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THE BLOOMSBURY RESEARCH HANDBOOK OF EMOTIONS IN CLASSICAL INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

*Edited by
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difference between “emotion” as a general category and *bhāva* and *rasa* as technical terminology (in other words, “grief” and “pity” mean something different when they are emotions in the world versus a *bhāva* and a *rasa* within an aesthetic context). Moreover, focusing on the variety and complexity of emotions woven throughout Jagadharā’s poetic praise *without* defaulting to the language of *rasa* offers different perspectives on how emotions are important in such texts. It highlights, for example, how a variety of emotions can overlap and contradict in the context of a devotional relationship to a supreme deity.

46. In addition, perhaps the overlapping and complex emotions in such poetry can be seen as mirroring how some people experience emotions in their own lives. For example, hymns, as a form of prayer, allow for certain types of theological openness; thus Steven Hopkins explores how the *stotra* form, partially because it can be more emotional and personal than other genres, gives Vedāntadeśika latitude to resolve debates about self-effort and grace (2002: 235–6). Stephanie Clark, in her study of petitionary prayer in Anglo-Saxon England, describes a different kind of openness. Taking her cue from her sources, she interprets prayer in terms of a gift economy that creates relationships between the parties involved, and this gift giving requires an openness—it isn’t a mechanical transaction—that allows for other types of values (2017: 189, 273–4).
47. There are exceptions, of course, and these generally focus on South India; see, for example, Hopkins 2002.
48. On the idea of a *bhakti* network, see Hawley 2015: 295–312; on the metaphor of a quilt, see Hawley 2015: 310.
49. Lurgendorf 2016: xv.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Savoring *Rasa*: Emotion, Judgment, and Phenomenal Content

STHANESHWAR TIMALSINA

In recent decades, a surge of interest in emotion studies has led to meaningful engagement between contemporary theories of emotion and the integral philosophical and psychological models of emotion from the cultural milieu of medieval India. Owing to problems of translation and interpretation, the latter contributions have not kept pace with the burgeoning discourse of the west. Each field is laden with multiple, interdisciplinary theories and perspectives that viewed together generate an opportunity to rethink emotion outside the old paradigm of mind-body dualism. By foregrounding the Sanskrit philosophical texts of Abhinavagupta, this chapter on *rasa* theory deviates from traditional textual readings that have, to date, resisted dialogue with contemporary approaches and socio-anthropological readings. Aside from a few exceptions (e.g., Ali 2006; Benamou 2010), contemporary studies are mostly reluctant to engage classical theories. This chapter aims to demonstrate a case for future conversation between *rasa* theories and current trends in reading emotion.

Just as emotion studies contain multiple theories, the domain of *rasa* combines diverse approaches that require nuanced reading. An integrated approach is fruitful, combining traditional philological methods to read the classical texts with a cross-cultural phenomenological outlook that grounds

salient issues in *rasa*-experience. Whilst I focus on Abhinavagupta's (eleventh century) understanding of *rasa*, I read Viśvanātha (fourteenth to fifteenth century) to elaborate on Abhinavaguptan concepts and look to Rāmācandra and Guṇācandra (twelfth century) to demonstrate an alternative to the Abhinavaguptan paradigm. Although reading broadly across the literature in Sanskrit, I derive central arguments on the cognitive and phenomenological features of *rasa* experience.

INTRODUCING THE CATEGORIES

The first challenge encountered in the attempt to initiate a global dialogue on *rasa* is translating the key terms, especially *bhāva*, *rasa*, and *camatkāra*. *Bhāva* refers to emotion, but the term also captures involuntary corporeal functions such as trembling, tears, or sweating. *Rasa*, along the same lines, is translated as emotion, aesthetic emotion, aesthetic essence, or a cocktail of emotions. *Rasa* also means the state of savoring emotions and a judgmental state of evaluating emotions.¹ Equally complicated is the term *camatkāra*, generally translated as “wonder” or “rapture.” Philosophically, the term describes the reflexivity of consciousness. This includes the act of sensing as well as the content of experience. In an aesthetic context, *camatkāra* is the evaluation of *rasa* experience which simultaneously incorporates a sense of exuberance combined with wonder. One can interpret this as bedazzlement or the act of it, a feeling that flashes or shimmers. If the metaphor of light is used to describe consciousness, *camatkāra* is about its active surge.

All three terms—*bhāva*, *rasa*, and *camatkāra*—have deep cultural underpinnings. Even for the category *bhāva*, some are enduring (*sthāyīn*), some transient (*sañcārīn*), and some involuntary somatic responses (*sāttvika bhāvas*). Even the common emotions, the enduring ones, are not that universal when we engage certain contemporary studies (Cuneo 2007: 32–5). The term *bhāva* refers to a mode, or a specific manifestation, of basic or foundational consciousness. Grouped under *bhāva* are somatic responses, emotional states and feelings, and emotional judgments. In this sense, *bhāva* is the coming into being of an episode of consciousness (*citta-vṛtti*), a distinct form of consciousness, which is not merely judgmental but also emotional. Bharata and Abhinavagupta elucidate the matter etymologically: “*bhāvas* are as such because they constitute *rasas*”;² “by the term *bhāva* what is meant is the specific modes of the mind.”³ Keeping in mind the aesthetic context, Bharata traces the etymology of *bhāva*:

As to whether *bhāvas* are, because [they] come into being or because they constitute [something], we say, [they are] *bhāvas* because they constitute

the true sense (*artha*) of the poetics that has [the proper arrangement of] speech, body, and the mind (*sattva*).⁴

Rasa is a cocktail of different emotions, given that they are appropriately combined. The most commonly cited “*rasa-sūtra*” of Bharata states:

Rasa emerges when [the enduring emotion] is combined with the determinant, consequent, and transient [*bhāvas*].⁵

Bharata's sentence outlining *rasa* remains obscure, as the words “emergence” (*niṣpatti*), “mixture” (*samyoga*), as well as the very term *bhāva*—understood not only as “coming into being” but as “assuming a distinctive modality”—are deeply nuanced. Bharata uses *bhāva* to mean stimulant factors, corporeal symptoms, feelings, emotions, moods, and even judgmental states. Bharata did aggregate different categories, although this merely reflects the enigma of defining emotion even today. A closer analysis of *bhāva* might yield some insight into what he was attempting.

When equated with an episode of the mind, *bhāva* only refers to the enduring emotions. Abhinavagupta makes this point by distinguishing transient and consequent *bhāvas* as merely of the character of predisposition from the enduring ones.⁶ The two different etymologies given for *bhāva* as “that which occur,” and “that which constitute,” capture the domains of both the enduring emotions as well as the consequent and transient *bhāvas*.⁷ *Rasa* is a distilled property that emerges with the commixture of different *bhāvas*. Since not every single *bhāva* is identified as a mode of consciousness, one can argue whether their product, *rasa*, can be identified as a cognitive category. Keeping this question in mind, Abhinava clarifies, “savouring (*rasanā*) is of the character of understanding.”⁸ So that we do not conflate this savoring with common sense experience, Abhinava further explains, “however, this understanding [i.e., savoring] is distinct from other everyday experiences.”⁹

In their attempts to initiate a broader comparative approach and a dialogue between the classical Hindu and Greek aesthetics, some scholars have explored similarities between *rasa* and catharsis.¹⁰ I am not convinced this is the most appropriate approach. In any cultural or philosophical dialogue, misconceived similarity is far more hazardous than apparent difference. On the one hand, the concept of *rasa* evokes the sense of savoring, as is evident in Bharata's application of “tasting” (*asvādayanti*) (NŚ VI.33), comparing it with savoring a nicely prepared dish (NŚ VI.32). Examples abound relating this to juicing, rejoicing in a cocktail, or enjoying a refined dish. On the other hand, catharsis has the central component of the purgation

of "negative" emotions such as grief or fear. This interpretation proposes that a dramatized tragic situation mirrors the subject's own adverse situation, stimulating the same emotion, eventually making it possible to diffuse or purge it. In contrast, there is no purging but savoring in the mechanism of *rasa* experience, particularly when we engage the position of Abhinava. If there is anything removed when experiencing *rasa*, it is not the phenomenal content but the gap or apparent distance between subject and object, the dichotomy between inside and outside. Although the evaluative state of emotional experience is epitomized in the concept of *camatkāra*, categories such as catharsis or wonder are not appropriate to compare with *rasa* and *camatkāra* in the aesthetic framework of Bharata and Abhinavagupta. Viśvanātha's definition reveals some of these nuances in the experiencing of *rasa*:

Some [rare] subjects savor *rasa* non-distinctively, as if [experiencing] oneself. [This *rasa*] has as its essence (*prāna*) the flash of experience (*camatkāra*) that transcends common sense. [This is] devoid of contact with any external object, and due to the surge of vitality (*sattha*), [it] is comprised of the non-dual self-manifest bliss and consciousness. [This experience resembles] the experience of Brahman [just as] a twin sharing the same womb.¹¹

Engaging the above understanding of *rasa*, it becomes clear that the mechanisms at play in this experience and its intentional content appear distinct in several ways from the ways catharsis has been understood, whether explained as purgation or as the resolution of emotions. In particular there is no purgation of emotion in the *rasa* paradigm, as they are to be savored with a higher aesthetic gaze. In experiencing *rasa*, the basic emotional states are not expunged but evaluated. Therefore, there are both judgmental and emotional contents in this experience. What this implies is that emotions are a first-order interpretation of specific stimuli. There is a further order of interpretation where even experiences deemed negative in first-order processing are re-evaluated based on new components, blended within, and evaluated as positive, ultimately resulting in the surge of *rasa* experience.

Bharata explains *rasa* experience:

Just as aesthetically virtuous (*śūnnaśa*) people relish the taste and experience bliss when consuming the food that is seasoned with various spices, aesthetically virtuous people [while watching a drama] experience bliss the same way by savouring the enduring *bhāvas* that are expressed by means of speech, physical gestures, or the corporeal symptoms expressed in the course of indicating various *bhāvas*.¹²

He adds further:

The presence of an entry that evokes (*sannādin*) the heart is the cause of the surge of *rasa* by means of which the body is covered, just like the fire covers an entire dry log.¹³

This metaphor of soaking the body with *rasa*-experience is crucial to *rasa* phenomenology. Besides somaticity, *rasa* experience has yet another domain that of inter-subjectivity.

Two different etymologies define *rasa*: "the mechanism by means of which [the enduring emotions] are savoured is called *rasa*" (*rasyate = āsvādyate*), and the very act of savoring is *rasa*" (*rasyata iti rasah*).¹⁵ Accordingly, *rasa* both sensing or savoring and is also something being savored. What is it that is being savored? The very emotions (*bhāvas*) that are commixed and reprocessed. This exposition retains the emotional content even in the evaluating mode of consciousness, elucidated by the concept of *camatkāra*. If *rasa* integrates emotions (*bhāvas*) into its very emergence, then observation applicable to emotions are also applicable to *rasa* and *vice versa*. Some have argued that *rasa* is a "heightened emotional state," thereby dismantling the hierarchy between *rasa* and *bhāva*. Most aestheticians reject this view particularly those who accept Abhinavagupta's interpretation. "Heightened emotional state" as in heightened anger or fear is evidently not joyful, and those emotions are savored, it is not due to higher stimulation but because these emotions have been evaluated in aesthetic judgment.

This is where the concept of *camatkāra* becomes relevant, as it is what demarcates *bhāva* from *rasa*. It is in finding *camatkāra* that a new property emerges that makes savoring possible. And by "emergence" I only mean "manifestation" (*abhivyakti*) of the properties that were not visible in the causal categories; there is no implication that I am committed to any specific causal account comparable to those in contemporary physicalisms. Abhinavagupta's model of *rasa* is not that of simple alteration of structure but as the transformation or *pariṇāma* model would support. (Among various forms of causal relationships between *bhāva* and *rasa* discussed in medieval literature, the transformation (*pariṇāma*) model accepts no ontological difference in the emergent property, with merely a modification of form in the new category.¹⁷) This is also not emergence in the sense of novel production (*utpatti*), as this would violate the Abhinavaguptan interpretation. I am reading both the terms *abhivyakti* and *vyāgya* in the Abhinavaguptan phenomenological sense of the manifestation of the properties that are dormant in the causal form, similar to the manifestation of the colors in the peacock feathers which are not absent in the yolk but are not manifest in it

either. To say “*rasa* emerges” is therefore neither equating *rasa* with *bhāva* nor supporting a categorical difference. That is, there lies both identity and difference between cause and effect, i.e., *bhāva* and *rasa*. This may not suffice to meet the demand for a full metaphysical account of causal properties but is an indication of how Abhinava treats the experiential relationship—i.e., the phenomenal features—between the occurrence of *bhāva* and the arising of *rasa*; the details of Abhinava’s engagement with causal theory would take us too far from the concerns of this chapter.

The key to the explication of Abhinava’s understanding of *bhāva* and *rasa* is the concept of *camatkāra*, a culturally laden and contested term. For example, Hiriyanna, Coomaraswamy, and Larson read *camatkāra* in an esoteric sense that led them to equate *rasa* with mystical experience.¹⁸ My contention is that there is nothing mystical for Abhinava about experiencing unobstructed bliss without any hindrance from the contrary stimulants. It is true that classical aestheticians have often compared *rasa* experience with experiencing Brahman.¹⁹ However, one should not overlook that this experience is equally compared with enjoying good food. The very act of comparing underlies the assumption of difference. Consequently, there are some aspects in experiencing *rasa* that resemble self-experience while there are other domains that suggest the enjoyment of food. Presence and absence of the active subjective mode of savoring, for example, is what distinguishes these experiences. That is to say that the cognitive faculties of evaluation and synthesis are active in the savoring of *rasa*.

Camatkāra is generally translated in contemporary readings as “wonder.” This rests on equating aesthetic experience as outlined in *rasa* literature with the Aristotelian conception of *thamaston*. This equation leads to two types of misconceptions: one, *camatkāra* describes aesthetic experience in general; it stands for the evaluative mode of experiencing *rasa*. “Wonder” is closer to experience—the emotion, the *bhāva*—of *adbhuta*. Additionally, the application of “wonder” to synthesize *rasa* experience simplifies aesthetic experience while appropriating a Western category of “wonder” without acknowledging the conceptual difference.²⁰ *Camatkāra* is the essence of aesthetic experience, bedazzlement, but at the same time, a judgmental state. Although conflating *camatkāra* with *adbhuta* and translating the first as “wonder” is not new,²¹ this equation has given rise to new problems. To make it clear, all the *rasas* elicit *camatkāra*, and when they do not, they fail to be recognized as such. It is therefore flawed to identify *adbhuta* as the essence of experiencing all *rasas*. Furthermore, the understanding of *camatkāra* as wonder fails to acknowledge the etymological meaning of the word, besides the way the term has been used by the classical aestheticians.

There is something shimmering (*camat*) or dazzling in the flash of experience where the parameters that separate different emotions and the subject and object are breached, and this reflexive mode is what the term intends to capture. Even the derivatives of the term, for example Prākṛta /*camakkai*/ refers to flashing or flash, dazzling or bedazzlement. Hindi, /*camakī*/, /*camaknāl*/, /*camkīlā*/; Nepali /*camkiol*/, or /*camkanul*/, all relate to shimmering or flashing. In Abhinavagupta’s terminology:

In the world, the consciousness devoid of all forms of distractions is identified as *camatkāra* or as entering, savoring, experiencing or enjoyment (*bhoga*), coming together (*samāpatti*), absorption, or repose.²²

In other applications, the term describes the experiential mode of bliss and also implicit expression of something which appears otherwise as if hidden.²³ When read in the *rasa* context, the term describes synthesis where the self gazes upon itself, recognizing its modifications (*bhāva*) in their pre-modified state. To sum up, the concept of *camatkāra* demands that what is being experienced, be it horror or laughter, is reprocessed within the aesthetic framework. And this experience presents itself as blissful, even when some of its contents would not be, if removed from the aesthetic context.

What makes *camatkāra* peculiar, therefore, is that it describes the phenomenological state in which the subject is both undergoing emotion (*bhāva*) while also aesthetically evaluating the episode, where the evaluation, being an intrinsic mode of consciousness, is itself blissful (in a non-worldly way that we will look at soon). There are two orders of experiencing: the raw emotions, with their own variable content, which may not be in themselves enjoyable, are presented, while a reflexive consciousness evaluates these experiences, and consists of joy (*ānanda*). This is what Abhinava implies when he says, “in my opinion, what is savoured is the very consciousness, consisting of pure joy.”²⁴ That is, there is no distinction between the higher-order savoring of variable emotions expressed in the play or poetry, and the experience of bliss itself. Abhinava expands further:

There is no concern regarding [the experience of] pain in this [savoring]. Only upon its variegation does inclination towards attraction or grief come into operation.²⁵

Upon the question of whether savoring is pure delight or a mode of consciousness that is judging a state of emotional blending, Viśvanātha says:

[One could ask:] How is it that *rasa* has [the property of] emergence? True. It is because the operation identified as savoring is distinct from acting or cognizing. This is why there are separate terms such as tasting, savoring, or having *camatkāra*. This is why there is a distinctive operation [at play in the manifestation of *rasa*] to primary significance (*abhidhā*).²⁶

Sanskrit aestheticians describe *rasa* experience as “*sukha*” or bliss and based on simple translation, readers assume that *rasa*-experience is “blissful.” Classical commentators provide examples like the emergence of sweetness in mature fruit, extending the “emergence” or the “*abhivyakti*” thesis, applied to *rasa* by the philosophers such as Abhinavagupta. However, we should not conflate this with everyday experience of joy. It is in this sense that Abhinavagupta applies the terminology of this experience being “outside of the sensory realm” (*lokottara*). The application of the term *camatkāra* needs to be read in this light, as this peculiar aspect of aesthetic savoring is lacking in the everyday experience of emotion.

In the above paradigm, *rasa* explains both the sensory aspect as well as the emotional content of such an experience, as has been outlined above. In this regard, one could evoke Husserl’s distinction between noetic content and its noematic correlate. The difference is that although Abhinava analyzes *rasa* distinctively as an act of experience together with its emotional correlate, he does it through deriving two different meanings for the same term *rasa*.²⁷ If we were to understand *rasa* as merely *rasanā* or savoring, it would be tautological to say “the savoring of *rasa*” (*rasāsvāda*), or “savoring the savoring.” On the other hand, if *rasa* only explained the content, we would require a separate category for aesthetic evaluation. This also applies to how we understand *camatkāra*.

The above description is not the only narrative of *rasa* found in classical Sanskrit literature. There were some early aestheticians working from within the Sāṅkhya framework who considered *rasa* as consisting either of painful or pleasant experiences. We find this position further extended in the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* of Rāmācandra and Guṇācandra. I will discuss this contrast in the last section, “Is *rasa* always a positive experience?”

BHĀVA, RASA AND REFLEXIVITY: PROGRESSION FROM BHĀVA TO RASA

Bhāva demonstrates continuity between the somatic and cognitive. This is evident even in the way the term captures a wide range of emotional occurents and corporeal states. The enduring emotions (*sthāyī bhāvas*) are essential for the conversation on *rasa*, as these “endure” even before and

during the process of the emergence of *rasa*. The endurance of these emotions is not changeless permanence, as *bhāvas* are constantly modified and they intermingle with each other. Their consistency is stream-like, which is not quite permanence. They surge and are diffused, contingent upon stimulating factors. When Abhinava says “what is meant by the term *bhāva* is the specific modes of consciousness,”²⁸ he makes no categorical distinction between emotion and cognition.

Now we can turn to the issue of “manifestation” (*abhivyakti*). In the discourse on *rasa*, this *abhivyakti* is commonly described in terms of “emergence” (*niṣpatti*), although this is not to be conflated with one particular interpretation, that of Śāṅkuka, that viewed *rasa* as an epiphenomenon not directly derived from the enduring emotions. Bharata declared that there is an “emergence” (*niṣpatti*) of *rasa* in the fusion of different *bhāvas*.²⁹ I understand *niṣpatti* as “distinct manifestation” (*abhivyakti*) in accordance with Abhinavagupta for whom, whilst there still exists similarity between *bhāvas* and *rasa*, the latter stands as a separate category.

If we apply here the *pariṇāma* model of causation that we have touched upon briefly, *bhāva* and *rasa* would be “chemically” the same, meaning that there would be nothing peculiar about *rasa* that is not in *bhāva*, and the difference would be qualitative and not categorical. This is what we find in the position of Rāmācandra and Guṇācandra. While treating *rasa* as an emergent property, something unique and not directly reducible to *bhāvas*, Rāmācandra and Guṇācandra simply take *rasa* to be pleasant and painful modes of experiences. This position is not radically different from the one that was maintained by Lollata, a theorist before the time of Abhinavagupta who maintained that *rasa* is merely a heightened form, an exalted state (*vipaciti*) of what already exists in the enduring emotion. By contrast, Abhinava’s paradigm allows *rasa* experience to be desirable and blissful even when the basic emotions are “negative” for there is a categorical distinction between *rasa* and *bhāva*.

Abhinavagupta’s *abhivyakti* or “emergence” model mediates between *rasa* as immediately felt property that yet cannot be reduced to the properties of more basic causal factors. The immediacy of *rasa* experience is crucial to analyze how his term “*lokottara*,” best read as “beyond the sensory realm,” needs to be understood. *Rasa* in this model is analogous to (although obviously not literally or scientifically like) the honey that is derived from nectar, an exotic dish made of raw ingredients: note that the relevance of these analogies is most potent because of the phenomenology of the emergent, the taste of the honey or of the dish.

Bharata has a wide range of metaphors to describe this emergence:

- i. Just like the credit goes to the king for the valour, so also the credit of *rasa* goes to the enduring emotion (*sthāyī bhāva*) (NŚ VII. 7. prose section).
- ii. Just as a gourmand savors the blend of flavors in an exotic dish, so also is the enduring emotion tasted in the mode of *rasa* (NŚ VII. 7. prose section).

Here, *rasa* could be thought of as transcendental experience of emotion rather than an emotion. A “transcendental experience” conceptually expands from the “originator” (*utpatti*) model of causality and suggests that *rasa* is inferential. This model can be contrasted with that of Lollata, who argued that *rasa* is non-sensory, a form of propositional knowledge. If we were to reinterpret *camatkāra* on this basis, it would be a judgmental cognitive state that lacks emotionality. This is what Abhinava is confronting by adopting the emergence or “manifestation” (*abhivyakti*) thesis. The consequence is that if *rasa* is only to be inferred while *bhāvas* are felt, we would not directly undergo it by sensory access to emotions (*bhāvas*). On the other hand, if we equate *bhāva* and *rasa* altogether and yet also maintain that *rasa* is inferentially known, then we would have to say that even *bhāvas* are inferred and not experienced. By contrast, in the Abhinavaguptan model of causality, emergence (*abhivyakti*) avoids the denial of the experiential nature (even if radically different) of *rasa* and *bhāva*.

There are two different ways of understanding the category of *lokottara*. From the Abhinavaguptan perspective, while this is an experience that cannot be captured within the sensory faculties and translated in common language, it is nonetheless directly revealed in immediate consciousness; *rasa* is beyond the world of common experiential language but not beyond any type of experience. But from the perspective of Lollata, *lokottara* means “outside the sensory realm” in the sense of outside of experience as such. We would be misreading the intent of Abhinava, however, if we were to conflate the concept of *lokottara* as found in Abhinava with transcendentality in the way Lollata articulates. It would be equally problematic if we fail to recognize the distinction between *rasa* and *bhāva* in Abhinavagupta’s aesthetics.

Cuneo exemplifies the position where, if one misunderstands *bhāva* as ordinary emotion, then an unbridgeable ontological divide opens between it and *rasa*. Consequently, we have the view that “*rasas* are *alamkara* and enjoyable precisely insofar as they lack reference to spatial and temporal coordinates as well as reference to any particular knowing subject,” as maintained by Cuneo (2013: 65). The most basic or somatic states of consciousness that appear to lack intentionality are therefore deemed “otherworldly.” Were *lokottara* to mean that *rasa* is outside of the sensory

faculties, it would be purely inferentially derived, and a form of propositional knowledge. This misconception emerges when we fail to recognize how Abhinava thinks of the intentionality of *rasa* and its “transcendentality.” If we synthesize the phenomenological aspects of this experience as outlined by Abhinavagupta, *rasa* experience simply transcends dichotomies. Abhinavagupta says, “this [*rasa* experience] is of the essence of savoring alone and it lacks the character of having an intentional object (*prameya*) etc.”³⁰ He adds further:

This savoring is neither an operation in the form of cognition nor an operation in the form of causation. This, however, is not non-veridical, as it is established by means of self-awareness. Savoring is of the character of consciousness itself. This, however, is distinct from other everyday modes of consciousness.³¹

There is yet another aspect of experiencing *rasa*, an inter-subjective domain, that is embedded within the concept of “commonization” (*sādhāraṇikarāna*) that Bhatṛa Nāyaka (c. 900) introduced and that of “sharing the same heart” (*sahridaya*), central to Abhinava’s aesthetics. In drama, the first explains the cognitive act of a viewer where he finds commonality with the character. The second explains an empathic state of sharing the same heart (*samānāmanahridayam yasya*). Abhinavagupta explains:

[This *rasa*] is not actualized as indifferent to [whether it is] common inference or by someone who is sexually aroused. Rather, [this is felt] essentially by reprocessing [lit. chewing], which corresponds to becoming one [with what is being felt], without climbing the ladder of inference, memory, etc., but by the growth of the savoring of *rasa* that comes to completion by the strength of the “common heart” (*sahridayatva*) that is characterized by the matching of the hearts.³²

This is also vivid in Jagannātha’s explanation:

By the phrase “entered into the heart of someone sharing the same heart,” [what is meant is] by the majesty (*mahiman*) of the particular mode of imagination accompanied by [the state of] being common-hearted with the intended subject (*tadīya*).³³

Going back to the specific mode of experience identified as *rasa*, the Abhinavaguptan paradigm explains consciousness as either pre-conditioned or conditioned in terms of subject, object, and cognitive mechanism. When

Jagannātha explains that “*rasa* is the mode of consciousness in which the covering has been torn,”³⁴ the same conceptual framework is found. Within these parameters, Jagannātha maintains that *rasa* stands for both the evaluative thinking of the enjoyment of [enduring emotions like] loving desire (*rati*), etc., as well as the consumption of [these enduring emotions like] *rati*, etc.³⁵

Terms such as “beyond the world” (*lokottara*) and “other-worldly” (*alaukika*) have been repeatedly used in describing *rasa* experience and as a consequence, interpreted as outside of the realm of experience, or something that is only inferentially given and not directly experienced. This line of argument has also led some to equate *rasa* with mystical experience, where it is called *lokottara* or *alaukika*. As has been already said, these arguments overlook the passages where the immediacy of *rasa* experience is explained and when the application of *lokottara* is limited to its just being “uncommon.” The very term *loka* or its derivatives also have the connotation of sight or the visual faculty, implying a sensory mode, while also used to describe the entities that can be grasped by the sensory faculties. Abhinava clarifies this in the following lines:

This *rasa* is not transcendental [not in the world (*alaukika*)]. [Question:] Are the determinants (*vibhāva*) etc. indicative (*nīṭhaka*) or causative? [Answer:] They are neither indicative nor causative. They are instrumental (*upāyoga*) in the savoring. [Question:] Is this [type of cause] found elsewhere? [Answer:] Only because [this type of cause] is not seen elsewhere, it is called uncommon (*alaukika*).³⁶

Simply put, the term *alaukika* does not describe *rasa* as outside of the scope of direct apprehension. And this makes it possible to address *rasa* as a form of emotional experience, albeit a unique kind, as the above citation suggests. In Abhinavagupta’s paradigm and for most of the aestheticians—except for Rāmācandra and Guṇācandra—*rasa* is blissful. There may be painful and pleasant emotions but there is always savoring when it comes to *rasa* experience.

If *rasa* is essentially blissful, one might argue that this is somewhat inferior to experiencing *bhāva*, as *bhāva* is full of life and sweet and sour experiences that come along, whereas *rasa* is merely a distilled sap eliciting only the experience of bliss. Cuneo (2013: 66) actually argues along these lines when he says:

Abhinavagupta’s very innovative interpretation of the *Rasa* theory implies that *rasas* (aesthetic emotions) are, somehow, less than *bhāvas* (common-

life emotions), insofar as the former lack some of the elements that pertain to the latter, i.e., all the elements that determine the inevitably pleasurable-cum-painful nature of real-life emotional existence.

If such were the case, a connoisseur who is capable of a higher-order processing of emotions from within the aesthetic framework would be rendered incapable of feeling sorrow, disgust or arousal. Emotional numbness is not what makes one a connoisseur. On the contrary, he is capable of reprocessing, or literally “chewing” (*carvinaṅ*) the raw emotions. Not a single classical aesthetician has argued that *rasa* is an inferior experience to *bhāva*. On the contrary, this experience is epitomized in terms of the return of consciousness to the core of itself, free of subjective and objective horizons, making *rasa* experience undivided (*akhaṇḍa*) by subject-object structures.³⁷

RASA AND REFLEXIVITY

The Abhinavaguptan model of “emergence” allows us to integrate the aspects of *rasa* embedded within *bhāva*: just like there is latency in a plant to blossom, *bhāvas* have potential to evolve into *rasa*. Just as a sour mango can transform into a sweet one when ripe, painful *bhāvas* can be pleasant when mature in the form of *rasa*. In addition, this allows us to explain *rasa* as having new properties not observed in the elemental forms, without excluding the feelings inherent in emotional states. With it being an emergent state, *rasa* enjoys a higher form of reflexivity, as it is closer to the most pristine form of consciousness than other modes conditioned by conceptual structures. As Abhinava says, *rasa* experience “manifests itself as distinct from the modes of consciousness that are distinguished as common-sense [experience] that are conditioned by the factors of subjectivity and objectivity. This is also common to the consciousness derived from inference, testimony, yogic perception etc.”³⁸ He adds further, “there is no relishing in grasping the common states of consciousness by means of inference. Relishing *rasa*, therefore, is of the character of an uncommon (*alaukika*) flash of consciousness that is distinct from the common (*laukika*) states of consciousness such as memory or inference.”³⁹

Reflexivity of *rasa* experience requires further explanation. First, there are the emotions that are felt as painful or pleasant. While consciousness is free to grasp reflexively its own states within different emotions, some form of reflexivity is already there in the basic pain-pleasure evaluation; and this property is not erased as the structure of experience evolves aesthetically. The Abhinavaguptan “emergence” model allows us to analyze emergent properties without rejecting source properties. If emotions are determined

by evaluation of certain states or conditions, then *rasas* are second-order judgments upon emotions already processed in the form of *bhāva*. Emotions, in this paradigm, are categorically the expressions of consciousness. For Abhinava, consciousness always has the character of bliss (*ānanda*); “the core of consciousness is bliss,”⁴⁰ which explains both its built-in self-expression, being expressed as manifold, and its inherent savoring character. It is not only in the evolved forms of *rasa* that emotions can be relished, but also in seminal form in the elementary *bhāva* states; however, the nature of the reflexivity of consciousness is different, since only bliss is found in the savoring of *rasa*.

IS RASA ALWAYS A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE?

The above conversation has primarily focused on the mainstream *rasa* discourse where the aesthetic appreciation of emotion is something to be relished even when the emotions that provide the basis for such evaluation are painful ones. I would like to offer a different paradigm, a marginal one, just to confirm that the *rasa* aesthetics of Abhinavagupta relies on an inherent distinction between the enduring emotions and the processed *rasa*. And for this, I would like to introduce the position of Rāmācandra and Guṇācandra, who maintain that there is no categorical difference between *rasa* and *bhāva*. I am not proposing, however, that what Rāmācandra and Guṇācandra offer in the *rasa* discourse is unique, as Abhinava cites a position that “following the Śāṅkhyā perspective, *rasa* is of the character of both pain and pleasure.”⁴¹ Abhinava neither accepts this Śāṅkhyā paradigm nor rejects the presence of any enduring emotion (*śhāyina*). He is only maintaining that “when infused with [lit. ensnared by] the determinant, consequent, and transient *bhāvas*, the very enduring emotion attains the identity of *rasa*.”⁴² He says elsewhere, “there is the property of being savored in the *rasa* that is designated by the term ‘enduring.’”⁴³ In contrast to Abhinava and somewhat closer to what Abhinava identifies as the Śāṅkhyā position, Rāmācandra and Guṇācandra argue that:

What has been said—that all *rasas* are comprised of pleasure—contradicts common sense. Even when accompanied by both the primary determinants (*vibhāva*) and by the determinant that is brought forth by poetry or drama, [the *rasa* experience of] fear, disgust, and terror stimulate an indescribable state of suffering for those savoring *rasa*. Therefore, the world shuns [the experience of] fear, etc.⁴⁴

Regarding the relishing of negative emotions, which is consistently explained in the Abhinavaguptan paradigm in terms of savoring, Rāmācandra and Guṇācandra maintain:

The *camatkāra* that has been observed even with these [negative emotions] is when the savoring of *rasa* has ceased and is due to the skill of the poet or the actor who demonstrates things the way they are.⁴⁵

On the one hand, these aestheticians maintain that *rasa* is not necessarily pleasant, as it is comprised both pleasure and pain (*subhadubhāva* *rasa* | *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* III.7d), while on the other hand, they also maintain that *rasa* elicits *camatkāra*.⁴⁶ But this *camatkāra* is not to be conflated with the aesthetic savoring of wonder, which is captured by the term *adbhūta*. In this shifted paradigm, emotional experience rests in the first order of *bhāva* experience. When the same *bhāva* is experienced as *rasa*, there exists another category of evaluation described in terms of *camatkāra*. Explicit in *rasa* as *camatkāra* is an appraisal that evaluates the aesthetic sense. Consequently, *camatkāra* here lacks exuberance and is expunged of savoring, as this only means a judgmental state. This leaves *rasa* as a potentially painful state, as any negative emotion can be:

Even the savoring of pleasure when the grief of those suffering due to the loss of what they love is being described or acted on is also the savoring of suffering in reality. Only the one who is grieving experiences pleasure by the conversation about someone grieving and becomes disturbed by the conversation of joy. Therefore the [*rasas*] of *karuṇa*, etc. are of the character of pain.⁴⁷

Embedded in the above description is the thesis that *bhāva* and *rasa* are identical, as far as the content of experience is concerned, and *camatkāra* that underlies *rasa* in this paradigm is not savoring but evaluating. This is to say that although Rāmācandra and Guṇācandra accept the category of *camatkāra*, they do not also maintain that *rasa* experience is pleasant on all occasions.⁴⁸ Above all, this is not the “emergence” paradigm of Abhinavagupta when it comes to explaining the manifestation of *rasa*.

What underscores this pivotal difference in the analysis of *rasa* is the philosophical background. The notion that emotions are eventually painful, or that there is nothing worth savoring in *rasa*, reflect attitudes toward worldly pleasure. Abhinava makes worldly pleasure a central piece of his aesthetics, whereas Rāmācandra and Guṇācandra rest their aesthetic theory on Jain monasticism. Whether consciousness can or should be expunged of emotions is the issue that differentiates these schools. In Rāmācandra and Guṇācandra’s aesthetics, the fabric of *camatkāra* is devoid of sensation, lacking pain or pleasure. *Camatkāra*, as noted in this paradigm, merely reveals the thing as it is (*yathāśhīlavastu*). This then would be a judgmental

state that is not commingled with emotions, leaving the structures of emotions, both in terms of *bhāva* and *rasa*, in separate realms. Aesthetic experience would lack savoring (*carnvanā*) in this paradigm, which enjoys center place in Abhinava's philosophy. That is, rather than replaying the enduring emotions, having them evaluated on their capacity to stimulate bliss, the paradigm of *carnatkāra* in this altered paradigm makes *rasa* an evaluative state. Here, perhaps, *carnatkāra* is indeed more akin to catharsis.

The contrast in Abhinava's understanding with the above position lies not just in *rasa* being either pleasant or both pleasant and painful, but also in its containing a mode of judgment. For Abhinava, emotional content is integral to the evaluative state: the same emotion, whether it stimulates pain or pleasure in its ordinary condition is processed as pleasant—indeed, blissful—when the experience is transformed into *rasa*. Thus, Abhinavagupta stresses that “this savoring is not an operation of the tongue but that of the mind” (*na rasamāyāpāra āśvānam, api tu mānasa eva* | Abhinavahārati upon NŚ VI.32). Chewing (*carnvanā*), as applied by Abhinava, is therefore metaphorical, used to demonstrate that the same emotion is re-processed when evaluated as *rasa*. That is, the phenomenal state of having a specific emotion that is a commixture of different emotions is repeatedly processed at this higher order. And this processing, in my reading, is a form of synthesis which allows one to “act out” pain, to discharge its power to dominate experience. The emotions are not thrown out, as the self retains autonomy despite these feelings, and can evaluate according to his liking, with a possibility of making them blissful. This is why Abhinavagupta is explicit that although being a mode of consciousness, *rasa* experience is distinct from arousal or grief stimulated by an attractive woman, etc., as this does not generate further modes of consciousness but instead is grasped by the mode of consciousness that is returning back to the self.⁴⁹

Abhinava is not saying, however, that *rasa* is merely savoring. This, for him, is the commixture of the basic emotions, and although the emergent occurrence in the form of *rasa* has its specific newness (*navatva*), the components that make *rasa* possible are nonetheless present in latent form in the *bhāvas* themselves. If *rasa* meant merely *rasamā* or savoring for Abhinava, there would not be a categorical difference between savoring erotic or comic *rasas*, and so even enumerating *rasas* would be pointless. Abhinavagupta meticulously argues in defense of peacefulness (*śāntā*) as the ninth *rasa*,⁵⁰ which would be unnecessary if *rasas* did not have some inherent qualitative state to distinguish one from the other. It cannot be a mere sense of bliss equated with the experiential aspect to be identified as *rasa*, since there would be no categorical difference then between one *rasa* and another.

Debates over the number of *rasas* demonstrate that any emotion can elevated to that state. Just as we find a meticulous analysis of peaceful *rasa* Abhinavagupta, we find the same sophistication regarding *bhakti* or devotion in Bhakti literature.⁵¹ Some aesthetes have explicitly stated that there can be many *rasas* as there are unrefined emotions. Pollock (2012: 195) cites passage, “There is no mental state (*cittavṛtti*) that cannot achieve enhancement and become *rasa*.”⁵² What makes an emotional state the savoring of *r* according to Abhinava, is the judgmental state, or the reflexive gaze that makes emotion its object:

This savoring is of the character of consciousness. However, this is distinct from other, common consciousness.⁵³

This savoring, in his opinion, is a non-directional bliss that is merely aware of being in the blissful state.⁵⁴ For Abhinava, *rasa* experience retains a unified flavor within the fabric of the phenomenal content, while being its phenomenologically distinct from those experiences mediated through concepts. Although *rasa* experience is not devoid of conceptualization, having both the emotional and judgmental contents intact—this, Abhinava's view, is as intimate as we can be to the being equated with consciousness that is savoring its own emotional modalities. Therefore Abhinavagupta says, “there, all the *rasas* have the primacy of bliss because bliss is the essence of consciousness that is of the character of a singular mode of savoring one's own consciousness.”⁵⁵

The conversation on *rasa* and *bhāva*, the evaluative processes involved in *carnatkāra*, and the mechanisms explained in the cocktail of emotion manifesting in the form of *rasa*, all clarify issues that can be linked to a contemporary conversation on emotion, but that is a task for another day. The relationship between *bhāva* and *rasa*, as articulated by classical aestheticia demonstrates the challenge of addressing complex emotions and emotional refinement on one hand and evaluative and judgmental aspects of emotion the other. This foregrounds *carnatkāra*, an aesthetic relishing that is intermingled with cognitive states. While the boundary between aesthetic *carnatkāra* and mystical states often appears to give way, classical aestheticians such as Abhinava do not allow for aesthetic relishing to become mystical states. An “emergent” model contributes a hierarchical order of feelings, unrefined emotions, a *rasa*. The category of *carnatkāra* explains the evaluative mechanisms involved in savoring emotion. The intentionality in the emergent structures is in semi-form, in latency, in the origins. Just as the term *bhāva* dismantles the difference between the external objective world and the emotional being, *rasa* demands that emotion be understood both somatically and cognitively.

NOTES

1. For the hermeneutics of *rasa* and *bhāva* see Pollock (2016, 2012) and Cuneo (2013: 49–76). For analysis of *camatkāra*, see Gnoli (1985), and Pandey (1963).
2. . . . *bhāvā bhāvayanti rasān*. . . NŚ VI.35cd.
3. *bhāvasabdena tāvac cittavrttiviseṣā eva vivakṣitāḥ* | *Abhinavabhāratī*, NŚ VII.1. (Śāstrī 1971: 784).
4. *kim bhavanti bhāvāḥ kim vā bhāvayanti bhāvāḥ* | *ucyate—vāgāṅgasatvopetān kāyāntāthān bhāvayanti bhāvā itī* | (NŚ VII. Śāstrī 1971: 783. Bharata derives *bhāva* not from the root √*bhū* *sattāyām*, i.e., that which pertains to occurrence or coming into being, but from the root √*bhū* *aukalikane*, that pertains to combining or constituting. Abhinavagupta, on the other hand, derives the term from both the roots and endorses the etymology “that which occurs” (*bhavanti bhāvāḥ*), referring to the mental states that occur in the mind. For discussion on different etymologies, see *Abhinavabhāratī*, NŚ VII. Śāstrī 1971: 785–6. Bharata also derives *bhāva* from √*bhū* *sattāyām*, with +*ntic*, in the causative, with the meaning of *bhāvita* or to cause something to be in a particular way. An example is something soaked with particular flavor or filled with specific smell. See, NŚ VII. Śāstrī 1971: 787.
5. *vibhāvanūbhāvavyabhicārisanyogād rasamīpattibḥ* | *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata, Chapter VI. Prose after verse 31.
6. “Even though the consequent and transient *bhāvas* are not of the character of mental modification and therefore do not correlate with the enduring [*bhāva*], their being of the character of predisposition is intended here.” (*vibhāvā amūbhāvā ca citavrttyanāmnakāvād yadyapi na sābhavānūbh sthāyīnā tatpāpī vāsānāmnakateḥa teṣān vivakṣitā* | *Abhinavabhāratī* upon NŚ VI. Upon the *Rasasūtra* commentary (Śāstrī 1971: 622).
7. As Abhinavagupta explains, “the etymology there [for the term *bhāva*] is both ‘that which occur’ and ‘that which constitute’” (*tatrāpi bhavanti bhāvayanti vyutpattibḥ* | *Abhinavabhāratī* upon NŚ VI.3).
8. *rasanā ca bodhanūpāya* | *Abhinavabhāratī* upon NŚ, Śāstrī 1971: 671.
9. *kintu bodhāntarebhyo lautklebhyo ulāksanāya* | *Abhinavabhāratī* upon NŚ, Śāstrī 1971: 671.
10. For such an analysis of *rasa* and catharsis, see Gerow 2002.
11. *sattvoprekṣākālekhāndasavprakāśānandacimnyabḥ* | *vedyāntarāspaśāsānyo brahmāsvādāsahodarabḥ* | *lokottaracamatkāraprānāḥ kaścīḥ pramātrībḥ* | *svāārauvadabhinatvemyam āsvādyate rasabḥ* | *Sāhityadarpaṇa* III.2–3.
12. *yathā hi nānūvyatīnamasankṛtam annam bhujīnā rasān āsvādayanti sumanasabḥ purnāḥ harsādīnś cādḥgacchanti tābhā nānūbhāvūbhinayavyatīnān vāgāṅgasatvopetān sthāyībhāvān āsvādayanti sumanasabḥ prekṣakāḥ harsādīnś cādḥgacchanti* | Bharata, NS VI. The text after verse 31. Śāstrī 1971: 678–80.
13. *yo ṛtho hṛdayasannūdāt tasya bhāvo rasodbhāvabḥ* | *śāstrīn vyāpṛyate tena śūṣkām kṣīḥam tvāgnīnā* | NŚ VIII.7.
14. This etymology rests on Bharata’s statement: “Why is this category called *rasa*? We say, because it is savored. How is the *rasa* savored? . . . the enduring emotions

- are savored.” (*rasa itī kalp padārthasḥ ucyate—āsvādyatvāt* | *katham āsvādyat rasabḥ? . . . sthāyībhāvān āsvādayanti*) | NŚ VI. The prose after verse 32.
15. The etymology, *rasayata itī* is found in *Abhinavabhāratī*, NŚ VI.12. This etymology grounds *rasa* as the experiential mode rather than the content, as explicit in the text Abhinava cites: “*rasa* is the experience of the character of savoring” *āsvādānāmnūbhavo rasa*. . . | NĀ VI.31. Śāstrī 1971: 647. Also Madhusūdana’s commentary confirms that “savoring is of the character of awareness” (*caruvāntīnako jīvāntīnake āsvādāḥ* | *ibid*).
 16. For a recent survey of positions relating physicalism and emergentism, see Wilson 2015.
 17. Abhinavagupta himself addresses this position, identifying this with Sāṅkhyā philosophy. For discussion, see *Abhinavabhāratī*, Śāstrī 1971: 640.
 18. This approach is prevalent in the works of Hiriyanna 1954; Coomaraswamy 1956; and Larson 1976.
 19. The reference, “*parabrāhmanāsivādasavīdhenā bhogena bhujyate . . .*” in the *Abhinavabhāratī* (Śāstrī 1971: 645) corresponds to the position of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka. Viśvanātha seems to have glossed different positions in comparing experience of *rasa* with that of Brahman (see *Sāhityadarpaṇa* III.2–3 (for text see fn. 11).
 20. See Bynum 1997 for wonder in Western philosophical contexts.
 21. For discussion, see Raghavan (1967: 205–10).
 22. *tathā hi loke sakalaviḥnavinimuktā samvrtit eva camatkāranirvūṣarasānāsī anābhogasamāpattilavyavīrantyātāśabdair abhidhīyate* | *Abhinavabhāratī*, (Chapter VI): 280.
 23. Bhāskarakanṭha, for example sees it as “experiencing bliss” (*camatkaruv ānandam amūbhavanti* | *Mokṣopāya*, *Upātī* V. 20), and even here, primary *camatkāra* is “experience.” And Mammata says:
Similar to the breasts of a sexually attractive woman, is that which is hidden *camatkaroti*. However, that which is not hidden is already vivid and therefore referred primarily and thus subordinate. (*kāmīnīkucakalāśaṅgūḍham camatkaroty agūḍham tu sphūṭatayā vicyāyamānam itī guṇī bhūvā eva*) The prose section after *Kāvyaprakāśā* V.1.
 24. *asnamante sannvedanam evānandaghanam āsvādyate* | *Abhinavabhāratī*, NŚ VI. 33: 293.
 25. *tatra kā dūpkhasānka* | *kevalam tasyaiva cīratālekanne ratsōkādūtāsānāvāpārāḥ* | *Abhinavabhāratī* (NŚ VI. 33: 293).
 26. *katham rasasya vyatīyatei cet satyam uktam* | *ata evānūbh* | *ulāksana evūṣya kṛtījīpattibhedebhyabḥ svādānābhyabḥ kaścīḥ vyāpārāḥ ata eva hi rasānāsvādānā matkaranādāyo ulāksanā eva vyāpādesā ity abhidhātāvulāksanavyāpārātā atra*. . . | Viśvanātha in SD, Ch. 3: 53. The term *abhidhā* is borrowed here from the Sanskrit philosophy of language where the semantic power is described in three categories of *abhidhā* or literary expression, *lakṣanā* or secondary derivation that collectively refers to various forms of metaphorical expression, implication, and metonymy, and *vyatījānā* or suggestion. A common

