphere of the play. This integration of diverse emotional states exemplifies Dhananjaya's analogy of the ocean, where *sthāyibhāva* unifies and harmonizes different emotional expressions into a consistent emotional resonance. "Mālatimādhava" is a play that showcases various sentiments, known as rasas, including love *(śṛṇgāra),* heroism *(veera),* and disgust *(vibhatsa).* Despite love and disgust being opposite sentiments, they coexist in the play without interfering with each other. Instead, they blend seamlessly depending on the context of the story.

The question arises whether two bhavas can be expressed simultaneously, especially when they are contrary to each other. In this context, both favorable and unfavorable emotions are considered part of the *sthāyibhāva*. There are two types of contraries within *sthāyibhāva*: *Sahanavasthā*, where *bhāvas* cannot coexist in the same context, and *bādhyabādhakabhāva,* where one *bhāva* influences the expression of another.

Dhananjaya meticulously distinguishes *sthāyibhāva* from other emotional states. Staying true to his definition, *sthāyibhāva* is characterized by its resilience to be influenced by either positive or negative emotions. Emotions that conflict with one another are not categorized as *sthāyibhāva.* Consequently, it is conceivable to witness the simultaneous manifestation of two *sthāyibhāvas* within a character.

For instance, consider Madhava's simultaneous experience of disgust *(vibhatsa)* towards Aghoraghanta and love *(rati)* for Malati. In this scenario, both emotional states are depicted with equal prominence within the same character. Madhava's *sthāyibhāva* of love towards Malati and disgust towards Aghoraghanta coexist independently, without one being a component of the other.

Dhanika aligns with Abhinavagupta's perspective concerning the permanent mental state inherent in the spectator or listener. Both scholars assert that this mental state undergoes a transformation into rasa when it is evoked and brought to the consciousness of perfect bliss, thereby becoming an object of relish. Furthermore, they concur on defining rasa as constituting perfect bliss.

However, a nuanced difference arises in their interpretations. Abhinavagupta does not consider *sthāyibhāva,* the permanent emotional state, as rasa itself. Instead, he emphasizes the realization of the state resulting from the combination of *vibhāva* (determinants), *anubhāva* (consequents), and other factors, which removes all barriers to enjoyment.

Contrarily, according to Dhananjaya and Dhanika, the transformed state of *sthāyin,* brought to the point of enjoyment through *vibhāva* and other elements, may indeed be termed as rasa. This subtle distinction lies in their perception of whether the *sthāyin* itself qualifies as rasa or if it requires a process of transformation to attain that status.

Bharata initially identified eight *sthāyibhāvas* (permanent emotional states), to which Abhinavagupta later added *śama* or *śānta* rasa, making it the ninth. However, Dasarupaka does not acknowledge *saṃa* as a proper rasa in dramaturgy and does not recognize *śama* as a *sthāyibhāva* of *śānta*. Abhinavagupta, on the other hand, emphasized *śānta* rasa as the most significant among the nine rasas.

Various commentators have provided diverse interpretations of *śānta* rasa. Some scholars reject its existence entirely, arguing that the complete eradication of *rāga* and *dvesha* (attachment and aversion) necessary for *śānta* rasa is unattainable in worldly life. Others view *śama* as a peaceful mental state but not elevated to the level of *sthāyibhāva*. Additionally, elements of *śama* are found in *vibhatsa* (disgust) and *vīra* (heroic), suggesting that *śānta* cannot be classified as a separate rasa.

In my thesis, I delve into analyzing the cognitive value within drama, yet it's crucial to recognize the broader significance of rasa across various art forms, including poetry. While my focus remains on drama, rasa is universally acknowledged as the essence of any art form. Scholars contend that poetry, too, cannot exist devoid of rasa, highlighting the interconnectedness of different artistic expressions. This acknowledgment underscores the universal importance of rasa in evoking emotional responses and aesthetic experiences. Although my thesis primarily centers on drama, it indirectly acknowledges the pervasive influence and significance of rasa across diverse artistic expressions. This section briefly explores how rasa influenced poetry, with particular attention to the discussions by *dhvanivādins*, who centered their analyses on rasa. Various interpretations within this context are examined to illuminate the impact of rasa on poetic expression.

Adherents of the Dhvani theory, including Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta, Mammatta, Viśvanātha, Pt. Raja Jagannatha, among others, argue that rasa is primarily appreciated through the suggestive power of *vyanjanā* in poetry.

2.2.2. Ānandavardhan’s View on Rasa

Ānandavardhan, the founder of dhvani theory, advocated for rasa in poetry, considering it as the source of aesthetic charm. His unique contribution lies in defining rasa within linguistics, asserting that rasa is exclusively expressed through dhvani. He emphasized that the ultimate

goal of poetry is to evoke aesthetic delight, which is achieved through an analysis of words and their meanings. According to Ānandavardhan, a word serves three functions: it signifies or denotes *(abhidhā),* indicates *(lakṣanā),* and suggests *(vyanjanā).* These functions are essential for conveying the aesthetic essence of poetry.

In the example of *"gangāyamghosah,"* Ānandavardhan illustrates the significance of linguistic nuances in conveying deeper meaning in poetry. While "Ganges" literally refers to the river's current, through *lakṣanā* it suggests proximity to the riverbank. However, the speaker's choice of *"gangāyam"* instead of *"gangātire"* indicates a deeper intention to evoke the coolness and sanctity of the hamlet, enhancing the aesthetic experience. This suggested idea, beyond the literal meaning, distinguishes poetic language from ordinary speech, requiring intellectual engagement to fully appreciate its beauty.

In "Dhvanyāloka," Ānandavardhana elucidates that the essence of poetry lies in *dhvani*, where words and their meanings transcend their explicit sense to convey implicit meanings. Dhvani encompasses two senses: *Vācya* (explicit) and *pratiyamānārtha* (implicit). *Vācya* represents the expressed meaning understandable to all, while *pratiyamāna* signifies a unique essence difficult to articulate, such as the beauty of a lady or the speech of a great poet. Ānandavardhana provides an example: "Oh! Pious man! Wander freely, that dog is killed by the fierce lion that dwells on the banks of Godavari River." Here, the literal meaning is clear, but the implicit meaning conveys a deeper sense of danger and urgency, illustrating the power of *dhvani* in poetry. In this interpretation, the scenario described by Ānandavardhana depicts a lady hesitating to meet her lover on the banks of the Godavari River, as a pious man approaches to bathe. Though she explicitly tells him he can roam freely, the implicit message is that he should avoid going there because of the danger posed by a fierce lion. By saying one thing but suggesting another, the lady ensures her privacy remains undisturbed, using the power of suggestion to convey her true intentions.

Pratiyamāna -rasa dhvani

Ānandavardhan believed that suggestion *(dhvani)* is manifested through ideas *(Vastudhvani),* embellishment *(alamkāradhvani),* and poetic configuration *(rasadhvani).* If the suggested meaning is in the form of an idea it is *vastudhvani* in poetry. If the suggestion is in the

form of figure of speech is called *alamkāradhvani*. When an emotion or mental experience is suggested in a poem and that emotion attains the form of poetic configuration and when permanent mental states or transient moods are suggested, it is called *rasadhvani.* Ānandavardhana observes that the poet Valmiki's grief transformed into poetry, when he saw the lamenting krauncha bird separated from the beloved spouse. Abhinavagupta also gives utmost importance to *rasadhvani* and considers it practically the soul of poetry. A connoisseur of poetic art experiences only the love expressed in the Abhijñānaśakuntalam, or pathos in the Rāmāyana or the *śāntarasa* in the Mahābhārata.

Dhananjaya and Dhanika disagreed with the concept of dhvani. Dhanika argued that the desire for expression and understanding, termed *tātparyasakti*[37], not only helps the audience comprehend the meaning of poetry but also prompts them to act accordingly, leading to the enjoyment of aesthetic pleasure. Thus, he believed that poetry, through *tātparyasakti*, serves as the catalyst for experiencing rasa, rendering *dhvani* or *vyanjanāvṛtti* unnecessary. Dhanika proposed that the connection between poetry *(kāvya)* and rasa is *bhāvyabhāvakabhāva,* contrasting with the *vyangyavyanjakabhāva* suggested by the Dhvani School. He asserted that this connection differs from the *janyajanakabhāva* of the Naiyāyikas, as rasas already exist within the appreciative mind in the form of permanent moods *(bhāvayati).*

2.2.3. Mammata's Emphasis on Rasa

In his "Kāvyaprakāsa," Mammata explores various concepts of poetry and drama discussed by earlier scholars, including *guṇa*, *doṣa, riti, alamkāra, dhvani,* and *rasa.* Among these

[37] Naiyāyikas put forth four conditions of sentence meaning. Tātparyasakti is one of the conditions for knowing the meaning of a sentence. It means the intention of speaker. Here the concern should be what the speaker intended the listener to understand. A word may mean different things in different contexts. In ordinary language, judgment arises from a sentence as determined by the circumstances in which it is uttered; and it is always of the nature of some kriya or action. For ex- the word 'Saindhava' means 'salt' as well as a 'horse.' Now, if a person taking food asks another to bring 'saindhava', another should not bring a horse.

components, he particularly emphasizes the significance of rasa, marking a shift in the intellectual aesthetic tradition. Mammata contends that poetry consists in word and sense-without faults and with merits and excellences of style- which may at times be without figures of speech.[38] While Mammata's definition of poetry includes *guṇa, doṣa,* and *alamkāra,* it notably excludes explicit mention of rasa. However, Mammata acknowledges the importance of rasa as a vital element of poetry, granting it supreme significance. It can be argued that *doṣa, guṇa,* and *alamkāra,* present in his definition, ultimately serve the overarching purpose of evoking rasa. Mammata implies this prioritization of rasa when he states: "When poetry exercises its full functions, it helps the development of the various rasas." This indicates that all other poetic elements ultimately contribute to the fruition of rasa within poetry. The other components of poetry relinquish themselves to rasa. Rasa occupies the primary position and others subsidiary to it. As he points out that the chief aim of poetry is pleasure and that can be accrued only through rasas. He writes, "The chief aim of poetry, however, is the attainment of the pure unmixed pleasure that follows instantaneously on the sensing of rasa."

Mammata underscores the portrayal of rasa through *guṇa* or excellences in poetry. *Guṇa,* traditionally considered attributes of rasa, combine with it to enhance poetic expression. Mammata identifies three *guṇas—mādhurya, oja,* and *prasād—*which respectively evoke delectability, courage, and lustrous expansion of the heart. These *guṇas,* inherent in poetry like fragrances in a flower, are experienced during the reading or viewing process. S.K. De defines *guṇas* as qualities that heighten a work's charm or aid in illuminating rasas. They are intrinsically related to rasa, functioning as instruments rather than the primary cause. Similarly, poetic figures *(alamkāras)* adorn words and meanings, akin to ornaments on a body, embellishing the underlying sentiment of poetry. However, without the presence of rasa, they merely produce a variety of expression.[39]

When we read, listen or watch any poetic object and if we get any type of obstruction in word, meaning, or experience in the poetic object then it is called *kāvyadoṣah*. He also emphasizes that poetry should be free from flaws.

[38] Jha Ganganatha. (1985). *Kavyaprakash of Mammata with English Translation.* Varanasi-1: Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan. P-4.

[39] De, S.K. (1925). *History of Sanskrit Poetics.* London: Luzac & Co., Vol-II, p.276.

On the basis of dhvani, Mammata categorizes poetry as *uttam-kāvya*, *madhyama-kāvya* and *avara-kāvya*. If the suggested sense is more prominent than the expressed sense, it is called *uttama kāvya.* If the suggested sense does not exceed the expressed sense in charm, it is *madhyam kāvya*. A poem with no suggested sense is described as *avara kāvya*.

Mammata defines rasa as the manifestation of mental states, termed *sthāyibhāva,* through causes *(vibhāva),* effects *(anubhāva),* and accessory elements *(vyabhicāribhāva).* In everyday life, *sthāyibhāva* arises from various stimuli, while in poetry or drama, these stimuli are represented as *vibhāvas*, divided into *ālambana* (primary cause) and *uddipana* (stimulus). *Anubhāva,* the expression of *sthāyibhāva,* encompasses verbal, mental, and physical manifestations, occurring after *vibhāva. Vyabhicāribhāvas,* additional elements, nourish and manifest *sthāyibhāvas,* transmitting various emotions in rasa. Thus, rasa is the manifestation of *sthāyibhāva* through *vibhāva, anubhāva,* and *vyabhicāribhāvas.* Mammata elucidates the process of rasa by addressing all its elements, including the concept of permanent emotions *(samskāra or vāsana)* lying dormant in human hearts and awakening under favorable circumstances.

2.2.4. Viśvanātha on Alaukika Nature of Rasa

Viśvanātha begins his discussion by criticizing Mammata for failing to incorporate rasa into the definition of poetry. He challenges Mammata's inclusion of "free from flaws" *(doṣa)* and "possessed of excellence" *(guṇa)* as epithets for poetry, arguing that no poem is entirely free from flaws and that *guṇas* actually reside in rasa, not in the form of a poem. Viśvanātha also questions the epithet "generally possessed of embellishment" *(alamkāra),* stating that *alamkāras* are not indispensable in poetry but serve to enhance its beauty. In his unique approach, Viśvanātha defines poetry in terms of rasa, marking the first appearance of the term in poetic history. He criticizes previous theorists like Ānandavardhana, Kuntaka, and Vamana for not giving rasa its proper place in poetry. This shift from focusing on the form of poetry to its content, the poetic sentiment (rasa), is evident in Viśvanātha's definition: "Poetry is a sentence the soul whereof is flavor" (*vākyam rasātmakam kāvyam*).[40] Rasa serves as the vital essence that

[40] Ballantyne, James R. (1851). *The Sahitya-Darpana or Mirror of Composition: A Treatise on Literary Criticism by Viswanatha Kaviraja.* Calcutta: J. Thomas, Baptist Mission Press. Verse no-1.3, p-10.

animates poetry, rendering it meaningful and enjoyable. Without rasa, poetry lacks its essential substance. However, rasa encompasses more than just emotions like *śṛngāra;* it embodies what is tasted or relished. Derived from the root "rasa," meaning to taste or relish, rasa extends to encompass *bhāva, rasabhāsa,* and other relishable elements. *Rasabhāsa*, in particular, denotes the mere apprehension of rasa. Unlike Mammata, Viśvanātha elucidates the roles of *guṇa, doṣa,* and *alamkāra* in relation to rasa. *Doṣa* refers to elements that degrade or obstruct the enjoyment of rasa, while *guṇa* enhances the allure of rasa. Viśvanātha emphasizes that *guṇa, alamkāra*, and *riti* are elements that enrich the experience of rasa in poetry.

2.2.4.1. Rasa-svarupa

Viśvanātha illuminates the nature of aesthetic experience by likening it to *Brahmānanda,* the supreme bliss experienced in the divine. Additionally, he elucidates the process of apprehending rasa *(rasanubhāva)* as an experience that is indivisible, self-luminous, replete with delight and contemplation, devoid of any other feeling, akin to the joy of meditation, deriving vitality from its remarkable distinctiveness, and inseparable from its own form. Viśvanātha writes:

> "Through the excess of *sattvaguṇa*, we realize ourselves in a state of complete bliss, free from all knowledge of the external world, and similar to the yogin's realization of the infinite; and this realization is essentially some extraordinary *camatkāra* or enjoyment of bliss, and it is called rasa. This *camatkāra* is nothing but the unfolding (*Vistāra*) of the mind, and is synonymous with *vismaya* or wonder. This *vismaya* is the primary characteristics of all rasas; and it means, in the rasa *adbhuta* are synthesized all the other rasas; and the latter are nothing but the different manifestations of the one *adbhuta*."

सत्त्वोद्रेकादखण्डस्वप्रकाशानन्दचिन्मयः ।
वेद्यान्तरस्पर्शशून्यो ब्रह्मास्वादसहोदरः ।।

लोकोत्तरचमत्कारप्राणः कैश्चित् प्रमातृभिः ।
स्वाकारवदभिन्नत्वेनायमास्वाद्यते रसः ।।[41]

In these two verses, Viśvanātha delves into the nature of Rasa as a state characterized by *sattvadreka,* wherein the mind is predominantly influenced by *sattvaguṇa*, surpassing *rajas* and *tamas.* During the experience of rasa, the mind is entirely devoid of rajas and *tamas,* indicating a state of pure pleasure. Additionally, Rasa is described as indivisible *(akhanda),* implying that it is experienced as a whole without being fragmented into parts. This completeness stems from the combination of various elements such as *vibhāva, anubhāva, vyabhicāribhāvas,* which collectively culminate in a pleasurable experience. Despite being composed of these elements, rasa remains inseparable from them, hence earning its designation as *akhanda.*

Viśvanātha emphasizes that the aesthetic experience of rasa is not only holistic but also self-illuminating. Unlike the unconsciousness of deep sleep, where one remains unaware, rasa is self-revealed, akin to the sun needing no external source for illumination. Rasa is brimming with delight *(ānanda),* distinct from mundane joy yet akin to spiritual bliss, devoid of any feelings beyond those related to the art object. In this state, the *sahṛdaya* loses awareness of time, space, and individual identity, immersed solely in the experience of Rasa. This profound joy parallels the spiritual bliss experienced in meditation, akin to that of a *yogin.* Additionally, Rasa is *cinmaya,* pervaded by consciousness, offering a pleasure distinct from ordinary worldly delights. Viśvanātha emphasizes the concept of *lokottaracamatkāraprana,* asserting that wonder, or *camatkāra,* is the essence of all rasa. He contends that wonder, characterized by the expansion of the mind, is intrinsic to rasa, generating an extraordinary experience. For Viśvanātha, rasa is inseparable from its own distinct form *(svakaāravādabhinna);* it cannot be experienced in any other form. Each appreciator has their own unique rasa-experience, distinct from others', highlighting the individual nature of the aesthetic encounter. Viśvanātha asserts that rasa and *āsvādya,* the object of aesthetic enjoyment, are not distinct entities; they are one and the same. Whatever is experienced as rasa is simultaneously tasted as *āsvādya*. Thus, the saying

[41] Singh, Dr. Satyabrata. (1989). *Sri Visvanathakavirajapranit Sahityadarpana.* Varanasi: Chowkhamba Vidyabhawan.3rd Parichheda, verse.2-3.

"rasahsvādyate" denotes that rasa and *āsvādya* are synonymous. Furthermore, Viśvanātha underscores that rasa and *āsvādya* are self-illuminating consciousness, implying that they are both the essence of experience and the experience itself. This understanding challenges the conventional notions of illumination, as rasa is not akin to the reflection of light on objects or the revelation of an object by light. Similarly, *vyanjanā,* the suggestion or indication in poetry, does not serve as a medium to reveal rasa; rather, both rasa and *āsvādya* are subjects of cognition. Viśvanātha contends that rasa and *vyanjanā* are equal in their role as the ultimate outcomes of the aesthetic experience.

Mammata posited that poetry dominated by rasa represents the highest form of poetic expression. However, rasa is distinct from other cognitive processes: it cannot be perceived, inferred, remembered, or considered an effect. Rather, rasa is suggested through the presentation of *vibhāva, anubhāva,* and *vyabhicāribhāva,* maintaining its unique nature. S.K. De, in "History of Sanskrit Poetics," examines the consensus among later theorists regarding rasa as a pleasant sentiment evoked in readers, transcending personal experience into an ideal and impersonalized joy. This impersonality allows the art object to be appreciated universally, beyond the constraints of space and time. *Sthāyibhāva*, the dominant emotional state, is considered essential for the experience of rasa. Bharata likens *sthāyibhāva* to a king or guru, emphasizing its superiority over other emotional states. Abhinavagupta compares *sthāyibhāva* to a thread in a garland, with other emotional states acting as flowers or precious stones tied to it. Dhananjaya describes *sthāyibhāva* as a form of delight that can manifest under favorable or unfavorable conditions.

2.2.5. Distinction between Viśvanātha and Mammata

The distinction between Viśvanātha and Mammata lies in their approaches to defining poetry and rasa. Mammata, influenced by Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, did not initially include the term 'rasa' in his definition of poetry but later discussed its definition. He focused on differentiating the ordinary world from the poetic world, illustrating how *sthāyibhāva* manifests through causes, effects, and auxiliaries in poetry.

In contrast, Viśvanātha critiqued Mammata's approach and placed rasa at the center of his definition of poetry. He aimed to establish the transcendent nature of rasa and discussed its various aspects. While Mammata included *vastudhvani* and *alamkāradhvani* alongside *rasadhvani*, Viśvanātha prioritized *rasadhvani* as the essence of poetry. He also downplayed the significance of *alamkāra*, suggesting that unclear *alamkāras* would not affect the characteristics of poetry.

Mammata did not use the term 'rasa' in his definition of *kāvya* and later he discussed definition of rasa. He was a follower of both Ānandavardhan and Abhinavagupta. His main concern was to display the distinction between ordinary world and poetic world. Hence, he has displayed how *sthāyibhāva* manifested through causes, effects and auxiliaries but when it enacted on stage it becomes *vibhāva*, *anubhāva* and *vyabhicāribhāva*.

In the case of Viśvanātha, he started his theory by criticizing Mammata. Unlike Mammata, he has given central place to rasa in his definition (*rasātmakamvākyam*). His chief focus was to establish only the *alaukikatva* of rasa. His position was to elucidate the prevalent process of rasa in his own simple way. That's why he has discussed various nature of rasa. Mammata includes *vastudhvani* and *alamkāradhvani* into *rasadhvani* whereas Viśvanātha does not give equal importance to these three schools of dhvani. He emphasized only on *rasadhvani* as the soul of poetry. Regarding *alamkāra*, Viśvanātha's view is that even if the *alamkāra* is *asputa* (unclear) it would not affect the characteristics of *kāvya.*

2.2.6. Different Interpretations of Sthāyibhāva

Sthāyibhāva- at the outset, we have mentioned *sthāyibhāva* is necessary for rasa. Bharata compares *sthāyibhāva* to a king and guru, just as a king is superior to other men, and the preceptor (guru) is superior to his disciples, so the dominant states (*sthāyibhāva*) are superior to the other states (determinants, consequents and transitory states).[42] In the view of Abhinavagupta, the *sthāyin* is compared to a thread in the garland and the *vyabhicārins* as the

[42] Ghosh, Manmohan. (1950). *The Nāṭyasāstra, A treatise on Hindu Dramaturgy and Histrionics*. Calcutta: The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, P-121.

flowers or varied precious stones tied in that thread. Dhananjaya maintained that it is like a form of delight which makes its own self either favourable or unfavourable conditions.

2.3. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have covered the concept of rasa (aesthetic experience) and the various interpretations put out by various interpreters. Bhatta Lollata, Śri Śankuka, Bhatta Nāyaka, and Abhinavagupta proposed four interpretations, which are referred to as *utpattivāda, anumitivāda, bhuktivāda*, and *abhivyaktivāda,* respectively. The most extensive of these is the Abhinavagupta's *abhivyaktivāda,* which became the standard subsequently. This perspective represents the pinnacle of Indian aesthetic philosophy.

Everyone has concerned to identify the nature and existence of rasa. The first commentator to offer philosophical commentary on rasa theory was Bhatta Lollata. He raised the issue of the location of rasa, arguing that it is primarily found in historical characters such as Kedar and Dusyanta, and secondarily in the actor. He highlights the significance of *sthāyibhāva* in rasa realisation. He explained that rasa is manifested when *sthāyibhāva* intensified by other causes like *vibhāva, anubhāva* and *vyabhicāribhāva.* Bhatta Lollatta paid no attention to the spectator's experience.

Śri Śankuka interpreted the rasas-sūtra in two phases. First, from the perspective of the ontology of the art object, emphasizing imitation, he suggested that actors imitate the original characters. Second, from the perspective of the spectators, he argued that they infer the emotions of the original characters through the actors.

Bhatta Nāyaka advanced these interpretations further by introducing the concept of sādhāranikarana, which transformed the understanding of art. Abhinavagupta then developed a more comprehensive theory of rasa, drawing inspiration from Bhatta Nāyaka's insights. According to Bhatta Nāyaka, rasa is neither produced nor manifested. If rasa were produced or manifested directly, then in the case of karuna (sorrow) or bhayānaka (fear) rasas, the experience would be sorrowful or fearful, rather than enjoyable. Bhatta Nāyaka attempted to solve the

problem of rasa from the standpoint of Sāṅkhya. He argues that for aesthetic enjoyment, both emotions and poetic language are essential. Without accessibility to the language of poetry or any art form, the spectator cannot fully relish the experience of rasa. He introduced the concept of *sādhāranikarana,* which is the indispensible for realizing rasa. Without universalization of *vibhāva, anubhāva* etc., the realization of rasa is not possible. He also claimed that *rasānubhuti* is possible when the mind of the spectator is dominated by *sattvaguṇa*. He maintained that aesthetic enjoyment is different from the ordinary experiences and it is similar to experience of the supreme brahman *(brahmānāndasahodara).*

According to Bhatta Nāyaka, there are three functions of words: *abhidhā, bhāvakatva, and bhojakatva. Bhāvakatva* defines the art object, while *bhojakatva* refers to the process of enjoyment that is generalized through the function of *bhāvakatva*. However, Abhinavagupta rejects these two functions, arguing that aesthetic experience is spontaneous and does not occur in a sequential manner. Additionally, he contends that *bhāvakatva* is not different from *vyanjanā* (suggestion). According to Abhinavagupta, rasa is *"carvaṇā,"* the savoring or relishing of one's own consciousness. This experience is characterized by being free from obstacles and is inherently blissful in nature. Hence, Abhinavagupta identifies seven obstacles that, when removed, allow a *sahṛdaya* (a sensitive and discerning appreciator) to realize rasa. For the realization of rasa, it is essential to be a *sahṛdaya;* when the sahrdaya overcomes these obstacles, they achieve a state of *camatkāra* (wonder or astonishment). Although Abhinavagupta criticizes Śankuka's analogy of *'citra-turaga-pratiti'* (the perception of a painted horse), he concurs that the experience of rasa *(rasānubhuti)* is distinct from ordinary cognition of the real and unreal, possessing an *alaukika* (transcendental) nature.

In the post-Abhinavagupta period, Dhananjaya stands out for his nuanced interpretations of *sthāyibhāva* (permanent emotions) and *sāttvikabhāva* (involuntary physical manifestations of emotion), which enable a *sahṛdaya* to relish rasa. For Dhananjaya, *rasānubhuti* (the experience of rasa) is defined by *svādyatvat,* meaning that rasa is something to be tasted or savored. Vibhavas and other elements play a crucial role in allowing one to taste their own *sthāyibhāvas* (permanent emotions) through imaginative participation in the dramatic performance. However, Dhananjaya's contributions are not isolated; the works of Mammata and Viśvanātha also provide

significant insights. Following Abhinavagupta, they notably broaden the scope of rasa beyond the confines of drama to include poetry.

Mammata, influenced by Abhinavagupta, extends the application of the rasa-sūtra (the aphorism related to rasa) to both drama and poetry. This approach signifies a departure from earlier traditions that predominantly focused on drama as the primary medium for the realization of rasa. Mammata's interpretation thus bridges the gap between dramatic and poetic expressions, highlighting rasa as a unifying element across different forms of artistic expression.

Viśvanātha, on the other hand, introduces a distinctive perspective by emphasizing *camatkāra* (wonder or aesthetic astonishment) as the fundamental principle underlying rasa. According to Viśvanātha, the experience of wonder is the essence of rasa, which serves as the core of all artistic activity. Defining rasa in the context of poetry *'rasātmakam vākyam kāvyam',* suggesting that the essence of rasa lies in the ability to evoke a profound sense of wonder and emotional engagement, irrespective of the medium.

Together, Mammata and Viśvanātha's theories have profoundly influenced the understanding of rasa, expanding its application and reinforcing its central role in both drama and poetry. Their contributions make a compelling case for the inseparability of rasa from artistic expression, thereby enriching the discourse on aesthetics in the Indian tradition.

CHAPTER 3

Pratyakṣa Pramāṇa: An Exposition of Ordinary Cognition

3.0. Introduction

In the previous chapter, we delved into the intricate concept of rasa within the realm of drama, exploring how it generates aesthetic experiences in the spectator and examining various interpretations of this phenomenon. In this chapter, we pivot our focus to the notion of *pramāṇas* in Indian philosophy, aiming to unravel the essence of perception when encountering ordinary objects. This chapter is structured into three sections. The first section examines the fundamental features of epistemology, while the second section focuses on *pratyakṣa pramāṇa.* The final section delves into the epistemological perspective of Kashmir Śaivism.

When we encounter an ordinary object, our perception is influenced by the *pramāṇas,* or the means of valid knowledge, that guide our understanding. These *pramāṇas* encompass various modes of perception, such as direct perception *(pratyakṣa),* inference *(anumāna),* comparison *(upamāna),* verbal testimony *(sabda),* and presumption *(arthāpatti),* each playing a crucial role in shaping our perception of reality.

However, the perception of an art object introduces a nuanced dimension to our sensory experience. While the *pramāṇas* still serve as the foundation of our perception, the encounter with an art object often transcends mere sensory apprehension. Artistic creations evoke emotions, provoke contemplation, and stimulate imagination, imbuing the perceptual experience with layers of meaning and significance beyond the surface appearance.

Despite these distinctions, there exist similarities between the experiences engendered by ordinary and art objects. At their core, both entail the engagement of the senses and the cognition of form, albeit with varying degrees of complexity and depth. Furthermore, both

experiences are fundamentally rooted in the subjective interpretation and interaction with the object, highlighting the intrinsic role of individual perception in shaping our encounter with the world.

In the exploration of perception within the realms of both ordinary objects and art objects, we find a common thread linking aesthetic experience to philosophical inquiry. This connection is deeply rooted in Indian philosophy, where perception serves as a gateway to understanding both the nature of reality and the means to transcend worldly suffering.

Just as the encounter with ordinary and art objects invites we to contemplate the nature of perception, interpretation, and reality, Indian philosophical traditions emphasize the profound significance of epistemology in the pursuit of liberation *(mokṣa).* Knowledge, whether derived from sensory experience or introspective insight, is considered essential for breaking free from the cycle of suffering, with ignorance identified as its primary cause.

The convergence of aesthetic engagement and philosophical inquiry underscores the interconnectedness of epistemology and metaphysics in Indian thought. As we delve into the nature of perception and the validity of knowledge, we are led to confront fundamental questions about the essence of reality and the ultimate purpose of existence. In this way, the exploration of perception in both aesthetic and philosophical contexts serves as a catalyst for self-discovery and the attainment of liberation, highlighting the inseparable relationship between the pursuit of truth and the quest for transcendence in Indian philosophy.

3.1. Fundamental Features of Indian Epistemology

In Indian epistemology, three primary concerns take centre stage:

1. The method of acquiring valid knowledge *(pramāṇas):* This focuses on understanding the various means by which valid knowledge is acquired. These include direct perception *(pratyakṣa),* inference *(anumāna),* comparison *(upamāna),* verbal testimony *(sabda),* and

presumption *(arthāpatti),* each recognized as a distinct source of knowledge by different philosophical schools.

2. The nature of validity *(prāmānya):* This delves into the nature and criteria of what makes knowledge valid or reliable. It involves questioning the standards by which knowledge claims are judged to be true or justified.

3. The nature and status of illusion *(khyāti):* This addresses the phenomenon of illusion or error in perception and cognition. It examines how illusions arise, how they can be distinguished from genuine knowledge, and their implications for our understanding of reality.

Despite acknowledging common sources of knowledge, such as perception and inference, Indian philosophical schools diverge in their metaphysical approaches. This diversity leads to various challenges in understanding the intricate relationships between knowledge and the ultimate reality. Key questions emerge, such as: What constitutes knowledge, and how is it acquired? What are the sources of knowledge, and what objects do they reveal? Exploring these questions sheds light on the complex interplay between epistemology and metaphysics in Indian philosophy. The theory of *pramāṇa*, central to the Nyāya system and often referred to as *Pramāṇaśāstra,* focuses on the nature and sources of knowledge. Gotama, in his text Nyāyasūtra, asserted that *"तत्त्वज्ञानान्निःश्रेयसाधिगमः"*[43], meaning "Knowledge is what leads to the attainment of the highest good." This statement underscores the profound significance attributed to knowledge as a means to achieve ultimate fulfillment and liberation.

3.1.1. The concept of True Knowledge (Pramā)

The Sanskrit term *"Jñāna,"* commonly translated as knowledge, encompasses all forms of cognition, regardless of their truth value. In contrast, *"pramā" distinguishes* between true and false cognition. Therefore, a more precise translation of "knowledge" might be "cognition," while *"pramā"* specifically denotes valid cognition within Indian philosophical systems. Different schools of Indian philosophy offer varied perspectives on *pramā*, recognizing diverse

[43] Vidyabhusana, Satisa Chandra Mahamahopadhyaya. (1913). *The Nyāya Sutras of Gotama.* Allahabad: The Panini Office, Bhubaneswari Asrama. P-1, Verse no-1.1.1.

forms of valid knowledge. These systems identify six sources of cognition: *pratyakṣa* (perception), *anumāna* (inference), *upamāna* (comparison), *sabda* (verbal testimony), *arthāpati* (postulation), and *anupalabdhi* (non-perception). Different schools accept different means of knowledge.

- Chārvāk accepts only one *Pramāṇa* i.e., *pratyakṣa*,
- Buddhists and Vaiṣeśikas claim *pramāṇas* are two types- *pratyakṣa* and *anumāna*.
- Jaina and Sāṅkhya accept three *pramāṇas- pratyakṣa, anumāna, and sabda.*
- Nyāya accepts four *pramāṇas- pratyakṣa, anumāna, upamāna,* and *sabda.*
- Prabhākara Mimāṁsā accepts *arthāpati* with these four.
- Advaita Vedānta and Bhatta Mimāṁsā accept all six.

All these schools accept different *pramāṇas* depending on their metaphysics. Every school of philosophy envisages a set of metaphysical doctrines and develop a system of epistemology to justify it.

3.1.2. Four Dimensions of Knowledge Inquiry

There are four aspects in the process of a knowledge inquiry i.e., *pramātā* (cognizer), *prameya* (cognized object), *pramāṇa* (instrument of right cognition) *and pramā* (right cognition) constitute the reality. Intending this Vātsyāyana, the author of Nyāyabhāsya expresses-

"तत्र यस्येप्साजिहासाप्रयुक्तस्य प्रवृत्तिः स प्रमाता, स येनाऽर्थं प्रमिणोति तत्प्रमाण, योऽर्थः प्रमीयते तत् प्रमेयं, यत् अर्थविज्ञानं सा प्रमितिः"[44]

> "Cognizer *(Pramātā)* means, a person who is stimulated to exertion by the desire to acquire or discard the object; that by means of which the person obtains the right cognition of the thing is called the instrument of right cognition *(pramāṇa);* and the thing which is rightly known is called cognized

[44] Sastri Acharya Dhundiraja. (1970). *Nyāyadarsana the Sutras of Gotama and Bhasya of Vasyayana*. Varanasi-1: The Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, p.3.

object *(prameya);* and the apprehending knowledge of the thing is called right cognition *(Pramiti).* The real nature of things is depending on all these four factors."[45]

Pramātā, the seeker of true knowledge, serves as the subject or Doer in the process of inquiry, representing the individual who holds the object. This seeker, often identified as the soul *(ātmā)* or the doer *(kartā),* strives to attain pleasurable objects and avoid unpleasant ones, utilizing *pramāṇas* to recognize them, act upon them, and reap the consequences of its actions. It is the one who experiences the true knowledge *(pramā)* of the object *(prameya)* in the quest for understanding.

Prameya, on the other hand, signifies the object or reality grasped by the subject. It is the object of knowledge, which can be acquired from anything in the world, leading to the recognition of countless *prameyas.* Vātsyāyan categorizes objects into four groups, such as pleasure, the basis of pleasure, pain, and the basis of pain, reflecting the fundamental entanglement of individuals with these categories in seeking pleasure, identifying its source, avoiding pain, and eliminating its source.

Pramāṇa acts as the method for acquiring true knowledge, serving as the tool or means utilized in the pursuit of understanding. It provides both an authoritative source for making knowledge claims and a means for acquiring knowledge. Without the means provided by *pramāṇa,* cognition between the subject *(pramātā)* and the object *(prameya)* would not be possible. Therefore, *pramāṇa* serves as the essential bridge between the seeker and the object of knowledge, ensuring the possibility of claiming true knowledge.

Pramā refers to valid knowledge, characterized by the direct apprehension of reality *(yathārthanubhava).* An example would be perceiving a rope as a rope rather than mistaking it for a snake. Pramā entails a complete and accurate understanding of the object, providing a wholesome experience of knowing it as it truly is. Each instance of *pramā* constitutes a knowledge episode, with *pramāṇas* establishing the connection between the cognitive event and its object *(prameya).*

[45] Jha Ganganatha. (1939). *Gautam's Nyāyasutras with Vātsyāyana Bhasya.* Poona: Oriental Book Agency, P.2.

Therefore, the theory of *pramāṇas* serves a dual purpose: it functions as a theory of epistemic justification, elucidating the conditions under which knowledge claims are valid, and as a metaphysical theory, outlining the causal requirements for such justification to hold. *Pramāṇas* are not merely processes of justification; they also serve as mechanisms for aligning causal chains with justification, thereby validating assertions of knowledge.

Pramātā and *prameya* serve as the fundamental causes of all cognition, representing the knower and the object of knowledge, respectively. Their presence is essential for the formation of any knowledge claim. However, even when *pramātā* and *prameya* are present, true knowledge *(pramā)* cannot arise in their absence of a *pramāṇa,* which acts as its sole cause. *Pramātā* and *prameya* are prerequisites for *pramāṇa,* which serves as the instrument of the self that knows an object.

3.1.3. The Nature of *Pramā*: Perspectives from Indian Philosophy

Pramā is often characterized as cognition that possesses both truth and novelty *(abādhitatva* or *yathārthatva* and *anādhigatatva).* According to Nyāya, valid cognition *(pramā)* is also a definite or certain *(asandigdha)* unerring *(yathārtha)* knowledge that consists in knowing the object as it is. According to the Advaitins, truth is one of the characteristics of *pramā* and it consists in its content being uncontradicted *(abādhitartha-visayyakatva).* The second characteristic of *pramā* or knowledge is, as it has already been said, novelty. It is not enough for knowledge to be true; it must also have new or previously unacquired *(anādhigata).*

Pramā represents valid knowledge, but its true nature is a subject of debate within Indian philosophy. Different schools of thought, such as realism, idealism, and pragmatism, offer various perspectives on the nature of *pramā* in Indian epistemology. The Nyāya Vaiṣeśika School subscribes to the correspondence theory of knowledge and advocates for uncritical and naive realism. According to this view, we apprehend external objects through sense perception, including their qualities, actions, and general characteristics. Knowledge is deemed valid because it accurately depicts the true nature of its object, establishing a correspondence relationship between knowledge and the object. Any discrepancy between the two renders the knowledge invalid.

However, determining whether knowledge aligns with its object poses a challenge. Nyāya realism proposes a pragmatic test to address this issue. It asserts that the validity or invalidity of knowledge, its agreement, or disagreement with its object, can only be ascertained through its practical efficacy. Knowledge is considered valid when it leads to fruitful activity and invalid when it results in fruitless outcomes. Thus, Nyāya realism aligns itself with pragmatism, emphasizing the practical consequences of knowledge as a criterion for its validity. According to Sankara, Brahman stands as the sole ontological reality, while all other objects are superimposed on the eternal consciousness by nescience. These objects possess only an empirical existence *(vyavahārikasattā)* as opposed to ontological existence *(paramārthikasattā).* Consequently, the Advaita Vedāntist distinguishes between empirical and ontological validity.

For the Advaita Vedāntist, knowledge is empirically valid if it accurately represents the true nature of its object and is not contradicted by any other valid cognition. Aligning with the Mimāṁsaka perspective, the Advaita Vedāntist believes that the validity of knowledge is inherent, while its invalidity is merely an adventitious mark due to extraneous circumstances. The validity of knowledge, stemming from its inherent nature, is self-evident and self-knowing. Conversely, the invalidity of knowledge arises from external factors and is discerned through them. This perspective underscores the intrinsic nature of knowledge validity and the contingent nature of its invalidity.

According to Sāṅkhya, valid knowledge arises from the consciousness of the self, brought about by reflecting on the self within a mental mode focused on an object that has not yet been comprehended and is free from doubts or discrepancies. In this framework, both the validity and invalidity of knowledge are inherent characteristics discernible within the knowledge itself. Cognition is deemed either intrinsically valid or intrinsically invalid, with its validity or invalidity not contingent upon external factors. This perspective leans towards a highly realistic view of knowledge.

In contrast, Buddhist philosophy equates *pramāṇa* with *pramā* (valid knowledge). According to Buddhist realism, valid knowledge is a cognition that harmonizes with its object, a harmony discerned through fruitful activity or the actual attachment to the object. This stance aligns with a form of realistic pragmatism. However, Buddhists diverge from Naiyāyika thought

in that they assert that the validity of knowledge is ascertained through fruitful activity, whereas the invalidity of knowledge is inherent and not influenced by external circumstances.

3.1.4. Theory of Truth Apprehension: Prāmānyavāda

All Indian philosophical schools acknowledge truth as a fundamental characteristic of knowledge claims *(pramā).* However, the central challenge arises with the theory of truth apprehension *(prāmānyavāda).* Various schools approach this issue differently, considering whether truth is apprehended intrinsically *(svataḥ)* or extrinsically *(parataḥ).* In simpler terms, this concerns whether cognition and its truth are perceived simultaneously or if the truth of cognition is only understood through a subsequent cognition.

Philosophical traditions such as Mimāṁsā, Advaita, and Sāṅkhya generally advocate for some form of intrinsic truth apprehension *(svataḥprāmānyavāda),* asserting that a cognition is inherently true or perceived as true, without requiring external validation. Conversely, schools like Nyāya and Buddhism typically support the theory of extrinsic truth apprehension *(parataḥprāmānyavāda),* suggesting that no cognition is inherently true on its own and that its truth must be confirmed by subsequent cognitions.

Intrinsic theorists *(svataḥprāmānyavādi)* argue that a cognition is inherently true and requires no external criteria for validation. Conversely, extrinsic theorists *(parataḥprāmānyavādi)* hold the opposing view, suggesting that no cognition is inherently true and that its truth must be established through external means. Nyāya, for instance, emphasizes that the truth of a cognition hinges on its correspondence to reality, suggesting a pragmatic approach to truth validation.

Another pertinent issue concerns whether knowledge is self-knowing or if it necessitates another form of knowledge to comprehend it. In philosophical systems such as Jainism, Buddhism, Prabhākara Mimāṁsaka, Advaita Vedānta, and Sāṅkhya-Yoga, knowledge is considered self-knowing. This perspective posits that illumination *(sva-prakāsa)* is inherent to the nature of knowledge. Knowledge is inherently self-illuminating and does not rely on anything external to manifest itself.

According to this viewpoint, knowledge cannot be an object of knowledge or be known by another form of knowledge. If knowledge were to be known as an object, it would imply that each individual instance of knowledge requires another form of knowledge to know it, leading to an infinite regress. Therefore, knowledge is understood to be self-revealing and self-aware within these philosophical frameworks. According to the Bhatta Mimāṁsakas and Nyāya-Vaiṣeśika schools of thought, knowledge is not inherently self-knowing but is rather known by another form of knowledge known as *anuvyavasāya.* In this view, knowledge is likened to the eyes, which illuminate everything but remain concealed themselves. While knowledge may reveal the object of cognition, it does not illuminate itself. Instead, it requires another form of knowledge to comprehend it. This perspective suggests that knowledge functions as a means to illuminate external phenomena but does not possess the ability to self-reveal or self-know within these philosophical traditions.

3.2. Primacy of Perception

In the realm of Indian epistemology, there is a unanimous consensus among scholars that perception *(pratyakṣa)* stands as the foremost and foundational *pramāṇa*, or source of valid knowledge. It is widely recognized that perception holds a paramount position, being the primary gateway to understanding reality. Direct and immediate, perception grants us unmediated access to the essence of an object, serving as the bedrock upon which all other *pramāṇas* are built.

According to the teachings of Nyāya philosophy, perception not only offers direct knowledge but also forms the basis for other means of knowing. Thus, it is understood that all subsequent avenues of knowledge rely fundamentally on perception; they are contingent upon the truths derived from it. Whether through inference, comparison, or testimony, perception acts as the cornerstone from which we expand our understanding of the world. While other forms of knowledge acquisition may face scrutiny regarding their reliability, perception stands indisputable. Its veracity is self-evident, providing a firm grounding upon which the edifice of knowledge is constructed. Consequently, the validation is provided by perception reigns supreme, making it the most crucial wellspring of human understanding.[46]

[46] *सर्वा चेयं प्रमितिः प्रत्यक्षपरा*

Vātsyāyana's definition of *pratyakṣa* elucidates that it entails the engagement of each sense organ with a specific object: "*Akṣasya akṣasya prativiṣayam vṛttiḥ pratyakṣam*" [1.1.3 Vātsyāyana]. In common parlance, *pratyakṣa* has come to mean the direct apprehension of an object by any of our senses, such as sight, hearing, smell, taste, or touch. This direct encounter is opposed to the term *parokṣa*, which denotes an indirect or mediated experience.

Perception *(pratyakṣa)* stands as the foremost *pramāṇa*, with other *pramāṇas* reliant upon it. It grants immediate knowledge of sensory perceptions without the need for inference or testimony, offering direct insight into reality. Unlike inference, comparison, and testimony, which provide only indirect knowledge, perception involves direct sensory interaction with objects. Other sources of knowledge, such as inference, rely on perception for their foundation.[47] For instance, inference involves deriving new knowledge based on pre-existing conceptual knowledge, as seen in the observation of smoke leading to the inference of fire. Similarly, comparison and verbal testimony depend on perception, as they rely on previously perceived information or authoritative sources for approximation. Postulation *(arthāpati)* also relies on perception, as it involves assuming unperceived facts from perceived inconsistencies. For example, inferring someone's whereabouts based on observed circumstances. Ultimately, perception serves as the cornerstone of knowledge, upon which other means of knowing are built and dependent.

Perception is highlighted as the fundamental source of knowledge among various valid means. Unlike other sources prone to doubt and debate, perception offers immediate clarity akin to sunlight without requiring additional illumination. However, in situations where perception is not feasible, Naiyāyikas turn to inference for knowledge acquisition. For instance, if someone observes smoke on a hill but cannot directly perceive fire, they can infer its presence. Certain objects may require specific methods for identification, while others can be understood through various means. Trustworthy testimony, for example, may reveal the presence of fire in a distant location, leading to inference based on observed smoke. Alternatively, direct perception on-site provides immediate knowledge of the object's nature. Different methods may yield knowledge of the same object, but certain circumstances necessitate specific approaches for truth attainment.

Jha Ganganatha. (1939). Gautam's Nyāyasutras with Vātsyāyana Bhasya. Poona: Oriental Book Agency, Verse 1.1.3

[47] Jha, Ganganath. (1939). *Gautam's Nyāyasutras with Vātsyāyana-Bhasya*. Poona: Oriental Book Agency, p.16.

In the discourse on knowledge acquisition, two significant theories emerged: *pramāṇa-samplava* by the Naiyāyikas and *pramāṇa-vyavasthā* by the Buddhists. These theories explore whether a single cognition or multiple means are required to grasp the same object with specific knowledge. Buddhism advocated *pramāṇa-vyavasthā*, positing that each *pramāṇa* has its distinct and exclusive power. In contrast, the Naiyāyikas supported *pramāṇa-samplava,* suggesting that the same object could be apprehended by multiple *pramāṇas* under varying conditions.

For instance, consider a tiger in a forest. This knowledge can be obtained through various *pramāṇas:* direct perception *(pratyakṣa)* by witnessing the tiger, inference *(anumāna)* from hearing its roar, analogy *(upamāna)* by recognizing its resemblance to a larger cat, or verbal testimony *(sabda)* from someone who has seen a tiger. Some knowledge is accessible only through a specific *pramāṇa;* for example, the knowledge of heaven may be gained solely through verbal testimony for those without direct or inferential access.

In this context, I aim to delve into the discussions surrounding four significant philosophical systems: Nyāya, Buddhism, Sāṅkhya, and Advaita Vedānta. Within Indian philosophy, Nyāya, often referred to as *pramāṇaśāstra,* holds a prominent position. Conversely, Buddhist philosophy presents a contrasting perspective to Nyāya's views. Additionally, as an idealistic system, Advaita Vedānta offers a distinct viewpoint distinct from Nyāya. In exploring cognitive faculties, the insight provided by Sāṅkhya philosophy is merit careful consideration. Each of these philosophical systems will be examined in turn to elucidate their respective doctrines and implications.

3.2.1. The Nyāya Theory of Perception:

Gautama defines perception as: *"इन्द्रियार्थसन्निकर्षोत्पन्नं ज्ञानमव्यपदेश्यम् व्यभिचारि व्यवसायात्मकं प्रत्यक्षम्,"* (that knowledge which arises from the contact of a sense with its object and which is determinate, unnamable and nonerratic.) [48]

[48]Vidyabhusana, Satisa Chandra Mahamahopadhyaya. (1913). *The Nyāya Sutras of Gotama.* Allahabad: The Panini Office, Bhubaneswari Asrama, Verse 1.1.4.

In order to understand the definition, we must first learn the sense of words *"indriya", "artha", "sannikarṣa", "avyapadeśya", "avyabhicāri" and "vyavasāyātmakam".* According to Naiyāyikas, human being has six sensory organs–minds, eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin. The first five organs are known as external organs, while the remaining organs are known as internal organs. We sense our external world through external organs and perceive our internal states through mind such as pleasure, pain, etc. The term *"artha"* means an external object. According to Naiyāyikas, every external organ has its own object. *"Sannikarṣa"* is contact of sense organ with its object. *"Avyapadeśya"* translates *"aśabda"* or "un-definable by words" i.e., indeterminate perception. *"Avyabhicāri*" means infallible. Perceptual knowledge must be infallible. *"Vyavasāyātmaka"* means certainty and it should be there in perception." It is formed by the intercourse of a present object with the external sense organs.

The definition comprises five conditions, each integral for its completeness. The last three conditions—*avyapadeśyam, avyabhicāri,* and *vyavasāyātmakaṃ*—have been extensively debated. Vātsyāyan elucidates the rationale behind employing the term *'avyapadeśyam'* in the definition. *Avyapadeśyam,* meaning "unnameable," suggests the indeterminacy of *pratyakṣa*. There's a prevalent belief that knowledge can only be communicated verbally, as everything in the world is expressible solely through words. The world is termed *'vācaka,'* the object *'vāchya,'* and their relationship is characterized by *abheda* (non-difference). Hence, knowledge of attributes like color and taste is deemed achievable through verbal representation. This is exemplified in sentences like "such and such a person perceive the object as color" or "such and such perceives it as taste," where cognition is conveyed through names inseparable from words. However, Naiyāyikas challenge this perspective.

In light of the preceding viewpoint, Gautama has introduced the condition that cognition should be 'not expressible by words.' When the object's relation with a word is unknown, i.e., when we lack knowledge of the object's name, the apprehension of the object remains unspoken of by any name. Conversely, when this relation is known, it manifests as "such is the name of the thing I perceive." These two scenarios markedly differ. The absence of a name or verbal expression for the object's cognition renders it incomprehensible to others and consequently impractical, for what is not understood cannot be effectively utilized. Consequently, Vātsyāyan concludes that a name is neither necessary nor operative during the apprehension of an object; its

relevance arises only when it is communicated or spoken about to another individual. This underscores that the apprehension of objects resulting from sensory contact is nonverbal and devoid of any verbal representation.

The next condition is *avyabhicāri,* signifying non-erroneous cognition. Vātsyāyan highlights its importance in distinguishing between accurate perception and erroneous perception. For instance, mistaking a mirage for water that doesn't actually exist contradicts the true presence of the mirage. Genuine perception remains uncontradicted and devoid of illusion. When one mistakes a rope for a snake, it's categorized as *vyabhicāri*—an illusion, not perception. *Avyabhicāri* encompasses solely erroneous perception. Critics argue that if the definition of sense perception only comprised two terms—resulting from sensory contact *(indriyārtha sannikarṣa)* and unrepresentable by words *(avyapadeśya)*—then perceiving water under such circumstances would be deemed sense perception. To circumvent this, the additional qualification of non-erroneous cognition was appended. True knowledge always stems from certain, definitive cognition.

The final condition is *vyavasāyātmakam,* indicating definitiveness. Vātsyāyan elucidates that doubt may arise when observing an object from a distance, unable to ascertain whether it's smoke or dust. This doubt arises due to shared attributes between smoke and dust. If defined solely as 'resulting from sensory contact,' this doubtful cognition would have to be considered sense perception. To address this, the further criterion of definitiveness was incorporated.

Another crucial term in defining *pratyakṣa* is *sannikarṣa* (contact). Vātsyāyan outlines three forms: senses-object contact, manas and sense contact, and manas and self (Ātman) contact. However, Gangesha, a Navya Nyāya philosopher, further refines this concept by delineating between *laukika* (ordinary) and *alaukika* (extraordinary) *sannikarṣa. Laukika sannikarṣa* refers to typical sense contact with objects, while alaukika sannikarṣa involves objects not directly present to the senses but conveyed through an extraordinary medium. This encompasses a unique form of sense-object contact *(alaukika-sannikarṣa),* leading to nine varieties of *sannikarṣa*—six under *laukika sannikarṣa* and the remaining three under *alaukika sannikarṣa.*

The first type of *sannikarṣa* is called *samyoga*, wherein there's direct contact *(samyoga)* as the senses directly engage with their respective objects. For instance, the visual senses instantly contact the object when perceiving a substance like a jar. The second type is *Samyukta samavāya*, where the visual senses contact the color along with the jar when perceiving the color of the jar. Thirdly, when perceiving a universal quality like 'colorness' inhering in the jar's color, the eyes contact the object 'colorness' through the medium of the terms 'jar' and 'color'. This is referred to as *samyukta-samavetā-samavāya*. The fourth type of sense-object contact is called *samavāya* or inherence, wherein the sense contacts its object because the object inheres as a quality in the sense itself. This is illustrated in auditory perception, where the ear contacts sound due to its inherence in its own substance, *ākāsa*. In the fifth case, known as *samavetā-samavāya*, the sense contacts its object through a third term inseparably related to both, as in the auditory perception of the universal "soundness" *(sabdatva).* Lastly, there's *visesanatā*, wherein the sense contacts its object because the object is a qualification *(visesana)* of another term connected to the sense.

There are three types of *alaukika* perception: *sāmānyalakṣana, jñānalakṣana,* and *yogaja. Sāmānyalakṣana* involves perceiving the entire class of objects through the generic property (*sāmānya*) perceived in any individual member of that class. It is the perception of the universal aspect. For instance, when we perceive an individual horse, we also perceive the universal "horseness" in that particular horse. According to the Naiyāyikas, when we perceive one horse, we perceive the universal 'horseness' as its defining property, enabling us to perceive all horses through the knowledge of the universal.

Jñānalakṣana perception occurs when we perceive an object through previous knowledge of it. Here, the respective sense organ is not in direct contact with the object, but the object is perceived through past memory. For example, when we see a rose from a distance and say, "I saw a fragrant rose," the fragrance is not perceived by the eye but is recalled from past experience. We previously perceived a rose and smelled its fragrance, so when we see the rose again, we are aware of its fragrance due to past memory. *Yogaja* perception is a form of intuitive perception achieved through meditation. It allows one to attain the highest stage of perception.

The fundamental prerequisite for perception is the contact of an object with a sense organ. However, the validity of perception depends on certain conditions, such as the health of the sense

organ, the proximity of the object, satisfactory lighting conditions, and the contact of the sense object. If there are obstacles, such as illness affecting the person, the object being situated at a distance, or darkness, the function of perception will be hindered or incomplete. According to Nyāya philosophy, there are both positive and negative causal conditions of perception. Positive circumstances include the perceiver (the self), the internal sense organ (manas), the external sense organs such as the eyes, the objects of perception, and the sense-object contact.[49]

Perception is categorized into two stages: *nirvikalpaka* (indeterminate) and *savikalpaka* (determinate). According to Vacaspati, *nirvikalpaka* is the initial stage of perception, revealing the particularity of an object. In this stage, perceiving an orange provides all its color, form, and the associated universal concept of "orange," yet without expressing it in a subject-predicate relation, such as saying "This is an orange." While universality is disclosed in the *nirvikalpaka* stage, it lacks the association of names; the universal and the particular are perceived together, rather than as words of relation like subject and predicate. All perception is ultimately determinate but begins with an earlier stage of indeterminate perception. In *nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa*, one promptly perceives an object without considering its qualities, name, or analyzing it relative to others. It entails merely awareness of the object's color, shape, and size. However, in *savikalpaka* perception, one identifies the particular object and can relate, discriminate, and analyze it with others, as knowledge of its name, size, and quality is present. For instance, when observing an orange tree, one simultaneously recognizes it by name (orange), species (orange-fruit), and generality (tree), indicating perception not only of the object's form but also its types

[49]As regarded, negative causal conditions mentioned by the Sāṅkhya philosophers and the some of which have been accepted by the Nyāya philosophers: ***Atiduratyasamipyatindriyaghatatmano'navasthanat, sauksmyat vyavadhanatabhibhavat samanabhiharat ca.*** Apprehension of even existing things do not arise by the excessive distance, proximity, impairment of senses, absentmindedness, subtlety, intervention, suppression by other objects, intermixture with other similar objects, and other causes. In Indian philosophical thought, perception (pratyakṣa) is influenced by several conditions (bhavas) that determine whether an object is perceived. Distance (atiduratabhava) plays a role, where objects like a bird soaring high in the sky may not be perceived due to their distance. Conversely, proximity (atisamipyabhava) also affects perception, as objects very close, such as collyrium applied to the eye, may not be perceived due to their closeness. The absence of sense organs (indriyanasabhava), like deafness or blindness, can prevent perception. Inattentiveness (avyavaharabhava), such as being absentminded or distracted, can hinder perception even in the presence of objects. Subtlety (suksmabhava) poses challenges, making very subtle objects like atoms difficult to perceive regardless of concentration. Intervening objects (vyavadhahabhava), such as walls or screens, can block perception. Overshadowing (abhibhavabhava) occurs when more powerful objects like the sun's rays overshadow lesser ones, obscuring perception. Mixed-up objects (samanabhiharabhava), such as rainwater in a lake mixed with similar objects, are hard to perceive individually.

and species. Determinate perception *(savikalpaka)* is characterized by acquiring specific knowledge about the object.[50]

Opposed to this view is *nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa*, where the subject merely apprehends an object without acquiring specific knowledge about it *(nisprakārakam jñānam nirvikalpakam).*[51] Certainly, in indeterminate perception, like that of an infant seeing a peepal tree, the subject perceives the form of the object but lacks specific knowledge about it. The perception is bare, without features or qualities attributed to the object.

Consider the classic example of mistaking a rope for a snake. Initially, when encountering the object, the perception is indeterminate—it lacks specific knowledge or attributes associated with the object. However, upon closer examination, when we realize it is just a rope, the perception becomes determinate. In determinate perception, we relate the substance with its attributes, discerning the object and its qualities. This transition from indeterminate to determinate perception occurs in our mental state, as we move from a state of uncertainty to clarity regarding the object's identity and attributes.

According to Naiyāyikas, there exists another stage known as recognition or *pratyabhijña*. Recognition is a type of perception influenced by our prior experiences. It occurs when the sense organ contacts the object, and memory, formed by the subconscious mind, plays a crucial role. Recognition involves both perception and memory working together. In this process, something is cognized previously, and upon encountering the object again, we recognize it.

For instance, suppose I saw a girl assisting blind people. Later, at a party, when I see her again, I recognize her as the same girl I saw helping the blinds. However, according to Buddhist philosophy, recognition is considered solely a unified cognition rather than a synthesis of perception and recollection. Buddhists argue that recognition is a form of perception because its primary cause is the interaction between the sense organ and the object, with the subconscious mind serving as a secondary cause.

[50]Bhattacharya Chandrodaya. (1960). *The Elements of Indian Logic and Epistemology [A Portion of Annambhatta's Tarka-samgraha and Dipika*. Calcutta-12: Modern Book Agency Private Ltd, p-35.
[51] Ibid

3.2.2. Buddhists Theory of Perception

Buddhist philosophy diverges from that of the Naiyāyikas due to its unique metaphysical stance, particularly its theory of momentariness, asserting the impermanence of all phenomena. According to Buddhism, everything is transient, existing only momentarily, akin to the impossibility of crossing the same river twice. Ignorance is identified as the root cause of bondage, with liberation achievable through right knowledge or cognition.

In the Buddhist framework, objects of knowledge are categorized into two types: *svalakṣaṇa,* representing the real and unique, and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa,* denoting generalized concepts or images. Correspondingly, there are only two forms of knowledge: perceptual *(pratyakṣa)* knowledge corresponds to the unique, while inferential *(anumāna)* knowledge pertains to the generalized image. Thus, Buddhism acknowledges only two sources of knowledge: perception and inference, forming the basis of its epistemological framework.

Perception, characterized as the direct apprehension of the unique, involves pure sensation, while inference involves mental construction in the form of generalized images. Perceptual knowledge precedes inferential knowledge, with the former devoid of judgment or determinacy. Buddhist thinkers emphasize that perception exclusively apprehends the unique, while inference is the means through which generalized images are understood.

Perception is esteemed as the foundational *pramāṇa*, holding precedence over inference in Buddhist epistemology.

The philosophers Diṅnāga and Dharmakirti provided systematic explanations of perception. Diṅnāga articulated that perception, as expressed in his statement *"Pratyakṣam kalpanāpoḍam"*[52] perception is devoid of mental constructs like name or class.

Diṅnāga posits that perception is immediate and pure sensation, devoid of any form of imagination or conceptualization. Mental constructs, associated with terms like name *(nāma)* and genus *(jāti),* are absent in perceptual cognitions. Due to this absence of conceptualization, perception defies expression through words. It represents a direct encounter with external reality,

[52] Sinha, Jadunath. (1958). *Indian Psychology: Perception*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publishers Private Limited, P. 103

comprising a fluid collection of unique, momentary particulars *(svalakṣaṇa).* As perception is unaffected by the workings of the mind, it remains consistently valid. Particulars are indescribable as they lack distinctive characteristics. When perception involves any form of general concepts *(sāmānyalakṣaṇa),* such as words or judgments, Diṅnāga categorizes it as inference.

The term '*svalakṣaṇa*' denotes the unique characteristic or activity of an individual basic element *(dharma)* as it exists inherently. On the other hand, '*sāmānyalakṣaṇa*' refers to the common features shared by *dharmas* when they combine to form conditioned, macroscopic entities. *Svalakṣaṇa* represents the specific attribute of a bare particular, such as the blueness of a peacock, while *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* encompasses general concepts like the blueness associated with peacocks.

As a sautrāntika, Diṅnāga acknowledges that reality consists of clusters of unique, momentary particulars *(svalakṣaṇa),* rejecting the notion that each atomic factor possesses an unchanging and eternal nature. Instead, he argues that general properties are conceptually constructed by perceivers. Diṅnāga defines conceptual construction *(kalpanā)* as the process of interpreting pure sensations using proper names and words that represent general features *(jāti, sāmānya),* qualities *(gunas),* actions *(karman),* and individual substances *(dravya).*[53]

Dharmakirti defines perception as "*tatra kalpanāpoḍambhrāntam pratyakṣam"* meaning it is a non-erroneous cognition free from mental concepts or *kalpanās*.[54] He aligns with Dinnāga's perspective, describing perception as *kalpanāpodham*, non-conceptual, and adds the term *"abhrāntam,"* non-erroneous. Dharmakirti emphasizes that perception apprehends an object in its distinct nature *(svalakṣana),* devoid of any association with names or verbal expressions, which are merely conceptual constructions. Thus, the object perceived is real and directly revealed to consciousness, distinct from concepts and words *(vikalpas)* fabricated in the mind. Dharmakirti's concept of perception includes not only *"kalpanāpodham"* but also *"abhrāntam."* Perceptual knowledge, according to him, must be free from both conceptual constructions and

[53]Bartley Christopher. (2011). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. Chennai: Continuum International Publishing Group, p.39.

[54] Sinha, Jadunath. (1958). *Indian Psychology: Perception*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass Publishers Private Limited, P.103.

errors. He illustrates the term *"abhrāntam"* with examples such as color blindness, motion blur, seasickness, and mental illness, emphasizing the necessity of non-erroneous perception.

Perception should be devoid of conceptualizations *(kalpanās),* which involve using our minds to categorize and name objects. It must be free from any association with names, as we cannot contemplate or articulate the nature of the perceived object. For instance, when we see an unfamiliar object in the distance, we may lack knowledge of its name or qualities, yet we are aware of its presence. This indeterminate perception is essential, distinguishing it from sensory illusions like seeing a double moon. Dharmakirti stresses on that perception must be non-erroneous and devoid of conceptual constructions and associations with names. It involves a clear awareness of objects, even in cases where their nature or identity remains uncertain.

In this context, the objects of perception are not inherently tied to specific names, although they have the potential to be associated with names. For example, even though an infant may lack knowledge of object names, its perception is not inherently linked to any particular name. However, it may still be subject to mental constructs *(kalpanā).* Perception must involve the direct and immediate presentation of an object, without any additional elaboration or interpretation. Buddhists adhere solely to the concept of indeterminate perception, which is incapable of grasping any specific quality; it apprehends only the *svalakṣana,* or unique characteristic, of an object, which is inherently self-evident and requires no further definition. Any attempt at definition is merely a negative characterization.[55]

Indeterminate perception is distinctive and cannot be expressed in words; it can only be understood through direct perception. Therefore, perception itself is inherently indeterminate, as it defies verbal articulation. What is commonly referred to as determinate perception lacks the true characteristics of perception and is instead influenced by the recollection of the object's name. Buddhists maintain that perception is entirely devoid of imaginative faculties, thus rejecting the notion of determinate perception altogether.

[55] Dinnaga's theory of apoha posits that linguistic designations like "cow" operate through a mechanism of exclusion rather than direct reference to positive entities. Within this framework, the term "cow" does not denote a specific object but rather signifies the absence of characteristics associated with non-cow entities. This perspective underscores the centrality of negation in language, where meaning is derived not from direct reference but from the contextual exclusion of alternatives.

Perception, as understood in Buddhism, serves as the means through which we apprehend something unique. The term *"pratyakṣa"* is employed in two distinct senses: as the instrument or *karana,* and as knowledge or *pramā*. Buddhists use the term *"svalakṣaṇa"* to denote 'the particular', signifying that every individual object possesses unique properties, which are perceived through *pratyakṣa.*

Central to Buddhist philosophy is the idea of momentariness or *"kṣana,"* asserting that all phenomena in the world are transient. This doctrine underscores the notion that everything exists for only a fleeting moment, forming a continuous stream or flux. Buddhism advocates for a universal acceptance of change, emphasizing the uniqueness of each momentary object. Since objects are ephemeral, comparisons between them are rendered irrelevant, and each object stands as inherently unique.

Moreover, Buddhism rejects the concept of universals or classes as valid categories, as it views the common quality shared by individuals (known as the universal or *jāti*) as merely imaginary. In the Buddhist perspective, only the momentary is deemed real, while knowledge of universals is considered illusory. Thus, perception alone allows for the direct apprehension of the unique momentary object, known as *svalakṣaṇa*, in accordance with Buddhist principles.

Advaita Vedānta offers a critique of the Buddhist view of perception, arguing that it lacks a satisfactory explanation. According to Advaita, if perception were to solely provide knowledge of unique momentary particulars, it would only entail sensation and not *pramā,* or valid knowledge. Pramā entails both sensation and the interpretation of that sensation. For instance, hearing a noise is a sensation, but recognizing it as a bus horn involves interpretation. Thus, perception encompasses both sensation and interpretation, wherein meaning is attached to the sensation during the interpretative process.

However, if objects were truly momentary and unique, as posited by Buddhism, the concept of universals would be impossible. Without universals, interpretation becomes untenable, and only sensations would be feasible according to the Advaita perspective. This limitation would render the Buddhist definition of *pratyakṣa* unsatisfactory from the Advaita standpoint. Furthermore, it would lead to an unacceptable conclusion, as perceptual knowledge would not be susceptible to error, which contradicts our everyday experience. Therefore, Advaita

Vedānta finds the Buddhist understanding of perception lacking in its ability to explain the full process of knowledge acquisition and its susceptibility to error.[56]

3.2.2.1. Controversy between Nyāya and Buddhists on Nirvikalpaka Pratyakṣa

The concept of *pratyakṣa,* or perception, is subject to various interpretations across different philosophical schools. While both Nyāya and Buddhism acknowledge *nirvikalpaka* perception, which is free from any form of imagination, they differ in their perspectives on its role in acquiring knowledge.

Nyāya accepts two forms of *pratyakṣa: nirvikalpaka and savikalpaka*. *Nirvikalpaka* perception, according to Nyāya, lacks any form of conceptualization and is considered essential for valid knowledge acquisition. However, there is disagreement regarding the efficacy of *nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa* as a standalone source of knowledge.

Vyākaranika contends that *nirvikalpaka* perception, devoid of names and definitions, lacks existence and therefore cannot yield knowledge. In contrast, Vedāntists argue that *nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa,* which transcends mere forms, constitutes true knowledge. They suggest that while names and forms may be illusory, the indescribable essence of knowledge is genuine *(yathārtha jñāna).* Buddhism shares this perspective, emphasizing the validity of indescribable knowledge.

In contrast, Nyāya-Vaiṣeśika adopts a middle path, acknowledging the significance of both *nirvikalpaka* and *savikalpaka* perception. Gautama's definition of *pratyakṣa* incorporates these distinctions, as exemplified by terms like *avyapadeśyam* or *vyavasāyātmakam*, which denote the indescribable and certain nature of perception. The terms *avyapadeśya* and *vyavasāyātmakam,* meaning indescribable and doubtless/certain respectively, are pivotal in the understanding of knowledge according to Navya Naiyāyikas. While these terms are not explicitly mentioned in Gautama's Nyāyasūtra or Vātsyāyana's commentary, they were introduced by Vacaspati in Nyāyavārtikātātparyatikā. Subsequently, scholars such as Gangesa, Kesava Mishra, and Sridhara elaborated on this distinction in their own works. The Sāṅkhya and Bhatta Mimāṁsha schools also endorse these categories of knowledge.

[56]Tulku L.D and Joshi M. (2010). *Pramāna: Dharmakirti and the Indian Philosophical Debate.* New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributers, P.47-48

The main idea of Nyāya is that, though indeterminate perception is the basis of all understanding, it is not knowledge in and of. The instantaneous apprehension of an object that is not cognitive in the authoritarian sense. According to Nyāya, *nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa*, it is not possible to intimate the knowledge of reality; it gets clarity in *savikalpaka*, whereas Buddhists philosopher Diṅnāga maintained the distinction between *svalakṣaṇa* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*. *Svalakṣaṇa* which is perceptible and exclusively particular, *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* is imperceptible and universal. *Svalakṣaṇa* constitute ultimate reality because it is pure, particular, instant, and devoid of all mental constructions while *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* is universal or conceptual constructions of mind. As Vacaspati said *nirvikalpaka* perception is also associated with universal whereas according to Buddhist, it is only pure sensation. However, according to Diṅnāga, reality is intrinsically linked to causal efficiency. The core principle of Nyāya, is that while indeterminate perception forms the foundation of understanding, it alone does not constitute true knowledge. According to Nyāya, *nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa* provides a basis for understanding reality, but clarity is achieved through *savikalpaka pratyakṣa*. In contrast, Buddhist philosopher Diṅnāga distinguished between *Svalakṣaṇa* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*, where *Svalakṣaṇa* represents pure, particular, and instantaneous reality devoid of mental constructs, while *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* denotes universal or conceptual constructions of the mind. However, Vacaspati suggested that *nirvikalpaka* perception is also associated with universals, contrary to the Buddhist view of pure sensation only. Diṅnāga emphasized that reality is intrinsically linked to causal efficiency *(arthakriyākāritva)*, distinguishing between real and unreal entities based on their functional properties. According to Gangesa, the *nirvikalpaka* stage represents a logical state in the evolution of perceptual cognition rather than a psychological one.[57]

3.2.3. Sāṅkhya Theory of Perception

Sāṅkhya espouses a dualistic realism, affirming the existence of two ultimate realities: *prakṛti*, representing active yet unconscious matter, and *purusa*, symbolizing inactive yet conscious

[57] Aesthetic experience though looks like perceptual experience but it's not falling under *nirvikalpaka* and *savikalpaka* stage. It's purely direct experience. As it is said above by Vacaspati that *nirvikalpaka* is a logical state for the progress of perception not a psychological state but whereas aesthetic experience is dedicatedly a psychological state.

spirit. In Sāṅkhya, right knowledge is conceptualized as *viveka khyāti*, which signifies the discriminative discernment between *purusa* and *prakṛti*.

In Sāṅkhya, the process of cognition unfolds uniquely. The object's form is apprehended by the sensory organs *(indriyas)* upon contact. The mind *(manas)* responds to the stimuli received through the sensory organs. Subsequently, the form of the object is attributed to the *ahamkāra* (ego) through the sensory organs. The ego then interprets and conveys the object's form to the buddhi (intellect). The intellect further refines and determines the object's form before initiating the process of knowing. For instance, let us consider the case where a jar is perceived. When the eye comes into contact with the jar, specific *indriya vṛttis* are generated and presented to the mind. The mind then analyzes and synthesizes these *vṛttis* before presenting them to the intellect. The intellect, in turn, assumes the form of the jar through the operation of the mind and the external organs. Ultimately, self-consciousness reflects upon this objectified form of the buddhi, leading to the instantaneous recognition of the jar by the perceiver. According to Sāṅkhya, valid knowledge is classified into three modes: *dṛsta* (perception), *anumāna* (inference), and *āptavākya* (reliable testimony). In the Sāṅkhya-kārika, Isvarakrsna asserts: **"**प्रतिविषयाध्यवसायो दृष्टं**"**[58]

In his commentary on the verse, Vacaspati Misra provides detailed explanations for all the terms found in the verse *'prati-viṣaya-adhyavasāyah dṛṣṭam.'* According to Sāṅkhya, any *pramāṇa* involves a mental modification *(cittavṛtti),* wherein the *antahkaraṇa* or *citta* assumes the form of an object, termed as *vṛtti.*

Viṣaya, or objects, are entities that influence cognition by imprinting their form upon it, such as earth, water, and sensations like pleasure and pain. Essentially, *viṣaya* gives shape to the formless *antahkaraṇa*, making it perceivable. However, Vacaspati Misra suggests that the subtle forms *(tanmātrās)* serve as objects *(viṣaya)* for yogins and ascetics, not for ordinary individuals. *Prati (viṣayam)* relates to the specific sense organ affected by its corresponding object. *Adhyavasāya* is the result of *vṛtti*, occurring when the senses engage with each object. This cognitive process originates from the functioning of *buddhi.*

[58] Virupakshananda Swami. (1995). *Samkhya Karika of Isvara Krsna with The Tattva Kaumudi of Sri Vacaspati Mishra*. Madras: Sri Ramasrishna Matha, p.14.

Perception occurs when the object suppresses the *tamas guṇa* (concealing factor) and enhances the *sattva guṇa* (illuminating factor). When contact is established between *indriya* and *viṣaya, antahkaraṇa* or *citta* adopts the form of the object, leading to perception.

Sāṅkhya delineates two types of perception: indeterminate *(nirvikalpa)* and determinate *(savikalpa)* perception. Indeterminate perception is characterized by a mere impression, where the object is simply seen upon contact with the senses. It occurs prior to the mental processes of analysis and synthesis of sensory inputs. In this state, there is no specific recognition or comprehension of the object; rather, there exists only a vague awareness of its presence. This form of perception lacks discernment and cognitive understanding, resembling the initial experiences of a newborn, which are primarily sensory in nature. Consequently, while there may be an abundance of sensory data, there is a notable absence of judgmental recognition, rendering the majority of perceptions indeterminate in nature.

Determinate perception represents a more evolved stage of perceptual processing. It occurs when the mind engages in the analysis, synthesis, and interpretation of sensory inputs, leading to a clear recognition and differentiation of the forms or names of objects. As sensations are meticulously classified, contemplated upon, and assessed, they transform into determinate perceptions. At this stage, there is a distinct identification of objects, which generates knowledge. These perceptions encompass well-recognized and distinguished forms and names, marking the culmination of the perceptual process.

3.2.4. Advaita Theory of perception

According to Advaita Vedānta, Brahman is the sole universal reality, supremely real, and the ultimate truth. In this idealistic system, the world is ultimately considered false, and there exists no inherent difference between Brahman and the individual soul *(jiva).* Advaitins assert that knowledge is inherently valid and does not require external validation. *Pramāṇa,* or the means of valid knowledge, directly leads to the ascertainment of cognition's validity. However, external factors such as defects in sensory perception or inadequate lighting can invalidate cognition. Therefore, knowledge is considered intrinsically valid but can become extrinsically invalid due to external influences.

In Advaita Vedānta, perception is deemed invalid only when it is contradicted or superseded by subsequent experience. As long as cognition remains uncontradicted by subsequent experiences, it is considered valid. An erroneous cognition occurs when its content is contradicted by later knowledge. For example, mistaking a rope for a snake is an erroneous cognition. However, this erroneous perception is corrected when subsequent knowledge reveals that the object is indeed a rope and not a snake, thereby sublimating the earlier cognition of the snake.

तत्र प्रत्यक्षप्रमायाः करणं प्रत्यक्ष-प्रमाणम् । प्रत्यक्षप्रमा चात्र चैतन्यमेव, "यत् साक्षाद-परोक्षाद् ब्रह्म" इतिश्रुतेः, अपरोक्षादित्यस्य अपरोक्षमित्यर्थः ।[59]

According to Nyāya philosophers, perceptual knowledge arises from the contact of the sense organs with the object. Conversely, Advaitins argue that perception is witness cognition *(sākṣijñāna),* which does not originate from the sense organs but is instead pure consciousness. Brahman, considered the immediate and direct reality, embodies pure consciousness. This consciousness manifests in three forms:

Firstly, the empirical self *(jiva)* comprehends Brahman, thus serving as the subject consciousness *(pramāṭṛ-caitanya).* Secondly, knowledge of the eternal consciousness (Brahman) is attained through the mind *(antahkaraṇa),* representing knowledge consciousness *(pramāṇa-caitanya).* Lastly, the perception of an empirical object constitutes object consciousness *(viṣaya-caitanya).*

According to Sankara, perception is solely Chaitanya or consciousness, which occurs through the function (*vṛtti*) of the internal organ *(antahkaraṇa).* It represents direct consciousness of objects, involving actual contact between the subject and object in sense-perception. In the case of external perception, such as perceiving a jar, the mind engages with the object, modifies into its form, and illuminates it, forming what is known as *vṛtti*. If the mind is not engaged, perception does not occur. For instance, simply gazing at the blue sky without mental engagement does not result in perception.

[59] Madhavananda Swami. *Vedānta-Paribhasa of Dharmaraja Adhvarindra.* Howarh: The Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Pitha, p.8.

This perspective draws a clear distinction between cognition and inference. In inference, the mind merely contemplates the inferred objects without directly perceiving them. For instance, observing smoke on a mountain and inferring the presence of fire without direct perception. In contrast, perception involves the simultaneous apprehension of the object and its interpretation. It differs from memory, where past experiences are recollected. Furthermore, it acknowledges the disparity between determinate and indeterminate perception. Determinate perception allows for clear recognition of an object's qualities and attributes, distinguishing it from others. Conversely, indeterminate perception lacks the ability to discern between two objects.

According to Naiyāyikas, the material world's existence is independent of subjective experience, advocating a form of realism where perceived truths are considered valid. In contrast, Vedānta posits that direct perception is illusory, with Brahman being the sole ultimate truth and all else deemed false. This perspective, known as phenomenalism or *māyāvāda,* suggests that the world is a product of ignorance *(avidyā).* Meanwhile, *Vijñānavādin*, asserts that direct perception is merely a mental sensation, negating the existence of an external world beyond the mind's constructs. Similarly, some philosophies advocate for the concept of emptiness (*sunyavāda* or nihilism), positing the absence of both external and internal realities.

3.2.5. Validity of knowledge

As previously noted, the concept of validity *(prāmānya)* of knowledge remains a contentious issue among these philosophers. Some schools assert that knowledge's validation or invalidation is contingent upon external sources, advocating for extrinsic validity *(parataḥ prāmānyavāda).* Conversely, others uphold intrinsic validity *(svataḥ prāmānya),* positing that knowledge itself is inherently valid and is only invalidated by external factors.

In this context, Mādhvāchārya succinctly summarizes these theories of knowledge validity and invalidity in his Sarvadarsanasangraha. For instance, Sāṅkhya acknowledges that knowledge can be both intrinsically valid and invalid. On the contrary, Naiyāyikas argue that both validity and invalidity are determined extrinsically. Meanwhile, Buddhists assert that knowledge is extrinsically valid but intrinsically invalid. In contrast, Mimāmsākas and Advaitin maintain that knowledge is intrinsically valid but extrinsically invalid. According to Sāṅkhya, knowledge is

deemed both intrinsically valid and invalid, independent of external factors for verification. This perspective hinges on the state of the mind (*manas*). When the *sattva guṇa* predominates in the mind, the knowledge is considered valid, whereas when the mind is influenced by *rajas* or *tamas guṇa*, the knowledge is deemed invalid.

Sāṅkhya's *prāmānyavāda* is intricately connected to its causation theory, termed *satkāryavāda,* which asserts that the effect exists within its material cause prior to its actualization. Within this paradigm, the validity and invalidity of knowledge are inherent qualities, contingent upon the merits and demerits of their underlying causes. Consequently, within Sāṅkhya philosophy, both validity and invalidity are considered intrinsic aspects of knowledge.

The perspectives of the Naiyāyikas stand in stark contrast to those of the Sāṅkhya philosophy. According to the Naiyāyikas, knowledge entails the manifestation of objects, and its assessment is impartial to notions of validity and invalidity. Instead, the validity of knowledge is contingent upon its alignment or misalignment with the true nature of objects. A knowledge is deemed valid when it accurately corresponds to the object and results in successful activity, while invalidity arises when there is a lack of correspondence or failed activity. In the Nyāya perspective, the efficacy of the conditions facilitating knowledge determines its validity, while shortcomings in these conditions lead to invalidity. The fundamental requirement for perception is the contact between an object and a sense organ, yet the validity of perception is subject to specific conditions such as the health of the sense organ, proximity of the object, and adequate illumination. Obstacles such as illness, distance, or darkness can impede the perceptual process, leading to invalid outcomes, such as an illusion seen in a mirage. Hence, within the Naiyāyika framework, both validity and invalidity are extrinsic to knowledge.

Naiyāyikas determine the validity by another form of knowledge—pragmatic knowledge—that exists external to the original cognition. For instance, when one perceives a chair and forms the knowledge "this is a chair," the truth or falsehood of this knowledge remains undetermined. To ascertain its validity, one subjects the chair to a pragmatic test by sitting on it. If the chair proves functional, demonstrating pragmatic value *(arthakriyā or samvādipravṛtti),* it is deemed valid. Conversely, consider the mirage phenomenon: when one sees apparent waves of water above a sandy desert, the initial perception lacks pragmatic value upon examination—it does not

feel wet to the touch nor quench thirst. Consequently, the perception is deemed illusory and invalid. Realists, followers of *parataḥprāmānyavāda,* assert that the pragmatic test determines the reality of an object. If an object proves to be real through this test, the knowledge of it is valid *(yathārtha);* otherwise, it is deemed otherwise *(ayathārtha).* Thus, according to *parataḥprāmānyavādin,* the validity of knowledge is determined externally by a second form of knowledge that assesses the pragmatic value of the object in question.

Buddhists maintain that knowledge is extrinsically valid but intrinsically invalid. Their philosophy embraces the theory of momentariness, positing that all phenomena exist only for a moment. According to this perspective, the initial perception of an object is considered valid. However, any subsequent conceptualization or verbalization about the object, which arises from the mind, is prone to error and thus invalid. In essence, Buddhists assert that only the immediate perception of an object upon its first encounter can be deemed valid, while any subsequent knowledge derived from mental constructs is inherently unreliable.

Contrary to the Buddhist perspective, both Mimāṁsakas and Advaitins assert that knowledge is intrinsically valid but extrinsically invalid. According to Advaita Vedānta, knowledge is inherently valid and does not require external validation. It is considered valid when it arises directly from a valid means of knowledge *(pramāṇa).* However, external factors such as visual impairment or inadequate lighting can lead to invalid cognition. Therefore, in Advaita Vedānta, knowledge is deemed intrinsically valid but may become extrinsically invalid due to external influences.

Supporters of *svataḥprāmānyavāda,* or the intrinsic validity of knowledge, challenge the notion of external validation proposed by *parataḥprāmānyavāda* proponents. They argue that if knowledge requires validation from external sources, it would lead to an infinite regress—a chain of validations requiring further validations ad infinitum. This renders the theory self-contradictory, as no amount of external validation can ultimately establish the validity of knowledge. In contrast, advocates of intrinsic validity posit that knowledge is inherently valid and self-aware. Abhinavagupta, a proponent of intrinsic validity, expanded upon this concept by proposing that all knowledge should be considered valid until contradicted by another form of knowledge. The validity of knowledge is tested not by external verification but by its coherence and non-contradiction *(badhabhāva).* For example, in the realm of dream experience, knowledge

remains valid as long as it coheres with other knowledge within the dream state. However, upon waking, the dream knowledge is deemed false as it contradicts waking experience. Thus, according to proponents of *svataḥprāmānyavāda*, the validity or falsification of knowledge is determined by its coherence or lack thereof with other forms of knowledge.

3.2.6. Theory of error (khyātivāda)

The inquiry into knowledge validity is intricately linked with the concept of illusion or error within Indian philosophical frameworks. Each system's theory of error *(khyātivāda)* is grounded in its ontological stance. For instance, in Nyāya philosophy, the theory of error, termed *anyathākhyāti,* stems from its adherence to *parataḥprāmānyavāda*, which asserts that knowledge's validity or invalidity hinges solely on external factors, devoid of internal considerations. *Anyathā,* meaning "elsewise" or "elsewhere," reflects the idea that the perceived object exists differently from its representation, or in another place altogether. An illustrative example is mistaking a shell for silver, wherein the perceived silver doesn't exist there but elsewhere, triggered by memory recollection. Such errors arise from *jñānalakṣana* perception, wherein the mind, deluded by its own impressions, misconstrues reality. The Nyāya theory of error finds resonance with Kumarila's *viparitakhyāti. Vijñānavādin* Buddhists subscribe to the *ātmākhyāti* view, positing error as the imposition of cognitive form onto an ostensibly external but ultimately unreal object, as only momentary cognition is deemed real. Sāṅkhya's theory of error, termed *sadāsatkhyāti,* offers its perspective, while Advaita Vedānta's theory of error, known as *anirvachaniyakhyāti,* presents its distinct understanding of the phenomenon.

According to Abhinavagupta, or Kashmir Śaivism, the theory of error is termed *apurnakhyāti.* Illusion, in this context, is seen as partial or incomplete knowledge. It is not a lack of knowledge but rather a misunderstanding or misperception of reality. When one mistakes a rope for a snake, it is not due to ignorance but because the perception of the snake is incomplete. The reality is that the perceived snake is actually a projection of the mind. When one realizes this and understands the true nature of the object, their knowledge becomes complete or perfect.

Similarly, Kashmir Śaivism considers the world, termed as appearance or *ābhāsa,* to be a manifestation of consciousness and not inherently unreal. The world is seen as an independent

reality made of consciousness, and the belief in its materiality is considered unreal. Therefore, the theory of error or illusion, according to Kashmir Śaivism, is *apurnakhyāti.* The world is not entirely false, but the misconception lies in viewing it as independent and material. True knowledge arises when one perceives the world as the manifestation of consciousness, leading to a complete understanding of reality.

Indeed, while the previous chapter emphasized the enjoyment associated with aesthetic experience, it also acknowledged a significant disparity between aesthetic cognition and ordinary cognition. However, the objective of this chapter extends beyond merely highlighting their differences; it aims to delve into the potential intersections between these two domains. If Indian Epistemologists argue that *pramāṇas* lead us to grasp the ultimate truth (often identified as the Pure Self), then both aesthetic cognition and ordinary cognition share a common goal: self-realization. In the upcoming final section of this chapter, I delve into Kashmir Śaivism to demonstrate how genuine *pramāṇa* is synonymous with self-realization, a state attainable through *rasānubhuti,* or aesthetic experience.

Let's delve into the epistemology of Kashmir Śaivism, particularly as it relates to Indian aesthetics. Abhinavagupta, a prominent figure in both aesthetics and Kashmir Śaivism philosophy, pioneered the exploration of the connections between spiritual and aesthetic experiences, distinguishing them from all other *pramāṇas* or sources of knowledge.

3.3. Epistemology of Kashmir Śaivism

In Kashmir Śaivism, akin to Advaita Vedānta, Śiva represents the ultimate reality. Śiva is synonymous with self-consciousness and serves as the pathway to individual self-realization. This journey toward self-realization necessitates the removal of impurities that veil one's consciousness. Consequently, Kashmir Śaivism places significant emphasis on the practical application of knowledge in life. Understanding the essence of knowledge entails grasping its intrinsic relationship with consciousness.

Drawing from Nyāya-Vaiṣeśika philosophy, some schools consider knowledge as an incidental attribute of the self. However, Sāṅkhya, Vedānta, and Tantra diverge in their perspective, asserting that knowledge is not merely an attribute but rather the very essence of the

self or consciousness. Tantra, much like these other systems, contends that knowledge inherently belongs to the self.

An illuminating analogy frequently employed in this context is that of light and illumination. In this analogy, light and illumination are not separate entities; rather, illumination is the fundamental nature of light, not merely an attribute. Unlike qualities that are distinct from the substances they belong to, illumination is inseparable from light. For instance, while sweetness is a quality distinct from sugar, illumination is not a quality of light but rather its intrinsic essence. Hence, it would be inaccurate to assert that light possesses illumination; rather, illumination is an inherent aspect of light itself.

The Naiyāyikas propose that if knowledge is inherent to the self, it should persist even during deep sleep. However, the Tantrists offer a different perspective, suggesting that deep sleep serves to obscure the self or consciousness, rendering it incapable of illuminating itself or others. To illustrate, they draw an analogy with the sun obscured by clouds: just as the sun's rays continue to exist despite being obstructed by clouds, consciousness remains present during sleep but is veiled.

During deep sleep, consciousness is akin to the sun hidden behind clouds, its inherent illumination obscured but still intact. It is only when the clouds of sleep disperse, and the impediment to consciousness is removed, that its luminosity becomes apparent once again. In this view, deep sleep acts as a temporary veil over the essential nature of the self, obscuring its inherent illumination or knowingness.

The distinction between Nyāya and Kashmir Saivite philosophy lies in their understanding of how knowledge is known. While both agree that knowledge reveals objects, their perspectives diverge on the nature of knowing itself.

According to Nyāya, knowledge becomes the object of knowing through a two-step process. Initially, one perceives the object, such as a table, as the primary knowledge. Subsequently, in a second moment of reflection, one becomes aware of the knowledge itself, realizing, “It’s a table.” In this framework, the object is the first focus of knowing, followed by the awareness of knowing itself.

However, Kashmir Śaivism challenges this notion, proposing instead the concept of self-illumination *(svayamprakāsa).* According to this philosophy, when one knows something, they are simultaneously aware of their own knowledge. In the very moment of perceiving an object, knowledge reveals itself, akin to light illuminating itself as it shines upon an object. In this view, the table is recognized, and one is also cognizant of knowing the table.

The analogy with light further elucidates this concept: light exposes objects by falling upon them, yet it does not reveal itself in the same manner as the objects it illuminates. Instead, light subjectively illuminates itself, making itself known without becoming its own object. Similarly, knowledge becomes aware of itself through self-illumination, without needing to make itself its own object of knowing. In Kashmir Śaivism, knowledge is synonymous with self-consciousness, which is inherently shaped by the diverse manifestations of the subject itself. Within this framework, freedom is intimately connected to these manifestations, representing the freedom of the power of knowledge.

The power of knowledge, essentially identified as the light of consciousness, encompasses action, referred to as *vimarsa*. This concept of action is fundamentally rooted in freedom and finds its existence within *prakāsa,* or illumination. In essence, freedom is considered the quintessence of the light of consciousness, permeating and guiding all aspects of existence.[60]

In essence, all forms of knowledge, whether correct or erroneous, emanate from the subject's innate power of freedom, or *pramātā*. Ultimately, the absolute non-dual subject, known as *para-pramātā*, encompasses all knowledge, serving as the ultimate knower in every act of cognition.

The convergence of subjective and objective waves of consciousness results in what is known as knowledge or *anubhava*, where the subject merges with the object. Unlike the object, which lacks sentience and cannot illuminate itself, the illumination of the object necessitates a sentient entity. Thus, the illuminator must possess the nature of consciousness.

Consider light illuminating a room: while it may appear to be the illuminator, in reality, it is consciousness that provides the illumination. Therefore, *pramātā, prameya*, and the

[60] Sharma L.N. (1972). Kashmir Śaivism. Varanasi-I: Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, p. 92

pramāṇas—representing the knower, the known, and the means of knowing—are all manifestations of the creative power inherent in pure consciousness. Ultimately, all *pramāṇas* are dependent on the self, relying entirely on Śiva to impart knowledge of the object.

In Kashmir Śaivism, *Samvit* or *citi* is upheld as the sole *pramāṇa,* encompassing various forms of right knowledge and intellect, all stemming from *Cit Shakti's* diverse manifestations. *Pramāṇas* are effective in dispelling ignorance, yet both ignorance and its removal are intrinsic to absolute consciousness. Thus, *citi* alone is deemed the *pramāṇa*.

At the transcendental level, agama represents the most potent expression of the ultimate self. This agamic knowledge isn't supernatural but rather a natural state of consciousness, offering a deeper understanding of reality. It's inherent within us, akin to the sun veiled by clouds, waiting to be revealed. This heightened experience, termed *pratyabhijña* or *ātmā-pratyabhijña,* involves self-recognition or self-realization, known also as *ātmājñāna* or selfhood or divinity.

To grasp the essence of *pratyabhijña* or higher experience, we delve into the theory of pratibhā. Pratibhā entails intuitive and immediate knowledge, independent of sense organs or reasoning, innate rather than acquired. It resembles yogic perception or "Clairvoyance," allowing direct cognition without sensory mediation. This intuitive ability, termed higher intuition or higher pratibhā, enables perception of distant objects or events without reliance on sense organs. Pratibhā, associated with consciousness purification, leads to higher experience. In Kashmir Śaivism, *pratyabhijña* isn't about recognizing previously known things but discovering the identity of unseen or unrecognized phenomena. Knowledge of identity is fundamental to *pratyabhijña* in Kashmir Śaivism.

Pratyabhijña, commonly translated as recognition, implies the remembrance of something previously known. It's akin to recalling the appearance of someone you've met before when you see them again. Across various schools of Indian thought, recognition has been extensively analyzed. Buddhists view recognition as a mechanical fusion of presentative and representative psychoses, not a solitary one. In contrast, Mimāmsākas, Vedāntists, and Nyāya-Vaiṣeśika consider recognition as a qualified perception, primarily an idea-based psychosis. Naiyāyikas see recognition as a form of qualified perception where the present object is qualified by distinct

remembrance of its past experience. According to Advaita Vedānta, pratyabhijña is a *nirvikalpaka* form of perception, devoid of any prediction about the perceived object, but rather involving absorption of its identity amidst changing situations. In the Yoga tradition, *pratyabhijña* is seen as a form of perception achievable because *buddhi*, or intellect, is eternal and distinct from the transient cognitions of individuals. In Sāṅkhya philosophy, cognition is perceived by the self rather than by another cognition. Since cognition is viewed as an unconscious function of *buddhi*, it cannot be its own object and can only be perceived by the self.

In Kashmir Śaivism, the concept of *pratyabhijña* takes on a unique meaning. It emphasizes knowledge of identity as its central aspect. Unlike perception, where we simply note an object without awareness of its identity, *pratyabhijña* involves recognizing the real identity of the perceived object. While perception is a component of *pratyabhijña,* it does not encompass the entirety of this concept, which extends to knowing the true identity of what is perceived. *Pratyabhijña* is also distinct from memory. While self-recognition *(ātmā-pratyabhijña)* is often figuratively described as remembrance, it differs from memory in that it involves perceiving and recognizing the true identity of the object rather than simply recalling it mentally. The analogy of "remembrance" is used to depict the process of recognizing one's true nature, akin to awakening from ignorance rather than recalling something lost in the past. Thus, *pratyabhijña* in Kashmir Śaivism signifies the awakening to one's inherent nature rather than a mere recollection of past experiences.

Abhinavagupta illustrates the concept of *pratyabhijña* with two examples. In the first scenario, a ruler encounters a priest he does not know. Another priest introduces the unfamiliar one, detailing his qualifications, allowing the ruler to fully recognize his identity. This instance exemplifies *pratyabhijña,* where the true identity of the unknown priest becomes known to the ruler. The second example involves a woman who, despite never meeting her betrothed, develops a deep love for him. Upon meeting him for the first time without recognizing his true identity, she sees him as an ordinary man. However, upon learning his name, she realizes his significance as her future husband, bringing her immense joy. This instance also demonstrates *pratyabhijña,* as it entails the discovery of one's actual identity.

In a similar vein, the self is revealed through experience. We perceive ourselves as beings, observing ourselves but failing to recognize our true identity. Mistakenly, we perceive ourselves as limited individuals, unaware that our true essence is Śiva, the infinite. Through the guidance of a guru or scripture, we come to understand our true nature as Śiva. This realization of our own identity as the self is *pratyabhijña*, or recognition. Using the terminology of Advaita Vedānta, this identity is already defined for us, but we misunderstand it. This is akin to mistaking a rope for a snake: the object (the rope) is already present, but our perception of it is flawed. However, when it is revealed that the object is actually a rope, we correctly identify it. This analysis of *pratyabhijña* reveals two important points: firstly, the recognized object is not newly created but already exists, and secondly, although the object existed previously, the recognition of its true nature is a new event. The self (Śiva) was always present, but our awareness of this reality only occurs when the veil of ignorance is lifted.

3.4. Conclusion

In our exploration of aesthetic cognition, we have delved into the issue by examining various texts, beginning with Bharata's Nātyaśāstra and extending to Viśvanātha's Sāhityadarpaṇa. The preceding discussion has centered around the pursuit of knowledge claims or truth claims in pramanasastra. However, when we immerse ourselves in aesthetic experiences, such claims are absent; instead, the experience is spontaneous, blissful, and sui generis.

In this chapter, we have explored epistemological inquiries, delving into processes, assessing *pramāṇas,* identifying errors, and distinguishing between *nirvikalpaka* and *savikalpaka* experiences—all critical elements of truth claims. Nyāya, adhering to realism, asserts the reality and independence of external objects, considering our perceptions as genuine. Conversely, Advaita Vedānta posits that our perceptions are illusory, mere products of ignorance *(avidyā),* with the world being mere *māyā.* According to Buddhists, perception is transient, existing only momentarily, devoid of any imaginative element. Sāṅkhya, on the other hand, attributes all knowledge to the mind’s workings.

In Kashmir Śaivism, similar to Advaita Vedānta, Śiva is the ultimate reality and self-consciousness, leading to self-realization by removing impurities veiling one's consciousness.

Unlike some philosophies that see knowledge as an incidental attribute, Kashmir Śaivism, like Sāṅkhya, Vedānta, and Tantra, views knowledge as the essence of the self.

Abhinavagupta emphasizes that right knowledge depends on Śiva. In Kashmir Śaivism, citi (consciousness) is the sole *pramāṇa* (means of knowledge), encompassing all forms of right knowledge. Agama represents the ultimate self-knowledge, an inherent state of consciousness awaiting revelation, akin to the sun behind clouds. This self-recognition, or pratyabhijña, involves intuitive knowledge, or pratibhā, which is direct and independent of sensory input, leading to higher experience and realization of identity in previously unrecognized phenomena.

CHAPTER 4

Comparative Analysis between Pratyakṣa Pramāṇa and Rasānubhuti

4.0. Introduction

In the second chapter, "Aesthetic Cognition: Nature and Conditions of *Rasānubhava*," and the third chapter, "*Pratyakṣa Pramāṇa*: An Exposition of Ordinary Cognition," we have undertaken an exploration of the concepts of rasa and pertinent issues within *pramāṇaśāstra,* with a specific focus on *pratyakṣa pramāṇa*. In the second chapter, we have examined various interpretations of Rasa and conducted an analysis of the foundational conditions that underpin the experience of rasa. Shifting our attention to the third chapter, our inquiry centred on the concept of *pratyakṣa* (perception) across different schools of Indian philosophy, aiming to illustrate how *pratyakṣa* can attain validity.

Our subsequent investigation is directed towards exploring the potential relationship between these two forms of cognition. Our primary objective is to elucidate the distinctions and parallels between ordinary and aesthetic cognition. A central concern within the realm of *rasavādins* has been to elucidate the connection between ordinary and aesthetic cognition.

Ordinary cognition is typically conceptualized in terms of validity *(pramā)* or invalidity *(apramā).* According to Nyāya philosophy, valid cognition *(pramā)* entails the accurate apprehension of an object *(yathārthanubhavah),* where the object is perceived as it truly is, facilitating a precise understanding. Conversely, invalid cognition *(apramā)* involves the erroneous apprehension of an object *(ayathārthanubhava),* where the object is misperceived.

Rasānubhava, or aesthetic experience, stands apart from the realms of *yathārthanubhavah* or *ayathārthanubhavah* and does not neatly align with the categories of *pramā* or *apramā*. Unlike the process of perceiving an object such as a rope, where the primary concern revolves around discerning its true nature, engaging with a drama shifts the focus away from considerations of *pramā* or *apramā*. Instead, the emphasis lies on the enjoyment or lack thereof

derived from the dramatic experience. When experiencing a dramatic performance or watching a movie, our main focus is not on the authenticity of the characters, but rather on the overall enjoyment derived from the experience.

An aesthetic experience is a direct experience *(indriyārthasannikarṣa),* and it may seem like a perceptual experience. Since perceptual experience is one of the means *(pramāṇa)* of true cognition, it follows that aesthetic experience could also be considered a form of true cognition. However, the question arises: is there something called aesthetic cognition that presupposes ordinary cognition, or is aesthetic cognition impossible? Or these two types of cognition are distinct from each other? My focus here is to analyse whether aesthetic experience has any cognitive value.

In order to examine the above questions, we propose to explore a similarity between aesthetic experience and ordinary cognition *(pratyakṣa).* Among various types of *pramāṇas,* all systems of Indian philosophy give importance to *pratyakṣa* (perception). This is not only because it is the basis of all other *pramāṇas* and provides direct or immediate cognition *(jñāna)* of the reality of an object, but also because direct cognition satisfies the desire of the seeker of knowledge. To quote Vātsyāyana,

> "Among the four kinds of cognition, perception is the most important; because when a man seeks the knowledge of a certain thing, if he is told of it by a trustworthy person and has the verbal cognition *(sabda)* of the thing, there is still a desire in his mind to ratify his information by means of inference *(anumāna)* through particular indicative features; and even after he has been able to get at the inferential knowledge of the thing, he is still desirous of actually seeing the thing with his eyes; but when he has once perceived the thing directly, his desires are at rest and he does not seek for any other kind of knowledge."[61]

[61] *सर्वा चेयं प्रमितिः प्रत्यक्षपरा*
Jha, Ganganath. (1939). Gautam's Nyayasutras with Vātsyāyana-Bhasya. Poona: Oriental Book Agency, p.18.

When seeking knowledge, a person may first rely on the testimony of a trustworthy source *(sabda)* to gain verbal understanding. They then seek to confirm this information through inference *(anumāna)* based on specific features. Even after gaining inferential knowledge, the desire remains to see the thing directly. Once they perceive it firsthand, their desire is fulfilled, and they no longer seek further knowledge on the matter. In this sense we can call perception is the stage of *jigyāsā nivṛtti*, in which stage there is no expectation remains. Similarly, the Mīmāṃsākas refer to it as *nirākāṅkṣā* when the desire to understand the meaning of a sentence is satisfied. They describe such a sentence as *nirākāṅkṣā*, meaning that it requires nothing outside itself to complete its meaning.[62] Similarly, when someone encounters an object through perception, there is no need for any other means. At that point, our expectation of an inquisitive mind comes to a halt.

The uniqueness of aesthetic experience, as Abhinavagupta holds, is that the mind comes to a total rest *(samvidviśrānti).* We can say that if *samvidviśrānti* is not achieved, the aesthetic experience is also not possible. Similar to perception, where one's desire to know is at rest after direct contact with the object, in aesthetic experience, the resting of consciousness *(samvidviśrānti)* is achieved.

There is a similarity between aesthetic experience *(rasānubhava)* and perception *(pratyakṣa)* in that the mind plays a central role in both. According to the Naiyāyikas, ordinary perception requires the interaction of the sense organs, objects, *manas* (mind), and self. This process involves the self coming into contact with the manas, the manas with the sense organs, and the sense organs with the objects. Notably, the contact between the sense organs and the objects cannot occur unless the *manas* first connect with the self.[63] Abhinavagupta refers to aesthetic experience as mental perception *(manasapratyakṣa),* a concept we will explore further later. Can we then say that based on the end result, perception *(pratyakṣa)* and aesthetic experience *(rasānubhava)* are somehow connected?

[62] Raja, K. Kunjunni. (1977). *Indian Theories o.f Meaning*. The Adyar Library and Research Centre, p.154.
[63] Sharma, Chandradhara. (1962). *Indian Philosophy: A Critical Survey*. Great Britain: Barnes & Noble, Inc., p.181.

It is not just the direct contact of the sense organ with the object that is similar in both cases, but also the end result: the satisfaction of the seeker's quest. Therefore, can we say that perception is equivalent to aesthetic experience, or is aesthetic experience something more than perception? Let us examine this question by comparing the concepts of *pratyakṣa* with *rasānubhava* that we have discussed in the previous two chapters.

4.1. The Role of Khyāti and Vighna in Rasānubhuti:

Let us begin by discussing *apramā, ayathārthanubhava,* or an error in *pratyakṣa pramāṇa.* A perceptual error, referred to as *khyāti,* encompasses various defects that can hinder accurate perception. These defects include environmental factors, such as inadequate lighting, haze, or distance; physical factors, such as myopia or jaundice, which can cause objects to appear yellow; and psychological factors, such as inattentiveness, a predisposition to make hasty judgments, or greed, exemplified by mistaking a shell for silver or perceiving a rope as a snake. We can identify such defects and understand why we are sometimes mistaken underpins the basic reliability of the perception as a means of epistemic access to reality.[64] Errors can occur in perception, but this is not the case with aesthetic experience; aesthetic experience is never considered illusory. Perceptual cognition often involves errors *(khyāti),* where what is perceived does not align with reality. Various Indian philosophical schools interpret these errors differently. In his work Abhinavabhārati, Abhinavagupta identifies five types of errors *(khyāti pañcaka)* to distinguish them from rasa-experience.

Let us briefly revisit, as we have already discussed in the previous chapter.

Ātmākhyāti (Yogācāra Buddhism): Objects like jars and pots are not independently real; they are manifestations of consciousness. This view compares waking perception to dreams where objects exist only in consciousness. For example, a rope misperceived as a snake is a manifestation of consciousness.

[64] Bartley, Christopher. (2011). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*. Chennai: Continuum International Publishing Group, p.106

Asatkhyāti (Mādhyamika Buddhism): Neither the external world nor consciousness exists independently; everything is ultimately empty *(śūnya).* Right and wrong knowledge are grounded in this emptiness, which applies to characters and events in dramas.

Akhyāti (Prabhākar Mīmāṃsā): Errors arise due to non-discrimination between real and unreal. Mistaking a shell for silver occurs because the real properties of the shell are confused with the imagined properties of silver.

Anyathākhyāti (Nyāya-Vaiṣeśika): Error occurs when qualities of one object are wrongly attributed to another. Seeing a rope as a snake involves attributing the snake's characteristics to the rope.

Anirvacaniyakhyāti (Advaita Vedānta): Erroneous perceptions are indescribable *(anirvacanīya).* Perceiving a snake instead of a rope is neither completely real nor unreal; it is a superimposition *(adhyāsa)* that defies strict categorization.

Whether from the perspective of the momentariness in Buddhism, the realism of Nyāya and Mīmāṃsā, or the non-dualism of Vedānta, the concept of error or illusion is crucial to their metaphysical frameworks. Since the elucidation of aesthetic experience relies on a distinct ontology of the existence of art, the question of error does not arise. However, Abhinavagupta identifies several obstacles *(vighna)* that can occur and hinder the experience of rasa. Obstacles in Aesthetic experience *(vighna)*- Abhinavagupta identifies several obstacles that can impede aesthetic experience (rasa): Several types of obstacles have been identified by Abhinavagupta. Obstacles in aesthetic experience, as identified by Abhinavagupta, include several key factors. Firstly, if the spectator cannot comprehend the objects presented on stage, they cannot fully engage their consciousness in the drama. Secondly, personal pain and pleasure can preoccupy an individual, diverting their attention from the aesthetic experience and focusing instead on their own sensations. Thirdly, over-involvement in personal emotions such as happiness or sorrow prevents the spectator from concentrating on the depicted emotions (rasa). The fourth and fifth obstacles are the absence of adequate means of immediate realization and a lack of clarity in the performance, respectively. The sixth obstacle is the absence of a dominant element, as the mind seeks the predominant aspect and is unsatisfied with subordinate details. Lastly, doubt arises when there is uncertainty about the relationship between the aesthetic components *(vibhāvas, anubhāvas, vyabhicāribhāvas)* and the underlying stable emotions *(sthāyibhāvas),* such as when

tears might be caused by joy, sorrow, or an eye condition, leading to confusion about the dominant emotion being portrayed.

These obstacles highlight the various psychological and practical barriers that can impede the experience of rasa. Comprehension of stage objects, personal emotional states, clarity of presentation, the presence of dominant elements, and the resolution of doubt are all critical factors in fully engaging with and appreciating aesthetic experiences. Understanding and addressing these obstacles is essential for achieving a profound and immersive engagement with art and drama.

4.2. Examining Definition of Pratyakṣa in Relation to Aesthetic Experience (Rasānubhava)

In this section, following our discussion on error, we will analyse Nyāya's definition of *pratyakṣa* in relation to aesthetic experience *(rasānubhāva).* It may seem that aesthetic experience *(rasānubhāva)* is a form of perception *(pratyakṣa)* because, like perception, it involves direct contact of the sense organ with the object. As we have already discussed the Nyaya definition of perception in detail in the previous chapter, here I am focusing on the three conditions: non-verbal *(avyapadeśya),* non-contradicted *(avyabhicāri),* and determinate *(vyavasāyātmaka)*.[65]

Non-verbal *(avyapadeśya)* means not related to any word, non-contradicted *(avyabhicāri)* means not deviating from the object, and determinate *(vyavasāyātmaka)* means definite or determinate. However, these three conditions of perception do not fully apply to the art object as the question of erroneous or non-erroneous does not arise at all. The validity of this definition depends on the ontology of the object. As Naiyāyikas are realists, what would be the ontology of the art-object. Śankuka, a Naiyāyika philosopher, explores the ontology of *Vibhāvas,* considering them as a blend of the real and unreal. He illustrates this with the example of a painting of a horse. If someone points to the painting and claims it is a horse, one could argue that it is not a real horse. Conversely, if the person says it is not a horse, that would also be inaccurate. Thus, the painting simultaneously embodies both real and unreal aspects. Hence, the three conditions

[65] Jha, Ganganath. (1939). *Gautam's Nyayasutras with Vātsyāyana-Bhasya.* Poona: Oriental Book Agency, Verse-1.1.4

for valid perception—non-verbal *(avyapadeśya),* non-contradicted *(avyabhicāri),* and certain *(vyavasāyātmaka)*—do not apply to an art object. Since the perception of an art object does not meet these criteria for valid perception, it must be categorized as erroneous cognition *(mithyājñāna).* However, this presents a problem: in typical cases of erroneous cognition, such as mistaking a rope for a snake, the error is due to a prior memory of the mistaken object. This does not apply to the experience of an art object, which is a new, fresh experience, complicating the identification of the reason for the error. Hence, according to the Naiyāyikas, the experience of an art object cannot be considered either valid or invalid. This is because it does not fulfill the criteria for valid perception, nor does it fit neatly into the category of erroneous cognition, as the latter typically relies on the memory of a previously cognized error, which is not applicable in the fresh experience of an art object.

4.3. Investigating Aesthetic Experience within the Nirvikalpaka and Savikalpaka Stages of Perception

Let us explore whether aesthetic experience fits within the *nirvikalpaka* (indeterminate) and *savikalpaka* (determinate) stages of perception. From our study, we have observed that aesthetic experience *(rasānubhava)* can indeed be considered a form of perception. Similar to perception, aesthetic experience may involve two stages: the indeterminate *(nirvikalpaka)* and the determinate *(savikalpaka).*

In the initial, indeterminate stage of aesthetic experience, we may not have a clear idea of the characters *(vibhāvas).* This stage is characterized by a general, diffuse awareness without specific identification or conceptualization. As the experience progresses, we transition to the determinate stage, where we gain a definite understanding of the characters *(vibhāvas)* and their attributes, such as recognizing them as Rāma or Sītā. Thus, aesthetic experience appears to follow a similar trajectory to perceptual experience, moving from an initial, vague awareness to a more precise and determined understanding. This is not the case. Aesthetic experience does not fit neatly into the categories of *nirvikalpaka* or *savikalpaka pratyakṣa.* When we witness an enactment on stage, we immediately recognize the characters (such as the hero or heroine) due to their attire, gestures, and manner of representation. This clear understanding from the outset is

supported by the four kinds of representation *(abhinaya)*, which effectively convey the characters' identities.

Therefore, aesthetic experience cannot be considered *nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa* because it does not involve an initial, indeterminate stage where the characters are unclear. At the same time, it is not *savikalpaka pratyakṣa*, as it does not pertain to the recognition of a class or category but rather to a specific, contextual understanding of the characters and their roles within the performance. Thus, aesthetic experience stands apart from these traditional perceptual stages as defined by the Naiyāyikas. Even the Buddhist definition of *pratyakṣa, 'kalpanāpoḍḥam,'* does not apply to aesthetic experience, which involves imaginative participation with the art object. Additionally, for Buddhists, *nirvikalpaka* is the cognition of particulars, *'svalakṣana,'* whereas art is always experienced as a unified whole.

In the context of Viśvanātha's Sāhityadarpana, *nirvikalpaka* is described as knowledge without attributes. Rasa, however, does not fall under this type of knowledge. This is evident because the experience of the spectator *(sahṛdaya)* indicates that rasa involves the interplay of elements such as *vibhāva,* among others, and is associated with intense pleasure *(camatkāra).* Consequently, rasa is also not a form of *savikalpaka*, which is characterized by knowledge that can be verbally described. Unlike tangible objects such as pots or wood, rasa is considered indescribable due to its unique and non-conceptual nature.[66] In his book 'Some Aspects of Rasa-Dhvani', A. Sankaran elucidate that,

> *"Rasapratiti* is not absolutely unrelated, because it is only by the knowledge of the *vibhāvas*, etc., that we have *rasapratiti,* i.e., the knowledge rasa involves the knowledge of the *vibhāvas* etc., in a generalised form; and so, it is not *nirvikalpaka. Savikalpakajñāna* is definite and is related to name and *jāti.* But *rasapratiti* is utterly ineffable, and at the moment of realisation it is all but a

[66] *न निर्विकल्पकं ज्ञानं तस्य ग्राहकमिष्यते । तथाऽभिलाषसंसर्गयोग्त्वविरहान्न च ।।*
सविकल्पकसंवेद्यः सविकल्पकज्ञानसंवेद्यानां हि वचनप्रयोगयोग्यता, न तु रसस्य तथा ।
Singh, Dr. Satyabrata. (1989). *Sri Visvanathakavirajapranit Sahityadarpana*. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Vidyabhawan.3rd parichheda,verse-24, p.130.

composite and blissful experience transcending direct expression. So, this is different from two varieties of knowledge and hence is transcendental."[67]

Now, let us explore Sāṅkhya-Yoga's definition of perception. According to Sāṅkhya, any valid means of knowledge *(pramāṇa)* involves a mental modification (cittavṛtti), where the *antahkaraṇa* or *citta* assumes the form of an object *(vṛtti)* and objects *(viṣaya)* imprint their form upon the mind, making them perceivable. Perception occurs when the object suppresses the *tama guṇa* (concealing factor) and enhances the *sattva guṇa* (illuminating factor), allowing the *antahkaraṇa* to adopt the form of the object and leading to cognition. Sāṅkhya -Yoga emphasize the mind *(manas or citta)* as the highest aspect of *prakṛti*, constituted by the three *guṇas: sattva, rajas,* and *tamas*. From a disturbed and restless state of mind *(rajas)* or a lethargic state *(tamas),* yoga disciplines the mind to transform these states into a state of *sattva*.[68] In order to achieve right cognition, the mind must be in a *sāttvika* state.

From the perspective of Sāṅkhya-yoga, to fully enjoy an art object, the mind must be in a *sāttvika* state. According to Bhatta Nāyaka, aesthetic enjoyment *(bhoga)* arises when *sattva guṇa* predominates over *rajas* and *tamas*. "On account of the variety of the persistence of the elements of *rajas* and *tamas* (delusion and stupefaction) in human nature, it is of the nature of flux or fluidity, expansion and dilation. Further the delectation is also characterised by perfect repose in the spectator's own consciousness, and the nature of this consciousness is that of the joy of illumination due to the preponderance of the element of *sattva* (purity)."[69] Abhinavagupta emphasizes the importance of a *sāttvika* mind, stating that aesthetic experience is an inner or mental perception *(mānasi-pratyakṣa)* of a distinct nature, characterized by direct experience *(sākṣātkāra),* perceived through the mind or inner sense. In contrast to ordinary perception, where an object is perceived by its respective sense organ, aesthetic experience highlights the

[67] Sankaran, A. (1973). *The Theory of Rasa and Dhvani.* University of Madras. P-109-110.

[68] According to Yoga, the mind progresses through five stages: *kṣipta* (distracted), *mudha* (infatuated), *vikṣipta* (occasionally steady), *ekāgra* (one-pointed), and *niruddha* (restrained). When the mind is overpowered by *rajas*, it becomes distracted and attached to worldly objects is the *ksipta* state of mind, *mudha* is dominated by *tamas* and there is a loss of discrimination between right and wrong. When *sattva guṇa* begins to dominate, leading to a relatively steady mind, though occasionally unsteady is *viksipta*. And *ekāgra* is the state of mind dominated by pure *sattva*. It is free from oscillations and is a completely focused mind. Yoga goes beyond *sattva* and establishes mind when ceases all mental functioning which is called *niruddha.*

[69] Walimbe, Y.S. (1980). *Abhinavagupta on Indian Aesthetics.* Ajanta Publications. P. 39-40

role of the mind, referred to as *mānasi-pratyakṣa*. Gnoli elaborates aesthetic experience, likened to tasting *(āsvādana),* operates within the mental realm, distinct from the purely physical act of eating. The mind of the aesthetic perceiver must be fully absorbed in the object of perception, excluding all distractions. In contrast, someone who eats may have a distracted mind and can think of other things. "Like the sensations of pleasure, pain, etc., aesthetic experience is an inner or mental perception (*manasapratyakṣa,* i.e., it is perceived through the mind or inner sense. Such a perception is selfknowing *(svasamvedanasiddha).* In the Abhinavabharati, Abhinavagupta observes that the fact of tasting (*āsvādana*; aesthetic perception being conceived as a particular form of tasting) is of a mental order: it differs from the fact of eating, which is a purely material act *(rasanāvyāpārād bhojanād adhiko yo manaso vyāpārah sa eva āsvādanam).* The mind of he who tastes must be *ekāgra,* absorbed in the object of the tasting to the exclusion of all else. On the contrary, he who eats may be also *anyacitta*: he can also think of other things, etc. Aesthetic tasting is of a non-ordinary nature *(alaukika),* sui generis with reference to the concept of beatitude."[70]

In both ordinary perception and aesthetic experience, the mind plays a significant role. In ordinary perception, the mind experiences the activities of external objects. In contrast, in aesthetic perception, the mind experiences its own consciousness.

4.4. Exploring Alaukika in Nyāya and Rasa Theory

Unlike ordinary objects, which exist in space and time and are subject to considerations of truth and falsity, aesthetic objects are beyond these dimensions. They do not exist in space and time and are thus extraordinary *(alaukika).*

Naiyāyikas have addressed *alaukika pratyakṣa* in addition to *laukika pratyakṣa*. The difference between *laukika* and *alaukika pratyakṣa* lies in the mode of sensory engagement. When an object is not directly present to the senses but is perceived through unusual modes, the perception is termed *alaukika* or extraordinary. However, in the case of rasa, the object is directly present to the senses, making the experience immediate and direct. According to

[70]Gnoli, Raniero. (1963). *Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta*. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Studies, p.54.

Abhinavagupta, rasa is considered *alaukika* because it is generalized and impersonalized. This *alaukika* nature signifies that the experience in drama or poetry is artificially constructed, transcending ordinary, everyday experiences. Abhinavagupta uses the term *laukika* to refer to experiences that are personal and grounded in daily life. In contrast, *alaukika* experiences, such as those evoked by rasa, are beyond the mundane and represent a higher, universal level of aesthetic engagement.

According to Naiyāyika, extra-ordinary perception (*alaukikapratyakṣa*) is divided into 3 types- *sāmānyalakṣaṇa, jñānalakṣaṇa* and *yogajapratyakṣa*.

4.4.1. Sādhāranikaraṇa and Sāmānyalakṣaṇa

The enjoyment of a work of art or aesthetic experience is often explained as transcending space and time, despite being directly perceived in the drama. This phenomenon can be understood through the concept of *sādhāranikaraṇa* (generalization/universalization). In this section, we will discuss how *sādhāranikaraṇa* and *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*[71] *pratyakṣa* may appear similar.

Although both terms imply a similar idea of generalization, they differ in their application. The concept of *sādhāranikaraṇa* is specific to aesthetics, where specific emotional or aesthetic qualities are generalized in a universal form, allowing for a broader appreciation. On the other hand, *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* is used in *alaukikapratyakṣa* (extraordinary perception), such as perceiving the class essence or universal characteristics that apply universally to a group.

According to Nyāya, *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* perception is a form of extraordinary perception. For instance, when we state, “All men are mortal,” we recognize that mortality applies universally to all men, regardless of their class, caste, or region, and this applies to men of the past, present, and future. Essentially, mortality is an attribute of the class of men. The question arises: how do we

[71] Nyāya philosophers also address the concept of *sāmānya,* or generality, distinguishing it from *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* perception and *sādhāranikaraṇa*. According to Annambhaṭṭa, *sāmānya* has three characteristics: it is eternal, it is singular, and it resides in many. For example, the table in front of us is a particular *(viśeṣa)* table with specific characteristics, whereas “tableness” refers to the general concept of a table and does not pertain to any specific table.

comprehend the entire class of men? Ordinary perception cannot suffice, as we cannot physically perceive all men at once. Yet, we must have some way of knowing all men.

The Naiyāyikas explain this through extraordinary perception, where individuals are understood through the class-essence or the universal concept of 'manhood.' When we perceive a man, we inherently perceive 'manhood' within him; otherwise, we could not identify him as a man. This direct perception of universal manhood allows us to perceive all men insofar as they possess this universal quality. In essence, perceiving manhood enables us to perceive all men as instances of the universal 'manhood.' This perception of the class of men, facilitated by perceiving the universal *(sāmānya),* is termed *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* perception.[72]

Sādhāranikaraṇa is one of the most significant concepts in Indian aesthetics, contributed by Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka. It is central to the aesthetic experience because the realization of rasa is not possible without the concept of *sādhāranikaraṇa* (generalization).

Sādhāranikaraṇa refers to the process of generalizing or universalizing *(sāmānyīkaraṇa)* the elements of a character *(vibhāva)* etc., freeing them from their particularity. This state is a precursor to the experience of rasa. Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka claimed that to enjoy any piece of aesthetic composition (poem or drama), one has to go through the following three *vyāpāras:*

Firstly, through *abhidhā,* the spectator grasps the meanings of each and every word arranged in a sentence. This involves understanding the literal meaning of the words and sentences. Secondly, through *bhāvakatvavyāpāra,* all three elements—*vibhāva, anubhāva,* and *vyabhicāribhāva*—that are connected with a particular situation become *sādhāranikṛta* (generalized). This means that these elements, which originally had individual characteristics, become universalized. As a result, the reader or spectator is freed from all sorts of prejudices or pre-conceptions against these elements. Finally, through *bhojakatva,* the *sahṛdaya* (the empathetic spectator) enjoys the rasa (aesthetic flavor or essence) of the composition.

[72] Datta, D. & Chatterjee, S. (1948). *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy.* Calcutta: Calcutta University Press. p.202-203.

In essence, according to Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, the process of enjoying an aesthetic composition involves understanding the literal meanings of the words *(abhidhā),* universalizing the elements connected with a particular situation *(bhāvakatvavyāpāra),* and ultimately experiencing the rasa *(bhojakatva)* of the composition. Thus, *sādhāranikaraṇavyāpāra,* i.e., the function of generalization, is an inevitable means for the realization of rasa.

Let us analyse how Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka elaborates on this:

Vibhāva etc. being free from individuality: In the Rāmāyana, Rāma and Sītā serve as *ālambana* (main support), while the garden of King Janaka acts as *uddīpana* (stimulation). Rāma's excitement represents *anubhāva* (consequent emotion), the *sthāyibhāva* is *rati* (love), and *vyabhicāribhāva* includes *harsha* (joy), *vitarka* (contemplation), and *mati* (reflection). In the process of rasa, all these aspects become generalized. The *sādhāranikaraṇa* of *vibhāva* or character means that Rāma is no longer viewed as a historical figure but as an ordinary man deeply in love. The constraints of time and space are removed, much like an ordinary person captivated by the beauty of a woman.

Similarly, the *sādhāranikaraṇa* of *anubhāva* means that Rāma's efforts and expressions are not specific to any particular individual but represent the efforts and expressions of any ordinary man in love.

The spectators become free from all their prejudices: The characters portrayed in the poem by the poet lose their individual identity and assume the qualities of common men and women. They transcend the limits of space and time, becoming universal and understood in their general character. When seen in their universal or general form, the reader becomes free from all sorts of prejudices. Abhinavagupta was the first to articulate this theory, suggesting that the process of generalization *(sādhāranikaraṇa)* applies not only to *vibhāva,* etc., but also to the *sahṛdaya* (the empathetic spectator). He emphasized the generalization of both the subject and the object. In essence, through the process of *sādhāranikaraṇa*, characters and their qualities in poetry become universalized, allowing the reader to relate to them beyond their specific historical or individual contexts, thereby facilitating a deeper and more universal aesthetic experience.

Generalization of Sthāyibhāvas - Abhinavagupta, quoting from Abhijñānasakuntalam, describes a scene where King Dusyanta, in the guise of a hunter, chases a deer which runs away in fear for its life. When this scene is enacted before us, Abhinavagupta explains that we cannot determine whose fear it is—whether it belongs to us, the deer in front of us, or any third person, friend, or enemy. The fear being portrayed is not specific to any individual but becomes a generalized fear that transcends space and time.

At that moment, Abhinavagupta suggests, we experience that fear in its generic or universal form, free from all barriers such as individualistic elements. Through the process of aesthetic experience, the fear portrayed in the Rāma is universalized through *sādhāranikaraṇa,* allowing the spectator to empathize with it in a way that transcends individual circumstances and biases. This enables a deeper and more profound emotional connection with the artistic portrayal. When we are witnessing the Rāmāyana, the *sthāyibhāva*, such as *rati* (love), is not specifically Rāma's love for Sītā, nor is it the spectators' love for Sītā or their own beloved. It is a released *rati,* where individual feelings of "mine" and "yours" cease to exist. Essentially, it is the *sthāyibhāva* of the spectators, but due to the process of generalization, it becomes free of personal consciousness.

After Abhinavagupta, Dhananjaya indirectly illuminated the theory of universalization. He asserted that it is the reader or spectator who enjoys aesthetic pleasure, but he raised a crucial question: "Who is the object for the reader?" If the historical characters Rāma or Sita are taken as the object, how can the reader identify with them? How can the reader reconcile his past sentiments and conceptions about the historical characters with the portrayals created by the poet? The reader will inevitably differentiate between the Rāmaa of his mind and the Rāma portrayed by the poet. Trying to solve the riddle Dhananjaya says: *"* [The Hero], like Rāma and others, illustrating [one of]the kinds [known as]self-controlled and exalted *(dhīrodātta),* and so on, displays [the Permanent States], Love *(rati)* and the like, and these give pleasure to the spectator *(rasika).*"[73]

[73] *धीरोदात्ताद्यवस्थानां रामादिः प्रतिपादकः ।*
विभावयति रत्यादीन् स्वदन्ते रसिकस्य ते ॥

Dhananjaya speaks of two stages through which one must pass to experience aesthetic bliss:

1. Symbolic Representation of Characters: The characters portrayed in a poem are not historical figures; rather, they symbolize the characteristics of a noble-gallant hero *(dhīrodātta)* or other heroic archetypes. The poet cannot faithfully portray the exact virtues and vices of historical characters; instead, he represents them based on his knowledge and imagination, aiming to achieve the ultimate purpose of his work.

2. Universalization of Situations: When these particular situations are freed from individuality and the limitations of space and time, they provide poetic pleasure to the reader. This means that when the characters in a poem shed their individuality and are understood in their general character as men or women of any era, they become sources of poetic relish. In this context, figures like Rāma and Sita or Dusyanta and Shakuntala are not perceived as historical persons but as universal representations of common men and women.

And that is exactly what Bhatta Nāyaka had said in the conclusion: Our reading a poem or witnessing a play, in fact, do not see the historical figures, but only those which have been created by the poet's imagination. Thus, we had shorn of our prejudices (reverence, hatred etc.) towards the historical persons feeling no difficulty in reaching the state of poetic bliss.

Thus, Dhananjaya and his commentator Dhanika, while explaining the theory of 'generalization' have clearly defined to the poet's role which according to them is quite significant. No doubt the learned predecessors of Dhananjaya, i.e., Bhatta Nāyaka and Abhinavgupta also, had realized this factor, but they did not mention the role of the poet explicitly. Dhananjaya and Dhanika's contribution are that they talked of the role of poet's imagination in undubious and clear tone.

The next philosopher who elucidated the theory of universalization was Viśvanātha. He stated that the feelings of love of the characters depicted in a poem or a Rāma, stimulate the sentiments of the reader, but the question arises how it happens. Answering it, he states that it is

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Hass, George C.O. (1912). *The Dasarupa: A Treatise on Hindu DRāmaaturgy by Dhananjay*. New York: Columbia University Press, Verse-48, p-126-127.

due to the total impact of the *vibhāva, anubhāva* and *vyabhicāribhāva* and whole impact is called *sādhāranikaraṇa*. Visvanātha claimed that through this *sādhāranikaraṇa,* the spectator for those moments identify himself with the great personality like Hanuman crossing the vast ocean in one leap. In other words, the reader experiences the same feelings and emotions as are experienced by the characters themselves in a poem or in a drama. These sentiments basically are those of the *anukārya*, i.e., the real characters like Rāma, Hanumāna etc.

The identification of the reader with the character involves sharing the same emotions. The spectator experiences the sentiments of the characters and mentally aligns with their behaviour. The generalization of *vibhāva* is also an important aspect, though distinct from the spectator's identification with the character. Generalization of *vibhāva* means that characters like Rāma or Sita become relatable as common men and women, rather than extraordinary figures. On the other hand, the spectator's identification with the character means that, for that moment, the spectator feels a sense of unity with the character, believing that feats such as archery or crossing a vast ocean are possible. The reader experiences the same feelings and emotions as the characters in the poem or Rāma.

Thus, Viśvanātha has presented the views of Abhinavagupta in more lucid and simple terms. According to him, the entire scene in a Rāma becomes generalized, detaching itself from any specific person, place, or time, and shedding its individuality. This generalization leads to the reader's identification with characters such as Hanumān. Both the reader and the character share the same emotions, with the reader experiencing the sentiments of the characters and mentally aligning with their behaviour. This mental state forms the foundation for the realization of poetic bliss.

Abhinavagupta has clearly expressed that rasa does not come from outside; it springs from within the self. The *sthāyibhāvas* (permanent emotions) belong to the *sahṛdaya* (sensitive appreciator), who identifies mentally with the subject *(āśraya).* In other words, the reader or spectator, while witnessing the physical activities of historical or mythical characters like Rāma, Hanumān, Parasurāma, or Dusyanta, does not emulate their actions physically but responds to their behavior mentally.

The experience of rasa is a generalized or universalized emotional experience that transports the spectator or reader beyond oneself, allowing them to enjoy and appreciate emotions at a general and impersonal level of consciousness. Rasa represents a unique form of impersonal pleasure, distinct from ordinary experiences, enabling one to appreciate tragedy or misery if artistically depicted. For example, in real life, we cannot bear to witness accidents or the demise of our relatives, but when the same situations are enacted in a drama, we can derive enjoyment from them. This distinction highlights the transformative power of art to create a space where emotions and experiences can be safely appreciated and enjoyed, even when they would be disturbing or distressing in real life.

To describe *sādhāranikaraṇa,* Abhinavagupta quotes a verse from Kalidasa's 'Abhijñānaśākuntalam' which narrates a fearful deer fleeing after being pursued by the hunter, the hero. In this perception, the deer is devoid of particularity *(viśeṣa),* and the actor playing the role of the deer, displaying fear, is not actually feeling fear. Therefore, what appears there is fear itself, unconditioned by time, space, etc. This perception of fear is distinct from ordinary perceptions of fear, such as "I am afraid," "he is afraid," "my enemy is afraid," "my friend is afraid," or "anybody is afraid." These ordinary worldly perceptions give rise to pleasure and pain, thus serving as obstacles in the process of aesthetic experience.

In the case of the perception of fear experienced through the representation of the deer, these obstacles are absent. This perception seems to directly enter into the heart of the spectator and dance before their eyes. Abhinavagupta describes this fear as the terrible *(bhayānaka)* rasa.[74]

Hence, when we compare *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*, which is the cognition of universals, and *sādhāranikaraṇa,* which is the process through which particular emotions are enjoyed in a universal form, we see that they are completely different from each other. *Sāmānyalakṣaṇa* pertains to the perception and is a universal class. It involves recognizing and understanding the universal qualities or characteristics shared by members of a class. On the other hand, in *sādhāranikaraṇa*, generalization occurs within a particular character. It involves transforming

[74] Mishra, kailash Pati. (2006). *Aesthetic Philosophy of Abhinavagupta*. Varanasi: Kala Prakashan, p.108-109.

specific emotions or situations into universal forms that can be universally appreciated, transcending their individual characteristics.

In aesthetic experience, the concept of class *(jāti)* is not applicable. Aesthetic *sādhāranikaraṇa* occurs when specific emotional or aesthetic qualities are generalized in a way that transcends individual instances, allowing for a broader, universal appreciation of those qualities.

In this context, *sādhāranikaraṇa* involves the process of generalizing emotional or aesthetic qualities such as fear, love, heroism, or beauty, so that they are perceived in a universal form rather than tied to specific individuals or situations. This universalization enables a deeper and more resonant aesthetic experience, where the emotional impact is felt universally rather than individually.

4.4.2. Jñānalakṣaṇa and the Role of Smṛti

Let us now discuss the relationship between *jñānalakṣaṇa pratyakṣa* and *rasānubhava.* In *jñānalakṣaṇa pratyakṣa*, an object is not directly presented to a sense organ but is revived in memory through past cognition and perceived through representation. For example, when looking at a blooming rose from a distance and saying, "I see a fragrant rose," the fragrance cannot actually be seen; it can only be smelt. Fragrance is perceived by the sense organ of smell, while the sense organ of vision perceives only color.

In this case, the visual perception of the rose revives in memory the idea of fragrance through association with past experiences, where the fragrance was perceived through the nose. This is the perception of the fragrant rose through the eye, facilitated by memory and past cognition. Therefore, it is called *jñānalakṣaṇa* perception, or perception revived in memory through the cognition *(jñāna)* of the object in the past. *Rasānubhava* is fundamentally different from *jñānalakṣaṇa pratyakṣa. Rasānubhava* is never generated from memory. Although memory does play an important role, which will be discussed later in this chapter, aesthetic experience is a direct experience in which the spectator finds total immersion in the art object. In this context,

the concept of *jñānalakṣaṇa* does not arise. The spectator's engagement with the art is immediate and profound, not mediated by past cognition or memory.

4.4.3. Yogaja Pratyakṣa and the Possibility of Rasānubhava

The third type of extraordinary perception is *yogaja* perception. This refers to the intuitive and immediate awareness of all objects—past, present, and future—achieved by *yogins* through the power of meditation. According to Yoga, there are two types of *samādhis: samprajñāta* (*samādhi* of wisdom) and *asamprajñāta* (acognitive *samādhi*). *Yogins* can perceive the true nature of existence, free from the distortions imposed by the senses and the mind. This state of direct perception *(pratyakṣa)* is known as *samprajñāta samādhi*, a form of object-directed samādhi characterized by a highly focused meditation where the yogin attains direct perception. *Asamprajñāta samādhi* is beyond perception, representing a state of Pure Consciousness *(purusa). Samprajñāta samādhi* is classified into four types: *vitarka, vicāra, ānanda,* and *asmita.* Furthermore, *vitarka* and *vicāra* can be subdivided into *savitarka or nirvitarka* and *savicāra* or *nirvicāra,* respectively. In *savitarka samādhi*, the focus is on a gross physical object, where there is no clear distinction between the word, meaning, and knowledge. This means that the meditator's concentration includes the object's name and associated concepts, making it a more complex and layered form of focus.

Nirvitarka samādhi, on the other hand, occurs when only the object *(artha)* appears to be illuminated. In this state, the concentration is solely on the object itself, free from the influence of memory, words, knowledge, inference *(anumāna),* and authoritative testimony *(āgama pramāṇas).* This results in a purer and more direct form of perception, where the meditator's awareness is entirely absorbed in the essence of the object without any external associations. In *savicāra samādhi,* the focus shifts to subtle objects like the *tanmātras* (subtle essences of the physical elements). Concentration encompasses aspects of space, time, and causality. *Nirvicāra samādhi,* a more refined state, allows the yogin to perceive fundamental subtle elements without the constraints of space, time, or causality. In *ānanda samādhi,* the mind concentrates on even subtler objects, such as the senses, revealing their nature and leading to a state of bliss *(ānanda).*

The final type of *Samprajñāta samādhi* is *asmita*, where concentration is on the ego-substance *(asmita),* the fundamental sense of 'I' with which the self is usually identified.

Based on the concept of *samādhis,* we will attempt to analyse whether the aesthetic experience fits within this framework or if it transcends *yogic pratyakṣa*. Abhinavagupta, in his elaboration on aesthetic experience, argues that it cannot be clearly categorized as *asamprajñāta samādhi*, as it is beyond sattva and devoid of mental modifications at that level. Our focus is on *sattva*, which pertains to *samprajñāta samādhi,* as *sattva* is a prerequisite for the aesthetic experience.

Since *savicāra samādhi* allows the perception of subtle elements *(tanmātrās)* beyond space, time, and causality, *sānanda samādhi* focuses on even subtler objects like the senses, leading to bliss *(ānanda),* and *sasmita samādhi* concentrates on the ego-substance ('I'), none of these states can be equated with the aesthetic experience because aesthetic experience requires an art-object for cognition.

Nirvitarka samādhi occurs when only the object is illuminated. In this state, concentration is solely on the object itself, free from the influence of memory, words, knowledge, inference, etc. Similar conditions occur during the contemplation of the art-object, but a question still arises: is it the perception of the art-object or the contemplation of the art-object?

Abhinavagupta puts it, aesthetic experience is not similar to *yogaja* perception. Abhinavagupta categorically denied in his Abhinavabharati that *योगिप्रत्यक्षादिजनित-तटस्थपरसंवित्तिज्ञानात्, सकलवैषयिकोपरागशून्य-शुद्धपरयोगिगतस्वानन्दैकघनानुभवाच्च विशिष्यते ।।.*[75]

For him, aesthetic experience is distinguished from "….cognition without active participation *(taṭastha)* of the thoughts of others, which is proper to the direct perception of the

[75] Visweswar, Acharya. (1960). *Abhinavabharati.* Delhi: Hindi Vibhaga, Delhi University, p.485.

yogins;… and from the compact *(ekaghana)* experience of one's own beatitude, which is proper to yogins of higher orders…."[76]

In order to show the uniqueness of *rasānubhuti,* Abhinavagupta suggests that it is not comparable to the perception of perfect *yogins* nor to that of a yogin in the making. If it were similar to the former, it would not allow for anything other than the evoked *sthāyibhāvas,* just as the knowledge of a perfect *yogin* admits nothing but the ātman. However, as mentioned, the *vibhāvas* and related elements are perceived in this case. If it were akin to the latter, it would involve perceiving the *vibhāvas* and related elements in an indifferent manner *(taṭasthena),* much like how a yogin in the making sees objects other than the ātman indifferently.

Hence, rasanubhuti is a unique form of mental perception, referred to by Abhinavagupta as mental perception *(manasasāksātkār),* which is induced by the *vibhāvas* and other elements. It is akin to *carvanā,* much like the simultaneous acts of eating and tasting food. Abhinavagupta describes aesthetic experience as *alaukika*, distinct from ordinary and extraordinary perceptions such as *sāmānyalakṣaṇa*, *jñānalakṣaṇa*, and *yogaja*. To quote, *"Tenalaukikacamatkāratma rasasvādah smṛti-anumāna-laukikasvasamvedana vilakṣana eva."* Gnoli translates it as follows: "The tasting of rasa (which consists in a *camatkāra* different from any other kind of ordinary cognition) differs from both memory, inference and any form of ordinary self-consciousness."[77]

4.5. Alaukika Nature of Rasa

The concept of *alaukika* can be interpreted through various expressions such as sui generis, extra-worldly, non-worldly, other-worldly, supra-normal, and transcendental. Aesthetic experience (rasa) is considered extra-worldly *(alaukika),* and many aestheticians have provided arguments to support this position. They emphasize that the experience of rasa transcends ordinary perception and cognition, presenting a unique, heightened state of awareness and enjoyment distinct from everyday experiences. This elevated form of perception underscores the exceptional nature of aesthetic enjoyment, distinguishing it from other forms of knowledge and consciousness.

[76] Gnoli, Raniero. (1963). Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Studies, p.82.
[77] Ibid, p.81.

The experience of rasa is unique and transcends ordinary emotional responses. For example, the joy derived from hearing about the birth of a son is an ordinary, worldly happiness. In contrast, rasa, such as the joy experienced while engaging with a work of art or literature, is *alaukika* (extraordinary). This is because it involves a complex interplay of various aesthetic elements—*vibhāvas* (determinants), *anubhāvas* (consequent emotional responses), and *vyabhicāribhāvas* (transitory emotional states).

The spectator's deep familiarity with the *vibhāvas* and *anubhāvas*, coupled with their ability to sympathetically respond *(hṛdaya-samvāda)* and fully immerse themselves *(tanmayibhāvanā)* in the aesthetic experience, allows them to experience rasa. The *sahṛdaya's* experience of rasa is *vilakṣana* (distinct) from ordinary awareness of emotions like happiness. It is a higher form of awareness, not tangible or objective like physical objects (e.g., a pot or jar), but an internal, aesthetic realization.

The aesthetic experience through the *vibhāvas* and other elements is like the appearance of a magical flower; it is essentially a momentary phenomenon, independent of past or future time. Abhinavagupta emphasizes that aesthetic experience is unique and distinct from ordinary worldly joy.

To demonstrate the *alaukikatva* of rasa, Abhinavagupta contrasts the practical nature of everyday language with the purely aesthetic experience of literature. In daily life, instructions such as "Take the cow to the field for grazing" or "Bring the cow home as it is evening" are clear directives that prompt immediate action. When someone hears these commands, they understand that a specific task needs to be completed and proceed to act accordingly. In contrast, engagement with a literary work leads to an immersive experience that transcends practical considerations, highlighting the extraordinary nature of rasa.

In contrast, aesthetic experience doesn't seek to elicit direct, practical actions from its audience. When reading a literary work or watching a play, the audience is not expected to perform any tasks based on the story or dialogue. Instead, the engagement with literature is

intellectual and emotional. For instance, when an actor portrays a character like Rāvana (a villain in the Rāmāyana) or Sītā (the heroine), the audience's role is to appreciate the performance and the narrative, not to intervene or change the course of events.

The *vibhāvas* and other elements are *alaukika.* They are not the causes of the production *(nispattih)* of rasa. Rasa does not fall under ordinary causal relations such as *kāraka hetus* and *jñāpaka hetus.* The former class of *hetus* may be destroyed after the production of effect, but the effect may continue to exist even after its destruction; for example, a seed is the cause of plants, and even after the destruction of the seed, the plant may continue producing fruits and exist. Hence, rasa is not a *kārya.*

The *vibhāvas* are also not *jñāpakahetus*. The latter *hetus* are the causes of revealing objects that previously exist; for instance, a lamp reveals a pot that is in the dark, and this is said to be its *jñāpakahetus*. Here, the pot exists even before the lamp is brought to that place. But it cannot be admitted that rasa exists even before the *vibhāvas.* It is not *jñāpya* either. So, the *vibhāvas* only suggest the rasa that is enjoyed by us. The *vibhāvas,* etc., are *alaukika;* they make it possible for the *rasika* to relish rasa.

Viśvanātha in his Sāhityadarpana places significant emphasis on the concept of the *alaukikatva* of rasa. According to him, aesthetic experience (rasa) is neither a direct perception *(pratyakṣa)* nor an indirect one *(parokṣa),* but it is indescribable *(anirvacaniya).* He posits that rasa is transcendental *(lokottara),* elevating it beyond ordinary worldly experiences.

This transcendental nature of rasa distinguishes it from mundane pleasures, aligning it more closely with spiritual joy. It implies that rasa is not merely an ordinary emotion or sensation, but rather a profound experience that transcends the limitations of ordinary perception, offering a taste of something higher and more meaningful.

According to Abhinavagupta, Rasa consists exclusively in aesthetic relish and is not of the nature of the object of cognition. It is entirely distinct from all other empirical or mundane forms of knowledge. Abhinavagupta emphasizes that aesthetic experience, which is purely a matter of

perception, stands alone in its class and is incomparable to any other form of knowledge; it is unique and sui generis.

Furthermore, he asserts that the proof of rasa is *'sva-samvedana siddhatvam'* — because rasa is felt, therefore it exists. This means that the validity of rasa lies in the experience itself; its existence is affirmed by the direct experience of aesthetic relish. Thus, rasa is not something that can be empirically or objectively proven, but rather its reality is validated by the subjective experience of the *rasika* (the connoisseur of rasa). To quote: *"तेन-अलौकिकचमत्कारात्मा रसास्वादः स्मृति- अनुमान- लौकिकस्वसंवेदन विलक्षण एव ।"*[78] This translates to: "The tasting of rasa (which consists in a *camatkāra* different from any other kind of ordinary cognition) differs from both memory, inference, and any form of ordinary self-consciousness."

4.6. Śānta Rasa and the Possibility of Aesthetic Cognition

In the previous section, we discussed the *alaukika* nature of rasa and observed that, for Abhinavagupta, it differs from the perception of *yogis*. Simultaneously, Abhinavagupta introduces śānta rasa with the intention of establishing a relationship between art and reality.

Abhinavagupta plays a significant role in bridging the gap between metaphysics and aesthetics by including *śānta* rasa (the rasa of tranquility). By introducing *śānta* rasa, Abhinavagupta challenges the opponents of poetry and art who consider them useless for philosophical discussions. Masson and Patwardhan note, "There has always been among Indian Philosophers (and Western ones too; one thinks of Plato) a certain distrust of poetry."[79] They further quote Jayanta Bhatta and the Mīmāṃsākas, who dismiss poetry for not being useful: "There is no point in arguing with poets …. One should avoid the useless prattle that is poetry."[80]

Abhinavagupta's inclusion of *śānta* rasa, which conveys a profound sense of peace and contentment, argues for the intrinsic philosophical and cognitive value of poetry and art. This rasa represents a state of transcendence and ultimate truth, aligning closely with philosophical

[78] Visweswar, Acharya. (1960). 'Abhinavabharati'. Delhi: Hindi Vibhaga, Delhi University, p.485.
[79] Masson, J.L. and Patwardhan, M.V., (1969), Śāntarasa & Abhinavagupta's Philosophy of Aesthetics, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute , Poona, P. VIII
[80] Ibid

and metaphysical inquiry. By doing so, Abhinavagupta bridges the gap between aesthetic pleasure and cognitive value, asserting that poetry and art can indeed contribute to philosophical understanding and discussions. This perspective provides a robust defense against criticisms that dismiss the cognitive and epistemological significance of artistic and poetic works.

Furthermore, if the purpose of *pramāṇas* (means of knowledge) is to achieve the highest knowledge, "तत्त्वज्ञानान्निःश्रेयसाधिगमः", meaning "Knowledge is what leads to the attainment of the highest good," then the cognitive value of art becomes evident. By recognizing that aesthetic experiences, through *śānta* rasa, can lead to deeper philosophical insights and the attainment of higher truths, Abhinavagupta underscores the role of art in the pursuit of ultimate knowledge and the highest good. This understanding elevates the epistemological status of artistic and poetic works, demonstrating their significance beyond mere sensory pleasure and placing them firmly within the realm of cognitive and metaphysical value.

For Abhinavagupta, *śānta* rasa is the fundamental rasa from which other rasas arise, just as waves constantly appear and disappear in the sea. The permanent emotional state *(sthāyibhāva)* of *śānta* rasa is *śama*, which denotes the cessation of all mental modifications *(cittavṛttis). Śānta* rasa is a state of tranquility where the mind's disturbances are stilled, leading to a serene experience. This state, termed *śama*, is achieved by controlling the mind's reactions to external stimuli and is essential for experiencing deep meditation and inner peace.

Abhinavagupta identifies *śānta* rasa as the knowing the truth, closely tied to right knowledge *(śama).* Right knowledge is *tattvajñāna,* the knowledge of the eternal truth. This eternal truth is equated with the pure ātman (self), which is pure consciousness and supreme bliss. Abhinavagupta explains that *ātmājñāna* is not merely the knowledge of the self *(ātmānah jñānam),* but the self as knowledge itself *(ātmāiva jñānam).* The ātman in its true condition, as pure consciousness and supreme bliss, is the true experience of *śāntarasa.*

Though the *ātman,* the *sthāyibhāva* of *śānta,* is always present, *śānta* rasa is not always realized because we do not experience the ātman in its true state. Only when the ātman is experienced in its pure condition does it become the *sthāyibhāva* of *śānta.* Abhinavagupta's

philosophy interlinks *śānta* rasa with the realization of the ultimate truth and the attainment of moksha. He posits that equanimity *(śama)* is essential for experiencing *śānta* rasa, which, in turn, leads to the realization of the self *(ātman)* as pure consciousness and supreme bliss. This state is facilitated by literature and the arts, guiding individuals toward spiritual enlightenment. The sensitive reader *(sahṛdaya),* through engagement with emotionally profound works, can achieve *mokṣa*, highlighting the transformative power of art and knowledge. There is close relation between *śānta* rasa and *mokṣa.* Sustained literary works inevitably lead to *śānta,* as seen in the Mahābhārata, where the epic war results in disillusionment with worldly desires, culminating in *śānta* rasa.[81]

Another aspect of aesthetic experience is that *śānta* rasa is considered a higher aesthetic experience compared to other rasas. Accordingly, every individual may experience art at different levels, which correspond to the mental levels *(cittabhumi)* as described by Patanjali in the Yogasutras (as we have already discussed in the previous section). Although sattva (a state of purity and harmony) is a desirable condition for aesthetic experience, the transformation of the mind *(cittavṛttinirodha,* the cessation of mental modifications) may enable an individual to attain a higher or metaphysical aesthetic experience, such as *śānta*-rasa.[82] B.M. Chaturvedi suggests that *śama, sthāyibhāva* of *śānta* rasa, is the cessation of *cittavṛttis*.

> Śama is the sthāyibhāva of the śāntarasa. Śama means the cessation of all the cittavṛttis (modifications of the mind). That state of the mind when the four effects, vikasa, vistara, ksobha and viksepa which appear in the citta when it comes into contact with the external objects (through the senses), are controlled is called śama. This is what is called citta-vṛtti-nirodha (cessation of the modification of the mind) which culminates in the Nirvikalpaka Samādhi. [83]

He further explains that the term *'nirodha'* should not be interpreted as non-existence because the *citta* will always continue to exist. Small disturbances or big waves are constantly appearing

[81] Patnayaik, P., (2004), *Rasa in Aesthetics,* D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd, New Delhi, p.248-249.

[82] Abhinavagupta may not agree with the condition of cittavṛttinirodha as a prerequisite for aesthetic experience. It is already discussed that rasa, according to him, is a unique alaukika (extraordinary) experience that is distinct from the experiences of yogins who are in the process of attaining mental tranquility, as well as from those of a perfect yogi who has transcended mental modifications.

[83] Chaturvedi, B.M. (1996). Some Unexplored Aspects of the Rasa Theory. Hyderabad: Vidyanidhi Prakashan, p-93.

in the water. However, there are times when these disturbances or waves do not arise, and the water remains completely calm. The same is true for the *citta* as well. "There would be appearing, in the mind, various kinds of *vṛttis* which are classified under four groups *vikāsa, vistāra, kṣobha* and *vikṣepa*, and they would disappear in the *citta* itself. This disappearance of the *vṛttis* which is called *śama*, is experienced by the spectators as the *śāntarasa*."[84]

If we accept this explanation, we can conclude that aethetic experience resembles a *yogi*'s perception. We can conclude that Abhinavagupta posits two types of aesthetic experience: one related to the other eight rasas, which is *alaukika* in nature, and the second related to the higher level of aesthetic experience connected to the true knowledge of the self. Abhinavagupta himself distinguishes between *śānta* rasa and other rasas, stating that the highest enjoyment generally occurs in the form of *śānta* rasa, characterized by tranquility due to the predominance of detachment from objects. The key difference is that other rasas are typically influenced by enduring emotional impressions, which persist in their respective states, whereas in the state of *śānta* rasa, these impressions become tranquil.[85]

In this context, the possibility of aesthetic cognition cannot be denied. Even in the ordinary state of *rasānubhuti*, there is cognition of what is right or wrong, though not necessarily truth or falsity. For instance, one should behave like Rāma and not like Rāvana, implies a moral judgment about proper conduct.

4.7. Sahṛdaya and Śānta Rasa

In distinguishing between the higher rasa, śānta rasa, and the other eight rasas—*śṛṅgāra, hāsya, karuṇa, raudra, vīra, bhayānaka, bībhatsa*, and *adbhuta*—the role of the connoisseur in experiencing and evaluating art becomes crucial. The true benefit lies with the connoisseur, like a calf that drinks its mother's milk, gaining nourishment and enjoying the suckling. In the

[84] Ibid

[85] *तत्र सर्वरसानां शान्तप्राय एवास्वादो न विषयेभ्यो विपरिवृत्या, तन्मुख्यतालाभात्केवलं वासनान्तरोपहित इत्यस्य सर्वप्रकृतित्वाभिधानाय पूर्वमभिधानम्।*

Dvivedi, Dr. Parasanatha. (1996). Natyasastra of Sri Bharata Muni & Abhinavabharati by Sri Abhinavaguptacarya. Varanasi: Sampurnananda Sanskrit University, p-226.

absence of a true connoisseur, even great art may not be fully appreciated. Not every individual can experience all types of art objects equally, as there are various types of individuals with different tastes in art. For instance, not everyone can appreciate the charm of Meera's poetry, which can be considered a higher level of aesthetic or spiritual experience.

Bharata emphasizes that those who experience rasa are called sensitive spectators *(sahṛdaya)* in aesthetic experiences. *Sahṛdaya* is derived from the combination of *sa* and *hṛdaya*. Here, *sa* denotes *samāna*, meaning 'same' or 'similar,' and *hṛdaya* means 'heart.' Therefore, *sahṛdaya* signifies 'one of similar heart.' The term *sahṛdaya* has been variously translated as critic, observer, reader, spectator, or one who savors *(rasika)* in the creative process. In all these roles, the essential quality of *sahṛdaya* is that of one who appreciates and enjoys. *Prekṣaka* (observer) or spectator, *sāmājika* (an auditor), *rasika*, and *sahṛdaya* (empathizer) are defined as those who possess the same quality of heart as the creator. Hence, the spectator is a *sahṛdaya*, someone 'who empathizes with the artist.' The success of a performance is determined by the audience's ability to experience a specific emotion or aesthetic pleasure, known as 'rasa.' This makes the spectator an essential participant in the play, as their engagement and emotional response are crucial for the performance to achieve its intended impact.

What is that innate quality that allows a person to be a *sahṛdaya*? The *sahṛdaya* possesses latent impressions of basic states which are also called *samskāras* or *vāsanās* in the form of *rati*, *hāsa*, *soka* etc. These bhavas lie in a dormant state in all individual and enables them to enjoy an art. While all individuals possess these fundamental emotional states *(bhāvas),* the predominance of specific bhavas varies from person to person. To quote Abhinavagupta, *न ह्येतच्चित्तवृत्तिवासनाशून्यः प्राणी भवति। केवलं कस्यचित् काचिदधिका चित्तवृत्तिः काचिद्ना*

"No living creature exists without the latent impression of these sentiments. All we can say is that some of them predominate in some people and others in others, and that in some people they originate from the usual causes and in others from causes different from the habitual."[86]

[86] Gnoli, Raniero. (1963). Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Studies, p-74

Abhinavagupta notes that no living creature is without these latent impressions, though their prominence varies from person to person and can arise from different causes. Hence, every individual is a potential *sahṛdaya*. For him, a *sahṛdaya* possesses the power of imagination and is the proper person to enjoy pure aesthetic experience *(अधिकारी चात्र विमलप्रतिभानशालि हृदयः)*. This means that a *sahṛdaya,* or a person with a refined and sympathetic heart, has a natural ability to imagine and connect deeply with the aesthetic elements of art.

In order to be refined and sympathetic one does not need to acquire the special ability rather, it involves clearing the mind, much like removing dust from a mirror. Abhinavagupta holds that those whose mind-mirrors have been cleansed through the study of poetry, and who can thus become fully absorbed in the subject being described, are *sahṛdayas*, with hearts in harmony with the poet's heart. [87] Once the heart of a *sahṛdaya's* is free from disturbances it enjoys the art by identification *(nirmal pratibhānasali hṛdaya).* To truly appreciate the emotions conveyed, a sahṛdaya's mind must be completely immersed in the experience, undisturbed by extraneous thoughts or personal associations. This allows them to connect deeply with the art, experiencing the emotions and aesthetics in their purest form.

When communication occurs between *sahṛdaya* and the artist sharing similar thoughts or feelings, is called *hṛdaya-samvāda*. It is the highest level of rasa, achieved through the complete identification of the subject with the aesthetic object. This state is also known as *tanmayibhāvanā* or total identification. Abhinavagupta defines this concept in Tantraloka as the identification with the object of contemplation, where the mind and body merge completely into that object. This identification is seen as the attainment of one's highest self, representing the ultimate stage of fulfilment. According to him, there can be no further achievement beyond this state.

While these are the qualifications for a *sahṛdaya,* the question remains whether any additional qualifications are required to experience *śānta* rasa. As Abhinavagupta distinguishes

[87] *येषां काव्यानुशीलनाभ्यासवशाद्विशदीभूते मनोमुकुरे, वर्णनीयतन्मयीभवनयोग्यता ते स्वहृदयसं*.
Sastri, Pandit Pattabhirāma. (1940). *Dhvanyaloka of Sri Anandavardhanacharya With the Lochana & Balapriya Commentaries.* Benaras City: Chowkhamba Sanskrit series Office, p.38.

between *śānta* rasa and other rasas, nothing that the greatest enjoyment generally arises from *śānta* rasa, characterized by tranquillity resulting from detachment from objects. The main difference lies in the fact that other rasas are usually influenced by lasting emotional impressions, which remain in their respective states, whereas in the state of *śānta* rasa, these impressions become serene. In such a scenario, complete detachment would be the prerequisite to experience *śānta* rasa.

The question arises whether an artist can create a work that enables the experience of *śānta* rasa. This can be answered by the concept of *pratibhā.* In Indian philosophy and aesthetics, *pratibhā* is highly valued. In Kashmir Śaivism, *pratibhā (Sakti)* is considered the creative power of *Śiva* to manifest the universe. According to Bhartṛhari, all forms of communication occur due to *pratibhā,* an inherent capacity in all beings. For aestheticians, *pratibhā* is a crucial concept that underpins artistic creation. *Śānta* rasa certainly depends on the *pratibhā* of a poet, who possesses the insight to perceive the truth and the ability to express it in a creative and original manner.

Abhinavagupta's quotes his teacher, Bhatta Tauta, emphasizes novelty in his definition of *pratibhā*. According to him, *pratibhā* is the faculty of mind from which new and innovative concepts or ideas emerge. For instance, poets have been writing about the moon for centuries, yet each poem is uniquely fresh. No one says, "We are already familiar with the moon." The distinction between an ordinary object and an art object lies in the fact that once we attain knowledge of an ordinary object, there is no need to reacquaint ourselves with it. However, with a poem, this does not happen. Every time we read a poem, it offers a new experience.

It is the outcome of wisdom *(prajñā)* or knowledge *(jñāna).* प्रतिभा नवनवोन्मेषशालिनी प्रज्ञा। This phrase can be translated as: "*Pratibhā* is the faculty of mind from which new and innovative concepts or ideas emerge."[88] Bhatta Tauta observes that *prajñā,* which continually generates new meanings, is called *pratibhā.* Here, *prajñā* is used to denote poetic accomplishment—it is the gift of the poet that enables them to create enduring flashes of new ideas.

[88] Joshi, Natvarlal. (1994). *Poetry, Creativity and Aesthetic Experience*. Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, p.152.

4.8. Conclusion:

In this chapter, we have analysed the distinctions and parallels between two forms cognition i.e., perceptual and aesthetic cognition. We have compared the significant aspects of both these cognitions. This chapter intends to find whether aesthetic experience has any cognitive value or not or in other words is aesthetic cognition possible? We have thoroughly analysed rasa through perception, as defined by Nyāya, Buddhist, and Sāṅkhya philosophers, including various types of perception such as *nirvikalpaka* and *savikalpaka*, *laukika* and *alaukika*. It was found that the experience of rasa goes beyond mere perceptual accuracy, focusing instead on the enjoyment and emotional engagement with the art. Similarities can be noted between *Yogaja pratyakṣa* and *rasānubhuti* in this regard.

Abhinavagupta's exploration of *śānta* rasa (the rasa of tranquillity) presents a profound argument for the cognitive and metaphysical value of poetry and art. By positioning *śānta* rasa as a state of transcendence and ultimate truth, Abhinavagupta bridges the gap between aesthetic pleasure and philosophical inquiry. This perspective highlights that aesthetic experiences are not merely for sensory enjoyment but can lead to deeper philosophical insights and the attainment of higher truths. He asserts that the ultimate purpose of *pramāṇas* (means of knowledge) is to achieve the highest good, thus emphasizing the cognitive value of art in this pursuit. Abhinavagupta's insights on *śānta* rasa elevate the epistemological status of artistic and poetic works, demonstrating their importance in philosophical and metaphysical discussions. This comprehensive understanding of *śānta* rasa and its implications underscores the integral role of aesthetics in achieving cognitive and spiritual enlightenment.

CONCLUSION

This research aims to explore and analyze whether aesthetic experience is purely pleasurable or if it also has cognitive value. While *rasavādins* may differ in their definitions of rasa, they agree that aesthetic experience is inherently pleasurable. Typically, *pramāṇa* is associated with the validity of truth and falsehood. This thesis investigates the potential relationship between *rasānubhuti* and *pramāṇas,* questioning whether a truth claim can be made based on the contemplation of an artwork. The core objective is to determine if aesthetic experience holds cognitive value.

In the first chapter, the study seeks to articulate the problem of whether aesthetic experiences, which involve a connoisseur's cognitive engagement with an art object, constitute a form of cognition. This distinction was initially made by Alexander Baumgarten. Baumgarten's concept of aesthetic cognition suggests that aesthetic experiences, although considered an inferior form of cognition, still possess their own truth claims akin to those found in ordinary cognition.

Recently, this issue has garnered the attention of scholars in the realm of aesthetics. The inquiry into the epistemic value of art examines whether artworks can provide knowledge or truth claims beyond mere pleasurable experiences. For example, Sheryle Bergmann argues for the epistemological significance of aesthetic experiences, suggesting that they hold inherent epistemological value and should be included in educational curricula not just for their intrinsic worth but also for their cognitive contributions.

Rasa theory, rooted in the Nāṭyaśāstra, explores the creation of aesthetic experience through the interplay of determinants *(vibhāva),* consequents *(anubhāva),* and transitory states *(vyabhicāribhāva).* Bharata emphasizes the primary role of rasa, or sentiment, in drama, viewing it as essential for the art's impact on the audience. While Bharata acknowledges the instructive potential of dramatic art, he prioritizes the experience of rasa. To examine the cognitive or

epistemological dimensions within Indian philosophy and aesthetics, we have discussed fundamental terminologies related to both disciplines.

The second chapter delves into the nature and conditions of aesthetic experience (rasa), exploring numerous interpretations of rasa with a focus on drama. The chapter is organized into two sections: pre-Abhinavagupta (early rasa theorists) and post-Abhinavagupta (later rasa theorists).

Bhatta Lollata proposed the intensification theory *(utpattivāda),* which suggests that rasa is nothing other than intensified *sthāyibhāva* through the combination of *vibhāva, anubhāva* etc. it primarily exists in the character and secondarily in actor. Śri Śankuka critiqued Lollata's theory by arguing that rasa involves both the aesthetic object and its representation in the spectator's mind. He emphasized the role of imitation *(anumitivāda),* in the actor's performance and the spectator's cognitive process of inferring the emotions portrayed. He introduced the concept of *"chitra-turaga-nyāya"* (the analogy of a painted horse) to explain the dual nature of art as both real and unreal. His interpretation of rasa primarily focuses on the unique ontology of the art object.

Bhatta Nāyaka offered a distinct perspective grounded in the *Sāṅkhya* system. He critiqued previous theories and proposed that rasa cannot be confined to perception, production, or suggestion. Instead, he emphasized the spectator's experience and the essential role of emotions and poetic language in aesthetic enjoyment *(bhuktivāda).* Abhinavagupta criticized Bhatta Nāyaka's perspective, particularly the dualistic nature of his concepts of *bhāvakatva* and *bhojakatva.* He argued that these processes could be reduced to a single concept of *vyanjanā* (suggestion), proposing his revelation theory *(abhivyaktivāda)* of rasa which emphasizes the simultaneous occurrence of *bhāvanā* (generalization) and *bhogikarana* (enjoyment).

In the post-Abhinavagupta section, Dhananjaya is focused on for his specialized interpretations of *sthāyibhāva* and *sāttvikabhāva,* and their importance in the realization of rasa. Though the primary concern is to discuss rasa from the perspective of drama, Mammata and Viśvanātha have given a new turn to the interpretation of rasa, making them unavoidable for the present purpose. Mammata, following Abhinavagupta, interprets the rasa-sūtra in the context of

both drama and poetry, while Viśvanātha maintains that wonder *(camatkāra)* is the underlying principle of rasa. These two theoreticians have dissolved the distinction between drama and poetry, asserting that rasa is the essential element of artistic activity.

The third chapter explores the concept of *pramāṇas* in Indian philosophy, focusing on perception. Indian philosophy emphasizes on the primacy of perception in understanding reality and achieving liberation *(mokṣa).* Knowledge, whether sensory or introspective, is critical to overcome ignorance and suffering. This intersection of aesthetic engagement and philosophical inquiry emphasizes the interconnection of epistemology and metaphysics, eventually serving as a catalyst for self-discovery and transcendence in Indian thinking. This chapter is organized into three sections. First section introduces *pramāṇas,* the means of valid knowledge. The second portion concentrates on *pratyakṣa pramāṇa* as defined by different Indian Philosophical schools such as- Nyāya, Buddhists, Sāṅkhya and Advaita Vedānta. The final section examines Kashmir Śaivism's approach to *pramāṇas,* emphasizing the role of universal consciousness *(Śiva)* as the ultimate knower. It integrates various *pramāṇas* within a framework that values both objective and subjective experiences.

The fourth chapter analyzes the nuances of *rasānubhūti* discussed in the second chapter and *pratyakṣa pramāṇa* discussed in the third chapter, aiming to discern their differences and similarities. Both ordinary cognition and aesthetic experience involve direct perception based on sense-object contact *(indriyārthasannikarṣa).* However, the culmination and nature of these perceptions differ: Ordinary cognition involves perceiving external objects accurately or inaccurately, leading to either valid cognition *(pramā)* or invalid cognition *(apramā).* The state of *jigyāsā nivṛtti,* or the fulfillment of the desire for knowledge, is achieved through direct perception.

Aesthetic experience *(rasānubhava)* involves the mind achieving a state of rest *(samvidviśrānti),* crucial for aesthetic experience. Unlike ordinary cognition, it is not concerned with the correctness of perception but with the enjoyment and emotional resonance of the experience. Ordinary perception can be determinate or indeterminate, whereas aesthetic

perception transcends this dichotomy. The mind perceives and processes the activities of external objects in perceptual cognition.

In aesthetic cognition, the mind experiences its own consciousness, creating a deeper, introspective form of perception. *Alaukika* (transcendental) nature of rasa has been analyzed within the frameworks of *alaukika pratyakṣa*: *sāmānya lakṣaṇa, jñāna lakṣaṇa,* and *yogaja. Sāmānya lakṣaṇa pratyakṣa* involves recognizing common properties *(jāti),* which does not apply to rasa as aesthetic experience does not involve these general concepts. We have compared *sāmānyalakṣaṇa* with *sādhāranikaraṇa. Sādhāranikaraṇa* is central to aesthetic experience, how the emotions are enjoyed in their universal form. Additionally, we have examined why *jñāna lakṣaṇa pratyakṣa* cannot serve as the means of aesthetic experience, given the significant role of memory in *jñāna lakṣaṇa pratyakṣa*, whereas aesthetic experience is devoid of memory. Finally, *yogaja pratyakṣa* is crucial for our discussions. We have attempted to establish the relationship between *nirvitarka samādhi,* one of the levels of *samprajñāta samādhi,* and aesthetic experience. Yoga philosophy discusses two types of *samādhi: samprajñāta* (with mental modifications) and *asamprajñāta* (without mental modifications). *Samprajñāta samādhi* may be a possible category for rasa, as it involves some level of mental activity and awareness, and there are possibilities of *śānta* rasa at this level. *Asamprajñāta samādhi* cannot be applicable to rasa because all mental modifications are ceased in this state, which contradicts the engaged nature of aesthetic experience. Lastly, we have discussed the role of *khyāti* (error) related to perceptual experience and why contemplation of art cannot be erroneous. Instead, there can be *vighna* (obstacle) that prevents the aesthetic experience.

There is no doubt that cognitive and aesthetic experiences are distinct. Aesthetic experience, in particular, has a unique and superior charm, setting it apart from mere perception. To quote Bhāmāha, “Just as a person drinks the most pungent medicine after first tasting the sweet honey, similarly, sastras also become interesting when they are mixed with the rasa in a *kāvya*.”

स्वादुकाव्यरसोन्मिश्रं शास्त्रमप्युपयुज्यते।
प्रथमालीढमधवःपिबन्ति कटुभेषजम्॥[89]

If the ultimate purpose of *śāstra* is to gain knowledge of the highest reality *(parā vidyā)*, then this can also be achieved through *kāvya*. In Indian philosophy, metaphysics and epistemology are interdependent. The question arises: where does aesthetics fit? This thesis has demonstrated that epistemology and aesthetics are not directly related. However, there is a possibility of establishing a connection between aesthetics and metaphysics. As Bhatta Nāyaka elaborates, the nature of rasa is similar to spiritual experience *(brahmānandasahodara).*

Abhinavagupta plays a significant role in connecting metaphysics and aesthetics by introducing *śānta* rasa (the rasa of tranquility) into his list of rasas. This inclusion challenges opponents of poetry and art who consider them useless for philosophical discussions. The introduction of *śānta* rasa argues for the intrinsic philosophical and cognitive value of poetry and art, representing a state of transcendence and ultimate truth that aligns closely with philosophical and metaphysical inquiry. By doing so, Abhinavagupta bridges the gap between aesthetic pleasure and cognitive value, asserting that poetry and art can contribute to philosophical understanding and discussions. This perspective defends against criticisms that dismiss the cognitive and epistemological significance of artistic and poetic works.

Moreover, if the purpose of *pramāṇas* (means of knowledge) is to achieve the highest knowledge *tattvajñānam niḥśreyasādhigamah*[90], meaning "Knowledge is what leads to the attainment of the highest good", then the cognitive value of art becomes evident. Recognizing that aesthetic experiences, through *śānta* rasa, can lead to deeper philosophical insights and the attainment of higher truths, Abhinavagupta underscores the role of art in the pursuit of ultimate knowledge and the highest good. This understanding elevates the epistemological status of artistic and poetic works, demonstrating their significance beyond mere sensory pleasure and placing them firmly within the realm of cognitive and metaphysical value.

[89] Sastri, C. Sankara Rama. (1956). *Kāvyalankāra of Bhāmaha*. Madras: The Sri Balamanorama Press, p. 172, Verse 3.
[90] Vidyabhusana, Satisa Chandra Mahamahopadhyaya. (1913). *The Nyāya Sutras of Gotama*. Allahabad: The Panini Office, Bhubaneswari Asrama, p.1, Verse 1.1.1.

For Abhinavagupta, *śānta* rasa is the fundamental rasa from which other rasas arise, much like waves constantly appearing and disappearing in the sea. The permanent emotional state *(sthāyibhāva)* of *śānta* rasa is *śama*, signifying the cessation of all mental modifications *(cittavṛttis). Śānta* rasa is a state of tranquility where the mind's disturbances are stilled, leading to a serene experience. This state of *śama* is achieved by controlling the mind's reactions to external stimuli and is essential for experiencing deep meditation and inner peace.

Abhinavagupta identifies *śānta* rasa as knowing the truth, closely tied to right knowledge *(śama).* Right knowledge is *tattvajñāna,* the knowledge of the eternal truth, equated with the pure ātman (self), which is pure consciousness and supreme bliss. Abhinavagupta explains that *ātmājñāna* is not merely the knowledge of the self *(ātmānah jñāna),* but the self as knowledge itself *(ātmāiva jñāna).* The ātman in its true condition, as pure consciousness and supreme bliss, is the true experience of *śānta* rasa.

Although the ātman, the *sthāyibhāva* of *śānta*, is always present, *śānta* rasa is not always realized because we do not experience the ātman in its true state. Only when the *ātman* is experienced in its pure condition does it become the *sthāyibhāva* of *śānta*. Abhinavagupta's philosophy connects *śānta* rasa with the realization of the ultimate truth and the attainment of moksha. He argues that equanimity *(śama)* is essential for experiencing *śānta* rasa, which leads to the realization of the self (*ātman*) as pure consciousness and supreme bliss. This state is facilitated by literature and the arts, guiding individuals toward spiritual enlightenment.

Śānta rasa is considered a higher aesthetic experience compared to other rasas. Different individuals may experience art at various levels corresponding to the mental stages *(cittabhumi)* described by Patanjali in the Yogasutras. Although sattva (a state of purity and harmony) is desirable for aesthetic experience, the transformation of the mind (*cittavṛttinirodha*, cessation of mental modifications) may enable an individual to attain higher or metaphysical aesthetic experiences such as *śānta* rasa. According to B.M. Chaturvedi, *śama*, the *sthāyibhāva* of *śānta* rasa, involves the cessation of *cittavṛttis.*

Abhinavagupta's framework allows for aesthetic experiences that parallel yogic perceptions, ranging from ordinary moral judgments to higher insights related to self-knowledge. This comprehensive approach supports the view that aesthetic cognition can encompass various levels of understanding and meaning. In ordinary life, we are aware of the actions we should or should not take, yet human beings are often tempted towards wrongdoing. In the context of the Mahābhārata, Duryodhana expresses this dilemma:

"जानामि धर्मं न च मे प्रवृत्तिः, जानाम्यधर्मं न च मे निवृत्तिः।
केनापि देवेन हृदि स्थितेन, यथानियुक्तोऽस्मि तथा करोमि॥"

"I know what dharma is, but I do not practice it; I know what adharma is, but I do not refrain from it. There is a divinity established in my heart. I do whatever he engages me in."

This indicates that there is a direct cognition of what is right or wrong. We gain certain knowledge about *dharma* or *adharma*. When we hear a sermon on these moral or ethical values, it is indirect, but when these teachings are enacted on stage, direct cognition becomes possible. Therefore, direct cognition of moral, ethical, or spiritual values is achievable through artistic expression.

In this context, Aurobindo mentions a transition of mental states: mind, higher mind, illumined mind, intuitive mind, overmind, and supermind. He has established his aesthetic theory at the level of the overmind, which serves as the correct link between the mind and the supermind because it spiritually executes mental activities. Aurobindo distinguishes between different uses of art: the first and lowest use is purely aesthetic, the second is intellectual or educative, and the third and highest is spiritual. His aesthetics are primarily concerned with the spiritual experience, asserting that spectators must be spiritually awakened to fully appreciate it.

For Aurobindo, the mantra is the true essence. The source of the mantra is not the higher mind, ordinary mind, or illumined mind, but the overmind. In the vital minds, we experience ordinary aesthetic responses to poetry, painting, music, etc. However, at the level of the

overmind, we exclusively appreciate spiritual art. He maintains that beauty is not separate from truth, and there can also be an aesthetic response to truth. “Truth is not merely a dry statement of facts or ideas to something or by the intellect; it can be a splendid discovery, a rapturous revelation, a thing of beauty that is a joy forever. The poet can also be a seeker and lover of truth in expressing the beauty.” Truth and beauty come together or coincide in the state of overmind consciousness. It is especially in the overmind consciousness where everything becomes full of beauty and ānanda (bliss).

Therefore, it may be necessary to recognize a hierarchy in aesthetic experience, which can be influenced by both the content of the art and the mental level of the experiencer. Alongside the content of the aesthetic experience, the spectator’s mental state should be elevated. Thus, in aesthetic experiences, various types of cognition are possible, contingent upon both the content of the art and the mental state of the spectators.

A question arises whether two experiences, aesthetics and spirituality, can occur simultaneously. According to Nyāya philosophy, two experiences cannot occur at the same point in time. However, aesthetics and spirituality are not two distinct experiences; they are intermixed in such a way that they fall into the category of aesthetic experience while also having the nature of spirituality.

Though art imparts a spiritual experience, it is classified as an aesthetic experience because we derive all these types of experiences solely from an art object. Therefore, it is justified to call it aesthetic cognition. However, spiritual experience in art demands a transformed state of mind, without which it is not possible, because human minds always oscillate in worldly affairs. Rasa is relished only when the mind of the spectator is at rest *(samvitvisrānti). Samvitviśrānti* is the state where the 'I' ego is transcended, and one experiences a sense of loss of time and space, completely absorbed in the contemplation of the art object.

Finally, to end with Bharata’s aphorism that dramatic art encompasses all aspects of life.

न तज्ज्ञानं न तच्छिल्पं न सा विद्या न सा कला ।
नासौ योगो न तत्कर्म नाट्येऽस्मिन् यन्न दृश्यते ॥

"There is no wise maxim, no learning, no art or craft, no device, no action that is not found in the drama *(nāṭya)*."[91]

[91] Ghosh, Manmohan. (1950). *The Nāṭyasāstra of Bharat Muni,* Calcutta: The Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal,verse 1.116.

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अध्येता संगम – 2019

31 मार्च से 2 अप्रैल 2019

प्रमाण – पत्र

श्री/सुश्री/डॉ0 राश्मि नायक .....कनिष्ठ/वरिष्ठ/सामान्य ने भारतीय दार्शनिक अनुसंधान परिषद् द्वारा शैक्षणिक केन्द्र, लखनऊ में आयोजित अध्येता-संगम – 2019 में भाग लेकर अपने शोध विषय से संबंधित शोधपत्र ..... प्रस्तुत किया।

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Nature of Mind in Indian Philosophy

Mrs. Rashmi Nayak*

Abstract

This paper seeks to explore the nature of mind in Indian philosophy. In Indian philosophy the concept of the mind is addressed in every philosophical system.Most of the human problems are mental and that the only therapy to solve them is mental discipline. The mind is the finest of all human instruments that serves one in attaining one's goals. It is the mind that leads a person to bondage or to liberation. Generally, liberation is nothing but self-realization. Self in its true nature is pure consciousness. Due to the modification of mind, it falls in bondage. This self-realization is precisely the purification of mind and this purification means promoting the mind (the individual ego) to pure consciousness.

Key words-: Manas, cittavrtti, sense-organ, Sattvika, Yoga etc.

Introduction

The word literal meaning of manas or mind is "measuring"[1]. It is a human activity used to measure one's own wisdom, pleasures etc. The eye, ear, nose, tongue and skinare our five sensory organs. Theseorgans are external. However, mind is an internal organ.Generally, mind has two states- conscious and unconscious. If it is unconscious, we are unable to focus on a particular thing. As an illustration,when we study, our mind wanders and occupies different places. We are unable to concentrate on our studies. According to the concept of Yoga, conscious states associated with *sāttvika* states, whereas unconscious states with *tamas* and *rajas*. Our mental states will be altered because of the predominance of *rājasika* and *tāmasika* states,

Because of our minds, we have a need for all things material. Let's say, for instance, that I own a scooter but I'm not thrilled with it. I need an automobile once more. My desire keeps growing and won't stop here. We shall suffer when we are unable to obtain that item. So how can we break free from that thing in our minds? The most vital component of a human is their mind. Everything may be understood if the mind is understood. The mind can control the external sense-organs.There is still a controversy on regarding mind is a sense organ or not. Some systems like- Nyāya, Sānkhya, Mimāmsa etc accepts mind is a sense organ whereas Vedanta considers mind is not as sense organ. For this reason, each and every schools of Indian Philosophy has tried to understand the nature of mind. Let us discuss what is the nature and function of mind in the schools of Indian philosophy like Nyāya, Sānkhya, Yoga, Advaita etc.

Nyāya-Vaisesika Conception of Mind

The Nyāya-Vaisesika say that the mind, or manas, is a sense, just like the senses of taste, smell, etc. The Nyāya-Vaisesika believes that the mind is an eternal substance that is distinct from physical substances. In contrast to the external senses, the mind is non-physical *(abhautika)*, meaning that none of the components of the physical world—earth, water, etc.—make up its composition. It is not restricted to the experience of any single class of objects, nor, like the external senses, does it possess any particular quality of the physical elements. In addition, Nyaya defines mind *(mānas)* as the internal organ that senses the soul's attributes, such as joy *(sukha)*, suffering *(dukkha)*, and so on. Internal perception is dependent on the

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internal sense known as *manas,* just as external perception is dependent on the external senses.

For an object to be perceived, it must come into contact with its respective sense organ. Subjective realities like pleasure, pain, desire, aversion, and the like are all perceived by us. Since these experiences occur even in the absence of the senses of sight, hearing, etc., they cannot be the result of these senses. In order to generate internal impressions, an internal sense is therefore required. Another condition of external perception is the mind. Only when an object is in mental contact can the exterior senses perceive it. The mind must focus on an object through the senses in order to perceive it. Even if we are physically in contact with objects, we do not experience them as such while we are distracted. The mind is a state of such subjectivestates and processes as doubt and dream, memory and inference, etc.as well.

That manas or the mind is and atomic follows the order of succession among our cognitions. At any moment of our waking life various objects are acting upon our body. All the external senses may thus be in contact with their objects at the same time. However, humans are not capable of having much cognition at once. Therefore, it follows that in order for the senses of taste, smell, and so on to form cognitions, they must come into contact with an interior organ. Since the mind is incapable of interacting with more than one item at once, it lacks both extension and magnitude. If the mind were an extended organ, it would have had simultaneous contact with more senses than one and we could have many perceptions at one and the same time. This being not the case, we are to say that the mind is atomic. (Chatterjee, 1939)

Nyāya claims the existence of mind is an essential need for perception. The conjunction of soul with the mind, the mind with the sense organs and the sense organs with the object is necessary before one can have knowledge. Nyāya focuses on the significance of mind. Not only Nyāyabut other schools also accept mind is an internal organ.

Sānkhya Conception of Mind

In the Sānkhya and Mimāmsā systems also mind is treated as an internal sense. The Sānkhya considers it to be an unconscious product of subtle matter. Mind possesses the nature of both the sensory organ and motor organ. It is the deliberative principle, and is also called a sense organ since it possesses properties common to the sense organs. Its multifariousness and also its external diversities are owing to special modifications of the attributes. Among the eleven sense-organs, the mind possesses the characteristics of both , i.e., it is an organ of knowledge, and also is an organ of action in as much as sensory organs like the eye and the rest and the motor organs like the speech and the rest operate on their respective objects only when the mind cooperates with them. That means cognition or action is possible only when the mind is operative in conjunction with the organ and receives the impression.(Virupakshananda, 2012)

Yoga Conception of Mind

Yoga is mainly a psychological philosophy. It might be described as an extensive and critical study of the mind. In order to reach the greatest state *(Samadhi),* mental discipline is both a science and an art. Therefore, in order to be free from the attachment of the mind, one must understand the nature, structure, and function of the mind.

The modifications of mind *(cittavṛttis)*

The mind *(citta)* operates through the *(vṛttis)* modifications or processes. These *vṛttis*are cognitional, emotional etc. these *vṛttis*are innumerable, uncountable. Because of these *vṛttis*there is suffering. There are five kinds of modification of *citta*- right cognition *(pramāna),* wrong cognition *(viparyāya),* verbal cognition or imagination *(vikalpa),* sleep

(nidra) and memory *(smriti)*. There are three kinds of right cognition i.e., *pratyaksa*, *anumāna* and *sabda*. *Viparyaya*is the wrong cognition of objects, assume the object what it is not. *Vikalpa* is like imaginary ideas which actually not corresponds in reality i.e., sky flower, unicorn etc. *Nidra* is the stage due to the dominance of *tamas* in *citta*. It is absence of cognition. *Smriti* is the reproduction of past experiences through the impressions left behind.According to *Patanjali, yoga* is the restraint of mental modification. (*Yogascittavrttinirodhah)*[2] Then the question is what mental modification *(cittavrtti)* is*?* Whenever we have an experience, the mind modifies. Restraint all mental modifications means stop all the experiences happens to mind. Consequently, the mind does not exist because it exists only insofar as it is able to operate. Where is the mind when we shut off all of its operations? Nothing is left of the mind. Therefore, in his third sutra, Patanjali clarified that "then the staying of the perceiver in his real self." *(Tada drastuhsvarupevavasthanam)*.The *purusa* establishes his own essence, that is, pure consciousness, when all mental operations stop. Consciousness otherwise all the time it identifies with the *cittavrttis* when *cittavrtti* stops and the mind stops. Hence consciousness for the first time established itself in its own nature. When the mind becomes free of sensations then the knower, the known and knowledge of things begin to be reflected as if in a pure clear crystal, and the mind becomes one with whatever is presented to it. This is called object-directed Samadhi

(Ksinavrtterabhijatasyevamanergrahitrgrahanagrahyesutatsthatadanjanatasamapatti h).[3]

Now the important question is how to change the vrttis of mind? Patanjali speaks of five states *(chittabhumi)* of the mind i.e., *kṣipta*(distracted), *mudha* (infatuated), *vikṣipta*(occasionally steady), *ekāgra*(one-pointed) and *niruddha* (restrained).

Ksipta: At this point, *rajas* dominate the mind. As a result, the *citta (*thought) is highly disturbed and fixated on material things. The mind is completely erratic; constantly jumping about from one thing to another.This is how a "normal" person in the world would be awake. For instance, the mind is addicted to wealth, power, alcohol, etc. *Mudha*: At this point, *tamas* dominates the mind. Our acts are influenced by our fury and aggressive responses. Its ability to discriminate between good and wrong is diminished. Here, the lack of awareness of the situation symbolizes a condition of sleep or various types of stupor.

At the *viksipta* stage, the *sattva guna* rules over the other *gunas*. At this point, the mind starts to focus somewhat, yet its old patterns keep pulling it away from *sattva.* Here, yoga is practiced and the *citta* seeks to reach God, the ultimate soul. *Rajas* and *tamas* do not want to let go, but *sattva* has begun to make its presence felt.

Ekāgra: At this point, pure *sattva* rules the mind. *Citta* is centred on a single object and free from all other objects. *Citta* is immobile because of the predominance of *sattva*. This is known as *samprajñātaSamādhi*.

Niruddha- here mind has stopped all its mental functioning. Everything we own has divorced from us. We are to be a yogin. It is under the influence of pure *sattva.*The restrained mind under the influence of pure *sattva* arrests all mental modifications.

All our worldly objects detached from us. Complete cessation of mental modifications *(samādhi)* is possible only in the last two stages-*ekāgra and niruddha*. *Samādhi* is two types- *samprajñāta* (conscious) and *asamprajñāta*(superconscious). *Samprajñātasamādhi* is of four typesaccording to the different objects of contemplation. The

first is *savitarka,* which occurs when the mind is focused on any gross physical objects of the external world i.e., image of a God or Goddess. Another is focuses on subtle objects like the *tanmātra* is called *savicāra*. The third one is concentrated on the subtler objects like sense organs is *sānanda* and the last kind of *samprajñāta samadhi* is *sasmitasamādhi* in which concentration is on the ego substance with which the self is ordinarily identified. *Samprajñātasamādhi* is also called *sabijasamādhi* because they contain seeds of bondage. They are devoid of discriminative knowledge which dispels false knowledge.

Asamprajñāta samadhi is called *nirbijasamādhi* because it is objectless and devoid of ignorance *(avidyā)* which is the seed of bondage. In this *samādhi* where discriminative knowledge*(vivekajñāna)* is possible. In *samprajñātasamādhi*, I-ness is there but in *asamprajñāta*it is removed. These *samadhis* are possible only because of *sāttvika*state of mind.

Vedānta Conception of Mind

The Vedāntaview of the mind is different from those of the other systems. According to it, manas are the function *(vrtti)* of the *antahkarana* that is relevant when there is uncertainty. The same *antahkarana* is known by*buddhi, ahamkara* and *citta*, according as it functions respectively in the states of decision *(niscaya),* conceit *(garva)* and recollection *(smarana).*In Advaita Vedānta, mind (*antahkarana)*is like everything, a product of māyā. The Self*(Brahaman)* which is neither mind nor matter is the ground of both mental and physical states of existences. Mind is that which has a locus in time and space, whereas consciousness is not limited by time and space. Mind, like matter, is only an appearance of consciousness. The mind is not an *indriya,* or sense, whose existence is demonstrated by deduction from the experience of pain, pleasure, etc. Direct knowledge or perception is not due to sense-object contact. We have a direct perception of the mind when we perceive the qualities of pleasure, pain, etc., in it. Here, it should be noted that the idea that the mind is a sense is unacceptable. Those who consider the mind to be an internal sense reject the idea that it is any sort of physical *(bhautika)* entity. As a result, the mind as a sense cannot be a physiological device like the brain or any component that is associated with conscious thought.

Conclusion

From the above, it can be concluded that the mind plays very significant role in Indian Philosophy. Every system accepts mind is an internal organ but there is different view on whether it is sense organ or not. Vedanta does not consider mind as a sense organ. Nyāya-vaisesika holds mind is an atomic state more than one cognition is not possible, because mind can concentrate only one object at one point of time. Whereas Sānkhya maintains at the same time mind can attain several types of knowledge. According to Sānkhya,Self*(purusa)* is never in bondage. It is eternally pure and liberated. The problem is that it wrongly identifies itself with mental modes; hence the liberation depends on the function of mind.When the mind is in the right state that means in *sāttvika* then the self realizes its intrinsic nature. All the changes occur in mind only. Yoga philosophy minutely focuses on all the actions, reactions of mind. Yoga can bring that mind from its wanderings in the past and future, it can come to the present moment. The Mind is a central or chief sense organ. It is the mind which makes the other five sense organs effective.If mind be always in the present moment, then we can focus on our practical things, so that we can maintain happy and healthy life.

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Perception as a Means of Acquisition of Knowledge

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This paper aims to explore the process of acquisition of knowledgethrough perception. It is well known fact that all individual being have natural inclination to unravel the truth of Ultimate Reality. To do this one must possess knowledge. For acquiring knowledge four aspects are needed i.e., pramata(subject), prameya (object), pramana (means) and prama(valid knowledge). There are six types of pramānasi.e. ,perception (pratyaksa), inference (anumāna),comparison(upamāna), verbal testimony(sabda), postulation(arthāpati) and non-perception(anupalabdhi).I will discuss here the relation of pramānas with pramāta, prameya and pramā and as regards the sources of valid cognition or knowledge, all the systems of Indian philosophy have emphasized perception. Hence, I shall focus on perception with special reference to Nyaya point of view. The knowledge as outcome of conjunction of senses and objects is taken as PratyakshaPramana. It is doubtless and definite. It may be Laukika(ordinary) or Alaukika (extraordinary). Ordinary is further divided in to Savikalpaka(determinate) and Nirvikalpaka (indeterminate). Ordinary determinate is well recognized by everyone or it can be memorial but indeterminate is immediate or recent cognition.

***Keywords**:* Means; Cognition; Perception, Inference, Validity and Invalidity, Determinate and Indeterminate.

Introduction :

Every system of Indian philosophy explicitly concerns with epistemology i.e., the theory of knowledge. Through knowledge we can remove the veil of ignorance and achieve the ultimate reality/ realize our own self. Most of the Indian philosophers conceived that liberation *(mokṣa),* as the highest good. Such liberation is considered worth pursuing because worldly life is widely accepted to be suffering *(duḥkha).* The common philosophical strategy is to find causal conditions of suffering and to overcome it. One of the prominent causal conditions of our entanglement in the cycle of

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suffering is ignorance. Consequently, the acquisition of knowledge is the path of liberation to get rid of ignorance.

Then naturally many technical epistemological problems arise due to the important relations between knowledge and achievement of the highest good. The questions like what is knowledge and how it is acquired? What are its sources? What are their objects? Such questions make Indian philosophers develop the theory of *prāmānyavāda,* which is linked to the nature and sources of knowledge. The theory of *pramāna* is the pivot of the *Nyāya*system and in fact, it is often described as *Pramāna-sāstra*. MaharsiGotama, the founder of this system claimed that,

तत्त्वज्ञानंनिह्स्रेयसधिगमह्

"Knowledge is what leads to the attainment of the highest good."

There are four aspects in the process of knowledge inquiry i.e.,*pramātā (the knower), prameya (the known object), pramāma (the instrument of knowledge) and pramā (valid knowledge) are constitute the reality.*

Pramātā- it is the subject or knower that means the person who is grasping the object. The self is the knower, which knows the object through the *pramānas*, acts upon them, and experiences fruits of its action. One who obtains true knowledge. The soul *(atma)*, the doer *(karta)* or the person who obtains this true knowledge is called *pramātā.* It desires to attain pleasant objects and avoid painful objects known through *pramānas*, acts for their attainment or rejection, and gets fruits or its efforts. A person in the quest of *pramā* who experiences the true knowledge *(pramā)* of the object *(prameya).*

Prameya- it is the object or reality i.e.; the thing is grasped by the subject. It means the object of knowledge. The *prameyas* are the knowables, cognizable entities that constitute the world. Since knowledge is obtained from each and everything in this universe, *prameya* is said to be innumerable. For example- as per *Samkhya darsana, prameya* are the 25 principles of creation. As per Ayurveda, the *Tridosas, Trimala, Saptadhatu, Pancamahabhutas, Triguna*etc. are considered as *Prameya*.

Pramāna is that by which *pramā*or the valid knowledge is acquired. It is the means of knowing anything truly. It gives us true knowledge. This is the tool or means utilized for obtaining true knowledge. *Pramāna* is the collocation of conditions, which is the immediate antecedent of the production of valid knowledge. There

are four *pramānas* according to Nyaya, viz., perception, inference, comparison and testimony. A *pramāna* provides both an authoritative source for making a knowledge claim and a means for knowledge. In other words, a *pramāna*has a dual character: both evidential and causal. It provides evidence or justification for regarding a cognitive episode as a knowledge episode, but it is also supposed to be the most effective causal route to such an episode.

Lastly, *pramā* is valid knowledge *(yathārthanubhava),* which means obtaining knowledge. For example- identifying a rope as a rope and not as a snake. The true, as it is and wholesome experience is *pramā.* A *pramā* is a knowledge episode and the relation between such a cognitive episode and its object *(prameya)* is structured by the *pramānas*. Thus, the theory of *pramānas* becomes both a theory of epistemic justification and a metaphysical theory of the causal requirements necessary for the validity of such justification. The *pramānas* are not simply justification procedures, but also those methods that match the causal chains with the justification chains so as to validate knowledge claims. All the four factors, i.e., *pramā, prameya, pramāta and pramāna* plays an important role in perception of true knowledge.

All schools of Indian philosophy accepted that truth is a distinct characteristic of knowledge episodes *(pramā).* But the central problem arises with the theory of apprehension of truth *(prāmānyavāda).* Different schools address the issue in different manner such as whether the truth of a cognition is apprehended intrinsically *(svatah)* or extrinsically *(paratha):* in other words, whether a cognition and its truth are apprehended together, or whether it's only through a second cognition that one apprehends the truth of the first cognition. The philosophical schools like *Mimāṁsā, Advaita and Sānkhya* as all supporters of some variant of the theory of intrinsic truth apprehension *(svatahprāmānyavāda)* and Nyaya and the Buddhists as both supporters of the theory of extrinsic truth apprehension *(parathaprāmānyavāda)*. According to intrinsic theorists *(svatahprāmānyavādi),* a cognition as such is true or apprehended as true, no criterion can prove its truth. But extrinsic theorists *(paratahprāmānyavādi)* hold the opposite view that no cognition is true on its own account. Nyaya holds that the truth of a cognition depends upon its correspondence to reality.

According to Indian philosophy, there are six sources of valid knowledge i.e., perception (pratyaksa), inference (anumāna),

comparison (upamāna), testimony (sabda), postulation (arthāpati) and non-perception (anupalabdhi). *Chārvāk* accepts *pratyakṣa*, *Buddhists* and *vaisesikas* accept two *pramānas- pratyakṣa* and *anumāna*. *Jaina* and *sāṁkhyadarsana* accept three *pramānas- pratyakṣa, anumāna, and sabda. Nyāya* accepts four *pramānas- pratyakṣa, anumāna, upamāna,* and *sabda. Prabhākaramimāṁsā* accepts *arthāpati*with these four. *Advaita Vedanta* and *Bhatta Mimāṁsā* accept all six. All these schools accept different *pramānas* depending on their metaphysics. If one *pramāna* is not sufficient, then move to second *pramāna* to defend their knowledge claim. Epistemology is closely related to metaphysics. Every school of philosophy envisages a set of metaphysical doctrines and develops a system of epistemology to justify it. There are two important theories such as *pramāna-samplava* and *pramāna-vyavasthā*, established by the Naiyayikas and the Buddhists respectively. The issue is that whether the same object can be grasped by the one means of cognition or more than one or each mean has its own specific knowledge? Buddhism dwells with *pramana-vyavastha*, is that each pramana has its own exclusive and distinct jurisdiction. In contrast, the Naiyayikas accepted *pramana-samplava*, which means that the same object can be grasped by more than one *pramana*under various circumstances.

Perception (pratyaksa) in Nyaya Philosophy

All Indian epistemologists agreed that perception *(pratyakṣa)* is the most fundamental of *pramāna.* The literal meaning of perception is *pratyakṣa*. The word *pratyakṣa*is combined of two words *prati*and *akṣa.* So *prati* means to, before, near and *akṣa* means sense organs. Therefore, the word *pratyakṣa* means the function of each of the sense organs in respect to their appropriate objects. So, in common parlance it has come to mean "present to or before the eyes or any other sense organ," and hence "direct", "immediate" etc. it is contrasted with the word *paroksa*, which means "away from the eye or any object sense", "mediate", "indirect" etc. Perception means what we directly perceive by our sense organs i.e., eye, ear, nose, tongue, and skin. Perception is the contact of sense organ with the object, which is true or unerring. For example- the perception of the table before me is due to the contact of my eyes with the table, and I am confirming that the object is a table. Perception means how we see the world and relate to everything around us. It is the awareness of information. When our sense organs interact with reality of object, then perception takes place. It plays a significant role in our daily life. Because in our daily life what are perceiving, seeing that are the

only perception. Out of these six sources of knowledge, perception (pratyaksa) forms a direct and immediate process of knowledge, the rest five represent indirect and mediate processes. Indian theories accord primacy to perception as a knowledge-gathering instrument because all the mediate processes are based on perception at some stage or the other.

According to Vatsayana, *"sarvachaiyampramitihpratyaksapara"*[2], that means all valid knowledge depends upon direct experience.Perception is the most important; because when a man seeks the knowledge of a certain thing, if he is told of it by a trustworthy person, and thereby he has the verbal cognition of the thing, there is still a desire in his mind to ratify his information by means of inference through particular indicative features; and even after he has been able to get at the inferential knowledge of the thing, he is still desirous of actually seeing the thing with his eyes; but when he has once perceived the thing directly, his desires are at rest, and he does not seek for any other kind of knowledge. For instance- in the case of fire, when a trustworthy person says there is fire at such and such a place, we have the cognition of fire by means of word, from the distance we see smoke, we infer from this the existence of fire but still there is an inquisitive to directly perceive it. When we go to the particular place and directly see the fire. In this case it is found that only perception that fully satisfies the inquisitive mind.

Broadly, there are two kinds of knowledge i.e., memory or representational *(smriti)* and apprehension or presentational knowledge *(anubhava).* Each of the two can be valid *(yathārtha)* and invalid *(ayathārtha).*The Sanskrit word jnana stands for all kinds of cognition irrespective of the question of true and falsehood. But the word *pramā* is used to designate only a true cognition *(yathārthajñāna)* as distinct from a false one. Valid presentative knowledge is called *pramā* which is also known as *yathārthanubhava*. Invalid presentative knowledge is called *apramā i.e., ayathārthanubhava.* Valid apprehension is that when the object acquired as it is, for ex- one apprehends the silver as silver that is *pramā.* Invalid apprehension is that when one apprehends a thing as silver but it is not silver, it is known as *apramā.* According to Nyāya darshan, there are four types of knowledge come under *pramā* i.e., *pratyakṣa, anumāna, upamāna*and*shabda* whereas *apramā* is divided into also four types i.e., memory (smriti), doubt *(saṁsaya)*, error *(bhrama or viparyāya)* and hypothetical reasoning (*tarka).*

The Nyaya claims that there are both a set of positive and a set of negative causal conditions of perception. The perceiver (the self), the internal sense-organ(manas), the external sense-organs such as the eyes, the objects of perception, the sense-object contact etc., are positive causal conditions. As regards negative causal conditions, the Samkhya philosophers have mentioned the following, soe of which have been accepted but the Nyaya philosophers:

A. Not being too far *(atiduratabhava),*
B. Not being too close *(atisamipyabhava)*
C. Absence of loss of sense-organs, such as deafness, blindness, etc., *(indriyanasabhava)*
D. Not being inattentive *(mano'navasthanabhava)*
E. Not being too subtle *(suksmabhava)*
F. Not having intervening objects such as wall, screen etc *(vyavadhahabhava*)
G. Not being overshadowed (or covered) by a more powerful object *(abhibhavabhava),* e.g., during the day stars are not visible as they are overshadowed by the rays of the sun.
H. Not being mixed up with similar objects *(samanabhiharabhava),* e.g., rain water cannot be perceived in a lake or a river separately as it is mixed up with similar objects.

Gautama defines perception as the non-erroneous cognition produced by the intercourse of the sense organs with the objects, not associated with any name, and well defined.

[3]*"इन्द्रियार्थसन्निकर्षोत्पन्नम्ज्ञानम्अव्यपदेस्यम्अव्यभिचरिव्यवसायात्मकम्प्रत्यक्सम्"*

"To understand the definition, we should at first have to understand the meanings of the words *"indriya", "artha", "sannikarsa", "avyapadesya", "avyabhicāri" and "vyavasāyātmak". Naiyāyikas* admit that we have six sense organs- eye, ear, nose, tongue, skin and mind. The first five are called external organs, while the rest is called internal organ. We perceive the external world with the help of external organs and by mind we perceive our internal states like pleasure, pain etc. The term *"artha"* means an external object. According to the *Naiyāyikas,* every external organ has its own object. *"Sannikarsa"* means relation. The relation of sense organ with its object is called *sannikarsa. "Avyapadesya"* means *"asabda"* or un-definable by words i.e., indeterminate perception. *"Avyabhicāri"* means infallible. Perceptual knowledge must be infallible. *"Vyavasāyātmaka"* means certainty. There should be certainty in perception." It is produced by the intercourse of a present object with the external sense organs, their

conjunction with manas, and its conjunction with the self. The sense organs are directed by manas, which are directed by the self. Conjunction of the sense-organs with manas and conjunction of manas with the self are the general cause of perception. The intercourse of a sense organ with an object is a special cause of perception.

Ordinary perception is of two types- internal (*mānas*) and external (*bāhya*). In internal perception, mind plays a major role. Mind comes into contact with the internal stages and processes like- pleasure, pain, cognition, and conation. In external perception, when sense organs like- eye, ear, nose, tongue, skin contact with their respective objects i.e. sight, sound, Smell, taste and touch respectively, then the perception like visual, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, tactual.

In addition to the above six kinds of intercourse, which are called ordinary intercourse *(laukikasannikarsa)*, the Neo-Nayāyikas recognize three other kinds of extra-ordinary intercourse *(alaukika-sannikarsa)* between the sense-organs and their objects.

Extra-ordinary perception is of three kinds- *sāmānyalakṣana, jñānalakṣana,* and *yogaja. Sāmānyalakṣana* perception is the perception of general. It is the perception of universal object even if we perceive a particular object of that class. For example- when we perceive an individual horse, we also perceive a universal horseness in that particular horse. We perceive a horse by our ordinary perception. But when we perceive universal horseness in that particular object that is by our extraordinary perception. By perceiving only one object then we also perceive the each and every object in that class. That is *sāmānyalakṣana*perception.

Jñānalaksana perception is the perception of an object through the previous knowledge of an object. In this perception, the respective sense organ is not in contact with the object. The object is not directly present to our sense organs but by the past memory. For example- from distance we see a rose and say I saw a fragrance rose. How can be fragrance perceive by eye. It is the production of nose. By eye we can only perceive. In past we already perceived a rose and smelled its fragrance. Now when we perceive that rose from distance and we also aware of that fragrance because of past memory. *Yogaja* perception is a type of intuitive perception. Here we can achieve highest stage of perception by meditation.

There are two stages in the perception- first is called indeterminate *(nirvikalpaka*) and second is determinate

(savikalpaka). Perception which is not clear, without any name (*avyapadesya*), that is indeterminate perception. And the perception which is clearly defined (*vyavasāyātmaka)* that is determinate perception. All perception is determinate but initially it is presupposed by an earlier stage that is indeterminate perception. In *nirvikalpakapratyaksa*, we immediately perceive something and we ignore about the qualities, name and we cannot analyze, synthesize or discriminate it with others. In that stage, we are just aware of the color, shape and size of that object. But in *savikalpaka* perception, we know what the particular object is and we can relate, discriminate it with other, we know the name, qualities of that object.

Take for example- in a distant place, we see there is a white moving object, we don't know what it is. But when we go near by the object then it is a cow.

Another example- we are familiar with the rope-snake example that is- we see in dusk a straight something lying on the road. And find out by going near that it is a rope.

The former stage is indeterminate and the later stage is determinate perception. There is no feature, no qualities and purely bare object in indeterminate perception. In determinate perception, we relate the substance with it attributes, object with it qualities. In our mental state, we can separate indeterminate from determinate perception not in real state.

Conclusion :

As we saw from the above discussion that we need four aspects of knowledge for a knowledge inquiry. The process of knowledge will be incomplete from the lack of any of these four aspects. We saw that the senses are like doorkeepers which bring knowledge of the outer world to the mind. Not all things in this universe are grasped straightway by the five senses – of touch, smell, taste, hearing, and sight. There are so many things which we know indirectly, without the direct aid of the senses. Hindu sages have classified all such means of valid knowledge into six broad groups. These are called *Pramānas. Pramānas* are valid means of knowledge. The knowledge that we gain through all these means should be full proof. The perceptual process plays a foundational role in giving us cognition. Perception is the primary causal way of knowing *(pramāna)* since other *pramānas* are somehow dependent on it. The primary reason for knowing is perception because other *pramānas* are dependent on it anyway.

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[2]Nyayasutra, Vatsyayanabhasya, 1,1,3
[3](Nyaya-sutra,1.1,4)

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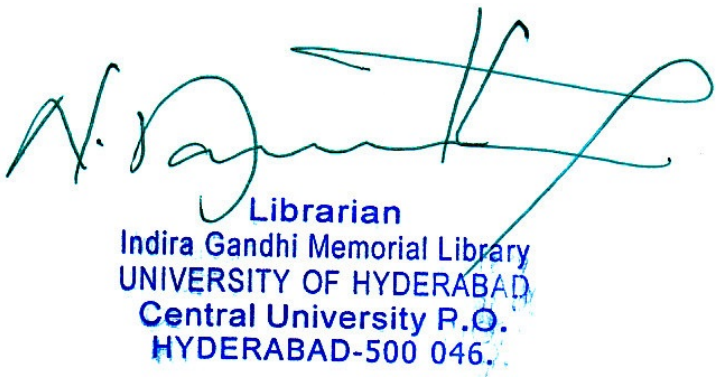
An Analysis of Aesthetic Cognition with Reference to Rasa Theory

by RASHMI NAYAK



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