Abhinavagupta and S.T. Coleridge

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In India emphasis was always laid on the main purpose of education, which was moral. For imparting moral education words may be used in three ways according to ancient Hindu critics. They may be used as the master's dictation or the friend's advice or the beloved's sweet persuasion. These three ways of using words are respectively employed in the three branches of Sanskrit literature, viz, Vedas, Purāṇas, and Kāvyas. Sciences and philosophies are Vedāṅgas, 'the limbs of the Vedas'. They were made subservient to the moral purpose of learning. In all these three ways of imparting education the purpose was the same, namely, to make man perfect in thought, feeling and behavior. Access to the Vedas is rightly denied to all and sundry, for a life of rigorous self-sacrifice and moral discipline, which is the first requisite for admission to a Vedic course of study, is beyond the capacity and perseverance of ordinary men. Purāṇas do not appeal to all. Poetry, which in its best form is dramatic, has universal appeal because of the audio-visual aid of theatrical performance. It holds the spectator in its grip with such a transcendental charm that he can hardly escape its effect. A kind of pleasure is generated in his heart which is the same as the end of all education. It is the peculiarity of a dramatic presentation that it makes this ideal pleasure its means also. This pleasure is named *rasa* in Sanskrit poetics. It is the most important concept in Sanskrit literary criticism. Bharata points out that *rasa* is the very root of poetic feelings.[1] It is impossible to talk of anything regarding poetry or drama without first explaining *rasa*.[2] Ancient Indian critics discuss literature mainly from the viewpoint of the reader or the spectator. How it affects people is their main concern. It is only by the way that they explain how it is created. So far as the essence of literature is concerned it is one and the same whether we discuss it from the creative or the appreciative standpoint.[3] *Rasa* is equated with the essence of the highest absolute reality.[4] The same is the end of poesy or fine arts in general.[5]

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1 *Yathā bījād bhaved vṛkṣo vṛkṣāt puṣpam phalaṁ yathā*,
ṭathā mūlaṁ rasāh sarve teṣu bhāvā vyavasthitāḥ.
Nāṭya-Śāstra, I 294.

2 *Na hi rasādṛte kaścid arthaḥ pravartate*. Ibid., I 272.

3 Mark the singular in the following line of *Locana*, verse 1:

Some Indian critics challenge the high claim of *rasa* in poetry. But they limit the scope of poetics by their theories. They can hardly explain the use of poetry or the use of criticism in the comprehensive scheme of education unanimously accepted by Indian writers of different branches of learning. All of them agree that there are four aims in life–two divine and two mundane. The most important aim of life is *mokṣa*, or the attainment of perfect knowledge and bliss, and its means is *dharma*, or purity of thought, feeling and action. *Kāma*, or the attainment of worldly desires, and its means, *artha*, or money, also become proper aims of life when they do not go against *dharma* and thus do not obstruct the realization of perfect wisdom and happiness that *mokṣa* is. The *vakrokti* or *alankāra* school or the *rīti* school of poetry can hardly show that poetry can lead us to attain these aims on the basis of their theories. They have to accept these recognized aims as borrowed concepts in poetics.

Almost a thousand years have gone by since Abhinavagupta wrote in Kashmir. There has been hardly a challenge to his interpretation of Bharata and Ānandavardhana. The present essay will be confined to the exposition of *rasa* and will show its points of similarity with and superiority to the Coleridgean analysis of the essence of poetry. The main purpose of the essay is to show that these two writers have the same philosophical standpoint and the same purpose, and agree even in most of the details. On the whole, Abhinava is more correct. Coleridge did not complete his work, but Abhinava presents a complete and comprehensive analysis.

II

We should know something of Coleridgean poetics before we speak further of the Indian theory of *rasa*. Studying poetry and analyzing the root cause of its creation and appreciation, Coleridge studies almost everything—thing and thought, phenomena and

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Sarasvatyās tattvaṁ kavi-sahṛdayākhyaṁ vijayate.

Or the following line of *Abhinavabhāratī*, I 294:

Kavir hi sāmājika-tulya eva.

[4] *Raso vai saḥ*, *Taittirīyopaniṣad*.

[5] *Vākyaṁ rasātmakam kāvyam* / *Sāhityadarpaṇa*.

noumena, knowing, feeling and willing, word and meaning, existence and consciousness, God and Truth and Joy; and found in the key concept of the infinite eternal self-consciousness, "I AM I," an explanation of all kinds of knowing faculties and knowable objects. His main thesis is based on the Pythagorean principle that Truth is a unity of subject and object, and that object is ultimately a duplicate of the subject and does not essentially differ from it, for totally dissimilar things can never unite. Knowing in every form is a unity of subject and object. His contribution to poetics is an analysis of both the poem and the poetic experience as a reconciliation of opposites, which, he said, was the work of "Esemplastic Imagination," an intermediate faculty of the mind below the infinite Reason and above the finite Understanding. He contrasted the co-adunative, modifying, shaping power of Imagination with the aggregative, associative faculty of Fancy, and pointed out that true poetry was the product of Imagination as false one was that of Fancy. He judged the merit of a poem by referring it to the mental faculty or source from which the pleasure given by it was derived. Thus, while in his theory of the reconciliation of opposites he is a Pythagorean and a Platonist, in his concept of Imagination he is a Kantian, for it was Kant from whom he learnt the art of explaining a thing with reference to the mental faculty involved in knowing it. Similarly, in his judging the merit of a poem from the kind of pleasure derived from it he had a great predecessor, Longinus, though he did not speak of his influence.

Another great contribution of Coleridge is a comprehensive scheme of total education—his science of method. He clearly distinguished three stages of mental development and three mental disciplines. The lowest discipline is that provided by the physical sciences, which study things in terms of the causal relation. The highest discipline is that of religion and philosophy, which sees everything in relation to the Absolute Truth and explains it as an aspect of the infinite, eternal, spiritual Reality. It is an esemplastic relation. Poetry holds a middle position between these two and there lies the secret of its cathartic quality. Coleridge did not speak of catharsis as he spoke of imitation, but he considered poetry as the work of the pure mind and spoke of the purification by poetry.

Poetry has a definite place in man's real education. The essential characteristic of education is continuous progression. The highest aim of education, the chief goal of life, its perfection, is to attain perfect wisdom, where knowing is a kind of being one with the eternal Reality itself. To know is to be in every case. All types of existence and all types of experience are mere repetition of the self-evident self-consciousness, but we are not conscious of the unity of subject and object in ordinary perception. Even in scientific investigation, the value of the mental initiative, which is the prior half of the knowledge discovered, cannot be denied. It is a pointer to the fact that reality is more subjective than objective, *a priori* first, and *a*

posteriori later. While ordinary perceptions and empirical sciences cannot do without the assumption of the *a priori* subjective reality, they emphasize the *a posteriori* aspect of knowledge so much that their criterion of the reality of any experience is objective verification only. But such a criterion is defective, for it proves only the objectivity of a thing, not its reality.

Poetry gives us an experience of the type of knowing where objective verification is of no consequence, and the criterion of truth is self-consistency. Time and space so intrude upon us in ordinary perception that we forget the intuitive, self-evident aspect of perception and separate knowing from being. Hence feeling, where knowing is of the type of being, is considered a lower grade of knowing and a sort of prejudice is developed against it by all seekers of true knowledge. Though the predominance of feeling in life cannot be ignored, its value in the field of scientific education is almost completely ignored. Poetry sees in it, however, a path of further progress in the search for truth and shows that the prejudice against feeling on account of its mixing the subjective factor with observation is not proper, for the subjective factor can never be completely set aside from experience. And if the defect of 'feeling' be spatial and temporal limitations, they equally belong to 'knowing' as understood by those who make objective verification the criterion of truth. It is poetry that removes these defects from both 'feeling' and 'knowing' by raising the experience above the limitations of time and space. We are so delighted mentally by the descriptions of a true poet that we never try to verify the objective reality of what he says. He holds us in his grip by presenting things beautifully bound by the law of inner necessity, or self-consistency. This law is so pervasive that even irrational behavior is a part of it. We willingly suspend verifying descriptions objectively and accept the poet's statement of a higher test of truth, the test of self-consistency. If a thing may possibly be, we do not question whether it really exists or not. If an action may happen, we do not bother whether it ever actually happened or not. Even though it may never find actual expression in life, its capacity to do so can never be denied.

Thus removing the prejudice against feeling and seeing its importance in man's education, poetry utilizes it as much as it utilizes knowing, if not more, for it tries to educate man only in the delightful way. The real trouble with knowing and feeling is their being limited by space and time. And if selfishness or attachment of temporal and spatial types be deemed sufficient for rejection of feeling in man's search for truth, objective verification should equally be rejected as a criterion for deciding the reality of knowledge, for objectivity is nothing but a spatio-temporal limitation; it is not reality. Knowing the essential nature of truth as *a priori*, subjective, intuitive, immediate and self-evident, and that of prejudice as a spatio-temporal limitation, the poet seeks to raise man above these limitations and thus gives him an

experience of truth of a higher stage. It is here that poetry imitates and asks its reader to imitate his master, God, whose essential form of existing, knowing or creating is the eternal infinite I Am, which is the only self-evident form that truth can take when unalloyed by the limitation of time and space. But poetry does not completely do away with the objects of sense. Indeed it de-sensualizes the mind by sensuous presentations. That is the secret of its appeal to the masses and attraction for the unregenerate. But once it holds its readers in its grip by this lure, it leads him up to a delightful state where pleasure is intellectualized and it is realized that the sensual contact with the object is not essential for pleasure. Indeed, intellectual pleasure is far superior to sensual pleasure. In giving him this joyous experience, in creating the proper atmosphere for such an experience, all the elements of poetry play their part, so that the reader may not play truant. Meter and figures of speech, Fancy and Good Sense, are all a well-organized pageant of poetry to lead the reader to realize the “exquisite harmony of all the parts of the moral being, constituting one living total of head and heart,” a realization of which experience alone is capable of the spontaneous creation of genuine poetry. Not what man is but what he may be, what he ought to be, is the poet’s main concern. “For it is in the privacy of the moral being only that man is truly human; in his intellectual powers he is certainly approached by the brutes, and man’s whole system duly considered, those powers cannot be considered other than means to an end, that is, to morality.” For this purpose alone poetry utilizes everything as its means—all the varieties of human behavior, all the circumstantial details of description. Poetry leads man upwards, makes him better by spiritualizing his feelings. That is the most important work of the secondary Imagination, its esemplasticity, its uniting the passive matter with the active Reason. The poet weaves the cobweb of material descriptions only to entice the unregenerate man, who runs after sensual pleasures. His purpose in doing so is to de-sensualize his pleasure. Once his reader realizes that the objective touch is unnecessary in enjoyment, once he realizes that the fountain of joy is within him and not in the object outside, the ground is prepared for a still higher stage when even intellectual pleasures are discarded for the experience of the deepest delight, the peace of God, the experience of the total union of will with Reason, which is the greatest joy, higher than which nothing can be conceived of in knowledge or existence. That is the aim of religion and philosophy and that is the end of all education. Poetry is the training ground for living in this highest universal, ideal world, a type of life which is the characteristic merit of the man of genius to live.

In this scheme of total education Coleridge shows that man knows the objective world only as such as he unfolds his mind. Sense, Understanding, Fancy, Imagination and Reason present a hierarchy of his mental faculties. The Value of poetry lies in its being a product of

Imagination, or that faculty which unites all the lower faculties with Reason and thus makes them function in harmony with the highest essence of himself and the universe. That is the moral and natural way of living.

After having discovered this truth Coleridge does not seem to have given much thought to the details of the poetic process. Again, poetry is an affair of word and meaning and a sound semasiology is essential for a poetic training. He also he knew the essential truth that word and meaning are two aspects of the same reality—namely, self-consciousness. As focus it is word, as reflection in its own mirror it is meaning. But he did not develop it further. His Logosophia remained unwritten. Similarly he neglected a detailed analysis of feelings and emotions. His essay on "passion" remained a fragment. It is in these respects that Abhinavagupta's exposition of poetic principles offers a supplement and an improvement.

III

Before the exposition of the concept of *rasa* it is necessary to explain the philosophical basis of this concept. It is here that the similarity between Abhinavagupta and Coleridge becomes most apparent.

As consciousness is the nature of being conscious of something, that something must be included within the consciousness itself. In order to retain its nature consciousness must be self-consciousness. This paves the way for the most natural explanation of knowledge at every stage, noumenal and phenomenal. To have any kind of experience—divine or mundane, finite or infinite—is to be self-conscious. But it has to be remembered that the self has consciousness in it not as a quality in a substance, as the materialists say,[6] but as power, which is the very essence of the self. This power of consciousness includes all kinds of powers in it. It is the power of absolute freedom of the self, which accounts for all kinds of knowledge and existence.

The self may choose to appear simply as existence, without an attempt to be conscious of its own nature. It is the state of pure existence. But it cannot be said to be a state of total

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[6] *Tantrāloka*, Vol. VI, p.67:

Dharmād dharmiṇi yo bhedaḥ, *samavāyena caikatā*,

ṇa tad bhavadbhir-uditaṅ kaṇa-bhojana-śiṣyavat.

Coleridge holds exactly the same view as Abhinava does. See *Biographia Literaria*, ed. Shawcross, I 188.

unconsciousness, for then we cannot prove its existence. Unconsciousness is the only proof of any kind of existence. Pure existence or the most primary state of existence means that its nature, that is, consciousness, lies hidden as it were (*antar-līna-vimarśa*). It is a state of all pervasive light (*prakāśa*). As a prior state cannot be thought of, this state of existence is called *anuttara*. Bereft of consciousness the absolute would hardly differ from a piece of stone. Existence and consciousness are two aspects of the same Reality. What appears as luminous existence (*prakāśa*) from one side appears as consciousness (*vimarśa*) from the other. A change in this two-fold nature of the absolute would rob it of its nature of freedom and consciousness.[7]

The absolute is thus a self-duplicating reality, which, as Abhinavagupta points out, may be thought of as self-expressive or self-conversing.[8] The most primary state of (*prakāśa*) or pure existence, is static. We can hardly say anything about it, though it can hardly be denied, as it is the very ground of all manifestations, subjective and objective. The true glory of the absolute reality, however, is found in the dynamic state of self-consciousness. It is owing to the unequal manifestation of the power of Freedom that we have manifold varieties of objective existence and subjective knowledge. This is so, because the Power of Freedom naturally included in it the Power of Limitation. To restrict the freedom of the absolute self, which is self as Freedom and not self plus Freedom, is to make freedom meaningless. The absolute self has freedom to manifest itself both in totality and in limitation. The power of total manifestation is called *vidyā* and that of limited manifestation *māyā*. *Vidyā* is the freedom to unite the subject with the object and *māyā* is the freedom to separate them.

The total manifestation of the self is called its divine state (*śakti-daśā*), and the limited manifestation its worldly state, which is promiscuously called *paśu*-, *nara*-, *jīva*-, or *jaḍa*-*daśā*. The most *a priori* state (*śiva-daśā*), when even divinity remains unmanifested, is really the state of great void as well as plenitude, existence pervaded by the light of total consciousness, when subject and object remain so closely united that we cannot think of them separately. As thinking presupposes the thinker separate from the object of thought, this state can hardly be thought of. We can describe the absolute only as indescribable. Consciousness being dynamic, that is, having the nature of movement, has a natural tendency to rest somewhere. Here there

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[7] *Śaktiś-ca no śaktimato vibhinnā*. *Mālinīvijaya-vārttikā*, I 969.

[8] *Pratyavamarśaś ca antar-abhilāpātmaka-śabdana-svabhāvaḥ*. *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, I, 205.

is nothing other than itself and so it rests in itself. It is thus an active as well as a passive state. To think of it is to be it. Coleridge's absolute also is this very identity of subject and object. (*Biographia Literaria*, Ch. XII).

The concept of *saccidānanda* represents the trinity of Will, Knowledge and Action. Freedom of self, which can only mean freedom to do or to know, can easily be equated with Will, which is the prior state of both knowing and doing. Thus *cit*, or *vimarśa*, may mean Will. Will is thus the power as well as the nature of the self, or *sat*. Freedom to know or do anything is the highest type of joy. The absolute created the whole universe out of its own free will and is able to know everything without any aid. This is the joy of the absolute, which is its highest state. In the absolute self thus we have five powers of consciousness (*cit*), joy (*ānanda*), will (*ichhā*), knowledge (*jñāna*) and action (*kriyā*). The Trika philosophy does not lose its monistic nature in spite of this five-fold nature of the power of the absolute. The absolute is thus said to possess one power or three powers or five powers or even innumerable powers.

Object as such still remains unmanifested. Still object is no other than the very self of the subject. Subject and object are relative terms. Neither of them can be proved to exist singly. They are not separate entities, but two phases of the same reality. As in this state there is no objective manifestation, it is a state when the absolute may be viewed as smaller than the smallest thing, for still there is nothing. It is the potential energy of everything. And as all objects came out of it, are [or?] rather its limitations, it may be viewed as higher than the highest. Trika is not a pantheistic philosophy. Like Vedanta it views the highest truth as both transcendental and immanent. Creation means objective manifestation. When objective manifestation is distinct, but not different from the subject, that is, when object is not a limited but a total manifestation of the subject, it is called pure creation (*śuddha vikalpa*), for the true nature of the object as the subject's projection of his own self is retained in this stage of creation. In this state of pure creation objects are totally self-conscious entities, hence it is known as the state of pure knowledge (*śuddha-vidyā*), and because they retain the five-fold powers of the absolute self-consciousness in totality, it is known as the state of Power (*śākta daśā*).

The phenomenal multitude of our universe (*aśuddha vikalpa*) came into existence simultaneously when we view creation from the divine side. Phenomenal creation is the type of manifestation when the absolute self-consciousness chooses to hide itself. It hides itself in order to seek itself. The One became the Multiform by its power of self-limitation. Self-limitation means limiting all the five powers above enumerated. Trika philosophers make no

distinction between inanimate and animate objects. They define both as limited self-consciousness, which means that self-consciousness cannot be said to be totally absent from any form of existence. It is the degree of limitation in the manifestation of self-consciousness that causes variety in creation. Objects merely as objects cannot exist. Objects are of the nature of nothing.[9] Objects have existence only as reflections in a mirror. Reflections in a mirror cannot be said to be unreal, for we see them, but they have no independent existence. Similarly, objects exist only as far as they are known by the subject. Here the peculiarity is that both the mirror and that which reflects itself in the mirror are one and the same subject, the absolute self-consciousness. Objects are limitations of the subject, which alone exists. Objectivity of a thing is no proof of its reality. Without the appearance of self-consciousness, perception can have no meaning. "I Am I" is the very form of perception. All objects are thus limited manifestations of the absolute self-consciousness. Hence all objects are really unities of subject and object. The absolute has no objectivity. The subject-objects, which are the stuff of this universe, owe their existence to the omnific freedom of the absolute self-consciousness. Freedom which is retained in the divine state is lost in the worldly state.

In spite of the fact that limitation of the freedom of the absolute self-consciousness is the root cause of all ignorance and consequent evil in this world, we cannot ignore the good aspect of this self-limiting power of the absolute. It is the very principle of objective creation. Without the limitation of the absolute there would have been neither any objective existence nor any kind of knowledge. It is incomplete knowledge that whets our craving for complete knowledge. Complete knowledge is only removal of limitation. Total unity of existence and consciousness in the absolute self-consciousness splits up after its self-limitation and what is one suddenly becomes many. This is done in no time, for time itself is manifested after limitation (*māyā*).

Thus, as soon as the absolute limits itself, it becomes atomic (*aṇu*) and a veil of darkness appears all around its limited form. All of a sudden, this atomic self finds its freedom of all the five types gone and itself bound by time and causality. It becomes partially conscious and partially unconscious, to a great extent ignorant, suffering and sad, full of wants and restricted in activity. As soon as the absolute self-consciousness limits itself thus, the limited self-consciousness feels itself separate from its parent absolute form. Its limitation thus appears as an appetency, a seeking-after. The freedom of the absolute becomes an appetency of the limited subject. Free will degenerates into want. The ignorant limited subject forgets

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[9] *Yat tatra na hi viśrāntaṁ tan nabhah-kusumāyate*. *Tantrāloka*, V, 3.

that all objective manifestation is only a projection of the true subject and tries to satisfy itself by enjoying objects. Appetency is only a search for the satisfaction which the subject experienced in his state of plenitude on account of his total union with the object. But his seeking it in the limited objective sphere only whets his appetite. In this blind seeking and blind enjoyment the heart becomes hardened and the mind grows ignorant. This is the story of appetency (*vāsanā*) leading to sensual enjoyment (*bhoga*) and vice versa. This explains the Hindu theory of the cycle of births. Every appetency seeks satisfaction, and for that it requires a particular body. This chasing will-o'-the-wisp ends when the individual realizes that he is one with the absolute self-consciousness. For such a realization he has to make himself introvert and carry on the uphill journey till he reaches the summit by outgrowing his limitation. As limitation is objectivity, to overcome limitation is to seek union with the true subject. To overcome limitation is the greatest task before man. In seeking union with the subject sensual enjoyment is the greatest hindrance.

IV

The Trika absolute may be studied as the unity of intuition and expression, meaning and word. [CHECK EDIT - TOP OF MS. P. 18] Intuition is never bereft of expression; otherwise the very existence of intuition may be doubted.[10] Without intuition different means of knowledge lead us nowhere. Truths are perceptional by nature. When intuition expresses itself totally, its self-evident nature admits of no doubt. But in the case of limited expression different means of knowledge come into play. They become means of knowledge only so far as they establish self-evident truths. There is hardly any difference between self-consistent and self-evident truths.[11]

Word and meaning are never separate. In the noumenal sphere word and meaning are a unity. But in the phenomenal sphere word and meaning and object are separate. But a unity has to be assumed here also in order that language may be of any use. Word in its essential form is consciousness. Existence or meaning can hardly manifest itself without consciousness or word. Abhinavagupta explains the whole creation as a projection of word. The absolute is

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10 *Vāg-rūpatā ced utkrāmed avabodhasya śāśvatī*
Na prakāśaḥ prakāśeta sa hi pratyavamarśinī.
Vākyapadīya quoted in *Īśvara-pratyabhijñā-vimarśinī*, I, 212.

11 *Sat-tarkaḥ śuddha-vidyaiva*. *Tantrāloka*, III, 39.

the all-inclusive unity with omnific potentiality. Everywhere words or sentences appear separate from things and ideas they represent. But nobody can deny that a change in the words has a corresponding effect on the meaning and that this is not possible without some connection among the word and the meaning and the object represented by them. A physical unity in such a case is impossible. But that there exists a metaphysical unity cannot be denied. Indeed truth in its purest form should mean only this unity. Otherwise any speaker of truth is so only by a consensus or a majority vote. He cannot claim inevitable acceptance of his statement or have any personal conviction of a self-evident truth.

The Trika philosopher starts with the letter as a unit and says that we may try to think of what actually is an unthinkable state of the absolute self-consciousness, or *aham*, or "I Am I," we may imagine *aham* as sinking in itself, as *m-ha-a*, or simple *a*, a noumenal point (*bindu*). As a matter of fact, we can hardly say anything regarding this state. Thinking or self-consciousness itself lies asleep then. Pure existence can hardly fall within the ken of consciousness. As soon as the self or existence tries to know itself, it finds itself as power or [of?] pure consciousness or joy or will or knowledge or activity, which really is the primary word. Abhinavagupta, therefore, calls self-consciousness self-conversation. Consciousness is a non-symbolic language and hence is an unlimited expression, the very ground of all types of limited expressions, symbolical, alphabetical or of other varieties. Self-consciousness in the waking state is *aham*. Self-consciousness is a unity of passivity and activity. While nothing can be said of the passive aspect, the active aspect is the meaningful word. In the phenomenal state, word is dead letters on paper, or sounds, which quickly vanish away in the sky. So is meaning the passive object, which may be destroyed. The absolute never loses this duality of expression.

The word *aham*, meaning I, is a combination of two letters, *ah* and *am*. In Sanskrit these two vowels are called *bindu* and *visarga*. In both these letters the primary *a* sound is common. The primary letter sound *a* represents pure existence, self or *ātman*. It projects itself out. This projection is the *visarga* or *ah*; *h* is the last letter of the Sanskrit alphabet. The whole universe is the projection of the absolute self. In the same way, whatever remains unmanifested is also the absolute reality. *ah*, the manifested, and *a*, the unmanifested are both unified together and the union is indicated by the *bindu* in *aham*. Self-consciousness thus is a noumenal triangle consisting of the noumenal point (*bindu*), and its self-expression (*visarga*). Creation thus appeared as a noumenal triangle with the base above, [DRAWING OF THREE DOTS], and

destruction another triangle with the point above, [DRAWING OF THREE DOTS]. According to Abhinava *vāk* (word) means that which creates all and destroys all.

Before phenomenal creation (*bhūta-sṛṣṭi*) there was ideal or noumenal creation (*bhāva-sṛṣṭi*). The latter is explained in this philosophy as unities of word and meaning, or *mantra*s. Truly speaking, word is a noumenal letter. These noumenal letters really express the meaning as they are unified with the meaning.

The most primary place in this ideal creation is given to vowels (*svara*). They are the primary sounds and are expressions of self-consciousness as knower or subject. Consonants, which cannot be pronounced without the help of vowels, are expressions of self-consciousness as objects. Objects in the purest form are totally subjective. Consonants, representing phenomenal objective principles, came out of noumenal vowels or noumenal subjective principles. *Aham*, or self-consciousness, is the totality of the Sanskrit alphabet, where every letter is an aspect of self-consciousness, out of which the whole creation [thus?] became manifest. Letters are really focal points of self-consciousness and hence, according to the principle of distinction without difference, every letter stands for all letters, and all letters show the same reality of self-consciousness.

The noumenal unity of word and meaning has three states. The most primary (*parā*) state is that of the noumenal point (*bindu*) when word and meaning are not felt even as distinct. In the second state their unity splits itself. In its own most clean mirror it reflects itself. The experience of this state is like “I am this.” Still the predicate “this” is felt undifferentiated from the subject, “I.” This perceptive (*paśyantī*) state gradually changes into the conceptive (*madhyamā*) state. Yet there is only distinction but no difference. The only difference between the second, perceptive, state and the third, conceptive, state is that in the former, the predicate “this” is very dimly distinct from the subject, and in the latter “this” becomes clearly distinct, though not different from the subject. Really, the predicate for the first time appears as distinct from self-consciousness and hence it is the experience of the first objective state, though still the object is experienced as essentially the same as the subject. In the divine state word as concept, a universal, is distinct but not different from percept or meaning and hence is felt as one with the subject. In the worldly state, concept, still a universal and deriving its truth from the percept, is felt as different from it. The limited mind can never perceive the universal concept; it always remains an inferred reality for the empirical subject. Divine experiences of “I Am I” and “I am this” perceived and “I am this” conceived, called *parā*, *paśyantī* and *madhyamā*, respectively, are experiences of universal ideas.

In the primary *parā* state there is no play of imagination and hence it is *nirvikalpaka*. In the latter two states the predicate, which is of the nature of projection (*vikalpa*) of the self, the essence of which is imagination (*kalpanā*), is accepted to be essentially the same as the subject (*svabhāva*-*parāmarśa*) Hence this imagination and the imagined predicates of these states are both accepted as true or pure (*śuddha*). The knowledge of these states is, therefore, called *śuddha*-*vidyā* or pure or true expression of the nature of self-consciousness. It is far superior to our mundane knowledge, where predicates appear different from the subject.

Whether it be in the phenomenal state of letters seen or letter-sounds heard, or in the noumenal state of their originals perceived as shining entities made up of pure self-consciousness so focused, the unity between these letters, which are the primary words, and their meanings is established by the primary self-consciousness.[12] Hindu semasiologists say that the meaning of the word is not the individual object it represents but the concept, which is a universal, including all individuals of that class in the past, present or future.[13] Concept is the universal language of all human beings. It is the basis of communication among speakers of the same language. It makes translation possible and renders it intelligible. But it should be remembered that concept is merely a limitation of percept. It is impossible to have a concept without first having the percept. It is pure perception alone that is self-evident and true. But pure perception of anything is beyond the scope of ordinary human experience. The real perceiver in every case is the eternal "I Am I" or *aham*. As soon as we try to express what we have perceived, we have to use language and language is always conceptual. On the basis of the analysis made above it will be easy to understand that the truth of the meaning cannot be established by referring to the phenomenal object perceived, for the object itself has existence only because it is a projection of the self-evident self-consciousness. Indian thinkers,

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[12] *Saṅkalanaṁ ca bhagavatī saiva parā parameśvarī karoti*. *Parātriṁśikā*, p. 71.

[13] *Uktaṁ hi Vākyapadīye*:

na hi gauḥ svarūpeṇa gauḥ,

nāpy agauḥ, *gotvābhisambandhāt tu gauḥ*.

Kāvyaprakāśa p.32.

therefore, say that the true meaning of every word is a work of selfconsciousness itself.[14] Abhinavagupta lays down a self-evident principle, which may be universally accepted. He says that that without which a thing cannot be is its true nature. In other words, the true nature of a particular thing is its universal. Taking the aid of this principle we may explain the nature of word as concept, for meaningless conglomeration of letters is not called word. Concepts are limitations of percepts and percepts are duplicates of self-consciousness. Hence, ultimately, word is self-consciousness itself, where it is one with its self or meaning.

Similar is the view of the Hindu grammarians. The phenomenal letter-sounds do not directly express the meaning. They only leave an impression on the mind. The impression left by the first letter mixes with that left by the second and this mixing continues till the impression of the last letter. This last impression thus becomes a unified total impression, which is nothing but self-consciousness focused in a particular way. Thus a word or a sentence, in the ultimate analysis, is nothing other than self-consciousness focused in a particular way.

The noumenal focal points of self-consciousness are the life of the phenomenal letters. In this noumenal state one letter is of the nature of all letters.[15] The difference in the languages is due to the difference in the outward manifestations of these noumenal focal points of self-consciousness. Concept is the lowest grade of word in the divine state; the highest is percept, or self-consciousness, or *parā*. The unity of concept and percept, though essential for true knowledge is only an assumption for the worldly experience.

The analysis of a poem as dhvani or Suggestion, of which the supreme form is *rasa*, is merely an elaboration of this theory of self-consciousness as the unity of word and meaning, for *dhvani* is the total expression of the intention of the speaker.

V

To recapitulate, there are two states of existence, divine and mundane. Reality in both forms is of the nature of self-consciousness, which may be viewed as several types of unity: of self and consciousness, universal and particular, subject and object, meaning and word, intuition and expression, male and female, I and this, spirit and matter, cause and effect. The

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[14] *Na hi saṅketo nāma anyaḥ kaścid ṛte parameśvarecchātaḥ*. *Parātriṁśikā*, p.125.

[15] *Eko varṇaḥ sarva-varṇa-svabhāvaḥ*. *Mālinīvijaya-vārttikā*, I, 641.

absolute is thus the identity of unity and omneity. The second factors are the aspects of the power of the absolute self.

Creation is a story of concentric manifestation (*ābhāsa*) of the power (*śakti*) of omniformity of the absolute self-consciousness, which itself remains the centre in every form externalized.

Creation always is an outcome of the union of parents. In the absolute, which is the form of their eternal union, consciousness is the female, active aspect, and self is the male, passive, aspect. Absolute self-consciousness looks into its own self, which on account of its purity, reflects itself. By its very look it creates a number of selves, distinct but not different from itself. These units may be conceived of as waves in the absolute self-consciousness. There are two types of these units. Just as waves rise and sink, these units of self-consciousness rise and sink. In the rising units *ānanda* or joy predominates. These two aspects of reality are included in the highest universal, absolute self-consciousness, "I Am I," Parama-Śiva.

Next, there is a manifestation of "I am this." Still "this" is not different from "I." On account of the emptiness of "this," the self-evident light of self-consciousness gets externalized. Here three states are distinguished. The first shows the predominance of the subject; the second, that of the object, and the third, the equivalence of the two. The unity of subject and object is not yet broken. These three divine states may be understood as "willing," "knowing" and "feeling" of the absolute. Thus we have five types of expression of the absolute, known as Śiva, Śakti, Sadāśiva, Īśvara and Sadvidyā.

Ideal creation, that is, creation of creative ideas or divine forms comes to a stop here. Having manifested itself totally in all the five possible ways the absolute self-consciousness chooses to hide itself in order to realize itself in more ways. The splitting of the unity of self and consciousness thus gets confirmed, and the distinction between the subject and the object comes to mean difference. The hiding of the absolute is the appearance of the phenomenal universe, just as the appearance of the absolute is the hiding of all objectivity. As soon as the absolute's power of self-limitation becomes active, all the five forms of freedom of total manifestation are lost, and the absolute becomes helpless in every way.

Thus consciousness (*cit*) becomes unconsciousness (*acit*) and hence existence (*sat*, *Śiva*) becomes nothing, or void (*asat*, *śūnya*). Freedom, power, or joy (*svātantrya*, *śakti* or *ānanda*) becomes limitation, helplessness, or appetency (*māyā*, *pariccheda*, or *lolikā*). Thus absolute self-consciousness (Śiva-Śakti) becomes the cosmic unconsciousness (*māyā*). Free will

or intuitive perception (*icchā*, *paśyantī*, or *sadāśiva*), which is total projection of the pure I, becomes split up into two limited powers of activity (*kalā*) and knowledge (*vidyā*, or *aśuddha vidyā*). There is little difference between willing and perceiving in the divine state, because both are mere duplications of self-consciousness, being either total knowledge (percept) or total activity (will). It has to be remembered that knowing is the primary activity. Divine concept, knowledge or activity (*jñāna*, *kriyā*, *īśvara*), when limited, turns into the powers of Time (*kāla*) and causality (*niyati*). *Kāla* or Time expresses itself as continuity both in subjective action called time (*kāla*), for time is known only as continuity, as process, which can be known or felt only as movement or action (*kriyā*),and in objective extension called space (*deśa*). The equivalence of subject and object (*sadvidyā*), which is the divine plenitude of self-contentment, turns into bias (*rāga*) or loss of balance.

Prāṇa, or life, is the first phenomenal expression of self-consciousness. Life in this world is spatio-temporal expression of the eternal activity of the absolute, which is bound in a chain of causal relations as soon as it becomes spatio-temporal. *Citta*, or mind, is a development of this life principle. *Citta*, or mind has three names according to its three functions. First in the order of manifestation is *buddhi*, the faculty of knowing or judging or ascertaining. Second is *ahaṁkāra*, the faculty of feeling that “I do it” or “I know it.” Third is *manas* or the faculty to imagine, think or desire (*kalpanā*, *iccha*). Thus knowing, feeling and desiring are the three aspects of the same inner organ. The name *citta* reminds us that it is only *citi* in the limited form. Remembering is its activity.

The absolute knows or does or feels anything by its own free-will. The individual is limited by his mind (*antahkāraṇa*, *citta*) in his knowing, feeling and doing.

When after the manifestation of the power of self limitation, *māyā*, the absolute self-consciousness turns into an unconscious, atomic, unknowable, invisible entity, there appear in it all the powers of the absolute in a limited way. Here there are three types of manifestation. One is subjective or active, another is objective or passive, and in between them there is a third, which serves as an instrument (*karaṇa*) for their interconnection.

Kalā is the power of doing limitedly. It is the first manifestation of the subjective side. *Vidyā*, or *asadvidyā*, is the power of knowing limitedly. *Rāga* is feeling for an object. *Kāla* is both time and space. *Niyati* is causal relation. All these and *māyā* are the folds (*kañcuka*s) that wrap

the atomic individual,[16] who is already impure on account of its three inner impurities in consequence of its becoming atomic and feeling itself separate from the absolute, and seeking its former glory in the objects.

Though primarily it was the absolute's own free will that it limited itself, yet when once limitation became a fact, it became a quality of the individuals so limited. The most primary impurity is the atomization of the absolute (*āṇava-mala*), the essence of which is appetency on account of forgetting its previous free nature. It is an inducement to sensual enjoyment, which is another impurity (*kārma-mala*), and which being insubstantial, aggravates desires instead of satisfying them. Thus a vicious circle is created, as a result of which the limited individual always feels himself separate from the absolute. This feeling of separation is the third impurity (*māyīya mala*).

With these three internal impurities, *āṇava*, *kārma* and *māyīya*, and six folds, *māyā*, *kalā*, *vidyā*, *rāga*, *kāla* and *niyati*, the phenomenal individual forgets his previous, glorious, divine state.

The limited unconsciousness of each individual is known as his *prakṛti*. The first evolute of *prakṛti* is *buddhi*. It is an extraordinary mirror. It reflects not only the object perceived or dreamt, but also the light of the limited subject. *Buddhi* is a passive, material instrument, howsoever sensitive it may be. It is the subjective instrument of *vidyā* which makes it active and conscious. Discrimination, the distinctive character of *buddhi* is really the work of *vidyā* which is able to discriminate between this and that only on account of its expression through this passive instrument. While *buddhi* by itself is unable to discriminate or ascertain, *vidyā* would see everything as one with the absolute without the aid of this material instrument.

This, in short, is the story of the creation of this universe owing to the self-limitation of the absolute self-consciousness, when the absolute throws itself in the background and manifests the phenomenal world, consisting of finite subjects and finite objects on its own canvas. When the blind-folded individual, bound by his limitations, his infinite powers curbed by his finite instruments, desires to overcome these limitations and know the reality as it is, he can know it, provided he uses the proper instrument, follows the proper method. This proper instrument or method is no other than what has earlier been called *śuddha-vidyā*, or the

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16 *Māyā kalā-śuddhavidyā rāgaḥ kālo niyantraṇā*

Ṣaḍ etāny āvṛtivaśāt kañcukāni mitātmanaḥ. *Tantrāloka*, VI, 164.

balanced universal self-consciousness, which shows objects undifferentiated from the subject, or the absolute self-consciousness. The method for this is total meditation on an object and perception of its universal form above the limits of time and space and causality.

The importance of literature or fine arts in general lies in the fact that it is one of the ways of overcoming limitations and seeing things in their universal perspective.[17] That such a universalization of experience is possible is one of the fundamentals of the poetic or artistic faith in India and the West.[18]

Total attention to any object universalizes the object as well as the subject and the experience. All limitations are then crossed, limitations of time and space, cause and effect, thing and thought. This is the secret of the education of the heart, of seeing its infinite, pure, self-conscious background (*cidākāśa*), which is the essence of the object as well. The experience is a peculiar, spiritual union of one's heart with the soul of the object, a soliloquy, which is also a dialogue. When in total attention man crosses the barriers made by his individual, phenomenal self and finds his universal, noumenal self, he is capable of spiritual communion. The value of the poetic experience lies in its being an esemplastic experience, which is spiritual.

VI

The *vidyā-śakti*, which is really the proper means of knowledge, gives us both types of experience, experience of universal and that of particular. When it works through the material

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[17] *Sarvathā rasanātmaka-vīta-vighna-pratīti-grāhyo bhāva eva rasaḥ*. *Abhinavabhāratī*, I, 280.

[18] See the following as a few examples:

(a) *Tasmāt kalādiko vargo bhinnam eva kadācana*

Aikyam etīśvarecchāto nṛtta-gītādi-vādane. *Tantrāloka*, VI, 132.

(b) The theories of *sādhāraṇīkāraṇa* in Indian poetics and of impersonalization (T.S. Eliot, *Tradition and The Individualized Talent*) and universalization (Aristotle and Coleridge) in Western poetics. Coleridge defined the man of genius as one who "lives in the universal." Gokulanātha defines him similarly: *sahṛdayasya sādhāraṇī-kṛta-vibhāvādi-parāmarśakasya*. *Kāvya-prakāśa-vivaraṇa*, p. 17.

instrument of *citta*, *buddhi*, or mind, it becomes impure and enables us to know objects or particulars. When the mind is subdued, the pure *vidyā śakti* gives us the experience of a universal. The powers of *māyā* and *vidyā* are respectively the powers of limited and total manifestation of the eternal "I Am." The secret of human nature lies in this two-fold capacity of the human consciousness. Coleridge's "philosophic consciousness" is nothing other than the total manifestation of the eternal I Am, which Abhinava calls the power of *vidyā*. It is the organ of spirit as the mind is the organ of sense. *vidyā śakti* is present in all, but for a *māyā*-*pramātā*, which a human being naturally is, to be *para*-*pramātā*, or *vidyā*-*pramātā* is an uphill journey. Coleridge's experience as *vidyā*-*pramātā* was as:

> *A light, a glory, a fair*
> *luminous cloud*
>
> *Enveloping the Earth,*
> *or as Joy,*
>
> *Which wedding nature to us*
> *gives in dower*
>
> *A new Earth and a new*
> *Heaven.*

The most popular description of this experience is that given by Wordsworth in the Tintern Abbey as the blessed mood in which we see into the life of things. Such experiences are called *rasa* in Indian poetics. *ṛasa* is the supreme art experience, and when it is successfully expressed through words, they become the highest type of poetry.

Let us now analyze the spectator's experience of a drama in a theatre. He sees the actors and actresses dressed in costumes suited for their different parts and is willing to accept them as the characters they represent. But he finds it difficult to accept them as original characters, as they are actually not so. A peculiar illusion is created in which he completely forgets the time and the place associated with either the actors or the characters they represent. He does not exclude his own self from the experience. The more he enjoys the dramatic action performed on the stage, the more he identifies himself with the action. The result is that his whole personality, body and soul together, gets electrified. In a unique mood of sympathy or rather empathy he weeps or laughs with the actor. He does not remain a detached spectator but partakes in a unique experience of a universal feeling along with other sensitive souls in the gallery. The suspension of the spatio-temporal tags is one of the most essential characteristics of the *rasa* experience.

The poetic experience (*rasa*), though super-psychic, includes psychic things as its subordinate part, and has its effect felt on the body as well. It led a critic like A. E. Housman

[to?] give an undue emphasis on the physical aspect of this experience. He rightly pointed out that poetry belongs to the class of things which may be called secretion, but he was wrong to think that it was natural or morbid secretion. Indian critics say that it is a transcendental, ideal secretion of the infinite subject enjoying his own universal nature.

Universalization of experience may be viewed as forgetting the worldly nature of feeling. Its spatio-temporal tags make it worldly. When the tags are removed from the object and the subject, they are both universalized. Such an impersonal, universal experience is called *rasa*. This is the way feeling is purified. Spectators come out of the theatre retaining the memory of this universal experience in their minds purified by that divine experience.

This experience is the experience of a continuity, though continuity is not felt, because only one feeling flowing as an undercurrent is felt. This feeling lies in the unconscious. In life it is felt only when it comes to the region of the limited consciousness through sensual contact with its appropriate object. In poetry also it cannot be experienced without suitable objective-correlatives. The objective-correlative of this undercurrent of feeling (*sthāyi-bhāva*) becomes the centre of attraction in a drama. It is generally its hero or heroine, who is the centre of the plot, round whom the whole plot is woven. Floating emotions (*sañcari-bhāva*) rise and fall like waves in this undercurrent of feeling. They are roused by the actions of the hero as well as less important characters who are introduced as the objective-correlatives of these floating emotions. Again the psycho-physical expressions of these ephemeral emotions also play an important part in giving an idea of the nature of the basic undercurrent of feeling and the floating emotions. The basic feeling is expressed in life through ephemeral emotions and their psycho-physical effects in behavior. In life, however, the process is extrovert, centrifugal, and the result is that a feeling becomes pleasant or unpleasant according to the congenial or uncongenial relation between the subject and the object. Again in life both the subject and the object are finite and so the continuity of enjoyment is arrested.

The poetic experience of the undercurrent of feeling reverses this process and purifies it. The various minor characters and situations contribute to the understanding of the main character, the hero, and it is his feeling that becomes the predominant feeling of the drama. What the spectator enjoys is not the objects but the feeling and emotions they arouse. The sleepy passivity of the basic feeling is removed. It flows as an undercurrent in which the concrete emotions are mixed like the various ingredients that variegate the taste of a drink and cannot be tasted separately or part-wise but only as parts subsisting in a whole.

The feeling and emotions and their expressions cannot be those of any person other than the spectator. How can he feel with another man's heart? Hence it is not correct to

describe the artistic or poetic experience as “an escape from emotion” or “an escape from personality” as T. S. Eliot did. It is better to call it an inscape into one’s own heart, into one’s deep-seated basic feeling, which is common to the spectator and the poet and the character and the actor, in fact, to all persons, past, present or future and hence is an undercurrent, unconscious and universal. It is the experience of this universal feeling that is *rasa*. The unconscious region is brought into conscious grasp. As the unconscious region is infinite, it is only the infinite self-consciousness that can hold it in its grasp; the limited self-consciousness cannot.

The total experience (*rasa*) of a basic feeling (*sthāyibhāva*) is different from any limited experience (*rāga*) of the same. The latter circumscribes our personality, brings pride and prejudice and thus denigrates it. The former sublimates it by removing prejudices. The removal of the spatio-temporal limitations is the *sine qua non* of the *rasa* experience.[19] Removal of limitations gives a value to the feeling and makes art or poetry a proper means of moral education.

Poetic creation and poetic enjoyment are two types of manifestations, centrifugal (*kriyātmaka*) and centripetal (*jñānātmaka*), of the universal self-consciousness. Abhinava stresses the identity of the power behind these two manifestations. The wonderful experience of *rasa* is possible only when the spectator gets so completely absorbed in the dramatic world as to forget his own.

Poetic experience is a bilateral affair. While the objective correlatives have their own importance in rousing the passion, they are helpful only to those spectators who offer themselves to be attracted by them. The audio-visual attraction of the drama makes it superior to poetry. Still not only the reader of poetry but also the spectator of drama should be a qualified man. Everybody cannot understand it. In every branch of learning Indian scholars prescribe a minimum qualification for the student. The reader of poetry as well as the spectator of drama must be a man with a very sensitive nature, who can get absorbed in the subject-matter described or displayed. Such a person, who is called *sahṛdaya*, alone can understand poetry or drama. Coleridge explains that there is only one unity in drama, the unity of impression. Abhinava says that the unity of impression leads the spectator to sympathize with the hero to such an extent that he identifies himself with the hero. The experience of one’s own undercurrent of feeling along with its associate emotions and their

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[19] *Uktam hi deśa-kāla-pramātṛ-bhedāniyantrito rasa iti*. *Abhinavabhāratī*, I, 291.

psycho-physical expressions felt in an esemplastic manner by one's universal self-consciousness is *rasa*. The poet's main purpose is to direct the feeling of his reader to a proper object and thus make it valuable for himself and others. This is the moral aim of the poetic course of education.

In thus giving a life-size portrait of the basic feeling, lying latent in everybody's heart, there are various factors at work. It is necessary to understand them clearly with the help of an example.

You see a tiger coming towards you in a forest and load your gun at once, aim at him, shoot at him and are glad to bag him at the first shot. Here the tiger roused your basic feeling of courage lying latent in your unconscious. You acted in a brave manner and stood with bristled hair, exhilarated at your success. Here you and the tiger are the cause (*upādāna kāraṇa*, known in poetry as *vibhāva*) of excitement of the basic feeling (*sthāyibhāva*), you being the person in whom the feeling is roused (*ālambana*), and the tiger being the person who rouses it (*uddīpana*). The forest also excites the feeling and hence falls in the second category of the causa (*uddīpana vibhāva*). In between the act of killing the tiger and that of first sighting him you experience various emotions like anger, pride, fear, impatience and so on, quickly changing according to your varying moods, all giving expression to the basic feeling of courage and making your experience of it unique. All these associates (*sahakāri*s) are known in poetry as *sañcāri*- or *vyabhicāri-bhāva*s. These ephemeral emotions bring out various psycho-physical expressions on your face and physique. They are the effects (*kārya*s, known in poetry as *anubhāva*s) or the ever-changing expressions of moods of the basic feeling, which moves as an under-current.

This is how it happens in life. We see such a scene enacted on the screen or read its description in poetry. We at once identify ourselves with the hero, the hunter, and in such an identification we forget that the feeling of bravery or courage displayed actually belongs to the real hunter and not to the actor playing his part or to us, spectators or readers. We subdue our finite selves, make an inscape into the depth of our unconscious and the result is that our universal self-consciousness (*para-pramātā* or *vidyā-pramātā*) embraces the basic universal feeling and the joy of this embrace is *rasa*. It is a total experience affecting both our body and soul. It is a super-psychic joy (*brahmāsvada-sahodara*). As we suspend the limits of time and place, we have a transcendental super-psychic experience of a universal feeling, where all the particulars of experience are so mixed together that while they make the experience unique and rich, they themselves do not become obtrusive in any way and yield to the self-ebullient

stream of the infinite self-consciousness, giving a unique taste of multeity in unity like a high class drink. *ṛasa* is the transcendental, delightful perception of one's own self (*svabhāva*) tinged with the predominant feeling excited by the dramatic display.

Rasa is an experience without obstacles, while a worldly experience is full of them. Both Richards and Abhinava agree on this point. Abhinava enumerates the seven obstacles and shows how they are removed. The main task of the objective correlatives is to remove the obstacles to a total manifestation of the spirit.[20]

In the worldly experience we equate existence with objectivity. Whatever does not appear as object is considered non-existent. In short, feelings and thoughts become figments of imagination while objects are supposed to be real. This position is reversed in a poetic experience. Here substantiality belongs to subjective things--feelings, emotions and psychic actions; and objects, characters and their physical actions are valuable only so far as they are able to rouse their subjective correlatives, the emotions and the basic feeling. Hence it is of no consequence whether the objective correlatives have factual existence or not. The only significance of their portrayal is to help the audience know their own nature and see that nothing obtrudes as an obstacle to it. As time and space are the most obstinate forces to raise a massive material structure before the self at the time of perception of its own nature, so the first and foremost task of the poet is to remove these obstacles. The poet does it by his attractive presentation and the spectator by his close attention. The nature of true happiness is freedom from obstacles, perfect rest. Objects of the world, which entice our sense organs and make our mind restless, are detrimental to perfect rest and happiness. Poetry restores mental health.[21] This explains why an actual love affair does not produce the *rasa* experience while a poetic description of the same does.

In the ultimate analysis *rasa* is one and is the absolute self-consciousness itself. It is called *śānta-rasa* or *rasa sāmānya* or *mahā-rasa* to differentiate it from the lower universal

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[20] *Tatra vighnāpasāraka vibhāva-prabhṛtayaḥ*. Ibid., I, 280.

[21] *Antarāya-śūnya-viśrānti-śarīratvāt sukhasya*; *aviśrānti-rūpataiva duḥkham...ity ānanda-rūpatā sarva-rasānām*. *Sā ca avighnā saṁvit*. *Abhinavabhāratī*, I, 282, 279.

experiences of similar nature. All types of *rasa* have the common nature of being the experience of perfect peace.[22]

It is a common belief among Indian philosophers that an individual's experiences and actions leave impressions on his mind, which stores them. They are *samskāra*s or *vāsanā*s. A similar view has been expressed by Dr. J. A. Richards: "Every stimulus which is ever received leaves behind it, so it is said, an imprint, a trace capable of being received later and of contributing its quota to consciousness and to behaviour" (*Principles of Literary Criticism*. p. 103). They are psychic potentials. The Trika philosopher explains them as impurities resulting from the individual's biased activities (*kārma-mala*). They are the directional impulses, formative principles, which determine not only a man's character but also his birth. These basic innate tendencies are eight in number--four primary and four secondary. Love, Resentment, Courage and Aversion are the primary character-traits and Mirth, Sorrow, Wonder and Fear are the secondary ones according to Bharata. They direct the course of man's life. Their different proportions explain the different character-traits of people. Another cause of such differences is the propriety or the impropriety of the object to which they are tagged.

This is the unconscious state of feeling (*bhāva*), and its vast region is compared to an ocean. It is the root-feeling and is compared to the thread that holds flowers in a garland. Continuous flow as an under-current is its nature. These basic tendencies (*sthāyibhāva*s) are masters of the psychic region. Abhinava explains them as innate appetencies owing to the cumulative psychic effects of actions done in the vast period of a beginning-less past, and distinguishes them from the desires for worldly objects. Appetency thus is the first stage of feeling.

Taking the analogy of the ocean we may explain the second stage of feeling as the stage of psychic waves, which take their rise from the first unconscious stage only to disappear in it after a momentary stay. We should call them 'emotions' which term, according to the modern usage, denotes a more complex state than that denoted by the term, 'feeling'. Emotions are transient and are thirty-three in number. A basic feeling may often have a transient phase in association with another basic feeling. Thus for example, the lover's love for his beloved excites courage in him to overcome obstacles to a rendezvous. Courage becomes

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[22] *Sarva-rasānāṁ śānta-prāya eva āsvādo*, *viṣayebhyo viparivṛttyā*. Ibid, I, 339. Cf. I.A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism*, chap. 32, p.248.

a transient emotion here. But none of the thirty-three transient emotions (*vyabhicāri-bhāva*s) can ever assume a permanent form of a continuous under-current.

The third stage is that of expression of feeling or emotion and is psycho-physical. Expression starts in the mind and ends in the physical signs on the body. These expressions in their psychic rather than physical aspect are said to be eight in number. They are called *sāttvika*-*bhāva*s or *anubhāvas*.

One energy passes through three stages. *Ethe*, *pathe* and *praxeis* of Aristotle's *Poetics* are of similar connotations. I have almost a conviction that the Aristotelian concepts of *ethe*, *pathe* and *praxeis* were taken from India, from Bharata or some earlier writer. Had the Indians borrowed their concepts of *sthāyi-bhāva*, *vyabhicāri-bhāva* and *anubhāva* from the Greeks, there must have been more elaborate discussions in the Greek works either of Aristotle or of earlier writers. But the fact is otherwise. Again, the very concept of *vāsanā* or *samskāra* is fundamentally Indian as is the concept of the cycle of births. These two concepts are very closely related. *Vāsanā* is the cause of birth, and the nature of both birth and life is determined by it.

In English, the terms 'feeling' and 'emotion', are promiscuously used. This confusion, says George Whalley, appears "in every writer on poetic experience and the nature of poetry," and he says that "to distinguish clearly between them" is "one of the most important tasks for a philosophical critic at the present time." He chooses 'feeling' as his key term, which he explains as "the irreducible energetic principle for all psychic organization", "specific aspect of intention", "the orientation of the person in a dynamic and directional sense", which is "personal only in the sense that it is generated in a person". 'Emotion' he takes to mean "a complex of feeling which necessarily involves personality". "In the light of this distinction", Whalley remarks, "I should further urge that the word 'aesthetics' be taken to mean (in accordance with the Greek derivation of the term, an enquiry into states and processes of feeling" (George Whalley, *Poetic Process*, pp. 66-67).

Whalley's distinction supports Bharata's distinction between *sthāyi-bhāva* and *vyabhicāri-bhāva*. But his analysis does not seem to be so comprehensive or correct as that of Bharata. Thus, for example, his remark that "emotion is centripetal" (ibid.) seems to me only a half-truth. According to Abhinavagupta, *vyabhicāri-bhāva* (that is, Whalley's 'emotion') is as much centripetal as centrifugal. In the process of idealization emotions submerge in the basic feeling, (Abhinava's *sthāyibhāva*, Aristotle's *ethos*, or Whalley's feeling), and have a centripetal

tendency. They, then, tend inward to the centre. In ordinary, worldly state, they have a centrifugal tendency, seeking physical expression.

In presenting his psychological theory of value, I. A. Richards starts with impulses, divides them into appetencies and aversions, and rejects the terms, feeling and emotion, in his analysis of the principles of literary criticism (*Principles of literary Criticism*, chapters VII and XI).

Lack of a fixed nomenclature in this regard shows a lack of unanimity among Western scholars in the psychological analysis of the problem of 'being' and 'becoming'. It has done immense harm to the development of a true poetics in the West. I think it would serve the cause of a clear conception of poetry if we fix the nomenclature of the three psychic stages as 'feeling', 'emotion' and `expression' corresponding to Bharata's terms, *sthāyi-bhāva*, *vyabhicāri-bhāva* and *anubhāva* and Aristotle's *ethe*, *pathe* and *praxeis*.

VIII

The difference between the common experience of psychic 'becoming' and the uncommon one of super-psychic 'being' found in aesthetic experience, however, cannot be understood simply by fixing the nomenclature of psychic and super-psychic states but by understanding that universalization is possible only in the stage of feeling, and that it has its repercussions on the other stages as well.

Experience is always a union of subject and object and it has to be noted that the subject is always wider than the object. Consciousness has to extend itself in order to grasp the object. In case it does not or cannot, the object remains ungrasped, unknown. The basic feeling remains always an undercurrent in the unconscious and ordinarily no man ever grasps it. In an aesthetic experience it is grasped. The reason is that while in an ordinary experience the subject is always the finite self-consciousness, or mind; in the aesthetic experience it is always the infinite self-consciousness. The undercurrent of feeling is itself infinite and can never be grasped by a finite mind. Actually speaking, mind is only a finite material instrument of knowledge, not the subject. Abhinava points out that the subject everywhere is infinite self-consciousness. It has two instruments for having an experience, one finite, the other infinite, respectively called *māyā* and *sad-vidyā*. The limited or total nature of experience depends on the nature of the instrument used.

Coleridge has similar ideas. *Māyā-pramātā* and *vidyā-pramātā* correspond to his concepts of Understanding and Reason, or, natural, spontaneous, common consciousness, and

supernatural, artificial, philosophic consciousness. But his concept of a third intermediate faculty of Imagination connecting the two regions of consciousness made a confusion. The primary Imagination is defined by him as “a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite ‘I Am’.” The infinite ‘I Am’ he calls Reason. If the primary Imagination were a repetition of the total activity of Reason, how would it differ from Reason itself? If the finite mind, where the activity manifests itself, be a limiting factor how would it differ from Understanding, which also borrows its activity from Reason but is considered stagnant and passive? In either case, Imagination loses its differentiation.

Coleridge perhaps forgets his own statement that the absolute self-consciousness is a unity of total activity with total passivity. That is why it is a unity of existence and consciousness, subject and object. Abhinava clearly states that if the absolute were either only active or only passive, it would lose its all-powerful and all-inclusive nature. There is nothing which does not show its presence. If the unconscious void or sky or stone does not show any activity, it only means that they by themselves do not possess freedom to cross the limitations which ensnare them. The absolute self-consciousness, which alone is totally free, can manifest activity even there. The absolute alone is really free; all its evolutes are slaves of limitation.

Abhinava, like other Indian philosophers, speaks of only two kinds of perception: one is pure and the other is impure. The form of pure perception is ‘I Am I’, or the absolute self-consciousness. The form of impure perception is ‘I know this’ or ‘I feel so’. The absolute ‘I Am I’ is the prime perceiver. The worldly perception is impure because it is mixed with conception. When we see a table, we think that it is a case of perception. But it is not so. The table that we see is a conceptual entity. The concept of table received from others renders its help in this perception. Therefore, it is a mixed perception. Poetic experience is not like this. In the worldly perception subject and object are felt separately. But the poetic experience is esemplastic. There subject and object are unified together. The experience is in the form ‘I Am this’. Here lies the intermediate nature of poetic experience, which is neither purely divine nor purely mundane. In the ordinary experience, the form of the object, which is really conceptual, is the separating factor between ‘I’ and ‘this’, the subject and the object. In the poetic experience this separating form of the object loses its particularity, but it remains as a universal feeling. In the divine experience, the separating factor totally vanishes and ‘I’ and ‘this’ are united totally. It is to be noted that the particulars of a feeling, the floating emotions and their psycho-physical expressions, have to take a universal form of a continuous under-current before the true poetic experience can be had. The secret of poetic delight, however, does not lie in this universal feeling but in its union with the universal subject. Poetic experience is the experience of the embrace or impregnation of this undercurrent of basic

feeling or *sthāyi-bhāva* or Ethos by Reason. The basic feelings are really the basic inner impurities (*mala*s). They are of the nature of appetencies. The stream of infinite consciousness of total self-sufficiency is colored, modified and variegated by this inner impurity, but in this very stream of joy the inner impurity of the mind gets purified also.

The experience of such a unity exists till we attend to a poem or a drama. It depends upon the spectator's or the reader's capacity of attention. But such a moment of living in the universal, in the ideal present, cannot be denied. In that pure moment mind undergoes a catharsis. Man learns the secret art of crossing limitations, of dissociating himself from the outward form and the mental concept, which distort truth and limit satisfaction, and of associating himself with the stream of total consciousness, Truth and Joy, that "beautiful and beauty-making power". This is how art teaches morality and improves character. Man learns the art of unselfish work (*niṣkāma karma*), of impersonal feeling, of living in the world as lotus-leaves live in water without being wet. This is how the opposites—detachment and feeling, total activity and perfect peace, unselfishness and total activity of the self—truly meet.

Abhinava's vast comprehensiveness and clear analysis are wonderful. He shows, broadly, the four limited forms of the absolute self-consciousness, the vast unconscious void and the various types of undeveloped and developed bodies according to the predominance of the physical, vital and mental aspects. In every limited form the absolute remains immanent. While the most primary limited form, the unconscious void, or sky, shows the ultimate insubstantial nature of all later manifestations, it also shows its vastness necessary for containing the lower manifestations. But the unconscious is neither the last word in the analysis of the knowing faculty nor void the last word in that of existence. The unconscious and the void are limitations of the absolute self-consciousness. It is Abhinava's clear exposition of the process of creation which resolves the paradox underlying Coleridge's phrase, "all Shakespeare; and nothing Shakespeare", or his statement that "unconscious activity" is "the genius in the man of genius". The unconscious in itself cannot hold the key to genius. As Richards is not true to himself when he says that an unconscious mind is a fiction, so is Coleridge not true to himself in making the unconscious active. The phrase `unconscious activity', like the sentence, 'it is nothing', is self-contradictory. Coleridge marked the self-contradiction in the latter but not in the former. The limited mind is unconscious, not the activity, for activity is nothing but a developed form of consciousness, its self-expression. It is not the unconscious that really explains the secret of genius but the divine activity, which manifests itself through it. In an ascent to the divine experience one has necessarily to pass through that stage of unconscious void, which means a complete negation of particulars.

Subjective plenitude requires objective nothingness. The secret of genius lies not in the unconscious but in the total consciousness, in bringing “the whole soul of man into activity” as Coleridge himself says, in the removal of obstacles to a complete unification of the subject with the object, as Abhinava says.

Coleridge thinks of self-consciousness as focus and mirror. He says that word is a focal point of consciousness. Naturally, self-consciousness as mirror reflects meaning. The unity of word and meaning is self-consciousness. But Coleridge does not develop the doctrine.

Abhinava’s concept of the letter as the primary word, or the primary focal point of consciousness, is an improvement on Coleridge’s concept of word. It is impossible to accept word as a focal point of consciousness without first accepting each of its constituent letters to be of the same nature. That the conceptual knowledge can have a perceptional verification at an ideal stage only is a statement of great significance for the perfection of a truly scientific epistemology. It supports the idealistic theory of perception presented by Vedanta and Trika and the Platonic philosophy of Coleridge. It proves that there is a true, ideal world above the material.

Perceptional verification is the only test of truth. But what is the verifying touchstone? There lies the mistake of the empirical psychology and logical positivism based on that. They say that the object is the touchstone. That is their referent of verification. Vedanta and Trika say that object is not a self-evident reality. It itself requires a proof of its existence. It owes its existence to the mental conception. The only self-evident reality is self-consciousness and it is the true touchstone of perceptional verification. Lack of objective verification should be no bar against metaphysical knowledge. Not accepting metaphysics on this ground betrays an ignorance of the true nature of perception and of the conceptual nature of phenomenal percepts. According to Abhinava, external existence or non-existence of a thing conceived has any meaning only in terms of time and space. That a thing exists externally means that it exists at a particular place and time. That it does not exist means only that it does not exist at a particular place and time; it may exist at another place and time. Total negation of its objective existence can only mean that it is inconceivable.

This solves the problem of poetic truth. Poetic truth is a true percept of the universal, germinal, potential form of a thing. It is thus higher than factual truth, which is conceptual. As the only language intelligible in the phenomenal world is the language of conceptual self-consistency, poets have to be self-consistent in communicating their vision. Poetry gives the news of a true perception in a conceptual language, which is the only means of communication in the world. That explains its intermediate position between science and religion, as Coleridge

said, and between *savikalpaka* and *nirvikalpaka* perception as Abhinava said. Only an inconsistently developed idea can be rejected as false. Everything conceptually consistent is valid.

How to overcome limitation, remove the conceptual cobweb and perceive truth is the greatest task before man. Truth is the most important value. Knowledge is valuable because it is true. But truth is not an objective fact; it is an esemplastic feeling of subjective self-sufficiency. Poetry is the most attractive means of experiencing this truth and that is its value. Physical sciences with all their mechanical aids cannot attain that ideal height. That is their inferiority to poetry. Both Abhinava and Coleridge declare the intermediate position of poetic experience between the phenomenal and the noumenal, the empirical and the spiritual. How feeling receives the light of Reason has not been successfully shown by Coleridge (*The Friend* - Introductory Essay XV), though he declared it to be the main object of his philosophy.

Coleridge brought in an intermediate faculty of Imagination between Reason and Understanding to relate feeling with Reason and that itself became the barrier between the two. Though, according to him, the poet, described in ideal perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity", Coleridge makes the power that so brings it half-passive and half-active and thus incapable of total activity. Reason alone is totally active, he himself says.

The Indian theory of *rasa* is exactly a theory of shedding the light of Reason over feelings. It is a concept that explains the purification of one's conscious and unconscious regions of the mind by removing the limitations of one's emotions (*rāga*), the spatio-temporal tags of which make them what they are. That poetry is an alchemy of life is a fact noted by many critics –Aristotle, Abhinava, Coleridge, I.A. Richards and T. S. Eliot, to quote only a few important names. But Abhinava surpasses everyone else in his comprehensive and convincing analysis of the process of this transmutation. Coleridge has his own concepts of the poetic passion and the poetic Imagination. But the former is not developed, and the latter is unable to explain the shedding of the light of Reason over feeling. It is not the subject's resemblance with the object but their unity that is perception. In Vedanta and Trika, perception, or *pratyakṣa* is defined as the identity between the mental mould enveloping the object and the object enveloped. Vedāntin says, exactly like Coleridge, that the mind goes out and envelopes the object and this enveloping is perception. This is called *savikalpaka pratyakṣa*, where the mental, conceptual mould and the objective form limit perception. The prime perceiver, Reason or *caitanya* and the prime object, the universal 'this', are beyond the scope of the ordinary, mixed

(*savikalpaka*) perception. The mixed perception can be possible only on the basis of pure perception, i.e., unity of Reason with its duplicate, universal 'this', which is called *nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa*. Coleridge's primary perception is equal to *savikalpaka pratyakṣa*, or ordinary perception.

It hardly differs from Understanding, which judges according to sense. If it be equated with *nirvikalpaka pratyakṣa*, or true perception, Imagination would be the same as Reason. If it be said that Abhinava also accepts a difference between the experiences of 'I Am I' and 'I am this', *nirvikalpa* and *śuddha vikalpa*, and we may accept an intermediate faculty common to all perception, then in that case that faculty would be something superior to both the primary and the secondary Imagination. It would be something divine, *paśyantī* or *mantra*, as Abhinava called it.

Coleridge's mistake lies in making Imagination instead of Reason the prime agent of perception; in analyzing mind's faculties instead of its folds caused by the self-limiting power of the absolute. It did not allow him to understand clearly that unconsciousness was its primary fold. *ṁāyā* itself is the primary *kañcuka* of the absolute.

In an idealistic philosophy like that of Abhinava and Coleridge where everything is an aspect of eternal 'I Am', difference of one thing from another will have to be explained as the difference of the predicate, the limiting factor. To know a thing truly is to know the predicate truly. Coleridge did not care to analyze the three different states of feeling in spite of the hint given by Aristotle in the terms *ethe*, *pathe* and *praxeis*. He did not find out that *praxeis* and *pathe* must be submerged in ethos before the central *ethos* becomes the predicate of the poetic experience.

Coleridge was fully aware of the universal state of feeling. He said that a man of genius lived in the universal. He showed the importance in poetry of "a continuous undercurrent of feeling" which is "everywhere present, but seldom anywhere as a separate excitement". He spoke of "reducing multitude into unity of effect and modifying a series of thoughts by some one predominant thought or feeling (*Biographia Literaria*, II, 14). But in spite of these statements it cannot be said that he clearly visualized the three states of feeling and made the universal undercurrent of feeling, with all its concrete manifestations subdued in it, the object or predicate of poetic perception.

Abhinava is more clear in his analysis. He makes the absolute self-conscious spirit the prime perceiver everywhere. The only thing common between the poetic experience and the ordinary experience is the subject, the eternal 'I Am'. The instrument of knowing in the poetic

experience is *sadvidyā*, or the divine equivalence of the subject with the object. In the ordinary experience the instrument of knowledge is the finite mind, (*antaḥkaraṇa*). Poetic experience is esemplastic, of the nature of 'I Am this', which is different from ordinary knowing or feeling, which is in the form, 'I feel this' or 'I know this'. The extraordinariness of the poetic experience is due to its super-psychic nature. The predicate of the poetic experience is the undercurrent of feeling with all the concrete floating emotions and their psycho-physical expressions subdued in it. The object of ordinary feeling or knowing is always a particular person or thing, never a universal.

Poetic experience is the experience just above the empirical because here spatio-temporal limitations are overcome. The object is a universal feeling and not its concrete forms or objective correlatives that suggest it. The experience (*rasa*) is, therefore, primarily spiritual. But the memory of the phenomenal particulars is not lost. They color the spiritual experience as ingredients modify the taste of a drink. *ṛasa* or poetic experience at its apex, is the tranquility of a total experience where the memory of emotions and feeling modifies the joy of the spirit's experience of its own nature of peace.

IX

The ordinary relation between word and meaning undergoes a change in poetry. It is not now one word meaning one idea. This fixity is removed. Not only the words but even the quality of their sounds, the order in which they are placed, the character of the person who speaks and that of him who hears, the 'literal' and 'indicative' meanings, the speaker's intonation--all these or even more contribute to magnify the power of the words and they suggest the meaning which is wide in its scope. For its ties with any one fixed meaning are loosened. Word in its particular, tangible form is always different from its meaning. In order to unite with meaning it has to make itself universal. There is a finesse in calling poetry *dhvani* with all its meanings of the suggestive, suggested, and suggestion. Again, it shows the unity of the poetic experience. Words and all their aides-de-camp focus the consciousness to attend to its own self. Word is not the combination of letters but *sphoṭa*, consciousness as focus, say the Hindu grammarians. *dhvani* as the suggestive is consciousness as focus, in which many factors count. *dhvani* as the suggested is consciousness as its reflection in its own self as mirror.

X

In the poetic experience the particulars are not remembered in their particular forms. There lies the intermediate nature of poetic experience, which is neither wholly spiritual nor wholly empirical, but partakes of both. Here we may realize the importance of the Trika concept of the internal folds of mind, the impurities (*mala*s), the appetencies lying in the unconscious state, which persist even if the outward folds (the *kañcuka*s) are removed. These appetencies color the spiritual, poetic experience and hence poetry is not purely spiritual. But it is not purely psychic either, because the instrument of knowledge used is not the finite mind but the infinite esemplastic subject-object equivalence (*sadvidyā*). This touch of the infinite pure subject purifies the internal impurities. This is the secret of catharsis or purification of the mind in a poetic experience. The mind's purification means the removal of its knotty nature, its spatio-temporal tagging, its likes and dislikes. As truth alone is pure, catharsis, or purification of the mind, means making it more akin to the truth of things, and that is possible only by universalizing it by removal of selfishness. Poetry gives a sound principle to the mind to regulate its likes and dislikes. That sound principle is the principle of unselfishness. Poetry gives a training in detached selfless living by the opposite method of deep attachment to a thing. The poet finds people attached to the worldly objects and utilizes that very human weakness for removing it. If once the reader is able to live in the universal, he learns the art of dissociating feeling from worldly objects and their impure mental images and prepares the ground for the higher experience of the spirit's self-sufficiency. He would ultimately realize that the spirit is above all appetencies and that essentially he is a wave of the infinite, eternal ocean of the all-pervasive and all-inclusive spirit. It is the experience of *śānta-rasa* alone that brings salvation. The secondary *rasa*s also better life, because they are experienced only on the basis of *śānta-rasa*. Animality in its essence is appetency, (*lolikā*), hankering of the subject. This hankering is due to the subject's feeling of separation from the object. This hankering gets washed away or burnt up in a poetic experience. As it is a very hard, knotty stuff, it requires continuous melting or burning. When by repeated melting or burning, it becomes totally removed, that is, when the mind realizes that the ultimate substantiality lies in the spiritual, infinite subject and all objectivity is a product of imagination, it becomes totally liberated and gets the highest peace. Thus salvation or *mokṣa*, the highest goal of life, is achieved through poetry in this very life.

Opposites cannot be reconciled as both Abhinava and Pythagoras pointed out. One of the two factors in the poetic experience must, therefore, change its nature. As the subject everywhere is the eternal infinite self-consciousness, its nature admits of no change. Naturally

the lower unit has to change its nature. The finite object has to lose its finiteness. It has to be made ideal, universal, subjective. Then alone is the union with the eternal infinite subject possible. This is the significance of Bharata's remark in the *Nāṭya-Śāstra* that the basic feeling is turned into *rasa*. The actions displayed or described suggest concrete emotions and concrete emotions must submerge themselves in their universal form, the basic feeling, of which they are the off-shoots, before they can be unified with the infinite, universal subject. No Western critic has pointed out this fundamental point of the poetic process. Aristotle mentioned the three states of feeling but did not show the process of idealization.

Aristotle said that poetry describes things as they may be, and this is what he meant by describing them in a universal way as different from the historical way, which describes things as

they are or were. But things as they are or were are also forms of what they may be, and Aristotle felt some difficulty in explaining probability or inner necessity as the fundamental law of poetic description. He tries again and again but does not quite succeed in clarifying his point and winds up his argument with a statement that begs the question: "Not to know that a hind has no horns is a less serious matter than to point it inartistically". This led W.K. Wimsatt to remark that a nuclear something in poetry still remains a mystery. Aristotle's pragmatic way of explanation has its own merits but certainly it gave speculation a blind spot and the analysis of the poetic experience on the lines suggested by his own distinction of the three states of feeling did not develop in the West. Critics in India right from Bharata analyzed the centripetal nature of the poetic description that leads *praxeis* to *pathe* and *pathe* to the central *ethos*, which, with all the offshoots merged in it, becomes the object of the infinite, eternal subject, the pure self-consciousness, or spirit, in a poetic experience.

Coleridge spoke of the importance of the under-current of feeling but was not clear about its being the object of poetic experience. He spoke of the reconciliation of opposites, unity and multeity, unity of the universal and particulars, in the poetic experience. The Indian critics speak of the poetic experience as the unity of two universals, objective and subjective. It is a more correct view on the basis of the Pythagorean principle that likes alone can meet, a principle on which Coleridge based his own theory. Particulars lose their particularity, become submerged in their universal, before they become the object of poetic experience. The whole process happens very quickly, almost like a flash of lightning, none the less the process cannot be denied. There are three states–universal potential feelings, concrete emotions, and their psycho-physical expressions, and they make a psycho-physical circuit, which is the story of life in every form. Actions are a development of emotions, and emotions, of feelings. But feelings

are nothing other than psychic potentials, appetencies, which are the results of the individual's past actions. Thus actions lead to feelings and feelings lead to actions. The relation between them is like one between the seed and the tree. Freedom from this vicious causal chain is possible only in the human form of life. In every other respect man is no better than animal or is even worse, because he often turns his freedom into license.

How to be free from this vicious causal circuit is the greatest problem of man's life. Education in true sense of the term must solve this fundamental problem of freedom from causal bondage. *Mokṣa* or salvation means nothing other than this freedom.

Bondage is possible of finite things only. Infinity cannot be bound. So the Hindu thinkers tried to find out the secret of crossing the realm of finites. Their analysis shows that what appears as finite is, in every case, a developed form of its infinite potential form, and that infinity in the ultimate eternal form is subjective. The true self is wider than the sky. Thus the secret of salvation or freedom (*mokṣa*) lies in being the true, eternal, infinite self. But being differs from nothingness only so far as it can be observed and observation requires objectification, however 'inly' it may be. Thus *cit*, or infinite consciousness is found to be the nature of self or *sat* or existence; *ānanda*, or ineffable joy, a realization of the plenitude of *cit* by union with *cit*; and *rasa*, an overflow and taste of *ānanda* as a result of that union.

Total attention to any object is found to be the key to freedom from the causal fetters. The attractive art of drama was created only with this purpose in view. Its attractive features easily free the spectator's mind from distractions and make him attend to the plot. And when the spectator becomes totally attentive, all the objective correlatives get submerged in their subjective counterparts, the concrete emotions, which have a quick inscape into their universal form of the basic undercurrent of feeling. As the spatio-temporal tags of the action or the object portrayed are loosened, the concrete emotions suggested by them become impersonal and they become submerged in their basic universal form and thus there is no obstacle to the union of the infinite subject with the universalized object. This unification is the real poetic experience, its climax. The whole poetic process is a process of idealization of physical objects and universalization of their conceptual subjective counterparts.

The experience of a basic undercurrent of feeling as it is in itself is possible only by an infinite self-consciousness, which is higher, deeper, and larger than the vast unconscious region of the basic feeling. Abhinava is most probably the first writer in the world to point out that the subject of the poetic experience is the infinite knower (*para*-*pramātā*), the instrument

of knowledge used is infinite, and the poetic experience is esemplastic, below the totally spiritual (*nirvikalpaka*) and above the limited empirical (*savikalpaka*).

In this highest experience of the union of universals, which lasts at best as long as the drama is displayed or the poem is read, the finite mind gets volatilized and purified. Purification as a result of the poetic experience becomes an excellence (*guṇa*) of the mind, which is its moral and spiritual development, and the expressions of such a mind show this. The concept of *guṇa* in Sanskrit poetics explains the value of poetry and the process of purification more clearly and convincingly than the Greek concept of *katharsis*. *Rasa* is higher than a cathartic experience. *Guṇa* or poetic catharsis, is an effect of the *rasa* experience. When a reader reads a poem, he is helped by such a spontaneous, rhythmic expression in the experience of the higher delight of the poetic experience (*rasa*).

There is a circuit in poetry as in life. The poetic experience creates poetry and poetry creates poetic experience. This, however, involves no fallacy. Like the seed and the tree they are interdependent. Inter-dependence of cause and effect becomes fallacious in one action, not in two actions, Abhinava points out (*Abhinavabhāratī*, I, 293). There is no fallacy in accepting the poetic experience as the cause of the poem and the poem as the cause of the reader's poetic experience.

The aesthetic experience transforms ordinary emotions, making them universal by removing all spatial and temporal contacts. Such universalized emotions become the object of a poem or an aesthetic or poetic experience. A theory of poetry from the standpoint of empirical psychology cannot be perceptional, for poetic perception is esemplastic, not dualistic. A universal can only be assumed by the mind; it can never be actually experienced by it. Such an experience is, therefore, always out of the scope of common consciousness. A materialistic, empirical, scientific theory of poetry will have to explain poetic experience as inferential, not perceptional, if facts are not denied and self-consistency is maintained in explaining them. It is precisely here that the Richardsian principles of criticism fail. Richards is inconsistent. To base a psychological theory of value on the unfelt appetencies and to call unconsciousness a fiction is self-contradictory (*Principles of Literary Criticism*, pp. 47-82). To accept a standard poetic experience common to the poet and the reader and to declare 'universals' bogus entities (Ibid., Chapters XXX and VI) is to be inconsistent, for a universal, by definition means unity in multeity. To say that "the critical theories can be obtained from the psychology without initial complications with the philosophical matter" (*Coleridge on Imagination*, p.11), and declare Coleridge's transcendental Imagination as "the essential

characteristic of poetic as of all valuable experience" (*Principles of Literary Criticism*, pp. 242-3) is defection from the materialistic opposition to the idealistic treasury bench. It is to declare the failure of a purely psychological theory of poetry.

In India poetry has been studied from the empirical standpoint also. Rajānaka Mahimabhaṭṭa's *Vyakti-Viveka* is such a study. He criticized the theory of poetry as suggestion (*dhvani*) and tried to show that poetic experience was a kind of inferential knowledge. But he did not deny *rasa* as the essence or soul of poetry.

The greater critics like Ānandavardhana and Abhinava chose a different standpoint, and certainly a better one, for, after all, inferential knowledge can never have the surety and conviction of perceptional knowledge. Inference is useful as a means of knowledge only in case where perception is not possible. Those who are content with the inferential knowledge of the poetic muse can never have the extra-ordinary, total satisfaction of perceiving her ideal beauty and can never have the purification of the mind which follows as its result.

These greater critics followed the grammarian philosophers who knew the higher stages of word and meaning. Abhinava's own Trika is a philosophy of universal grammar. He was himself a master of semantics and explained poetry on the basis of metaphysics and idealistic semantics.

Just as word or sentence is ultimately equated by the grammarians with consciousness and meaning with its self and both are unified in self-consciousness and thus is knowledge possible in every case, so is *dhvani* the ultimate power of word or sentence or still larger units of expression till the whole poem becomes one unit, capable of being unified with its meaning, which ultimately is the infinite human feeling experienced by the Infinite pure self in the form of a self-conversation (*hṛdaya-samvāda*).

XI

The experience of a basic feeling is not, however, the last word in poetic experience. Every branch of Sanskrit learning has a peculiarity of offering a total education. That is more so in poetry, which is supposed to be the verbal icon of the Absolute. The concept of the primary *śānta-rasa*, where the infinite subject has for its object no appetency, no limitation of the subject but its purest self, is ultimately the goal to be achieved through poetry. To have such an experience is the highest achievement in life. What is achieved by Vedanta is attained by poetry also. Nay, *rasāsvāda* in this ultimate *śānta* form is even a higher realization than

brahmāsvada. For *brahmāsvada* so negates predicates that it is difficult to say anything about that experience. In *śānta-rasa* the joy of the absolute self-consciousness itself becomes the object of taste and so it is a deeper realization of Brahma itself. It is an experience of `I Am I'. It is to be nothing and everything and higher than both, all simultaneously. It is an experience that excludes nothing.

After the realization of *śānta-rasa* man conquers his finite nature totally. He becomes totally unselfish, totally pure. Such men live only for doing good to others, for bettering life. They are the best citizens of an ideal society.

In this essay I have tried to show (1) that Richards failed to give a correct interpretation of Coleridge's Primary Imagination; (2) that a purely psychological theory of poetry presented by Richards is unable to explain the poetic experience correctly; (3) that Coleridge's theory of Imagination is not necessary to explain the nature of poetic experience; that Reason and Understanding are enough to explain it; (4) that the Indian theory of poetry as *rasa-dhvani* most convincingly explains all the problems of poetry.