BEYOND THE ARCHITECTURE OF SENSING

An investigation of the role and function of the observer in a staged performance, with particular reference to the Indian aesthetic theory of Rasa, and its effect on what we mean by consciousness.

This Thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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Abstract

Beyond The Architecture of Sensing

Sage Bharata’s ancient Indian aesthetic theory of “Rasa” has for many years been the subject of research and intercultural exploration in global theatre and performance studies. While this dissertation focuses on the role of observer in performance, it more importantly explores the larger notion of consciousness. Illuminated by “Rasa” theory, this research sifts through the understanding of broader philosophical, spiritual and aesthetic issues that are so often not cohesively examined within the context of performance studies. European and Asian philosophies are linked to once again examine consciousness in our human existence in the physical universe. Ancient Indian aesthetics and modern scientific theories, and their understanding of sound and visual perception are scrutinised to help in understanding the nature of performance, experience and consciousness. The ‘Rasa’ theory that stems from Bharata’s thesis, The NatyaShastra, a compendium on theatre, performance and technique, pivots upon both a spiritual and an aesthetic axis. In this dissertation, the observer/the self is taken through a journey around this axis. I will align the aspect of ‘Self’ as the observer within consciousness, with the observing principle of Quantum theory and a
discussion of the theatre spectator, as catalysts in creating transformation. Elucidated by global theories of phenomenology and philosophies, both ancient and contemporary, and cultured through the insights of theoretical physics, coherence is established. The lived artistic experience of ‘the dancer Sarasa’ and ‘the visual artist Sarasa’, the mutual interplay of this expression of experience, from the physical to psychical states is explored; the dancer through her movement in space aligns with the artist whose movement is captured on canvas. This experience of expression is beyond the architecture of ‘sensing’. It communicates to the observing entity, an integral vision from that ‘Self-space’, that transcends space, time and locality. This communication is ‘Rasa’. The spiritual, the aesthetic and theatrical significance converge. Philosophies are surpassed. Consciousness is transformed. The work is done.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

This dissertation investigates the role and function of the observer in a staged performance, with particular reference to the Indian aesthetic theory of Rasa\(^1\), and this observer-Rasa effect on what we mean by consciousness.

This investigation brings into focus the intimate connection between philosophical enquiry and artistic endeavours, and their often-parallel journey, in unveiling the diversely complex and multifarious processes involved in cognizing experience. Rather than creating yet another theory or aesthetic taxonomy of its artifacts, this research attempts to discuss some insights into performance and consciousness shared between philosophy, scientific enquiry, and aesthetics and arts practices.

The power of the image, either as a static image in a painting, or as a moving image in dance invokes the question of how it is read by the audience or observer. Cultural differences aside, the image is part of a complex semiotic system that creates a distinct language, be it in performance or not. It is this language that will help to re-conceptualize the philosophies examined in this dissertation. Dance and painting will be the practical sites I will use to explore

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\(^1\) The word ‘Rasa’ is derived from Cikitsa Sastra part of the Pancha Vidhya Sastras- Upanishadic doctrine of the coming of the soul into the birth of individuality.
the relationship between theological/spiritual, scientific and aesthetic dialogues.

Unlike in much primarily European Anglophonic perception, there is no rift between philosophical enquiry and artistic endeavour in most cultures of the Asian traditions. Particularly in India, art remains an integral part of a persistent, if complex, tradition of social, cultural and religious pursuits; holding the artist and the spectator/aesthete on equal and exalted positions. In detailing this inherent unity and integration in spiritual, artistic and scientific thought, this thesis will investigate the potential spiritual and aesthetic capacity of an artist and her creative impetus as well as fundamental epistemic aspects of art and aesthetic experience.

Since art and religion are inextricably bound in most Indian traditions, the quest to identify the process of transcendence through art and aesthetics, in particular, Indian theories of aesthetics, is a particularly prominent theme in Hindu traditional practices. Any serious analysis must delve into the vastness and variety of Hindu religious ritual and devotion.

2 Relating to or affecting the human spirit as opposed to physical attributes
3 “Hinduism” is a term used to designate a body of religious and philosophical beliefs indigenous to the Indian subcontinent. Hinduism is one of the world’s oldest religious traditions, and it is founded upon what is often regarded as the oldest surviving text of humanity: the Vedas. It is a religion practiced the world over. Countries with Hindu majorities include Bali, India, Mauritius and Nepal, though countries in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas have sizable minorities of practicing Hindus.
However, to study and analyze the path of “art as a means for transcendence”, a dialogue between the methodology advocated by Bharata’s aesthetic theory and the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta is an appropriate mechanism to follow. Informing this dialogue will be insights from the phenomenological theories of Edmund Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Japanese Theatre theorist Zeami Motokiyo, Martin Buber, Mikel Dufrenne, Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre and Michael Polanyi, and especially the significant dynamics of their work on the subject of art and aesthetic experience.

Bharata’s NatyaShastra, also known as the 5th Veda, specifically codifies the spiritual aspects of the Sanatana Dharma into a treatise on theatre and aesthetics. Cocooned within the structure of the treatise is the theory of Rasa.

Out of the thirty-six chapters that make up the NatyaShastra, the topic and discussion of ‘rasa’ is devoted to only one chapter. Despite this, the theory of Rasa has become hugely influential in the arena of world theatre and performance.

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4 In this dissertation I refer to Bharata as a sage although fully aware that Bharata may be also be a number of seers who, over many centuries, could have contributed to formalizing the NatyaShastra, as inferred to by the scholar Vatsyayan in her book The Square and Circle of Indian Arts.

5 Advaita Vedanta, a sub-school of Vedic philosophy, has acquired a broad acceptance in Indian culture well beyond as the paradigmatic example of Hindu philosophical thought, giving “a unifying interpretation of the whole body of Upanishads”

6 “Eternal Law”- an alternate name for Hinduism, dominant religion of India.
Bharata’s purpose in creating the treatise was that while the sacred, the divine, and the highest philosophical truths can be experienced, they can also be a source of pleasure to all. His avowed aim in delivering the sacred scriptures to all of humanity was so that it may be experienced and savoured through and beyond the senses and body, thus ultimately initiating positive transformation within the consciousness.

The Rasa, sown by the artist/dramatist, sprouted and flowered through the branches of ‘emotional expression’ and plot, is finally experienced by the spectator or audience. The process is reminiscent of an energy pattern, a kaleidoscopic ‘mandala’ of movement, like Zeami’s “Fushikaden”7 (Horan 2010) and “Jo-ha-Kyu”8 (Zeami and Wilson 2006) and the Indian sacred geometry, “Sri Yantra”, the experiential process between artist, her art, and the audience... and back to the artist. Being a cyclic pattern, it weaves and corresponds with psychological processes within the consciousness of both entities.

7 Zeami - Japanese playwright who codified the form in 21 treatises, the most influential of which is the Fūshi kaden(1400–18; “Appearance of Flower Transmission”), also known as the Kaden sho. Zeami’s teachings, originally intended for his descendants in the Kanze school of Nō, discuss both philosophical and practical considerations regarding actors’ training (Britanica)

This thesis’s epistemological dialogue will survey the terrains and domains of consciousness as examined by Western theorists (Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Buber), the cerebral topography of consciousness as researched by numerous neuroscientists like Francis Crick, Christof Koch, V.S.Ramachandran, and Daniel Glasser as well as interpretations by Adhi Shankara in Advaita Vedanta and Abhinavagupta of Kashmir Shaivism. A syncretic, mosaic interpretation and interweaving of systems of thought, sometimes seemingly diverse, will be presented in this work. A

From the point of view of Hindu philosophy, in order to create a true, clear and intelligible picture of consciousness, the scholar requires not only an anthropocentric enquiry but also a theo-centric and cosmo-centric study for an integrated insight into reality. Perhaps we require a map to chart through the investigated paradigms. Or perhaps, within the intentional brushstrokes of a painting or a moving moment of dance, an emergent, spontaneous order will begin to emerge and manifest from this enquiry.

The creative impetus, in scientific terminology, is a process of emergence. It implies a chaotic situation within a person’s consciousness that develops while processing and assembling information within a performance or while creating a painting; trusting the chaos; and then abandoning notions of ‘I and self’ by abandoning rational or conceptual thinking [and delving into an abyss.
of not knowing]. The very chaotic process paradoxically instigates a state of ‘stillness’ in the mind. After this abandonment of the rational, the creative process emerges. Systems Theory based on the ecosystem as well as the Baars global workspace theory, this thesis argues, also suggest similar adaptive responses.

Chaos Theory explains this ‘self-organizing’ capacity, and reveals the depth of interdependence of systems within nature. The aspect of self-similarity is also of central significance in appreciating how nature looks and functions, and thus how it might be imaged. Chaos theory provides a ground to bring together different spheres of knowledge — science, theology and art. It reveals the peculiarities of a material’s behaviour as being of critical importance in the mechanism of evolution and systems in play.

9 Global workspace (GW) theory emerged from the cognitive architecture tradition in cognitive science. Newell and co-workers were the first to show the utility of a GW or “blackboard” architecture in a distributed set of knowledge sources, which could cooperatively solve problems that no single constituent could solve alone. The empirical connection with conscious cognition was made by Baars (1988, 2002). GW theory generates explicit predictions for conscious aspects of perception, emotion, motivation, learning, working memory, voluntary control, and self systems in the brain. It has similarities to biological theories such as Neural Darwinism and dynamical theories of brain functioning. Functional brain imaging now shows that conscious cognition is distinctively associated with wide spread of cortical activity, notably toward frontoparietal and medial temporal regions. Unconscious comparison conditions tend to activate only local regions, such as visual projection areas. Frontoparietal hypometabolism is also implicated in unconscious states, including deep sleep, coma, vegetative states, epileptic loss of consciousness, and general anesthesia. These findings are consistent with the GW hypothesis, which is now favored by a number of scientists and philosophers. Bernard Baars-Science Direct Journal

10 It is important to note that I am using this concept almost like a metaphor and that it is a mathematical concept that looks at interdependencies in terms of probabilities.

11 Chaos Theory does bring these elements together, but whether they represent a manifestation we recognise is an open question. We are guided by our perceptions and the limitations of our physical self in recognising interrelationships.
The reflective aspect of the artistic creative process is thus related to the way in which we process information every minute of our lives; essentially it is based on the way we progress through life, minute by minute, learning and evolving, affirming self through finding meaning.

Thus, while a systematic study will be focused on ‘subjectivity’, it will question known and lesser known views on philosophical enquiries of Self, and begin an ‘unveiling’ of the concealed or obstructed view of the ‘self’\textsuperscript{12}, as viewed through the tonalities of Advaita\textsuperscript{13} and Samkhya philosophy\textsuperscript{14}, the Quantum world\textsuperscript{15} as well as the Bharata’s\textsuperscript{16} Theory of Rasa.

The initial project of this thesis was aimed at identifying the vital relevance of the ‘self’ that exists in Advaita Vedanta as a witnessing consciousness, in Husserl’s ‘minimal self’, the “I-it” and “I-Thou” of Buber, Quantum theory’s ‘observing entity’ and Samkhya\textsuperscript{17} (Nair 2007) theory of ‘self’ that observes in fractional time. Increasingly, however, the theory of Rasa moved to center stage on my research.

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\textsuperscript{12} Distinctions between ‘self and Self’, while pertinent in Indian philosophy is not widely understood in Western philosophy.

\textsuperscript{13} Advaita Vedanta tradition, a live tradition of India, explicated by Sankara (788-820 CE) system of philosophy.

\textsuperscript{14} The ancient Samkhya and Vedanta philosophies discuss various aspects of origin of universe and evolutionary rationality of creation. The whole approach of various Indian belief systems, in some way or the other, is based on these philosophies.

\textsuperscript{15} Quantum mechanics presents the enquiry into the essential nature of things, “the search for the ultimate substance and workings of matter”. (David George 1989). More importantly it proves that the observing phenomena itself becomes part of the observed.

\textsuperscript{16} The author of the renowned Indian treatise of dramaturgy, “NatyaShastra”.

\textsuperscript{17} S.Nair 2007
Rasa theory is foundational in exploring the observer-artist relationship. Analyzing the relationship between the artist and observer, decoding and deconstructing known norms of this fundamental equation, it highlights the significance of who is the ‘self’ in the observer and what exactly is being observed as aesthetic object. Consequently, the theory also explores modes of meaning being created by the artist and spectator/observer or the very concept of the artist and art; that is, what they really are.

Further, the fundamental identity of ‘self’ in the artist and in the observer, the study draws on protean concepts within the ‘philosophy of consciousness’ and in the observer phenomenon of quantum mechanics, where it is argued that the observing phenomena itself becomes part of the observed, and is somehow transformed by it. By identifying a pattern common within these apparently differing realms, a surprising and uncommon network becomes visible and the apparent fragmentation vanishes to reveal shared insights from seemingly diverse bodies of knowledge.

The ‘Rasa’ theory, also, strategically places the observer as an active participant in the creation of ‘bhava’ and ‘Rasa’. Thus the two-way operation
in the participant as established by the observer equation of quantum and the Rasa created and recreated in the artist-spectator realm, meet.

**Dance-Painting-Sculpture-Music**

These art practices are four different languages that all have the capacity to produce Rasa.

Simplistically:

a. **Dance**: through physical movements in space and time

b. **Painting**: through arrested movement of brush strokes of paint on surface

c. **Sculpture**: through the three dimensional extension of Painting

d. **Music**: through the rhythmic motion of musical notes.

Although the outer physicality and materiality of these languages differs in creative expression and manifests as different languages, the inner creative thought-impetus is arguably the same. Despite their different forms, I will attempt to demonstrate that these art forms can evoke similar emotional and mental response outcomes in the audience. As in all thought processes, we

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18 What I am saying here is that the Rasa concept parallels Schrodinger’s contentions in quantum physics. (observer changes the phenomenon) Einstein did not agree with Schrodinger, saying “God does not play dice with the universe”. Schrodinger’s viewpoint is still relevant in contemporary quantum physics. Fine, Arthur, The Shaky Game: Einstein, Realism, and the Quantum Theory. Chicago University Press, 1986.
subconsciously arrange our ideas in sequences and execute these choices to produce an outcome.

Taking into account the psychologist Stephen Pinker’s statements that “Language is a window to human minds and language is an outcome of human minds interacting” and that “Language is cognitive machinery with which humans conceptualize the world“\(^{19}\) (ThinkingAllowed TV 2012), I would argue the language of artists no matter what their particular skill may be, conceptualizes a unique world that we as spectator/audience are given access to.

My study aims firstly to research and to analyze this link from ‘thought to action’; and to then correlate these creative processes involved within the mind of an artist or dancer and musician, and the creation of a change in consciousness in the spectator/audience.

**Methodology: Dance**

To test the limits of this enquiry from a personal experience is also a vital part of this project. Augmenting a methodology, empirical in nature, via direct experience, by being the dancer in the dance, being the artist of the artwork and understanding the aesthetic ‘moment’ through experience, will constitute a movement through the means of performance beyond a

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19 Pinker, Steven. 2012 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZDeYe93rFg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZDeYe93rFg)
phenomenal aspect of tacit knowing; this will be a significant, *lived* knowing.

The artist through her movement investigates ‘intention’ through colour and the dancer engages rhythmic energy-colour patterns that fuse to create movement. This methodology is *in* performance, underpinning theoretical observations through direct, corporeal, and subjective experience; an experience that enacts a change in consciousness experienced in a present-tense moment.

This thesis, therefore, will question the artistic creative process: How does it work? Are there fundamental patterns of consciousness that determine the creative process? This is a methodology, an empirical study, centered on attaining understanding, relating to the elements and dynamics involved in creating visual art (paintings) and dance.

**The Methodology of Painting:** [symbols-codes-processes-patterns-performance-paintings-movement and 108 karanas].

Aesthetic experience is concerned with the capacity of the human individual to create words and objects of polyvalent meanings: metaphors and symbols.
Historically and still in the present time, the world of theatre arts has been created, in its various forms, next to the world of facts, transforming the world by means of symbolic representation and ‘re-framing’: “Symbolic thinking”, says Rolf Von Eckartsberg, is “connotative thinking, allowing multiple readings and interpretations of the given variables.” (Eckartsberg 1981) Alongside this view, I will be investigating the Hindu mandala, Sri Yantra, a mathematical representation of cardinal points of energy cycles, mirroring the psychical universe. Powerful as a visual image of sets of crisscrossing triangles set within two circular complexes of lotus petals and surrounded by a square, it is at once a sacred geometry as well as a complex mathematical syntax of consciousness.

The ‘symbol’ is representational of the ‘being and becoming’ of the relationship between ‘thought and action’. It is the power of art to represent and reflect human experience to each of us and to clarify our lived meanings through contemplation and interpretation; that is through hermeneutical experience and activity.

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21 Innate within this symbol is the Hindu icon Ardhanarishwara, a poetic representation of the creative impetus in a male-female form, a composite androgynous form of the Hindu god Shiva and his consort Parvati. Is depicted as half male and half female, split down the middle. The right half is usually the male Shiva, illustrating his traditional attributes.
Following this thread of ‘being and becoming’, this thesis explores a movement based study of the sculptural work of the karanas of Bharata’s NatyaShastra, approached from a phenomenological perspective; the moving notation of dance sculptures will be studied and created as illustrations of ink on paper from the point of view of ‘intentionality’. Articulating ‘movement in space’ (dance), through movement on paper (illustrations) of Bharata’s 108 karanas, “these illustrations, as Shankar says, “with a single movement…. encapsulate the meaning or primary aspect of a karana” (Shankar 2004). These transitional phrases of movement have been captured in stone as sculptures and reliefs, in five major temples of India.

What was Bharata’s intention in creating these works of art? Where and how do they conform to his theory of creation of Rasa? More than one scholar has confirmed that they are not mere static sculptural poses but stills of a phrase. I ask in this thesis if there was a reason for Bharata to take such pains to create these poised moments of movement. If so, what phenomenological significance is chiseled onto these moving forms? Were they mere modes of instruction for dance or did the author have intention to instigate movement based transformational processes, into form, within our consciousness?

22 A term coined by Brentano later borrowed by Husserl in ‘Phenomenology’.
23 Bindu Shankar- dance Karanas 2004
In Practice

This research will not only stretch the usual restraints and boundaries of conventional performance structures, but also create a formal exploration from a point of view of an arts practitioner.

It is a cross-disciplinary analysis of the centrality of embodied experience, and in my practice as a dancer/choreographer and visual artist, it functions as a pragmatic tool, to view the abstractions of culture and environment as a means of exploring consciousness.

There is a very potent moment, a poised moment, a still point, from which movement begins. I believe, at equilibrium, when the dancer is technically efficient, the embodied awareness is within a void, a space devoid of the thinking, rational mind. The movement then begins, as a movement in dance, or a movement as brushstroke, when passive witnessing of oneself begins. As a dancer, I am aware watching myself being still and being aware of a possible movement emerging from a creative impetus.

This encapsulated, pregnant moment, before the beginning of any movement will be scrutinised in this thesis. Cradled within this pivotal, subjective experience, is the underpinning of mental states of sensory experience in performance, and the crux of my argument.
A dancer creating painting while being informed by music, rhythm and dance technique, involves a ‘gazing’ within. Viewing this conceptual framework of inquiry (in locating the study of the “observed and observing self” within the discourse of “consciousness”) is also, this thesis argues, to work within a multi-disciplinary methodology that is at once complexly multilayered, abstract, concrete, universal and local simultaneously.\textsuperscript{24}

This uncommon choreographic coalescence with dance, co-mingling with artistic expression in paint, develops a phenomenological theory of the body-mind complex. The collective work of this exploration of cognition, synaesthetic perception, all written in the voice of the dancer/artist, in the midst of a lived experience, also situates itself within developing philosophical theories.

As a visual artist and student of the Indian dance traditions, my artistic expression is projected through Hindu/Indian metaphysics and philosophy. The impetus of my performance dynamic is proceeding from a religious sensibility, the source of inspiration, \textit{Santana Dharma}\textsuperscript{25} (Vatsyayan 1997),

\textsuperscript{24} My research in the broader locus of knowledge, involving multi-genres of cognition, neuroscience, quantum physics, art, aesthetics, anthropology and philosophy through visual arts and dance.

\textsuperscript{25} It being ‘a multi-layered cluster of knowledge’, it fundamentally encompasses aspects of mathematics, physics, biological sciences, and the arts. The decoding of the various simplistic rituals and understanding the basis of this synthesis of ‘sciences’ is in itself the very purpose of its creative genius. An integral vision of this process and the unraveling of a new world-view, would achieve a greater understanding. (Kapila Vatsyayan The Square and Circle of the Indian Arts 1997)
meaning the “eternal order and structure of the universe”. This thesis focuses on the concept of a dancer/artist, as not just a producer of ‘aesthetic objects’ but as an identity that contains within its moving body, a cultural consciousness.

On a more reified scale, this investigation attempts to bridge the inferred separation between scientific research, artistic practice and philosophy and religious methodologies and hopes to create a dialogue between these paradigms of knowledge: a post-modern construction of knowledge that becomes more visible in the overlapping of disciplines. Through a multiple layering of concepts, a rarely seen fabric of reality may perhaps be unearthed in discovering an arterial, cohesive and ordered ‘Reality’ that exists within these diverse bodies of knowledge, through the artist (and the arts), a fragmented reality may be bridged and an aesthetic continuum may be experienced, creating, in some small but significant way, a hypothesis of convergence or confluence.

Thus, in interrogating the theory of Bharata’s Rasa, I will follow a dualistic methodology. First, I will engage with important concepts of the theory, and demonstrate how it relates to and operates with other concepts, to my central

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26 The term “inferred” is used because, in the Indian tradition, “knowledge” is considered as a “whole”. The bifurcation of knowledge into various components is merely to facilitate analysis and understanding and not intended as ‘limiting frameworks’ that have difficulty in distinguishing a cohesive Reality.
thesis about the transformation of consciousness in the "observer" or audience. These connections between Rasa and other theoretical approaches are with the Quantum theory, concept of Para and Apara Vidhya, studies in cognition and consciousness, aural and visual perception, Vedantic philosophy, the notion of Moksha, the significance of Bharata’s Karanas in the transformation of consciousness, performance theory and phenomenology.

Secondly, throughout the thesis I will always be speaking from the position of a dancer/artist: this is an embodied, lived inquiry and in the last chapter, I examine one of my own works to show how an artist might investigate these concepts in praxis.

Finally, I want to re-state the significance of my investigation. This thesis argues that the central concern of Rasa is the change in consciousness that the performance (including the audience) can affect in its 'observers' or participants. I want to reclaim the important foundations Rasa has in a holistic view of the universe and our relationship to it. It is a profoundly metaphysical view of art. I would argue that this re-claiming of Rasa as a philosophical and spiritual vision is significant for a re-visioning of theatre itself, and art generally, as a profoundly important, world an life changing practice, as well as a way of being.
**Chapters: Overview**

**Chapter One** is the introduction to an amalgamation of ideas that revolve around the concept of the observing consciousness. Ranging from the philosophical and aesthetic traditions of ancient India to current phenomenological investigations, inter-cultural performance discussions, the links with theoretical physics, as well as the forging and understanding of the human body’s proprioceptive and kinaesthetic impact on consciousness, this chapter most importantly introduces these key concepts that will be further examined and presented in later chapters.

**Chapter Two** is a review of the current literature and contribution to scholarship on the subject of dancers who have written about their lived experience as well as their research on the specifics of Bharata’s Karanas as aesthetic models. This body of experience is juxtaposed against the scientific representation by physicists and scholars of Indian aesthetics, namely Capra and Dehejia. Their specific research finds relevance in addressing philosophical, scientific and aesthetic investigations, relevant to the topic of the transformation of consciousness.

**Chapter Three** addresses the key concept of **Rasa**: *that is*, the aesthetic experience and the outcome of a transformative experience in human
consciousness as a result of a staged performance. In-depth enquiry into the aspects of creation of Rasa, the various constituents and technicalities that traditionally invoke this experience in Indian theatre, is scrutinised.

**Chapter Four** is an investigation of the Indian traditional concept of what is “Real Knowledge” or “Para Vidhya” in the Advaita Vedanta of Sankara. This is crucial to the investigation as it lays the base concept of what is the traditional understanding of ‘Real’ knowledge; why do we seek this ‘Real’ knowledge; and how it helps in the understanding of the concept of what a ‘transformation’ of consciousness is.

**Chapter Five’s** main investigation is into the detailed insight of the concept of Quantum-ness. It is a review and overview of an idea, surveying a cluster of philosophers, scientists and physicists whose hermeneutical theories of consciousness studies align with those of Bharata’s implementation of aesthetics and Vedantic philosophy in the transforming of consciousness.

**Chapter Six** is an analysis of human perception and the aspects pertaining to cognising of experience. Aural and visual perception is viewed through the lens of Indian, Western and scientific research in order to investigate the concept of consciousness.
Chapter Seven is the synthesis of Quantum philosophies and Vedantic philosophy. Pivoting around the axis of the transformative processes of consciousness, it draws together the role of perception and the observing consciousness in performance. This chapter also focuses upon the experience of Rasa and the repercussions of this Rasa-Experience on the observing consciousness. Creating an avenue for future detailed research into these repercussive Rasa experiences, Bharata’s ultimate intention in creating this transformation is scrutinized.

The interpretation of this enquiry is based on the interpretations of Abhinavagupta, a successor of Bharata.

I found it pertinent to only introduce Abhinavagupta at this stage, because an earlier introduction (as an interpretation of Rasa and ultimate aim of Rasa), among the wider analysis of consciousness studies would have created an unclear vision of the landscape of this dissertation. Like an artist, who reserves the final touch-ups and places the all-important persona only in the end, to delight the spectator, the all-important and surprising element of a transformation of consciousness is elaborated through the concept of Moksha or “a super-conscious state”, a possible experience as a resultant effect of Rasa upon the consciousness of the artist and audience.
Chapter Eight focuses upon the creation of Rasa through the physical modalities of experience as given by Bharata in his treatise, the Natyashastra, from which the concept of Rasa is drawn. This chapter is also an amplification of a specific lived experience of Sarasa the dancer, whose lived experience through dance movement, translates this movement to Sarasa the visual artist; and who then transcribes this experience to ink on paper. It is an amalgamation of an experience, beyond a phenomenal aspect of tacit knowing. This unusual melding of experience also involves the specifics of translating codified Sanskrit texts of Bharata from the Natyashastra, and from my lived experience of being a traditional ‘Hindu’, practising the specific rituals and formalities of this tradition in interpreting these texts. The concept of Rasa, being the focal point of all performance (according to Bharata), is overlayed upon the canvas of Karanas, seen as depictions of moving bodies. The 108 Karanas, with all of the specifics of movement as ascribed by Bharata, are specific receptacles of the Rasa-experience. Here, aesthetics, kinaesthesia and philosophies align to create transformation in consciousness. These sculptured transitions of fluid movement are themselves embodiments of dance in process: I argue that the purpose of Bharata’s work through the Karanas was to create Rasa in the dancer and spectator. Specific proprioception and kinaesthesia, joint motion, acceleration and simultaneous

27 Krishnan, Sarasa. Bharata’s Karanas- An Interpretation- Beagle books 2014
holding of specific gestures provide sensory feedback to the brain’s neural pathways and vice versa. These specifics are addressed in this chapter.

**Chapter Nine** is the culmination of the above ideas from chapters one to eight, as embodied in my practice as a dancer, visual artist and practising “Hindu” in my presentation of *Shakti The Eternal Energy - Seeing Music, Hearing Images, Painting Dance*. A systematic observation of experience, it is a creative analysis of a link from ‘thought to action’, that correlates creative processes within the mind of an artist, a dancer and, more importantly, the observing entity of the Self, within the dancer/choreographer, the painting artist. Aesthetic experience and ‘performative consciousness’ are aligned to project the concept of witnessing the Self and peer into the concept of “self-extinction”. The juxtaposing of Advaita’s *Sri Yantra*, the “mandala of consciousness”, with the canvas of the painter/dancer’s performative consciousness is an attempt to re-establish the ‘the whole’, beyond the dichotomy of “I-it” and “I-Thou”. Using the concept of the ‘nine veils of ascension’, (*Nava Avarna*), as processing within the consciousness of the artist, Shankara’s idea of a unifying field of consciousness is addressed, and Rasa is


29 Vijay Mishra as quoted by Pillai M, 2001

identified as a direct and immediate experience, achievable during performance. The ascending planes of consciousness within the 3 dimensional precepts of the Sri Yantra finally create an inward ascending pathway to an experience that is beyond the architecture of the senses, and even beyond that of Rasa. The final experience of the ultimate Rasa is one of enduring tranquility.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review and Contribution to Scholarship

In this chapter, I will mainly examine the research of dancers, performance artists and scholars of dance, juxtaposed with the work of a physicist and that of a scholar who examines art through the eyes of a theorist rather than an artist. This brief cross-sectioning of diverse systems of thought will provide a canvas for the numerous brushstrokes of my enquiry, from a dance perspective, a physicist’s search and a scholar’s scrutiny of art. Finally a painted canvas manifests, as in the process of emergence in physics, filled by
The seeming cacophony of colour of thought but bound by a single sturdy enquiry.

**Theatre**

With remarkable insistence and detailed perseverance theatre theorists have written, coded and explored Bharata’s *Rasa* theory. Countless aspects of the various *bhavas*, and accompanying *vibhavas* and *sanchari bhavas* have been interpreted, elaborated and extrapolated meticulously. Scholarship from researchers from Asian and Western nations on Indian theatre in particular, and world theatre in general, and also on specialized areas of music, dance, sculpture, painting is immense.

Excluding a few exceptions, studies have focused primarily either on a study of *Rasa* through the subjective sensory experience of arts practitioners, or on investigations from philosophers who have presented in-depth arguments on theories of sensory perception. However, extremely few practicing artists, dancers, musicians have provided a theoretical exegesis of *Rasa* and the concept and experience of consciousness, both grounded in praxis and informed by theory.
The following pages mainly focus and survey the studied abstractions by dancers and movement specialists. I have deliberately pivoted my review on these few works because I am primarily interested in writing that eventuates from a dancer’s (movement specialist’s) lived experience, and not from an intellectual, academic-only perspective. Having said this, I have also briefly included two other perspectives from two ends of a broader spectrum: physicist Fritjof Capra, whose writings on quantum science reflects Vedantic thought, and physician and philosopher Harsha Dehejia who has made unusual connections between Advaita philosophy and the realizing of transcendence through art.

Maxine Sheets-Johnstone has done refreshing work as a practitioner and theorist on movement, regarding mirror neurons and an empirical phenomenological analysis of the dynamic congruency of emotions and movement, as a piece in the larger picture of creation and appreciation of everyday life.31 (Sheets-Johnstone 2012)

Although thorough and informative, seamlessly uniting work in phenomenology and biology, and envisioning the corporeal turn\textsuperscript{32} (Sheets-Johnstone 2009) productively as an open-ended spiral, Sheets-Johnstone does not appear to examine the inherent and vital feature of the art aesthetic; of the ‘consciousness of pleasure’, derived and experienced by the artist-observer (Bharata’s \textit{Rasa} or in Heidegger’s “a felt sense of Being”\textsuperscript{33} (Schechner 2002)). Areas such as gesture and impetus of movement and cognition have also had close scrutiny\textsuperscript{34} (Schechner 2002), but are not developed in Sheets-Johnstone’s work.

Sheets-Johnstone’s coalescing of scientific research with artistic practice is commendable but I feel it is insufficient, as deeper ontological questions are not asked or answered; that is, a synthesis of arts working with science was the main focus: “The challenge of a conversation between art and science rests on a recognition of that basic fact. Such a conversation is the conversation of

\textsuperscript{32}Maxine Sheets Johnstone, ‘\textit{The Corporeal Turn}: an interdisciplinary Reader, in (Maxine Sheets-Johnston, \textit{The Corporeal Turn: An Interdisciplinary Reader}, (Exeter U.K: Imprint Academic, April 2009

\textsuperscript{33}‘\textit{Befindlichkeit}’ Heidegger’s words thus apply to his \textit{...attunement-to-Being} (felt sense-of-being-in-the-world) constitutes an implicit, pre-conceptual pre-understanding of Dasein’s relatedness to Being…” - Levin, David Michael-\textit{The Body’s Recollection of Being}…’ Routledge 2002 ISBN 1135795088

\textsuperscript{34}ibid.
choice because it is the preeminent and authentic conversation to undertake.”35 (Schechner 2002)

Michele Merritt’s36 article, “Thinking is Moving, Dance Agency Radically Enacted Mind” (Merritt 2013), addresses cognition, meaning making, ‘intentional agency’ and radical enactivism, through pre-reflective movement and improvisation in dance. While Merrit’s argument is focusing on mind, movement and thought as agency to movement and vice-versa, it is constrained within the structures of embodiment of movement and intentional thought but does not extend beyond to matters of consciousness. It is the latter topic that is the focus of my own investigation in this thesis.

Although Bharata Natyam dancer Padma Subramaniam’s thesis, Bharata’s Art: Then and Now37 (Subrahmanyam 1979), in the direction of movement-analysis that co-relates to the textual inscriptions of NatyaShastra, the relevance of her work in relation to cognition and consciousness does not extend beyond the physicality of dance modes, enshrined within historical and archeological parameters. Nevertheless, Subramaniam, being one of the first researchers in her time to research Karanas, sought to establish the fact that Karanas were

35 ibid.
36 Michele Merrit-Academia.edu- “Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences” (in press)
37 Padma Subrahmanyam, Bharata’s Art: Then and Now (Bombay: Bhulabhai Memorial Institute, 1979).
not static poses but moments captured in movement. Her study, mainly descriptive, demonstrates a penchant for survey and lists sculptures scattered around the temples of the Indian subcontinent. Despite a strong technical understanding of dance modalities and movement synthesis, many portions of her analyses of the Karanas and of other symbolic representations are speculative and sometimes lack sufficient verification and support.

Eminent scholar-historian, dancer and author, Kapila Vatsyayan, having a deep interest in dance, establishes important co-relations between cosmological values with the Vedic Shastras, in her book “The Square and the Circle of the Indian Arts”\textsuperscript{39}(Vatsyayan 1997). Contained within this iconic book is Vatsyayan’s synthesis of an integral movement of consciousness situated within dance, the NatyaShastra and Indian speculative thought: that is, the interconnectedness and interdependence of these fields within a cosmic system of thought. Vatsyayan’s study, unique at that time, in its approach to recognizing the \textit{axis mundi} or \textit{sthambha} “as the centre of the Universe, in mystical and mythical terms”\textsuperscript{40} (Vatsyayan 1997), draws attention to the kinetic image, inherent in dance and sculpture as well as sacred geometry, and thereby bridges communication between traditional thought.

\textsuperscript{38} Various sciences, geosciences, architecture and arts in the Vedic system.
\textsuperscript{39} Abhinav Publications and Roli Books 1997, 1983
\textsuperscript{40} The Square and the Circle of the Indian Arts -Vatsyayan
and sciences. Vatsyayan relates the seven core concepts of *bijā* (seed), *sthāmbha* (pillar), *garbhā/nabhī* (navel and womb), *agamas* and *tantras* (scripture and sacred text, design, ritual), *sunya* (investigates emptiness as in value of zero- algebraic system), *purna* (complete-ness –‘fullness’) and finally *jyoti* (illumination or radiance), to themes found not only in *Sanatana Dharma*; but to what she sees as universal spiritual and philosophical precincts. Although Vatsyayan’s brilliant analysis of the seven core concepts of all things, interrelated as a language of metaphor, provides a significantly original coding or understanding of the co-relation of an immense system of integrated ideas, it is, as she herself admits, “only a beginning of a long journey of unlearning and re-learning”41 (Vatsyayan 1997).

My exploration of Vatsyayan’s system of integrated ideas and their outlining of the interconnectedness of various abstractions of knowledge, and the possible resulting glimpse of this foundational thought, led me to find further correlates in *Rasa* as an illuminating concept. For in this complex understanding of correlations, from the seeding (*bijā*) to illumination (*jyoti*), is a sequential structure understood and experienced as an ascending order to transcendence. The central core threading through these abstractions is

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41 Vatsyayan- pg. 163-The Square and the Circle of the Indian Arts -Afterword (1983)
awareness as cognized by the witnessing ‘self’ and this cognition is realized only through experiential deduction. This empirical deduction is underpinned through my process and personal lived experience as an arts practitioner and thus provides a fundamental grounding that is so important in any hermeneutic exercise.

Practice-based dancer/researcher, Susan Kozel in her book “Closer”, explores the use of interactive interfaces, responsive systems and affective computing, as extensions of the thinking, moving body. The foundation of her work is about the transformative potential of alchemy between bodies and technologies. She examines the ‘sharing of the body’ and lived experiences in and through digital devices that foster a collaborative construct of new physical states. Through digital performance, she writes, “a reencounter occurs with ourselves and others”. Re-exploring and respecting the theories of lived experience of Merleau-Ponty, Kozel says, “Bodies are more than just meat. They are sources of intelligence, compassion and extraordinary creativity.”

(Kozel 2013) She reflects on “listening to the senses, noting insights that arrive obliquely, unbidden, while in midst of dance or life”, and argues that in this entwining of experience and reflection, some light may be

42 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mv7Vp3NPKw4
shed on the restructuring of scholarly approaches to the use of human bodies in digital technologies. Kozel correctly and usefully identifies and overcomes “unhealthy” divides between theory and practice, mind and body and solitary and shared experience. She iterates, “It helps in listening to sensations and inner voices, unformed ideas, thoughts and images that emerge as experience within computational systems” (Kozel 2013).

Although Kozel’s work in designing and using various digital devices (motion capture, telematics, responsive architecture and wearable computing) as a method and means to record and transfer ‘affective’ states of phenomenological experience, is exciting and ‘cutting edge’, and could possibly generate more critical and positive responses to this area of interdisciplinary work in performance studies, the risk of working within a global fast-paced digital interface is the possibility of adversely affecting physical performance with technology as well as creating another performance ‘fad’ or short-lived “application”, before we race on to the next.

43 ibid.
In her doctoral dissertation, *Bodies moving and moved* (Parviainen 1998), dancer and teacher Jaana Parviainen develops a phenomenological theory of the body and explores cognitive aspects of a dancer’s practice within Western philosophical theories. Focusing on the concept of a dancer as not just a producer of ‘aesthetic objects’, but as a formation that contains, within its moving body, the dancer’s cultural, ethical and political identities, Parviainen elucidates her journeyed analysis through the discourses of Foucault, Heidegger, Bourdieu and Merleau-Ponty. Her discussion on dance and to some extent, synaesthetical perception, focuses on contemporary dance and breathes freshness into phenomenological exploration from the voice of a practicing dancer:

“The dance classes brought me to listen to the moving body, opening a new world from and into the body and its movements. Later, taking part in improvisation and release technique classes, I came upon the pleasure the moving body takes in being led by its internal “logic”, the reasons of the lived body. This path led me into hours engaged in studying movements. It took a long time before I was able to conceptualise this field, which was opened to me through and in the movements; indeed, not until I began to study philosophy ten years ago, learning about the phenomenology of the body, which revealed this topic not only as a relevant object of study but also as a crucial issue of human existence.”

The lived body as a source and the core of a work of art, set within temporality and ‘momentness’, furnishes the performance structure of this paper. A dancer’s voice and experience resonate through another dancer’s
understanding. As a dancer, I understand every vulnerability, every insecurity, every triumphant moment of movement: I would argue that this peculiarity of the ‘dancer-awareness’ of sensorial perception is unfamiliar to non-dancers; that is, where the body as a corporeal entity is the vehicle or sensor of knowledge. Parviainen writes, “To know a thing deeply means to be bodily involved in it.”45 (Parviainen 1998)

But how can ‘knowing’ only through body experience provide sufficient insights to knowledge, when we are made up of much more than our own flesh and ‘bodily memory’? Beyond this ‘subjective flux’ of experiences that are recorded and beyond the form and content of experience, is situated the problematic but foundational idea of ‘consciousness’. In her general argument of her thesis Parviainen does not address the significant issue of consciousness, although the subject matter’s relevance to consciousness is crucial. Space, time and sensual abstractions alone may not be sufficient in the analysis of our ‘being’. Perhaps, she was limited by the constraints of the discipline itself at that time, when consciousness studies were at an infantile form in performance theory in the West. Her analysis is bound within the lived body, the experiential body, a biological organism, which is a ‘place of

memories— an anatomical and neuro-muscular thing. Limiting one’s experience and analysis to only the body persona inhibits deeper and more meaningful observation. Or perhaps, the field of phenomenology alone is insufficient for the purpose of consciousness analysis.

The discussion on dance, movement, and visual arts also takes me to Allesandra Iyer’s contribution to the karanas discussion Iyer’s thesis “Prambanan: Sculpture and Dance in Ancient Java” (Iyer 1998), using Subramaniam’s restructuring of the karanas, revolves around the sculptures of Prambanan in Indonesia as representations of Bharata’s karanas. Apart from being a historical analysis and perhaps even validating an interesting argument that the Indonesian sculpture panel may predate the Chola matrix, it does little to address or question the reason, intention or motivation of Bharata to codify these movement specifications (karanas); or that of later Indonesian sculptors who recreated these very forms, as being more than mere decorative fasciae.

Bindu Shankar, to some extent, has attempted to address this issue, in her dissertation, Dance Imagery in South Indian Temples: Study of the 108 Karana

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Sculptures (Shankar 2004). In her attempt to understand the symbolism and meaning of the 108-karana sculptural program in the south Indian temple, she explores the inter-relationships between the dance tradition and the temple tradition. From themes of dance to sculptural repertoire and the possible relevance of the karana to the temple, Shankar attributes their inference as a communicative device to a religious setting, within the context of dance, ritual, transformation, and meditation. Her interpretation, heavily influenced by her study/practice of Bharata Natyam, and enshrined within a South Indian Tamil enclave, attempts to attribute transformation through gesture and stance. Numerous detailed descriptions of the architectural embellishments and sculptural reliefs (hand, body and foot positions) form a large part of the work, with a scarcity of in-depth analysis of the codification and relevance of the karanas to transformation, meditative or otherwise.

Although Shankar creates an interesting link between the karanas and Sandhya Nrityam through observation of temple freezes, and identifies the function of dance (in India) to enhance ritual, worship, celebration, trance and even warfare, her treatment of ‘Tandava’, seems lacking in analytical depth.

She quotes Zvelebil’s association of meanings:

47 The Ohio State University 2004
48 The language of gesture and stance alone is insufficient in understanding meaning. A movement synthesis together with emotional content that enhances the gesture and stance is required.
“In the context of Siva’s dance in the Tamil region, Zvelebil proposes a Tamil origin to the word tandava. Accordingly, the Tamil word tantavam which means ‘jumping, leaping’ is derived from tantu—‘to jump, leap across, dance’.

Therefore, according to Zvelebil, Siva’s tandava dance – forceful and vibrant– is a south Indian development. 49 Whether or not the tandava dance originated in the Tamil south, I believe that the regions’ proclivity towards dance expression emphasizing heroism, destruction...” (Shankar 2004)

Symbolic of the cosmic cycles of creation and destruction and the cyclic rhythm of birth and death, Tandava dance is a depiction of a holistic reality beyond any etymological inferences of mere leaps and jumps. Ananda Tandava, “the dance of bliss”, and Roudra Tandava, “the dance of dissolution”, is the dance of spontaneity of Lord Shiva in which the universe is created, sustained and resolved.50 It is also, more importantly, the complimentary opposite of ‘Lasya’.51 The idea of “fierce destructive dance”52, the “fierceness” described by Shankar in relation to Shiva’s dance in Cidhambaram53, seems a shallow attempt at interpretation, conveying a negative violent, aggressive ferociousness. This thesis would argue that Tandava in all its seven aspects really depicts the dissolution of the gross Universe in terms of temporality and negative manifestations; a triumph of positive over negative.54 (Swami Shantanand Saraswati)

50 See on tandava dance https://au.answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20110812004503AAU139y
51 The gentle and graceful dance of Parvati, Shiva’s consort.
52 Pg 66
53 Temple of Shiva in South India.
54 Swami Shantanand Saraswati reiterated the significance of the functional aspect of Lord Shiva, as an energy of dissolution rather than a negative energy of destruction.(talk on dance)
Despite some obtrusions in interpretation, Shankar’s observations of the karana arrangements, as well as the component of musical inferences within the focused karana temple architecture, provides an interesting framework to use in this thesis’s interpretation of the metaphysical impact of the karanas on consciousness.

Thus, the above-mentioned academic-practitioners provide theoretical exegesis of studies in lived moments of movement and analytical observation of ancient sculpture. I intend to further explore these moments in consciousness (both grounded in praxis and informed by theory) by investigating not only the phenomenological aspects of experience, but also scientific and philosophical theories that would provide a comprehensive analysis of the experience of Rasa in consciousness.

Two other perspectives, those of Fritjof Capra and Harsha Dehejia, have had significant influence in unfurling the lack of depth in my perception on the present subject.
Capra’s influential book *The Tao of Physics* provided a fresh perspective on the links between physics, cosmology and Asian philosophical traditions from a physicist’s perspective. His own personal experience of the “dance of Shiva”\(^{55}\) (Capra 1975), and his ability to identify and align his expert knowledge and professional experience as a physicist in his book, presented a ‘paradigm shift’- of understanding of many academic circles of thought.

My personal experience of growing up in an environment of Vedantic thoughts\(^{56}\) and the inter-connectivity of many plural structures within this ancient perspective naturally drew me to explore Capra’s scientific retake on Reality. I will present a more in detail analysis of Capra’s work in Chapter 5, “Quantum Consciousness”

Harja Dehejia’s book *Advaita of Art*, \(^{57}\) (Dehejia 1996) as explained by Kapila Vatsyayan in her introduction to his book, “…sets out to investigate the aesthetic experience principally from the point of view of the aesthete, rather than the creator or artist.\(^{58}\) (Dehejia 1996) ” This important observer experience analyzed through the annals of Advaita Vedanta is a vital

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\(^{55}\) *Tao of Physics, An exploration of the parallels between Modern Physics and Eastern Mysticism* Shambala 1975 – preface pg 11

\(^{56}\) My family and subsequent proximity with Swami Shantanand and Swami Sivananda’s Vedantic teaching since a very young age.


\(^{58}\) ibid, - forward pg vii
perspective for my study of transcendence and Rasa. I have referred to his perspective in more detail in my writing in Chapter 7, “A Synthesis- Quantum-Advaita-Rasa”.

Thus, as I remarked in the opening page of this chapter, of this seeming cacophony of colour of thought, I am but bound by a single sturdy enquiry; the all-important observer and how the intimate experience of Rasa, creates transcendence with consciousness.
CHAPTER 3

Rasa

“Rasa is the sap or soul (of theatre) and body (sarira) the plot”

(Bharata and Ghosh 2002)

As mentioned in my introductory chapter of this dissertation, Rasa theory, and its significance to the identity of the ‘self’ in the observer-artist relationship is central to this investigation.

As I have stated previously, the Rasa theory also places the observer as an active participant in the creation of bhava and Rasa. I would argue that the genius of Bharata’s Rasa theory is that it anticipates much of contemporary theories of self and the nature of consciousness.

“Rasa is the sap or soul (of theatre) and body (sarira) the plot” (Bharata and Ghosh 2002)

Rasa as a concept is described as sap or essence (of his theory), and this imagery invokes notions of fluidity and movement. The morphology of the NatyaShastra as an entity is, on several levels, the ‘essence’ of the Vedas. Like ‘Rasa’, the treatise of Natyashastra is the sap, the essence that is extracted from the living organic structure of the four Vedas.

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59 Chapter 1 Sarasa Krishnan of this thesis
Photos show the self-similarity and fractal dimension of the image generated by the Mandelbrot Set.

Bharata's concept of Rasa explores the intrinsic pattern within the theo-centric and cosmo-centric consciousness.

“The creative impetus, in scientific terminology, is a process of emergence. It implies a chaotic situation within person’s consciousness that develops while processing and assembling information within a performance or while creating a painting, and trusting the chaos, then abandoning notions of ‘I and self’ by abandoning rational or conceptual thinking [and delving into an abyss of not knowing]. The very chaotic process paradoxically, instigates a state of ‘stillness’ in the mind.”

I propose that within this concept of ‘stillness of mind’ (in my opinion, the birthplace of ‘Rasa’), Bharata explores the fractal-like spaces that are the fermenting ground for the ever growing and deepening propinquity of the observer-artist relationship.

60 https://www.fractalus.com/info/layman.htm
61 This animation of the Mandelbrot/Julia set image resembles the 1000 petal lotus (sahasra chakra) which symbolizes the fully blossomed consciousness in Indian mysticism
http://guciek.github.io/web_mandelbrot.html#0.74368672625;0.13183997515625;2.9296875e-8;5000
62 Sarasa Krishnan- Chapter 1 of this thesis
Fractals and Rasa theory

The centrality of the Rasa theory within the Natyashastra carries with it a fractal-like idea of self-similarity in its concept of the part being same as the whole. Although Bharata’s intention was not to align this model with the geometric expansion and reduction of the fractal concept, it is uncannily similar in logic and pattern as an ‘iteration’ (based on a natural biological formula). In this I mean that its pattern is repeated in the perception of the various gradational bhavas, vibhavas, stayi bhavas and their resulting effect in

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63 Fractal geometry discovered by mathematician Benoît Mandelbrot. The word “fractal” often has different connotations for laypeople than for mathematicians, where the layperson is more likely to be familiar with fractal art than a mathematical conception. The mathematical concept is difficult to define formally even for mathematicians, but key features can be understood with little mathematical background.

The feature of ‘self-similarity’, for instance, is easily understood by analogy to zooming in with a lens or other device that zooms in on digital images to uncover finer, previously invisible, new structure. If this is done on fractals, however, no new detail appears; nothing changes and the same pattern repeats over and over, or for some fractals, nearly the same pattern reappears over and over. Self-similarity itself is not necessarily counter-intuitive (e.g., people have pondered self-similarity informally such as in the infinite regress in parallel mirrors or homunculus, the little man inside the head of the little man inside the head...). (Wikipedia)

64 A mathematical concept of endless repetition
producing Rasa. It is an exponential transference, “overdracht” (Jung 1969) from one psychological state to another. This bio-geometric expansion ‘blossoms’ in a self-similar pattern and invokes emotional responses in the spectator.

The word “Bhava” itself means “permeate”. With moisture like quality, it is an analogous expansion of a theme of emotional effect. Visual representation of this morphing “entity” can be constructed as an (expanding and reducing) mandala, similar to a repeatable mathematical equation and acting as a metaphor for consciousness. (Wikipedia 2014)

Mathematicians and scientists have only recently (Hubbard 2013) (since the late Nineteen-seventies) studied fractal branching and fractal geometry and acknowledgement of their importance in understanding natural phenomena is relatively new. Inadequate linear systems of measurement have been unable to tackle complex problems in science. Concepts like Mandelbrot’s

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65 C.G.Jung, Psychology of Transference
67 Prof. John Hubbard provides an indepth explanation and hypothesis of the beauty and complexity of the Mandelbrot Set. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-u5YLGaDc4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-u5YLGaDc4)
68 Dendrites in our brains, lungs, lightning and such ‘fractalizations’ is apparent everywhere in nature
self-similarity, tessellations\textsuperscript{69} (Mathforum.org 2014), Sierpinski’s Triangle, and Julia Set\textsuperscript{70} (Mavireck 2013) all explore randomness, irregularity and chaos\textsuperscript{71}.

The theory argues that nature, as we know it is chaotic\textsuperscript{72}. But within this chaos there is an inherent order to which the universe adheres\textsuperscript{73}. Bharata’s theory too shares this pattern: describing immeasurable, imperceptible abstraction as natural phenomena, which advances and elevates consciousness through the medium of gesture, movement, melody and expression embodied in the senses; in other words, through Rasa, through his theatrical universe of ‘pleasure’.

19\textsuperscript{th} century Japanese artist Katsushka Hokusai had surprisingly and intuitively created paintings using fractal self-similarity\textsuperscript{74}. This knowledge\textsuperscript{75} (Krishnananda 1951), it is said in the Mundaka Upanishad,\textsuperscript{76}(Swami

\textsuperscript{69} http://mathforum.org/sum95/suzanne/whattess.html (patterns in nature)
\textsuperscript{70} https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmxJ1KDR_sQ
\textsuperscript{71} Chaos, with reference to chaos theory, refers to an apparent lack of order in a system that nevertheless obeys particular laws or rules; this understanding of chaos is synonymous with dynamical instability, a condition discovered by the physicist Henri Poincare in the early 20th century that refers to an inherent lack of predictability in some physical systems. (tech target.com)
\textsuperscript{72} Like in Chaos Theory
\textsuperscript{73} Trinh Xuan Thuan, Matthieu Ricard The Quantum and the Lotus. Three Rivers Press, New York, 2001. “...the existence of an organizing principle, of the sort envisaged by Spinoza and Einstein…. still a lingering determinism within the theory (quantum).” Pg. 153
\textsuperscript{74} The Great Wave see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKJecnXU0UQ#t=68
\textsuperscript{75} There are two kinds of knowledge, lower and higher. The 4 Vedas, phonetics, grammar, etymology, prosody, astronomy are ALL considered lower. The higher one is through which the imperishable is attained. ( Swami Krishnananda )
\textsuperscript{76} Mundaka Upanishad: Saunaka, the great sacrificer, approached Angiras duly and with respect and asked: “What is that, O Bhagavan, through the knowledge of which everything becomes known?” The knowledge of everything through the knowledge of one thing means that everything is made up of that same thing. Ordinarily the knowledge of one thing does not imply the knowledge of another thing. But Brahma-Vidya is not a knowledge which excludes
Krishnananda 1951) is revealed when individual consciousness becomes one with Universal consciousness; one is said know all that is to be known, anywhere, anytime. According to the Upanishad, it can be argued that the consciousness of artist Hokusai, at those moments of creativity, became one with the Universal Consciousness; that is, nature.

He says,

“At seventy five I’ll have learned something of the pattern of nature, of animals, of plants, of trees, birds, fish and insects. When I am eighty, you will see real progress. At ninety I shall have cut my way deeply into the mystery of life itself. At a hundred I shall be a marvelous artist. At a hundred and ten everything I create; a dot, a line, will jump to life as never before. To all of you who are going to live as long as I do, I promise to keep my word. I am writing this in my old age. I used to call myself Hokusai, but today I sign myself ‘The Old Man Mad About Drawing.’” - Hokusai

Keenly aware of the strengths and weaknesses of humanity, Bharata’s challenge was to envisage and formulate a theoretical format inclusive of all the sciences and arts and which also interweaves the senses so that humans can internalize external sense objects. All Vedic thought aims to be inclusive of the senses and humanity’s place within it. At no place is there any indication that the senses are considered unreal, unimportant.

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*other kinds of knowledge, but that which transmutes into itself all kinds of knowledge. Spiritual knowledge means the direct experience arrived at through the fusion of the essence of the object of knowledge into the essence of the subject of knowledge. Hence spiritual knowledge is indivisible experience, not divisible like intellectual knowledge. It is intuition which does not function on the basis of duality, but is essentially a self-identical, integral experience. Spiritual Knowledge means the essence of the knowledge of everything that exists in generality as well as in particularity. It is the Knowledge of the highest cause, the knowledge of which means the knowledge of all its effects also. (S.Krishnananda) http://www.swami-krishnananda.org/mundak/Mundaka_Upanishad.pdf*
In Vedanta, it is the mind and the illusions that it weaves that are unreal and unimportant. The five senses are the five jnana indriyas and their actions are the karma indriyas. They (sense) are of utmost importance as they are the vehicles of experience. The mind is to be harnessed by the positive actions of the five senses.

The Universe’s interconnectedness is apparent and real and the various sheaths that veil the unreal from the Real are mere illusions of the mind (and not the senses) and provide false impressions (Gupta 2007). The senses, (when appropriately channeled) themselves give us access to the Real. The term, “Tat Tvam Asi” means “you are That”, and is indicative of “you are in actuality, ‘Absolute, undifferentiated reality’” It is the mind that creates and fosters illusions that we begin to assimilate as real.

But these concepts of ‘self’ and a higher reality are concepts that demand a philosophical, academic and intellectual mind-set. Ordinary people may not always, given the economic realities of contemporary working life, have access to these deliberations of in-depth research.

The senses of perception, through sound, touch, sight, taste and smell, are common tools of being ‘human’. Thus Bharata used these very senses that are

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77 Advaita Vedanta . Empirical cognition of the ‘state of concealment’-avidhya, or ignorance and elimination of this ignorance using the ‘cit’ (Consciousness) which is light or knowledge through means of the witness-consciousness or saksin –Bina Gupta 2007

78 Vedantic thought – The cause of all human suffering springs from the mind .(and desire)
‘common’ in every person, as analogous agents to imbue higher truths.  

(ThunderboltsProject 2014)

Theoretician and scholar Kapila Vatsyayan\(^80\) says of Bharata:

“... perusal of this material would make one believe that Bharata enunciated the theory with the help of these (vedic) systems of speculation at a date later than and not prior to writing of the Natya Sastra ... and makes copious references to his predecessors and repeatedly speaks of the Vedas and Sastras\(^81\) and takes pains to distinguish his work from the Vedas and stresses its analogous nature." (Vatsyayan 1997)

Thus a blossoming of a concept began when Bharata, extracted ‘pathya’ or the art of recitation from the Rig Veda, ‘abhinaya’ from the Yajur Veda; ‘gitam’ or music from the Sama Veda and ‘Rasa’ or aesthetics from the Atharva Veda and distilled a theory of theatre and aesthetics which simultaneously enabled a unique presentation of the ‘metaphysical’ to the physical.

Vedic India’s tradition of passing on knowledge from teacher to disciple (guru sishya parampara\(^82\)) was predominantly an oral one and the potent, aromatic theory of Rasa that delighted and pleasured the senses, began its exponential growth through the utterances (mouth) of Bharata.

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79 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HlXAzlnBs7c  
81 The word ‘Rasa’ is derived from Cikitsa Sastra part of the Pancha Vidhiya Sastras.  
82 The guru-shishya tradition, lineage, or parampara, denotes a succession of teachers and disciples in traditional Indian culture and religions such as Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. It is the tradition of spiritual relationship and mentoring where teachings are transmitted from a guru "teacher" (Sanskrit: गुरु) to a śiṣya "disciple" (Sanskrit: शिष्य) or chela. Such knowledge, whether it be Vedic, agamic, architectural, musical or spiritual, is imparted through the developing relationship between the guru and the disciple. It is considered that this relationship, based on the genuineness of the guru, and the respect, commitment, devotion and obedience of the student, is the best way for subtle or advanced knowledge to be conveyed. The student eventually masters the knowledge that the guru embodies.
Consciousness-Diagram

*Sri Yantra* Hindu Tantric science exponential expansion within the psychical universe\(^{83}\).

\(^{83}\) When looking at the above diagram of Hindu Tantric science, the concept of triangles/prisms align with those of Koch’s island (Mandelbrot set).

**Fractalization**

The above is a representation of Koch Island, a fragment of the Mandelbrot set. Nonlinear equations find resonance in Hindu thought (*Sri Yantra*), a resonance that holds possibilities for scientific research to decode and unravel the knot that makes consciousness studies so difficult to explore.
Investigating the scope of meaning of the word RASA

The Sri Yantra ("sacred instrument") or Sri Chakra ("sacred wheel") or Mahameru [3D] is a yantra formed by nine interlocking triangles that surround and radiate out from the central (bindu) point, the junction point between the physical universe and its unmanifest source. Four isosceles triangles with the apexes upwards, represent Shiva or the Masculine. Five isosceles triangles with the apexs downward, symbolize feminine embodiment Shakti. Thus the Sri Yantra also represents the union of Masculine and Feminine Divine. Because it is composed of nine triangles, it is known as the Navayoni Chakra. "These nine triangles are of various sizes and intersect with one another. In the middle is the power point (bindu), visualizing the highest, the invisible, elusive centre from which the entire figure and the cosmos expand. The triangles are enclosed by two rows of (8 and 16) petals, representing the lotus of creation and reproductive vital force. The broken lines of the outer frame denote the figure to be a sanctuary with four openings to the regions of the universe. Together the nine triangles are interlaced in such a way as to form 43 smaller triangles in a web symbolic of the entire cosmos or a womb symbolic of creation. Together they express Advaita or non-duality. A lotus of eight petals, a lotus of sixteen petals, and an earth square resembling a temple with four doors surround the outer layer. The Shri Chakra is also known as the nav chakra because it can also be seen as having nine levels. "Nine" comes from "Nau or Nava" of Sanskrit.

1. Trailokya Mohan or Bhupar, a square of three lines with four portals
2. Sarva Aasa Paripurak, a sixteen-petal lotus
3. Sarva Sankshobahan, an eight-petal lotus
4. Sarva Saubhagyadayak, composed of fourteen small triangles
5. Sara Arthasadhak, composed of ten small triangles
6. Sarva Rakshakar, composed of ten small triangles
7. Sarva Rogahar, composed of eight small triangles
8. Sarva Siddhiprada, composed of 1 small triangle
9. Sarva Anandamay, composed of a point or bindu

The Sri Chakra (called the Shri Yantra) is the symbol of Hindu tantra, which is based on the Hindu philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism.

83 Radhakrishnan, S explains that, Shruti as divine revelation as a truth that is 'seen' and what is remembered by the sages. Smriti is an interpretation (Patayiying, Paitoon.2008-46)

Hindu tradition divides its sacred texts among the two categories of shruti and smriti--those which are heard, or revealed, and those which are remembered. J. A. B. van Buitenen explains the distinction thus: "Shruti (literally, "learning by hearing") is the primary revelation, which stands revealed at the beginning of the creation. This revelation was "seen" by the primeval seers (risi) who set in motion an oral transmission that has continued from generation to generation until today. . . . smriti (literally "recollection") is the collective term for all other sacred literature, principally in Sanskrit, which is considered to be secondary to shruti, bringing out the hidden meanings of the revelation, restating it for a wider audience, providing more precise instructions concerning moral conduct, and complementing shruti in matters of religion. While the distinction between shruti and smriti is a useful one, in practice the Hindu acquires his knowledge of religion almost exclusively through smriti." (923-33) Sawhney, Simona-Remembering the Veda: Accumulations of Interest. Vanderbilt University- 1999 Source- http://english.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v3i12/sawahne.htm
Etymologically, Ra means “to give to”, and Sa means “motion”. In Sanskrit phonetics, the sounds when repeated or recited amplify the notions of meaning embedded within the cadence and resonance of these words.

It is thus important to note that the transfer of knowledge in the Vedic tradition is predominantly an oral one (Patyaiying 2008) and is classified as both Shruti and Smriti. Shruti, or ‘that which is heard’, is described as “a visible garment of the experiences of the awakened soul” (Rambachan 1991). Sanskrit phonetics is based on root sounds that, it is argued, correspond to the aural wavelength of the objects being described.

When the sounds are put together, they resonate with several meanings: To flow; to saturate in liquid; to taste or relish; flavour, fluid, liquid, sauce, condiment, beauty, pleasure or delight.

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84 Radhakrishnan, S explains that, Shruti as divine revelation as a truth that is ‘seen’ and what is remembered by the sages. Smriti is an interpretation (Patyaiying, Paitoon.2008-46)

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Monier Williams’ Sanskrit dictionary\textsuperscript{86} (Monier-Williams 2005) also lists several meanings of the word Rasa, both used as a verb and as a noun. Used as a verb,

“It means “to roar”, “cry”, “sound”, “reverberate”, “scream”. As a noun, it means “juice of plants”, “juice of fruit”, “any liquid or fluid”, “the best or finest, prime part of anything”\textsuperscript{87}” (Monier-Williams 2005)

Since its emergence from Vedic times (at least 500 years or so between the Vedas and the NatyaSastra), Rasa as a word grew in context and significance, resonating with a multitude of meanings and cadences (dhvani)\textsuperscript{88}. Bharata’s use of the word was distinct, and was meant to be used as an \textbf{aesthetic measure}. The very fluid intonations of the word emphasize the process of flowing, entering and perhaps even rejuvenating. The perception of Rasa is thus \textbf{a process}, constantly in motion.

Therefore, in extracting the elemental elixir from the first four Vedas, Bharata fashioned a fifth Veda, reiterating the wisdom and substance of the sciences before it, while nurturing a form that aims to possess a universal appeal.

\textsuperscript{87} ibid.
\textsuperscript{88} The poetics of Dhvani can be simply stated. Dhvani is this quintessence of poetry, and Rasa is the quintessence of dhvani. “What then is dhvani? Dhvani is an exclusively poetic feature concerned with exploiting the beauty of every element in the medium of language”
In formulating a theory that relies on and advocates the importance of the human body as a vehicle for transcendence, he began with the five senses: shabdha (sound), sparsha (touch), rupa (sight) rasa (taste) and gandha (aroma).<sup>89</sup> (Vatsyayan 1996), and correlated these with the five elemental energies of akasha (ether), marut (air), ap (water), tejah (fire), and kshiti (earth). Implicit in the formulation is the concept of ‘self’ and ego-consciousness (ahamkara).

In creating a theory that blends and infuses the human sense organs with the internal organ of knowledge (ego, intelligence and mind or antahkarana<sup>90</sup> (Banerjee 1994)), he manifests a biologic morphing system (theory) that transcends the corporeal and enlightens the spirit.

It is believed Bharata then presents this highly systemized ‘science of dance and dramaturgy’ to Lord Shiva, in Kailash. It is Lord Shiva, who added the aspect of Thandava [dynamic rhythms] to this science, and Parvati, his consort,  

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90 Antahkarana, foreign to the self, product of non-conscious, non-spiritual substance. Consciousness is a mere reflection in it. Mind is that medium or central organ which communicates between motor action and sense knowledge. It is divisible into fractions and parts which are in contact with many senses at the same time. Consciousness which is considered by Descartes as essence of mind, is thus simply a reflected form of pure consciousness or caitanya (Purusha) through buddhi. The whole antahkarana may perhaps be understood in analogy with the moon and its light. Hence our cognitions, affections, and actions are all ‘as if’ consciousness which are phenomenal in character. (J.C. Banerjee)
who contributed the fluidity of ‘Lasya’ to this treatise of illumination. This so-called belief may be construed as fiction. Perhaps, but more than a fictitious narrative, it could more believably be attributed to a poetic construction of a metaphor. Shiva as the male principal and Lord of Kailash and Parvati as the female consort are symbolic of the creative impetus, that Yin-Yang principle of compatible opposites. Thus the two-fold energy of the dynamic (Tandava) and fluid (Lasya) complement the dance movement of the internal and external cosmos.

A closer reading of the theatrical universe of Bharata implicitly repeats the structural emphasis of the Vedas in its emphasis on art as a means for the ascension of consciousness. Moreover, while the body, mind, senses, intellect and sense perceptions, all play a part in the ‘evolution’ of the consciousness, it is the senses and sense perceptions that are crucial for this ascension.

91 The term lasya, in the context of Hindu mythology, describes an extremely feminine, graceful and fluid type of dance that the goddess Parvati performed. It was as a response to the male energy of the cosmic dance of Tandava performed by Shiva, and was performed concurrently while tandava was in progression. Hence the word ‘tala’ been derived from the union of the dances of both Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati (Tandava and Lasya). In Shiva is said to have been revealed both faces of dance - 'lasya' and 'tandava', of which all subsequent dance forms were offshoots. Lasya, the dance of aesthetic delight revealed beauty, grace, love and all tender aspects of existence. Lasya is the mode that defined many of Shiva’s iconographic forms - Kalyana-Sundara, Vrashavahana, Yogeshvara, Katyavalambita, Sukhasanamurti, Vyakhyanamurti, Chinamudra, Anugrahamurti, and Chandrashekhara. The expression of happiness and joy in dance is also termed as Lasya.

92 Unlike the 4 earlier Vedas that intuitively germinated and grew from the consciousness of seers/rishis, The Natya Shastra was specifically constructed and designed to bring the highest truths to common man.
Out of the thirty-six chapters that make up the “Natya Sastra”, the topic and discussion of ‘Rasa’ is devoted to only one chapter. What exactly does ‘Rasa’ mean? First used in the *Rig Veda*[^93], the word, as I have said earlier, was associated with soma, wine, juice or essence. For example, we have the statement: “Raso- vai saya aanandaha”, “Indeed Rasa is supreme bliss”. Once again, there is the comment from *Yajur Veda*: “Yad vai tat suktram, raso vai sah, rasamhya evamlabdhvaanandibhavati”[^94]; “Only after perceiving the essence, can one perceive bliss”.

It is important, however, to understand that Rasa is part of a holistic system of theatrical aesthetics.

Swami Krishnananda elaborates upon this concept in his talk about this bliss described in the Taitriya Upanishad.

> “The Absolute appears to be non-existent from the point of view of the senses, not from its own point of view. It is non-existent to the senses because the senses can perceive only what is in space and in time. But the Absolute Brahman is not in space and in time; it is the Self. Again we come to the point that we cannot see the Self, just as we cannot see our own eyes. The Self is the seeing consciousness. That is called the Atman; that is called Brahman or the Absolute. How can we see it? Who can see the Seer? We cannot see the Seer because the Seer is the seer of things. The Atman cannot be beheld in the way we behold a building outside or people in the

[^93]: The class of “Vedic texts” is aggregated around the four canonical Samhitas or Vedas proper (turiya) of which three (traya) are related to the performance of yajna (sacrifice) in historical. Vedic religio. 1. the Rigveda, containing hymns to be recited by the chief priest, 2. the Yajurveda, containing formulas to be recited by officiating priest, 3. the Samaveda, containing formulas to be chanted by the priest, 4. The Atharvaveda, a collection of spells and incantations, stories, predictions, apotropaic charms and come speculative hymns. - Wikipedia

[^94]: Taitriya Upanishad derivative of Yajur Veda. Swami Krishnananda provides a brilliant discourse on the seeking of this happiness or bliss, based on the Taitriya Upanishad. ([http://www.swami-krishnananda.org/aitt/ait_5.html](http://www.swami-krishnananda.org/aitt/ait_5.html))

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CHAPTER 3: RASA
world externally, because the beholding outside is done through the senses. But the senses function on account of the light of the Atman. The deepest Self within us cannot be experienced by any activity of the senses. And if we try to contact the Absolute with the help of the senses or through a test tube in a laboratory in a scientific manner, as they call it today, then we will be a failure. The Absolute is the selfhood in things and it can be known only by self-restraint, by self-control, by tapas.”(Swami Krishnananda)

Bharata, following the Vedic precepts on “Anandam” or bliss set by the Ananda Mimamsa of the Taitriya Upanishad, fashioned a method through theatre, to create this bliss and joy (Anandam as described in the Upanishad) by conditioning the mind, through which we transact with the world around us. The structure of ‘bhava and rasa’ is the means with which he provided a palpable method to create this ‘conditioning’. It is the ‘tapas’ or ‘sadhana’ undertaken by the actor/artist through his/her craft of choice, to present this bhava through his/her action to finally produce the rasa in the audience and his/herself. The tapas or sadhana is the practical application of ‘polishing’ to reveal the true divine nature of the human being. Like revealing the presence of a diamond in the rock face, Bharata created a method. A method to draw the mind inward and to a point of stillness, so that the actor/dancer/artist is able to produce a ‘purity of expression’ and produce a bhava that subsequently produces ‘rasa’. A culmination of the rasa experience is to produce the ‘anandham’ or ‘bliss’ in the consciousness of the observer (artist and spectator).
Vatsyan on Bharata

The following is a summary of Vatsyan’s lucid interpretation of Bharata’s substantial contribution to theatre in her book, *The Square and Circle of Indian Arts* (Vatsyayan 1997).

Bharata’s *Rasa* theory of aesthetics was formulated on ritual and the speculative thought of an ancient Vedic tradition. His extensive theory provides a complex infrastructure called *natya* (theatre) that exhibits a rare understanding of the physical body, its limbs and physiological systems. It establishes a system of correspondences and correlatives with the metaphor of universality outlined in the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, and, it is argued, patterned in the cosmos itself.96 (Vatsyayan 1997)

The following Sanskrit poem, from the *Natyasastra*, correlates the microcosm of physical anatomical structures with macrocosmic bodies.

“Aangikam Bhuvanam Yasya, Vaachikam Sarvavaangmayam Aaharyan Chandra Taaradhi, Twam nomas Saatvikam Shivam?” (Bharata Muni 2002)

**Meaning:**

Aligning the *physical body* with the cosmos, speech with every sound within the Universe, *ornamentation* to the planets, acknowledging *One* unchanging Reality.


Vatsayan puts it clearly: “Bharata had stressed at the very onset that drama (natya) deals with the action in the universe, the three worlds and the seven spheres” (Vatsayan 1996); that is, that gods, humans, asuras (demonic beings) and all life, participate in it.

Bharata calls Rasa the ‘sap’ or the soul, and calls the plot, the sarira or the body. (Bharata and Ghosh 2002) The images he evokes are analogous to forms of plant life, of a flowering and sprouting of a vibrant growing life form. However, the gastronomical inference of relishing and savoring, tasting and absorbing through the senses, also suggests a tangible familiarity to the mind; something we do every day, an experience we understand organically, and intuitively. The dynamics of using the attributes of taste and flavour to describe a phenomenon that takes place within the mind, within our consciousness, is extremely significant. This sensuous, proximate, aromatic juice or stuff that suffuses our senses; that thematically fills our mouths also fills the spaces within our minds.

In this context, Richard Schechner writes about this “taste” experience:

“a child learns early on to see something, focus on it, reach for it, grasp it, and bring it to the mouth. The mouth replaces the eyes as the end point of
exploring the “outer” world and relating it to the “inner” world. The “transitional object is how the infant first experiences the sameness/difference between the world outside herself and the world inside herself.” (Schechner 2001)

Using the experience of taste and tasting, located within a common, instinctive human sense organ (mouth), Bharata correlates and aligns it to an aesthetic phenomenon. How to better understand an abstraction but through what we know and use every day of our life!

**Performance**

Contemporary performance theory also locates the dramatic within the realm of our everyday life. In his book *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (Schechner 2002) Schechner says, “Performance is action”; that is, action, that is performed within the structure of theatre, as well as action in everyday life. He categorises these two different though related, modes of action with the terms “as performance” and “as performance”. The former refers to a framed event within conventional theatrical structure and ‘as performance’ relates to informal scenarios in everyday life. An entire revolution of performativity has emerged since the refining of these terms.  

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98 The Taitriya Upanishad pays close attention to the place of food and sustenance in the human mind evolution. Interpretation/translation is available in, [http://avgwarrier.blogspot.com.au/](http://avgwarrier.blogspot.com.au/).


1. Theorizes individual and social human behaviour as performance. (essentially a variation of the ‘Theatrum Mundis’ metaphor).

2. Theorizes various performative art forms. (i.e. Theatre, dance, music,
(Grimes and Schechner 1986) (in the Nineteen-eighties), with the advent of YouTube, email, texting, smart phones, global cultures closely interacting, hyperlinks, internet conferences (podio) and the like, a gushing torrent of “is” and “as” performance structures, making minds reel.

Therefore the term ‘performance’ seemingly becomes a problematic category. Schechner recalls Erving Goffman’s observation that “... all the world is not, of course, a stage, but the crucial ways in which it isn’t are not easy to specify”.103 (Grimes and Schechner 1986) He further argues that theory, if it is to incorporate both the 'art as life' and the 'life is art' components of the performance mirror, must inevitably become a meta-theory that is concerned with the highly complex and stratified ‘modes of seeing’, which involve a performance event.104 (Grimes and Schechner 1986)

Performance theory then has far-reaching implications and applications that stretch well beyond the boundaries and constraints of institutionalized theatre. The two-way mirror of performance (the 'art as life' and 'life as art' components of performance) becomes an important aspect of my argument.

etc. as a kind of personal or social interaction.

103 ibid.
104 ibid.
Frames

Therefore, put in simplistic terms, an event, whether in real life or within the precincts of institutionalized theatre, is observed; that is, observed by the self or by people surrounding the event - in this time or another. The observer and the observed in their time and space together constitute a performance. Richard Schechner's view here concerning theatre in theatre and theatre in ordinary life is in keeping with mine. The choice whether or not to engage with the event is left to the observer. When we do engage, we enter the peculiar emotional world of play: we get involved; we step into the looking glass; we enter a set of brackets; that is, we enter a frame. "Frames", a term used much in contemporary sociology and psychology, defines the factors and features that distinguish one sub-reality from another. The human mind and intellect understand by using this mechanism. We constantly step in and out of frames in order to bring about some degree of comprehension about us: in order to create meanings.

David George specifies:

"The existence of segregated, stratified ontology and segregated..."
stratified epistemologies necessitates some general theory ... frames - this refers to those boundaries which are imposed on the receiver by the mode of being the phenomena; ‘brackets’ are those which are imposed on the phenomena by the receiver.” (George 1989).

What this proposes is that the event is always presented as framed, and that the spectator always complements that frame with their own brackets; in consequence, we constantly shuttle between what we see and what we feel, bhavas and rasas. In a theatrical performance frames are prearranged structures that tell us how to behave. We then as spectators respond with corresponding acts of self-definition within our own set of brackets. So long as our self-preparation- our brackets meet the pre-arranged frame, all is well.

Therefore if the theatre is a frame, the audience who dress up and walk through the foyer and sit behind closed doors in the dark and prepare themselves for a particular kind of experience with willing assent, provide the corresponding brackets. But the historical tendency towards ontological reductions which is so characteristic of Western thought, culminates in the theory of frames (that is, Goffman In Frame Analysis) where only one form of reality is accepted - the material, social reality. All the rest of various ontologies that might be...
available to us, including explicitly the Theatre, are rejected as fictions of some kind.

Interestingly the conspicuously alternative approach of Asian Theory which recognises multiple ontological frames would appear to relegate this whole question to not one of mere cultural relativity, but actually to encompass theories of Quantum physics which recognise the hypothesis of many worlds as a logical, and to some degree, the only explanation. If Quantum physics succeeds in revolutionizing Western thought, a performance may be able to resonate without barriers within the inner spaces or consciousness of the Western mind. Otherwise theatre may, in the end, have no ontological relevance to it.

Nevertheless, there are artists (symbolists, expressionists and modernists) like Antonin Artaud, Grotowski and Brook, who dared to venture out of these realist frames of Western theatre and were all, to an extent, influenced to some degree by Asian theatre models, to try and reach different states of consciousness. Artaud, with his affirmation of ‘Holy Theatre’, Grotowski’s ‘theatre laboratory’ and Brook too in his exploration of his term, “two worlds” (the world of imagination of actors and ‘world of the every day’ of audience, that
meet to, “an interaction between the two modes of reality – those of the ‘imagination’ and the mundane.” 106(Cohen 1991) all attempted to explore a more complicated understanding of multiple ontologies. For Brook, this also meant performing Asian epics as in his Conference of the Birds and Mahabharata. Perhaps considered avant-garde in their time, their ‘aspirations for transcendence’107 (Innes 1981), and seeking of the ‘spiritual’ (not religious), propelled them into seeking, questioning and voicing the fundamental questions pertaining to theatre, its semiology, the spectator/actor relationship, and, ultimately, the transformation of consciousness itself.

Therefore frames need brackets and brackets need frames; in Hegelian terms, consciousness which is directed towards the object is constitutive of that object to the extent that the object lends itself to the constituency - the aesthetic object creates its frame but that frame is completed or made whole only by the spectator’s brackets108 (Hegel 1931). It seems therefore clear that any performance works as

106 Cohen, Paul, MA dissertation, Vanderbilt University.
107 Innes, Christopher, Holy Theatre, Cambridge University Press, 1981 0521 225426 (pg 3, 4)
an aesthetic object only to the degree that the frames that define its mode of being are received, consumed and appropriated by complementary brackets supplied by the spectator. Western theories may deny that the intangible and impalpable spiritual ontology of drama has any "real" cognitive significance.

Asian theory has always accepted bracketing as its only explanation of aesthetic response. This particular perspective has received considerable confirmation in Luckmann's work, which recognises "that our existence is played out in a series of small 'life worlds' within which there are different space-time and behavioural contexts" (Luckmann 1978).

Experimental theatre which was set up to break all this, instead inversely confirmed it. David Cole writes, "if the audience breaks the frame, rearranges the brackets, intervenes on the stage, you no longer have theatre, you have an acting class or a debating chamber" (Cole 1975). Experimental theatre tried to destroy the frames and brackets because they found theatrics, understood as the
not “real”, morally and politically problematic. Therefore when Rousseau said (of an emotional response in the theatre),

“... What is this pity? A fleeting and vain emotion which no longer than the illusion which produces it. A stench which never produced a slightest act of humanity ... ”, is there any point in witnessing and feeling the emotions that the performance presents? 

111 (Rousseau and Gourevitch 1997)

When Anne Ubersfeld, says, “The spectators have an answer - we come to the theatre not to be morally improved - we come to feel the pleasure”, it is true, and the pleasure that is felt is multi-levelled. Good theatre provides this; be it Bharata’s, or Brecht’s, Greek or modern, the experience of this multilayered pleasure is deep and satisfying. This Satisfaction is part of the quality of Rasa. The quality of Rasa differs in that a deep almost spiritual satisfaction ensues as a result. The mind-less joy engulfs the experincer. The frames and brackets are both predicated on pleasure.

This is a valid and important aspect, even in the theatre of Bharata. Because Bharata’s purpose in creating the treatise was that, while the sacred, the divine, and the highest truths can be experienced they can also be a source of pleasure to all. His aim is in delivering the

111 Jean-Jacques Rosseau, Rosseau: The early Discourses and other early Political Writings. Cambridge University Press (pg.95)
‘essence’ of the sacred scriptures to all of humankind, to be experienced and savoured through the senses and body, finds resolution. This resolution is indicative in all the times when the spectator finds a total satisfaction and happiness at the conclusion of a performance. What is Pleasure?

Anne Ubersfeld in "The Pleasure of the Spectator" replies:

"one can say almost anything about the spectator's pleasure, and the most contradictory formulas can appear valid: The pleasure of liking and disliking; the pleasure of understanding and misunderstanding; the pleasure of maintaining an intellectual distance and of being carried away by one's emotions; the pleasure of following a story (and what happens next? The child asks.)" (Ubersfeld, Bouillaguet and Jose 1982)

She speaks about the joy of the spectator and in their joy in “assembling the fragments of a spectacle” (Ubersfeld, Bouillaguet and Jose 1982). Ubersfeld also remarks that this pleasure is “protean, obstinate and lurking” and that it is “never absent” and scattered all over and that theatrical pleasure is beyond “rational analysis” (Ubersfeld, Bouillaguet and Jose 1982). The following section elucidates the precepts of pleasure in Rasa theory. In the opening chapters of Natyashastra, Bharata celebrates ‘purvaranga’, bestows

113 ibid.
114 ibid.
upon the audience ‘Drista and Adrishta phala (Pleasure and religious Merit.)\(^{115}\) (Ramakrishna 1934) In attempting to un-pack these concepts, I quoted at length below from a report of a symposium on Philosophy of Indian Dramatic Art and Value Education\(^{116}\)(Gupta 2002), where scholars try to understand Rasa, and its relationship to pleasure;

“Natya as a Vehicle of Purushaartha,” Prof. Radha Vallabh Tripathi, showed a detailed relationship between the four purushaarthas, Kama, Dharma, Artha and Moksha and the four rasas, Sringara, Vira, Raudra and Bibhatsa. He then brilliantly elaborated how other rasas and the other aspects of the ancient plays like nayikas, vrittis etc, were connected with the purushaarthas or the well defined aims of life. He asserted that there could be no predominance of any one purushaarthan in drama. Life had to be shown in its completeness. He pointed out that there were two streams in the ancient times, one didactic like Ashvaghosha’s and the other more pleasure centric like Kalidasa’s. They demanded two aesthetics. In the rasika tradition, pleasure also created an ethical resolution or ‘purusharthaadhee’. After performance the onlooker had acquired better samskaaras or morally intuitive abilities and was a better educated person. As Abhinavgupta said the poet through recreating (anuvyahaarana), the actor through redoing (anukarana) and the onlooker through revisualizing (anudarshana) attain the understanding of aims of purushaarthas. There can be no rasa if the realization of purushaarthas is not present.”(Gupta 2002)

In the discussion that followed Dr. Bharat Gupt observed that though ethics was a desirable concern for the ancients and there could be no purusharathalessina or value-less pleasure, ethics however did not constitute the aesthetic pleasure, the main aim.

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\(^{116}\) http://ifihhome.tripod.com/reports/symposium001.html
of natya. Purushaarthas were a social not an aesthetic construct. Prof. Tripathi agreed and said that achaaryas only claimed that drama created ‘purushartha-dhee’ and not the action.

Prof. Kapil Kapoor said ethical values can be generated only if the art experience is affirmative. If it is postmodern there may be no Rasa and no ethics either. Prof. Satyadev Chaudhury asserted that Rasa was distinct and independent and the didactic functions such as ‘kavya prayojanas’ or ‘kaantaasamopa desha’ were outside ‘Rasa nishpatti’.

As outlined above, although Bharata created an avenue to elucidate the ethical precepts of the dominant philosophy of the Vedas, the aesthetic pleasure was of utmost importance. Abhinavagupta believes that through this aesthetic pleasure, any discrepancy or disparity in these ethical issues find resolution (Visuvalingam 2002).

**The Artist, the performance and the spectator**

When the spectator watches pain, starvation, torture and the like, is

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117 Although Bharata created an avenue to elucidate the ethical precepts of the dominant philosophy, the aesthetic pleasure was of utmost importance. Abhinavagupta believes that through this aesthetic pleasure, these ethical issues find resolution.

he/she a mere voyeur, simply enjoying the effects and responding to
good acting? Bharata's theory of rasa says – ‘yes’ and ‘no’. The
audience does respond to good effects and acting; that is, they enjoy
the “bhava”, or the emotion they experience as the actor performs.
But more importantly, this emotion or ‘bhava’
[119], which comes from
the artist, corresponds with a similar bhava that the spectator can
relate to and this knowledge through the complex aesthetic process
of framing and distancing, in turn becomes a 'rasa' or aesthetic
rapture/ pleasure. Therefore, it is in the capacity of the spectator to
be able to identify the emotion with a similar experience in his or her
life where the performance is engaged; just as much as it is in the
capacity of the artist in displaying an emotion that he or she has felt
in everyday life.

When these two corresponding emotions meet, the dialogue is
formed and meaning is created. This is only the meeting ground i.e.
'bhava'; that is, where intellectual understanding transcends to
emotional understanding. According to this theory, a shift in

\[\text{bhava} \]

\[\text{rasa} \]

\[\text{bhava} \]

\[\text{rasa} \]

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[119] “The theatrical experience emerges from a ‘seed’ (bija)- a term used in the context of the relationship of rasa and bhava, as also the structuring of drama, i.e. ‘ittivrta’ (plot) Bharata says, ‘Just as a tree grows from a seed, and flowers and fruits (including the seed) from a tree, so the sentiments (rasas) are the source (root) of all the states (bhavas) and likewise the states exist as the source of all sentiments (rasa). Natyashastra VI-38” - Vatsyayan, Bharata The Natyashastra, 1996
consciousness occurs. ‘Rasa’ or aesthetic rapture is achieved when the spectator transcends the rationalized understanding - either the intellect or emotion. He or she experiences; the consciousness experiences; the spectator is touched; the spectator ‘is’. This state of ‘isness’ is what Rasa means: “the essence”.

The word Rasa, therefore, is both the simplest and at the same time the most bewildering experience in the Sanskrit language. It is simplest in the sense that in India it has a popular resonance even in illiterate and unsophisticated circles. A layperson instantly comprehends its meaning - although he or she may be unable to give it precise definition. The word may convey different meanings in different contexts but, I would argue, its essential core remains unaltered.

R.L.Singhal120 in “Bharatha’s Theory of Rasa” describes it as –

“...juice, essence or elixir. It also meant taste, relish or flavour. Whether the relish is of the Aryan:’ s drinking of the ’soma’ juice (intoxicant) or the yogi’s communion with the Cosmic Soul, or the reader’s delightful experience of a beautiful piece of literature, it is ‘rasa’” (Singhal 1977)

Bharatha’s explanation in The Natya Shastra makes this abundantly

clear. The sages ask him ‘What is this commodity called Rasa?’ Bharatha’s cryptic reply is - ‘that which is relished is ‘Rasa’”. In fact whether we use the word in its association with the palate or the transcendental experience of a yogi, or the delight afforded by art, the word Rasa indicates the pleasure each (class of people) receive from their experiences. The word is most bewildering in the sense that it defies all attempts at translation. It transcends simplistic intellectual rationalization. Words can only approximate what is a profound spiritual experience. As Apparao says:

“It has been found that no comprehensible word or phrase is adequate to convey the full import of ‘rasa’. Rasa is actually the impression created in the mind of the sympathetic audience by the expression of ‘bhava’ and is an experience the individual is subject to, on account of this expression. The idea of rasa is unique to Indian poetics and dramatics and is essentially a creation of the Indian genius. So however much one may try to translate the word rasa, such a translation has always been found to be yet wanting”.

(Apparao 1969)

If Rasa is likened to essence and, as in the case of essence of roses is rose-scent the idea of sap or juice becomes steadily conflated with the notion of essence: first of a plant or any other natural phenomena itself and then by a fascinating transference of emotion felt when smelling that essence becomes an essence within oneself.

What begins then as the description of some objective quality
becomes a description of the subjective response to that quality: the juice or sap or vital fluid of a plant becomes the flavour or essence of the experience: an enjoyment of this flavour or smell.

Perhaps this is the reason that the effect of the magical drink 'soma' was associated with Rasa, because it led to shifts in consciousness and altered the state of cognition. Therefore Rasa is the pleasure, the joy, and the delight that follows the experience of the essence of natural phenomena.

This essence of natural phenomena in this tradition is what is termed Ishwara: The Supreme, The God of all creation, or Virata Purusha121; the essence that pervades and permeates the Cosmos, Absolute Consciousness. Therefore the metaphor is once again stretched to horizons far beyond the span or capacity of ordinary, everyday consciousness. The innate essence when experienced lifts the consciousness from objective to subjective. Thus Rasa is an experience that is ultimately deeply spiritual, with the ability to shift our consciousness to a conversance

121 The Virat is the Chaitanya, or the Consciousness, which animates the universe of gross experience. http://www.swami-krishnananda.org/mundak/Mundaka_Upanishad.pdf
with joy.

This lift in consciousness is what the Indian theorist Bharata conceived of as theatre.122

“The concept of sensation and mind has also been defined as the union of the breath of life with the body organs. If this union is merged with desire, the origin of the mind takes place... 123” (swami-krishnananda.org 2014)

This finds resonance in Rasa theory, where mind, body, senses and life breath, through the observance of the various bhavas, act to cause the ‘sympathetic’ spectator’s ‘being’ to become harmonised during the course of performance: the Rasa takes effect; the Rasa is relished.

The audience can return to their ‘homes’ fulfilled and transformed. So the little dramas, the little performances continue, as they must. The phenomenal universe is ever ‘happening’, ever changing.


The third element is the corporal body formed of five physical elements or prakrti. The concept of sensation and mind has also been defined as the union of the breath of life with the body organs. If this union is merged with desire, the origin of the mind takes place. This is why the living and sensitive plants are devoid of a mind. Therefore, it is illustrated that the end of desire is the end of the mind and leads to the end of the birth and death cycle, that is Nirvana or emancipation

This still takes me back to the question of why an exhibition or ‘bhava’ of a distasteful or aggressive act of murder or mere anger can produce pleasure in the audience. Why does a tragedy produce pleasure? The answer comes in a twofold manner.

Firstly, there is pleasure in all well-done acts of imitation, so that the artistic reproduction of even a 'really' distasteful object pleases us by its skill.

Secondly, the sympathetic spectator who observes this reproduction removes\(^{124}\) the reproduced object from real life reference and refuses to follow where it must lead. Thus, if this spectator sees a tragic scene like a young boy dying of a dreaded disease, he or she is able to reframe, enjoy the dramatic elements, of acting talent, music, lighting, and appropriate an affective response.

\(^{124}\)Concept of tatastha or ‘distancing’ (Bharata-Vatsyayan 1996)
Bharata’s answer is as simple as it is radical: “The experience of tragedy is not an experience of something real” (only relative and nascent); and “hence the response is but a heightened sensitivity, which by removing the events” or re-framing them “from real life reference, automatically makes them pleasurable” 125 (Apparao 1994).

It is important to note that Rasa theory lies in recognizing no distinction between the purgation (reframing) of unpleasant and the purgation of pleasant emotions; that is, that all emotional responses are suspect and tainted (even happy ones) because they are experienced by the mind. Rasas are finally experienced aesthetically (directly) and at the level of the deeper ‘self’. This is, of course, an implicitly spiritual argument, based on a particular worldview. In this view, no mundane rationality exists in the experience of Rasa. When the rational mind is silenced, the intuitive mode produces an extraordinary awareness. The phenomenon is a direct experience126; without the filter of conceptual thinking.

Consequently, the awareness does not identify itself with the

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126 An in depth argument of direct and indirect knowledge/experience will be closely examined in chapter 4 of this dissertation.
situation of grief, love, hate, anger and other emotions but only responds to them in relation to its own. Response is always one step removed. The audience is kept at “arm’s length”. In Sanskrit theatre the danger of the audience identifying with the character is counteracted by the transporting of the audience to a realm which is expressly not that of their everyday world; it is characterized by perfect being, supernatural intervention and by happy endings: that is, this aromatic world is a fine world, a refined world of beauty, not one to be lived in but one to be observed and only to be responded to. Therefore aesthetic distance is the dominant characteristic of the Sanskrit mechanism of audience purgation. It is a very delicate balance. Therefore the stage world must be accepted on its own terms, not as a copy of the real world and not even as an alternative to it. For one cannot live in it, but only as a refined, ephemeral, framed world parallel to the real one.

**Expanding Bharata's Theory**

Thus it is evident the theory of Rasa is audience-oriented. The argument I am making is that the aesthetic rapture of Rasa is not just a one-way street of producing Rasa in the spectator, but is actually a
two-fold experience, and even circular. This Rasa is a shared experience by the spectator and artist: by ‘shared’ here, I do not mean emotions experienced by the two are identical; rather they are complimentary. This Rasa is the ‘root of’ and the ‘end of’ Bharata’s theatrical performance. It is the sap or the soul of it.127

My argument is that Rasa is an experience of the creator (the artist) as also that of the spectator.

_The artistic experience (Rasa) is viewed from the point of view of creator- poet, writer, artist, painter, architect, and interpreter- in this case the actor, the singer, the executor of architectural design, as also the spectator and receiver._ (Vatsyayan 1996)

Unless the artist is ‘immersed ‘in Rasa, unless it has taken possession of the artist’s very soul, she or he will not be able to transmit it to her or his work. There is an unbreakable link between what the artist feels and contemplates and what the artist expresses128. The artist is first saturated with an emotion (not a momentary thing but the result of

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127 Bharata
128 “The artistic experience is a-causal and whole, a state of beatitude and bliss in the experincer, the creator. A reading of the Natyashastra (esp.6th and 7th chapters) makes it very clear that although Bharata appears to be speaking only about artistic expression and methodologies for evoking response and resonance, he was indeed conscious of theses distinctions. After all, who was conceiving and visualizing before form came into being? An experience of un-differentiation , of a state of (concentration) Samadhi, an a-causal, a-intellected state, intuitive and non-cognitive, alone can be liberated from immediacy and boundaries….Whether stated as words or not, it is rasa in the singular, the highly charged state of momentary freedom and emancipation which motivates, inspires creation.” Vatsyayan, The Natyashastra, 1996 pg 59.
sustained contemplation), and is so overwhelmed by that emotion that she or he finds it impossible to contain it. Like a poet whose heart overflows and finds utterance, the artist experiences Rasa and transmits bhava. The sympathetic spectator (sa hridaya)\textsuperscript{129}, relishes the same emotion in almost the same degree: the beauty of this intense rapture communicates through emotion and it fructifies as intense rapture again. I would argue that this intense rapture finds its way back to the artist, who is enthralled by the response of the spectator. Thus the creation of Rasa is cyclic and is punctuated with bhavas in a performance.

Again, here I would argue that the word Rasa embraces the complete process of aesthetic appreciation. John Dewey, for example, rightly regrets the absence of a word in the English language which can convey the impact of both ‘artistic’ and ‘aesthetic’ experiences\textsuperscript{130} (Dewey 1996). Whereas the word ‘artistic’ refers to the act of creation, the word ‘aesthetic’ indicates perception and enjoyment. This unfortunate segregation of the two processes disappears with the use of the Indian term Rasa.

\textsuperscript{129} See Higgins’ Aesthetics below
Ultimately, Rasa unites the acts 'creating' and 'appreciating' or 'doing' and 'undergoing': only Rasa remains; it may be a moment of complete aesthetic rapture or a vastness of experience that may well be beyond the concepts of time and space.

The Rasa - the 'is-ness' is the only Reality experienced. The experience, when prolonged and intensified, may seem akin to (and perhaps lead to) mystical experience; direct and non-intellectual (devoid of the clutter of thought whether rational or not) awareness\textsuperscript{131}.

The creation of Rasa is the central aim of the Natyashastra, and this creation of the Rasa can only be experienced within the consciousness of the ‘suitably cultivated audience member’.\textsuperscript{132}

K.M.Higgins in her analysis of rasa states,

\textsuperscript{131} Abhinavagupta’s interpretation
\textsuperscript{132} Significant is the terminology of a worthy spectator (rasajña) for rasānubhava subjective qualification for objective appreciation
“The Natyasatra articulates rasa theory in light of the dramatist’s pragmatic goal of conveying emotional states to the audience… (it) is concerned with the practical means for creating a distinct mood through the performance that can be transformed into rasa, aesthetic relish of the emotional tone, in the suitably cultivated audience member. ’…”...and everything within the drama should be subordinate to the aim of producing rasa, including the construction of the plot.’”

Higgins’ analysis of the essence of Bharata’s work, as working in the “suitably cultivated audience member” here is important.134 (Vatsyayan 1996) Bharata has implied this throughout the treatise and also stated that the main purpose of theatre is to create ‘Rasa’135 so that this psychical experience transforms the consciousness.

At this point, some more clarity needs to be attempted in the use of the word Rasa. Is there one Rasa or many? Bharata’s reasoned use of the word Rasa as the end product as well as the part-process is curiously interesting. It is essential not to confuse the eight rasas, (sringara, hasya, karuna, raudra, vira, bhayanaka, bibhatsa, adhbuta)136, with the transformative ‘end-product’ experience of Rasa. These eight quantified, enduring emotional states are called ‘stayibhavas’, which when transformed through the prowess of the actor, produce the total, transformative experience of Rasa. Each of these

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133 Higgins analysis includes Kant’s ‘free play of imagination and understanding’ and David Hume’s “sentiment”.
134 Bharata’s emphasis is on the ability of those who are called ‘bharatas’ to take on roles and to be the vehicle of presenting and evoking ‘rasa’…” Vatsyayan – The NatyaShastra
135 Ref
136 The plural form of this refers to a range of emotional abstractions that are commonly referred to as navarasas (but for present purposes, it is confined to 8 rasas.)
palpable emotional states ‘comprise’ the unmistakable experience of the final product.

**Rasa: The Core Concept.**

> “The performers of music and dance, the transmitters of the religious tradition, speak for Hinduism. We should listen to them.”
> 
> Vasudha Narayanan (Schwartz 2004)

As in Aristotles’s Poetics in the European theatre arena, Bharata’s *NatyaShastra* has been the parallel in Sanskrit performance theory study. This concept of Rasa has been core concept of a treatise on theatre, that not only luxuriates in the elements of theatre but also stems from a deep religiosity derived from the canvas provided by *Sanatana Dharma*.

Susan L. Schwartz in her thoughtful and provocative book *Rasa-Performing the divine in India* (Schwartz 2004), a third in a series of books based on Indian performing arts, navigates the reader through a range of performance

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137 “DiGlossisic Hinduism: Liberation and Lentils ” -Susan L. Shawartz –Rasa. Although this is a quote from Schwartz’s book, I use this quote on two levels. One, that I interpret Hinduism as Sanatana Dharma ie. Way of life and that too the performers of theatre, as transmitters of a universal theatrical tradition rather than religion.  
structures of India, carefully unpacking the complicated Sanskrit terminology and performing and religious traditions existing in India. Central to her theme of Rasa is the NatyaShastra of Bharata. She states that this monumental work on theatre, that began around 2\textsuperscript{nd} BC, was created so that common humanity may experience the highest truth through accessible modes, has survived and is till this day a vibrant, perpetually evolving art-form. Essentially oral in tradition, Bharata based the work on Sanatana Dharma and Vedas; this complex treatise of theatre and aesthetics was written in order to facilitate transformation- in the “artist, audience and ultimately the world”\footnote{S.L. Schwartz 2004}.

Focusing on the term Rasa, Schwartz connects the etymology of the word with India’s ancient traditions, from Ayurveda to music and dance, the ‘guru-sishya’ (student-teacher) relationship and the psychophysical transformative power in performance.

\textit{Rasaesthetics} \footnote{A term coined by Richard Schechner in 2001} (Schechner 2001).

The holistic nature or the Rasa experience is explored by Richard Schechner in his paper “Rasaesthetics” observes that the term Rasa of Bharata’s
NatyaShastra is coined around the concept of tastes, and the geo-physiology of body.

"...the mouth, or better said, the snout-to-belly-to-bowel—the route through the body managed by the enteric nervous system—is the topic of this essay. The snout-to-belly-to-bowel is the “where” of taste, digestion, and excretion. The performance of the snout-to-belly-to-bowel is an ongoing interlinked muscular, cellular, and neurological process of testing-tasting, separating nourishment from waste, distributing nourishment throughout the body, and eliminating waste. The snout-to-belly-to-bowel is the where of intimacy, sharing of bodily substances, mixing the inside and the outside, emotional experiences, and gut feelings. A good meal with good company is a pleasure; so is foreplay and lovemaking; so is a good shit." (Schechner 2001)

Schechner interestingly focuses on the concept of the snout or mouth being the open vestibule of experience and delves though it to the belly and bowel! Displaying remarkable insight into the aesthetics of Indian theatre, festivals and ritual feasting, he writes

“There are phases of these festive performances where partakers stand back and watch or listen and other phases where they participate. This blending of theatre, dance, music, food, and religious devotion is to many participants a full, satisfying, and pleasurable experience that cannot be reduced to any single category—religious, aesthetic, personal, or gustatory. This kind of an event yields experiences that dissolve differences, if only for a little while. This kind of experience is hard to measure from the inside or observe from the outside. (Schechner 2001)

Schechner’s writing resonates with mine, in that the Rasa that is experienced by the spectator and artists is measured beyond religious, aesthetic, personal or gustatory categories. This aesthetic relish is experienced by each ‘cultivated audience’ member in a unique way depending on his/her experience and mindset. Not only this fact endures but also that as a collective experience, ‘it dissolves differences’.

142 Schechner 2001
143 ibid.
Schechner elaborates:

“Western aesthetics are derived from the Greek theatre as reinterpreted in the Renaissance. The outcomes are variations of the drama-based proscenium or frontal-stage theatre still prevalent today. Rasaesthetics is very different. It is not something that happens in front of the spectator, a vision for the eyes, but “in the gut,” an experience that takes place inside the body specifically engaging the enteric nervous system.” (Schechner 2001)

Thus the experience of Rasa or “raseasthetics”, is an experience far more on a deeper level. It is even beyond the ‘gut’ level, as it taps into the collective consciousness of the audience as an entity as well as on the cultural consciousness of the individual.

Schechner’s analysis included the enteric nervous system (gut, esophagus, stomach, intestines and bowels) that operates alongside (before and “underneath”) the brain. Michael D. Gershon’s work (The Second Brain) is cited on this topic by Sandra Blakeslee:

‘The gut’s brain, known as the enteric nervous system [ENS], is located in sheaths of tissue lining the esophagus, stomach, small intestine, and colon. Considered a single entity, it is a network of neurons, neurotransmitters, and proteins that zap messages between neurons, support cells like those found in the brain proper and a complex circuitry that enables it to act independently, learn, remember, and, as the saying goes, produce gut feelings.

The ENS derives from the “neural crest,” a bunch of related cells that forms in mammals and birds early in embryo genesis: “One section turns into the central nervous system. Another piece migrates to become the enteric nervous system. Only later are the two nervous systems connected via a cable

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144 ibid.
145 Works with the psychical chakras and pranic energy of individuals.
146 The enteric system does all this on its own, with little help from the central nervous system. The enteric nervous system was first described in 1921 by Dr. J. N. Langley, a British physician who believed that it was one of three parts - along with the parasympathetic and sympathetic nervous systems - of the autonomic nervous system, which controls involuntary behaviors like breathing and circulation. In this triad, the enteric nervous system was seen as something of a tag-along to the other two. (New York Times- 23/08/2005)
147 ibid.
This second ‘brain’, interacting and directing the physiology of a person, is also an indication that neural responses are not just brain-centered but also ‘gut’-centered. Schechner draws parallels to the nabhi or navel center-chakra stimulation known to Indian physical/martial arts, the activating force in Chi in Chinese, Japanese Ki and tanden in Noh theatre. Identifying the presence and location of the ENS in the region between the gut and pubic bone, these Asian traditions share at least one common principle of energy grounding.

The psychical chakras have always had a direct bearing in the artistic practices of India. The navel region is the said to be the seat of the coiled serpent called ‘kundalini’, the seat of the ‘shakti’ (feminine creative principle) and corporeal energy. Meditation on potent sound syllables and psychical visualizations, together with breath and movement training, creates a powerful psycho-physicality. This energy then becomes part of the creative structure and impetus of the artist.

Making a general comparative study between the NatyaShastra of Bharata and the Poetics of Aristotle, Schechner could be mistaken to make the
treatise sound reductive by calling it “about dance-theatre-music”. While this work succinctly encapsulates these art forms, it is also an immense and meticulously detailed compendium on architecture, physics, mathematics, physiology, sculpture, painting and aesthetics in general.

Discussing one interpretation of Bharata’s work, Schechner briefly mentions 10th century Kashmiri sage, Abhinavagupta’s\(^{149}\) contribution to this apparent fragmented text. But he explains:

“But this fragmentation ought not to be read as “neglect.” The NS tradition is active, oral, and corporeal. It is present in performers, their teachers, and their performances. We must distinguish the absence of the NS as a text (a book brought to light in modern times mostly by Western orientalists) from its presence in actual performances where it has been absorbed into, and forms the core of, a multiplicity of genres such as kathak, kathakali, odissi, and bharatanatyam which, taken together, comprise Indian classic theatre-dance. The NS is much more powerful as an embodied set of ideas and practices than as a written text. Unlike the Poetics, the NS is more danced than read.” \(^{150}\) (Schechner 2001)

Schechner’s words reaffirm my argument, that the Rasa experience in India is a lived experience. Its source, the NatyaShastra is as he indicates, not a theory, merely read and kept aside, but has infiltrated and gelled into the aesthetics of Indian culture. Its presence speaks through the dance, music, sculpture, architecture and the ‘gut’ and

\(^{149}\) The 10th century Kashmiri spiritual leader and theoretician Abhinavagupta, whose brilliant commentary and interpretation of the Natyashastra, called Abhinavabharati, is one of the most illuminating and indispensable tools in understanding this seminal text of Bharata, on many levels.

psyche of the cultivated Indian spectator.

The more important analysis that Schechner makes is in his identifying the importance of ‘The Pleasure of Rasic Performance’ structures. Comparing the Rasic pleasures in a play to a banquet, “always extending, always deferring, an “almost sexual orgasm”, he notes that its paradigmatic activity is sharing or savouring with spectators; an immediacy rather than judgmental viewing. Through a combination of sentiments and emotional renderings, a perfect balance is created and enjoyed.\textsuperscript{151}(Schechner 2001) He quotes Bharata: “Those who are connoisseurs of tastes enjoy the taste of food prepared from (or containing) different stuff; likewise, intelligent, healthy persons enjoy various sthayi bhavas related to the acting of emotions”\textsuperscript{152}(Schechner 2001).

An important observation of Schechner is on the fabric of India’s unique approach to the Hindu (Sanatana Dharma) religious practice and experience, and its apparent lack of moral distinction in the sacred and profane in its practices:

\begin{quote}
“Religion itself has a feasting quality that interweaves performing, worshiping, and eating. Separating work from play, and the sacred from the profane, has always been more a Western than an Indian phenomenon. …the arts, infused
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{151} ibid.
with intense sexual pleasure, were often part of the religious experience.”
(Schechner 2001)

Schechner’s linking of the Rasa experience with the neurobiological system (Enteric Nervous System) and the ‘gut-brain pathway’ in order to outline the psycho-physiology between the performer and the spectator and how it ‘affects’ consciousness is significant.

However, this gaze, coming from a Eurocentric tradition, at a cultural and religious practice that is so unlike its own, poses a difficulty. Schechner’s ‘peering’ into an ocean of traditional practices through an academic keyhole, without a complete understanding of its tantric and religious doctrines, allows for only a limited understanding.

Vatsyayan in her book Natyashastra153 (Vatsyayan 1996) interprets this aspect of the treatise being beyond the body thus:

“Bharatha adopts these concepts to describe the relationship of the “incipient” invisible and explicit form (example, bhava and rasa)... The body is a primary tool. It is also a term of reference. Physically, it made up of bones, joints and muscles. The sense organs and sense perception are potent vehicles of sensibility. The body and the mind are interdependent, mutually effecting and affective. Intellection is important. But sense feeling and sensibility are fundamental.”
(Vatsyayan 1996)

153 Vatsyayan, Kapila, The Natyashastra, chapter 5
Vatsyayan also asserts that Bharata was “adopting and accepting a different view of the body than what is understood as a corporeal frame or fleshy mass” and that Bharata was guided by the Upanishads in his discourse of the ‘senses and sense perceptions’ by the generic word “indriya” – outer and inner senses.

It is significant to note that the body-mind complex, although noted as erring in religious/philosophical thought (as instigator of maya or illusion), is celebrated by Bharata’s aesthetics with its emphasis on the senses being utilized as a vehicle and as a means to achieve transcendence.

Shwartz crystallizes this thought succinctly:

“Far from rejecting the body for its fallibility, Indian Aesthetics celebrates its potential to express the transformative ability of its underlying divine nature. Artistic experience through the body may enable the attainment of the highest spiritual goals. The relationship of body and mind and spirit and substance, affect and effect are brought together in the Hindu attempt to collapse all of these perceived distinctions, a prerequisite to enlightenment.”154 (Shwartz 2004)

Thus, be it for artist or spectator, Bharata celebrates the body as a means of transformation for the spirit. Through its senses and sense perception, through the various systems, whether they be the enteric,
sympathetic or para-sympathetic nervous systems, aesthetics serve to enable enlightenment for mind and spirit.

Bharata had stressed at the very onset that drama (natya) deals with the action in the universe, the three worlds and the seven spheres\textsuperscript{155}(Vatsyayan 1996) (1-119)” …that Gods, humans, asuras (demonic beings) and all life participate in it.

This is a theory connected to a holistic world-view.

\textbf{Bhavas}

The connecting link between the minds of the artist/spectator to the experience of Rasa, is the emotive vehicle called bhava. Bhava is the expressive element, used from the mind of the artist, through to her/his facial and hand and bodily gestures/expression to convey an emotion. They are expressed through the artist to specifically produce a reaction and/or empathy in the spectator, so that a consequent result is produced to eventuate Rasa.

\textsuperscript{155}Vatsyayan, V, \textit{Natyashastra}, Chapter 5
The following shloka from Nandikeswarā’s Abhinaya Darpana immortalises the relationship between bhava and Rasa:

“yato hasta tato drishtir
yato drishtistato manah
yato mana tato bhavo
yato bhavo tato rasah”

“where hand there eye
where eye there mind
where mind there bhava
where bhava there rasa”

Manomohan Ghosh elaborates in his interpretation/translation of Nandikeswarā’s Abhinaya Darpana (Ghosh 1957).

Where the hand goes eyes should go there. Whither the mind goes Psychological State (bhava) should turn thither; where there is Psychological State, there the sentiment (rasa) arises (Ghosh 1957).

Coomaraswamy (Coomaraswamy 1977) too translates the same:

“For wherever the hand moves, there the glances follow;
where the glances go, the mind follows;
where the mind goes, the mood follows;
where the mood goes, there is the flavour” (Rasa)

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156 Abhinaya Darpana of NANDIKESVAR- (Trans.Manomohan Ghosh 1957- Calcutta)
157 ibid.
Thus the gestures and expressions themselves (through the hands, eyes) suggest more than a mere external focus. The spectator is transported through the meaning in the gesture to an internal canvas of experience, through the gesture, expression and other dramatic elements in the performance. The zone of experience is expanded and deepened for the spectator as well as the actor/dancer/artist.

Phillip B. Zarrilli investigates this phenomenon of the gesture of eyes in his article, “Where the Hand [Is]” (Zarrilli 1987)

“In aesthetic performance like kathakali the eyes reveal emotional states through stylized forms. Behind the stylized form for embodying “fury” is the performer’s subtle psychosomatic control of the internal prana-vayu. When “fury” is displayed externally in the facial muscles by contracting the lower lids, raising the upper lids and eyebrows, the vayu (air/wind/breath/life force) is “pushed” into the eyes from the navel, providing an internal psychosomatic realization of that emotional state for the performer. He might be said to be “seeing” (furiously) from within-from the navel. “Where the eye [is]” is where there is simultaneously outer and inner seeing”. (Zarrilli 1987)

Thus like the eye that creates a trail to the mind experience, the hands, i.e. gesture, also transport the spectator and actor to an alternate psychological state. The mind, the manas/mano or inner being or consciousness, engages in the mind-experience of the artist and empathizes with the character and drama, through this, partakes the relish of the total experience.

About this, Schechner comments,

“If performing rasically is to offer emotions to partakers in the same way that a chef offers a meal to diners, then the effectiveness of the performance depends very much on an active response from the partakers. The NS is very emphatic in its insistence that natya appeal to people of all stations in life, affecting different people differently. The more knowledgeable the partakers, the better the experience. To respond to the fullest, partakers need to be connoisseurs of whatever performance genre they are taking in—as wine tasters need to know vintages, bottling procedures, and ways of sampling in order to fully appreciate a wine. There is a sliding scale of how much one needs to know. In the rasic system, each person enjoys according to her abilities; the higher the level of knowledge, the greater the enjoyment∗∗∗(Schechner 2001).

The prior knowledge of the gestural language, cultural significance and storyline, provides a greater advantage to the experience of the spectator.

Zarrilli writes about this experience of the educated audience:

“Assuming an audience educated and prepared to *taste,* the performer’s embodied psychosomatic state-of-being (bhava) simultaneously establishes the presence of rasa—there is a “tasting.” In that tasting there is a further resonance—a glimpse, touching, and knowing of the state of bliss itself (ananda)∗∗∗(Zarrilli 1987)

The experience of Rasa is thus heavily depended upon the bhavas.

Bharata says…“ Why are bhavas so called?

It is because they are bhavayanti… (They pervade), hence they are bhavas∗∗∗∗(Bharata 2002)

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161 In the system of Rasa
164 Ghosh, M. Natya Shastra 1956 ; 7
According to Bharata, bhavas are instruments of causation, like a perfume or moisture that pervades the air. While gestures and expressions are designed to permeate the hearts of the spectator, the inner idea of the playwright is made to pervade the minds of the spectators and create empathy.165 (Bharata 2002)

The importance of audience member’s sensitivity to empathize with the affective trajectory of actor experience and taste the common rasa is crucial to the theatre of Rasa.

K.M.Higgins in her analysis of Rasa states,

> The Natyasastra articulates rasa theory in light of the dramatist's pragmatic goal of conveying emotional states to the audience... is concerned with the practical means for creating a distinct mood through the performance that can be transformed into rasa, aesthetic relish of the emotional tone, in the suitably cultivated audience member166. (Higgins 2007)

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165 Ghosh
166 Significant is the terminology of a worthy spectator (rasajña) for rasānubhava subjective qualification for objective appreciation.
Higgins continues: “everything within the drama should be subordinate to the aim of producing Rasa, including the construction of the plot.”

The creation of Rasa is the central aim of the Natyasastra, and this creation of the Rasa can only be experienced within the consciousness of the ‘suitably cultivated audience member’; who is:

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167 Higgins analysis includes Kant’s ‘free play of imagination and understanding’ and David Hume’s “sentiment”. 168 Significant is the terminology of a worthy spectator (rasajña) for rasānubhava subjective qualification for objective appreciation

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The quality of a superior or ‘ideal’ spectator lies in his or her capacity to have an empathetic response with the emotions of others. Rasa can only be experienced when the spectator can feel the sorrow and the pain as well as
the joys expressed in the drama in order to savour the aesthetic. This is the superiority that is demanded; an aesthetic one and not one that exists with class or creed or to quote Higgins, ‘eminence within society’.

One of the crucial constituents of the Rasa theory is in the understanding of Stayībhava. Bharata defines it as the permanent state of mind under a particular situation:

“It is comparable to the ocean, where the deep waters remain unruffled. There may be some transitory mood or state of mind, which is evident only for a short period and may disappear soon after. These can be likened to the waves of the seething ocean, which are only on the surface and will eventually merge with (into) the deep ocean.”

(Vatsyayan 1996)

Rasa and the Performance as a Complex Dialogue

In this section, I want to be more specific about the way Rasa works emotionally, and the role of the audience in this process. Rasa is said to arise when the sthāyībhāva (the 8 enduring states-love, laughter, heroic, sorrow, anger, fear, disgust, astonishment) in the individual are awakened by his perception of the vibhāvas, anubhāvas, vyahicāribhāvas, and sāttvic bhāvas.

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169 Higgins, K.M 2007
170 Natyashastra (Vatsyayan)
The 8 Rasas and their Stayibhavas (sentiments) are the following:

1. Sringara - arises out of love (Rati)
2. Hasya - induces humour (Hasya)
3. Karuna - emanates out of pathos or compassion (Shoka)
4. Roudra - the result of rage or fury (Krodha)
5. Vira - arise out of valor/enthusiasm (Utsaha)
6. Bhayanaka - the result of great fear (Bhya)
7. Bhibatsa - result of detest, disgust, despise (Vibhata)
8. Adbhuta - arises out of wonderment or surprise/mystery (Vismaya)

Vibhāvas are the stimuli; such as the story, the stage and the actors responsible for the awakening of the sthāyi, i.e. the latent sentiment in the spectator. The vibhāvas are of two kinds: ālambana vibhāva is the basic stimulus capable of arousing the sentiment; uddipana vibhāva is the enhancing stimuli, the environment in which the basic stimulus is located.

It is in the internalizing process of the expressed external states of the actor where this synthesis occurs and Rasa is experienced. An analogy would be the way the flavour in food is experienced not as an additive or enhancer, but as
an essential defining quality of the ingredients used in the very process of creating it.\textsuperscript{171} (Schwartz 2004) Rasa, much like perception, has at once an inner and outer quality: a simultaneous fusing of an outer objective world with an inner subjective one.

I once again revisit Artaud’s expression, ‘Holy Theatre’, (as discussed previously, not to be mistaken as ‘religious’ but rather as linking back to ‘primitive past, to an ‘illo tempore’- a beginning\textsuperscript{172} (Innes 1981)) and view it as a laboratory of ‘spiritual’ awakening. In his book, \textit{Holy Theatre}, Innes explores theatre practices divested of the ‘pollution’ of theatrical conventions, using “imagistic and quasi-religious plays and psychodramas” without relying only on “cerebral means of communication\textsuperscript{173}” (Innes 1981), and also where the actor is viewed as an archaic being. The spectator’s unconscious is explored and aroused and is “projected back to his ‘roots’ during the dramatic spectacle, to the purest states”\textsuperscript{174} (Innes 1981).

Bharata’s theatre too has this quality, \textbf{but} using all the conventions of music, narrative, codified gesture and language, the audience’s consciousness is aroused to a primary state of transcendence.

\textsuperscript{173} ibid.
\textsuperscript{174} ibid.
Looking Closer at Terms

The following technical terms in Sanskrit poetics requires some elucidation: “Bhava-anubhava-vibhava-vyabhacharibhavas-sthayibhavas satvic bhavas”.

Anubhāvas are the deliberate manifestations of feelings on the part of the actor (in accordance with the mood and aim). They consist of the various gestures and glances of the actor that are intended to develop the basic stimulus or the vibhāva.

Vyabhicāribhāvas are the transient emotions, which arise in the course of maintaining and developing the basic mood. They are the ancillary emotions determined by the basic emotion (in the scene or the story) and Vyabhicāribhāvas in turn reinforce the basic mood. If the basic mood is love, rati, then joy in union and anguish in separation will be the accompanying ancillary emotions.

Sāttvic bhāvas are the involuntary expressions such as blushing, perspiration and horripilation, which arise as a result of (successfully) experiencing and
portraying an emotion. However, it must be noted that vibhāva is not the ‘cause’ of any emotion but only the ‘medium’ through which it passes to spectator by means of ‘sympathetic induction’. Thus, in aesthetic induction, everything is a medium rather than a cause and this is because ‘what is transferred is always a generalized feeling’ (neither a result nor a knowledge). This transference however, implies not the production of any new emotion in the spectator, but only the awakening of latent sentiment (Bharata 2002).

T.P Ramachandran in his book, The Indian Philosophy of Beauty (Ramachandran 1979), marks the 8 rasas thus:

“The rasa based on conjugal love (rati) is sringara,
rasa based on mirth (hasa) is hasya,
on sorrow, is called karuna,
that based on anger (krodha) is raudra,
that on fortitude (utsaha) is vira
that which is based on fear (bhaya), is bhayanaka
and based on disgust (jigupsa) is called bibhatsa
and finally based on wonder (vismaya) is called abhuta”. (Ramachandran 1979)

The ninth rasa, shanta (bhakti pertaining to God-love) is argued by later writers (Abhinava (Gerow 1994)), to be based on the stayībhava of serenity or spiritual peace.

175 Ghosh, M. NatyaShastra
176 Ramachandran,T.P. The Indian Philosophy of Beauty, Part 1 and 2. Dr. S.Radhakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy. University of Madras 1979
177 Edwin Gerow observations: The ninth rasa is a rasa in a different sense than the other eight of the tradition. To assert it as a rasa involves an aesthetic paradox, for while the eight rasas are clearly understood as modifications of the basic emotional constituents [bhiva] of our mundane personality, the new rasa implies rather a suppression of
He comments:

“Abhinavagupta has shown the supposed differences among the rasa do not pertain to the nature of the experience as such, but only to the source of the experience, namely the stayibhava. In its fundamental character rasa is only one. It signifies a mood of impersonal, joyous emotional exaltation.” (Gerow 1994)

Thus the number of rasas is really the number of stayibhavas.

He furthers states that:

“The term rasa itself implies enjoyability and would be a contradiction in terms to speak of a ‘painful rasa’. The emotions as they obtain in life (laukika-bhava) are no doubt either pleasurable or painful. But to say that the rasas to which they give rise in art are also pleasurable or painful is to overlook the difference between bhava and rasa. A bhava becomes rasa only when aesthetically transformed.”

As a consequence of these complex stimuli, Rasa is evoked by these emotions, yet still retains quite a clear distinction from them. Just as the meal has a wholesome refinement and separate flavour from each of the separate ingredients, so too, Rasa is the wholesome culmination of all the sentiments ascribed by Bharata.

Those very constituents: it is a state untroubled by emotion of any sort. That is why of course, the discussion of santa rasa, in the Indian texts is chiefly an inquiry into its sthayin, that is it is an effort to discover the bhava that may without contradiction be assigned to it, and of which it is a “modification.” If it should appear that shanta rasa has, in fact, no corresponding bhava, then its status as a rasa would not only be paradoxical in explanation, but impossible of manifestation—something like a “hare’s horn.” I will discuss Abhinava’s solution to this paradox below, as well as Masson’s and Patwardhan’s account of his solution, but first, I want to point out that santa rasa poses also a paradox in an even greater sense, of Abhinavagupta’s philosophical thesis. Santa rasa, all agree, derives its pretext, from the fourth purustartha (‘life goal’): moksha ‘liberation.’ But santa rasa if indeed it functions as claimed by Abhinava, and is accomplished in the terms he proposes, would appear to possess the attributes of moksha, the supreme goal of life, and thus becomes a synonym of moksha, or renders the latter notion superfluous. In either case, the boundary between “art” and “reality” (which is as important to Abhinava as it is to Aristotle) would disappear and metaphysics would in effect have been reduced to aesthetics.(Edwin Gerow- Journal of American Oriental Society. 1994)
The following table based on Peter Zarrilli’s book, *Kathakali Dance Drama where Gods and Demons Come to Play* (Zarrilli 2003) demonstrates this process of internalizing an external process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>External</th>
<th>Internal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Durable States”: Love, laughter, Mirth, sorrow, anger, fear, disgust, Astonishment</td>
<td>Personal experience of the actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derived from daily life</td>
<td>Experience of emotions and feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical manifestation observed</td>
<td>Physical manifestation part of experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence’ in performance, i.e. The ‘mind’</td>
<td>Realised through ‘informal’ training, stylised and experience in life, maturity and the of eyes, face etc, representing these actualisation of ‘internal energy’, manifest as states (<em>angika abhinaya</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part of body-memory though training</td>
<td>Full engagement in each moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ready-at-hand for performance</td>
<td>Actualisation of each state of being-doing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phillip Zarrilli’s chart concludes, as a final point, with the Rasa being experienced by the audience. I have to take this experience further to

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complete the circle: the Rasa experienced by the spectator reflects back onto the artist. I would argue that in the ideal artistic experience, the whole process of experiencing Rasa becomes continuous and dynamically circular.

In the language of the Theatre, the dialogue, that is the relationship between the stage/artist - audience/ spectator, is fundamental to theatre. This direct, intimate connection between the artist who 'speaks' and the audience who 'listens' forms the basic interaction. This communication is more than a superficial word play but also involves a dynamic interaction of consciousness. The term 'dialogue' connotes a dynamic, interactive process that
occurs between the audience (spectator) and stage (actor/artist).

On the subject of dialogue and language, David Kellogg quotes the following:

“…poignant passage from the Russian poet Fet:

“How can the heart express itself, How can the other understand?” (Vygotsky)

Volosinov’s citation goes a little further: “Oh, if one could speak from the soul, without words!” (Kellogg 2009)

Bharata’s language of gesture and poetics and dance conveys meaning by the very way of existing in the theatrical universe. Achieving Rasa is of most importance and when achieved, it is the language that souls speak and understand, through a palpable potency of Rasa (Kellogg 2009): beyond the language of words: beyond the architecture of the senses.

Heidegger, said the world is seen in two ways - in terms of either ‘things’ or ‘ways of existing’. Thus if we view the world in terms of ways of existing, then what it means to be in the world is more than the world itself as an entity.

This, when applied in terms of language, what it means to speak is prior to

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180 na hi RASAdrite kaschidarthah pravartate”. Bharata states in the Rasadhya of Natyashastra that “no meaningful idea is conveyed if the “Rasa” is not evoked.” (NS Chapter V1)
181 Different emotional states (sthdyibhdvas), such as sexual passion, grief, peace, etc., induced the corresponding moods (rasas), such as love, compassion, serenity, etc., through the power of suggestion (dhvani). An image, situation or character (stimuli or vibhavas) served as the objective correlative of the emotional state, and it came up with the appropriate suggestion in the context. The aesthetic experience was the outcome or culmination of the refinement of the emotional state purged of its impurities. It then transcended the individual, and reached out to the universal through a process of transpersonalization (sadharanikarana).
language therefore language is a means of understanding - what it means ‘to be’. (Heidegger, Martin, trans. ed. 2008.)

Parthasasarathy in his article “Tradition and The Indian Writer” (Parthasasarathy 1992) also advocates the importance of this understanding of language and its role in the Rasa outcome;

“Rasa is simply the aesthetic experience, shared by both writer and reader, induced by the disinterested contemplation of a poem. It is through the suggestive power of words that the poem is able to effect this transformation in the consciousness.... The process implied the ‘elevation of the consciousness of the poet and the reader from the plane of their private everyday world to the plane of collective human experience where poetry is created and enjoyed’ (Parthasasarathy 1992)

He furthers,

“In the Indian tradition, literature (sahitya) was a way of realizing the Absolute (Brahman) through the mediation of language. ‘Therefore, the attainment of faultless speech’, states Bhartrhari (5th cent. CE) in the Vakyapadi'ya (Of the Sentence and the Word) ‘is the attainment of Brahman. He who knows the secret of its functioning enjoys the immortal Brahman’. The literary artefact in itself had no significance.” (Parthasasarathy 1992)

Therefore an attempt to decode and deconstruct the relationship between the actor and audience is to understand the whole of the text (in this case communication/dialogue) from its detail and the detail of the text from its wholes - the hermeneutic circle. This thus creates a method of reading and rereading that never closes the reading of a text.

183 ibid.
184 ibid.
Consequently, the understanding of a text is a dynamic activity - an interaction or dialogue that never ends. It is never ‘done’; it is of "being", of existence, of language. Thus the artist and spectator share an effect ‘not described by a language but shown by a language.\textsuperscript{185} (Parthasarathy 1992)\textsuperscript{185}

This then presents a mode of dramatic action without simply presence or absence, without history, cause, origin or telos - which would "overturn all dialectic, theology, teleology and ontology".\textsuperscript{186} (Derrida, Johnson 2004) It foregrounds not the individual subject but an interaction, a struggle, a 'play' where understanding and meanings are never fixed. This analysis is to recognize the continual flickering, spilling and defusing of meaning from the artist's world to that of the spectator and more importantly from the spectator's world to the play.

Thus as performance is a fundamental element of the theatrical event, there cannot be a 'passive audience' as such. A performance is ‘made’ through active participation of audience.

\textsuperscript{185} "There is, generally, in the West a reluctance to endow language with such power. Heidegger is an exception. In a series of lectures, first delivered at the University of Freiburg in 1957—58, entitled, 'The Nature of Language', he says: 'What is it that the poet reaches? Not mere knowledge. He obtains entrance into the relation of word to thing. This relation is not, however, a connection between the thing that is on one side and the word that is on the other. The word itself is the relation which in each instance retains the thing within itself in such a manner that it "is" a thing'. Patanjali (2ndcent,BCE), in fact, had gone further than Heidegger in his attempt to empower the word. This is what he says in his classic formulation of the view in his great commentary on the Grammar (Vyakarana-mah\$bhd\$ya) of Panini: 'A single word, well used and perfectly understood, and conforming to the sacred texts is, in heaven and in the world, the sacred cow to fulfill every wish'.-Parthasarathy R.-“Tradition and the Indian Writer”. British Journal of Aesthetics,Vo.32,No.2, April 1992

\textsuperscript{186} Derrida, Jacques. Dissemination A&C Black, 2004
In his book ‘On Deconstruction’ (Culler 1982), Jonathan Culler uses Nietzsche’s deconstruction of causality to demonstrate a reversal of the stage - audience hierarchy as a necessary step towards theorizing the stage - audience relationships in bipolar terms.

“If the effect is what causes the cause to become a cause, then the effect, not the cause should be treated as the origin. By sharing that the cause can be used to favour effect, one uncovers and undoes the rhetorical operation responsible for the hierarchization and one produces a significant displacement. If either cause or effect can occupy the position of origin, then origin is no longer original; it loses its metaphysical privilege” (Culler 1982).

Therefore the audience is the origin of Rasa. The spectator experiences Rasa by relishing the various bhavas and dramatics then transmits this Rasa to the artist. They then, together, resonate. The audience, talking in hierarchical terms, ‘ranks’ the most important in this process, as without the active participation of the audience, there cannot be the experience of Rasa.

**Sound and Rasa**
It is important at this point to discuss the aspect of "dhvani" in Sanskrit poetics as an effect of 'sounds' that convey meaning. S.K. De, in his book "Sanskrit Poetics as a Study in Aesthetic", argues that:

"Governed entirely by pure imagination, poetry is not the sum of knowledge, sensation, or feeling, but in an individualised shape. What intellect apprehends in abstraction, intuition experiences in immediate concreteness"(De 1963)

Dhvani is an important aspect of creating Rasa through the suggestive power of tones in word, poems and song in the theatre of Bharata, and has been given much consideration by Abhinavagupta. Rasa theory's tremendous linguistic potential in communicating through the power of gestures, symbols, words and image, not only in a staged performance but also through poetry, text, has been the object of centuries of dialectics and interpretations.

Higgins writes,

"Although Abhinava, like Bharata, took the rasa produced by drama to be paradigmatic, he also acknowledged the production of rasa in purely literary works. -that poetry conveys rasa by means of suggestion (dhvani). Dhvani was proposed as a third power of language, in addition to abhidha (denotation) and laksanii (metonymy). While these other two powers convey meaning conceptually, dhvani conveys affective meaning."(Higgins 2007)

Higgins also quotes Abhinava’s position, in endorsing the third linguistic power that can only communicated through dhvani:

190 The 10th century Kashmiri Saivaite spiritual leader and theoretician Abhinavagupta, whose brilliant commentary and interpretation of the Natyashastra, called "Abhinavabharati", is one of the most illuminating and indispensable tools in understanding this seminal text of Bharata, on many levels.
“Describing rasa as it is produced in poetry, Abhinava asserts that "rasa is ... of a form that must be tasted by an act of blissful relishing on the part of a delicate mind through the stimulation ...of previously deposited memory elements which are in keeping with the vibhavas and anubhtivas, beautiful because of their appeal to the heart, which are transmitted by [suggestive] words (of the poet)."” (Higgins 2007)

The idea that Rasa that is being experienced and relished by the “delicate” mind of the observer, instigates a deeper questioning of the observing entity and who actually experiences meaning, the actor or spectator?

In relation to this issue, Ubersfeld makes a telling observation;

“...Theatre is an art that fascinates because of the participation it requires, a participation of which neither the meaning nor the function are clear, a participation that requires analysis. There is both physical and psychological participation of the actor and the spectator...more than any other art, it shows how the individual invests itself within a collective relationship. The spectator is never alone; as his or her eye takes in what is presented on the stage, it also takes in the other spectators, just as indeed they observe him or her. As both psychodrama and a means to reveal and identify social relations, theatre holds both of these paradoxical threads in its hand.” (Ubersfeld 1982)

Ubersfeld here makes an interesting distinction: there is the collective consciousness of the spectators as one entity, but also each individual.

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191 Note: 1.Reinforcing this idea of the suggestive power of translating an idea through the use of tonality in language, Ramakrisna Kavi191 in his interpretation of Natyashastra refers to Bharata’s indication in the use of language, “Tantrakam paanrusam slokam samavitamprayojayet”, which means the ideas in a sloka (text) must be (strong, powerful) and not soft and delicate” but at the same time also says, “when delicate emotions have to be depicted, in its dainty ways, Prakrit (be used) is most appealing to the heart rather than harsh Sanskrit whose beauty lies more in the intellectual grasp of suggestion, or dhavanis”.

2. Prakrit languages, (from Sanskrit: prākṛta, “arising from the source, occurring in the source”) MiddleIndo-Aryan languages known from inscriptions, literary works, and grammarians’ descriptions. Prakrit languages are related to Sanskrit but differ from and are contrasted with it in several ways. First, a distinction is made between speech forms considered to be correct or standard (referred to as śābda) and those that are considered incorrect or nonstandard (apaśābda). Forms called śābda are Sanskrit items and have been described by grammarians, chiefly Pāṇini (c. 6th–5th century BCE); these forms are language components that are said to be adorned or purified (saṃskṛta) by adhering to particular grammatical principles. (Brittanica)
spectator is often observing the other spectator, observing the play (action). This pattern of the observer observing the observer, observing, has its very own special experience and creates a meaning within the play. More importantly, each and every observer may become an actor in a semiotic sense of contributing to the event’s meaning, and the action of the play becomes more complicated, because the actors (spectators and actors) as observed phenomena are changing and creating different and varied meanings within the performance.

This is a phenomenon that has the potential to produce Rasa. The reactions and responses (also considered the stayi bhavas of the spectators) from fellow audience members add to this rich concoction of flavours, to produce Rasa.

Central within this formula is the concept of ‘distancing’.

K.M. Varma192 (Varma 1958), commenting on Bharata’s theatre, provides an important perspective:

"Rasa is the result of the perfect combination of bhavas, vibhavas, anubhavas. This combination produces a global experience different from individual feelings... it can be compared to a delicious drink which is a mixture of various ingredients but whose flavour is unlike that of any single ingredient.

This new feeling can be explained by the attitude of the spectator when he is watching the play. The spectators’ total experience of this combination is pure, unique and completely peaceful. Such an experience is called rasa and it is nothing short of beatitude. The theatrical pleasure thus defined is the union of all affective elements plus the distancing we need to achieve peace."193 (Varma 1958)

193 ibid.
This act of ‘distancing’, from the actor as well as the spectator, is a psychological device that allows us to understand that this is an event that has a limited time frame, contingent to this present tense, here within the theatre. It is art, not life. But this ‘distancing’ will be discussed in more detail in the following pages.

In his article “Abhinavagupta’s Aesthetics as a Speculative Paradigm“, Edwin Gerow observes:

“The ninth rasa is a rasa in a different sense than the other eight of the tradition. To assert it as a rasa involves an aesthetic paradox, for while the eight rasas are clearly understood as modifications of the basic emotional constituents [bhava] of our mundane personality, the new rasa implies rather a suppression of those very constituents: it is a state untroubled by emotion of any sort. That is why, of course, the discussion of santa rasa, in the Indian texts, is chiefly an inquiry into its sthayin, that is, is an effort to discover the bhava that may without contradiction be assigned to it, and of which it is a "modification." If it should appear that shanta rasa has, in fact, no corresponding bhava, then its status as a rasa would not only be paradoxical in explanation, but impossible of manifestation—something like a "hare’s horn"....I want to point out that santa rasa poses also a paradox, in an even greater sense, for Abhinavagupta’s philosophical thesis. Santa rasa, all agree, derives its pretext from the fourth purusartha (‘life goal’): moksa, ‘liberation.’“ (Gerow 1994)

He then postulates:

“But santa rasa, if indeed it functions as claimed by Abhinava, and is accomplished in the terms he proposes, would appear to possess the attributes of moksa, the supreme goal of life, and thus becomes either a synonym of moksa, or renders the latter notion superfluous. In either case, the boundary between “art” and “reality” (which is as important to Abhinava as it
Although Gerow concludes that moksha and santa rasa are synonymous\textsuperscript{195}, this may not be entirely accurate; however, it does still make some kind of sense, since the silencing of the mind does occur, following the quieting of in-breath and out-breath in the experience of santa rasa. Abhinava agrees with this argument to an extent; that is, that santa rasa is a precursor to Rasa per se, that then amplifies to moksha.\textsuperscript{196} Furthermore, the importance of Rasa as an experience that transforms consciousness can never be considered superfluous; because Rasa experienced within aesthetics is different to the Samadhi or moksha or liberation in real life. The Rasa experience may be a precursor to moksha, but it is still not moksha. Although ultimate transcendence begins in that liminal space between the consciousness of Rasa and that of moksha, each component or module or ‘quanta’ of this experience within consciousness is extremely valid, and stands true on its own, whole and complete; one reflects the ‘pleasure’ within the reality of theatre (aesthetics) and one within a more enduring reality.

\textsuperscript{194} ibid.
\textsuperscript{195} The reasoning is that Santa rasa unlike the other stayins/rasas does not seem to have a corresponding bhava and vibhavas, anubhava etc..
\textsuperscript{196} Nevertheless, Abhinava takes santa rasa to be both a foretaste of molqa (liberation) and a means to understand it. Although similar to molqa, santarasa is a response to the separate “world” of the artistic performance, whereas moksa pertains to reality. However, we tend to be deluded about our real situation, and Abhinava considers the experience of rasa through drama to be an ideal metaphor for our actual status.
Thus Ramachandran’s consequential emphasis, “Though stayins are many, rasa is one.”\textsuperscript{197} Rasa has therefore been compared to Brahman, which is ONE; although the manifestations, through which it is known, are many. Abhinavagupta points out that Bharata himself refers to Rasa in the singular when he says, “Nahi rasad rte kascid arthah pravartate”\textsuperscript{198} Translated, “Without Rasa, no purpose exists” (Masson, Patwardhan 1977).

**Consciousness and the experience of Rasa**

*Rasa* is experienced within the waking consciousness. Indian tradition defines consciousness by distinguishing between the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep and that of *Turiya*, or pure consciousness\textsuperscript{199} (Meyer-Dinkgrafe 2005). For it is in the state of pure or transcendent consciousness, spiritual I would argue, that rational thoughts cease to exist. It is in this irrational (as not construed by thoughts) realm of the spiritual that Rasa is experienced. These four reference points, form and shape the journey of an

\textsuperscript{197} Ramachandran, T.P. The Indian Philosophy of Beauty. Part 1 and 2. Dr. S.Radakrishnan Institute for Advanced Study in Philosophy. University of Madras 1979


\textsuperscript{199} As described by Ramana Maharishi and DanielMeyer-Dinkgrafe’s Vedic Science
Implicit within the theatre of Bharata are the tenets of this philosophy.

Ramakrishna Kavi’s interpretation of Abhinava and Bharata’s Natyashastra says Bharata’s purvaranga (ceremonial invocation) bestows upon the audience drista and adrista phala (Pleasure and Religious Merit):

“The premise of this indication, preempts two suppositions. On a Vedic ritualistic significance level as well as on a aesthetic level, drista is indicative of ‘representation of objects’ as they are seen or observed normally in life and adrista represents objects as visualized or personified by the artist, even if they do not particularly resemble the original. Bharata’s adherence to closely intertwining the Vedic philosophy to artistic/aesthetic embellishment in this treatise is picked up by Abhinava’s interpretation: ‘gitam, nrtam, natyam (Kavi 1934)’ is viewed from a psychological perspective, while other interpreters view them with less importance, as mere pictorial effect.” (Banerjia 2013)

200 I use this word, because it is only within the consciousness of an aspirant that an inward journey to perfection/freedom or liberation, is invoked. Rasa is the ultimate expression of that spiritual freedom. The 4 purushartas is but the scaffolding used at the beginning of that journey like a blueprint, or an immortal idea. The second cause is the material, or what a thing is made out of. The third cause is the process and the agent, in which the artist or creator makes the thing. The fourth cause is the good, or the purpose and end of a thing, known as telos- (Michael Davis) On Aristotelian Poetics -four courses

201 Nandin’s agamic interpretation (Ramakrishna Kavi)

202 Religious indications -first is called drista-phala, which literally means visible effects, i.e. effects whose causal relation with the action can be directly perceived and established by means of our senses. These are the outer results of our actions. Taking nutritious food satisfies our hunger and helps the nourishment of the body. When one man does any injury to another out of any selfish motive, the injured man suffers and the injurer gains. All such cases are cases of drista-phala. We actually experience such effects of our actions in our worldly life. Some actions bring to us pleasure and prosperity and others become sources of pain and poverty, some actions make us objects of praise and honour and others objects of condemnation and dishonour. Our actions affect the interests of others, and others, actions affect our interests. All these are instances of drista-phala. Secondly, our actions produce corresponding samskara (impressions) in our mind, which become the causes of our dispositions and tendencies and desires and attachments and aversions and thus influence our future actions. It is by our actions that our habits and characters are moulded. As we act, so we become. This is called the psychological effect (samskara-phala) of our actions.

According to the yogi school, and in fact according to all the important systems of Indian thought, the psychological effects of our actions are very far-reaching. Many of our actions produce such deep-rooted samskaras in the mind that they are not destroyed even by our physical death. The psychical organism does not die with the physical organism. The physical organism becomes disorganised in course of time and its constituents arc dissolved in the Panca-Mahabhatas. But the psychical organism retains its individuality even after this death and carries with it the samskaras which are produced by the actions of the life-time. The psychical organism, carrying the samskaras which become part and parcel of its nature, may exist in a subtle embodiment (limga-sarira) for a certain period, and may
In the philosophy of Abhinava (Saivism), the Absolute Being Paramakash\textsuperscript{204} (Nisargadatta, Frydman, Dikshit 1973) is infinite, and is the latent energy of the universe. The manifested Universe (abhasa) is of some imperfection and limitation.

Abhinava, having defined the nature of the Absolute as the ultimate principle, goes on to observe phenomena from the point of view of the manifested variety:

“The entire manifested universe in perfection is latent in the Absolute. Like the acorn holds all the secrets to the ‘manifested’ magnificent oak tree, the entire magnificence of the universe is contained within the Absolute.

“Mayuraananda rasa nyana”; Absolute variety of colour and perfection of the peacock is latent in the yolk of its egg.”\textsuperscript{205}(Vatsyayan 1996)

after that be associated with a new physical organism (bhoutika pinda) for its further course of self-expression and self-fulfilment. In this new body also the old samskaras produced by the actions performed in the previous embodied life exercise great influence in the forms of instinctive tendencies and propensities and capacities for adjustments with the new circumstances. Thus our nature in the current embodied life has to a great extent been constituted by the psychological effects of our deeds of the past embodied life or lives, and the nature of our future embodied life also will be similarly moulded by the samskaras which are being produced by our deeds in the present life. It is to be noted that in the human life there is ample scope for the exercise of freedom in all the fields of our active self-expression for the destruction of the old evil Samskdras and the development of new good samskaras through the voluntary performance of righteous actions and thus for a considerable transformation of our psychological nature and advancement towards higher and higher orders of life. Thirdly, our saints and philosophers aver that every action, " and particularly every voluntary and deliberate action, " produces some adrista-phala in the forms of moral and religious merits and demerits (punya and papa, dharma andadharma), which are rewarded and punished in due course in accordance with the law of the cosmic order, the rewards being in the forms of happinesses or greater opportunities in life or higher levels of existence, and the punishments being in the forms of sufferings or unfavourable conditions of life or lower levels of existence. Virtuous deeds produce good adrista and vicious deeds bad adrista. Adrista is also called apurva, and it greatly determines the future destinies of individuals. Often this apurva or adrista-phala of actions is designated as Karma in scriptures. Like the psychological effect, this moral effect also is not generally exhausted in the same bodily life. It becomes the cause of happinesses and miseries, favourable and unfavourable conditions, developed or degraded levels of existence, in the disembodied life after death and in the future bodily life as well. Cultivation of virtue and avoidance of vice is of prime importance for progressive and enjoyable life. The constitution of our physical body also is greatly influenced by these three kinds of effects of our actions. What is generally known as the Law of Karma refers specially to the adrista-phala of actions, which indicates the principle of moral justice in the cosmic order.


204 Paramakash is the timeless and spaceless reality, mindless, undifferentiated, the infinite potentiality, the source and the origin, the substance and the essence. (Nisargadatta 1973)
205 Vatsyayan (NS 1996)-Quotes Abhinavagupta in Chapter 7, The text and the interpreters-pg.151
In the philosophy of Abhinava (Saivism), the Absolute Being Paramakash (Nisargadatta, Frydman, Dikshit 1973) is infinite, and is the latent energy of the universe. The manifested Universe (abhasa) is of some imperfection and limitation.

“Even (Lord) Siva, the highest category is abhaha, because it represents some disturbance or movement (away) from the perfect quiet and repose. It is the moment of making visible, the Absolute (so that self-luminosity is experience-able). The experience and consciousness implies a “self” and “I” and therefore the Absolute is both self- luminous and self-conscious. There can be consciousness without the self and no self without consciousness. Consciousness is thus the capacity of awareness of the self, technically called Shakti” (Vatsyayan 1996)

Thus, like a blossom, the prayer is offered to that Shakti (Energy) that supports the actor, in the form of theatre, as well as to the Consciousness that supports all awareness in the micro and macrocosm.

Bharata Kula bhagya kalike
Bhava Rasa-ananda parinathakare
Jagatheka mohanakale
Jeya Jeya rangadhi devathe devi

O Goddess of ranga, victory to thee.
Thou art the patron of the actor-class,
the embodiment of the joy accruing from States (bhavas) and Sentiments (rasas),
yours is the kala (art) that only can charm the whole world,
victory to thee.

206 Paramakash is the timeless and spaceless reality, mindless, undifferentiated, the infinite potentiality, the source and the origin, the substance and the essence. (Nisargadatta 1973)
207 Vatsyayan ( NS 1996)
208 Abhinaya Darpana of NANDIKESVAR- ( Trans.Manomohan Ghosh 1957 - Calcutta)
Verse 32-Purvaranga in pushpanjali slokas and benediction to deities: (by means of various musical performances one should offer worship [to these gods] Praise of the Goddess of Ranga.
Therefore, keeping in mind Bharata’s primary purpose in creating this theatre of Rasa is a method or nexus to the ‘highest truth’\textsuperscript{209}. Rasa as an aesthetic pursuit seeks to transform the consciousness and this change entails finding Real knowledge\textsuperscript{210} or true perfection.

\textsuperscript{209} Moksha
\textsuperscript{210} Para Vidhiya, The pursuit of Real knowledge and what exactly this means will be the subject of my next chapter.
In Pursuit of Real Knowledge: Para Vidhya

“What is that, when known and experienced, does not require any other knowledge or experience? What is that knowledge which gives absolute satisfaction and eternal happiness?” (Mundaka Upanishad211)

In this chapter, a clarification of the types of knowledge (Para and Apara vidhya) and their corresponding experience (Aparoksha and Paroksha Anubhuti) will be examined and I will then explain how this knowledge is assimilated into consciousness, thus enabling transformation. As indicated in my introductory chapters, Bharata’s theory of Rasa “created a means of transcending this phenomenal universe, transcending dualities between the artist and spectator”. The Rasa theory constructs a means to achieve Para Vidhya or the highest truth as indicated by the four Vedas, through “direct experience”. Arguably, it is through “direct experience” that any transformation of consciousness occurs. I will argue that Shankara, through Vedantic thought, as well as Abhinavagupta in his interpretation of the Rasa elaborate the theory that this Aparoksha Anubhuti or direct experience is the portal leading to transcendence: to Moksha or liberation.

These sources also argue that the purpose of Bharata’s creation, the NatyaShastra, was for all of mankind to experience an alternative path (to that of the 4 Vedas), and that it will subsequently lead humanity to experience “Ultimate Reality”, or “True Nature”, or “Self” or “Ultimate Bliss”. An entirely new and unique paradigm of knowledge, ‘Natya Veda’ was created by Bharata, to facilitate this experience.

In the seeking of understanding of this Reality, a distinction was drawn between “Real Knowledge” (Para Vidhya) and “Unreal knowledge” (Apara Vidhya) in the Mundaka Upanishad. 212(Krishnan 2014)

The seeker (Shaunaka) asks,

“What is that, when known and experienced, does not require any other knowledge or experience? What is that knowledge which gives absolute satisfaction and eternal happiness?”

The sage (Angira) replies:

“dve vidye veditavye iti ha sma brahmavido vadanti parâ caiva parâ ca”

“To him, he said—Two kinds of knowledge are to be known—so indeed the knowers of Brahman declare—the higher (parâ) as well as the lower (aparâ).”213(Chandrasekhar 2009)

Apara Vidhya includes all knowledge, secular and religious, that is assimilated through the intellect. The knowledge ascribed by the four Vedas, is also

212 From the book, Bharata’s Karanas- An Interpretation- Sarasa Krishnan 2014
213 R (Chandra) Chandrasekhar, (What is Saraswati Mahavidhyala?), based on talk by Swami Shantanand -Saraswati Mahavidhyala, 2004 Perth Australia
included in the term Apara Vidhya or “Unreal knowledge”.

“In case one gets the wrong idea that this is a dichotomy between religious and secular knowledge, the very next verse in the Upanishad states that knowledge of the four Vedas is itself part of the lower knowledge and that atha para’yaya’ tadaksaram- adhigamyate214 (Rama 1990), meaning: and the higher [knowledge] is that by which the Immutable is reached.”215 (Rama 1990)

Hence, a crucial point to note is that although the study of the sacred scriptures like the four Vedas is important, it provides not direct and sure access to the ‘Immutable’ because the study of scriptures is in itself but an intellectual exercise/pursuit. The assimilation of the essence of scripture is only possible through Real knowledge. The ‘Immutable’ is only accessed through Real knowledge. Real knowledge (Para Vidhya) is an experience that is felt. Real knowledge is a direct experience that bypasses intellectual comprehension and the Rasa experience is direct experience; beyond intellectual capacity.

In Swami Krishnananda’s exegesis216 (Swami Krishnananda 1951) on Mundaka Upanishad, Swami Sivananda, his guru, writes in the forward:

“At the very commencement, the Upanishad throws out a challenge to all finite (and therefore imperfect) sciences. Real Knowledge does not consist in the mastery of cartloads of mere verbiage, but in the immediate experience of the Self. Without this Self-Knowledge, it is futile to try to know anything else! Man’s knowledge of an

215 ibid
216 http://www.swami-krishnananda.org/mundak/Mundaka_Upanishad.pdf
object is clouded by the ignorance that shrouds his own Self; and minus this unifying force of Self-Knowledge, all knowledge is reduced to mere conjecture and, therefore, it is arbitrary. Knowledge of the Self instantly means true knowledge of everything. “- Swami Sivananda

Swami Krishnananda writes his interpretation on the receiving and attaining of this deeper Knowledge,

“Knowledge is attained not so much by the effort of the individual as through the Sages who hand down this Knowledge. The characteristics of the ancient disciples were very marked. The aspiration, the sincere perseverance and the devotion they had to the ideal of Knowledge was exceptional. They attained the Knowledge with much difficulty, undergoing many hardships in the forms of austerity, service of the preceptor and practice of meditation”. (Swami Krishnananda 1951)

A large part of Vedic practices are thus steeped in austerities and penances, and contemplation of higher truths. Swami Krishnananda continues,

“Knowledge is the ripe fruit of the fine flower of virtue. Righteousness practised without exceptions, to the very law, gives rise to the state of introversion and contemplation of consciousness. It is absolutely necessary that the aspirant or the disciple should be a contemplative so that he may be receptive to the Knowledge imparted to him. Knowledge is received by the internal nature and, hence, it is not properly received by extroverts.” (Swami Krishnananda 1951)

This inference by Swami Krishnananda is that reception of knowledge “by internal nature” is knowledge received through “direct experience”, as a result of penances and contemplation.

Gaining this knowledge, according to the Upanishad requires, “sincere
perseverance and the devotion”...and “service to the preceptor” and “meditation”. Bharata, through an alternative structure, of theatre and the arts practices of dance, music, sculpture and other forms, has created self-same avenues for study through perseverance and disciplined practice of the arts, as service to the guru (guru-sishya parampara) and meditation. A structure, Bharata argues, that is based on pleasure.

When Mundaka Upanishad says;

“Though everyone has the right for Knowledge, it is Knowledge that is connected with renunciation that becomes the means to liberation. Renunciation is the necessary implication of the attempt at an expansion into universality of nature. Knowledge cannot be expected to be co-existent with worldly activity. Love for the world is not consistent with love for the Absolute. Therefore, true Spiritual Knowledge is found only in those who find no value in anything that is objective.”

So Shauna began severe penances, focusing on the life force, a flowing, somatic energy, Prana (Raikes 2013), (also known as the wind god, Vayu)

217 Every creative impulse and act is born from a deep contemplative, pondering. A space born beyond technique and skill.
218 The pranic aspect refers to the current of life force – a totality of flowing, intelligent somatic energy. The Sanskrit word prana comes from the yogic tradition, and can be translated as energy, breath, life force. Prana is an intrinsically intangible electrical phenomenon – as is the basic fact of life. Anatomically, there is nothing that distinguishes a live body from a corpse. Moreover, our conscious minds know nothing of how to digest food or transport oxygen from the atmosphere into the bloodstream. Prana is the intelligent electricity that creates the embodied expression of life. The current of prana flows through the nadis, a somatic network of subtle channels. The term nadi comes from the Sanskrit root “nad,” which means movement or stream. The nadis can be understood as a dematerialized, expanded dimension of the body’s fluid and nervous systems. The dynamic flow of prana through the circuitry of the nadis constitutes the pranic body. Heather Raikes (http://www.heatherraikes.com/webresources/Body-Neopoetic.pdf)
219 Vayu, like many Sanskrit words, has a multiplicity of linguistic dimensions and interpretations. As an entity, Vayu is Hindu deity lord of the winds, also sometimes known as prana, the breath. Vayu is more commonly used in a general sense to describe wind or air, and is sometimes considered to be synonymous with prana. In all interpretive frameworks, Vayu has five subsidiary aspects: prana, apana, vyana, udana, and samana, and within yogic embodiment philosophy, the five vayus are often used to describe directional movements of prana or energy within the body. This premise provides the starting point for The Vayu Cycle, which applies its own interpretive filter to the Sanskrit archetypes and creates a temporal progression, or cycle, through the five vayus. There are four "movements" to this "kinesthetic symphony" – prana, apana, udana + vyana, and samana. The cycle begins with prana, energy that draws inward and upward; progresses into apana, energy that roots downward; then moves into udana + vyana, expansive
Prana, apana, vyana, udhana, and samana are components or four movements within the ‘symphony’ of this life force. Upon the conquest of each component, he returns to the sage but is sent back to do further enquiry and penance. Finally, he only finds respite after mastering the last component, upon which time he does not return to his master sage. He has transcended: he has experienced Real knowledge and has become one with Reality. The analogy of a salt doll (Iyer 1996), being sent to measure the ocean, becoming one with the ocean, is a traditional one here. The seeker’s self merges with the Para-Self or Reality, through direct experience of Real knowledge: Para Vidhya (Krishnan 2014).

Bharata challenges these restraints of austerities and penances as advocated by Vedic discourse, by de-limiting the artist/ (seeker of knowledge through the arts), and finding liberation/moksha through the aesthetics of Rasa! The theatrical worldly activity becomes a means to an end, a pathway to perfection. Through the disciplined but pleasurable praxis of theatre, the artist transcends in consciousness and finds perfection, a transition worked through the pleasures of bhava and Rasa.

energy that flows upward and omni-directionally outward; and concludes with samana, energy that draws from the periphery of the body in to the core” ibid.
221 Sarasa Krishnan- Bharata’s Karanas- An Interpretation. 2014
An alternate reading of rasa, provided by Abhinavagupta casts an interesting colour on this experience of happiness. Being a theologian, mystic as well as a philosopher, one of the giants of Indian thought and interpreter of Natyashastra, he views the principle of Rasa (Shanta Rasa) as ultimate happiness, akin to Moksha or liberation. K.M.Higgins in her article ‘An Alchemy of Emotion: Rasa and Aesthetil: Breakthroughs’ quotes:

“Valuable as enhanced wisdom is, aesthetic pleasure is the primary purpose of drama, according to Abhinava. Indeed, aesthetic pleasure is the means to the wisdom available through art. “Even of instruction in the four goals of life, delight is the final and major result.” Abhinava continues,” Nor are pleasure and instruction really different things, for they both have the same object, “that is, happiness.”(Higgins 2007)

Abhinava’s reading of Bharata’s Rasa theory reinforces the argument that the seeking and finding of an experience that is aesthetically pleasurable in Rasa acts as a portal for liberation and ‘eternal happiness’. The austerities observed through the Vedic theory of the ‘four goals of life’ are clearly by far a more difficult method to liberation. Bharata’s design of ‘aesthetic pleasure for eternal happiness’ is clearly more palatable to those not attracted to the path of extreme austerity.

Swami Sivananda’s reference to “Self” is the same self as Samkara’s Vedanta “Self” and Daniel Meyer-Dinkgrafe’s referral to Vedic Science’s pure
consciousness ‘self’ (Meyer-Dinkgräfe 2005). It is also this same Self that experiences ‘rasa’ and happiness in the theatre of Abhinava and Bharata.

The experience of Real Knowledge or ultimate happiness is achieved by the self through intuitive means and not primarily by rational thought.

Buddhistic philosophy (Thakchoe 2011) also speaks of an ‘absolute knowledge’ (transcendental truth) and ‘relative knowledge’ (conditional truth) experienced in consciousness.

Radical theorist, novelist, feminist and mythographer, Kathy Acker’s statement, rings through my mind; “Reality, no rationality possible!” (Acker 1989) This IS true, even by eastern mystical terms; that rational, logical, sequential thought that positions the objective world in an ordered reality, has no place in the paradigm of Absolute Reality. The furiously ticking mind ‘demands’ to be overcome by an inner tranquility; that is, to experience the one undifferentiated reality. Reason is required to be subservient to intuition. Rational knowledge is relative knowledge. “…a world of intellectual distinctions is created; of opposites which can only exist in relation to each

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222 Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe quoting Maharishi Mahesh Yogi: “He whose self is established in Yoga, whose vision everywhere is even, sees the Self in all beings and all beings in Self.” (1969:441)- Performance and Consciousness - (States of Consciousness)

223 The theory of the two truths has a twenty-five century long history behind it. It has its origin in the sixth century BCE in India with the emergence of the Siddhārtha Gautama. It is said, according to the Pitāmātrasamāgama-sūtra, Siddhārtha became a buddha “awakened one” because he fully understood the meaning of the two truths—conventional truth (saṁvṛti-satya) and ultimate truth (paramārtha-satya)—(Stanford University-Theory of two truths 2011)

other…” Capra 1975)

Capra adds,

“Rational knowledge is derived from the experience we have with objects and events in our everyday environment. It belongs to the realm of the intellect whose function is to discriminate, divide, compare, measure and categorize.” (Capra 1975)

In the analogy provided by Capra, once the limited purpose of this rationalizing faculty is served, its usefulness is ended. An analogy might be that once the fish are caught, the net is no longer required. (Capra 1975).

In his book An Idealist view of Life (Radhakrishnan 1947), Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan quotes Plato, in favouring the great worth of intuition and creativity (as opposed to intellect), which is a kind of madness sent to men from the gods. “We Greeks owe our greatest blessings to heaven-sent madness. For the prophetess Delphi and priestess at Dodona have in their moments of madness done great and glorious service to men and cities of Greece, but little in their sober mood.” Radhakrishnan adds, “The plodding intellectual, the man without intuition, is a useful worker quite necessary for the world though, the genius is at a different and higher level. His messages

226 ibid. pg.28
227 ibid.
228 Idealist way of life, S. Radhakrishnan
take shape in the secrets of the soul**” (Radhakrishnan 1947).

This ‘soul secrets’ of Plato, ‘soul and rasa or sap’ of Bharata, are abstractions that serve to communicate experience. This experience is direct experience, experienced through a transcended consciousness. Intuition, creativity, moments of brilliant awareness or ‘punctum’**230 (Barthes 1981)” all these phrases and terms attempt to describe moments that are all flashes of that direct experience. “We become conductors, attached to a greater consciousness**231” (Swami Shantanand Saraswati 1979).


> “...the highly civilised mind of (of modern day scholars) is incapable of probing beyond the physical and the rational... and can take in only two dimensions of existence. He adds,” The Rig Veda itself has said of the sage poets, “Their lowest abodes are visible, they dwell in realms concealed beyond physical appearances.”

> Indian art along with aesthetics is an attempt to reach that Guhyesu Vratesu, those hidden realms.

Sri Aurobindo writes: “the whole basis of Indian artistic creation is to disclose something of the Self, the Infinite, the Divine.”**233 (Ghose 1995)

S. Shwartz crystallizes this thought succinctly.

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229 ibid.
230 Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida.
231 Swami Shantanand on talk on creativity
232 The Advaita of Art (1996)
233 Sri Aurobindo, The Hand of God
“Far from rejecting the body for its fallibility, Indian Aesthetics celebrates its potential to express the transformative ability of its underlying divine nature. Artistic experience through the body may enable the attainment of the highest spiritual goals. The relationship of body and mind and spirit and substance, affect and effect are brought together in the Hindu attempt to collapse all of these perceived distinctions, a prerequisite to enlightenment.”

Physicist and author Fritjof Capra in his influential and controversial book, The Tao of Physics comments;

“The realm of rational knowledge is, of course, the realm of science which measures and quantifies, classifies and analyses. The limitations of any knowledge obtained by these methods have become increasingly apparent in modern science, and in particular in modern physics which has taught us, in the words of Werner Heisenberg, ‘that every word or concept, clear as it may seem to be, has only a limited range of applicability.’” (Capra 1975)

He continues about the relative nature of our rational capacity and that we often confuse the map for the real territory (Capra 1975), thereby confusing the symbols for reality. He says, “The Zen Buddhists say that a finger is needed to point at the moon, but that we should not trouble ourselves with the finger once the moon is recognised.” (Capra 1975). Sri Aurobindo writes,

“The intellect is not the poet, the artist, the creator within us; creation comes by suprarational influx of light and power which must work always... by vision and inspiration.”

Establishing that rational thinking does not reveal ‘Real Knowledge’ but only points the way, these writers argue that intuitive knowledge experienced by the artist and spectator through the arts creates a passage into this ‘Real’

knowledge. Deheija says, “The essence of creativity or artistic inspiration is termed “pratibha” ... meaning ‘light’; etymologically, the term signifies a burst of enlightenment. Abhinava describes this light as ‘an intuitive capacity to produce novel objects’ (Dehejia 1996). This self-same leitmotif is again apparent in Vedic thought. Deheija compares the golden bird, suparna, symbolic of the flight of artistic vision, to that of the creative process itself.

Vedic thought is reluctant to scrutinize or dissect this golden winged bird as it is sacrosanct as, “no amount of probing will yield any useful meaningful answers.” (Dehejia 1996)

The fact is, that this luminous, golden, effervescent abstraction that is born of creativity and blossoms and fructifies as this glorious, inexpressible, indefinable experience called RASA (which is perhaps the portal to Absolute Reality or Real Knowledge), truly is indescribable in rational terms. Thus the Upanishad says, “there the eye goes not, Speech goes not, nor the mind. We know not, we understand not…” (Pandey 2006)

Thus Bharata’s Rasa theory (while challenging the ‘gate keepers’ of Real knowledge), proliferated access to this ‘sacrosanct’ real, and encompassed ‘the sacred and) profane’ (so called secular arts), to empower the artist/actor

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235 The Advaita of Art(1996)
236 Dehieja, introduction Advaita of Art.
237 Tavalkara Upanisad 1.3, Abhinava Gupta An Historical and Philosophical Study(K.C. Pandey)
238 Mundaka upanishad’s rules for attaining Para Vidhya or Real Knowledge.
(through the universe of theatre in experiencing the sacred through the arts.

**It was a radical theory** that allowed access to the sacred for the average human being, male and female; the unschooled, ‘unqualified’ person whose existence may revolve around the demands of meager existence. But, through the praxis of “Rasa” in art, he or she too is considered and sanctioned for the path of salvation.

**Consciousness re-examined**

The subject of consciousness as a concept has been an intrinsic part of the Indian subconscious since ancient times\(^2\) (Gupta 2007). It is therefore not a new field of study. It has been the subject of debate in all six major Indian philosophical schools of thought, since their inception, thousands of years ago. The use of the word ‘rasa’ itself infiltrates everyday conversations of not only aesthetics, but in even the naming of a particular spicy soup called “rasam”. “Chid- Akasha”\(^3\) (Devesan 2013) as ‘inner space’ within our consciousness is often referred to in Sanskrit poetics as well as in *Upanishads*. It has proved to be a centrally binding factor that has contributed to keeping an ancient civilization alive to this day. I would even argue that most of the perceived distinctions between schools of Hindu philosophical thought

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239 All strata of society including the learned, uneducated and every person that existed and encased within the caste system.

240 Gupta Bina mentions this fact in her comparative analysis of Husserl’s phenomenological ideas with that of Shankara, in her essay, “Advaita Vedanta and Husserl’s Phenomenology” 2004, University of Missouri, Columbia, USA.

241 The Eye of The Universe: Brahmavidya meditation & its Upanishadic base Devesan (Google Books)
dissolve onto this homogenous canvas; that is, the identification and study of the principle of ‘consciousness’. This significance extends into the practical culture of a people, whose lives reflect these philosophical concepts as living theories.

William S. Haney in his article, “Deconstruction and Sanskrit Poetics (Haney II 1995)” writes about this fact that nature, consciousness and language are inwardly akin.

“Poststructuralists commonly believe that every act of understanding is embedded in a context of cultural preconceptions, and that to interpret a text is to enter a “hermeneutic circle” without access to a higher theoretical or experiential order of knowledge independent of history… Although in theory deconstruction attempts to undermine the possibility of transcendental consciousness, in practice the mechanics of deconstruction suggest a field of pure possibility at the basis of language that corresponds to the ineffable experience of transcendental consciousness. In this way, deconstruction could be regarded as an undeveloped form of Sanskrit poetics, for central to Indian philosophy is the distinction between theory and practice, conceptualization and direct experience, at the same time that the philosophy of yoga (union), holds that nature, consciousness and language are inwardly akin.” (Haney II 1995)

He proceeds to say,

“I wish to show that the knowledge of expanded awareness available through Sanskrit Poetics can take one beyond the oppositions inherent (between theory and practice), for Sanskrit poetics (theatre) holds that unity and diversity are not mutually exclusive, that unity is diversity.” (Haney II 1995)

Quoting from the Mundaka Upanishad, Haney (Haney II 1995) earmarks the relevance of two kinds of knowledge (Real and relative- Para and Apara) to

242 Mosaic, (Winnipeg)Academic Journal Article. Vol.28, No. 1
the subject of understanding notions of consciousness and how the Indian
notion of consciousness “accords with recent scientific research”:

“The basic principles related to the question of language, consciousness and
meaning found in Sanskrit poetics have their roots in Vedic literature. In terms
of the difference between conceptualization and direct experience, the
Mundaka Upanishad states that “Two kinds of knowledge must be known . . .
the higher and the lower knowledge . . . . The lower knowledge is the Rig-Veda
[and other Vedic literature]; but the higher knowledge is that by which the
Indestructible (Brahman) is apprehended” (Muller, Upanishads 2: 27-28).”

While Haney’s argument would be contested by many post-structuralists, I
would agree with him: the basic unity in diversity within the poetic discourse
in Bharata’s theatre provides for not only knowledge of the technicalities of
poetics, but ‘expanded awareness’. Higher knowledge is made available
finally only through a direct experience, a shift in consciousness.

Haney quotes S.Radhakrishnan244 (Haney II 1995) in respect to the four states
of consciousness (the awake state, the dream, dreamless state, the state of
Turiya, the state of spiritual consciousness (I would argue that this last state is
the one to which the portal of Rasa gives the artist/spectator access). In this
view,

“(Turiya is) not that which cognises the internal (objects), not that which
cognises the external (objects), not what cognises both of them, not a mass of
cognition, not cognition, not non-cognition. (It is) unseen, incapable of being
spoken of, ungraspable, without any distinctive marks, unthinkable,
unnameable, the essence of the knowledge of the one self, that in which the
world is resolved, the peaceful, the benign, the non-dual. ...” (Haney II 1995)

243 Mosaic, (Winnipeg) Academic Journal Article. Vol.28, No. 1
244 Mosaic, (Winnipeg) Academic Journal Article. Vol.28, No. 1
Knowledge received from within this state of Turiya is said to be a direct experience, bereft of all external senses and sense objects.

The experience of Rasa in Bharata’s theatre leads to this moment of resolving consciousness, where the process of transformation and possible transcendence of artist and spectator may occur.

Thus, as Hindu philosophy postulates three alternating levels of relative consciousness—waking, dream and deep sleep, only a sage or seer who experiences this fourth transcendental state is capable of articulating such an experience.

Sage, seer and philosopher, Sri Ramana Maharishi of Tiruvannamalai, speaks about Turiya:

“There is only one state, that of consciousness or awareness or existence. The three states of waking, dream and deep sleep cannot be real. They simply come and go. The real will always exist. The “I” or existence that alone persists in all the three states is real. The other three are not real so it is not possible to say they have such and such a degree of reality. Existence and consciousness is the only reality.

He continues to expand on what he means by this statement:

Consciousness-plus-waking we call “waking-Consciousness” plus sleep, we call “sleep-Consciousness” plus dream, we call “dream-Consciousness”. Consciousness is the screen on which all the pictures come and go. The screen is real, the pictures are mere shadows on it. Turiya245 means the supreme consciousness, as distinct from the other three states waking, dream and deep sleep. The fourth state is eternal and the other three states come and go in it.246” (Ramana 2005)

245 For those who experience waking, dream and sleep, the state of wakeful-sleep, which is beyond these states is named Turiya (the fourth).

Ramana then clarifies that in the fourth state of transcended consciousness (Turiya), there is a quiet awareness that the mind has merged in its source, the heart and is in a state of equilibrium, “Turiyatita”.

Since the state of Turiya becomes the ‘only reality’, turiya alone exists and the seeming three stages of waking, dream and deep sleep are only apparent realities. The Self is the witness of these states. When this is awareness is ‘known’ the three experiences of waking, dream and deep sleep all disappear. Soon, even the idea that the Self is a witness, that is the fourth state, also disappears.

That is why the Self is described as beyond the fourth (Turiyatita):

“The jnani, (seer) having transcended the three states, abides merely as pure consciousness unaffected by the disposition of body and mind. For him, turiyatita is identical with turiya and the other three states do not exist for him. Holding fast to the truth, transcending the three states, life activity should be viewed as a leela247.”(Ramana 2005)

The experience of Rasa is the beginning of this fourth state. It is an experience within the waking state of consciousness, a direct248 and intense

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248 Aparoksha Anubhuti
experience, triggered and engineered through the senses and intellect, to go beyond the senses and intellect.

**Aparoksha Anubhuti**: Direct Experience and **Paroksha**

**Anubhuti**: Indirect Experience

The term *Anubhuti* is the condition of the ‘self’ or direct experience.

Paroksha is “not direct”. Experience is therefore divided into two levels.

Direct experience is experienced directly in consciousness bypassing the deduction of the intellect and the senses. Indirect experience is that which is experienced through an intellectual understanding of deduction and through the senses.

The ‘a’ of the word a-paroksha indicates that it ‘not’ paroksha. Thus, a very interesting but common occurrence in the Sanskrit language/poetics, a

249 These terms coined by Adhi Shankara, main proponent of Advaita Vedanta.
250 ibid.
251 All the knowledge an individual gathers in this material world is through the perception of senses. Whoseover you know about the world right from the birth onwards, is through the five senses of seeing, hearing, touching, smell and taste in the form of roopa, shabda, sparsha, gandha and rasa (appearance, speech, touch, smell and taste). These are the five dimensions of your cognition, five types of experiences through which you perceive the whole world and acquire all the knowledge. So this is indirect knowledge. It comes through one of the senses or a combination of them. If any of these senses is absent, that part of perception is absent. A person born blind has no perception, form and appearance. In direct Knowledge the sense play no role. Aparokshanubhuti, the direct Knowledge, arises only when the senses are completely still. The senses are the main obstacle in direct Knowledge. When the sense are totally still, the mind is desireless, and when the seeker enters a very subtle state of higher consciousness, one experiences one’s own real Self, transcending the material world and its cognition. That is the direct Experience. The seers had that great Experience and came face to face with the ultimate Reality. The moment they entered into the direct Experience, they were amazed; they were stuck dumb. Because, there was a total transformation of their whole consciousness and they became filled with the Light. The darkness of ignorance vanished instantaneously, all doubts vanished forthwith. They experienced total Knowledge. Everything became straightway. No more any questions or doubts remained. That knowledge is known as Brahma-jnana and the knower as jnani. Whatever is to be known became known to them. They became the very embodiment, the very personification of Knowledge itself. (Swami Chidananda-Divine Life Society)
description of something is made through negation: what it is NOT.\textsuperscript{252}(Lowe 2011)

Therefore, when one wants to describe an experience accurately, one can only describe the known and say that it is not like this known entity or that known entity. \textit{Rasa} is a direct experience. It is a consequence to the experience of the \textit{stayibhavas} and \textit{vibhavas} and such. It is the culmination of the totality of an aesthetic experience.

How does one convey the total experience to another who has not experienced it? By connecting it to a ‘mind-familiar’, or indirect experience, and showing that it is somewhat like this but not really.

Swami Atmaprakshananda\textsuperscript{253} (Bonnici 2011) comments on direct and indirect experience:

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"When one says, ‘This is a tree,’ the speaker and the listener can both see the tree right in front of them: they don’t infer a tree, they can see it directly with their own eyes. They have direct knowledge of the tree in the garden: this is \textit{pratyakSha jīAnam}, direct knowledge. Direct knowledge is always of an object.

If I say, ‘There is a similar tree in the park down the road,’ the listener has knowledge of the other tree in the park, but cannot see it directly: he or she has information got through the speaker, which gives indirect knowledge, \textit{parokSha nyanam}. Somebody who does not see an object directly but comes to know it through another source has indirect knowledge. Indirect knowledge is also of an object. Another example would be coming to hear of...
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\textsuperscript{252}Many religious texts like Sankara’s Bavani Ashtakam (Na thato Na matha Na Bandu na datha...) have similar grammar. In Sanskrit participles are negated by means of combination with the negative prefix â(n)-. ‘a’\textsuperscript{\textsuperscript{is}} is the only means of negating a participle: the independent negative particles nā and ma˘ are not used to negate participles,and in fact, besides a very few exceptions, can only be used to negate clauses(Deibrück, 1888)(John J Lowe- Indo Iranian Journal 54 2011

\textsuperscript{253}Peter Bonnici- Direct experience- advaita-academy.org
Abhinavagupta, being a Saivaite theologian and one of the most important and influential Hindu seers, interprets Bhrata’s aesthetic theory, as an annexe to Moksha, or spiritual liberation.

Dehejia notes, that it was important for Abhinava to not only enunciate his theory of aesthetics that revolved around the framework of Kasmir Saivaism but to also show that art experience was a form of higher realization.255 (Dehejia 1996)

Through his celebration of the ‘santa rasa’ (tranquility) of the rasa theory, Abhinava sculpted his aesthetic theory of transcendence. Abhinava is quite insistent on determinate cognition256 (Sukla 2001). To explain this term, one should understand that a main feature of Sanatana Dharma, is in the belief of

254 The object of knowledge is different from the person who has the experience. When we say aparokSha nynam, on the other hand, we do not mean knowledge of an object. One cannot talk about direct knowledge of brahman, nor can we say we have indirect knowledge of brahman. People think that when you study the upaniShads you have indirect knowledge of brahman, then one needs to sit and meditate to get direct knowledge of brahman. This is wrong understanding. There is no such thing as direct or indirect knowledge of brahman because these two types of knowledge are of an object that is away from one and other than one. Brahman, however, is never an object because it is all-pervasive: there is no time when the mind is NOT in contact with brahman. Normally when we say that one has knowledge of an object it indicates that mind comes into contact with the object: prior to seeing the object or hearing about it mind was not in contact with the object. When one reads a book about Himalayan valleys, the mind comes in contact with the valleys through knowledge obtained from a book. When is there contact? After knowing. How? By the act of reading. Some action is always involved in bringing the mind into contact with an object. Action produces the phalam [result/fruit] of knowledge. Mind comes into contact with the object indirectly through reading and then directly through perception. - (Swami Atmaprakashananda-Peter Bonnici)

255 The Advaita of Art pg. 127

256 For a more in depth analysis of determinate and indeterminate cognition, see Ananta Charan Sukla’s Art and Representation: Contributions to Contemporary Aesthetics. Greenwood Publishing Group. Pg.234-240
past lives. Human consciousness is conditioned by previous experiences, in present and past lives. I argue that, determinate cognition/perception is the result of causes and effects of previous experience (Samskaras and Vasanas) in this life and in past lives. All previous experiences act as catalysts for future experience. Buddhists argue that cognition is “non-sensuous or non-perceptual” if it is preceded by recollection, as an inferential cognition; this is a ‘determinate cognition’.257 (Sinha 1934)

Of determinate cognition, Stephen Phillips writes from Nyaya school of thought:

> Thought-laden perception, determinate perception gets its content not only from the object in connection with the sense organ but also from the classification-al power of the mind (self). For most adults, prior determinate cognition provides the content predictable of particular, or a group of things, presented through the senses.258(Phillips 2012)

For example, an unpleasant near-drowning experience in childhood will always impact upon the consciousness in adulthood and perhaps even carry on in another life. Our past experience conditions our present experience and the manner of our responses and reactions through our senses are the very projections of these experiences.

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257 Jadunath Sinha- Indian Psychology- 1934 (Kegan Paul, Trench, trubner & Co Ltd and Routledge) Pg. 59-60
He continues: “That is a previous ‘samskara’ formed by a previous knowledge-source-produced bits of occurrent cognition of things would be a causal factor... (and affect perception)”.

Sinha and Phillips argue from the perspectives of two different schools of Indian philosophy. So closely aligned, but different in approach, philosophical debate on perception, cognition, subjective-objective experience vary, lilts and quivers dangerously and precariously between the six schools of Indian philosophical thought.

Slicing through centuries of study, research and contemplation and outpouring from the various schools (or darshanas) of philosophical thought in India, Sankhya, Vaiseshika, Carvaka, Jainism, Buddhism, Nyaya, Samkyha, Patanjali’s Yoga, Vedanta, Purva Mimamsa, the issue of the relationship between perception and cognition has been scrutinised since (200 C.E): it has been debated, agreed and disagreed upon until the time of writing this thesis, and no doubt such academic debate will continue. But I would argue that this kind of seeking of knowledge is the seeking of INDIRECT or UNREAL knowledge or Apara Vidhya. The result of all the above study will ultimately lead to an understanding that Apara Vidhya is an Indirect and Unreal but a necessary annexe to purifying the mind through contemplation. Para Vidhya is ‘Real’ and ‘Direct’. The aesthetic experience of Rasa is ‘Direct’, ‘Real’ and a
subtle reflection of the final experience of Moksha or liberation, the final experience of all human consciousness.

**Consciousness: Real-life and Consciousness Theatre**

Bharata dips into the palette of human experience itself in the most direct and pleasurable manner, overriding all philosophical debate, all intellectual dilemmas and evoking a DIRECT experience for audience and artist in the Rasa experience.

Utilising the five koshas\(^{259}\) (Swami Atmananda Saraswati 2014) or five sheaths of the human personality, the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual layers, the artist and audience’s consciousness is transported to ‘another’ world where real experience is transformed through ‘play’.

\(^{259}\) A science from the Taitriya Upanishad. (Also evident in the 14th chapter of The Bhagavad Gita. Krishna points this in terms of gunas, and defines a man of knowledge as one who has become gunatita. Atita means beyond, transcending. Transcending means to see your existence unaffected by the thing you transcend. So when we transcend the five koshas, in effect this implies that neither my existence nor my fulfilment depends on these five sheaths. The fulfilment does not depend on any particular condition of these five sheaths, but is there inspite of any condition of these five sheaths. Meditation is not merely to make the mind thoughtless for some time, but to awake to this knowledge that ‘I am that who transcends all thoughts’. (Swami Atmananda- Panchakoshatita- Vedanta Sandesh)
Anna-maya kosha, being the outer most and ‘visible’ physical body, is the relatively known and studied entity of human kind. \(Prana-maya\textsuperscript{260}(Raikes 2013)\)

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\textsuperscript{260} There are three interconnected aspects of the body expressed in the expanded embodiment framework: the physical, fluid, and pranic. The physical aspect corresponds to the familiar material anatomy that we have come to
Mano-maya, and vijnana-maya koshas collectively comprise the realm of the subtle/astral body (sukshma sharira).

Mala Sinha in her paper on “Managing Constructive and Destructive Emotions: Indian Psycho-spiritual Perspective”, analyses the Guna theory of emotions and the impact on human consciousness,

“...positing that negative emotions with dominance of Rajasic and Tamasic guna like fear, anger, or grief have a destructive impact on self and impair cognitive capabilities. Positive emotions like love, heroism and serenity, on the other hand, have a preponderance of Satwic guna, the impact of which on the consciousness is constructive.” (Sinha 2010)

Sinha elaborates the impact of emotions aroused due to the dynamic interplay of external stimulus causes, “psychological changes and cognitive appraisals which cumulatively impact the consciousness of the individual

commonly equate with the body. However, in the context of expanded embodiment, the epicenter of the body shifts away from the gross matter of the bones and muscles and into the nervous system. The nervous system is the conduit that channels the flow of embodied intelligence within the physical anatomy, and it is the dimension of the body that gives rise to the fluid and pranic aspects. The fluid aspect invokes the fundamentally dynamic essence of embodiment. Our bodies are 60-80% water. The living body is sustained by the rhythmic motion of the breath and heartbeat. Cells constantly form and die. 50 million cells in the body will have died and been replaced in the time that it takes to read this sentence. 15 million blood cells are destroyed every second. 40,000 dead skin cells fall off of the body every minute. In an average lifetime, a human will shed 40 pounds of skin. The stomach produces a new lining every three days. 98% of the atoms in the body are replaced each year. Approximately every seven years, the body replaces the equivalent of an entire skeleton. Every human being spent about 30 minutes as a single cell. (Rea 1997: 24-25). This is to say that there is essentially nothing about the living body that is static or fixed at any moment in time. The natural state of the human body is fundamentally dynamic, fluid, oscillating in continuous waves of motion and change. The fluid body serves as ‘bridge’ between the physical and pranic dimensions – a bridge between materialized and dematerialized states of being. The pranic aspect refers to the current of life force – a totality of flowing, intelligent somatic energy. The Sanskrit word prana comes from the yogic tradition, and can be translated as energy, breath, life force. Prana is an intrinsically intangible electrical phenomenon – as is the basic fact of life. Anatomically, there is nothing that distinguishes a live body from a corpse. Moreover, our conscious minds know nothing of how to digest food or transport oxygen from the atmosphere into the bloodstream. Prana is the intelligent electricity that creates the embodied expression of life. The current of prana flows through the nadis, a somatic network of subtle channels. The term nadi comes from the Sanskrit root “nad,” which means movement or stream. The nadis can be understood as a dematerialized, expanded dimension of the body’s fluid and nervous systems. The dynamic flow of prana through the circuitry of the nadis constitutes the pranic body. (Raikes.H-Introduction to Neopoetics, University of Plymouth-) Intellect Journals Vol 9 number 2&3 (2013)

The three gunas- Satwa, Rajas and Tamas- (18th chapter of The Bhagawad Gita). ...codification of three types of attitudes and behavior that dominate personality.
experiencing the emotion”, in Rasa theory and outlines the points of intersections between the Guna theory and Bharata’s arguments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annamaya kosha</th>
<th>Matter</th>
<th>Physical Layer</th>
<th>Physical body and senses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pranamaya kosha</td>
<td>Vital Air</td>
<td>Energy Layer</td>
<td>Breath and the physical aspect of the senses and the operation of the physical body.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manamaya kosha</td>
<td>Mind</td>
<td>Mental</td>
<td>Processing, reason, logic and emotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vijnanamaya kosha</td>
<td>Ego and Intellect</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>Faculty which discriminates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anandamaya kosha</td>
<td>Centre of Consciousness</td>
<td>Bliss</td>
<td>Independent of any reason or stimulus</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is significant about this paper is the way the audience perception-cognition and the subsequent transformation of consciousness are succinctly analysed through the lens of the five koshas that are reflective of experiences in the eight predispositions of emotions in Bharata’s stayi-bhavas and causative vibhavas; which give rise to emotional experience and impact audience-artist consciousness. Sinha’s psychology research paper, although centering around the impact of emotions on consciousness with in-depth research on their positive-negative neurobiological and anatomical impact, from a sub-clinical perspective, also has significant relevance to the neuro-
physiological changes in the audience in performance. The cumulative
discourse of these Indian knowledge traditions of the Guna theory, Rasa
theory and Pancha koshas all help in the analysis of the effects and causes of
transformations within the audience–artist complex.

Sinha’s example of Arjun’s transformation on the battlefield mirrors the Rasa
theory’s trajectory of emotional states. On the battlefield, fearless and valiant
Arjun in Mahabharata, experiences the emotional grief (stayi bhava) when he
surveys his own kinsmen, friends and family, whom he is to fight. His mind is
moved; he is down cast; and his (negative) experience of psychological
weakness (anubhava) evokes physiological changes, (satvika bhava) (trembling
and cold sweat), that accentuate feelings of grief, guilt, alienation and fear
(vyabhachari bhavas).

“The cumulative impact of the emotional episode impacts Arjuna’s consciousness in such a
way that he almost chooses to withdraw from the impending war....”

In order to further explain the subtle shifts in Arjun’s consciousness and
ultimate transformation I will provide some information about the three gunas
and their effects upon human consciousness in the next few paragraphs, as
Bharata has employed this knowledge to construct the tenets of his theatre.
Whether Arjun here is mythic hero or, as in my argument, represents the stage actor, his emotional states here denote a clear path to emotional and perhaps even spiritual fructification, producing the Rasa in audience or the possible observer on the battlefield. Vedantic thought and the Gita offer similar insights in the Guna theory. The three Gunas, (Satwic, Rajasic, Tamasic)\(^{262}\)(Sinha 2013), interweave and interpenetrate all emotional experience. With the help of intelligence and ego, inherent in all human beings (which aids or abates according to the gunas), a change occurs within the consciousness, which produces either "constructive emotions like joy, cheerfulness and equanimity through Satwa or destructive emotions like lust, greed, anger"\(^{263}\)(Sinha 2013), hatred, jealousy, pride, arrogance and vanity through Rajas and Tamas. The play of samskaras and vaasanas (previous knowledge-sources), also has a huge bearing on one’s thoughts and actions:

> "Samskaras are nurtured and shaped by vasanas (propensities and inclinations of the mind developed on the basis of previous experiences.) Common man is unable to discern or perceive this due to lack of higher levels of awareness, developed by through penance and meditation (pragnyadrishti)."\(^{264}\) (Swami Jnananda Sarasvati 1991)

Thus the Upanishads and Vedas proclaim that no person with a body can

\(^{262}\) Satwic guna is luminosity, clarity, equilibrium, inter-connected-ness, perceives failures and success as a whole process, has constant, non-diminishing energy. Rajasic guna is dynamism, passion, goal-focused, pleasure and dominance seeking with strong sense of ownership.. Tamasic guna is fixed on patterns, propensity for routine, slowness, inertia, rigidity, and stagnation., with actions guided by immediacy and ignorance, energy is sporadic.- (Sinha, 2005;Bhal and Debnath, 2006)

\(^{263}\) Sinha M- Managing Constructive and Destructive Emotions: Indian Psycho-spiritual Perspective-

remain without performing action. All living species are engaged in performing actions or Karma. We may be sitting idle and may assume that we are not performing an action, but passive acts like reading, writing, talking, walking and even thinking, are all acts or karma. The silent driving force in human life is the concept of vasanas. Literally, meaning smell, it is, like the smell of an incense stick burning at a distance, dispersed through air currents and particles: vasanas are carried over and brought forward to the next birth. Vasanas are the subtle impressions left on the mind from actions performed in the past.

Every action pre-supposes the existence of a desire. Every action has a reaction, resonance and reflection. It leaves an indelible imprint on the mind and on the future. Thus the four purushartas (Dharma, Artha, Kama Moksha) come into play. When the mind is purified through meditative practices, penance or practice of the higher sciences and the arts, the five subtle sheaths of the human personality (koshas) reach transcendence, allowing the “pragnadrishti” or the awareness of the Self to become more apparent to the individual personality. The practice of Dharma or (righteousness), the first purusharta or phase of life is discernible and made applicable in everyday interpersonal transactions.

Swami Atmananda Saraswati on the subject of Self and the pancha koshas says:
“Taittiriya Upanishad reveals, that our real self, the ‘atma’ is Panchakosha vyatariktah, i.e. that which transcends the five koshas. Transcendence is not that which exists in a realm beyond the five koshas, but that which even though pervades these five layers of existence exists independent of these five koshas. While the koshas are dependent for their existence on this timeless divinity, the self is independent of these. Starting from Annamaya Kosha the five kosha’s are progressively subtler, so as we progress to identify and discover each of these koshas we simultaneously make our minds subtler too. The Self is the subllest of all these, so the appreciation of these five koshas also becomes a means to prepare our minds for the ultimate realization. Pancha Kosha Viveka is a one of the finest journey to the ethereal, divine and transcendental realm. It is the valid means of realization revealed by the Upanishads themselves for the one, non-dual divinity.”

Swami Atmananda Saraswati 2014

Bharata employed this revelation of the science of the five koshas to affect the artist and audience by creating the required and apt environment (time, space and content) within theatre to create a channel to interweave the subtle sheaths through ceremony and play. Bharata, being himself a sage and seer, was well versed with the workings of the pancha koshas and subtle mechanisms (physiological and psychological) that occur within the human condition. Thus his theatre was praxis of his analysis of an existing theory or science of consciousness, already a well-researched Vedic subject in his time. Consequently, the Natyashastra, a complete treatise on theatre, is considered a science of artistic pursuit, and is aptly named as the Fifth Veda.

Outside the theatre, we experience “constructive and destructive” emotions that create and stabilize semi-permanent and permanent states of mind or

http://www.vmission.org.in/vedanta/articles/5kviveka.htm
moods. "Neurobiological researches on emotions have shown that brain tends to respond to emotion inducing stimuli in ways that it has become used to during past experiences." (Sinha 2013) Predictability in patterns of such behavioural outcomes and responses is due to "emotional entrainment", a funneling of information in the brain where memory of similar emotional arousal episodes, convey similar pathways of behaviour. (Sinha 2013) Sinha states, "...Like a self-fulfilling prophecy, we experience the same emotions we had experienced earlier, even when the trigger stimulus has changed."

Thus the web of triggers we carry around with respect to emotional habits (vasanas and samskaras) is powerful and affects our responses. Bharata’s understanding and use of these triggers of real life situations, in the observing audience, to create response (and empathy), initially, then created theatrical situations to demonstrate other possible responses and outcomes by way of suggestion.

Thus I now continue the analytical journey of how the various subtle sheaths (koshas) affect the actor/character Arjun and identify the subtle shifts in Arjun’s consciousness and ultimate transformation on the battlefield of Kurukshetra (in the dramatic reenactment of the scene in The MahaBharata)
that ultimately produces Rasa in audience and actor. It is an analysis of activation from the innermost sheath, Ananda maya kosha, going outwards to the Anna-maya kosha, where physical effects or bhavas are produced as a result of psychological “turmoil”; in turn producing empathy and subsequent rasa in the audience-actor complex. Here I have addressed the actor as actor as well as what could have been the emotional turmoil of the real life Arjun on the real battlefield, as well as peering at the witnessing Self, observing consciousness.

**The psycho-physical affects and effects of Artist**

The audience watches the character Arjun, (before the battle of Kurukshetra [Mahabharata]) exhibiting physiological symptoms of a deep inner pathos and grief when he realises, in a whisper of a stirring within his deep subconscious (anandamaya-consciousness kosha is activated), that he will be fighting against his very own revered teachers (Dronacharya and Bheeshma), cousins, brothers, friends, and grandparents, whom he dallied with his entire life. His sense of personal human ethics prevents him from killing his own kith and kin. He does not want to incur the sin of killing his friends and family (vignyana maya kosha- intellect and ego). His judgement as a warrior and Kshatriar (protector) becomes clouded. At the moment when he should be the most collected and calm, in order to do his duty and deliver dharma, his mental
and emotional memory clouds (manomaya kosha—thoughts/mind). As a warrior, he should develop the seer or witnessing Self within (pragnyadristi) to steer his decision. The aim of dharma is to perpetuate the Self to watch and make informed decisions and not allow the emotion and intellect to decide course of action, but act only as tool. Arjun as a Kshatriya, or warrior, who is meant to uphold Dharma (justice), at that point fails and falls. His limbs tremble with a weakness (Annamaya kosha—physical body is affected) that the emotion has created, his mouth is parched and he allows his bow and arrow to slip to the ground and says to Krishna, his charioteer, friend and counsellor, “I will not fight!”

Krishna’s purpose (in speaking the Bhagavad Gita to Arjun) was to cultivate the social ethics of Dharma in Arjun. Since all possible attempts to avoid war had not succeeded, it had come to a point of no return; it had to be fought and justice must prevail. Krishna’s counseling (The Bhagavad Gita) had the main task to avert this very fine line of misjudgment: to emphasize the duty to dharma (justice) over self-interest and restore mental discipline and emotional self-control. This is the crux of yoga (Dowdle 2014). Arjun had systematically, 268 Upholding of justice is one of the most important duty of the warriors and royalty (Kshatriyas) 269 The yoga tradition offers a paradigm for such deep self-examination: the purusharthas, or four aims of life. They are dharma (duty, ethics), artha (prosperity, wealth), kama (pleasure, sensual gratification), and moksha (the pursuit of liberation). The purusharthas are the blueprint for human fulfillment, signposts that point us to a successful, satisfying, balanced existence in the world. The purusharthas are elaborated upon extensively in the Mahabharata, the epic Indian poem that contains The Bhagavad Gita, and are interwoven with yogic philosophy at the deepest levels. But they have their roots in the Rig Veda, the most ancient and revered of Hindu scriptures. The purusharthas are the inherent values of the universe. The cosmos is considered a living being, and the issues of law, prosperity,
within a few moments of standing on the battlefield, sunk sheath by sheath of the koshas and tumbled down the ladder of the three Gunas (Satwa, Rajas, Tamas).

Krishna intervenes and raises Arjun from a state of inertia and Tamasic attitude, and through his discourse on ethics and justice, re-invigorates the warrior (Rajasic-Kshatriya) mind and finally re-elevates him to a consciousness of Satwa, or revitalised joy, positive energy and heroism.

Swami Sivananda’s succinct account of this episode provides a complete picture of the event:

“Arjuna became very despondent. Lord Krishna’s opening remarks in the second discourse, which bespeak of the immortality of the soul, open his eyes and give him strength and courage. Arjuna then learns the technique of Karma Yoga and renunciation of the fruits of actions. He learns the methods of controlling the senses and the mind and practising concentration and meditation. This is followed by a description of the various manifestations of the Lord in order to prepare him for the vision of the Cosmic Form. Arjuna experiences the magnificent Cosmic Vision and understands the glorious nature of a liberated being. He is then given knowledge of the Field and the Knower of the Field, the three Gunas and the Purushottama. His knowledge is completed by an explanation of the divine attributes, the three kinds of faith and the essence of the Yoga of renunciation.” (Swami Sivananda)

Krishna commands: “Arjun... You must fight and fight till you re-instate Dharma”
Psycho-physical effects on audience/participant/observers

Following the instructive example of Arjun as model, the ideal observing audience in Bharata’s theory, participating in this plethora of emotional and mental exchanges of the theatrical event, wholly relish each and every wavering thought and roller-coaster of subtle bhavas: Stayi Bhavas (latent predispositions), anubhavas (outward expression) initiated by vibhavas, and vyabhachari bhavas (transient emotions) that reinforce basic emotions. They then finally experience and resonate with the Satvika bhava (equilibrium) of Arjun.

Abhinava defines this identification of audience with the artist in the concept of Sahrydaya:

“Those people who are capable of identifying with the subject matter, as the mirror of their hearts have been polished through constant repetition and study (of poetry) and who sympathetically respond in their own hearts...” 270

(Masson, Patwardhan 1977)

Baumer and Brandon271 (Deutsch 1981) state that the ideal audience member going through a theatrical experience is therefore not simply a passive spectator but active participant in the work272(Deutsch 1981). Abhinava states that one of the conditions for aesthetic experience is being “open to artwork”

272 ibid.
precisely as an intentional an artwork that is capable of controlling our experience of it. The “consent of the heart”, means a kind of self-surrender to the object, an affirmation of its being capable of sustaining our interest and attention:

“And of an obstacle to this experience, is that the participant –observer-experiencer, must universalize his own emotion by getting beyond the temporal-spatial specificity of his own immediate state of consciousness as this may grounded in ego-needs and as it is bound to particular life-experiences. Abhinava almost demands that participant must do this for the sake of recognising the universalized emotion in the artwork, as it is given only in the work”[Deutsch 1981]

Bharata’s Rasa, as a process, is created by the interpenetration and diffusing of various bhavas, that shift the traits of vasanas and samskaras from the personality sheaths using psychophysical alterations within the emotional and intellectual transactions in the mind-body complex. With the use of breath (pranic breathing exhalation and inhalation), the mind is expunged of negative emotions and memories[274]. To this end, actor/dancer training in yogic breathing is an important technique in Bharata’s theatre. The very process of the bhava-rasa complex is self-organising, like the biological ‘flowering’ of fractal movement or organic ‘blooming’ that enables many small transformations within the consciousness of artist and observing

273 ibid.
274 B.K.S Iyengar The inhalation of breath should be long, deep and rhythmic and slow as you are taking in nourishment. He retainment of breath allows prana to circulate, distribute and assimilate in all organs. The exhalation should be complete so all toxins (physical and mental) be purged and mind is silent and tranquil. (Sinha, Iyengar) – Truth-Knowledge-Awareness
audience. Neither subjective nor objective, it situates itself in quite another category. A category of that instigates change and further exponential flowering. In the words of J.A Honeywell, “The properties of Rasa must emerge as actualization in experience of the properties of the object itself.”

In Susan Langer’s observation, “Art is the creation of forms symbolic of human feeling.”

Powerful human feelings produced in theatre are a result of symbolic inferences that exist within the contextual design. Hence the symbolism is a representation of what already exists within the human consciousness. This explains the audience’s response within a cultural context, where villages in India, watch an excerpt of Ramayana or Mahabharata and react more powerfully than an uninitiated western audience member, who is unaware of the spiritual and cultural context of the play.

Baumer and Brandon comment that:

“Feeling awakens feeling: a universalized mental state can be apprehended in aesthetic experience only if it is constitutive of the artwork itself. The artwork as a whole becomes ‘vibhava’; it determines the experience. “To determine” it must be stated again, is different from “to cause”. Cause-effect

275 Langer argued that man (sic) is essentially a symbol-using animal. Symbolic thought is deeply rooted in the human nature – it is the keynote to questions of life and consciousness, all humanistic problems. “Art is the creation of forms symbolic of human feeling.” Langer defined. She distinguishes between the open “presentational” symbols of art and “discursive” symbols of language, which cannot reflect directly the subjective aspect of experience. Langer’s view of language is not far from Ludwig Wittgenstein’s logical theory developed in his Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (1922), but when Wittgenstein stopped on the threshold of the unsayable, Langer argued that “music articulates forms which language cannot set forth” – it shows what cannot be said. (http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/slanger.htm)
relationships, as we ordinarily experience suggest an indifference and independence between terms, which separation simply does not hold for art and aesthetic experience. And this is especially the case when artwork is capable, through the creative imagination (pratibha) of the artist, of awakening in one who is prepared for it that the special ecstatic unity of self and object wherein both achieve completion of their being276. (Deutsch 1981)

Inspecting the genesis of the word, “Sahridaya”, we find it is an amalgamation of two concepts: “sa’, equilibrium, same, together (saha, samana), and “hridhaya”, indicative of the ‘heart’ as the “centre of feeling”, from the Sanskrit, ‘Hrid’, spiritual heart (as in “Hridhaya Kamalam277”, the lotus of the heart). Thus, the ‘sahridaya’ concept is a significant and focused “state of spiritual equilibrium” as part of the process of this blossoming of the lotus-like consciousness within each individual heart. It is a blossoming that occurs as a conglomerated process. It is a synthesis of many hearts, resonating together. It is the collective consciousness of the audience that experiences and transcends simultaneously, transforming silently.

Georgina Peard and V.Ganesan278 (Peard, Ganesan 2014) quote from a compilation of works, that ‘Hrid’ is centre and ‘ayam’ is ‘this’, which is different from ‘that’ or the physical heart279:

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276 Baumer and Brandon-Reflections on Some aspects of the Theory of Rasa
277 Hridaya Kamalam stotram on Goddess Lakshmi. A form of meditation that focuses on the beauty of the goddess seated on a lotus ‘kamalam’ within the cave of one’s heart or ‘hridayam’.
278 http://www.georginapeard.com
279 Hridayam is the spiritual heart, the seat of pure consciousness…refered to as being situated in the centre of the chest, rather than to the left, as in physical heart.
“It is said to be different from the physical heart that regulates blood circulation and gives the body life. Rather Hridaya is the place where ego and all thoughts dissipate, the seat of Pure Consciousness, our true source and essential nature. Through stillness and self-observation, connecting with Hridaya provides us guidance and understanding and reveals who we really are.

“When we steady our breath we feel the steadying of our thoughts. Then the thoughts turn inward and melt away at a point. Watching this point, where the thoughts vanish, will also help us to merge ourselves in the Hridaya.”

This concept resonates with Zeami Motokiyo (14th century aestheteician from the Noh tradition):

“Matching the feeling to the moment... the experienced actor can absorb the concentration of the audience into his own performance. This moment is, in fact, the most crucial one in the entire day’s presentation.”

Thus the power of art is its effects on the collective receptive audience that not only changes by the power of observation but when ‘it’ is ripe and ready as a collective ‘educated’ audience, resonating together, a silent explosion (Spanda281(Jaideva 2012)) taking place within the consciousness of each and every individual; transacting energy through

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280 Kakyo, A Mirror Held to the Flower- p. 82)

281 The essence of this vibration is the ecstatic self-recurrent consciousness. The Spanda system, introduced by Vasugupta(c. 800 AD), is usually described as “vibration/movement of consciousness”. Abhinava uses the expression "some sort of movement" to imply the distinction from physical movement; it is rather a vibration or sound inside the consciousness- a throb.(Spanda-Karikas, The Divine Creative Pulsation, Jaideva Singh)
their mere presence; an elevation of a beauteous, mystical awareness, unseen but only felt.
This chapter will primarily be focusing on the observing consciousness that creates a world that we see and experience. This power of observation that presents itself in quantum physics, is also a central theme in Advaita Vedanta and catalytic force in the world of theatre. “Quantum physics says there is a reality in each and every meaning in each act of observation. Without which there is no actuality, only possibility”\(^{282}\) (Willow Star 2014).

This concept of the observer changing the phenomenon in quantum physics and the observer changing and creating transformation in a theatre performance, and Advaita Vedanta’s Witness Conscious state/sakshin, of observing oneself, being a silent witness of the thoughts that flicker and pass on the screen of consciousness, constitutes the beginning of ‘real’ observation.

The power of observation is thus the thread that links these paradigms of knowledge. The ubiquitous quantum world, the tantalizing arena of theatre and the sublime spaces of Vedanta that are intrinsically linked by the concept

\(^{282}\) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9AiPulsqck
of the observing self, a central concept in Bharata's theories of Rasa. By looking at the concepts as different ways of expressing a central insight, we can understand more about the way the transformation of consciousness works within Bharata's philosophy.

Quantum theory's uncertainty principle, especially the unpredictability of the particle/wave duality, is of particular interest to my inquiry. Spontaneity and unpredictability, quantum and chaos theories argue, are rampant throughout nature. Similarly, in theatre, according to Bharata, we observe and we change; in Vedanta, we observe and change.

The fact that the very act of observing particles, performance, the self, can change, is fascinating and is extremely powerful as a creative concept for a performer and a theorist.

Bharata, I have argued, aware of this power, created a means to change and elevate the consciousness of humanity through the theatre of Rasa.

As recent as 2002, Antonio Damasio wrote in the Scientific American entitled, "The Hidden Mind":

“At the start of the new millennium, it is apparent that one question towers above all others in the life sciences: How does the set of processes we call mind emerge from the activity of the organ we call brain? (some thinkers) believe the question to be unanswerable in principle; For others, the relentless and exponential increase in knowledge may give rise to the vertiginous feeling that no problem can resist the assault of science if only the science is right and techniques are powerful enough. ...The naysayers argue that exhaustive compilation of data (of neuroscience) adds up to correlates of mental states but nothing resembling an actual mental state... The finest level of description of the mind ... might require explanation at the
quantum level. ...I contend that biological processes now presumed to correspond to mind in fact are mind processes and will be seen to be so when understood in sufficient detail.” (Damasio 2002)

David Chalmers too refuted brain processes as failing to bring in “consciousness”...: the theory (by Roger Penrose 1994) is silent about how these processes might give rise to conscious experience. Indeed the same problem arises with any theory of consciousness based only on physical processing.” (Stapp 2011)

Scientists today are still looking to solve the ‘hard problem’ of consciousness. By repeated experiment, by prodding and probing, with the use of electrodes and magnetic resonance imaging, through psychological testing and many methods), studies in consciousness still continue: (BBC 2014)

“It is undeniable that some organisms are subjects of experience. But the question of how it is that these systems are subjects of experience is perplexing. Why is it that when our cognitive systems engage in visual and auditory information processing, we have visual or auditory experience: the quality of deep blue, the sensation of middle C? How can we explain why there is something it is like to entertain a mental image, or to experience an emotion? It is widely agreed that experience arises from a physical basis, but we have no good explanation of why and how it so arises. Why should physical processing give rise to a rich inner life at all? It seems objectively unreasonable that it should, and yet it does.”

Emotional experience, whether within the theatrical universe or in real life situations, is a non-linear process. From an etiological perspective, Bharata had stratified or layered these transient, intermediary psychological outcomes

284 Term introduced by David Chalmers, Facing Up to the Problem of Consciousness, The hard problem of consciousness is the problem of explaining how and why we have qualia or phenomenal experience — how sensations acquire characteristics, such as colours and tastes
286 David Chalmers.
through the codified vibhavas, anubhavas, vyabhachari bhavas and satwika bhavas, preparing rich, fertile alluvium to foster further transformative processes. As each latent predisposition (stayi bhava) of emotion creates a congruent one (Like Utsaha- effort, determination and courage creates Vira-heroism), the mind of artist and spectator reaches a fullscale emotional experience:

“The latent dispositions (stayi bhavas) are 1st aroused due to presence of potential determinant cause (Alambana vibhava) followed by secondary excitatory causes (uddipana vibhava). Anubhavas are outward expressions that develop in accordance to relevant emotion that has been initiated by vibhava and vyabhachari bhavas are transient emotions, which arise in course of maintaining, developing and reinforcing the basic emotions. i.e, if love is the basic emotion, then the play between, joy in union and anguish in separation, between lovers will accompany ancillary emotions.”287 (Saxena 2002)

Emotions felt by the psyche, manifest in a spontaneous, organic fashion through the body. Feeding intense fear, pain and despair, spontaneously creates involuntary tears, horripilation and reddening of skin colour. An interactive phenomenon occurs.

Neuroscientists (in the last decade), have evidence that identical sets of neurons can be activated in an individual who is simply witnessing or observing another person performing an action, as if one is actually engaged

287 Saxena, Sinha 2002
in the same action or the expression of the same emotion or behavior. The
domains of behavior currently investigated span somatosensory,
psychosocial, motor and cognitive functions, attachment theory and empathy.
The study investigates the basic mapping of responses in the central nervous
systems in primates as well as humans.

Neuroscientist Giacomo Rizzollatti, who discovered this phenomenon, writes
of the discovery.

“... there are neurons that respond both when monkey performs a motor act
(grasping or holding) and when it observes an object whose physical features
fit the type of grip coded by the neuron. ...We performed the experiments on
the motor properties (of F5)...using an approach that should most necessarily
lead to the discovery of mirror-neurons, if these neurons existed (in F5). In
order to test the F5 neurons with objects that may interest the monkeys, we
used pieces of food of different size and shape. To give the monkey some
food, we had to grasp it. To our surprise we found that some F5 neurons
discharged, not when the monkey looked at the food but when the
experimenter grasped it. The mirror neuron was discovered.”288 (Rizzolatti
and Fabbri-Destro 2009)

Generally, this theory argues that we ‘see’ the world only as we ourselves
‘are’. Perception is a matrix, a rendering as such; composed of prior
experiences, expectations, prejudices and stereotyping. We are clouded by
our already limited perception.

In the world of theatre I believe that this space allows for another kind of

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viewing, deeper and perhaps more meaningful. I would argue that the abstract cognitive functions of the audience and their reactions and responses to the performance are due to this firing of mirror neurons in their brains. The audience’s brains are reading the actor’s intention, constructing a theory of mind, performing a virtual reality simulation right there in their seats, completely unaware that their sub-conscious is activating proprioceptive signals. While motor command neurons are orchestrating the precise muscle twitches required to perform specific actions, the spectators are vaguely aware that they are physically affected, but after the fact!

As an audience, we are consumed by the experience when we only realize after the occurrence, how we had contorted our faces or held up our hands to shield ourselves from the fast approaching bus or crashing train, hurling itself towards audience, or scream when suddenly startled by an unexpected occurrence. We had so closely mirrored the protagonist (of the play) through the mirror-neuron precipice, that we anticipated the action and reacted almost simultaneously, with the protagonist. We momentarily lost our sense of ‘self- consciousness’ in the intensity of involvement. This cross activation in brain of the observer and artist, as well as the space-specifics of theatre, induced mood by music/sounds and lighting within the theatrical space and
participating audience (other audience members), contribute to the image schema\(^{289}\) (Johnson 1987) of our perceptual experience.

Peculiarly, what allows the audience to experience rasa and joy and not the actual physical pain and discomfort of dramatic play, is that the skin on our body protects us! Neuroscientist V.S.Ramachandran\(^{290}\) (University of Glasgow 2013), says that we experience empathy (as at least 10% of our mirror neurons are firing in our brains,) when we see someone being poked (with a sharp instrument), but we do not experience the same qualia or subjective experience of pain as the dramatic personae because our skin is simultaneously sending ‘vetoing’ signals to the brain (during the firing) that “all is ok”; thus the brain is appeased.

I propose that Bharata as a seer and a sage was ahead of his time in being party to this pool of knowledge, as well as more. Mundaka Upanishad says that when you have come to experience Real knowledge (Para vidhya) though direct experience, the wisdom of all eternity is yours. The creation of theatre to act as a portal to Real Knowledge was not only for the researchers, thinkers and people of education of Vedic India, but to all classes of society. The

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\(^{289}\) An image schema is a recurring dynamic pattern of our perceptual interactions and motor programs that gives coherence and structure to our experience. ‘Experience’... is to be understood in a very rich, broad sense as including basic perceptual, motor-program, emotional, historical, social and linguistic dimensions. (Johnson 1987: xiv, xvi)

\(^{290}\) University Glasgow Gifford Lecture Series [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcR8-Sq8dZk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kcR8-Sq8dZk)
significance of this fact cannot be undermined, as I have indicated in earlier chapters: that is, that the purpose of creating this Natya Veda/Natyashastra/5th Veda, was to specifically provide a nexus to liberation (moksha) to all of humankind.

Through the theatre of Rasa, Bharata employs the sense of self, agency or free will of the artist and spectator, emotions, emotional memory through the bhava complex, as a nexus to the impalpable, imperceptible consciousness factor. In engaging the mind through the bodily sensations and passions, then creating physiological changes, that in turn produce psychological experiences and subsequent shifts in consciousness, Bharata’s insight proves sophistication in approaching and harnessing the ‘hard problem of consciousness’.

In Bharata’s theatre, however, there is a deeper project at work: the complete mind-body complex is addressed through the shadows and light of subtle psychophysical nuances, where the play of the unpredictable, the spontaneous and the indefinable, find meaning in the sublime, in a Reality that always IS.
**Consciousness and Phenomenology and the ‘self’.**

Awareness, Consciousness, Reality… Where is the self, situated in all this plethora of perception and cognition?

Advaita states that there is a subject or ego (jīva) which cognises and has experience of the world. This ego (jīva) is entrapped in the cognitive web of the world. Consciousness is likened to a vast ocean that does not belong to any jīva, but is within the Reality that envelops and forms everything from it.

“*The ego or the self is endowed with an elaborate cognitive mechanism*(Pradhan 2006) of sense organs (indriyas) and the mind (manas) is engaged with the other, sense organs (buddhi, chitta, ahankara). The functions of sense organs are active while the self or jīva or ego is entrapped by ignorance*(Pradhan 2006).*

R.C. Pradhan reiterates Advaita’s position: the self that knows the world (through the sense and mind) creates a limited reality, based on ignorance

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291 R.C. Pradhan (*Consciousness, Cognition and Knowledge*)-Enworlded Subjectivity, Three Worlds and Beyond. 2006  
292 ibid.
and therefore the mechanisms of knowledge belonging to the self are themselves not ultimately real.

According to Bina Gupta, Sankara’s Advaita’s posits that “sakshin” the witness-consciousness\textsuperscript{293} (Gupta 2007), mediates the polarity of the real and the apparent. It is eternal, non-dual and remains unchanged. She notes that although the Upanishads are replete with terms; (drishta, vijnata, seer-inner-controller, antaryami- inner controller, atmajyoti –self-light or self-shining, svayam-jyoti- self-luminous) that indicate the fact that the self is a ‘sakshin’ or is a witnessing or observing entity of consciousness and the phenomenal world, it is Advaita that advocates this concept (as opposed to the six other schools of Indian philosophy):

“They witness-consciousness as the principle of revelation is not different from the self-luminous atman....It is completely independent existing in its own right....it is a seam-less, eternal existence, the ground of our understanding of “I” and the ultimate reality that “I” names.”\textsuperscript{294} (Gupta 2007)

\textsuperscript{293} It is because of this role that consciousness plays in cognition, that we are aware of not-knowing something, say X, when that X is unknown, and also aware of knowing X, when that X is known. Without the function of cit as witness no knowledge could be possible. The following statement...dik...vivaran.am.sums up this unique Advaitin thesis: “All objects are objects of witness-consciousness, either as known or as unknown.”. Witness-consciousness thus is the basic presupposition of all knowing. (Gupta B 2007)

\textsuperscript{294} ibid.
This is the basic epistemological principle of Advaita Vedanta and “the solution to the basic problem of epistemology; that is how is knowledge possible?” 295 (Gupta 2007)

“He is known by one who does not know him. He who is certain to know him, does not know him. Those who rightly know him, do not think they know him. Those do not have the right knowledge, think that they know.” 296 (Gupta 1998)

Several Upanishads enunciate the similar concept

**Kena Upanishad:** “The self is other than the known and the unknown.” 297 (Gupta 1998)

**Taitriya Upanishad:** “The self cannot be grasped by logic and reasoning, much less words (yato vacho, nivartante, aprapya manasa saha).” 298 (Gupta 1998)

**Katha Upanishad:** “The self cannot be reached by words, nor the mind and not the by the eyes.” 299 (Gupta 1998)

**Bhradaranyaka Upanishad:** “The inner controller is the inner self; It is the unseen seer, the unheard hearer, the unthought thinker, the unknown knower.” 300 (Gupta 1998)

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295 ibid.
297 ibid
298 ibid.
299 ibid
In the model of Advaita philosophy, in the seeking of knowledge is the understanding that the true epistemological enquiry is really to ask, “Who Am I?” The sages and seers from their direct experience of a heightened consciousness, say that this is this question that is the most urgent and important. “To know what you are, you must investigate what you are not”, Nisargadatta says:

“Discover all that you are not- the body, feelings, thoughts, time, space, this or that- nothing, concrete or abstract, which you perceive can be you. The very act of perceiving shows that you are not what you perceive. The clearer you understand that on the level of mind you can be described in negative terms only, the quicker will you come to the end of the search and realize that you are the limitless being.”(Nisargadatta, Frydman and Dikshit 1973)

So far in our experience we come to know the mind through the body, mind and senses. Cognition is a mental product, and it is through the mind that a private and subjective world is created and this changes with the restless mind. As in the Kantian manner, it is “a correlate of the human knowing subject” and is as such is construed. But it is this thinking that is flawed. Nisargadatta’s “I am” is unlike the Cartesian “I think, therefore I am”, because in the former theory, realization of the self goes beyond the limited

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300 ibid.
301 “I Am That”- Nisargadatta, Maurice Frydman, 1973
categories of subject object duality, intentionality and personal subjectivity.\(^\text{302}\) (Tiemersma 1983)

As it is evidenced in the *Upanishads* and through the long tradition of Hindu and Buddhist sages and seers, the real experiencer is the self and not the mind, and the self is like a single luminous wave in the ocean of consciousness. It is ever in the present.

To this Douwe Tiemersma\(^\text{303}\), explains:

“Memory seems to bring things to the past, but all that happens, does happen in the present only. It is only in the timeless now that phenomena manifests themselves. This time and causation does not apply in reality. I am, prior to the world, I am the sphere in which they all appear and disappear, I am the source of them all, the universal power by which the world with its bewildering diversity becomes manifest.

In spite of this primevality, ...it is not Highest or Absolute. The sense or taste of I am ness is,... it disappears when the body dies, like the spark extinguishes when the incense burns out. When pure awareness is attained, no need exists anymore, not even I am. What prevails is... cannot be described, a state of pure potentiality. The I am and the Universe are mere reflections of it.”

Prajapati\(^\text{304}\) clarifies this enquiry:

“*When a person is asleep, with senses withdrawn, is serene, and sees no dream- that is self*” (Gupta 1998)

Nisargadatta further identifies the self:

“Be like an infant with nothing standing between the body and the self. In deep silence, the self contemplates the body. It is like the white paper on which nothing yet is written. Be like that infant, instead of trying to be this or that.\(^\text{305}\)
that, be happy to be. You will be a fully awakened witness of the field of consciousness. But there should be no feelings and ideas to stand between you and the field.\textsuperscript{305} (Nisargadatta, Frydman and Dikshit 1973)

Thus, the central argument of thesis, the presence and nature of the observing factor, the self, the spectator, the silent witness, watches, contemplates and changes the outcome. Be it through theatre, through the concept of sakshin, or quantum reasoning, the seeming differences between experience and the experiencer begin to dissolve and reveal the ‘I am’.

**Perception, Self, Objects of Perception and Illusion**

Swami Krishnananda of Rishikesh reiterates the Shankara’s Advaitin value of true perception, of the world about us:

“We know it is, by means of sensations from outside, which are converted later into perceptions and concepts. But is it really a world that we perceive? Science has taught us today that the sensed properties point to a something of an indeterminable nature, observable as radiant energy, force, etc. ...that the mass of a body is variable. It appears to be fixed in low rates of motion, but it cannot be perceived in states of high velocity. Objects are fields of force, which appear as substances due to our channeling of the consciousness through sensory moulds. Pure force cannot be confined to space or time, and the shape, position and time of location of an object have different significations in different perspectives or frameworks of perception. We see a world, because we do not see ourselves properly as essential elements in all experience. “(swami-krishnananda.ord 2014)

Swami Krishnananda’s view and interpretation of the world of perspectives is that we experience the world about us, as our perspectives, as our

\textsuperscript{305} Nisargadatta-I Am That
observations present to it to us. It is a collection interpretation by various individual consciousnesses.

...“The world is an interrelated process envisaged by an all-inclusive consciousness,” which has been reduced to mere frames of reference to a witnessing consciousness. Where is the world of experience? It has shrivelled into conditions of feeling and sensation, modes of the observation of a universal ‘Observer of Himself’. 306”(swami-krishnananda.org 2014)

Thus the illusory world (Maya) that exists purely from the point of view of each individual consciousness. Krishnananda reflects Sankara’s recognition of such a world.

“This illusion is named Avarna Shakti (veiling power) and Vikshepa Shakti (projecting power). It is a term suggesting a mystery, which cannot be taken for reality, and yet cannot be denied altogether. It has a power that brings about these strange phenomena of a world-existence in which we find ourselves.”307

One of the most important doctrines of this observational world that we experience is succinctly expressed by him, “It is real to those who are in it, indescribable to those who try to understand it, and non-existent to those who have gone beyond it.”308 (swami-krishnanda.org 2014)

306 We glibly talk of a real universe, even as we get excited when we see silver in nacre. Our reflective consciousness may resent acquiescing in the ultimate validity of the reports of our senses, but we cannot help being immured in them and delighting in their deceitful music. We understand that the world can only be an appearance, but we are forced to feel that it is real. We accept it with submission. We seem to be bound; we do not know why.- Krishnananda http://www.swami-krishnananda.org/disc/disc_09.html
307 Ibid
308 Ibid
According to Swami Krishnanda, the empirical self appears due to a superimposition arising in the Witnessing-self (projecting power) and a distinction is created between the Real nature of Brahman and the phenomenal universe, by the veiling power.\textsuperscript{309} (swami-krishnananda.org 2014)

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<th>ABHINAVAGUPTA</th>
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Dehejia provides a compelling argument for the aesthetics\textsuperscript{310} of Abhinavagupta:

> Etymologically meaning “reflection”, Abhinavagupta defines abhasa as “all that appears, all that forms the object of perception or conception, all that is within the reach of the external senses or the internal mind, all that can be said to exist in any way and with regard to which the use of any kind of language is possible, be it the subject, the object, the means of knowledge or knowledge itself, is abhasa\textsuperscript{311}.”

Dehejia, furthers that ‘creativity is the spontaneous self-expression of the Absolute’:

> “… the created world displays the very nature of the Creator and therefore by the same token of art object reflects the essential nature of the artist. In Kashmir Slavism, therefore, creativity and freedom are of ultimate value because it has its ontological basis in the Absolute. Aesthetic cognition and experience is none other than the dialogue of Siva and Parvat\textsuperscript{312}, realising it is none other than Siva who divides himself into the

\textsuperscript{309} ibid.
\textsuperscript{310} However, the fundamental difference between the two different systems is that Kasmir Saivaism does not recognise Maya (illusion) of Shankara but instead postulates the concept of abhasa.
\textsuperscript{311} Several metaphysical implications follow from the concept from abhasa. First and foremost, abhasa affirms the reality of the manifested world, without negociating the non-duality and the transcendence of the Absolute. Abhasa allows differentiation without duality and affirms the ultimate reality and value of creation without compromising the integrity of the creator. 
\textsuperscript{312} Shiva and Parvati/Shakti is the creative matrix, the Yin/Yang component of Cosmic Static/Potential Energy(Shiva) and Cosmic Dynamic Kinetic Energy (Shakti) the combination from which manifests this Universe.
Quoting Abhinavagupta:

"Self who is the natural state if all existents, who is self-luminous, amusing Himself with question-answer which is not different from Himself, and in which both the questioner (as devi) and answerer (as Shiva/bhairava) are only Himself, enjoys self-reflection". 313 (Dehejia 1996)

While Shankara cognizes the phenomenal world as a temporary ‘reality’ that is a projection of our illusory projections, only provisionally real, and argues that we must ultimately see that the Universe as we see it is maintained by Ignorance (Avidhya), Abhinavagupta, the Shaivaite theologian, importantly for my argument sees the phenomenal Universe as not just a projection of Maya, but a reflection of the Creative matrix. Dehejia also sums up:

“The concept of abhasa implies that the artist’s creative self-expression is a reflection or a manifestation, at the human level, of Siva’s creative self-expression. As the world reflects Siva’s consciousness, so the art object reflects the consciousness of the artist. The aesthete’s enjoyment of art is a reflection of Siva’s spontaneous enjoyment of the world315.” (Dhar 2004)

I see these terms ‘reflection’ (abhasa) and ‘maya’ (illusion) as shifts in an argument that is basically ontological by nature. Both parentheses though sound, epistemologically, differ by one perceptible manner. Both are outcomes of the subjective mind, the rope mistaken to be a snake

313 Dehejia, V. Harsha The Advaita of Art. 314 Saints and Sages of Kashmir, T.N.Dhar Kundan 2004 (ISBN 81-7648-576-4) 315 ibid. 316 Indian Philosophy categorises this as ‘Mythagnyana. (Shantanand 1990 Perth Au) For example, bringing to light what was before shrouded in darkness like in the case of a piece of rope in the half light of twilight is mistaken.
analogy (Rajju Sarpa Gnayaya), is as valid as an object of creativity. Just like the ‘snake’ vanishes as a ‘reality’, when correct amount of light illuminates it, the art object when analysed using the lens of Shaivatism or Advaitic thought, the meaning of the art object is revealed. One becomes aware of the reflection of a reality as the illusion, but in fact both are unreal. The Supreme Consciousness, the Only Reality, pure and whole, (the basis of these schools of thought) and all objects of creation, whether by individual jiva-atma or universal param-atma, are unreal? Thus the reality of our world as we know it though our waking, dream and deep sleep, is unreal. Only pure Consciousness as a phenomenon is Real.

Therefore, I re-quote the wisdom of Ramana’s words:

“The jnani, (seer), having transcended the three states, abides merely as pure consciousness unaffected by the disposition of body and mind. For him, turiyatita is identical with turiya and the other three states do not exist for him. Holding fast to the truth, transcending the three states, life activity should be viewed as a leela (play).”

for a snake.; Ignorance is not simply an absence of knowledge; it is a positive force, which at the same time conceals while projecting a false appearance. (Gupta.B)

Vedanta takes the analogy of the snake-rope illusion to tell us that the world we perceive is also not real after all! One sees, in a dark place, a snake in place of a rope, and gets filled with fear. Someone corrects him and points out to him that it is actually a rope and not a snake. The snake has been superimposed on the rope. The snake does not exist. As soon as the knowledge of the reality dawns, that only the rope is real, the illusory snake disappears. Similarly we have superimposed the world on Brahman out of our ignorance and when this illusion is removed by knowledge, the truth is revealed to us. Only Brahman remains and nothing else. The world is real only at the level of transaction, but it does not have absolute reality. (vedantaindailylife.com)

For those who experience waking, dream and sleep, the state of wakeful-sleep, which is beyond these states is named turiya (the fourth).

Ibid.

CHAPTER 5: QUANTUM CONSCIOUSNESS
And, a play it is.

Dehejia states and quotes Shankara:

“In the light of ultimate truth the reality of the universe is contradicted and consequently, objects of perception are divested of ultimate value. The mind that rests in contemplation of brahman and the universe of objects are “adrift like two logs in the ocean”, never to meet again.” (Dehejia 1996)

While Dehejia validates the importance of objects of aesthetic creation, there seems to be incongruence in the fact that, when Shankara quotes the “logs adrift”, he refers to validating illusions of perception as real and not of the value of aesthetic experience formed through the direct experience of Rasa. Abhinava and Bharata both give credence to the aesthetics of Rasa and we should not forget that the epistemology of the Natyashastra is the ‘sap’ of the Vedas as it is based on the Vedic structure of knowledge, which both Abhinava and Bharata, as well as Shankara, all validate and conform to. The aesthetic experience of Rasa is ‘Aparoksha Anubhuti’ or direct experience, which is beyond the subjectivity of thoughts.

Therefore by the argument of Advaitin and Shaivaite discourse, we seem to be hard-wired for this illusory/reflectory power to play upon our consciousness and the world is projected upon us as having its own apparent validity of truth, but it is real enough “to vitiate the infinite”. If this be the case

320 ibid.
according to the neuroscientist, Ramachandran, there are moments of time, rare there may be, when the hard-wiring becomes ‘undone’. We gauge the salience or significance of any given moment or any given event or object, using the amygdala and other limbic structures in our brains; that is, we are constantly forming a creative landscape of the world, while interacting with this phenomenal world. But sometimes, a ‘kindling’ takes place within our brains, where the reading of the significance of any events or everyday occurrences in our life becomes a thousand-fold more significant or salient. So we begin to view events through a different lens... we see “infinity in the palm of our hands” and “eternity in an hour” or ‘God experience’ in a piece of paper! Suddenly sensory input and emotional salience becomes deeply significant, and our consciousness encounters mystical experiences. He says, there seems to be no scientific reasoning for this.

This brings to mind an episode in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (Vyasa Ancient India), where young child Krishna was admonished by his mother Yashodha when he was caught red-handed’ eating sand; when told to open his mouth, she was given a mystical experience; where she saw the entire universe with...
all its planetary activity within the tiny mouth of her son. Perhaps poet William Blake had a similar moment of transformed consciousness; as did physicist Fritjof Capra\(^ {324} \) (Capra 1975) who witnessed the Dance of Shiva and Yashodha. Perhaps a deep contemplation or Rasa experience kindled the limbic structures and amygdala within their brains to create the life changing experience. In fact, could they have had experienced a state of pure consciousness at those points in their lives!

Science is unable to substantiate a reason for mystical experience. The outcomes are there without an apparent reason. Bharata’s theatre of Rasa is able to systematically produce transformations in consciousness in audience and artists and sometimes these transformations create portals of such mystical experience. As Swami Krishnananda puts it, “The way in which Realty presents itself as appearance, to the mind of man (sic) is inexplicable.” While the mind is enraptured by the enfolding theatrical event, the thoughts are to an extent harnessed and redirected, and the power of suggestion (dhvani), the ambience of melody, music and intensity of the Rasa moments, can

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\(^{324}\) Fritjof Capra. Tao of Physics 1975, “I was sitting by the ocean one late summer afternoon, watching the waves rolling in and feeling the rhythm of my breathing, when I suddenly became aware of my whole environment as being engaged in a gigantic cosmic dance. Being a physicist, I knew that the sand, rocks, water and air around me were made of vibrating molecules and atoms, and that these consisted of particles which interacted with one another by creating and destroying other particles. I knew also that the Earth’s atmosphere was continually bombarded by showers of ‘cosmic rays’, particles of high energy undergoing multiple collisions as they penetrated the air. All this was familiar to me from my research in high-energy physics, but until that moment I had only experienced it through graphs, diagrams and mathematical theories. As I sat on that beach my former experiences came to life; I ‘saw’ cascades of energy coming down from outer space, in which particles were created and destroyed in rhythmic pulses; I ‘saw’ the atoms of the elements and those of my body participating in this cosmic dance of energy; I felt its rhythm and I ‘heard’ its sound, and at that moment I knew that this was the Dance of Shiva, the Lord of Dancers worshipped by the Hindus.”
create, if not prolonged ecstatic or even mystical experience, moments of transformed consciousness. Within these moments, infinity is witnessed; the Dance of the cosmos is experienced and the universe is seen within the mouths of babes. These moments also dissolve barriers between the observed and observer; qualia merges; the empirical self diffuses; minds melt and duality vanishes. Transformation and transcendence becomes a shared experience.

**Observed and Observer: Theatre and Quantum Moment**

“For a parallel to the lesson of atomic theory . . . [we must turn] to those kinds of epistemological problems with which already thinkers like the Buddha and Lao Tzu have been confronted, when trying to harmonize our position as spectators and actors in the great drama of existence.”—Niels Bohr (Capra 1975)

Even longer than these last three decades, we have seen argued links between the ‘physical’ disciplines (like quantum physics, holography movement, neuro-psychology, consciousness studies) and mystical approaches by ancient wisdom traditions like Indian philosophy and Zen Buddhism.

Capra, Bohr, Bohm, Pribram and Lilly, to name a few scientists, have argued ideas and discoveries that closely resonate with philosophical thought of
In order to understand and examine Quantum Physics as a system of observable phenomena not unlike in theatre, I have taken excerpts from Fritjof Capra's book *The Tao of Physics* (Capra 1975), to provide some fundamental facts about the Quantum theory that today presented as “The Copenhagen interpretation of Quantum Theory” and was developed by Bohr & Heisenberg.

1. The starting point of the Copenhagen interpretation is the division of the physical world into an observed system (object) and an observing system. The observed system can be an atom, a subatomic particle, an atomic process, etc.

2. The subatomic units of matter are very abstract entities, which have a dual aspect. Depending on how we look at them, they appear sometimes as particles, sometimes as waves; and this dual nature is also exhibited by light which can take the form of electromagnetic waves or of particles.

Light and Matter (Physical) are interchangeable. As Advaita Vedanta sees it, the entire universe is perpetually in a status of flux or “Spandanam.” This process is one of the most spectacular predictions of a theory called quantum electrodynamics (QED). The theory of QED clearly shows that light and matter are interchangeable.

3. This property of matter and of light is very strange. It seems impossible to accept that something can be, at the same time, a particle-i.e. an entity

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326 This term will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6 and 7.
327 [http://www.imperial.ac.uk/people/s.rose](http://www.imperial.ac.uk/people/s.rose)
confined to a very small volume—and a wave, which is spread out over a large region of space. This contradiction gave rise to most of the koan-like paradoxes which finally led to the formulation of quantum theory.

4. Max Planck discovered that the energy of heat radiation is not emitted continuously, but appears in the form of ‘energy packets’. Einstein called these energy packets ‘quanta’ and recognized them as a fundamental aspect of nature. He was bold enough to postulate that light and every other form of electromagnetic radiation can appear not only as electromagnetic waves, but also in the form of these quanta. The light quanta, which gave quantum theory its name, have since been accepted as bona fide particles and are now called photons. They are particles of a special kind, however, massless and always travelling with the speed of light. (Imperial College London 2014)

Einstein’s famous equation from 1905 $E=mc^2$ demonstrates that energy ($E$) is equivalent with matter (mass $m$). It suggests that the concept of mass is indeed, less basic than what can be believed from everyday experiences with massive bodies. In fact, energy can be transformed into massive particles, and mass can be transformed into energy. Energy in all its different appearances is a key concept in physics, “matter and energy” are interchangeable; 328

328 The equation $E=mc^2$ doesn’t tell us that mass and energy can be physically transformed into one another. Instead, it says they are actually identical, and that it is meaningless to differentiate between them. For convenience, we use one system of units for mass and another for energy, but they are actually one and the same. For example, when an atom absorbs a neutron, it will release a gamma ray (energy). The loss of this gamma ray will cause the actual mass of the atom to decrease. This phenomenon was demonstrated accurate to 0.0004% in 2005. Furthermore, if this gamma ray is absorbed by a different atom, it will cause the atom’s mass to increase. Of course, an important thing to recognize about $E=mc^2$ is that $c$ is the speed of light, a very big number. So what we would consider a small amount of mass, we would consider a large amount of energy. But, again, energy in all its forms is mass, and mass in all its forms is energy. Some mistakenly think that mass-energy equivalence breaks the laws of conservation of mass and energy, rewriting them as a new law that explains how one can be turned into another. Instead, it explains that neither mass nor energy can be created or destroyed, but they are identical. It’s also important to define energy itself, of course. Like mass, energy is not a mechanism or a certain type of particle, it is a measurable quantity. Energy measures the capability of a system to do “work,” which is defined as force times distance. When you push a boulder up a hill, you are transforming energy from food into energy of motion, called kinetic energy, through work. The boulder, in turn, will transform this kinetic energy mostly into heat as it rubs against the ground. It accomplishes this by doing work on the ground, transforming its energy into the kinetic energy of billions of tiny atoms. What we have learned is that we can also transform energy into matter. This is accomplished in particle accelerators on a daily basis. Particles are accelerated to close to the speed of light, so that they accumulate a relatively large amount of kinetic energy. The particles are then collided with one another. This collision transforms the kinetic energy into matter, which is how we were able to discover various kinds of new elementary particles. Hopefully now you can see why we made the odd comment that particles of matter have mass when they aren’t moving, which is called “rest mass.” Since energy and mass are equivalent, and motion creates kinetic energy,
however the ability to comprehend relies on the observation.

To explain simply; observation system includes:

a. Object  b. Observation (Tool)  c. Observer

Despite many kinds methodology known to humankind and through the many years of research, the limitations of such processes of observation are but an “Apparent Observation” and not a “Holistic Observation”. Our power of observation depends on the ‘tool’ we use for observing and comprehended by the human ability to infer the observed. Observation made with naked eyes like an everyday observation, “Grass is Green and Rose is Red”; however the same grass or the rose observed through a microscope doesn’t concur with the description of the object through our naked eye; certainly the grass doesn’t look green when observed through a microscope. Hence the description of a grass or a rose is purely an interpretation of the observer using the tools to observe. Thus, what then constitutes true observation? Or are the different modes of observation all true in some sense?

5. A careful analysis of the process of observation in atomic physics has shown that the subatomic particles have no meaning as isolated entities, but can only be understood as interconnections between the preparation of an experiment motion creates mass. By the same token, matter can be converted into energy, which is how nuclear bombs and power plants work. The takeaways here are that matter is just one kind of energy, but energy and mass are identical.- Bowles, Carter- http://trendingsideways.com/index.php/converting-energy-into-matter-what-it-really-means/
and the subsequent measurement. Quantum theory thus reveals a basic oneness of the universe. It shows that we cannot decompose the world into independently existing smallest units. As we penetrate into matter, nature does not show us any isolated ‘basic building blocks’, but rather appears as a complicated web of relations between the various parts of the whole. These relations always include the observer in an essential way. **The human observer constitutes the final link in the chain of observational processes, and the properties of any atomic object can only be understood in terms of the object’s interaction with the observer.**

Similarly, it is important to understand that the theatrical and artistic depiction in theatre is a circular process and a series of interconnections and relies heavily on the observer as audience as well as observer within the performing ‘Self’. The human observer is one of the important links in theatre.

For centuries before the significant ‘rise’ or discovery of Quantum physics, the mechanistic world view of classical physics and the Cartesian model of mechanistic thinking had a deep influence on human kind; the minds of people had problems seeing and understanding the universe as a whole; it was easier for us to see the phenomenal world as building blocks, as divided and separate elementary entities. With the mind-boggling\(^{329}\) (Schilpp 1970) discovery of the quantum science and new mode of ‘seeing’, the

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\(^{329}\) All my attempts to adapt the theoretical foundation of physics to this (new type of) knowledge failed completely. It was as if the ground had been pulled out from under one, with no firm foundation to be seen anywhere, upon which one could have built.-Einstein  (P. A. Schilpp [ed.], Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist, p. 45.
divided Cartesian modes of thinking could no longer hold true; a whole new paradigm shift occurred. The modern world began to slowly give itself permission to engage and approach knowledge with a greater balance.

Science and arts began deepening their knowledge pool and their understanding of the cosmos grew. Physicists and scientists began thinking in more philosophical terms as the newfound theory dislodged former linear processes of thought and soon a significant number of scientists and artists began forming alliances; but also learnt from natural phenomena and mystical traditions that provided many fundamental answers to exasperating questions about intangible and daunting subjects like consciousness.

David Bohm, a physicist, writes about this shift:

“One is led to a new notion of unbroken wholeness which denies the classical idea of analyzability of the world into separately and independently existing parts . . . We have reversed the usual classical notion that the independent ‘elementary parts’ of the world are the fundamental reality, and that the various systems are merely particular contingent forms and arrangements of these parts. Rather, we say that inseparable quantum interconnectedness of the whole universe is the fundamental reality, and that relatively independently behaving parts are merely particular and contingent forms within this whole.”330 (Capra 1975)

The study of the quantum interconnectedness of the Universe and the natural elemental forces that engage in processes of chaos and emergence331, is one

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331 In philosophy, systems theory, science, and art, emergence is conceived as a process whereby larger entities, patterns, and regularities arise through interactions among smaller or simpler entities that themselves do not exhibit such properties.
of the living systems that resulted from this paradigm shift.

In his book, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*, Bohm emphasizes and extends this thought.

“*It is especially important to consider today, for fragmentation is now very widespread, not only throughout society but also in each individual; and this is leading to a kind of general confusion of the mind, which creates an endless series of problems and interferes with our clarity of perception so seriously as to prevent us from being able to solve most of them.*”332 (Bohm 1980)

Renee Weber333 writes about the David Bohm’s cosmology.

“The foundation and fundamental feature of Bohm’s cosmology is the claim that reality is one, an unbroken, undivided wholeness which is the background for everything in the Universe, underlying both matter and consciousness, providing the aw material for all manifest entities and events, begetting, sustaining, governing everything by its enduring connection with it in the deep-structure of the whole.” (Valle and Von Eckartsberg 1981)

The philosopher Hegel attempted a similar reconciliation between the divided world with his “Phenomenology of Mind”: his idea of philosophy that “truth is whole” and that “the single fabric behind all being is an abstract and indefinable principle (Geist) that manifests itself as subject and substance, man and nature, inner and outer truth.” (Valle and Von Eckartsberg 1981)

Weber quotes that man is “the mirror in which the universe can see itself being reflected...” She writes that Bohm’s concept of the holomovement is one that “cuts across both implicate and explicate orders: the non-manifest

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energies of nature and their outcome in the world of appearances that comprises of nature, man and society.” (Valle and Von Eckartsberg 1981)

Curiously, the notions and reasoning of these thinkers are almost identical to that of the ancient Indian philosophies, like Shankara’s Vedanta, where there exists a Universal Consciousness that envelops and is part of each individual, and that we and the phenomenal universe are made of the very same stuff. The Maya (illusion) of Vedanta and Abhasa (reflection) of Ahinavagupta’s Shaivaitism are congruent concepts within their philosophies. What does differ is the avenue in which Bohm understands and codifies his thought.

As a physicist, his approach is built on the logic of scientific, rational thinking. His belief that Reality is ever fresh and a living process and that thought is bounded by time (as it cannot grasp what lies beyond a spatio-temporal framework) finds germination in ‘atom smashing’ which occurs only in the present and must occur ever fresh. Weber writes, “the analogy of atom with thought... is crucial”. (Valle and Von Eckartsberg 1981)

For Bohm, and the wisdom traditions, thought is reactive and only a means to an end. Once the finger has pointed the way to the moon, it is no longer relevant. Bohm’s ideas also reflect Kant’s (the eighteenth century philosopher) ideas on the inefficacy and impossibility of thought in

334 ibid.
experiencing what is ‘ultimate’. He demonstrated in The Critique of Pure Reason (Kant, Guyer and Wood 1998) whatever is thinkable and namable must necessarily conform to the inherent structure of space, time, causality, quantity and quality. Kant’s and Bohm’s doctrines (the manifest or explicate order) infer that by definition, “the thing itself in-itself can never appear to us as it would be without our ‘tuning in’ on it with our finite (senses) receiving apparatus.” (Valle and Von Eckartsberg 1981)

Thus, tuning in to Universal Consciousness to access what is ‘real’, according to Bohm, enquires the ‘emptying’ of thought, the fine-tuning of senses, transforming into a channel for noumenal intelligence. Weber remarks:

“It may be that this shift from phenomena to noumena becomes possible with the shift the particle nature-nature of consciousness to its wave aspect. Bohm (1979) observes that, when consciousness functions in the deep structure of the implicate order, it has access to the information embedded in the whole.” (Valle and Von Eckartsberg 1981)

Capra too concludes that, “…the quantum physicist has come to see the world as a system of inseparable, interacting and ever-changing, moving components, with man as an integral part of this system.” (Capra 1975)

Daniel Meyer-Dingkrafe writes about Bohm’s quantum mechanical insight, in

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335 Kant, Immanuel -The Critique of Pure Reason, Translation- Paul Guyer, Allen W. Wood
336 Weber, R (Metaphors of Consciousness)
his new theory of relationship between mind and matter:

“The physicist Bohm develops a new theory of the relationship between mind and matter, suggesting that it is one of participation rather than interaction. Bohm starts with the quantum mechanical insight that an electron, for example, "is regarded as an inseparable union of a particle and a field". The field is quantum mechanical in nature and can be represented in terms of a quantum potential\(^{338}\). The quantum potential gives rise to the movement of particles. In parallel, Bohm proposes a superquantum potential "that can give form to the unfoldment and development of this first order quantum potential". (Meyer-Dinkgräfe 1996)

Thus Bohm’s idea of:

“What we experience as mind in its movement through various levels of subtlety, will, in a natural way ultimately move the body by reaching the level of the quantum potential and of the "dance" of the particles.”\(^{339}\) (Meyer-Dinkgräfe 1996)

Humanity itself as an integral part of the system is also reflected in the findings of Valle\(^{340}\) (Valle and Von Eckartsberg 1981), when he observes,

“Given the nature of interference patterns and the photo electric effect, it is apparent that light will appear as a wave or as a particle, depending solely on the approach and subsequent method of the investigator- the observer and the observed co-constituting the situation as it appears, neither one would be the same without the presence of the other.” (Valle and Von Eckartsberg 1981)

He furthers, that “what we have come to know as objects and events are really patterns in a universal, cosmic process.” Quoting Capra, quantum reality

“...always includes the observer in an essential way. The human observer constitutes the final link in the chain of observational processes, and the

\(^{338}\) The electron can be thought of as moving under its own energy, but it is the quantum potential that gives the electron’s motion a form. Bohm refers to this characteristic of the quantum potential as "active information", and argues that this notion suggests "a rudimentary mind-like behaviour of matter, for an essential quality of mind is just the activity of form, rather than of substance". This principle of "active information", according to Bohm, is not just accurate on the level of the electron, but at "indefinitely great levels of subtlety".

\(^{339}\) Ibid.

\(^{340}\) Ronald S Valle, Relativistic Quantum Psychology, Chapter 21, Metaphors of Consciousness
properties of any atomic object can only be understood only in terms of the object’s interaction with the observer... we can never speak about the world without speaking about ourselves." (Valle and Von Eckartsberg 1981)

Valle also agrees with Zukav (Zukav 1979), that:

“It is not possible to observe reality without , at the same moment, changing it... that the ancient philosophers of the East were right all along in their insistence that the observer and that observed are fundamentally one.” (Valle and Von Eckartsberg 1981)

Reminiscent of the function of the all-important observer in theatre, the observing entity of phenomena in quantum physics changes the outcome of the “real”. It is also significant that it is the human observer that creates the change and not machine or animal or simulacrum of sorts. The involvement and existence of an observing ‘self’, as a living engaging entity, is of prime importance to initiate or generate change, either in the microcosmic quantum world or in macrocosmic reality.

Zukav also states ambitiously, “physics has become a branch of psychology, or perhaps the other way around” (Zukav 1979)

In the five levels or sheaths of human consciousness (anna mayam, pranamayam, mano mayam, vignyna mayam, ananda mayam) that surround

341 ibid.
342 Zukav, G, Dancing Wu Li Masters -1979
343 Valle, R, Met. Of Consciousness
344 Sakshin of Advaita
345 Zukav, G, Dancing Wu Li Masters -1979
the Self, manas or the mind, situated in the 3rd level, is usually likened to a ‘crazed monkey, bitten by ants’\textsuperscript{346}. Thus to rely on this state of our mental function [within consciousness] to relay the ‘truth’ or reality about us would be unwise. Thus Merleau-Ponty’s statement that “consciou$n$ess is open to the world, is to be thrust into a macroscopic world of things, events and people...” To be once removed, or ‘epoche’, is the heart of phenomenological method, that is to suspend our everyday “natural attitude” toward reality, to overcome our passionate need to draw conclusions about the world, and to disengage ourselves from our usual immersion in events, in order to allow our ordinary relationships to the world show itself. Merleau-Ponty describes epoche as \textsuperscript{348} (Valle and Von Eckartsberg 1981)

“It is because we are through and through relationships to the world, that for us the only way to become aware of the fact is to suspend the resulting activity, to refuse it our complicity...to put it out of play” (Valle and Von Eckartsberg 1981)

The sage of Trivanaamalai, Ramana Maharishi’s words imply this same belief:

“Turn the mind inward and search for the seer and you will find that you are the seer and the objective world does not exist. The mind divides itself into subject and object, the seer and the seen. So the outer world of names and forms has no independent existence” \textsuperscript{349} (Ramana 2005)

\textsuperscript{346} Traditional parable by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa- about the agitated state of the human mind.
\textsuperscript{347} Similar concept of sakshin in Advaita
\textsuperscript{348} Donald Moss and Ernest Keen’s discussion of Merleau-Ponty and Husserl In “The Nature of Consciousness”- (Met of Consciousness)
\textsuperscript{349} Absolute Consciousness, 4th ed. 2005
German Philosopher Heidegger also makes this distinct connection to Vedic thought, where in *Being and Time* \(^{350}(Tietz 2001)\), he discusses about how *Dasien* being-in-the-world and our own existence and subjectivity are inseparable. In other words, Heidegger, like Vedic thought, insist on the seeker of truth not being an armchair philosopher \(^{351}(Dewey 2005)\), seeking for knowledge from the outside of things, as this simply cannot be our primordial experience (as spectators or knowers), but on being completely engaged with the world with focus like a **child at play** or an **actor simply acting**. An analogy is of being in the world and not of the world; an almost unconscious or ‘unaware’ action, a pre-reflective engagement. This reflective meditative thinking is characteristic of an ontological philosopher, which he later seems to suggest is a close to meditative practice. Heidegger’s addresses in *In Time, temporality* as a structure, attempting to talk about the Self in time and asking the reader to take hold of your-self living within society. That, while we never really live in the Present (ideally we should be) but always in the past, and future; our understanding who we are, is from our past, history and culture. He uses phenomenology as a method of reflecting upon and interpreting our everyday experience in order to illuminate and

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350. Tietz, John. An Outline and Study Guide to Martin Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, © 2001 Humanities Online Frankfurt am Main, Germany http://www.humanities-online.de info@humanities-online.de

351. American philosopher John Dewey remarked about this as having a spectator view of the world.
reveal it’s latent meaning\footnote{Dodson, E.L. Dr. University of West Georgia – (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A04RhtR0imY)} (Dodson 2014). This is line of experiential inquiry was more important to him than other intellectual methods (physical and social sciences). For him, since pre-socratic times, in the Western intellectual tradition, there has not been a thorough and rigorous enquiry into the nature of being. Thus despite the scientific advances humankind is unable to derive ‘true happiness’. He credits this to humanity’s disconnection to the nature of Being and any thoughtful understanding of the nature of existence. The chaos and destruction that results (wars, genocide) is the result. Thus his query “what is being” culminates in the term “Dasein” ‘being in the world’. This term conceives of the fundamental subjectivity of being in the objective world and the interdependency between them. “Dasein” also fundamentally addresses ‘Truth’ or in his reference to ‘Alethea’, (classical Greek) meaning ‘un-concealment’ or discovery\footnote{ibid.} (Dodson 2014). This idea of finding ‘truth’ or ‘what is Real’ as in my argument is subjective to perspectives and different vantage points. Thus everyone has his or her own perspective or reflection of truth. Thus as we real one perspective, another seems to dissipate. It becomes a process of revealing and concealing that then further advances on to a hermeneutical arc of enquiry\footnote{How we interpret and understand our experiences influences how we experience the world and things in it and this influences our interpretation of our experiences- the hermeneutic circle. This process of revealing and concealing is evident in Indian aesthetics: poetry, art and Tantric wisdom, in particular between the play of Radha and Krishna, where Krishna and Radha as beloveds constantly reveal and conceal themselves to the world.}, between our living in the
world as actualities and potentialities. These considerations of his, echo the same strains of Vedanta, of an interconnectedness of the universe, and although Heidegger never explicitly talks about mystical experience, he conceives of the task of Being, of concrete universals, as being not just to rest within the self, but to reach out beyond itself.

“The Indian philosophical systems of Nyaya, Sankhya and Vedanta admit the Self is ‘That’; of being in ‘present’ and reaching out beyond itself.

This actor, or Being, is an experience of connotative thinking, within theatre; that is, the experience of and capacity of the human individual to create these instances of Being in the present, “of polyvalent meanings; metaphors and symbols.”

In the Natyashastra, Bharata almost seems to explore the denotative, theoretical and scientific thinking. Abstract concepts of physics and philosophical readings, and the use the symbolism and multiple readings are intertwined within his exposition of theatre, the Rasa theory and its exploration of temporality to encapsulate and illuminate the human condition. Not necessarily only in Bharata’s theory, however, shows how performance itself can lead to this shift in consciousness through its own kind

355 Heidegger’s concepts of Authenticity and Falleness, is re-casted in later years. Heidegger is quite clear that authenticity (Being present) revolves around ‘potentiality’ but one can be intellectually and philosophically sophisticated, and can still be inauthentic.'
of “observer-effect”. Going beyond meditative techniques, beyond yogic contemplation and beyond the tedious arduous decades of research and theory, the spectator is engaged in body, mind and soul and a transformation is created.

Rolf von Eckartsberg writes:

“In the arts one encounters” concrete universals”, that is concrete depictions of unique human experiences which yet also carry a universal meaning true for all humankind at all times, illuminating the universal human condition. It is a power of art to represent and reflect our experience to ourselves and to clarify our lived meanings through contemplation and interpretation, that is, through hermeneutical experience and activity.” (Valle and Von Eckartsberg 1981)

As previously discussed, the concepts of the hermeneutic circle of revealing and concealing, a process of discovery of our ‘potentality’ finds relevance in our experience of art.

“...The history of art-forms has opened up this level of articulated symbolic connotative thinking in which we participate, and which provide contexts of meaning-enrichment to the degree that we, as individuals have developed awareness of this domain of existence, and cultivated it as an important part of our psychocosmic world.”356 (Valle and Von Eckartsberg 1981)

Bharata’s project is a metaphysical one: he not only provides an avenue to experience reflection and clarify meanings; but all importantly provides the method to attain the meaning of existence, fulfilling the four cardinal rules of existence in Hindu thought, (dharma, artha, kama moksha). Through the

356 Maps of the Mind, (Met of Consciousness)
aesthetic categories of *Rasa, Rithi, Alamkara and Dhavani*\(^3\), he creates the sacred experience of *Rasa* and translumination.\(^4\) (Meyer-Dingkrafe 1996)

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\(^3\) Bharata orientates the audience to the play. Rasa the “inscape” or Nietzsche’s “form creating force”, Riti the stylistics of rhythm and phonetics, words play that create specific ambience, or sound of sense, Alamkara, poetic image clusters and logic of ideology and finally Dhvani, “a meta linguistic reality, culture specific meanings, suggestive and relies upon the cultural semiotics of the spectator.

\(^4\) The concept of “translumination” and similar concepts by other theatre artists share several features with the state of pure consciousness, only on an advanced level characterised by a simultaneity of pure consciousness and activity—the “holy” actor, i.e. the actor who has achieved translumination, is still operating in the waking state of consciousness while at the same time experiencing qualities associated with pure consciousness. (Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe)
CHAPTER 6
Perception-Aural-Visual

While in the last chapter consciousness was examined via a philosophical hypothesis, this chapter will provide a polychromatic view of perception and consciousness using scientific, empirical methods that conjoin with theories. Analyzing the means through which humankind perceives and cognizes the world about us through visual and aural perception, consciousness is once again scrutinized through the lens of Indian and Western philosophy, and through empirical and scientific research.

Swami Sivananda provides a clear summary of the link between Universal energy and the recasting of human perception.

“The universe is not an accidental combination of atoms. The theory of evolution differs according to the different schools of philosophy. The most accepted view, however, is that of the Vedanta. According to it, the universe is a systematic organic whole directed by a supremely intelligent and omnipotent Being behind it. From the relative standpoint, the universe appears as a gradual unfoldment of the primordial matter into the visible gross effects, this matter being actuated by the all-pervading Consciousness Itself. All these effects appear as realities, though they are not so actually, because they are based on the one Reality which is the omnipresent Pure Consciousness. From the absolute standpoint, there is no substantial universe at all, except the temporary external form taken by the fluctuating imagination of the mental consciousness within.”

359 The effects of this matter are, objectively, the five principles of sound, touch, form, taste and smell, giving rise to ether, air, fire, water and earth, and subjectively, the subconscious, the mind, the intellect, the ego, the sense-organs of perception and action, the vital energies and the physical body. Sivananda
360 From “May I Answer That“: http://www.dlshq.org/download/may_ianswer.pdf
When we observe, cognize or perceive the world about us, we are either experiencing actual ‘selections of reality’ (Tampalini 2006) as they really appear to be to us, or only ‘accounts or descriptions’ (Tampalini 2006) of it. Tampalini observes, “that our observations are not direct registering (s) of the world but are structured internally by the capabilities and limitations of our nervous systems.” (Tampalini 2006) It is also, I add, that perception not only goes beyond an anatomical function of receiving a stimulus and filtering through a nervous system, but also more importantly that we interpret it through our ‘samskaras’ and ‘vasanas’; that is from the frames of our previous experiences.

Of all sensory perception, the visual and aural are the most dominant methods through which our body cognises the world.

Validating the theatrical frame of reference by utilising the ‘cosmic organising principle’ (that was iterated by Swami Sivananda) directs the concept of perception from the reality of outside the theatre, to the consciousness of spectator and artist as affected by a number of consequences, within theatre.

The ambiences of lighting, intensity and colour, nuances and tone of language and poetry, music and melody, as well as the visual and aural

361 Tampalini, Serge, 2006 Affective Space pg.66
362 ibid.
363 ibid.
364 Past experiences from this life and other lifetimes leave indelible marks upon our consciousness that affects our future perception.
impact of the dancer/artist/musician’s physical aspect and any paintings and sets on stage, act upon the observer to produce these specific consequences.

Of all these elements that work in unison (or as individual components), with bhavas and plot, to help create Rasa in performance, I argue that ‘Sabdha’/sound or ‘cosmic vibrations’ or ‘hum’ is the most crucial and a dominant agent in creating fundamental stimulant neural firings within the brain. The brain’s involvement in processing sound as stimuli within human consciousness is, I would argue, a primordial function.

**Sound or Shabdha**

The ancient Upanishads of India refer to a cosmic vibration that is inconceivable to our usual modes of comprehension. Swami Krishnananda explains:

> “this peculiar cosmic vibration, it is not something that vibrates but vibration itself that is the ultimate stuff of things. This position is inconceivable to our present mentality due to our concept of the energy pattern of the cosmic make-up, energy being a potentiality but not a capacity manifest by something else as a substance ...... When we speak, we make a sound. There is an articulation in the expression of language. This outward mode of the manifestation of our inner intention through expression, vocally, is the grossest form of the manifestation of sound.” 365(swami-krishnananda.org 2014)

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365 This fourfold classification of the essence of sound, which is not to be identified merely with the sound that we hear through our ears, this fourfold character of sound is designated as para, pasyanti, madhyama and vaikhari. In the Mandukya Upanishad, a suggestion is made of the possibility of identifying the stages of sound with the degrees of reality.
In the Sanskrit language, most words consist of root sounds, actual vibratory permutations, it is argued, that arise from the universe. Sound made up of such vibrations is considered pure energy and when perceived through the senses, and, when released into the subtle channels (nadis) and synapses, has the ability to generate harmony within the mind body complex. The theory of sound and its implication on human consciousness is complex, but I would argue that its insights into the way performance, can act upon our consciousness in a profound manner. This is known as Anavriti Shabdat - Liberation by sound.

The vibratory influences of mantras, it is argued in Hindu philosophical writing, were intuitive revelations that manifested through the consciousness of rishis or seers. They affect the neural pathways in subtle, indelible ways. Swami Krishnananda, furthers that the power of will as a faculty of the human mind, is to elucidate the function of speech (which are coherent sound produced by humans) as a means to communicate. Thus speech and language are outcomes of the power of ‘will’.

“Will, which is creative in its character, is superior to ordinary thought. When there is a will or a determined activity of the psychological organ, there is thinking of the mind; then expression by means of speech. Everything that we utter or recite or chant is a form of speech. And the quintessence of speech in its most sacred form is the body of mantras in the Vedas. So, actions which lead to specific results and the consequent experiences in life are all rooted in the hints given in the mantras themselves, which are

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366 The Vedanta Sutras Adhikarana III: declares that Brahman is the source of the Vedas and that Brahman is known only by the study of Shruti and by no other means of knowledge. The significance of Shruti was discussed earlier, in Chapter 3.

367 The mantras contained in the texts called Brahmanas in the Vedas direct men to specified actions by means of injunctions. The mantras are like fire, great forces of directive intelligence. The mantras imply within themselves indications as to how they are to be utilised in a particular performance.
specified modes of the expression of speech, which again is rooted in the mind, which in its turn is directed by the will, the creative intelligence.

(Swami Krishnananda 1951)

Human sense (of assertion) of presence of ‘self’ or ‘I’, is an act of will that instigates any sense of enquiry and introspection and perpetuates the four purusharthas and the ascension through the five sheaths of personality. The power of sound through mantras has in recent years been researched through scientific experiment. The investigation of how sound and melody affect consciousness is still being analysed by pockets of neuroscientists and cognitive scientists around the world.
Human brain anatomy\textsuperscript{369} (Gustavus 2011)

The anatomy and not activity of brain can be seen using MRI

Since sound is the non-material source of the material manifestation, it is the key by which we can become free from bondage. It is the thread-like link between the material and spiritual realms\textsuperscript{370}.

Studies in sound and brain function conducted by Alfred Tomatis of France in the 1950’s may help our understanding of the importance of power of auditory function upon the human brain.

According to Tomatis, a Doctor of Medicine from the University of Paris, who specialised in ear, nose, throat and speech therapy, identified the important relationship between the ear and the voice. This discovery, made official in 1957 by the Academy of Science and Medicine in Paris, with the name “Tomatis Effect”\textsuperscript{371} (Tomatis Development SA 2012), is the basis of the techniques he has created for the treatment of listening and communication problems. According to Tomatis, his method operates on the plasticity of the neural circuits involved in the decoding and analysis of sound. In his book, The Ear and The Voice\textsuperscript{372}, he states:

\begin{quote}
“In order for the brain to think and be creative, it needs to receive a great deal of stimulation or energy, in the sense that it gives rise to physical-chemical processes at the cellular level, which results in nerve pulses that are measurable and give rise to an electrical field. We know that the brain needs
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{369} \url{https://gustavus.edu/events/nobelconference/2011/teachers/files/MusicBrainBeingHumanLessonPlan.pdf}
\item \textsuperscript{370} Vedanta Sutras
\item \textsuperscript{371} \url{https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FN2PkJciibo}
\item \textsuperscript{372} Tomatis Alfred, The Ear and The Voice.-translated by Roberta Prada and Pierre Sollier Scarecrow Press Inc USA ISBN 081085137 2005
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
to receive 3.5 million stimulations per second for at least 4.5 hours a day in order to function properly and be alert and attentive. Otherwise you will feel dozy and distracted. This energy can be measured as electricity, which proves that some phenomenon is taking place. The organ of Corti in the ear is the organ of perception. The ear coordinates all the other perceptions like conductor of an orchestra, assembling and directing the many stimuli upon us into patterns that we can accurately perceive. Then it sends nerve impulses to the brain through its own distribution network. We live, bombarded by a myriad of stimuli...surrounded and imprinted by the activity of molecular fields in the air, which make up atmospheric pressure. This molecular bombardment helps shape our apparent physical structure and makes it possible for us to equalise external pressures whose miniscule stimuli go unrecognised by our conscious mind.” (Tomatis, and Prada 2005)

The significance of Bharata’s basic instructions in the Natyashastra was that dancers and actors should not only act or dance, but also sing (paint and sculpt). This combined creative activity has obvious positive somatic responses. The audience too is affected by the sounds of not just music in itself, but also by the mantras that are most often used from Hindu rituals in theatre: by the obvious Sanskrit phonetics that create the timbre and intensity of sounds required for such positive neural stimulation.

The effects of the Tomatis factor is further described here:

“It works thanks to a device (invented by Tomatis) that causes musical contrasts by suddenly and unpredictably changing the timbre and intensity. This effect will surprise the brain and trigger its attentional mechanisms. We say that the brain puts itself in the listening position. Sound is transmitted through air via the ear canal. This vibration is called bone-conduction. Bone conduction transmits the sound directly to the inner ear, thus preparing it to receive the sound transmitted through the eardrum.” 374(Tomatis Development SA 2012)

Tomatis adds:

373 In the zone of the lows there are only a few dozen cells, in the middle a few hundred, and in the zone of the highs, 24,000 cells await recharging….the sounds in lows have few receptors and causes the brain to lose energy. During stimulation, many points on the body are excited by the myriad of tiny pressures. In fact, when we ourselves sing there is an even stronger internal sensory response from mucous membranes, including the intestines, than there is sound coming out from the outside, on the skin.

374  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FN2PuKci6bo
"For some people the OM contains all the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, ‘A’ followed by a ‘U’ and ends with ‘M’ being the last, contains all the sounds in this ONE sound. The reason for this is, ..is a true charging sound. ..it is closest to the bone vibration heard by the right ear."

Experiments and research in the area of vestibular cognition in pre-natal sound and music by Whitwell, Kelkar, Federico and Schwartz375(Whitwell 2014) have elaborated on this argument:

"Alfred Tomatis notes that the ear is "the Rome of the body" because almost all cranial nerves lead to it and therefore it is considered our most primary sense organ. Embryonically, according to him, the skin is differentiated ear, and we listen with our whole body. In order to better understand the role of music in its elements of rhythm and melody, we must briefly clarify the two parts of the inner ear. These are the vestibular system and the cochlea. The vestibular system controls balance and body movements, including the integration of movements which make up the rhythm of music-making the vestibular system the more archaic." 376 (Madaule 1984)

Whitwell, Kelkar, Federico and Schwartz further that Michel Odent, MD believes,

"...women have a profound need to sing to their babies but that the medicalization of birth has upset this process. In the past, women all over the world have sung lullabies to their babies. These were very important because as we now know the fetus is having first language lessons in the womb”377. What the baby learns in utero are the intonation patterns of sound and the frequencies of a language in his/her particular culture” 378(Whitwell 2014)

375 http://www.realpeacework-akademie.info/graz/e/eScience/music.pdf
376 And according to Paul Madaule (1984)"it is in fact because of the vestibular system that music seems to have an impact on the body." At around 4½ to 6 weeks gestational age the vestibular and the cochlear systems become differentiated, at 7½ the auditory ossicles start to grow, and at 4½ months the ear of the fetus is already adult-like in shape and size.
377 . The inflections of the mother tongue are conveyed not only through speech but most importantly through song. The singing voice has a richer frequency range than speech. In fact, studies in other disciplines such as linguistics and musicology (e.g., David Whitwell, 1993) point out that there was a time when speech was song and therefore singing is the older of the two. Babies born of deaf mothers miss these important first lessons in language development. French pioneer Dr. Alfred Tomatis mentions being intrigued by the fact that song-birds hatched by silent foster mothers can’t sing.
378 Frequency is the level of pitch measured in Hertz (Hz.) This range varies between 16 to 20,000 Hz. There is very little distortion of the mother’s voice as heard by the fetus whereas other external voices sound more muffled, especially in the higher frequencies."
Vedic philosophy’s theory of sound and frequency was the result of research that has been conducted through the Ayurvedic sciences even before the time of Bharata. Therefore it was inevitable that he used the science of sound as not only as a therapeutic stance, but also to enhance performance structures in the theatre of Rasa. The use of sound frequency stimulation through phonetics and “dhawani” and “Sphota” theories in Indian language systems was a method used by Bharata. Bharata in his project aimed at the transformation of consciousness through art.

According to the Vedic science of sound and communication379(Adhikary 2009), it is noted that sound has four ranges of experience in human consciousness:

1. *Vaikari*: ‘physical’ or the grossest experience of sound is via the ears

2. *Madhyama*: bio-physical vibration felt within tissues and chemical production within human body

3. *Pashyanti*: The visual aspect of a psychical ‘seeing of sound’, or image that comes to mind, before it is articulated.

4. *Para*: The overarching canvas of silence that allows sound to be heard.

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379 Sadharanikaran concept of or theory from Sanskrit poetics, has its roots in Natyashastra and is identified with Bhattanayaka and Bhartrihari’s Vakypadiya and illustrates that communication process as envisioned in Vedic Hindusim. (Nirmala M Adhikary, Bodhi-Interdisciplinary Journal ISSN 2091-0470 Vol 3 No.1 2009)
Pashyanti-vak is a significant stage of consciousness encapsulated within the third stage of the Pashyanti range, related to sound or ‘Vak’ or speech. In this stage, the differences between languages do not exist, as this sound is intuitive and situated beyond rigidly defined concepts. Pashyanti-vak’s framework has sound or speech intuitively connected to the object. The meaning of the word and the experience resonate as a single vibratory motion. When this occurs, the particular object, the corresponding sound description and the meaning of the word are one (Swami Shantanand Saraswati 1980). “No one can avoid in one’s activity’ that flash of understanding produced either through words or through the working of one’s predispositions”.

The use of Sanskrit in Bharata’s theatre as language of ritual and discourse in speech, song and mantra, allowed for this unification to occur with ease. The song and sounds borrowed from Sama Veda created appropriate bhava-rasa ambiences to affect a change of consciousness within the audience.

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380 Swami Shantand Saraswati-Lecture on Speech and Sound-1980
381 (Bhartrhari- Sanskrit grammarian)
382 The Samaveda (Sanskrit from sāman “melody” + veda “knowledge” ), is second (in the usual order) of the four Vedas, the ancient core Hindu scriptures. Its earliest parts are believed to date from 1000 BC and it ranks next in sanctity and liturgical importance to the Rigveda. It consists of a collection of hymns, portions of hymns, and detached verses, all but 75 taken from the Rigveda, to be sung, using specifically indicated melodies called Samagana, by Udgatar priests at sacrifices in which the juice of the Soma plant, clarified and mixed with milk and other ingredients, is offered in libation to various deities.
Sharma, in his study of Sanskrit poetics scrutinizes the specifics of the terms *sabda, artha and dhvani* in the creation of *rasa*.

“A close study of Abhinavagupta alone can bring clarity. Let us start with *śabda*. It is not mere sound; not even mere units of spoken language such as syllable, base, affix, word, phrase and sentence. It is these and some thing infinitely more in poetry. It is the whole poem is heard by our outer ear in recitation or inner ear in silent reading. The poem is an essentially organized or patterned linguistic sound-symbol—

*Dhvani* thus is primarily kāvyā-विशेष or śabda.
Its differentia or ‘soul’ (atman) is the ‘primary suggested meaning’ (*pradhāna-vāntyārtha*). The word artha does not mean ‘sense’ or meaning as usually misunderstood. It means aesthetic value only as Abhinavagupta rightly points out the word meanings and the sentence meanings culminate only in the *rasas*, the meaning of the poem is (actually) the *rasas.*”

The video link below is a recording of data from an excerpt of a brain imaging experiment conducted by the Hubbard foundation (USA) of a 26-year old male, singing the Sama Veda chants and melodies called *Samagana*.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DX11bBpuKlU

“The verses have been transposed and re-arranged, without reference to their original order, to suit the rituals in which they were to be employed. There are frequent variations from the text of the Rigveda that are in some cases glosses but in others offer an older pronunciation than that of the Rigveda. When sung the verses are further altered by prolongation, repetition and insertion of stray syllables, as well as various modulations, rests and other modifications prescribed in the song-books.”

This is a 26 year old brain listening to the Samaveda chanting with his EYES CLOSED, notice how the visual cortex lights up even with the eyes closed. This is the first time anyone has looked at the brain while listening to the Samaveda chanting.”

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383 Sharma, T.R.S – *Translating Literary texts through Indian Poetics.*
384 Hubbard Foundation Synopsis—The Foundation investigates the vascular component of neurological disorders, such as Chronic Cerebrospinal Venous Insufficiency (*CCSVI*) in Multiple Sclerosis, using functional MRI (fMRI), as well as MRV, flow-quantification, perfusion, and other measures. Our mission is to develop tests for earlier recognition of brain abnormalities, which may lead to neurological diseases.
Mohanty’s observations of the Vedic phonetics provide some light on an immensely complex philosophy of sound. (Mohanty 2014)

“The ancient Indian doctrine about sounds of speech, their classification, place of articulation, rules of sound combinations and recitation fixed the Vedic texts in a consonant form during millennia. It is a circumstantial proof of existence in the Vedas of the latent sense. In the Vedic mantras, the quantity of syllables and their longitude are determining factors. He says that right pronunciation and understanding is of greater importance for the philosophical part, because mistakes in the sacrifices and the ceremonial can be made good by penance, while there is no penance for a wrong understanding of philosophical principles.” (Mohanty 2014)

Daniel Meyer-Dingkrafe’s statement reaffirms my hypothesis of the significance of language and sounds employed in the Hindu system:

“As far as language is concerned, Vedic linguistics provides a model of language in line with Vedic Psychology, associating the levels of vaikhari and madhyama with ordinary waking consciousness, the intellect, and the subtler levels of pashyanti and para with the Self. As the Self, pure consciousness, is universal, language arising from that level, whether verbal or non-verbal, is

385 Monalisa Mohanty, The Significance of Phonetics and Siksha Vedanga- Odisha review, 2014
386 The quantity of syllables is strictly established for all the Vedas. Therefore, the Rg-Veda, according to tradition, contains 432000, the Yajur-Veda 288000(2/3 of the Rg Veda) & the Sama-Veda 144000(1/3 of the Rg-Veda) the obvious and ‘latent’ syllables. The latent syllables contain in diphthongs, long vowels on joints of complex words, in some consonants such as ‘V’ and ‘Y’. A part syllables, probably is ‘hidden’ in prosaic colophons and additional hymns or mantras common to different Samhitas. Correct division into syllables of Samhitas conjoint text would be not possible without the advanced science of phonetics. Therefore, Shiksha has also the status of the Vedanga (vital part of the Veda). It defines 64 sounds of Sanskrit (21 vowels, 2 consonants, 8 non-syllabic, sibilant and aspirants, 4 yamas or stops, anusvara or nasalization of a preceding vowels, visarga or hard aspiration, K, P and pluta or lengthened 1). Their scientific classification is made in accord with 8 and 3 places of articulation. The letter three places are correlated with three Vedic metres and three daily ceremonies. All sounds are divided into five groups depending on pitch (high, low and variable, and also nine modifications), co-relations of pitch with certain musical notes, length (short, long and lengthened or pluta of three measures) and efforts (initial and subsequent).
387 The science of phonetics is determined as a doctrine about sound, accent, pause and junction of sound. Besides, it includes scientific classification of sounds according to a place of articulation, pitch, co-relation with musical notes, character of modifications and definition of tempo of the Vedic relation. (Mohanty)
388 Sāyaṇa remarks in Shiksha chapter, the doctrine is necessary here, in order to enable the pupil to read and pronounce the sacred texts correctly, and thus to understand their real meaning. He remarks that the correct pronunciation is equally required for the earlier ceremonial portion of the Veda (karmakanda).
The significance of using sound as music and melody as a communicative tool, by Bharata in his theatre, is without doubt his method of choice as music is derived from the Sama Veda and Bharata (as mentioned in Chapter One) based The Natya shastra on the four Vedas. Bharata clearly placed sound at the core of his theories concerning communication emotion in theatre. The concept of ‘raga’ or melodic scale was born from his treatise of Natyashastra; in this theory, odthree gramas (basic parent scale) of ‘raga’ he employs Shadja and Madhyama graha. Although the ‘raga’ system was not yet invented at the time, Bharata anticipates it, and the nucleus of the raga concept is attributed to Bharata (Rao 2000). Research scientist Rao writes that although Bharata does not use the expression ‘raga’ as such, It was his ‘jatis and Lakshanas’ that provided the genus out of which ragas evolved.

The complexity of the science of Raga is too vast to delve in my present purpose, but what is interesting is that another treatise that came after Bharata, called the Brihaddeshi of Matanga, defines raga as, “That which

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389 Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe, Consciousness and the Actor: A Reassessment of Western and Indian Approaches to the Actor’s Emotional Involvement from the Perspective of Vedic Psychology. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996).

390 Bharata prescribes ten characteristics (lakshanas) that govern jatis that specify the ‘placings’ by denomination of particular notes and these become the guidelines for creating the melodic matrix. Rao, S, Acoustical perspective on Raga-Rasa Theory- (Munshi Ram M Publishers) 2000
colours the mind of the good through a specific swara (interval) and varna (melodic movement) or through a type of dhavani (sound), is known by the wise as “raga” (Rao 2000).

Bharata’s use of music and melody, together with other components, uses the various colourings of the mind to produce one magnificent experience. According to Bharata’s system, these colourings of Rasa, or ‘dyes’ of consciousness, ultimately produce a lasting and steady tranquility. When all colours of the light (of consciousness) get absorbed the only colour that remains is white. That quality of purity within ‘white’ is the quality of shanta rasa. That enduring quality of peace engulfs the consciousness of the artist and spectator (Nair 2007).

The Visual Mechanism: Anatomical

The following section deals with the neurological function that enables the visual perception that is fundamental in observing and cognizing performance.

391 ibid.
392 Shanta rasa is the means to the highest happiness. It arise from a desire to secure liberation of the Self and leads to Truth- (Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe -1996 -as quoted by Nair.S —Restoration of Breath 2007)
Capra quotes D.T. Suzuki who writes about Buddha’s eightfold path:

“The seeing plays the most important role in Buddhist epistemology, for seeing is at the basis of knowing. Knowing is impossible without seeing; all knowledge has its origin in seeing. Knowing and seeing are thus found generally united in Buddha’s teaching. Buddhist philosophy therefore ultimately points to seeing reality as it is. Seeing is experiencing enlightenment.”

This passage is also reminiscent of the Yaqui mystic Don Juan who says, “My predilection is to see . . . because only by seeing can a man of knowledge know.” (Capra 1975)

The ‘seeing’ depicted by both masters equates the ‘real’ with an ‘inner’ eye of transformed consciousness.

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"This cross section of a brain, as viewed from above, shows how the image which reaches the retina is coded and relayed to the visual cortex. Light falling on the retina stimulates the fibers of the optic nerve. These fibers join to form a cross, called the optic chiasma, where fibers from the inner side of each eye pass to the visual cortex on the opposite side. Fibers from the outer field of each eye are uncrossed, passing to the visual cortex on the same side. From the optic chiasma, the information passes, via the optic tracts, to the lateral geniculate bodies, where perception of depth occurs, and then onto the optic radiation, which transmits the information to the primary visual cortex, situated in the occipital lobes. The primary visual cortex is responsible for the perception of the position of objects in space, and their relationship to each other, as well as the perception of light and shade. In this way, an overall composite picture of any object is formed." (Izzo 2007)
In my earlier discourse on scientists and their research on cognition, neuroscientist V.S.Ramachandran’s input on the brain and how metaphors are created by the power of association and the mingling of senses in synaesthetes, and the ‘kindling’ that occurs, is significant:

“There are moments of time, rare there may be, when the hard-wiring becomes ‘undone’. We gauge the salience or significance of any given moment of any given event or object, using the amygdala and other limbic structures in our brains; constantly forming a creative landscape of the world while interacting with this phenomenal world. But sometimes, a ‘kindling’ takes place within our brains, where the reading of the significance of any events or everyday occurrences in our life becomes a thousand-fold more significant or salient. So we begin to view events through a different lens... we see “infinity in the palm of our hands...”395(Ramachandran 2012)

The effect and influence of how sound frequency and melody affects the neural firings in the brain have been discussed in much detail. The brain imaging that demonstrated the effect of the cadence of the Sama Veda recitation on the sections that illuminated the visual cortex, although the subjects had their eyes closed, is indicative of the power of the ‘sound matrix’ of the Vedic chanting. Perhaps this is the ‘kindling’ that Ramachandran refers to: when “sensory input and emotional salience becomes deeply significant, and our consciousness encounters mystical experiences.” He says, “there seems to be no scientific reasoning for this.”396 (Ramachandran 2012)

Bharata’s theatre, utilising the positive effects of sound frequency and song, ‘kindled’ the neurology of all within the performance structure to induce

396 VS Ramachandran- Pg 52
emotional salience. In fact, I propose that the effect of synaesthesia itself is a product of this sound frequency ‘effect’ in certain individual’s ‘brains’.

Perhaps these individuals had, as discussed earlier, ‘foetal’ experiences with sound frequency, when the ‘overlap’ of sensory signals occurred between neural mappings.

“Partly physiological, partly evolutional, it is a question neuroscientists ask, “How do neurons substantiate meaning?” The physiology of qualia that only occurs in humans, is caused by 100 billion neurons and 100 trillion synapses within in our body that convey information via neurotransmitters. This then gets diffused into our consciousness. But we do not really know how.” (Ramachandran 2007)

The sense of perception, sense of qualia and/or synaesthesia are still largely unexplained phenomena in human consciousness. Studying the anatomy and physiology of the brain to study consciousness and the ‘symptoms’ or effects of processes perhaps only provides a vague notion or theory.

In his book, The Spell of The Sensuous, David Abram states,

“Although contemporary neuroscientists study “synaesthesia” – the overlap and blending of the senses- as though it were a rare and pathological experience to which only certain persons are prone (those who report “seeing sounds,” “hearing colours,” and the like, our primordial preconceptual experience as Merleau-Ponty makes evident, is inherently synaesthetic. The intertwining of sensory modalities seems unusual to us only to the extent that we have become estranged from our

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397 V..Ramachandran.Nov.2007 - ‘Sensations you are conscious of subjectively’, an internal subjective experience
direct experience hence from our primordial contact with the entities and elements that surround us.” 399 (Abram 1996)

Merleau-Ponty adds:

And, “Synaesthitic perception is the rule, and we are unaware of it only because scientific knowledge shifts the center of gravity of experience, so that we have unlearned how we see, hear and generally speaking, feel…” 400 (Merleau-Ponty and Landes 1962)

Ancient sages in India, known as ‘seers’ 401 (Pillai 2011), or in Tamil, “Paarthavaney Parthaan” ‘produced’ mantras, or verses as revelations, 402 (Pillai 2011) and never as compositions (the latter they considered as the ‘prattle’ of the mind). They saw sound as visions, with colour and form, which they then decoded as sound syllables or mantras. Visual symbolism found expression though sound; each mantra or sound formula has a ‘devata’ attached as a poetic representation of it.

For example, the figure of Goddess Saraswati has the sound formula:


401 The rishi’s initial vision is said to be of the Veda as one, as a whole, the entirety of Brahman. This is represented in the Mandukya Upanisad by the mantra AUM, which includes within itself the three levels of ordinary consciousness—waking, dreaming, and deep sleep—yet also reaches out beyond to the transcendent where the sound itself comes to an end. Brahman which is said to be beyond, is also said to be AUM. (Coward 1997: 7) (Pillai 2011)

402 Swami Vivekananda—The claim of the Hindus is that the Vedas do not owe their authority to anybody, they are themselves the authority, being eternal—the knowledge of God. They were never written, never created, they have existed throughout time; just as creation is infinite and eternal, without beginning and without end, so is the knowledge of God without beginning and without end. And this is what is meant by the Vedas (‘Vid’ to know). The mass of knowledge called the Vedanta was discovered by personages called Rishis, and the Rishis is defined as a Mantra-dräshtha, a seer of thought; not that the thought was his own. Whenever you hear that a certain passage of the Vedas came from a certain Rishi, never think that he wrote it or created it out of his mind; he was the seer of the thought which already existed, it existed in the universe eternally. The sage was the discoverer; the Rishis were spiritual discoverers. (Muthiya 2004: 11) (Chattopadhyaya 1999: 200) – (cited by Pillai 2011)
“Om Aim Klim Sow, Sow Klim Aim Om”

Followed by a poetic description of her and her attributes:

Saraswati Namasthubhyam, Varade Kaama Rupine
Vidhya Rambam Karishyaami, Siddih Bhavatume Sadaa

The sound formula is pure potent vibratory impulses that resonate, it is believed, with the Universal energy cycles. Thus the form: Goddess Saraswati
Goddess Saraswati with the Swan as a vehicle (painting by Sarasa Krishnan)

About this aspect of communicating the visual component of brain function, cognitive scientist, Steven Pinker comments:
“We think in visual images, auditory images, in abstract propositions but not in words. The fact that there can be the same word underlying different ideas shows that words and thoughts cannot be the same thing. We create words to communicate an idea to another person, in an effort to bring out the concept in our minds. Words as language can be translated... there must be something more to language; a set of propositions, no linear modes of left to right but a web of connections between concepts. These are in turn connected with experience, visual images and body sensations... great scientist, poets, artists often say that moments of inspiration often come from a vivid visual image they then have to struggle to find the words to express that image”(Pinker and Mishlove 1998)

Pinker’s ‘visual images’ that are accessed by great artists would appear to correspond with the ‘pashyanti’ images of the seers of India, where inner vision correlates to link with sound to produce ‘image-meanings’.

The sense of anticipation and expectation that the audience feels is perhaps a valid consideration towards understanding the significance of perception.

Psychologist George Boeree comments about the associations that are involved in the act of perception are relevant here:

“The linguist Hjelmslev, once suggested that the mind contains nothing. No thing, that is, but relationships. This finds support in both the physical structure of the nervous system and the phenomenal processes of contrast and association.”(Boeree 1991)

Scientific analysis has uncovered that the human brain not only learns and assimilates information in a series of snapshots, but also acts like a sponge; it

404 Boeree, G.C Causes and Reason: The Mechanics of Anticipation
absorbs ‘patterns’ (of melody, or colour etc) and these patterns are encoded in the brain. These patterns are then used as filters to enable perception and cognition. These patterns are not inborn or genetic but are cultural (as in space and time specific). Scientists, John Schaefer, Daniel Levitin and musical artist Bobby McFerrin have created several separate experiments with music to illustrate this aspect of cultural reception, and the resultant anticipations formed in individuals. It is also a significant part of their experiments that it is only when the mind is relaxed can these patterns be learned and absorbed; play ‘allows’, play relaxes.

In their paper, *The Science of Art, A neurological theory of aesthetic experience* (Ramachandran and Hirstein 1999), Ramachandran and Hirstein argue that a “peak shift” can occur in our perception, while learning or understanding a phenomenon. This common principle in ‘animal discrimination learning’ when applied to human aesthetic preference, cognition and learning, is in understanding the amplification of certain attributes by the artist that is recognised by the spectator. Like in the case of caricature, the amplified areas of a character distinction is recognised by the viewer, Ramachandran and Hirstein are basically referring to the ability of the artist to locate and exhibit or produce the ‘Rasa’ of the art, person painting

405 Like Danish psychologist’s ‘Vase figures’ and Salvador Dali’s painting ‘The Great Paranoic’
406 Notes and Neurons with Bobby McFerrin - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=50kCUssOo9Q
etc. to the spectator or viewer. The generation of this peak shift, they claim, also occurs while listening to music or hearing certain tonal sifts that evoke emotional responses. The neuroscientists also address the process of identification of patterns that allow us to make sense of and create understanding of situations, or any kind of ambiguity encountered in art. The ‘ahah!’ moment is created when such identification and understanding is created and we recognise objects in a very ‘noisy’ environment. “… a cluster of features becomes perpetually salient as a ‘chunk’ with boundaries (grouping), a signal is sent to the limbic centres which you hold on to, to facilitate further computation.” (Ramachandran and Hirstein 1999)

Thus the techniques of ‘grouping’ and ‘potential problem’ solving are utilized intentionally by artists to create peak shifts and patterns of pleasure that ‘require’ urgent resolution in the consciousness of spectators.

It is the power of this significance and pattern ‘solving-resolving’ that Bharata argues creates an avenue for change in the consciousness of spectator (and artist). Within the relaxed mind (this is imperative) of the theatregoer, is the anticipation, that “this is a world that I enter that is not ‘real’ (in the apparent, every-day sense of that word). That very attitude relaxes the mind to savour, relish and absorb the ‘patterns’ that ultimately can transform consciousness.

408 ibid.
In Merleau-Ponty’s words, “Perception is not a science of the world, it is not even an act, a deliberate taking up of a position: it is the background from which all acts stand out, and is presupposed by them.”

William Blake’s observation sums up the Hindu/Buddhist philosophical concept of Infinite Consciousness, “If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, Infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro’ narrow chinks of his cavern.” (Blake 2014)

Therefore, our consciousness is informed by, all that we see, all that we have experienced and all that we hear and have learnt. The way that we move and act is based upon this past experience, and this, in turn, informs the way we perceive the world. Aural and Visual perception are the two main avenues of reception of data for the human being (apart from taste and the sense of touch which requires a close and private proximity to ones body). The significance of thus using speech, song and melody as soundscapes of information and influence in theatre, is notable. Bharata chose to invoke the sacred spaces within consciousness using both these avenues of perception, to create a transformation that would have positive repercussions in the artist as well as the spectator.

409 William Blake- Marriage of Heaven and Hell
CHAPTER 7
A Synthesis: Quantum-Advaita-Rasa

The physicist Heisenberg made the following comment about the development of human thought:

“It is probably true quite generally that in the history of human thinking the most fruitful developments frequently take place at those points where two different lines of thought meet. These lines may have their roots in quite different parts of human culture, in different times or different cultural environments or different religious traditions: hence if they actually meet, that is, if they are at least so much related to each other that a real interaction can take place, then one may hope that new and interesting developments may follow.” (Capra 1975)

Werner Heisenberg

Heisenberg’s comment on lines of thought finds resonance in my hypothesis.

In this chapter this intersection of thought, the tiny cross-section of meeting ground between Advaita philosophy, Bharata’s Rasa theory and in Quantum science, the pivotal role of the observing entity will be scrutinized and sifted through. Be it as ‘sakshin’ as a witnessing consciousness of Advaita, the Quantum observer or the observing audience in Bharat’s theatre, these contrastive rivers of thought find a meeting place - a rich alluvial confluence where “real interaction can take place”. This sifting and examination of ideas may perhaps then lead us to greater depths in understanding.

411 Ibid.
A Synthesis of Shankara’s Advaita Philosophy and Bharata’s Natyashastra: An Overview

Like the Rasa, which for Bharata is the ultimate outcome or realization of theatre, the 5th Veda or Natyashastra is in actuality the essence of the Vedas.

The Indian artist⁴¹² has never had any significant conflict between aesthetics,

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⁴¹² I use this term in a broad manner, in terms of artists trained within Indian aesthetics, rarely have such divides within their pursuit of perfection within their art-form. Art is art… be it influenced by philosophy or religiosity, it is engaged with an aesthetic passion and not divided by religious diversity. Thousands of artists from different religious backgrounds practice Indian aesthetics ie. the art given by Bharata, till this day without religious conflict.
philosophy/religion and sciences. In the pursuit of truth, knowledge is the underlying stratum of these paradigms of thought. Dramatic arts, as Bharata intended, extended itself to all of society, not least of all to common humanity; This ritual involves the observer, who begins to identify and empathize with common sentiments, becoming finally transformed and perhaps even reaching transcendence.

As for the artist/actor, who is also the observer or sakshin, the seeking for ultimate perfection is first accomplished through the senses, (through yama and niyama413 (Meyer-Dinkgräfe 1996) and all five of them - sight, sound, smell, touch and taste; because the relationship with the phenomenal universe is first established is through these five ‘feelers’. Perfection of the senses and sharpening their sensitivity is through the use of the conscious mind. Reality becomes more comprehensible - no - attainable. The path to perfection has begun.

For the artist/actor, the thought-provoked mind is harnessed and stilled

413 "...enlightenment is gained by practicing detachment of the senses, concentration of the mind. In the specific context of Patanjali’s yoga-philosophy, the eight limbs of yoga were understood as representing different practices to gain the ultimate stage of samadhi, pure consciousness. The procedure was interpreted as starting with the practice of yama, five qualities of observance (truthfulness, non-violence, non-covetousness, celibacy, and non-acceptance of others’ possessions); yoga was then thought to continue with the practice of niyama, the five rules of life (i.e. purification, contentment, austerity, study, and devotion to God). The next stages in the path to samadhi is said to be asana, the sphere of body posture, then prana (individual breath), pratyahara (turning away of the senses from their objects); dharana (steadiness of mind); dhyana (meditation), all are said to lead to the experience of samadhi, the goal of yoga practice. Samadhi cannot be gained by practice of yama, niyama, and so on. Proficiency in the virtues can only be gained by repeated experience of samadhi. (...) each limb is designed to create the state of Yoga [unity] in the sphere of life to which it relates. With the continuous practice of all these limbs, or means, simultaneously, the state of Yoga grows simultaneously in all eight spheres of life, eventually to become permanent.” -Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe
through repetitive technical training of the arts. As for the spectator the mind is guided through the bhavas and savoured and stilled, and at that moment ‘rasa’ is experienced. But should the fisherman be caught in his or her own fishing baskets and snares? The mind of the artist and spectator are discarded like the fishing baskets and their experience with Reality transcends the enclaves of the mind and rests only in pure consciousness.

Each observer, experiences his or her very own performance. So at anyone given point in space or time, there are as many performances taking place, as there are spectators. For Bharata, however, in an ideal performance there would be a unity of experience; at the level of the collective sub-conscious there would be a deeper meeting point. The audience and artists would experience that aesthetic rapture. That rapture, when analyzed in terms of consciousness, transcends our normal reality; our everyday cognitive concepts of time and space.

These 'moments' in a performance transcend our normal everyday interaction with the world and we are elevated to a different dimension, just for that 'moment'. Abhinava says that when this 'rasa moment' is intensified it is akin to states of super consciousness that are experienced in deep meditation. There is not 'here' or 'there': no cause nor effect; no before or after, but only 'isness'. Therefore in retrospect both space and time become
merely elements of the performance language a particular observer uses for his or her description of the phenomena cause. They can never be absolute matrices by which phenomena be judged, 'Time, space and causation are like the glass through which the Absolute is seen ... In the Absolute there is neither time, space nor causation'. 414(Swami Vivekananda)

**Rasa-Consciousness and Advaita-Consciousness**

A parallel reading of Samkara’s and Bharata-Abhinava’s philosophy reveals that the consciousness of one experiencing a state of turiya (spiritual illumination) is the same as that experiencing the most sublime rasa (shanta rasa): that is, the experience is absolutely present and peaceful. This comparison is inevitable, because like the aim of the seers of Advaita’s epistemological discourses, Bharata’s purpose in his theatre was to create a means to transform consciousness. It is a means to an end. Devised to attract all categories of the human personality, it serves to give pleasure and transformation. The development and experience of this theatre of pleasure ‘rasa’, becomes the means to deconstruct, to uncover, to transcend, and illuminate our reality in order to reach a deeper one.

“Na hi RASA drite kaschidarathah pravartate”

"No meaningful idea is conveyed if the "Rasa" is not evoked." 415

The Bhagavad Gita says;

"Taking as bow the great weapon of the Upanishad, one should put upon it an arrow sharpened by meditation. Stretching it with a thought directed to the essence of ‘That’, Penetrate that imperishable as the mark, my friend." 416

**Rasa and Moksha**

The theatre of Rasa is a theatre of pleasure; a means of seeking pleasure through the senses, to transcend the mundane. Transformation of consciousness through the beatitude experienced, by the artist and spectator is akin to the experience of the state of Turiya or “pure consciousness” of the ‘realized’ Advaitin.

Where Bharata’s Rasa is “like a delicious drink which is a mixture of various ingredients but whose flavour is unlike that of any single ingredient” 417 (Varma 1958), Advaita (and other Indian philosophical schools of thought) has liberation (Moksha) and Transcendent state of awareness, (Turiya). Advaita’s advocacy of self-enquiry, penance, witnessing consciousness, meditation yantra contemplation as means to Moksha is in line with the Bharata’s artist’s ardent enquiry (and practice)

415 Rasadhyaya of Natyashastra (6th Chapter)  
416 Bhagavad Gita 15th Chapter  
and research into technique, perseverance and creation of various bhavas and artistic/theatrical ambience.

The spectators too are required to be “imaginatively gifted and intellectually and emotionally prepared” (Katz and Sharma 1977) in the total experience of this (Rasa) combination of what is pure, unique and completely peaceful. Such an experience is called rasa and it is nothing short of beatitude. (Varma 1958) Not withstanding this, it is imperative that Rasa can only be realized when the spectators have the quality of Sahridaya (Ramachandran 1979)

The genesis of the word ‘Sahridaya’ is a compound of ‘saha’ or ‘same’ and ‘hridaya’ which means ‘of one mind’, indicating an internal harmony and co-existence constituting of ‘manas, citta, and akuti’ or internal supramental process where intellect, recollection and contemplation are yoked together and merge in a ‘supersensate’ level of consciousness. (C.D.Narasimhaiah 1994)

Abhinavagupta, emphasizes that, like overcoming various obstacles in spiritual ascension, there are seven obstacles that require to be overcome.

418 Ruth Katz and Arvind Sharma (The Aesthetics of Abhinava 1977)
419 The process of appreciating a work of art is, in point of order, the reverse of producing it. Beginning from material expression from artist, transferred as contemplation in the mind of spectator, this contemplation enables spectator to realise aesthetic experience as represented by artist... The sympathetic spectator (sa hrydaya) (Naty Shastra) relishes the same emotion in almost the same degree ... The beauty of intense rapture communicates - through emotion and it fructifies as intense rapture again. This intense rapture finds its way back to the artiste, who is enthralled by the response of the spectator. Thus the creation of rasa is cyclic and is punctuated with bhavas in a performance. (T.P. Ramachandran, Indian Philosophy of Beauty, 1979)
by the sensitized spectator/audience.

These are:

1. Lack of verisimilitude in the performance
2. Having too personal an identification with the performance (or with things of the world)
3. The absorption in one’s own feeling
4. A physical defect in means of perception (for example blindness)
5. The lack of clarity
6. The lack of a predominant factor (a unifying force, one permanent emotion dominating the others)
7. The presence of doubt

This resultant beatitude (Rasa) is beyond any theory of the mind; beyond any hypothesis of cognition that is the focus study of modern psychology or neuroscientific investigation. It is a phenomenon of conscious perception that has been studied, explored and experienced in Indian Aesthetics. Only in relatively recent times it is beginning to be observed by neuroscientists and theatre practitioners around the world.

About eight centuries after Bharata, Abhinava describes this process (of the final Rasa [shanta]) as rising of consciousness (satwa udreka) or rising of pure essence. (Nair) It is a state of equanimity beyond perception, emotion and knowledge and is a state of pure experience beyond

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421 Katz and Sharma (The Aesthetics of Abhinava 1977)
422 Abhinavagupta, 11th century Kashmiri philosopher and interpreter of Bharata’s Natyashastra (3rd century),
423 (S Nair 2007)
Thus, the dual paths the self-enquiry and sakshin of Vedanta, and Bharata’s pleasurable theatre of Rasa, both provide this nexus to wisdom. Shankara’s doctrine of the Self, silently witnessing (sakshin), that allows the light of pure consciousness to illuminate and transform, works in close association within the Rasa theory to evoke ultimate transcendence.

**Shanta Rasa and Abhinavagupta’s contribution**

Abhinava's most influential contribution to the Rasa theory is the explication and rendering of the final Rasa, Shanta Rasa- (peace- tranquility being its enduring quality). The concept, the Rasa, the experience, distinguishes itself in the singular notion; that it is a spiritual experience rather than an aesthetic one. According to Abhinava, it is the Raja Rasa (king of rasas): a transcendental realization of unity that is the source of joy and peace. Grounded in Self, it is the end of all worldly and aesthetic experience, a liberation of the spirit: a portal to the Universal Consciousness. It is through this Rasa that the realization of bliss and satisfaction occurs.
He asserts, “The Atman (universal consciousness) alone, possessed of such pure qualities as knowledge, bliss, truth (Sat-Chit-Ananda), and is the enduring state (stayibhava) of shanta.” (Gupta 2007)

And of the Self, he continues:

“Shanta Rasa is to be known as that which arises from a desire to secure the liberation of the Self, which leads to a knowledge of the Truth, and is connected with the property of the highest happiness”

The dual paths of Vedanta, and Rasa, are “conceptually and experientially” related. “Abhinava is clearly aware of the difference between the two experiences.” (Katz and Sharma 1977) Perhaps, as Katz and Sharma ‘qualify’, the area of interest and intensity of pursuit, interpretation, deliverance and clarity of Abhinava is caused by his involvement in theology and poetics.

“Because Abhinava’s philosophy is experiential, because it is not removed from his human feeling and in particular his religiosity, it is valid to consider it

424 In the Upanisads, both “cit” and “atman” refer to pure consciousness, a kind of trans-empirical consciousness, which not only is different from the empirical consciousness, but also forms the basis of the empirical individual. The vital concept of his philosophical thesis is that Reality is ONE. This one Reality called Brahman or Atman is not only the same as the inner self within every individual but also the stuff from which everything is made. (Gupta, B 2007)

425 In his exegetical commentaries Sankara provides a systematic account of consciousness which he largely draws from the Upanisads. The Sanskrit term for consciousness is “cit.” The discussions of consciousness in the Upanisads arise in the context of explaining the real nature of the ...man or the self. In the Western philosophico-religious traditions, the term “self” generally con-notes a subject, the referent of “I.” Atman, however, though usually translated as “self,” does not refer to the “I,” the empirical self. In the Upanisads, both “cit” and “Atman” refer to pure consciousness, a kind of trans-empirical consciousness, which not only is different from the empirical consciousness, but also forms the basis of the empirical individual. (Gupta,B 2007)

426 Katz and Sharma

427 ibid.
not in the abstract but in terms of Abhinava the man, i.e. not in bits 2nd pieces, but as a whole. Enough is known about Abhinava to allow us to speak of him as a unified figure. One distinguishing feature of this unified vision of Abhinavagupta is commitment to the personal encounter with Reality and to the search for truth. Perhaps the fact that he never married is to be explained in terms of this intensity as also the fact that he sought different solutions at different times to questions about life and moksha.428” (Katz, Sharma 1977)

But perhaps we should not forget that Bharata, too, was a rishi or sage and theologian and created the classic Indian treatise on theatre. The Natyashastra, although classed as a compendium of aesthetics, is rooted in and nurtured by Hindu theology and metaphysics. It was created for the sole purpose of ascension of the human spirit, a nexus to liberation from the illusory world of Samsara.

‘Brahman’ or ‘Atman’ is inclusive of all experience, not least of all the transcendent consciousness of the artist.

Katz and Sharma make an observation:

Natyashastra states

“Aesthetic experience (rasa) come from a combination of the vibhavas, the anubhavas and the vyabhicaribhavas”429

“But there is a difference. Only the earliest Indian aestheticians thought that the spectator experiences the same everyday (though intense) human emotions experienced by the character in his situation.

It was Abhinava who clarified what the difference really is. Before summarizing his

428 ibid.
429 Determinants, consequents and transitory mental states surrounding aesthetic experience (rasa) may be compared with causes, effects and concomitant elements surrounding any human emotion.
opinion, it is necessary to mention one more technical term, sthayibhava (permanent emotion). The ‘permanent emotion’ is to the ‘transitory mental states’ as a thread to the beads strung on it. The dominant emotion of any drama, the ‘permanent emotion’, is felt by both characters and spectators; for the character the ‘permanent emotion’ marks the highest pitch of emotion; for the spectator in a state of aesthetic consciousness, however, the ‘permanent emotion’ is transmuted into rasa or aesthetic emotion.”

Apart from the influence of samskaras and vasanas of the actor and spectators (as discussed earlier) the creation of Rasa is thus depended on the phosphorescent silken thread of ‘stayibhava’ that connects the experience of both actor and spectator, which then connects to the actor through aural and visual perception.

Abhinava states:

“Because of the flow (rasa) of desire, through the force of the relish (carvana) by outward things, which are filled with one’s own flow, one attains the state of complete repose and all phenomenal objects are merged into one’s own self.”430(Katz and Sharma 1977)

Ralph Waldo Emerson’s famous quote,

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us” (Emerson and Willoughby 2011), countersigns Bharata’s view that the most important consideration is to know, recognise and pay homage to the essence of the Self within. By the precincts set out by the various schools like Advaita Vedanta, “Rasa” as a state of perfection in Self

and Absolute Pure Consciousness is in existence already within, but is only awakened by the flow of the senses.

Edwin Gerow, in an elaborate discussion of Rasa, observes the wisdom of this phenomenon in his explication of Abhinavagupta’s aesthetics. In an almost relentless progress in seeking the stayibhava of the Shanta Rasa, he disintegrates and diffuses the possible ‘sthayi bhavas’ or enduring emotional state of this rasa. He eschews tranquility, indifference, sexual passion, repulsion, motivation and valor in an intricate and detailed discourse, and culminates in re-claiming that the stayi bhava is in the “dispassionate (rejoice) in liberation” \(^{431}\). (Gerow 1994)

Returning to tranquility, he concedes:

“No, the rasa "tranquility exists. And so, following the phrase, "we will lad the stable emotions to the condition of rasa..." There is certain old texts this definition of Rasa, Tranquility, as having a proper stable emotional basis, peace, In the view of these texts, the delight of all rasas is tantamount to tranquility, in as much as all the rasas involve a turning away from gross objects of sense. Their/its being grasped as the main thing is based on other latent mental expressions, deriving from earlier existences” \(^{432}\) (vasanas). (Gerow 1994)

Thus, “Rasa” as a state of perfection in Self slowly begins to uncover itself; like a beautiful maiden who is covered, with countless layers of garments, begins with to discard each garment, slowly, the consciousness begins to

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\(^{432}\) Ibid.
discard superfluous garb of emotion and sentiment, in its journey to
fructification, through the senses and then beyond the senses, to tranquillity
and reveal the true beauty of the shining, revealed, ‘ungarbed’ Self.

“Sringara hasya karuma raudra vira bhayanakah
bibhats adbhuta sarmjnau cety astau natye rasah smrtah”

It is Bharata’s voice that denotes the eight rasas and Abhinava’s that confirms
the ninth, as the quintessence of experience, beyond the architecture of the
senses. Abhinava’s explication is of the rasa of peace, as a surfacing from an
‘inner organising principle’ to produce the Ananda or bliss, and this is what
paves the way to liberation. Unlike the re-organising of sensory data and
apperception that occurs within the spectator’s consciousness while viewing
the unfolding drama in theatre, shanta rasa is the cumulative effect of the
rising of a state of equanimity that has resulted from a filtering through the
five koshas or sheaths of the experiential body. Real Knowledge, as the
culmination of experience in the Anandamaya kosha, is the peak of

433 Bharata- Natyashastra 6.15
434 Rasa is hence not the psychological ‘effect’ that the artistry ‘produces’ in us but rather the (source and) inner
organizing principle of the aesthetic creation, its very meaning. We do not particularly relish the emotions of others
inferred in real life, so the aesthetic emotion cannot be reduced to the rasa merely deduced in the ásraya (it’s
irrelevant whether the actor is really feeling that or any emotion). The dramatic spectacle does not simply ‘intensify’
our worldly emotions, for we would otherwise never lose an opportunity to fall into a fit of psychopathic anger or
wallow in suicidal depression. (Sunther Visuvalingam)-Abhinava Integral Aesthetics
experience within human consciousness. He terms this rising, ‘satwa-
udreka’ (Nair 2007), the arising of pure essence.

Advaita Vedanta calls it the state of Turiya.

As Ramana states:

“In turiya, there is awareness that the mind has merged in its source
the heart and is quiescent there. For those who experience waking,
dream and sleep, the state of wakeful-sleep, which is beyond these
states is named turiya (the fourth). Since that turiya alone exists and
since the seeming three stages do not exist, know for certain that
turiya is itself Turiyatita (that which transcends the fourth). The Self is
the witness of these states, that is called the fourth (turiya). When
this is known the three experiences disappear and the idea that the
Self is a witness, that is the fourth, also disappears. That is why the
Self is describes beyond the fourth (turiyatita). The jnani or the seer,
having transcended the three states, abides merely as pure
consciousness unaffected by the disposition of body and mind. For
him, turiyatita is identical with turiya and the other three states do
not exist for him. Holding fast to the truth, transcending the three
states, life activity should be viewed as a leela.” (Ramana 2005)

Abhinava’s Kashmir Shaivism’s monistic philosophy’s key concept, “Spanda”,
can be translated as a throb or pulse, referring to microcosmic essence of a
wave activity, emanating from the centre outward, within consciousness.

“Spanda is the pulsation of the ecstasy of the Divine consciousness” says Abhinava” (Abhinavagupta, Iyer, Pandey and Dwivedi 1986)

“Like a million silent explosions within the consciousness, the ‘almost
vibration’ is the dynamics of an infinite spectrum of frequencies flashing and
constantly in flux. An inner essence within that impels, unseen, through a
primordial resonance that manifests through our every experience, orients to

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435 Nair. S. Restoration of Breath 2007
organise authentic action, not through intellect or intention but ‘the ‘spark’ within each individual’

Dehejia states, “The concept of abhasa signifies for the Kashmir Saivas that the world manifestations arise out of a free and a spontaneous creative activity, or “spanda” in the Absolute.”

The creative matrix, Shaivaism believes, springs from this ‘throb’ or silent vibration or spark. Dehejia reaffirms:

“Abhaha connotes that creativity is the spontaneous self-expression or self-projection of the Absolute: the created world displays the very nature of the Creator and therefore by the same token of art object reflects the essential nature of the artist. In Kashmir Saivism, therefore, creativity and freedom are of ultimate value because it has its ontological basis in the Absolute.”

The ‘being and becoming’, that I choose to see as thought and action, is innate within the symbol of the Hindu icon Ardhanarishwara; a poetic representation of the creative impetus in a male-female form of Shiva (Purusha) and Shakti (Prakriti). This Hindu icon denotes the thought–action phenomena as a continuous process of the consciousness. Since all creative impulses begin in the consciousness, the ‘thought’ function is

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437 Swami Shantanand (1979)
438 Dehejia, H Advaita of Art 1997
439 ibid.
440 Shiva as the Ardhanarishwara is the best example for the perfect union of the complementary pairs that form the world and life in it: earth and sky, light and darkness, day and night, male and female, birth and death, pleasure and pain, all. At a human level, it is the highest symbol of love possible between man and woman, and between the male and the female in each of us. Like so many other yogic and tantrik concepts, the image of Ardhanarishwara is in all probability born in a mind that had transcended itself in the highest meditation.
poetically linked to ‘Shiva’ and ‘action’ denotes ‘Shakti’. Shiva is the static, masculine energy and Shakti the dynamic, feminine energy. I explore this link in my own artistic work, as discussed in Chapter Nine.

Every conscious thought–action motion of the mind creates another thought action and this continuous motion can be called the creative process.
Dehejia refers to this concept being central to Abhinavagupta’s philosophy of aesthetics:
“Aesthetic cognition and experience is none other than the dialogue of Siva and Parvati, realising it is none other than Siva who divides himself into the questioner and the answerer, and that the whole dialogue takes place within Siva.

As Abhinavagupta writes: Self who is the natural state if all existents, who is self-luminous, amusing Himself with question-answer which is not different from Himself, and in which both the questioner (as devi) and answerer (as bhairava) are only Himself, enjoys self-reflection.

The concept of abhasa implies that the artist’s creative self-expression is a reflection or a manifestation, at the human level, of Siva’s creative self-expression. As the world reflects Siva’s consciousness, so the art object reflects the consciousness of the artist. The aesthete’s enjoyment of art is a reflection of Siva’s spontaneous enjoyment of the world.” (Dehejia 1997)

It is the power of art to represent and reflect human experience to each of us and to clarify our lived meanings, not only through contemplation and interpretation- that is through hermeneutical experience and activity, but also in the lived transformative experience in performance. The (creation of) Rasa and, more importantly, Shanta Rasa that is experienced is the result of the creative matrix and expansion within the artist and as well within the creative experience within the spectator. It is a spanda of that allows the Self to witness and experience within:

“Yacca kincij jagat sarvam drsyate sruyate’pi va
antarbahisca tatsarvam vyapya narayanah sthitah”

“*One Universal Energy pulsates, pervades, permeates, interpenetrates every atom, (antarbahisca tatsarvam) within and without, everywhere - all these pervaded by one Supreme Energy*” 441(Swami Shantanand Saraswati 1980)

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441 Narayana Prusha suktam as quoted by Swami Shantanand Saraswati
This rare and wonderful experience of the supreme Rasa is celebrated through the numerous festivities in the Hindu calendar that are usually divided in fifteen day intervals. Ganesha Chaturti, meaning fourth quarter, is dedicated to the elephant faced god Ganesh. The symbolism attributed to this fourth quarter of Ganesha is as follows:

First: Para-Mouna-Tatva, A Silence- Pre thought phase or principle.

Second: The Shiva Tatva/principle.

Third: Shakti Tatva/principle.

Fourth: Fusion, which is the Ganesha Tatva/principle.

1st- Prathamai,

2nd-Dwitiyai,

3rd- Trithiyai

4th -Chathurti.

This is also the reason that Ganesha is the symbol of the Creative Impetus.

It is the intertwining of the concept of ‘being and becoming’442, Yin-Yang, a ‘Thought- Action’ that manifests as the creative output. The resulting figure that is envisioned is an elephant head with a curved trunk resting upon a

442 As discussed in Chapter One of this thesis.
human body: symbolic of the intertwining energy of the ‘being and becoming’ that is in constant motion, twisting and forming, within the seat of human consciousness (the head).

The concept of ‘Spanda’ is evidenced in the findings in the scientific world. Neuroscientists have conducted tests and have confirmed their suspicions that humans do not experience the world continuously, but rather in rapid snapshots:

“Now, researchers at the University of Glasgow have demonstrated this is indeed the case. Just as the body goes through a 24-hour sleep-wake cycle controlled by a circadian clock, brain function undergoes such cyclic activity – albeit at a much faster rate.

Professor Gregor Thut of the Institute of Neuroscience and Psychology, said: “Rhythms are intrinsic to biological systems. The circadian rhythm, with its very slow periodicity of sleep and wake cycles every 24 hours has an obvious, periodic effect on bodily functions.

“Brain oscillations – the recurrent neural activity that we see in the brain – also show periodicity but cycle at much faster speeds. What we wanted to know was whether brain function was affected in a cyclic manner by these rapid oscillations.” (Romei, Gross and Thut 2012)

Prof Thut said: “Rhythmicity therefore is indeed omnipresent not only in brain activity but also brain function. For perception, this means that despite experiencing the world as a continuum, we do not sample our world continuously but in discrete snapshots determined by the cycles of brain rhythms.” (Romei, Gross and Thut 2012)

443 The researchers studied a prominent brain rhythm associated with visual cortex functioning that cycles at a rate of 10 times per second (10Hz). They used a ‘simple trick’ to affect the oscillations of this rhythm which involved presenting a brief sound to ‘reset’ the oscillation. Testing subsequent visual perception, by using transcranial magnetic stimulation of the visual cortex, revealed a cyclic pattern at the very rapid rate of brain oscillations, in time with the underlying brainwaves. (Thut, Romei, Gross)

444 The research, ‘Sounds reset rhythms of visual cortex and corresponding human visual perception’ is published in the journal Current Biology. Vol. 22 Issue 9, p 807-813 Published Online April 12, 2012- (Gregor Thut, Vincenzo Romei, Joachim Gross)
The source knowledge of *para vidhaya*, derived through direct experience (*aparoksha vidhya*) regarding cognition and perception by the rishis of ancient India, is only now slowly surfacing in experiments being conducted on the various aspects of brain studies and consciousness, using modern equipment.

**The process of Cognition and the process of Rasa.**

The three schools of Indian philosophy, *Sankhya*, *Advaita* and Kashmir *Saivaism*, that I have previously discussed, although have relatively minor differences in approach, they all have the same point of departure.

In analysing perception and cognition, using these ancient philosophical as tools, we may be able to piece together in some rugged fashion, a trajectory towards consciousness.

I have discussed the process on a macrocosmic scale, as in the initial impetus of creation. But this process when superimposed on a microcosmic level, within the consciousness of an individual mind, it translates to an understanding and provides some light on the cognition equation.

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445 By neuroscientists and cognitive scientists like V.S.Ramachandran
“Advaita’s witnessing consciousness”, says Bhattacharyya, “is all seeing and always…this inner consciousness is aware of everything that goes on in an individual”. In waking, dream and deep sleep, the witnessing consciousness is aware. Not merely in waking but also witnessing the dream and deep sleep state. “Witnessing consciousness which cannot go to sleep, is there to ‘know’ the state of sleep”(Chattopadhyaya, Embree, Mohanty 1991) It is ever conscious, ever present; in silence, in Para.

First there is the silence within: this is the ‘Parasilent principle’

Seconds before one wakes in the morning, after a good nights sleep, the deep silence within becomes a like fertile germinating field, full of potential energy. This Para level has a movement from total stillness to a potent moment, just before the stir.

Split seconds later, in the initial stage of waking, there is a very gentle stirring deep within the consciousness. That stirring or vibration provides a very ‘shadowy’ impression upon the consciousness. This slight shadowy stirring is the initial hum of ‘spanda’.

This vibratory occurrence of spanda, in the consciousness of an individual, accelerates as the spark that ignites the principle of Purusha, the static, and

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446 This is the concept of Antaryami ie. Pure Consciousness is the indweller of everything and everybody
447 In Upanishads, it is also known as "SarvaShakshinyai –Witness of all- (Lalitha Trishati)
448 Bhattacharyya, Sibajiban- Phenomenology and Indian Philosophy, edited by Debi Prasad Chattopadhyaya, Lester E. Embree, Jitendranath Mohanty- Suny Press ISBN 0791498824, 9780791498828
the masculine, Shiva. This is the ‘I am’ principle in all of us. It is awareness, a pre-thought function.

A split second later the recognition of the ‘I am’ takes place, and this is felt within the pashyanti level, when one cognises reality, through yet another series of snap shots of spanda. The stirring, begins to express through form, the ego personality, finds resolution in concretising into a form; a personality. The recognition that “I am Sarasa, or John, or Jack”, is a visualisation of the ego (jiva) oneself; an ego without any attributes, but just as an entity, silently watching, for only a split second as your self in this body without physical attributes.

Then, Pashyanti principle comes fully in play, a form of your-self, as with a particular personality takes a shape. A vision, when you see your self as you with the particular body. This function is known as “Pashyanti Vak”, where sound is seen.

This impetus creates a fusion with the dynamic female principle, Shakti or Prakriti, and then the thought of you and who you are comes into play, as yourself in this body with its physical attributes. The series of snapshots re-occurs with greater clarity. Cognition is complete.

This thought then becomes active, and the brain sends an impulse. The biological substrate manipulates discreetly and the firing takes place between
the synapses and sends signals to produce the necessary chemicals to activate the vocal cords to vocalise and this is *Madyama*.

When the sound is actually produced, (for example, to wish your partner in bed ‘good morning!’) that is *Vaikari*, the sound heard. The individual has **completed the course of cognition** and the resultant effect of ‘being’ is accomplished. The embodied mind is now effective. Although I have used the process of waking as an example in an individual, this process occurs over and over again, not only from a deep sleep state, but each time the mind comes to a resting state, and a new thought is formed; all through the day, everyday. Our perception of the phenomenal world and of our selves is through a series of spanda snapshots. It is a process of the individual consciousness reaching outward.

The empiricism of *Advaita* may be characterised as being ‘radical’ because it examines consciousness in waking, dream and deep sleep. The empirical ‘I’ is only available in waking and the experience of rasa is experienced in this state. The magic of the experience is that the empirical ‘I’ begins to view the theatrical event as “I” then slowly begins to recede inwards, almost into the mists of the rising *Rasa*.

Visuvalingam notes:

“This ‘identification’ (*tanmayi-bhavana*) is so complete that we seem to be

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449 Abhinava Integral Aesthetics 2002
experiencing the same emotion without any distinction of self and other. This is precisely why our whole-hearted enjoyment of Sītā’s beauty through the eyes of Lord Rāma is no stigma to Indian aesthetics” (Visuvalingam 2002).

Within the theatre situation, these same series of snapshots affect the consciousness. Assimilating the information, from the enfolding drama or dance, the play between the Shiva and Shaktī or Prakriti and Purusha, in an organic and exponential manner, is constant and is a perpetual renewal within the consciousness; a process to kindle and activate cognition.

In his paper, Visuvalingam iterates:

“What’s represented on the stage are not just the ‘causes’ (vibhāva = determinants) of the intended emotion but also the ‘effects’ (anubhāva = consequents) that they evoke in another responsive dramatic personage (āśraya), who displays the appropriate ‘transitory states of mind’ (vyābhicārin = concomitant). And what evokes rasa is the (connoisseur’s attempt to restore meaning to this) configuration as a coherent whole as perceived by the mind’s eye. As we ‘infer’ the emotion in the āśraya, the accumulated traces (samāskāra) of the same predisposition are awakened from our own subconscious and our hearts begin to resonate (hrdaya-sanivāda) with their fluctuations depicted by the dramatis personae. Instead of ‘responding’ behaviorally to the transposed psychological causes, the focus is instead on understanding the interactions on stage by supplying the relevant emotional motivations from our own store of latent memories” (Visuvalingam 2004).

The rasa is thus produced through “in inner organizing principle” of a mode of apperception and not as a mere emotional response.

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450 This also amounts to Abhinava’s resolution of a long-standing disagreement as to the seat or locus of rasa: the poet, the dramatis persona, the actor, the audience. Given the process of de-subjectivization (sādhanā-karaṇa), the rasa-experience, unlike its counterparts in worldly feelings, cannot be properly said even to ‘belong’ somehow to the individual connoisseur.

451 This ingenious concept of tanmāyibhavana removes the moral compunction even while sanctioning the unreserved sensuous delight. Considering that the (often royal) hero (nāyaka), presided by Indra, actually assumes the role of the sacrificer, the (male) audience (at least) participates through this same identification in the play as sacrifice.

452 Abhinava Integral Aesthetics. 2002
453 ibid.
The theatrical universe that is created allows for this cognition to accelerate to fruition, if all necessary components (like sahridaya of audience and actors competence etc as discussed earlier) are conducive. The music, ambience and the theatrical event are in harmony, the Rasa is created and the ‘I’ experiences in harmony, the transformation occurs, with each rising Rasa.454

Jnaneshwar455 enunciates the distinction between states-of-mind of the enjoyer of sense objects, "...a self-possessed person enjoys the sense-objects without desire and attachment, keeping his senses under control, he attains serenity" (Yardi 1991)

Bharata’s uses the senses of the ‘sahridhaya’ spectator to elevate and ‘go beyond’ the sense experience.

The process of experiencing Shanta Rasa is really an ‘inwardization’456 of experience. Bhattacharyya457 observes, “It is not just the realisation of oneself but the realisation of the foundation of the universe... (it) is a realisation of the wideness, of infinite expanse”.

(Bhattacharyya 1992)

454 Relish of the eight Rasas.
455 In his commentary of Gita in The Jyaneshwari (M.R.Yardi) p52
456 Term by Battacharyya
457 S.Battarcharyyaa, Phenomenology and Indian Philosophy, Suny Press
But in the experience of the Moksha, that Shanta Rasa or aesthetic rapture,\textsuperscript{458} holds open the door to, is an outward moving experience, an expansive, a biologic, analogous exponential expansion; not just an outward cognitive one as from deep-sleep to waking. This transformative process of outward expansion, as stated by a mystic is:

“At the beginning I began to expand my ego. Then gradually I spread my I-sense all over the world, and directly experienced that I was the world. With this expansion of the ego, there was an ascent to different subtle worlds, as if doors were opened. Ultimately rising beyond all the worlds, I found myself in a realm of light, and I spread myself all over. By expanding myself infinitely in this light, I attained the final goal. (which is transcending the ego and becoming one with the impersonal infinite consciousness)”\textsuperscript{459} (Bhattacharyya 1992)

The physicist Capra provides a synthesis of religious and scientific models of experience:

“The parallels between the views of physicists and mystics become even more plausible when we recall the other similarities which exist in spite of their different approaches. To begin with, their method is thoroughly empirical. Physicists derive their knowledge from experiments; mystics from meditative insights. Both are observations, and in both fields these observations are acknowledged as the only source of knowledge. The object of observation is of course very different in the two cases. The mystic looks within and explores his or her consciousness at its various levels, which include the body as the physical manifestation of the mind. The experience of one’s body is, in fact, emphasized in many Eastern traditions and is often seen as the key to the mystical experience of the world. When we are healthy, we do not feel any separate parts in our body but are aware of it as an integrated whole, and this awareness generates a feeling of well-being and happiness. In a similar way, the mystic is aware of the wholeness of the

\textsuperscript{458} Gerow and Masson & Patwardhan, have written in length about the state of experiencer of the enduring emotion (stayin) of the Shanta Rasa. I say that the mind of the experiencer of Shanta Rasa although enjoys the relish of all the rasas, is detached from the effects of pain and pleasure that they represent in the real world but delves into and relishes the tranquility or ‘sthayin’ of peace in the 9th rasa.

\textsuperscript{459} Swami Satyananda, Bhagavan Guru O Jagad Guru (Bengali) from Bhattacharyya S Phenomenology and Indian Philosophy (Pg 75)
entire cosmos which is experienced as an extension of the body."(Capra 1975)

Capra quotes Lama Covinda:

“To the enlightened man . . . whose consciousness embraces the universe, to him the universe becomes his ‘body’, while his physical body becomes a manifestation of the Universal Mind, his inner vision an expression of the highest reality, and his speech an expression of eternal truth and mantric power.”(Capra 1975)

Capra further emphasizes the similarities of inner experience.

“In contrast to the mystic, the physicist begins his enquiry into the essential nature of things by studying the material world. Penetrating into ever deeper realms of matter, he has become aware of the essential unity of all things and events. More than that, he has also learnt that he himself and his consciousness are an integral part of this unity. Thus the mystic and the physicist arrive at the same conclusion; one starting from the inner realm, the other from the outer world. The harmony between their views confirms the ancient Indian wisdom that Brahman, the ultimate reality without, is identical to Atman, the reality within."(Capra 1975)

The language of the Rasa experience is inexpressible through speech.

It is felt.

Thus, if and when the (Shanta) Rasa of peace is finally experienced, the collective consciousness of audience and actor/artist is elevated to new heights and if only for the few moments in time that this resonates, it is a few moments that will be carried forth into time. Rasa is beyond “common-

460 The Tao of Physics
461 Capra F, The Tao of Physics pg 305-306

“A further similarity between the ways of the physicist and mystic is the fact that their observations take place in realms which are inaccessible to the ordinary senses. In modern physics, these are the realms of the atomic and subatomic world; in mysticism they are non-ordinary states of consciousness in which the sense world is transcended. Express in ordinary language Mystics often talk about experiencing higher dimensions in which impressions of different centres of consciousness are integrated into a harmonious whole. A similar situation exists in modern physics where a four-dimensional ‘space-time’ formalism has been developed which unifies concepts and observations belonging to different categories in the ordinary three-dimensional world. In both fields, the multi-dimensional experiences transcend the sensory world and are therefore almost impossible to express in ordinary language.”- Capra, Tao of Physics.
sense” modes of space and time, beyond the architecture of the senses and intellect. It rests beyond the phenomenal world as we see it. It resonates with Moksha, as an experience of the Eternal Brahman, of Universal Light, of the Absolute Consciousness.

The Bhagavad Gita speaks of this light:

\[ \text{Jyotishaamapi tajjyotistamasah paramuchyate;} \\
\text{Jnaanam jneyam jnaanagamyam hrdi sarvasya vishthitam.} \quad 462 \]

That, the Light of all lights, is beyond darkness; it is said to be knowledge, the Knowable and the goal of knowledge, seated in the hearts of all.

Swami Sivananda contemplates upon this light:

\[ \text{“Jyotishamapi taj jyothi: It is the Light of all lights. Na tatra suryo bhati:} \\
\text{thousands of suns cannot stand before it. The light of the sun is like darkness before It. Tamasah param: Beyond the darkness of the world shines that supreme radiance of the Absolute. Jnanam jneyam jnana-gamyam: It is knowledge, It is the object of knowledge, and It is also the knower. All three clubbed together is that Eternity which is Brahman, the Absolute. Hrdi sarvasya vishthitam: It is in our own heart. We should not be afraid that this tremendous description is of something that is very, very far away. It is in the heart of all.”} \quad 463\text{(Swami Krishnananda 1951)} \]

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462 Bhagavad Geeta verse 17, Chapter 13
463 Krishna himself starts speaking, without any question from Arjuna. \textit{Idaṁ śaṅkure ya kauṇṭeya kṣetram ity abhidhiyate} (13.1): “This body, this particular tabernacle, this physical embodiment of the human being, is technically called \textit{kṣetra}, or the field where some activity takes place. A field is an area where something happens.

While this body, which is physical in nature, is a field of operation, there must be somebody who carries on this operation in the field. The field is the body; but the knower of this body is the operator behind it. This body is, no doubt, the vehicle of action, but there is somebody who is conscious that there is a body, of which is to be used for the purpose of some activity. This body is an instrument of action in this world, but this body cannot act by itself. It is inert, constituted of the five inert elements—earth, water, fire, air and ether. Inert instruments cannot act by themselves. Even a car cannot move unless there is a driver. So is the case with this body. Unless there is prana and an intelligence that drives the prana in respect of the bodily limbs, there will be no activity.
The above missive from the Gita is broad, universal and sublime. Based on the Upanishads—the ancient wisdom of seers and saints, it is a message of solace, freedom, salvation, perfection and peace for all human beings (Swami Krishnananda 1951). I add an ‘aesthetics of beauty of being’ or the underlying ‘RASA of being’ to be included in the Gita’s interpretation.

Abhinavagupta’s contribution to this shared aesthetic between the experience of “bliss or ananda” in Shanta rasa of Rasa theory and “bliss and ananda” in spiritual transcendence of Moksha is an immensely significant addition to the theatrical universe and the real one. Here the two find a meeting point, a convergence of values, an intersection, an amalgamation and unification of experience.

Swami Shantanand equates this throbbing of universe (to its fructification as light) as the dance of Shiva within the ‘cit-akasha’, or that space within the consciousness.

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So while this body may be called kṣetra, or field, the one who knows this field is and is conscious of it, operates through it—lives in it, indwells it, and handles it in a different manner—such a principle is called kṣetrajña. Jña means knower, and kṣetra is, of course, field, so kṣetrajña means ‘the knower of the field’. Hence, this body is the kṣetra, the field, and the one who knows this field is the kṣetrajña.

The knower of the field knows the field. Consciousness has no characteristic of matter, and matter does not have the characteristic of consciousness. Consciousness does not move, whereas matter is always in a state of flux and agitation. Therefore, they are dissimilar in their character. Objectivity is the character of the body and matter, whereas subjectivity is the nature of consciousness. They are totally opposed to each other. So how can that which is pure subject come in contact with that which is pure object? How would we solve this great issue of what the relationship between two terrible contraries is? They cannot have any kind of connection, yet they seem to be working together in some way for the purpose of effecting some aim, which seems to be the very process of evolution. (Swami Krishnananda)
“Within the seer’s yogic vision, is a flame throbbing (spanda) systematically, symmetrically, like in a beautiful dance pattern. And therefore, for him, the whole Universe is Aadidum Jyothi (Dance of Lights).

Ambala Jyothi, Ambalam means akaash or space. It is a jyothi (light), which fills the entire void. This effulgence illuminates the infinite void. And therefore you can call it an infinite effulgent void, called Ambala Jyothi.

It is called Cit- Ambaram. Cit is known as consciousness, and Ambaram is space. The void of consciousness, the space of consciousness, Cit-Akaasham, Cit-Ambaram, and that in Tamil, they call it Cit Ambalam.

Since the universe is effulgent, and everything in the universe is throbbing and rhythmically dancing, they (sages) say it is Ambala-Jyothi. It is an infinite space, which is effulgent, throbbing, dancing in beautiful rhythm and harmony.

So I ask:

“What is the aim of this motion? What is the aim of this pattern of dance?”

Ultimately, it is attributed to the ‘Supreme Grace’ of that Universal Intelligence, Arul Perum Jyothi. It is grace upon every being of the Universe, to realize this dance and become one with the supreme dancer, Shiva.

Thus when comes a time, our movement and His movement, synchronize. The dynamics of this synchronization changes our consciousness and then it is called Ananda Thandavam.

Swami Shantanand explains;

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\text{It is Anandam, it is the result of peace, and the peace is the result of love and the love is the result of wisdom and He is the Wisdom Himself. And therefore His love is the wisdom, and therefore He is peace Himself and therefore He is Ananda Himself.}
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\text{So it is ecstasy, it is a dance of ecstasy because it is a dance of love. It is a dance of love because it is a dance of peace. And that peace, that joy, that love manifests as grace}^{465}\text{ (Swami Shantanand Saraswati 1979)}
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465 Audio recording from a lecture - Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.1979
The deity, the self, the philosophy, the art, the dance, the metaphor, the aesthetics and science, in this view, find fruition in the experience of Rasa.

Visuvalingam’s writing on Abhinava’s aesthetics, rings true here:

“So long as the language of art depends on the powers of signification and especially in their ability to evoke, fathom, and transform human emotions, the Indian legacy remains an incomparable resource for the aesthetics of the future. Abhinavagupta himself lives in our consciousness not so much as an artist stricto sensu but as a discriminating commentator, connoisseur, and veritable doctor. The deepening crisis of values further exacerbated by the ‘clash of civilizations’ is in need not so much of even more art-forms with their conflicting rules, theories, and subjectivities, but rather of a shared aesthetic sensibility that extends to the whole of life. Here, it seems to me, is Abhinava’s greatest contribution to our world.”

Thus here is another instance where the chasm is bridged between art and religion. The pursuit of happiness through the aesthetics of art (secular or sacred), or through spiritual practice, is found in the transcendence of Rasa. Rasa becomes the platform of experience for the transformation of consciousness, spring-boarded through the theatre. This “shared aesthetic sensibility”, this apparent incongruous or seeming conflicting pursuit of aesthetic ascension and spiritual transcendence, finds resolution in the tranquil consciousness of the experiencer of Shanta Rasa. The observing jiva is tuned inward to the observing Self, becomes united and realises that there is after all, only One.

466 This idea of doctor is also apparent in bhakti yoga where Lord Shiva is regarded as ‘Vedanta Vedya, Bhava-Roga Vaidhya’... as the supreme doctor of the human ‘malady’. (Idea mooted by Swami Shantanand in audio talk.) Abhinava himself was known to his contemporaries as Bhairava, an aspect of Shiva.

467 Visuvalingam, Sunthar, “towards an integral Appreciation of Abhinava’s aesthetics of Rasa”- Indic Colloquium, 2002
Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe, like Capra, states that concept of ‘unified field’ in quantum mechanics finds relevance in this state of unity:

“The ground state theorised in quantum physics is the unified field. Detailed studies, mainly on the basis of empirical data and experience reports of subjects practicing the Transcendental Meditation and advanced techniques, quantum physicist Hagelin proposed to regard the unified field theorised in physics and pure consciousness experienced during meditation, as identical.”

(Meyer-Dinkgräfe 1996)

“Tat Twam Asi” - That thou Art: this recurring theme in Indian philosophy requires some cognisance. It means, Tat (Supreme Consciousness), one Asi-are Twam- You. Contemplation on the unity between the Universal and individual consciousness leads to a state of equilibrium. You are the Self. You are already That.

(Shivabhakta 2011)

Capra’s observation of the quantum field aligns with this view here.

**Quantum and Reality**

In the Quantum Theory there is a concept of ‘quantum field’, that is, of a field which can take the form of quanta or particles. This is concept has been extended to describe all subatomic particles and their interactions, each type of particle corresponding to a different field. In these ‘quantum field’ theories, the classical contrast between solid particles and the space surrounding them is, completely overcome.

They all become energy. The quantum field is seen as the fundamental physical entity, a continuous medium that is present everywhere in space. Particles are merely local condensations of the field; concentrations of energy which come and go, thereby losing their individual character and dissolving into the underlying field.

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468 Daniel Meyer-Dinkgräfe, *Consciousness and the Actor: A Reassessment of Western and Indian Approaches to the Actor’s Emotional Involvement from the Perspective of Vedic Psychology*. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996).

469 It is the methodology adopted by the different schools of Indian philosophy.

470 Ramana Maharishi [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcouctV0FJo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcouctV0FJo) (on self and Self)
In the words of Albert Einstein:
"We may therefore regard matter as being constituted by the regions of space in which the field is extremely intense ... There is no place in this new kind of physics both for the field and matter, the field is the only reality."
(Capra 1975)

Similarly, incorporating the thought that we are mere one-dimensional expressions of the Supreme Reality that our consciousness dissolves in two Infinite consciences of Reality, then the artist and spectator are both levels of consciousness that resonate with pure consciousness. The performance eventually meets in that quantum field of ‘Rasa’ and only Rasa lingers: no artist, and no audience; only the reality of the field itself.

This poem, from the Yajur Veda, signifies the fundamental flow of energy that conjoins art, philosophy and the spiritual:

Karpura Gauram Karunaavataram
Sansaara Saaram Bhujagendra Haaram ||
Sadaa Vasantam Hridayaaravinde |
Bhavam Bhavaani Sahitam Namaami ||

कर्पूरगौरं करुणावतारम् |
संसारसारं भुजजेन्द्रहारम् ||
सदा वसन्तं हृदयारविन्दे |
भवं भवानि सहितं नमामि ||

I salute the merciful Bhava (Shiva), and his consort Sati, Adorned with the necklace of the serpent.

Karpur Gauram : The one who is as pure/white as a camphor
Karuna avatar : The personification of compassion
Sansara Saram : The one who is the essence or Universal pure consciousness
Bhujagendra haram: The one with the serpent king as his garland
Sada vasantam : Always residing
Hridaya arvinde: In the lotus of the heart
It is through the serpent-like intertwining of the Yin and Yang of the universal consciousness that the phenomenal universe is created. This constant complimentary action of the creative matrix is microcosmic and macrocosmic. It is constantly forming, reforming and transforming within the ‘hridhaya kamalam’ or the blossomed consciousness of the observer.
CHAPTER 8

The Karanas of Bharata: the unasked questions

Hasta pada samayogaha nrittasya karanam bhavet

‘The combined movements of hands and feet in dance is Karana’
(Rangacharya 2014)

The power of the image, whether static as in a painting, or animates as in
dance, invokes often unusual or unasked questions as to its visual semiotics
and underpinnings. Images speak a distinct, often subliminal, language, be it
in performance or not.

The drawings and observations in this chapter explore the aesthetic ‘moment’
through experience; a rare insight in the area of consciousness studies.

Augmenting theoretical observations through direct experience, by being the
dancer in the dance and, at the same time, being the artist of the artwork,
constitutes a journey beyond a phenomenal aspect of tacit knowing; this will
be a significant lived and knowing.471(Krishnan 2014)

Thus, unsurprisingly, this investigation is a cross-disciplinary analysis of the
centrality of embodied experience, and in my practice as a
dancer/choreographer and visual artist, it operates as a pragmatic tool to

471 This is an excerpt from my book. Krishnan, Sarasa, Bharata’s Karanas- An Interpretation Beagle Books-2014
view the abstractions of culture and environment as a means of exploring consciousness.

This chapter follows the thread (in this thesis) of ‘being and becoming’. Pursuing this line of thought, the dancer becomes through her movement, the very lines of motion that appears as ink on paper. My mind imbues the vision of movement, translates it to movement within and through my body then recreates this movement with ink upon paper.

This tacit knowing, a lived knowing, of experience of movement from understanding and interpreting Bharata’s words to creating the movement through my body and then translating it to drawings on paper is the ‘being and becoming’, thought to action, experiencing the aesthetic ‘moment’ as Sarasa the dancer and recreating that moment as Sarasa the visual artist.

I present a series of drawings that explore a movement-based study of the sculptural work of the karanas of Bharata’s NatyaShastra, approached from a phenomenological perspective. The moving notation of dance sculptures is studied and created as illustrations of ink on paper from the point of view of ‘intentionality’. Articulating ‘movement in space’ (dance) through movement on paper, the illustrations of Bharata’s 108 karanas encapsulate, with a single movement, the meaning or primary aspect of a phrase that is a karana. These

472 The concept was dealt with in some detail in my introductory chapter of this dissertation.
transitional phrases of movement have been captured in stone as sculptures and reliefs in five major temples of India, namely Brahadishwara temple Tanjavur, Sarangapani Temple, Kumbakonam, Nataraja Temple in Chidhambaram, Arunachaleswarar Temple in Tiruvannamalai and Vriddhagireeswarar Temple in Vrudachalam, all situated in Tamil Nadu.

Humbled by the magnificence of the work, I ask with folded palms:

What was Bharata’s intention in creating these karanas? Bharata stipulates that the creation of Rasa is crucial to theatre. Where and how do the karanas conform to his creation of Rasa? Is this creation of Rasa generated through movement and bhava or a combination of both? More than one scholar has confirmed that they are not mere static sculptural poses but stills of a phrase.

I want to ask if there was a reason for Bharata to take such pains to create these poised moments of movement. If so, what phenomenological significance is chiseled onto these moving forms? Were they mere modes of instruction for dance or did the author have an intention to instigate movement based transformational processes to form within the receiver’s consciousness? Could they be secret yogic codes to enhance a dancer’s endurance or are they designed in some manner to improve and augment neural activity?

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473 Dr. Padma Subramaniam and Dr. Bindu Shankar to name a few.
A dancer’s process in creating painting, while being informed by music, rhythm and dance technique, involves a ‘gazing’ within. Viewing this conceptual framework of inquiry (in locating the study of the “observed and observing self” within the discourse of “consciousness”) is, this thesis argues, also to work within a multi-disciplinary methodology that is at once complexly multilayered, abstract, concrete, universal and local simultaneously.\textsuperscript{474}

The collective work of this exploration of cognition and synaesthetic perception, from a voice of the dancer/artist, as a lived experience, situates itself within present developing philosophical theories.

As a visual artist and student of the Indian dance traditions, my artistic expression is also projected through Indian metaphysics and philosophy. The impetus of my performance dynamic is proceeding from a religious sensibility, the source of inspiration being \textit{Santana Dharma}\textsuperscript{475}, meaning “eternal order and structure of the universe”. (Vatsyayan 1997)

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{474} My research in the broader locus of knowledge, involving multi-genres of cognition, neuroscience, quantum physics, art, aesthetics, anthropology and philosophy through visual arts and dance. \textsuperscript{475} It being ‘a multi-layered cluster of knowledge’, it fundamentally encompasses mathematics, physics, biological sciences, and the arts. The decoding of the various simplistic rituals and understanding the basis of this synthesis of ‘sciences’ is in itself the very purpose of its creative genius. An integral vision of this process and the unravelling of a new world-view, would achieve a greater understanding. (Kapila Vatsyayan (The Square and Circle of the Indian Arts 1997)}}
Here I am focusing on the concept of a dancer/artist as not just a producer of ‘aesthetic objects’, but as an identity that contains within its moving body a cultural consciousness.

Bharata describes the origin and technique of movement in the 4th chapter of the Natyashatra (Vatsyayan 1996). I view them as moments in movement. These drawings are based on a combined analysis of present day sculptures of “Shilpa Shastra”, friezes, and drawings for numerous books: each karana is made up of stana, chari and nritta hasta. Present day illustrations found in books usually depict Lord Shiva, the male and latent principle. Here I present the karanas depicting the potent female energy, Shakti (Deutsch 1965), upon the premise of these words, from the Sanskrit text, “Devi Mahatmyam”:

*Who is there except You, Sakti in the sciences, in the scriptures, and in the Vedic sayings that light the lap of discrimination. You cause this universe*

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476 Vatsyayan, Kapila, Bharata’s Natyasastra, Sahitya akademi 1996, pg.62
477 One of the most interesting concepts in Indian thought and experience that might happily be evoked here (and which gained prominence in Tantric traditions) is that of sakti - translated into English usually as "energy". Sakti is a complex notion, for it is said to be at once physical energy, sexual energy, mental energy and, when these are properly integrated, spiritual power. It is not quantitative, insofar as it cannot be reduced to measurable terms; not is it strictly non-quantitative, in that it does enable a being to be a dynamic, vital being. According to the medieval Hindu conception, sakti is that which motivates, is the moving force behind, all action. In cosmic terms, sakti is that which informs the creation of the world; it is the energy whose creative release gives rise to the manifold things of the world. In naturalistic terms, sakti is that which informs the psychophysical organization of an organism; it is that energy which underlies as essence, and constitutes as form, the life-force or breath (prana) which sustains an individual’s existence. “Once manifestation has taken place”, writes Alain Daniélou, “it appears as the substance of everything, pervading everything”. And it has, for Indian thought, a central role in artistic creativity. Eliot S. Deutsch –Sakti in Medieval Hindu Sculpture Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism- 1965 Vol 24, No.1 pg 81-89-Wiley
478 A text of the Markandeya Purana, dated 400-500CE by Sage Markandeya.
to whirl about again and again within the dense darkness of the depths of attachment.”

And,

“You are the soul of Sabda-Brahman. You are the repository of the very pure Rig and Yajur (Vedas) hymns, and of Sama Veda, the recital of whose words is beautiful with the Udgitha! You are Bhagavati, embodying the three Vedas. And You are the sustenance whereby life is maintained.”

Shakti or ‘Sakti’ is the concept of energy, as I have mentioned elsewhere in this thesis. While Siva is considered the ‘silent’ energy, Shakti is the dynamic counterpoint to this concept of compatible opposites. While Siva is static, Shakti is action and movement. Thus when creating drawings of movement, the female form forms part of this necessary aesthetic. My use of this concept of female form or for that matter the very concept of Shakti in these illustrations, is not to be associated with any specific tantric or single stream of Hindu philosophy. It is an aesthetic choice.

Eliot Deutsch in his article, “Interpreting Artworks: Prolegomenon to a Cross-Cultural Hermeneutic”, frames my reference to ‘Shakti’ eloquently:

“The creative act is to be understood, then, in the Indian context, as a natural extension of a spiritual process, and not as a fortuitous happening. By itself sakti is formless; it is given form, which is embodied in the work itself,

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479 The ‘symbol’ is representational of the ‘being and becoming’, ‘thought and action’. Innate within this symbol is the Hindu icon Ardhanarishwara, a poetic representation of the creative impetus in a male-female form. A composite androgynous form of the Hindu god Shiva and his consort Parvati. Is depicted as half male and half female, split down the middle. The right half is usually the male Shiva, illustrating his traditional attributes. (Sarasa Krishnan-Chapter 1, of this thesis)

through the presence of an image, sanctioned by tradition, in the artist’s mind. Sakti is thus brought to a creative intensification through the artist’s meditation and concentration (dhyana) on the image. When the meditation is complete, when everything but the image has been removed from consciousness, the image and sakti join together and become inseparable in the act which externalizes the image, which gives it a concrete embodiment.” (Deutsch 1981)

Thus, in this context, the energy of ‘Shakti’ alone remains as image-movement in the consciousness of the artist who creates; as well as in the consciousness of the viewer who relishes the creation.

The need to recognize a relational reality between the role of the intellect and reason and that of the senses and emotions (Elder 2013) is part of an important contemporary philosophical and scientific project (Geertz 1957).

In discovering an arterial, cohesive and ordered ‘Reality’ that exists within these diverse bodies of knowledge, as expressed through the artist (and the arts), a fragmented reality may be bridged and an aesthetic continuum may

481 The term ‘emotion’ is used to designate “a state of consciousness having to do with the arousal of feelings (Webster’s New World Dictionary).” It is “distinguished from other mental states, from cognition, volition, and awareness of physical sensation.” …“critical thinking provides the crucial link between intelligence and emotions in the “emotionally intelligent” person. Critical thinking, I believe, is the only plausible vehicle by means of which we could bring intelligence to bear upon our emotional life. It is critical thinking I shall argue, and critical thinking alone, which enables us to take active command of not only our thoughts, but our feelings, emotions, and desires as well. It is critical thinking which provides us with the mental tools needed to explicitly understand how reasoning works, and how those tools can be used to take command of what we think, feel, desire, and do.” – Linda Elder (http://www.criticalthinking.org/pages/cognition-and-affect-critical-thinking-and-emotional-intelligence/485)...

482 “In recent anthropological discussion, the moral (and aesthetic) aspects of a given culture, the evaluative elements, have commonly been summed up in the term "ethos," while the cognitive, existential aspects have been designated by the term "world view." A people’s ethos is the tone, character, and quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style and mood; it is the underlying attitude toward themselves and their world that life reflects. Their world view is their picture of the way things in sheer actuality are, their concept of nature, of self, of society. It contains their most comprehensive ideas of order. Religious belief and ritual confront and mutually confirm one another; the ethos is made intellectually reasonable by being shown to represent a way of life implied by the actual state of affairs which the world view describes, and the world view is made emotionally acceptable by being presented as an image of an actual state of affairs of which such a way of life is an authentic expression”. Geertz, Clifford, Ethos, World View and analysis of Sacred Symbols The Antioch Review Vol.17, No.4 1957 pp421-437
be experienced, creating, in some small but significant way, a hypothesis of convergence or confluence.

This immense task of creating these 108 drawings began thirty-two years ago, upon the insistence of my spiritual master, Swami Shantanand Saraswati, and was fuelled by the enthusiastic passion of my dance master, Master Gopal Shetty. I was a young dancer then, who constantly made drawings and gave them away as presents to friends. Observing a small talent within me, Swamiji commissioned one sample drawing and there began my journey of ‘the karana’. These drawings are of a singular female dancer and not accompanied by musicians or percussions as depicted in some sculptural friezes in temple architecture. This was the premise advised by my masters. It was an arduous and painstaking journey that took me through a few years. Delving into this realm of anatomy and movement pre-empted my journey as a visual artist.

Today, when I am asked, by the spectator, in wonder, about the proportion and perspective of the larger than life figures that I paint, I can singularly attribute it to the long hours that were extended into these karana drawings.

483 Disciple of Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh and global founder of The Temple of Fine Arts.
484 Director of The Temple of Fine Arts, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Through his infinite wisdom and vision, Swami Shantanand unlocked a vast world that lay waiting to be tasted, experienced and relished. Not only did he uncover the world of theatre to the dancers of The Temple of Fine Arts, but also made transparent the philosophies, sciences, culture, traditions and exemplary attitudes to life of an ancient but living system of knowledge that was so generously offered by the seers to humanity. If not for these masters, my guiding lights, I may never have favoured the path of dance and delved into the pursuit of the creative arts. The love and affection and unlimited encouragement from them made my journey as an artist possible. If it were possible to pay homage through every fibre of my being, I would. I can but humbly offer a blossom to their feet in gratitude, and also endeavour to pass this knowledge and experience to those who come my way.

Thus, as I have commented previously, this research will not only stretch the usual restraints and boundaries of conventional performance structures, but also create a formal exploration from a point of view of an arts practitioner who works within a specific world-view.

There is a very potent moment, a poised moment or a still point, from which movement begins. At equilibrium, technically efficient, the embodied awareness is within a void, a space devoid of the thinking, rational mind. The
movement then begins, as a movement in dance, or a movement as brushstroke, when passive witnessing of oneself begins. “I, Sarasa, am aware of watching myself being still and being aware of a possible movement emerging from a creative impetus.”

This encapsulated, pregnant moment before the beginning of any movement will be scrutinised. Cradled within this pivotal, subjective experience is the underpinning of the mental states of sensory experience, and is the crux of my investigation in this thesis.

As I have said previously, the dancer creating painting while being informed by music, rhythm and dance technique, involves a ‘gazing’ within. This conceptual framework of inquiry is in locating the study of the “observed and observing self” as it works “within the discourse of “consciousness”.

This uncommon choreographic converdance with dance, co-mingling with artistic expression with ink and paint, develops a phenomenological theory of the body-mind complex. The collective work of this exploration of cognition and synaesthetic perception, from a voice of the dancer/artist speaking from a lived experience, situates it self within present developing philosophical theories.

As said previously I have based the descriptions of the 108 karanas on Dr. 

485 Sarasa Krishnan, Chapter 1 of this thesis.
Manomohan Ghosh’s (Bharata and Ghosh 2002) translation of the Natyashastra, Kapila Vatsyayan’s book Bharata: The Natyashastra (Vatsyayan 1996), Aadya Rangacharya’s, book The Natyasastra as well as from Padma Subramaniam’s book of Karanas (Subrahmanyam 2003). Some illustrations in this chapter are created as transitional ones (as ascribed by Swami Shantanand) and may seem to conflict with the translations provided by Ghosh and Rangacharya and, in some cases, my written word. This is intentional, as the reader is required to see the transition from word to illustration.

In this reading, I have also included the perspective of an expert physiotherapist to peer into the world of movement as presented by Bharata. G. Malliga Jegasothy, a Bharata Natyam dancer herself in her early years, presents fresh insight into the kinesthetic of movement, weight distribution and planes of movement within anatomical digressions. Sports scientist Dharmendra Ganesh has worked with me in identifying the muscular-skeletal anatomical analysis and function. This is the first step in

487 Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers 2014
488 Karanas. Common Dance Codes of India and Indonesia. Published by Nrittyodaya 2003
489 Ms Gnanalethchumy Maliga Jegasothy [APAM] with over 35 years of experience in the rehabilitation of movement after paralysis, of individuals with acquired brain injury and with rehabilitation experience, working with clients with congenital and acquired movement disorders.
490 Darmendra studies Sports Science at Edith Cowan University in Singapore.
understanding neuro-musculature. This study of the physical embodiment of movement, still in a state of infancy, may open pathways to a karana-based research in embodied cognition. I will continue this strain of research in the future, by looking into the possible relationship between the body and conscious mind and in the electrochemical interactions within the body, provided by the various stances and gestures. Within existing theories of consciousness, I hope to locate the granularity and dimensionality of conscious perception, within the possible meditative phenomenological excursions, presented by the karanas of Bharata.
A few samples of the 108 KARANAS of Bharata are provided below.

No: 79
"Behind the shell of the image is an ocean of sensate experience. Behind the coagulation of visual cognition is the torrential flux of a living nervous system. Beyond the boundary between artwork and observer is a fluid interplay between embodied perception and sensorial stimuli. Beyond the canon of codified aesthetics is an emerging compositional gesture that weaves evolutionary poetic dimensions of corporeality into the vital flow of embodied experience." (Raikes 2013)

No: 84
[Proprioception-neuro-muscular- anatomy-energy fields]

491 Heather Raikes- Body (neo) Poetic
Based on the infrastructure of the four Vedas, Bharata formulated a theory of theatre and aesthetics, a complex one that established correspondences between limbs and organs of the human body, and the senses with to aspects of the cosmos, where time, space, earth are consecrated to mirror a cosmic order. In enunciating another ‘path’ of human experience of the formless Brahman (GOD) through the world of name and form, Bharata chiseled and concretized a system that enabled the presentation of the metaphysical to the physical (Vatsyayan 1997). Innate and in fact central within this morphology is the theory of Rasa.

Although Bharata’s main thrust of his theatre theory was in the creation of Rasa, he took great pains in formulating the movement syntheses of the Karana in great detail.

The study of body awareness and various, kinesthetic, somatic and therapeutic approaches has been an ongoing subject since pre-Vedic times; although there is a tradition that it was first studied in by scholar and physician Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484-1558) in 1557. (Hagood and Brennan 2011), Ayurveda and Yoga have addressed these systems of somatic

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492 Kapila Vatsyayan was one of the first scholars to perambulate this idea. (The Square and The Circle of Indian Arts 1997)

493 Reported in Western world, that it was first studied in by scholar and physician Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484-1558) in 1557. http://www.twu.edu/downloads/dance/Hagood__Brennan_WDA_edited_.(4).pdf
understanding in great detail (Patwardhan 2010). The systematic creation and implementation of the serious study of such disciplines for the dancer, I propose, began with the karanas by Bharata. The series of karanas, studied as a creative movement and as a means to kinesthetic learning and conceptual appropriation, may possibly lead to significant ‘neural firings’ and increased electrical activity within the somato-sensory cortex.\(^{495}\)

The study of pranic energy and nadis, a somatic network of subtle channels within the body, was an advanced and accepted science in Bharata’s time: “the nadis can be understood as a dematerialized, expanded dimension of the body’s fluid and nervous systems. The dynamic flow of prana through the circuitry of the nadis constitutes the pranic body.”\(^{496}\) (Raikes 2013)

The science of ‘Mantra Sastra’, an ancient Indian science of recitation of ‘seed’ sound syllables called ‘mantras’, it is argued by Hindu scholars, creates mystical energy fields that work with aural perception, the nervous system, and pranic energy, that in turn affect consciousness.

Swami Shantanand Sarasawati in his lecture on energy fields speaks about an

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494 Origins said to be written between 5000BCE (Knowledge received through revelation by Sage Dhanvatari)
Ayurveda is one of the oldest extant health systems in the world with wide acceptance among large segments of the population in South Asia, especially in India. The logic, theoretical foundations and epistemology of Ayurveda are based on the six darsanas, mainly the Samkhya and Nyaya-Vaishesika systems of natural philosophy. Ayurveda’s unique, humane, personalized and holistic approach considers body, mind and spirit along with their relationships with nature.(Bhushan Patwardhan- Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative medicine. Jan. 2010 Vol.1
495 National Center for Biotechnology Information (www.ncbi.nlm.gov)
496 Heather Raikes
ancient recitation from the Krishna Yajur Veda, Rudram: 497

* So, the SRI RUDRAM is now pointing out which part of our body is occupied by which Devata.

....... Devata means a particular type of Frequency of Energy manifesting as a particular Function in the Cosmos.
So, if we say Indra is occupying this portion or that, it is not that we say someone is occupying your nose or back or spine or whatnot.
It all means that a particular frequency is occupying a particular portion of the body, which also is told by modern science.

So, it is not a dead matter but a living organism.
A living organism has the capacity
to multiply, grow, expand, decay, and then disappear and die498(Raikes 2013).
A non-living organism is dead matter - it neither grows, nor breathes, nor that or this, and one fine morning, disappears.

The Ancient Seers knew this scientific concept long ago.
Instead of using dry and drab scientific terminology, They put it in a Beautiful, Poetic way. *(Swami Shantanand Saraswati 2004)*

Hence in the Sri Rudram prayer below, the various energy fields connected to various parts of the human body can be noted. Rajagopala Aiyar provides the translation.

**SRI RUDRAM**499(Rajagopala Aiyar 1999)

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497 Lecture, 8th February, 2004 The Temple of Fine Arts Kuala Lumpur,
498 The fluid aspect invokes the fundamentally dynamic essence of embodiment. Our bodies are 60-80% water. The living body is sustained by the rhythmic motion of the breath and the heartbeat. Cells constantly form and die. 50 million cells in the body will have died and been replaced in the time that it takes to read this sentence. 15 million blood cells are destroyed every second. 40,000 dead skin cells fall off of the body every minute. In an average lifetime, a human will shed 40 pounds of skin. The stomach produces a new lining every three days. 98% of the atoms in the body are replaced each year. Approximately every seven years, the body replaces the equivalent of an entire skeleton. Every human being spent about 30 minutes as a single cell. (Rea, 1997, p. 24-25). This is to say that there is essentially nothing about the living body that is static or fixed at any moment in time. The natural state of the human body is fundamentally dynamic, fluid, oscillating in continuous waves of motion and change. The fluid body serves as 'bridge' between the physical and pranic dimensions – a bridge between materialized and dematerialized states of being. –Heather Raikes

499 T.R. Rajagopala Aiyar, Sri Rudram and Chamakm, Bharatiya Vidyabhaven, 1999
**PRAJAANANEY BRAHMAA TISTATU**  
(Face be stationed by Brahma)

**PAADAYOR VISHNU TISTATU**  
(Feet be stationed by Vishnu)

**HASTAYOR HARAS TISTATU**  
(Hands be stationed by Hara)

**BAAHOR INDRAS TISTATU**  
(Chest be stationed by Indra)

**JATAREY AGNIS TISTATU**  
(Stomach be stationed by Agni)

**HRIDAYEY SHIVAS TISTATU**  
(Heart be stationed by Shiva)

**KANTEY VASAVAS TISTANTU**  
(Throat be stationed by the 8 Vasus)

**VAKTREY SARASVATI TISTATU**  
(Speech be stationed by Saraswati)

**NASHIKAYOR VAAYU TISTATU**  
(Nostrils be stationed by Vayu)

**NAYANAYOR CHANDRADITYAO TISTEYTAAM**  
(Left and right Eyes be stationed by Sun and Moon)

**KARNAYOR ASHVINAU TISTEYTAAM**  
(Ears be stationed by Ashwin Twins)

**LALATEY RUDRAS TISTANTU**  
(Space Between Eyebrows be stationed by Rudra)

**MURDHNI AADITYA TISTANTU**  
(Forehead be stationed by Aditya)

**SHIRASI MAHAADEVAS TISTATU**  
(Head be stationed by Mahadeva)

**SHIKHAAYAM VAMADEVAS TISTATU**  
(Top of the Head be stationed by Vamadeva)

**PRUSHTEY PINAAKI TISTATU**  
(Seat/Posterior be stationed by Pinaake)
Rather than giving a sampling of the above set of mantras and meanings, I have included the entire portion to demonstrate the convergence of ‘cosmic space and time’ to ‘no space and time’. The universal and cosmic is located within the local and finite. According to the above mentioned scriptural teachings, each limb of the body is sheathed in protective verse with corresponding energy fields. The correspondences attributed between the five elements, the constellation of stars and the physical human form are significant. Here cosmic activity is directly interlocked with specific human activity (for example in the above mentioned mantra

‘KARNAYOR ASHVINAU TISTEYTAAM’- Ears be stationed by Ashwin Twins: the “ears”
here are configured with the twin stars, Pollux and Castor (Zimmermann 2012).

The dancer, while performing ritual listens to cadences of these mantras, allows the sounds to sift through the consciousness and experiences some kind of transformation while moving within the set motion of ritual dance.

Aural and visual perception, in other words, create psychophysical awareness that works within the somatic spheres of embodied movement.

As I have argued earlier, neuroscientists today, using modern imaging methods (NCBI 2001), have refined human somatotopic ‘maps’ to study the mechano-sensory stimulation of different parts of the human anatomy. The diagram below (Wikipedia 2014) shows the regions of corresponding stimulus.

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500 http://www.space.com/16816-gemini-constellation.html
Note Diagram: I would like to point out that the somatotopic map of the brain gives high importance to the head / face and hands regions. This probably represents the complexity of movement / perception of these organs and hence they are allocated a larger area of cortex.

Bharata’s study of the body and movement structures, through the somatosensory signals within the 108 karana complex, may well be the beginning of the study of neural correlates, ‘peri-personal space’ (Ramakonar, Franz and Lind 2011) and ‘body ownership’ (Tsakiris, Boy, Haggard, Fink and Hesse 2007). The term ‘proprioception’ here requires definition. It is basically the perception and sense of relative position of a

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503 Peri-personal space is a cognitive neuroscience concept describing the area which closely surrounds a person’s body, represented by a specialized brain system integrating multisensory inputs. Hari Ramakonar, Elizabeth A. Franz, Christopher R.P. Lind, *Journal of Clinical Neuroscience* 18 2011 (Primary source; Makin TR Holmes NP, Ehrsson HH)

504 When I decide to write, I do not need to look for my hand in the same way that I have to look for a pen or a piece of paper, for the simple reason that my hand is “always there” (James 1890), present with me. This example illustrates the immediacy of experiences of one’s own body. The feeling that “my body” belongs to me, and is ever present in my mental life, is called body ownership (Gallagher 2000). The sense of body ownership gives somatosensory signals a special phenomenal quality, and it is fundamental to self-consciousness:

body part. It is essential for controlled movement as this sensory modality allows us to modulate out movements according to our joint and limb position.

Proprioception and inter-sensory matches appropriate immediacy of experience. This awareness, and the possible pressure index associated with holding (and enduring) the transitional positions within the 108 karana system, may well play an important part in the organization within sensory cortices in the brain, which are essential for perception, cognition. Scientific and philosophical research in this domain still remains a tantalising puzzle for neuroscience and consciousness studies. Investigation into this kinaesthetic-anatomical postulation should perhaps be viewed as a somatic science and not only as dance movement. This shift in focus, though seemingly radical, may illuminate our understanding. The possibility of Bharata creating a movement based ‘yoga dance’ that not only incorporates the 8 rasas, but also used breath (as apparent in the ‘Kudiaattam’505 (Nair 2007) actor), as well as possible neuro-muscular activation of pranic energy. As Vedic rituals506 included dance in Bharata’s time, yogic methodology, science of Ayurveda, breath control and rhythmic respiration through recitation of mantras, that

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505 Svara- vayu, Sreenath Nair (Restoration of breath)
506 Rig veda
precipitate what are called the body winds (prana, apana, vyana, udana, samana)\(^\text{507}\) (Zysk 1993), may also have been part of the ritual.

Beyond this, the “spiritual quest through meditation for the Universal principle behind all existence”, was the goal of Vedic existence. Zysk’s\(^\text{508}\) investigation into the science of respiration and bodily winds uncovered the vital core of the philosophy of Vedic thought:

“...these ascetics realised that breath was the closest physical manifestation of the ultimate, unchanging, creative force in man, his atman, or soul the embodiment of the Brahman, or Universal spirit. Prana is the seat of the Brahman and arises from the atman”\(^\text{Zysk 1993}\)

Recitation of mantras, a common code of practice at that time, would have included the harnessing of prana through the breath and movement. For dancers, living in the Vedic period, the methodology of the karanas then at once become dynamic, poetically beautiful and also a transformative tool.

This initial investigation into such aspects could lead us to a clearer perception and create pathways in our understanding of possible transformations in consciousness. Such a somatic scrutiny may contribute to the investigation of the significance of movement in creation of rasa, within

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507 In classical Indian medicine, there are ordinarily five bodily winds or breaths operating in the body to regulate and stimulate various internal functions: 1. prana, the “front breath,” located in the mouth, ensures respiration and swallowing; 2. uddana, the “upward moving breath,” produces speech; 3. samana, the “concentrated breath,” promotes digestion; 4. apana, the “downward moving breath,” ensures excretion and childbirth; and 5. vyana, the “diffused breath,” circulates in the limbs and motivates their movement. Kenneth G. Zysk.

508 The Science of Respiration and the Doctrine of the Bodily Winds in Ancient India. Author(s): Kenneth G. Zysk.
Published by: American Oriental Society.
the universe of our consciousness, and processed within the complex event of theatre.

The following pages begin with a physiotherapist’s analysis of the static movement postures of the first five karanas, with reference to planes of movement and body weight distribution. A chart by a sports scientist, looking at the muscular-skeletal anatomy of the first two karanas, follows this analysis.

Thus the Physiotherapist says...

This method of describing movement ensures that movements are reproduced with precision by a skilled dancer.

Movement is described by the angle of movement or degrees of movement at:

1. Head and neck

2. Body posture

A. Arm or Upper Limb – shoulder, elbow, wrist and finger joints. Angles presented here are of movement at each joint, with reference to plane of movement.
B. Leg or Lower limb – hip, knee, ankle and toes. Angles are of movement at each joint, with reference to planes and axis of movement.

**What is the function of these postures?**

From a physiotherapy perspective, the joint and muscle work required in order to assume these postures require muscle endurance and strength:

- The dancer can train endurance into her muscles by holding these postures for a prescribed time.
- The dancer can train strength in her muscles by holding these postures.
- The dancer trains her mind and trains her concentration to ensure each joint is held at the correct angle for the prescribed time period.
- The dancer trains her gestalt, i.e. ability to maintain a mental image of position of every joint in the body, which is crucial for a dancer.
- The dancer is able to maintain this gestalt when moving at speed.
- Though the word ‘relaxed’ is used, it implies a ‘controlled’ relaxed position, a readiness to move out of the position being held.
- All postures require abdominal muscle control.
- There is a strong emphasis on abdominal control and selective thoracic movement.

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509 Proprioception
• All foot positions require some form of muscle contraction in the small muscles of the foot, some degree of downward pressure of the toes, especially the big toe.

• The lower limbs are ‘hard-wired’ to move in a sequential pattern when a signal from big toe flexor is initiated. This ensures all the muscles of movement are ready to move as required. This prevents strain on the knee.

• If these postures are the end postures of a movement sequence, then there is training of the power component of muscles. To achieve power there must be strength and speed. The movement has to be done at a set speed. The faster the speed, the more strength is required and therefore more power is achieved in a movement.

A dancer must train for endurance, strength and power. The dancer must pay due diligence to train in the same way as a marathon participant, while simultaneously training as a sprint participant.

There are prescribed traditional methods for these training schedules, laid down by teachers in various classical traditions. These phrases of movement may be termed yoga dancing or the yoga of dancing.

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510 This observation is derived from 35 years of clinical experience of M.Jegasothy.
Incorporating this with breathing techniques (used in Yoga practice), and with the control of abdominal muscles to anchor the body, while learning to move, these ‘static postures’ and ‘dynamic movements’ may be meditative and therapeutic for dancers.

My own considered opinion is that dancers need not to sit in Yoga postures. They can achieve the same benefit in their own practise using these movement motions of the Karanas as a form of “Yoga Dancing” (Swami Shantanand Saraswati 1987) or “Yoga in Dance” or “Yoga of Dance”.

**Planes of Movement:**

Ø Frontal or coronal plane separates body into “front – anterior” and “back – posterior” parts.

Ø Sagittal plane separates body into R and L halves.

Ø Horizontal plane or transverse plane– reference to “superior or above”, and “inferior or below”.

511 A term coined by Swami Shantanand Saraswati in 1987
The above planes of body diagrams\(^{512}\) (as indicated in Commons.wikimedia.org 2013) demonstrates planes of movement used to reference body position in space. Movement planes change according to the direction that the person is facing – with reference to cardinal points. For examples below, the person is facing the reader.

Ø Flexion – is always done in the sagittal plane, ‘bending forward’ – in relation to the direction that person is facing relative to cardinal points.

Ø Extension – reverse of above.

Ø Abduction – movement in coronal plane away from the body – ‘side-ways’

Ø Adduction- movement in the coronal plane toward the body

Ø Rotation – in horizontal plane- either external rotation – turning outwards, away from the body / or internal rotation – turning inwards towards the body.
The following describes static posture using body angles to determine final position.

1. **TALAPUSPAPUTA**

   **Head** – midline

   - **Mid line** – chin over sternal notch, relaxed
   - **Shoulders** – square- held at neutral shoulder blade position.
   - **Body weight**: on Left leg.

   **Upper Limbs [UL] /Arm posture:**
o Left hand just above the umbilicus.

o Right hand over Left.

o Right thumb resting on top of the Left thumb

**Lower Limb [LL] position/ Leg posture**

o Feet in coronal plane −120° externally rotated at hip

o Both knees bend to 1/3 of body height.

o Left heel behind Right. Body weight on Left foot.

o Right heel raised just resting on balls of Right foot.

  o Check position: mid point of R knee over 2nd toe.

**Trunk position**

o Right shoulder over mid Right thigh. Right Lateral shift of rib cage.

o Axis of Movement: in coronal plane. Rib cage moves laterally to the
  Right, moving the shoulders into position.

o Movement occurring at mid to lower thoracic region, hip girdle
  anchored.
2. **VARTITA**

- **Head**: midline – in relation to body position

- **Mid line**: chin over sternal notch, relaxed

- **Shoulders**: square

- **Body weight**: over left leg.

- **Arms**: held away from the body, left arm relaxed into straight posture.

  Right arm about 10° abduction. Arms held, externally rotated at
shoulders, extended at elbow and palms facing forward [supination at elbow]. Wrist and fingers in relaxed extension.

- **Legs**: both legs externally rotated through 90°. Left foot flat on the floor, body weight on Left. Right foot moved ½ foot away from start position. Heel raised resting on the balls of the foot [over metatarsal/phalangeal joints]

- **Knee bent**: Left knee more than 45° and Right knee less than 45°

- **Body rotation**: about 5° rotation of body to the Left – head in midline.

- **Axis of movement**: in transverse plane, movement occurring at lower thoracic joints, hip and hip girdle fixed.
3. VALITORUKA

- **Head**: looking down – head tilt following the eyes, looking down to the right

- **Shoulder position**: square

- **Body weight**: on left leg.
o **Arms:** finger position below ‘breasts’. Right arm - right fingers – tip of index on top of the tip of the thumb. Other fingers flexed – relaxed.

Right wrist in extension. Right elbow - forearm pronated, flexed. Elbow point at 45° abduction Right shoulder. Left arm - left fingers – palm flexed upward, pad of the index finger on top of the pad of the thumb, other fingers flexed relaxed. Left Wrist flexed to 45°. Left Elbow:

Forearm supinated, point of elbow less than 45° abduction.

o **Legs:** in full external rotation - 90°. Knees – flexed to ¼ of body height.

Right foot – resting on the toes – not over metatarsal phalangeal joints. Right heel held at height just over the top of the Left heel. Left – foot flat, weight over the left foot.

o **Trunk rotation:** 10° to the left, no lateral shift of rib cage.
4. APAVIDDHA

- **Head**: held midline

- **Shoulder**: square

- **Body weight**: equal over both feet.

- **Legs**: Right leg – turned 90° external rotation at hip, foot flat, with heel in front of Left heel by 1 heel width. Left leg – turned 90° external rotation at hip, foot flat in same line with Right heel. Both knees – bent to 1/3 of body height.
- **Arms**: Right arm – rests on upper 1/3 of thigh in *Pataka*, fingers inwards. Left arm – in supination, in *Kapita* - wrist flexion 20°, held below left breast line.

- **Trunk posture**: flexed at hips – slightly forward position

5. **SAMANAKHA**

- **Head**: held midline

- **Shoulders**: square
- **Body weight**: equal over both feet.

- **Legs**: both straight, knees straight, feet side by side but at level of hips. Outside of each foot should be in line with the hip.

- **Arms**: both arms held relaxed by side of body. Forearms neutral.

- **Trunk posture**: relaxed but straight.
### TALAPUSPAPUTA

#### A Biomechanics and Performance Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Body Part</th>
<th>Action Performed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>Glenohumeral Joint (Shoulder)</td>
<td>Abduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Deltoids</td>
<td>Abduction at shoulder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Supraspiniatus</td>
<td>Abduction at shoulder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>Humeroulna &amp; Humeroradial Joint (elbow)</td>
<td>Flexion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Bicep Brachii</td>
<td>Flexion at elbow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Brachiallis</td>
<td>Flexion at elbow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Brachioradialis</td>
<td>Flexion at elbow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>Proximal Radioulna</td>
<td>Internal Rotation / Slight Pronation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Pronator Teres</td>
<td>Pronation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Pronator Quadratus</td>
<td>Pronation</td>
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<td>Rotation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Obliques (External and Internal)</td>
<td>Trunk Rotation and lateral Flexion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Hips and Below**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>Hip Joint</td>
<td>Abduction/ Flexion/ External Rotation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Gluteus Maximus</td>
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<td>Iliacus</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Psoas Major</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Obturators</td>
<td>External Rotation of Hip</td>
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<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Pirifomis</td>
<td>External Rotation and abduction of Hip</td>
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<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Gemelli (superior and inferior)</td>
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<td>Quadratus Femoris</td>
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<td>Knee Joint</td>
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<td>Popliteus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Rectus femoris</td>
<td>Flexion at hip</td>
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</table>
A muscle is strengthened when it’s trained near its current maximal force generating capacity. Progressive resistance training, isometric training and isokinetic training are the three common methods to train muscles to become stronger.

When a dancer holds these Karna poses we are looking at the isometric training method, or the static training. This form of training activates the muscle fibres without observable change in the muscle fibre length.

However in order to get to these poses the dancer would need to perform concentric and eccentric actions on various muscles in order to achieve these poses. A concentric action occurs when the muscles shorten and joint
movement occurs as tension develops. For example in the Talapuspaputa pose, Bicep Femoris, Semimembranosus and Semitendinosus perform a concentric action. An eccentric action occurs when the muscle lengthens while developing tension. In this pose the rectus femoris and the quadriceps muscle groups perform an eccentric action as the muscle lengthens while the dancer is sitting down in the pose.

A lateral shift of the rib cage towards the right would also cause an activation of the, Obliques (External and Internal). Though the degree to which the shift is not confirmed we can physically view that it causes the right shoulder to fall over the right thigh. This would mean that a certain degree of concentric action is required of the dancer’s obliques in order to achieve this pose.

These actions help the dancer form the pose but essentially when a dancer holds the pose for a prolonged period of time, the muscles activated by the isometric action would help the dancer strengthen the muscles, as although from a physics point of view this action does not equate to work being produced, but it can generate a considerable amount of force despite the lack of activating the muscle sarcomeres through lengthening or shortening.
### VARTITA

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<td>Humerolna &amp; Humeroradial Joint (elbow)</td>
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<td>Anconeus</td>
<td>Extension at elbow joint</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Triceps Brachii (Lateral, medial and long head)</td>
<td>Extension at elbow joint</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>Proximal Radiolna</td>
<td>Supination</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Supinators</td>
<td>Supination at elbow joint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bone</td>
<td>Metacarpophalangeal Joints</td>
<td>Extension</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Extensor Digitorum</td>
<td>Extension at wrist and finger joints</td>
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<td>Rectus femoris</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Semimembranosus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Semitendinosus</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Using the same analysis for Varita, the right arm is held in 10° in abduction, which would activate the Deltoids, Supraspiniatus strengthening them using the isometric activation methods. Though the abduction is set to a minimum of 10°, a prolonged period of holding the arm in that position would cause the muscle to activate. However, further studies must be done, to evaluate to what extent do, the isometric activation affect the muscle group.

This pose requires the right heel of the dancer to be off the floor, which would mean that more weight and force is being borne by the left quadriceps muscle groups and the hamstrings groups. This would cause a greater force on the muscles of the left leg strengthening them more than the right.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bone</th>
<th>Talocrural (Ankle) Right</th>
<th>Plantar Flexion</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Gastrocnemius</td>
<td>Plantar flexion of ankle and Flexion at knee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Fibularis Brevis</td>
<td>Plantar flexion at ankle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Fibularis Longus</td>
<td>Plantar flexion at ankle and supports the longitudinal arch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Plantaris</td>
<td>Flexion at knee and Plantar flexion at ankle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Soleus</td>
<td>Plantar flexion at ankle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Tibialis Posterior</td>
<td>Plantar flexion at ankle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Flexor Digitorum Longus</td>
<td>Flexion at joints of toes 2-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Flexor halluces Longus</td>
<td>Flexion at joint of great toe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As for the raised heel a prolonged period of time may activate the Gastrocnemius, Soleus Fibularis Brevis, Fibularis Longus, Plantaris, Tibialis Posterior, Flexor Digitorum Longus and the Flexor hallucis Longus as a flexion of the knee and the ankle is present in this pose. The isometric activation may help to strengthen these muscles, which are essential for a dancer, as it promotes ankle stability. This would help the dancer to stabilise and strengthen the smallest joint in the lower proximity.

Note:

The implications of such a study is huge. What if the body of the dancer, while being fine-tuned, may also be receiving other neurological and physiological benefits? A deeper investigation into this aspect of analysis is valid and further relevant physio-neurological tests and controlled studies may reveal psychophysical benefits.
Conclusion

Bharata’s karana movement, the processes of immediacy of experience, proprioception and inter-sensory matches (integrated by the cerebellum) become coherent. This, with the pressure index associated with holding (and enduring) the transitional positions within the 108 karana system, stimulate not only kinesthetic awareness but organized within sensory cortices in the brain, affect perception and cognition. The added use of sound induced energy fields from mantra sastra, through the aural sensory receptors may then ultimately induce transformation within the waking consciousness of the dancer.

A speculation.

Is there a possibility that Bharata devised a multi pronged tool through the karana?

1. To create moments of beauteous movement

2. To strengthen the technique and posture by holding and moving the body, in specific manner and to temper the bones, muscles and nerves

3. Harnessing pranic energy through breath and creating positive energy fields through sounding and recitation of mantras.
4. Holding certain muscles and gestures that could increase synaptic firing and increase neural activity. This increase may synthesize the ‘naadis’ within the human anatomy to produce higher pranic energy.

5. The karanas thus being moving poetry stimulate the psychophysical in the artist and ‘pleasure and joy’ through visual and aural representation in the spectator, inducing the aesthetic experience in both artist and spectator.

This convergence of science, arts and ritual presents a speculative epistemology of aesthetics. Like the notions of probability and outcome, within quantum theory, creativity, the creation and subjective-objective experience are thus validated. Most importantly, consciousness is transformed.

This speculation finds grounding in the views and insight of Kapila Vatsyayan...

“Although Bharata does not discuss the existence of the spinal cord and vertebrae, nor does he talk of limbs and organs in terms of bones, joints, a careful reading of the text makes it amply clear that the bones or bone structure as points of articulation were is chief concern....micro and macro-movements of the body and speaks of relaxation and contraction (sphurita and ksama, etc) these aspects do not receive as much attention as that which evolves from the anatomical armature...A comparison of this section of the Natyashastra with the body system explained in the Cikitsasastra and Ayurdevedic texts and followed by the Hathayoga systems make the many interesting interconnections clear. Indeed the repeat use of vyayama (exercise) in the context of angika provides a clue for tracing the sources of Bharata’s technique in the early system of Indian medicine... Bharata was as much indebted to the Upanishadic thought and Vedic yagna as to Cikitsasastras understanding of the physical body. While in the latter, and in
the Hathayoga the possibility of controlling the mind through the physical body was being explored, in the Natyashastra the possibility of the physical body to manifest and evoke psychic states is thoroughly investigated. ...The Upanishads is translated into a mighty system of biological, physical and psychical functions all set in an ascending order and continuum.”513 (Vatsyayan 1997)

Being a multi-layered cluster of knowledge, the Natyashastra fundamentally encompasses mathematics, physics, biological sciences, and the arts. The decoding of the various simplistic rituals and understanding the basis of this synthesis of ‘sciences’ is in itself the very purpose of its creative genius. An integral vision of this process and the unraveling of a new world-view, would achieve a greater understanding.514 (Vatsyayan 1997)

This work is only a beginning of such an investigation.

514 Summary of ideas from Vatsyayan The Square and Circle of the Indian Arts
CHAPTER 9

The Nine Veils of Ascension

“The morning glory blossoms only for an hour and yet it differs not at heart from the pine, which may endure for a thousand years” - Matsunaga

Shakti the Eternal Energy: painting by Sarasa Krishnan

Preamble

Our consciousness is informed by all that we see, all that we have experienced and all that we hear and have learnt. The way that we move and act is based upon this past experience, and this, in turn, informs the way we perceive the world.

This chapter will discuss and interpret the performance, “Shakti the Eternal Energy- Seeing Music, Hearing Images, Painting Dance” (Krishnan 2008) as an example of an experimental performance structure that embodies the research in this thesis. While it focuses on the encapsulated spaces in awareness before the creative act, it views adaptive responses in consciousness, set within the geometrical symbol of consciousness, The Sri Yantra. The Sri Yantra is a symbolic representation of the vast reality of consciousness. Creativity, I have argued, stems from a deep stillness within this consciousness. My research of this aspect of consciousness is also aimed to be a systematic observation of experience; that is on lived human experience as it appears in the areas of consciousness, emotion, language, reasoning, cognition and aesthetics. Implicitly, it is a creative analysis of a link from ‘thought to action’, one that correlates creative processes within the mind of an artist, dancer and, more importantly, the observing entity of

516 Shakti The Eternal Energy, 2008 - A multidisciplinary performance choreographed and presented by Sarasa Krishnan at The Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August 2008 in Scotland
the Self, within the dancer/choreographer, the painting artist.

This relationship between the artist and observer also highlights the significance of who the ‘self’ is in the observer and what exactly is being observed as an aesthetic object. The eternal subject-object dichotomy is examined through this investigation, sometimes in the questioning of concepts of perception within Bharata’s Rasa theory and Tantric and Advaita philosophy, which deliver original answers. The nature of artistic experience, including the creator and the receiver of that experience, ultimately can only be viewed as relational, and in this light all parts of the event are interconnected. The creator and the receiver meet in the artistic experience and, while differentiation is recognized, this dichotomy is dispensed with in the meeting itself. The experience is doubly charged as the aesthetic experience itself can metamorphose into a spiritual one.

When the ‘language’ of art-forms flow and merge like poetry, as in Renga poetry, Noh dance in (Japanese) or Raga in music or Odissi dance (Indian), the merging enhances both forms but remains and enables aesthetic enjoyment as single art forms or as a total experience. When Rasa as an experience is transformed from the aesthetic to spiritual, not only the dichotomy of creator and receiver vanishes, but the duality becomes a

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517 Endless debate prevails throughout the world on this subject in all philosophical traditions.
Appreciating a work of art and the recognition of its representational content, either as aesthetic or as sacred, means seeking a rare insight into not only the work’s graphic or plastic qualities but also its process as an interpretive mechanism to view the sacred within the ‘secular’ in these performances. Though both (sacred/secular) are adjunct to the intention of the artist and the empathy present in audience perception, the transcending of the mundane poses new ontological questions in ‘being’ and Reality. There is an experience within the dancer while in the height of performance, where the dancer “is able to completely identify with the action performed and, in so doing, to ‘forget’ her own self. …This optimal state, one can reach and experience God or some form of divine power” Catalano coins this experience “performative consciousness”, where the dancer ideally experiences her body as the subject of the action performed (rather than as object of as in a learning process); and where the mind and body are equally co-present in performing the action (Catalano 2014). I believe that it is within this performative consciousness where, while being completely aware of this subject/object dichotomy, the dancer is able to step back and allow the

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518 ‘art as a secular form’ of expression
witnessing Self to watch the experience. It is like being as ‘one’, self, merging into Self: the ego-self behind the Unlimited Self. The individual ego personality is required to ‘dissolve’ in order to know the Real Self. (swami-krishnananda.org 2014) It is this dissolving that I refer to as ‘stepping back’. This presence of the real “Self” is also discernible by silently watching one’s thoughts, upon the canvas of consciousness. It requires a passive witnessing, a ‘stepping back’ (swami-krishnananda.org 2014). It is like an experience where you as an ego personality is ‘barely there’ but views the experience through the lens of the Self.

“When I dance I am really an abstraction, a creature set apart from time and space, unrelated to human things in an ordinary sense. I feel a certain limitless state of being, a curious unending movement not only of my dance, but of my very being. I could go on and on without cessation, subject only to the necessary limits of the body” (Lamothe 2014)

Thus, it is in this consciousness that I, the artist or painter, paints in performance. It is this strange dichotomous experience that allows the

520 “Consciousness is absolute Intelligence, unlimited Self-luminosity. Even in all the states of waking, dreaming, deep sleep, swooning, etc., the Self ever remains as the indispensable and indisputable immediacy of Consciousness, a witness of all states. Unaffected and unaltered, it remains in its purity, as the eternal principle in all states of experience. Ultimate Existence is identical with Infinite Consciousness and not individual consciousness. The Real is Impersonal, and the individual is personal!” – Swami Krishnananda.

521 Through what can one know the Knower?—Brihadaranyaka Upanishad., II. 4. 14.-”He who breathes in with your prana, is the Self of yours, which is in all things. He who breathes out with your apana, breathes about with your vyana, breathes up with your udana, is the Self of yours, which is in all things.” Yajnavalkya declares with the certainty of a seer of the Truth, “You cannot see the Seer of seeing. You cannot hear the Hearer of hearing. You cannot think the Thinker of thinking. You cannot understand the Understander of understanding. He is your Self, which is in all things.” The knowing subject is the essence of the being of the Self, and hence, it is not an object of knowledge. Consciousness cannot be conscious of Consciousness, even as one cannot climb on one’s own shoulders.– S.Krishnananda. (http://www.swami-krishnananda.org/realis/realis_4.html)

522 Ruth St.Denis as quoted by LaMothe,Kimerer, (Intellec Journal of Performing Arts. Volume 1, no.1 pg 58)
flow of creative patterning that translates movement to become a painting, through the dancer, Sarasa. Dance as such is represented through rhythmic and melodic movement. In moving in this manner as a kinetic function, it animates patterns and sensations that a person has created. Sensory awareness is awakened.

Lamothe, writing about Anthropologist Keeney’s ecokineti...
Thus, the aural and movement perception within the dance performance converts to the visual, though colours and form and lines of energy. The dancer, the visual artist ‘melt and merge’ in their creative capacities to create an aesthetic form through painting. This sustained ‘performative consciousness’ is held within a deep prolonged engagement with culture and ritual. It is an engagement advanced by a tacit knowing. Years of dance training technique together with meditative practices in the Sri Yantra have helped train my cultural consciousness to be fine-tuned enough to imbue my dance with the resonances of the ‘sublime’, when listening to the mantras and sacred music and chanting.

Vatsyayan quotes St. Thomas:

525 As dancers at TFA, we paid attention to the many discourses that Swamiji had delivered to us, one of which is as follows: the reason for the creation of the Natyasastra was to re-establish the state of enlightenment lost by humans. He further added that in the course of practice (years of practice, or/and perhaps not achieving it in one lifetime) one day the dancer would move on to a state that, while in performance, his or her consciousness would become so saturated that he or she would become one with Om, the primordial sound vibration of the universe, and all will be silent. That is the day which, Swamiji says, every dancer should strive to attain. This is one of the reasons Swamiji founded TFA as a house for the performing arts, which provides a platform for individuals to This is the very same “field of Brahman” elaborated in TFA’s AMND radar field in Chapter Four where the energy from the “field of Brahman” (fairies) affects the psychoenergetic core of the mortals, releasing them from their chaos to realising their true selves. return to their natural and original state with Brahman (Meyer-Dinkgräfe 2001: 5 & 101-102) (Haney and Malekin 2001: 104-105). Thus with Swamiji’s guidance, dancers are given a platform to experiment with Bharata’s Sastra through the many related fields of the performing arts, slowly moving to that one blessed moment in time when all will become, in Vijay Mishra’s reading of Indian sublime, the moment of self-extinction (realisation) (Mishra 1998). In sharing Swamiji’s opinion Meyer-Dinkgrafe similarly argues that the Natyasastra’s purpose is to facilitate humans to reconnect with the lost truths of the Vedas (Meyer-Dinkgräfe 2001: 100) by providing a training platform to achieve enlightenment (Meyer-Dinkgräfe 2001: 166). This training platform will spark the nadam (primordial sound or Om) to resonate within every atom of the human body increasing in strength, causing it to dance and finally ending in perceiving the truth (Meyer-Dinkgräfe 2001: 100). As mentioned earlier, the Natyasastra has a dualistic function of raising the levels of consciousness both in the performer and the audience, meaning that when the performer is at a higher level of aesthetic consciousness, the audience thus experiencing that state of expansion from the performer, will then be transported to the same level of aesthetic consciousness in achieving the goal of moksha (liberation). This fulfills the purpose of the Natyasastra in restoring the golden age (Meyer-Dinkgräfe 2001: 5-6). (Pillai M 2011)

526 Stanislavski, Vakhtangov, Chekhov, Zarrilli, Artaud were some western artistes who understood the value of yoga and body-mind and imbibed it into their systems of thought.
“It is of the essence of art to bring back into order the multiplicity of Nature and it is on this sense that it prepares all creature to return to God," (Biswas 1995)

He seeks to establish that all sciences and philosophy and arts endeavour to re-establish the ‘whole’ in an attempt to be beyond the dichotomy of “I-It” to the “I – Thou” (Biswas 1995).

Thus art can be a merging into the sacred and this is the main focus of my intention in this chapter. This focus will interpret the performance structure and the cluster of paintings (that inform the performance and vice versa), within the discreet tantric meditative practices of the Sri Yantra. The nine levels embedded in the ‘structure’ of the yantra have direct transformative encapsulations within the performance structure. These and the philosophical nuances of the ancient poetic interpretation of the Ardhanarisvara are part of and inform the performance structure. Effects of ‘dhwani’ cadences and nuances in poetry, pneumatic syllables as the language of dance form the aural input, and paintings and dance movement acting as visual input affect a transformation of consciousness.

This enquiry finds resolution and culminates as a performance of dance as prescribed by Bharata and ‘live’ painting as a product of a

527 (forward) in Art as Dialogue Gautam Biswas pg. 1994
528 Art as Dialogue, Gautam Biswas. Pg xi (1994)
529 YinYang- Being –Becoming
530 As discussed in chapter 3
phenomenological ‘searching’. As the artist as dancer invokes the sacred within and through the nuances of movement and translates this into a painting, informed by movement, the performance no longer is just a performance but a ritual of consciousness, a ritual that transcends performativity. Finally, the dancers, the artists, the audience become the sacred and spiritual, through colour, movement, spontaneity, simplicity and total presence of mind. Technique is transcended. The thinking mind, is silenced from the rational to the intuitive mode. Equilibrium is established through breath, and there remains only...

The sound of a single syllable...OM...

Diagram- simulation of Sri Yantra by Sankara
Sankara’s poetic proclamation of the energy within the Sri Yantra is significant:

“Shiva shaktya Yukto yati bhavati, Shaktak Prabhavitum
Nache devam devoh nakalu spanditum api.
Athiswaam aaraadhyaam hari hara Brahmadi pirapi
Pranantum stotum vaa. Katam akrita punyam prabhavatinya.”

“... You are the hidden power that energises every atom in the universe. The powers or gods of creation, preservation and dissolution are unable to even throb (spanda) without your energy. By adoring you they get their powers. Thus, to even listen or recite or adore you, we must have done countless good deeds in countless past lives.”

Hence, the focus on the hidden encapsulated spaces in the Universe of our awareness is the purpose of Sankara’s contemplation. Sankara addresses this inner ‘throb’ (spanda) as that very creative matrix, before the creative act. His reference above to ‘countless past lives’ is indicative of our responses within our consciousness to external stimuli.

The energy or power within each conscious expression is that ‘Shakti”. This inner power empowers one’s consciousness. Sankara’s poetic expression in appealing to this inner deity within every consciousness is significant.

**His-Story**

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531 1st verse from the ‘Soundarya Lahari’
Sankara\textsuperscript{532} the sage, seer, poet and the advocate of Advaita Vedanta, came across a rock, in Kashmir, inbuilt with a three-dimensional geometric mandala formation, called a Sri Yantra. Close to that rock, he unearthed 42 verses, in highly codified numbers that he decrypted and from these he deciphered the poetic verses called Ananda lahari, (waves of bliss), describing the loveliness of the mother goddess Shakti. He added to this another 66 verses of his own and it became in total of 108 verses, known as Soundarya Lahari (waves of loveliness). While it describes the beauty and grandeur of the divine mother goddess in detail, hidden within its composition are highly occult and sacred bija or seed mantras.

The practice of ‘Mantra Shastra’, an ancient Indian recitation of ‘seed’ sound syllables called ‘mantras’, seek to create mystical energy fields that work with aural perception, the nervous system, and pranic energy that in turn affects consciousness.

This concept of conceiving God, or Reality or Universal intelligence as “mother” is an important Hindu concept. She is conceived of as an ocean of compassion, and the underlying Reality that is Universal consciousness.

\textbf{According to Shankara, Consciousness is a unifying field.} All forces in the Universe, as we know it are ripples in this unified ocean of existence,

\textsuperscript{532} Śaṅkara (788-820) spoke of the Śri Cakra in the Saundaryalaharī (SL) (Subramaniam, 1977).
As I have said earlier, often in Hindu philosophical thought, when one wants to describe an experience accurately, one can only describe the known and say that it is not like this known entity or that known entity. *Rasa* is a direct experience. As a consequence to the experience of the *stayibhavas* and *vibhavas*, the culmination of the totality of the aesthetic experience is *Rasa*. How does one convey the total experience to another that has not experienced it? By connecting it to a ‘mind-familiar’, indirect experience, and showing that it is somewhat like this, but not really.

So universal consciousness is conceived of as a mother, who gives sustenance from her own being to the child. On an earthly plane, the first mode of the child’s perception is conditioned by and through the mother. Analogies such as universal mother, an ocean and wave, are ‘used’ to allow our consciousness to assume the form familiar to our experience. Thus an internal visualisation of an outer reality is made possible.

The poetic expression of this concept is explained below.

The universal mother called *Shakti* gave birth to this universe. Unlike an earthly mother, her consciousness pervades the entire universe and is self-
luminous. She is the source code and a sublime beauty called Lalita, the ever young, constantly at play, who rules the three worlds, Bhur, bhuva Svaha; the physical world of matter, the mental world of thoughts and the spirit world of souls. Thus she pervades, and sports within, these three worlds, laughing, and throbbing (Spanda) in and through everything in the cosmos. She is the creative energy of Saraswati, the preserving energy, Lakshmi and Durga, the power of dissolution. She is also called Maya, the great illusory power, and the power that finds expression as the ferocious volcanic eruptions, tsunamis as well the that which smiles as life giving rain and the calm, beautiful sunset:

“Adhyanta rahite devi, adhi Shakti maheshwara, yogaje yoga smaboode, mahalakshi namostute”

She is nature, evolving and revolving. She is time. The power that blossoms through a flower, and wilts and decays, is she. She forms, deforms, reforms and once again forms. She is the cyclic motion of nature (Swami Shantanand Saraswati 1980).

She is Shakti, the Eternal Energy.

The Sri Yantra that Shankara discovered in Kashmir is the representation of this eternal energy. It is a ritual drawing used for meditation. In their study

535 From Mahalakshmi Ashtoram
536 Swami Shantanand lecture on Shankara’s ‘Waves of Loveliness’
of neurology, Kulaichev and Ramendic observe:

“From the viewpoint of modern anatomy, physiology and neurology, the whole composition and separate elements of the Sri Yantra are precisely adjusted to the mechanisms of human perception and nervous activity up to neuron system structure. Thus it can be successfully be applied inducing psycho-physical states and dominates the right cerebral hemisphere...” (Kulaichev, Ramendic 1989)

The presiding deity (or goddess) here is called Sri Vidhya, the source of Real knowledge. This Yantra or symbol is a representation of the union of space and sound. The mantra is the soul and Yantra is the body of subtle sound (Naad Brahman). Usually used in meditation, it is the portal to transcendence, from the gross material to the subtle spiritual. According to Tantra Shastra (Tantric science), each level of crisscrossing closed circuit of triangles or enclosure is a gradational ascent, which corresponds to the various planes of consciousness of the seeker; (Swami Shantanand Saraswati 1978) who then finally merges with the Absolute Reality at the peak. The yantra, composed of nine interlocking triangles, symbolises not only the interpenetration of the spirit and material world but also the union between the Male and Female principle within the individual seeker on a microcosmic level, and of the entire creation of the Universe on a macrocosmic one. Four upward pointing triangles are symbolic of the

537 A.P Kulaichev and D. M Ramendic - Sri Yantra the ancient instrument to control the psychophysiological state of man. Indian journal of History of Science, 24,:137-149 1989
538 Swami Shantanand- ‘Navaratri’ lecture-1978
latent, un-manifested masculine power and five downward pointing triangles represent the potent manifested, feminine power. From these arise the five material elements earth, water, fire, air and space. Integrated within this architecture are the nine avaranas or nine veils of ascension.

As I said in my Introduction, that an intimate connection exists between artistic endeavours and philosophical enquiry. It is an inner journey, perhaps even a pilgrimage, which will unveil awareness as experience. The identification of this process of going back to the source is through meditative processes.

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539 As indicated in my introduction,
I have grouped the performance and paintings that I will discuss as a whole piece. This is “Shakti the Eternal Energy”. These revolve around the concept of the cosmic energy, the ‘becoming’, the journey of ascension and the abstractions of the Sri Yantra’. I refer to this piece as The

540 Krishnan Sarasa –Bharata’s Karanas- An Interpretation 2014 (Beagle Books)
Nine Veils of Ascension. It is about a journey of a seeker, an artist. I relate this journey to the Tantric journey of the two dimensional geometric drawing of the Sri Yantra (3 dimensional Mehru; where from the outer Square or Bhupuram (diagram), the veils of ignorance are lifted, and the mind of the artist finds fulfillment, merging into the peak, as experience of Rasa.

“In this unveiling of processes within this journey of ascension, is a quest for knowledge: it embodies a thirst for a knowing that will enable a transformation within the consciousness; That is, a ‘real’ knowing or understanding of Reality that enlightens and maps the way to satisfaction and happiness.”542(Krishnan 2014)

In this seeking there is revealed a distinction between Real knowledge and Unreal knowledge; a distinction I have made often in this thesis. “Real Knowledge” is direct, intuitive experience of the Self, or Absolute Reality. “Unreal Knowledge” is every possible secular as well as sacred text, assimilated by the intellect.

Mundaka Upanishad verifies this through a question: “What is that, when known and experienced, gives absolute satisfaction and eternal happiness?”

The answer is given to the seeker who asks, through penance, discovers “Reality” and returns not to the phenomenal world. He lost ‘him-self’ and found the ‘Self’. He transcended. Through direct or immediate experience or Aparoksha Anubhuti, he became one with Reality. Shankara says,” That

542 Excerpt from my chapter on Para Vidhya, Real Knowledge)
experience continues through all three worlds (physical, mental, spiritual) and through the 4 states of consciousness, in Wakefulness, dream, deep-sleep, and super-consciousness° (jagrat, swapna, sushupti and turiya).543 (Woodroffe 1994)

The performance Shakti the eternal Energy is a choreographical excursion of the embodied dancer’s phenomenological experience of a journey: a journey of ascension within a lived experience. It is a journey in attempting to understand the processes involved in a lived or immediate experience: Aparoksha Anubhuti. The journey transverses across the geometrical indices and iterations, of the complex mathematical plains of the Sri Yantra. Like the ‘orbit bound unit disc’ in Dr. John Hubbard’s exploration of the complexities of the Mandelbrot Set544 (Poincare Geometrization 2013), the consciousness of the seeker/ artist is bounded within the edges of the mantras545 (Pillai 2011) and mnemonic syllables546 of dance. The chakra of ‘hridaya kamalam’ or heart chakra is in heartbeat with the bounded simulation of the ‘hridaya kamalam’ (Achakra), as shown in Hubbard’s computer simulation of the complex

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543 Sir John Woodruff, Sakti and Sakta 1994
544 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-u5YLGaDr4 (@ minute17:03)
545 Mantra is an exact science. It is a science of phonetics, science of sound, science of cymatics. It is ultra rational and not mere blind faith. “Mana naath traayate iti mantra” says the rishi meaning “that which by recitation, saves” (Shantanand 2001: (Pillai 2011)
546 A bol is a syllable; a term used in Indian music and related rhythmical patterns. Also known as ‘text of the lyrics in Hindustani music’ (http://www.itcsra.org/sra_glossary_index.html)
numbers of quantum physics, the Julia and Mandelbrot Sets.\textsuperscript{547}(Hubbard 2013) This insignia, although rooted in complex mathematics, is one that is set within the cultural consciousness of the society, at least in South India. The creating of this symbol, during auspicious occasions as per the lunar calendar (using rice flour in front of their homes \textit{(kolam)}, as a decorative addition as well as a positive environmental practice\textsuperscript{548}(Ponraj 2014), denotes the activation of an engram\textsuperscript{549} set within the consciousness. Thus a civilisation that is steeped in symbols, with their polyvalent meanings, richly colour the deep consciousness of the Indian artist.

\textsuperscript{547} Dr. John Hubbard (youtube- @ minute18.00)
\textsuperscript{548} A.M Ponraj, Dept of Computer Science, Madurai Kamaraj University-Kolam and Paramatic equations
\textsuperscript{549} The word engram, in (dianetics) is used in its severely accurate sense as a ‘definite and permanent trace left by a stimulus on the protoplasm of a tissue’. In psychology it is the lasting trace left in the psyche by anything that has been experienced psychically; a latent memory picture.
Photograph of 3D Yantra- Mehru

The Object: The above photo of the Mehru is the object of the seeker’s initial meditative practices together with the diagram of The Sri Yantra.

The Ritual: This involves the mind to ‘gaze’ at the object as not an outer form but that, which forms the stratum of one’s own being. (The 3-D triangular form is replicated in the 3-D form of the seated human body –see diagram below of the chakras within the human body).

The ritual of Abhishekam, physically pouring milk or honey over this mehru and allowing the eyes to gaze at the flow of the white milk or golden honey, is a means to harness the mind activity of erratic thoughts and create a
contemplative focus within. The colours (white and gold) also aid in creating a
cadence of calm interaction within the mind.

After several years of regular practice, the meditation no longer involves the
physical use of milk or honey, but it is envisioned within the mind and this is
further enhanced by various meditative mental exercises. The outer process is
internalised and becomes an inner gazing. (Khanna and Mookerjee 2003)

550 "Scientific experiments have shown that when a subject is exposed to continuous visual input, or unchanging
stimulus called 'Gansfeld'- a patternless visual field or stabilized image, the subject loses contact with external
world" - Khanna, M- the Tantric Way, Thames & Hudson, London 2003
Image: The Seven Chakras or psychical energy points located within the body.

These are the interactive points during the ‘rising’ of consciousness, culminating in the ‘Sahasrara’ indicative of a fully blossomed lotus or consciousness.551 (Khanna and Mookerjee 2003)

551 Sahasrara the highest psychic centre just above the head, seat of Cosmic Consciousness, symbolised by 1000 petalled lotus. – Khanna, M- the Tantric Way, Thames & Hudson, London pg. 133
**The Architecture of the Discipline.**

The practical discipline of Navaavarna or nine veils establishes that within the human personality are contained all the essential dimensions of the universe and that the entire universe unfolds itself within the consciousness of the seeker as a progressive ascension. Thus working within the human model, cosmic activity is possible in the chakras in the human body.

The activation of the base chakras, mooladhara and swadhisthana, represents creative principle, the maniopora and anahata represent preservation and the visudhha and ajna represent the principle of re-absorption.

The five elements of earth fire, water, ether and space correspond to the senses of smell, taste, form, sound and touch.

The body chakras are further grouped into three knots (granthis) and are represented by Rudra, at the swadhisthana (2\textsuperscript{nd} chakra in pubis region), Vishnu at the anahata (heart chakra) and Brahma at the Ajna (space between the eyebrows).

The practice is in the effort to raise the potent energy coiled in the 1\textsuperscript{st} Mooladhara chakra, and culminating in the Sahasrara chakra on the top of the head, through systematic meditation on all the chakras. The coiled energy rises in a serpent-like motion through the Sushumna Naadi, pierces through
all the knots (granthis) and chakras, and unites with the highest chakra, the thousand petaled lotus, thus flooding and illuminating the consciousness with bliss and peace (brahma-ananda).\textsuperscript{552}
The Nine Veils of Ascension.

The artist/seeker attempts this process of ascension of consciousness with the preparatory practices of Sri Yantra meditation and through the performative practices of Bharata’s theatre of Rasa. The gradational ascent or transcendence of consciousness is systematically and consciously traversed through these nine stages or nine veils, or nava-avarnam, using the science of mantra shastra (as explored in Chapter Eight) and the associated mantras of ‘Panchadasakshari’ and those associated with the ‘navaavarna puja’.

Khanna’s research in this field uncovers a pertinent relationship between the part and whole (Plato); that is, that we as microcosm are part of a macrocosm.

“It is difficult to visualise the extent of our latent potentialities because... our outer self is only a small projection of the larger inner self. The human body, with its psychological and biological functions, is a vehicle through which the dormant psychic energy, Kundalini Sakti (coiled energy- a central pivot upon which our psychophysical apparatus is based.) can be awakened to finally unite with the Cosmic Consciousness.” (Swami Shantanand Saraswati 1979)

Moksha...

You are the absolute. From you is material substance and cosmic consciousness, the void and the Plenum. You are all forms of bliss and non-bliss, knowledge and ignorance. You are the five elements, gross and subtle. The entire world, the Vedas, and the unknown, below, above and around...

Peace, peace, peace...

CHAPTER 9: THE NINE VEILS OF ASCENSION
The neurological capacities of the human being are incalculable: each individual has around ten billion brain cells with each cell having 5,000 relationships. At each second, the brain receives “two billion sensations and fires 5,000 signals per second”. Of these, we are aware of only one millionth of our own ‘cortical signaling.’ The vast areas of the brain that remain silent are ‘wasted assets’, that are ‘untapped and un-utilized’. In the process of meditative practice (Lazar 2012), the pattern of the electrical impulses in the brain is altered (Shafir 2013), allowing the rise ascent of the coiled energy, to reach the Sahasrara chakra (1,000 petal lotus), and the (mystic) union of Shiva-Shakti occurs to enable transcendental experience (Shafir 2013).

Russian researcher, Alexey Kulaichev draws parallels between the Sri Yantra, and the biological centers within the body’s psychic energy, in his research of the Yantra’s mathematical properties:

“During meditation, the adept (sadhaka or seeker) imagines the projection of the evolutionary processes inside the body and as a result, the power of Sakti (kundalini) awakes. This power is sleeping at the base of the spinal column (in so called Cakra Muladhara is associated with the bhupura (or base square) of the Sri Yantra). The seeker attempts to send it (the energy) upward to merge with Siva’s aspect residing in the Sahasrara, associated with the bindu of the Sri Yantra. According to tantric concepts, this process leads to indescribable increase in (awareness) of consciousness." (Kulaichev 1984)

554 Neuroscientist Sara Lazar’s brain scans show the positive effect on the brain and brain function.https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8rRzTtP7Tc
555 Dr. Tal Shafir’s research on movement and research on neuro-physiology of motor control https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljm0ldxgkcE
556 ibid.
Hindu traditional thought stipulates that life on this plane of existence is a process or journey to enlightenment. Either in this life or the millions of lifetimes that the soul has lived or going to live in lifetimes after this, is governed by the process of *karma*, which is the fruit of action and inaction, by each soul. Through the countless experiences in each lifetime, the soul begins to unveil the many curtains or veils that obstruct our vision to clarity. It is a process where we ascend or climb the ‘mountain’, step by step towards the peak, to see the beauty, the awaiting mother: in Sufi terms, the mystical beloved. It is a journey of ascension, back to the source. This seeking and finding, this union of beloved and lover is the purpose of all existence. A process whereby the individual ego self, merges and vanishes in to the Universal Self, to create an understanding that me and my father are one, of returning to the source, of finding joy, bliss or *ananda* in the union with the beloved, of experiencing the supreme *Rasa* and merging with the Ultimate Reality.

This process of unveiling is by living a life of loving, giving, serving without expectation or benefit, and through these actions, an understanding develops within the consciousness of the seeker that “I am one with the Reality.” I am not only this small entity called ‘I’ but much more. It is within the watching and observing of one’s own thoughts upon the screen of
consciousness that this develops. I, the jiva or empirical self, observing the
screen or canvas of consciousness, know (as a process) that it is more ‘real
than the flitting thoughts that pass or dance upon it. Then a certain clarity
begins to emerge; that every detail of the phenomenal universe is a reflection
of this underlying Reality. I am not this small entity called “I” but much more.
To first understand this, and then to live this understanding is the purpose of
the journey. Then the process of unveiling begins. A process of
disambiguation, of making clear, and finally of experiencing this
understanding is finding the beloved, at the peak; a peak experience. Thus
the salt doll goes back to measure the ocean and never returns. It has
become one with the ocean, one with Reality. We are made of the same stuff
that we are seeking. We are the stuff of the Universal Reality. We are that
Param-atma or Self.
Every scripture, every dogma, every ritual, every higher sciences points to
this fact. Why don’t we know it? Perhaps, it is not to be understood by the
intellect or even the senses- but to be mediated through them. It is beyond
the architecture of sensing. This has to be an IMMEDIATE experience, without
the immediacy of the senses and intellect. Once we have experienced it we
can no longer return to speak of it because there is no more an
“experimenter”. No longer the little ‘I’. No longer a duality. This is the reason

558 Quantum and Indian traditional and holistic sciences
that Bharata’s theatre of Rasa was born; so that we can begin by perceiving through our senses and then go beyond that experience, to transcend them. A transformation that begins in the theatre finds resolution in the continuance of existence.

The goal of Shankara’s Vedanta and Bharata’s theatre of Rasa is the same.

Shankara’s aim is not only to construct a philosophical system and not only to bring to light, phenomena that would otherwise escape our notice, but also, in the long run, to illuminate the path to moksha or spiritual freedom; liberation from that ignorance which makes the empirical individual, subject to pain and suffering, confusion and attachment that prevents him or her from enjoying that bliss which constitutes the very nature of consciousness in its purity559. (Gupta 2007)

Bharata provides a stratum of experience through theatre so that we may savour the smorgasbord of delights, and through our senses we ascend, transcend and transform in the experience of Rasa. This alternative structure, of theatre and the arts practices of dance, music, sculpture (and the like), created self-same avenues for study through perseverance and disciplined practice of the arts, service to the guru (guru-sishya parampara) and

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meditation. A structure based on pleasure, Abhinavagupta says, “Indeed, aesthetic pleasure is the means to the wisdom available through art. “Even of instruction in the four goals of life, delight is the final and major result.”  

Thus the statement, “Rasa is the sap or soul (of theatre) and body (sarira) the plot” (Bharata and Ghosh 2002)

“The genius of Bharata’s Rasa theory rests upon the above reflection of the author.
Rasa as a concept is described as sap or essence (of his theory), and this imagery invokes notions of fluidity and movement.

The morphology of the Natyashastra as an entity is, on several levels, the ‘essence’ of the Vedas. Like ‘rasa’, the treatise of Natyashastra is the sap, the essence that is extracted from the living organic structure of the four Vedas.”

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560 Every creative impulse and act is born from a deep contemplative, pondering. A space born beyond technique and skill.
561 K.M.Higgins in her article ‘An Alchemy of Emotion: Rasa and Aeschtel: Breakthroughs
562 Ghosh, Manmohan (edited and translated.) Natyasatra 1956
563 excerpt from my earlier Chapter 3 on ‘Rasa’
As iterated in my earlier chapter on the quality of Rasa;

“The centrality of the rasa theory within the Natyashastra imbues a fractal\textsuperscript{564} (AllahUniversal\textsuperscript{79} 2011) like idea of self-similarity in its concept of the part being same as the whole. Whether Bharata intended this modal\textsuperscript{565} (Hubbard 2013) of geometric expansion and reduction of a concept, of this ‘iteration’\textsuperscript{566}, (based on a natural biological formula), the pattern is repeated, in the perception of the various gradational bhavas, vibhavas, stayi bhavas and resulting transference in producing rasa. It is an exponential transference, overdracht\textsuperscript{567} (Jung 1969) from one psychological state to another.

\footnote{Fractal geometry discovered by mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot. The word “fractal” often has different connotations for laypeople than for mathematicians, where the layperson is more likely to be familiar with fractal art than a mathematical conception. The mathematical concept is difficult to define formally even for mathematicians, but key features can be understood with little mathematical background.}

\footnote{The feature of “self-similarity”, for instance, is easily understood by analogy to zooming in with a lens or other device that zooms in on digital images to uncover finer, previously invisible, new structure. If this is done on fractals, however, no new detail appears; nothing changes and the same pattern repeats over and over, or for some fractals, nearly the same pattern reappears over and over. Self-similarity itself is not necessarily counter-intuitive (e.g., people have pondered self-similarity informally such as in the infinite regress in parallel mirrors or homunculus, the little man inside the head of the little man inside the head...). (Wikipedia)}

\footnote{Prof. John Hubbard provides an indepth explanation and hypothesis of the beauty and complexity of the Mandelbrot Set.}

\footnote{A mathematical concept of endless repetition}

\footnote{C.G.Jung, Psychology of Transference}
The Performance: *Shakti the Eternal Energy*

“*Shakti the Eternal Energy*”, “Seeing Music, Hearing Images Painting

Dance” is a thread of performances and paintings under the same title were created and they evolved over the period of four years (2004-2008). The birth of this concept was through a performance called “Rasa- The Still Point”, begun 12 years ago as a solo performance in Paris, France. The genesis for *Shakti* grew from that performance where I had ‘used’ my paintings for the first time to elucidate the performance. Thus, *Shakti, the Eternal Energy*, was a multidisciplinary presentation in which an aesthetic exploration of *Shakti* (the cyclic state of energy, from static to dynamic, within us), is examined. Ancient Sanskrit verses and contemporary Indian poetry are used to link and fuse the creative imagination to the objective reality. Using painting as a medium together with the plasticity of dance and philosophical abstractions, a practical attempt at reviewing the idea of what it meant to be performing as a dancer/artist, was attempted. The performances were designed as a means to break free from this frozen eclipse of viewing ‘dance’ as just a ‘dance’; painting as just another congealed formation of an artist; but to create and view a new way of seeing or performing. A framework of philosophy informing painting, in turn affecting dance, which interprets philosophy, was created. An evolving, ascending spiral that culminated in a transformation in not only choreography but also in the way movement was interpreted and found.
resolution through painting. Transforming of energies from dance to painting and back, precipitated a transformation in conscious perception, that began stilling the mind.

“Focusing on the concept of a dancer/artist, as not just a producer of ‘aesthetic objects’ but as an identity that contains within its moving body, a cultural consciousness. Implicitly, it is a creative analysis of a link from ‘thought to action’, that correlates creative processes within the mind of an artist, dancer and more importantly observing entity within dancer/choreographer and the painting artist. This relationship between the artist and observer also highlights the significance of who is the ‘self’ in the observer and what exactly is being observed as aesthetic object, (en soi). This uncommon choreographic converance with dance, co-mingling with artistic expression with paint, develops a phenomenological theory of the body-mind complex.”

The collective work of this exploration of cognition, synaesthetic perception, from a voice of the dancer/artist, performed as a lived experience, situates it self within present developing contemporary philosophical and scientific theories.

Overview: The Sri Yantra

The Sri Yantra is central to the performance thread of Shakti. The power of this symbol as an artwork as well as a mandala epitomised the transformational journey. This “visual masterpiece of abstraction” (Huet 2002) it is a representation of the cosmic energy, in the form of a geometric

568 An excerpt from my introduction that is relevant in this topic
569 Gerard Huet- Sri Yantra Geometry (Journal Theoretical Computer Science Vol 281 06- 2002 Pg 609-628)
diagram. It is an embodiment of the cosmos, or universe. The Macrocosm is reflected in its mystical geometrical abstractions through the microcosm of the yantra. I used the Sri Yantra as a canvas for my live painting during the performance. The painting progresses to completion with the completion of the performance, culminating in the face of the Shakti, is revealed as an engram of the artists visualisation (Pashyanti) within her mind, upon the canvas of Sri Yantra. This corresponds to the revelation of the consciousness of the artist, who ‘sees’ the complete vision of the face of the deity of the Sri Yantra, Lalita Maha Tripura Sundari. The deity, the Yantra are realised through the painting and the transformation is symbolically complete in the artist, dancers and audience.

Structure of the Sri Yantra
Symbolism of the Structure of the Sri Yantra

“Together the nine triangles are interlaced in such a way as to form 43 smaller triangles in a web symbolic of the entire cosmos or a womb representative of creation. Together they express Advaita or non-duality. A lotus of eight petals, a lotus of sixteen petals, and an earth square resembling a temple with four doors surround the outer layer.

The Shri Chakra is also known as the nav chakra because it can also be seen as having nine levels. “Nine” comes from “Nau or Nava” from Sanskrit vocabulary.

1. Trailokya Mohan or Bhupar, a square of three lines with four portals
2. Sarva Aasaa Paripurak, a sixteen-petal lotus
3. Sarva Sankshobahan, an eight-petal lotus
4. Sarva Saubhagyadayak, composed of fourteen small triangles
5. Sarva Arthasadhak, composed of ten small triangles
6. Sarva Rakshaakar, composed of ten small triangles
7. Sarva Rogahar, composed of eight small triangles
8. Sarva Siddhiprada, composed of 1 small triangle
9. Sarva Anandamay, composed of a point or bindu

The Sri Chakra (called the Shri Yantra) is the symbol of the tantra shastra which is based on the Hindu philosophical branch of Kashmir Shaivism. It is an iconic representation of the deepest intuitions of the Vedas. It represents both the recursive structure of reality and also expresses the fact that Nature and consciousness are interpenetrating. … The Sri Chakra looks at reality through the lens of beauty and felt experience…it takes the seeker to Siva, the fixed point of one’s self.”

Śri Cakra is described in terms of its 4 Śrīkaṇṭha (upward pointing) and 5 Śivayuvatī (downward pointing) triangles, which create its 43 triangles. If we look Śri Cakra’s structure as consisting of three basic triangles, then within each triangle are lower hierarchical levels of two other triangles, of alternating polarity. The 42 outer triangles are arranged in four circles around the middle triangle, with counts of 8, 10, 10, and 14 in the four arrays. The Śrī Cakra is also associated with the cakras of the yogi’s body. Fifty-six for earth (mūlādhāra); for water fifty-two (mani-pūraka), sixty-two for fire (vāïḗṣṭhāna); for air fifty-four (anāhata); seventy-two for ether (vīśuddhi); for mind sixty-four (ājñā cakra) are the rays; even beyond these are your twin feet. The six cakras are classified in granthis (knots) of two. The lowest two cakras correspond to 108 rays, the middle two to 116, and highest two to 136 rays. I have argued elsewhere that this provides an explanation for the layout of the great Śiva temple at Prambanan in Indonesia (Kak, 2010) The Śrī Cakra embodies the tripartite division of the cosmos into earth, atmosphere, and the sun, which is mirrored in the individual by the body, the breath, and the inner lamp of The Goddess Lalitā consciousness; it also represents the three parts of the body: neck to head, neck to navel, and navel to the bottom of the trunk. It is within the wheel of time (kālacakra), and it is both the human body (microcosm) and the universe (macrocosm). The middle 43 triangles are surrounded by a circle of 8 petals that, in turn, is surrounded by a 16-petalled circle. At the outermost are 3 lines, which are called the bhūpura. They are also categorized into 9 circuits or avarānas, where the bhūpura is the outermost avarāna. These 9 avarānas have 108 presiding Devis. In the Śrī Cakra pūjā they are systematically worshipped one by one with their names and mantras. The nine circuits symbolically indicate the successive phases in the process of becoming. The nine cakras are compared in the Tripura Upaniṣad to the nine yogas, namely the eight familiar ones of Patañjali and the additional one of sahaja. (Kak, Subhash)

http://ikashmir.net/subhashkak/docs/SriChakra.pdf

571 Wikipedia
572 Kak, Subhash (2010)
The *Sri-Yantra* is symbolic of the criss crossing energies within our consciousness. The triangles are but energy motions that delineate the various levels of experience. Meditating on these triangle-energies provides a nexus to liberation or to know the ‘Self’.

**The Ritual of the Yantra: An Inner Journey.**

The journey of the aspirant from the outer *Bhupuram* to the inner *Bindu* is identified with the awakening of psychical energies in consciousness and its ultimate esoteric union with the Universal consciousness. The meditative worship entails envisioning the body itself as a *Sripuram* or temple and, through ritual, the seeker finds enlightenment by transforming his or her conscious mind into a place of worship, burning the ego-self in the sacrificial fire of discipline and penance and reclaiming it by the purification. I have in juxtaposed the performance path of *Shakti* the eternal energy upon this path, from the outer peripheries to the inner sanctum of the *Bindu*. The path traced by the energy from the *mooladhara* to its point of union at the peak is identical to the progression through the performance. From the outer cerebral activity of the artist, through to the creative impetus, and various levels of understanding of the pain and suffering of worldly interaction (which resonates with various chakras of the *Sri Chakra*) and finally transcending the storm. This ascension then steps up to the sacred inner triangle of meeting
the beloved, Krishna. The circle is then completed, when the maker and the creation meet once again, the final convergence is met, with Shakti the eternal energy, in the dance of Moksha in the center point, of the Bindhu, to celebrate final liberation.

**SHAKTI the stage performance**

The performance itself revolved around the aspects of the feminine energy. The manifestation of this Sacred Feminine energy in its male and female dimensions, the raucous tempestuousness that characterizes the interaction of these dimensions and the manner that synthesis, impinges on the human soul, is explored through dance, poetry and painting. Morphing constantly from dispersion to dichotomy, this dynamic is personified by a spectrum of personae, weaving its way from the androgynous **Ardhanari** into the maternal Ganga, the raging and terrifying Kali, and the energy’s transmutation into the enchanting male form, Krishna, and its radiant burst as the compassionate **Devi**. The dance, the painting and the music, all set within the mind of the artist, is a rigorous search of the imagination, to find meaning and perhaps even to transcend the mundane.

**The Puja**

1st Veil

Thus we come to the 1st veil or Bhupuram: the Outer most Square or outer
limit of the mandala. The journey, moving from the lowest level of the square to the central Bindu at the peak, is indicative of one’s one journey to the Ultimate reality. The unveiling process begins at 3 grooves of the Bhupuram, symbolic of bhur, bhuva, swaha, where the body, thought and spirit of the artist is consecrated as an offering to the Ultimate. At the periphery of the Sri Yantra, the square, the seeker/artist contemplates her own passions such as anger, fear and lust, to overcome or conquer them. These eight psychological tendencies considered obstacles of the mind are invoked, as eight feminine energies or Matrika Saktis They are what we experience of the world through sense-activity and the cravings of the mind.
The Shiva-Shakti, Thought-Action Equation (Ardhanari)
Purvaranga-Sanctification prayer to the performance space as goddess
Choreographic augmentation of the left and right halves of the brain 
(depicting consciousness)

PERFORMANCE- DVD
Within the Cit-Aakasha or the vast space of the consciousness of the artist, a self-luminous seed sprouts. The dichotomy of Shiva- Shakti is symbolic of the concept of Pre-Thought to Thought and Thought to Action. Pre-thought and thought is the un-manifested entity (Shiva) and Action or manifestation is symbolised by Shakti. Together they form the creative matrix within the Cit Akasha or consciousness of the artist. Thus the performance begins with the androgynous form of Shiva-Shakti, the Ardhanari, format here the Ying and Yang, as a spanda, a throb, a stir that is within the universe of the Cit Akasha. The creative impulse finds congruence and parallels with the creative matrix of the universe.
The ‘self’ of the artist is the observer, and the observed aesthetic object is the dancing body. It is a systematic meditative process that begins with the witness-conscious mode of the artist’s consciousness.

Shankara says, without the function of cit or consciousness as witness, no knowledge could be possible. “All objects are objects of witness-consciousness, either as known or as unknown.” (Gupta 2007). Witness-consciousness thus is the basic presupposition of all knowing.  

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The geometry of the Yantra works with the model of the Chakras or psychical centres situated on the human body. (Swami Shantanand Saraswati 1973)

The path traced by the energy from Muladhara to the point of union at the Bindu at the peak is identical to the progression of the prayer or puja; that is, of consciously lifting the veils of ignorance in the meditation or puja.

Each veil is a transition point in the consciousness. The practical discipline holds that the individual or artist contains within herself the essential dimensions of the Universe and that the universe unfolds itself within the consciousness of the artist. The artist as dancer, the maker of the art begins to recede step-by-step back into her Self, as senses get withdrawn and she experiences ‘pure awareness’.

“The experience of turiya or the fourth state of consciousness, therefore, involves the process of self-referral through which the awareness moves inward from the senses toward the Self, where it transcends the opposition between the knower, the known, and the act of knowing.” (Haney)

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574 The six psychic centers in the human body, in groups of two, represent the centers of cosmic activity and consciousness whose presence activates the centers. The mooladhara and swadhisthana centers represent creation, the manipura (navel) and anahata (heart) represent preservation and the visuddha (throat) and ajna (space between the eyebrows) represent re-absorption. Swami Shantanand lecture (Navaratri 1973)
Paintings depicting Ardhānāri by Sarasa Krishnan

"Champeya gowrardha sareerikayai,
Karpooragourardha sareerikaya,
Dhamillakayai cha jatadaraya,
Nama Shivayai cha namashivaya."
(Adi Shankaracharya, 2014)

My salutations to both Parvathi and Shiva,
To Her whose body shines like molten gold,
To Him whose body shines like the burning camphor,
To Her who has a well made up hair,
And to Him who has the matted lock.

This very witnessing, of being once removed from ones thoughts, and viewing the dance through the body is symbolic of the removal of the ‘first veil’ of ignorance. From the Muladhara, chakra, the mind energy moves up

575 Ardhanari Stotram by Shankara, describing the creative matrix Shiva/Shakti quotient.
to the next plane of Swadhishtanam in the body. The creative energy being complete, the soul seeks the compassion of the maternal energy, through the trials and tribulations that life throws.

The second section: **Mother and Child**, is the 2\textsuperscript{nd} veil of ascension- Ganga Lahari\textsuperscript{576}

\textsuperscript{576} Part of 24 verses, 16\textsuperscript{th} century
“I come to you as a child to his mother
I come as an orphan to you, moist with love. I come without refuge, giver of sacred rest, I come a fallen man, uplifter of all. I come undone by disease to you, the perfect physician. I come, my heart dry with thirst, to you, ocean of sweet wine. Do with me whatever you will.” — Jagannath: The Waves of Ganga Lahari
The soul merges into the waters of Ganges to transcend and receive a second birth.

Below: the flow of feminine energy as Ganges.
When worlds collide, explode and shatter, like bolts of thunder their clamour provides the beat for your dance. When in that awesome void, blood-oozing demons sport and sing aloud. The gleeful refrain of their song, *thaka thimi thaka thimi*. The unceasing beat of their voices echo the thud of your footsteps. O Kali Kankali, Chamundi, your dance is a dance of ecstasy. Mother or mother, lured helplessly, I watch your rapturous dance...

(Dehejia and Coburn 1999)
Moving upwards to the concept of Kali (Hotep 2014), the

577 Kali, one of the most important tantric Das Mahavidyas, in her negative aspect appears as a conglomeration of terrifying elements. Kali is the first encounter with the female energy of the Inner Higher Self. Though Kali is represented in symbols, their real meaning is not what it first appears to be, the meaning have historical and
ferocious-ness within the feminine entity where she is also the concept of time and the space between two thoughts, as she contains the male principle within herself, “Her disheveled hair forms a curtain of illusion, the fabric of space-time, which organizes matter out of the chaotic sea of quantum-foam.”  

Her dance, symbolic of the agitation in the mind, the ensuing chaos that results, and the final resolution by dissolving negativity in the lifting of the 3rd Veil, 4th and 5th Veil, between the Manipoora chakra, Anahata and Vishudhi; where the consciousness of the artistseeker is brought to an equilibrium.

metaphysical significances. Kali is the symbol of the active cosmic power of eternal time (the cause of worldly changes) she symbolizes annihilation: all beings and all things must yield and in this aspect. The image of Kali is generally represented as black: Just as all colors disappear in black, so all names and forms disappear in her (Maharirvana Tantra). In tantric rituals she is described as garbed in space, sky-clad. In her absolute, primordial nakedness, she is free from all covering of illusion. She is nature (Prakriti), stripped of clothes. She is full-breasted; her motherhood is a ceaseless creation. She gives birth to the cosmos parthenogenetically, as she contains the male principle within herself. Her dishevelled hair forms a curtain of illusion, the fabric of space-time, which organizes matter out of the chaotic sea of quantum-foam. Her garland of fifty human heads, each representing one of the 50 letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, symbolizes the repository of knowledge and wisdom, and represents the fifty fundamental vibrations in the universe. She wears a girdle of human hands - hands are the principle instruments of work and so signify the action of Karma or accumulated deeds, constantly reminding us that ultimate freedom is to be attained as the fruit of Karmic action. Her three eyes indicate the Past, Present, & Future: Her white teeth, symbolic of Sattva. The translucent intelligence stuff, hold back her lolling tongue which is red, representing Rajas. The activating quality of nature leading downwards to Tomas, inertia Kali has four hands (or, occasionally two, six or eight).One left hand holds a severed head, indicating the annihilation of ego-bound evil force, and the other carries the sword of physical extermination with which she cuts the thread of bondage. One right hand gestures to dispel fear and the other exhorts to spiritual strength. In this form, she is changeless, limitless primordial power, acting in great drama, awakening the unmanifest Siva beneath her feet. Their inseparable union reflects non-duality. As the eternal, indifferent time she confronts man with his pitiful finite attachments, swallows them up, and produces them again in a different form, in a different time. Just as the destruction of the seed leads to the birth of a tree, so disintegration is a normal and necessary step of nature moving towards further progress or unfolding. Kali is the embodiment of creation, preservation and annihilation. She inspires awe and love at the same time. (www.trinicenter.com)

578 ibid
The universe a peacock’s tail - fractal imagery - painting - Sarasa Krishnan

Fractal

The whole universe a peacock’s tail, Myriads of eyes, other eyes reflecting…modulations, reverberations of a single eye. A solitary sun hidden behind it’s cloth of transparencies. Its tide of marvels, everything was flaming…Stones women water, everything sculptured, from colour to form, from form to fire, Colour to form, form to fire!

579 Poem by Octavio Paz, Vrindaban- Devi
Strike the bent pose of sweet Krishna, when he dances with the cowherd girls. Come stand in the shrine of the heart's temple, come show yourself as the charming, crooked one, with Radha at your side. Take off your skirt of human arms and put on the yellow dhoti of the cowherd god. Put on the peacock feather on your head and crook one foot over the other. Abandon your garland of human heads and put on the forest flowers instead. Be the dark charmer for once and not the black destroyer. O woman with heart of stone, the lotus of my heart blossoms when it sees the black moon. Just once drop the sword and pick up the bamboo flute! Fulfil the yearning of the faithful!
The slow transfiguration of the Male energy of Kali to the dark female Parvati, and then to the Dark blue smiling form of Krishna, is when the 6th veil is removed, and Krishna, the eternal lover, sports and plays with the blossoming soul. The 7th veil is then removed and the brilliance of Shakti is revealed; the dance of seeking liberation or moksha is the 8th veil and finally the 9th veil is removed at the peak of experience to reveal enduring bliss and peace...

The seeker, the self, the dancer and the artist (who is embodied as one) at
the canvas of consciousness of *Sri Yantra*; experience the peace of *Shanta Rasa*.

The Science, the Arts, the form and formless, the performers and the audience merge and transcend as one energy.

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**Power and Value of Image**

Steven Pinker says:
“We think in visual images, auditory images, in abstract propositions but not in words. ... great scientist, poets, artists often say that moments of inspiration often come from a vivid visual image they then have to struggle to find the words to express that image.”

(ThinkingAllowedTV 2012)

“...The power of the image, either as a static image in a painting, or as a moving image in dance, invokes often unusual or unasked questions as to its visual semiotics, its philosophical meanings. The use of the ‘image’ creates a distinct language, be it in performance or not. It is this language that will help to re-conceptualize the philosophies examined. Such symbolic thinking and communicating allows multiple readings and interpretations of the given variables.”

Shakti: The Eternal Energy:

“The Mind, the Artist, the Searcher is caught up in a violent flux, swinging between angst and agitation, compassion and cogitation. The canvas of the mind is splattered by riots of colour and cacophony of conflict and compromise - of emotion, of discovery and disappointment. Caught in this raging flow the artist journeyman continues, buffeted yet seduced, finally transcending the storm, finding that null point in the Universe where compassion and peace endures.”

Thus the energy that surges within us continues to flow uninterrupted,

580 Steven Pinker, www.ThinkingAllowed.com youtube (as quoted in chapter 7)
581 Quoted in chapter 8
undiluted, within the gross expanse of our objective reality that we call the cosmos. It resonates through all that we perceive as real, all that we imagine to be abstract.

The rising of consciousness within the artist is closely related to pranic energy (Raikes 2013). The crisscrossing currents of energy flow in a serpentine manner through the stream of nadis. *Ida, Pinggala* and *Sushumna nadis* are the main nadis that allow this "kinesthetic symphony" of vital energy forces to rise and these correspond to frequencies states of higher consciousness (Swami Shantanand Saraswati 1980) Thus as the artist in meditative ritual performance herself progresses to states of higher consciousness, the pranic somatic energy, inextricably linked, rises in unison.

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582 The pranic aspect refers to the current of life force – a totality of flowing, intelligent somatic energy. The Sanskrit word prana comes from the yogic tradition, and can be translated as energy, breath, life force. Prana is an intrinsically intangible electrical phenomenon – as is the basic fact of life. Anatomically, there is nothing that distinguishes a live body from a corpse. Moreover, our conscious minds know nothing of how to digest food or transport oxygen from the atmosphere into the bloodstream. Prana is the intelligent electricity that creates the embodied expression of life. The current of prana flows through the nadis, a somatic network of subtle channels. The term nadi comes from the Sanskrit root "nad," which means movement or stream. The nadis can be understood as a dematerialized, expanded dimension of the body’s fluid and nervous systems. The dynamic flow of prana through the circuitry of the nadis constitutes the pranic body. Heather Raikes (http://www.heatherraikes.com/webresources/Body-Neopoetic.pdf) The Vayu Cycle, which applies its own interpretive filter to the Sanskrit archetypes and creates a temporal progression, or cycle, through the five vayus. There are four "movements" to this "kinesthetic symphony" – prana, apana, udana + vyana, and samana. The cycle begins with prana, energy that draws inward and upward; progresses into apana, energy that roots downward; then moves into udana + vyana, expansive energy that flows upward and omni-directionally outward; and concludes with samana, energy that draws from the periphery of the body in to the core (Heather Raikes (http://www.heatherraikes.com/webresources/Body-Neopoetic.pdf)

583 Swami Shantanand (1990)

584 ibid
The body, the microcosm, as an entity mirrors the structure of the pulsating energy locus of the Mehru, the macrocosm. When the seven chakras are superimposed upon the triangularity of the Mehru, and seen in totality with the nervous system, a renewed method of viewing emerges.
The four phenomenological experiences of sound in the body-mind, complex as discussed in chapter 6, (Vaikari, Madhyama, Pashyanti, Para) evoke an unprecedented effect within consciousness. These sounds are made up of root or seed sounds that resonate with microcosmic particles that are within the structural make up of the basic phenomenal universe.
Working with the ritual of the *Tantra* (meditating in a specific order, using **aural perception** of the *mantra shastra* (seed sounds) and the **visual perception** of the power of the image of the geometric symbol, is the modus operandi of this meditation of the artist. Transcending through the vestibule of performance, the seeker/artist transforms to the vastitude of experience. The brain of the artist, or seeker, reconstructs the graphic through memories of previous experience. The process of reconstruction is through the stimulus presented by the, vivid cogent representation of the deity to a graphic diagrammatic symbol (*yantra*) as well as the sound of seed mantras or music. All of this is activated in observation. David Freed Burg and Vittorio Gallese’s investigating of this phenomenon, write in their paper, *Motion, Emotion and Empathy in Esthetic experience*, “All this (scientific) evidence shows that our brains can reconstruct actions by merely observing the static graphic outcome of an agents past action.” (Freedberg and Gallese 2007)

The motor senses of artists/mark makers, that produce the traces of art, or graphics, finds resonance in the emotional circuits of the observers. The artist while making a work of art evokes a sensory engram of the pattern for that specific movement intended. (O’Toole 2013)

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585 Science direct journal- Trends in cognitive science. Vol. 11 no. 5
586 Mosby’s Medical Dictionary. Proprioceptive signals transmitted by feedback pathways through the cerebellum and sensory areas of motor cortex are compared with the engram and modify the movement.
Although Freedburg and Gallese write about emotional empathy and emotional response as clarified in neuro-scientific evidence, I further this point in tracing the psychical responses in meditative and ritualistic engagement of the consciousness.

Image: Nadis intertwining Chakras or psychic centers,

“Bharata’s theory of Rasa, through theatre, created a means of transcending this phenomenal universe, transcending dualities between the artist and spectator; a theory that provided a means to achieve Para Vidhya through the experience of Rasa and through this transcendence, Moksha or liberation.”

The sensory engram that is already programmed through meditative practices, through ‘inner gazing’, allows the artist in performance to delimit herself to not only perform according to choreography, but allows for a more

587 Krishnan Sarasa, Chapter eight
important “performativity consciousness”; where the artist resonates with pure consciousness.

One significant and perhaps exceptional effect is of the impact of the “seed”-sound syllables and mantras upon the nervous system of the human body. As discussed in my chapter of the affected aural perception on consciousness, on a psychophysiological level, the peripheral nervous system shows distinct change. The following research indicates not just the musicality of melody (as discussed in my earlier chapter) but also the aspect of tempo, metre and rhythm that affect the nervous system that is divided into somatic and the autonomic nervous system.
Trost and Vuilleumier’s research in the area of neurophysiological effects of music, and in particular, ‘rhythmic entrainment’ as a mechanism for emotion induction, provide the necessary light for my argument. They say that music is an art form that lives in the domain of time, as most music is based on metrical structure and these rhythms in the music eventually resonate with the internal rhythms in the brain. Asking how the temporal structure in music influences perceptions and affective reactions, their intensive study concludes
that the “timing” features like metre and rhythm can trigger specific neural processes which contribute to ‘certain emotional states’. Quoting the research by Juslin and Vjastfjall (2008): “an emotion is produced by a piece of music because of the powerful, external rhythm of the music interacts with the internal body rhythm of the listener heart rate”, and the listener is engaged. Respiration and heart rate eventuate emotional arousal. The autonomic nervous system consists of two subcomponents; sympathetic and
parasympathetic nerves function. The latter is responsible for the co-ordination of physiological processes in the body at rest and the former has a stimulating function, responsible for the release of several neurotransmitters (e.g. adrenaline); thus mobilises body for action\textsuperscript{588}. (Trost and Vuilleumier 2013)

This research is particularly relevant as the metre and tempo that is a crucial part of the recitation of the mantras and seed sounds in the meditative practice of \textit{Mantra Shastra}, affects the nervous system of the person, who is reciting and listening to this particular use of sound. Here again is the special significance of ‘\textit{Shruti}’ the oral tradition, where the teacher or guru, teaches through his own voice the specifics of the tone and rhythm of recitation of the \textit{mantras and slokas}\textsuperscript{589}.

Thus the nervous system in turn affects the psychical energy, transpiring through the nadis that intertwine in a serpentine manner (hence the inference to a coiled serpent), and rise through the various psychic centres or \textit{chakras}, to eventuate a transformation in consciousness. There is no mystical or

\textsuperscript{588} Paraphrased from “physiological reactions to music”-Rhythmic Entrainment as a mechanism for emotion induction by music, from Emotional Power of Music-Multidisciplinary Perspectives”. Edited by Bernard, Frantini, Sherer-Oxford University Press.

\textsuperscript{589} “Anima Siddhey, lahma siddhey, eeshidvasiddhey, vashidva siddhey”…and so on, from the Sahasrakshara Vidhya-(knowledge of the 1000 syllables) - specific mantra shastra for the Sri Yantra, have specific metres that require particular methods of recitation.
unexplainable system for this occurrence. The collective vasanas and samskaras (collective effects of past actions and thoughts) of the particular person in meditation, allows this transformation to eventuate. It is a specific traditional knowledge, (that only in recent times is being proven through scientific testing with the use of modern equipment), of sound that was revealed, as is said by Hindu thought, to the ancient seers or sages.

The use of metre (in dance and poetics) in Bharata’s theatre as well as the use of metre in the Mantra shastra in this performance of “Shakti” coincide and share a commonality, in order to produce an extraordinary ‘performative consciousness’ in the dancer/artist and rasa in the spectator. The self in the

590 Closer examination of these sciences will reveal a systematic scientific base for the so-called ‘mystical’. Very often the means or knowledge is not available to scientists particularly in the West, to analyse and verify such processes due to cultural distancing.
dancer, observing the motions of the body in choreography, also observing the audience observing the performance, produces reverberating resonances on a psychophysical level in both artist and audience. The key ‘problem’ here is that the experience of the artist/dancer, when interpreted by a theorist or psychoanalyst, changes it and de-mystifies (dare I say) its inherent properties in the de-constructional analysis.

Gaston Balechard addresses this problem in his introduction to his book, The Poetics of Space. Referring to poetic image, he writes, quoting Rene Huyghe about Rouault’s painting:

“...In order to understand, to sense, ...we start at the heart of the circle, where the whole this derives its source and meaning, ...the soul.” (Bachelard, Jolas and Stilgoe 1994)

Bachelard continues:

“the soul as Rouault’s painting proves- posses an inner light, the light that inner vision knows and expresses the world of brilliant colours...He (the painter) knows from what the heat source the light comes from. He experiences the inner meaning of the passion for red. At the core there is a soul in combat- the fauvism, the wildness, is interior. Painting therefore is a phenomenon of the soul." (Bachelard, Jolas and Stilgoe 1994)

In these lines he continues about poetry as a ‘commitment of the soul.

“This grip that poetry acquires on our very being bears a phenomenological mark that is unmistakable. The exuberance and depth of a poem are always phenomena of the resonance-reverberation doublet. It is through the poem, through its exuberance, awakened new depths in us. ...the outpourings of the mind and towards the profundities of the soul...the reverberation, has a simple phenomenological nature in the domain of poetic imagination. For it involves bringing a veritable awakening of poetic creation in the soul of the reader, through the reverberations of a single poetic image...a poetic image sets in motion an entire linguistic mechanism, places us in the origin of the

591 Soul, a word born of our breath (Balechard)
speaking being…. The image has touched the depths before it stirs the surfacce, the image offered becomes really our own…. Becomes a new being in our language… expression creates being”. (Bachelard, Jolas and Stilgoe 1994)

Balechard scrutinises the intellectualisation of such “reverberations of the soul”:

“…As for the psychologist….keeps trying to describe his feelings and the psychoanalyst victim of his method, intellectualizes the image, losing reverberations… ‘understands’ it. When he interprets it, he translates it into a language that is different from the poetic logos.592”(Bachelard, Jolas and Stilgoe 1994)

Balechard stresses that the ‘forces are manifested’ in poems and paintings that ‘do not pass through the circuits of knowledge’ He argues that dialectics are of ‘two poles, “the soul and the mind” and that ‘poetic revery’ is a phenomenology of the soul: one that prepares pleasure not only from itself but for ‘other souls’ and that the “soul keeps watch, no tension, calmed and active”.

“What Balechard describes of the soul sounds identical to the Self, watching, being active and involved as the witness: the ‘sakshin’. The observing Self (or soul) is the active catalyst in this creating or inner stirrings that bring forth paintings, poems, dance music, or the creative arts: “Poetry is a soul inaugurating a form”-Pierre-Jean Jouve593” (Bachelard, Jolas and Stilgoe 1994)
Thus the creative outpourings (through words, music, painting, movement) are almost a ‘cry from the soul depths’ in order to give clarity, to give form, to a longing.

Shakti: The Eternal Energy: “The Mind, the Artist, the Searcher is caught up in a violent flux, swinging between angst and agitation, compassion and cogitation. The canvas of the mind is splattered by riots of colour and cacophony of conflict and compromise - of emotion, of discovery and disappointment. Caught in this raging flow the artist journeyman continues, buffeted yet seduced, finally transcending the storm, finding that null point in the Universe where compassion and peace endures.”

The convergence of philosophy, ritual and theatre finds resolution in the ‘play’. By un-limiting the artist/ (seeker), Bharata’s theatre provides a way to liberation/moksha through the aesthetics of Rasa! The theatrical worldly activity becomes a means to an end, a pathway to perfection. Through the world or universe of theatre, the artist transcends in consciousness and finds perfection, through the pleasures of bhava and Rasa. The dancers find resolution through movement, and through the cadence and sound of the final, “OM...”. Breath is calm, and mind is stilled: Rasa is experienced. The artist and the observer find resolution in the stillness of Rasa, a still point in a whirling universe.

594 Notes in Program of The Performance (2008)
Phenomenology and Indian Thought

“Before anything can come into being, there must be ‘somebody’ to whom it comes. All appearance and disappearance presuppose a change against some changeless background.” \(^{95}\) (Nisargadatta, Frydman, Dikshit 1973)

The ‘phenomenological method’ as such constitutes a problem because there is a difficulty in locating a ‘general attitude’ or world-view. In his opening address at the International Conference on Phenomenology in Hong Kong, Lao-Yung-wei expressed this difficulty. Comparing the different attitudes of well-recognized phenomenologists he said,

“Merleau-Ponty’s concept of “body subject”, is hardly compatible with Husserl’s “transcendent Ego”; Sartre’s theoretical orientation in his theory of Being is quite distinct from the Heideggerian orientation. These obvious facts are in no need of explanation. Then where can we find the general attitude of Phenomenologists? To this question, my answer is: whether we can identify the general phenomenological attitude depends on how strong our claim is...To put it in a more concrete way, I just mean that common features of different phenomenological theories consist rather than in their denials than in their assertions about basic philosophical problems. This clue, properly handled, will make it possible for us to talk about the general attitude.”

Following this perspective, this is my resolution. The many schools of philosophical thought that constitute “Indian Philosophy” are enormously diverse and even conflicting in some respects. Nevertheless, the experiential phenomenon within the structure per se is similar. Almost all believe in Consciousness (cit) as the basis, a unifying field. Consciousness simply “is.”

\(^{95}\) Nisargadatta 1973 (I Am That)
Advaita Vedanta says consciousness does nothing, simply manifests, illuminates (Swayam-prakasha) or evidences\(^{596}\) (Bhattacharyya 1992). Some schools believe that Brahman is the source of the world; “thus have srishti-creative theory of emanation, which meant construing consciousness as a force, as an energy, Cit as cit-shakti,\(^{597}\) which injects a certain intentionality into the texture of consciousness\(^{598}\)” (Bhattacharyya 1992). Thus, this is my belief: that Consciousness is a unifying field or ocean and that we, the waves, each have our experiential subjective consciousness, as a result of our ‘ego selves’. Our subjective consciousness is valid to us, until the point when the ego personality drops and like the moment when the light is switched on in a dark room, the darkness or semi darkness vanishes and all objects come to light. The subjective consciousness (wave) begins a slow dissolve into the ocean (due to various reasons like penances, etc.). The witnessing Consciousness (Self), being always present, becomes more visible, in direct proportion to this dissolving ego, like the falsity of the image in a reflection becomes apparent when the real form is seen. The dissolving wave (ego), finally dissolves and becomes one with the ocean, the (real) Self comes to light and is revealed. Within this view abounds the descriptive

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596 Mohanty, J. Phenomenology and Indian Philosophy. (http://www.sunypress.edu/pdf/52314.pdf)
597 Although the cit-shakti is emblematic of movement and energy, it is still set against a background of Changeless Shiva-shakti principle that is in keeping with a unified changeless ocean. The very metaphor of ocean is indicative of movement and stillness.
598 ibid
phenomenology of consciousness like the Citta-vritta of Sankhya school and the ‘real and apparent’ of Advaita Vedanta. Thus (viewing through the lens of Western Phenomenology as in Husserl), the descriptive modalities of experience are the flavor of the phenomenological experience. This is a means to cultivate and realize the universality of Consciousness, “within the range of human possibilities”599. But ultimately, the Hindu view are that Consciousness is formless and content-less (nirakara) and both the Hindu and Buddhist view are that both ego and object (content of experience) are constructs, constituted in the “ongoing stream of Consciousness600”.

The Buddhist literature deals in great detail with the modalities of consciousness. Mohanty explicates (the rich description of) the various mental states according to early Buddhism601, unrivaled by any other tradition.

“...beginning with the well know five elements (skandhas): rupa, vedana, samjna, vijnana, samskara (form, feeling, perception, mind and impulses) a list in which, it should be noted, mental consciousness is distinguished from sensory consciousness, perceptual consciousness, feelings, and volitions 602.”

In verifying the self as “I”, emerging out of these five modalities of experience that, “intertwine and interact with each other”, the ego is subjugated. The five modalities of experience thus, act as a sieve in purifying and filtering the core

599 Idea is derivative of Mohanty’s discourse on phenomenology. Encycloppedia of Phenomenology (Pg. 344-347)-Kluwer Academic Publishers vol 18, 1997
600 ibid.
601 Insome of its forms, Buddhism was phenomenalistic with regard to material objects which were construed as aggregates of sensory data-(Mohanty)
602 ibid.
Mohanty further illuminates by drawing together elements that seem disconnected.

“In any case, the technique- psychophysical and voluntaristic- that the Hindu and Buddhist traditions developed, nurtured and theoretically defended, the technique of yoga and meditation, may be said to be meant to do what Husserl’s epoche and reductions were to do- that is, to “purify” consciousness of presuppositions and presumptions, from living in the naïve world-belief and thereby to be able to achieve, to intuitively experience, transcendental subjectivity.” (Gupta 2007)

In this observation, Mohanty validates the effectiveness of the psychophysical techniques of yoga and meditation as vestibules of achieving transcendence via subjective experience.

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603 Husserl elaborates the notion of ‘phenomenological epoché’ or “bracketing” in Ideas I. Through the systematic procedure of ‘phenomenological reduction’, one is thought to be able to suspend judgment regarding the general or naïve philosophical belief in the existence of the external world, and thus examine phenomena as they are originally given to consciousness.

604 Mohanty notes that, of classical phenomenologists only Max Scheller and Helmuth Plessna recognized this function of yoga.
Phenomenological account of the dancer/artist.

Therefore, within this bracketing of experience, the following are accounts of an autobiographical lived experience while dancing or painting or both. It is a systematic ‘gazing’ of a lived personal experience, through the gestures of dance concurrent with prior (tacit knowing) knowledge (of discerned meaning of the Sanskrit verses); a project to create and dance in a simultaneous and spontaneous manner. I created paintings induced by rhythm and melody. A multi layering of visual and auditory perception was an attempt at observing and sensing and recording these sensations through my own body on to the canvas.

“Like a million silent explosions within the consciousness, the ‘almost vibration’ is the dynamics of an infinite spectrum of frequencies flashing and constantly in flux. An inner essence within that impels, unseen, through a primordial resonance that manifests through our every experience, orients to organise authentic action, not through intellect or intention but the ‘the ‘spark’ within each individual.”

The artist dancer experiences these “spanda” moments as flashes of pure consciousness experienced in performance; a re emanating from encapsulated meditative moments; and a delving within the reservoir of pure consciousness experienced during the process of unveiling.

The Sense of ‘I Am’ is Experienced

605 This meditation or creative endeavour was used in drawing of karanas, as well as in performance.
606 Quoting myself from previous Chapter (7)
Examining embodied simulation in aesthetic experience I again look at Merleau-Ponty’s statement:

“Synesthetic perception is the rule, and we are unaware of it only because scientific knowledge shifts the center of gravity of experience, so that we have unlearned how we see, hear and generally speaking, feel…”(Merleau-Ponty, Landes 1962)

My investigation of synesthesia as an experimental exercise, in the art of translating sound into movement in space to become movement of canvas, is still in an embryonic stage. This project extends itself in examining and linking ideas of cognitive science in performance.

As Ramachandran said,

“If it is the prerogative of humankind. This sense of self, the planning for the future and the ability of the self to “inspect” sensory information entering into the consciousness allows meta representations that allows one to manipulate symbols and give meaning based on past experience. (For ex. a red apple, has many connotations to humans.”(Boeree 1998)

I tested melody as a medium to understand how sound affects the sense of hearing in the brain and how this can be translated as a gestural language and movement, without self-consciously engaging in the experiment but allowing the ‘performativity consciousness’ to be the mode of experiential operation.


608 The concept of anticipation shows considerable potential for unifying the causal and teleological aspects of psychology. As a step towards exploring that model of cognition is based on stratificational linguistics theory, including “feed-forward” features that provide a likely mechanism for anticipation. Speculations on how the model might lead to a broader understanding of the mind’s structure are included in this site. (http://webspace.ship.edu/cgboer/anticipation.html)
Chanting, from the Vedic texts, mantras, melody and rhythm were used to synthesis spatial movement; to translate the meaning and cadence of the mantras as a means to create similar visual patterns (as they occurred me) on my body-mind complex as a canvas then transferring this movement in dance to a language of brush strokes of colour on canvas.

This translation was created through the medium of the classical dance modes of Odissi and Kathak dance; and then transferred through paint to the canvas. The paintings that emerge are the lines that create the form of Ganesh, the elephant face, the ‘half face’ of Shakti on the left half and a cacophony of energy streaks as the un-manifested half of Shiva.
Performance Painting: half face of Shakti-Shiva upon the mandala of Sri Yantra.

Witness-conscious perception, language and gesture, reasoning and emotion form part of the constituents of this experimental work.

I say it is experimental, because it contains within it the following qualities: indeterminacy in gesture, unpredictability in its outcome and spontaneity in its improvisation. The transference of spatial energy, flowing through
the senses, then in turn flourishing as colour on the canvas, happens in real time.

‘Seeing’ my ‘self’ sensing609(Eliasson, Schwartzman 2011) and interacting with the canvas while focusing on the meaning of the thundering Sanskrit sounds was intense and clarifying at once. It was a conscious concerted effort in the exploration and experience of Qualia610(Ramachandran 2007).

There is an unbreakable link between what I feel and contemplate and what I express. First saturated with an emotion (not a momentary thing but the result of sustained contemplation) is so overwhelmed that I find it impossible to contain myself:

“Like a poet whose heart overflows and finds utterance, the artiste experiences rasa and transmits bhava” 611 (De 1963)

The dancer, through movement, also finds utterance through the visual artist; through the colours that signify the various colours of experience as each level of transcendence is experienced.

The phenomenon of Qualia and of ‘self’, as the linking and mapping of the ‘self’, consciousness and the specificity of space and time, is experienced.

Thus, my mode or language, in one sense, can be seen as “a set of propositions”; as a means to communicate complex rhythmic structures of

609 This term was inspired by Schwartzman and Eliasson 2011
610 (V..Ramachandran.Nov.2007) ‘Sensations you are conscious of subjectively’, an internal subjective experience
dance through visual representation, either through dance, gesture or painting, using the temporality of ‘real’ time. The mandala that took shape in my consciousness, through the inference of the seed mantras (in meditative practice) I transferred as vocal pneumatic syllables to in turn to create a “mandala of consciousness” (Indian Tantric Philosophy) on canvas. Within the strict conforms of a dance form (Kathak), sixteen syllables constructed a sixteen petal-led lotus that represented not only the ‘blossomed consciousness’ theme in Hindu metaphysics; but also interpreted the narratives associated with the mythologies of ancient Vaishnavite scripture.
Photo: Sarasa dancing the rhythms while painting dance (Mandala in background).
Here, Husserl’s extremely complex notions on ‘duration’ come into play (Preester 2010)

1. The *primal intention* and empathy of the artist in creating a work of art, translates into an ability to:

2. Retain (retention) the immediately previous instants which allows for a sense of continuity, which then informs; or

3. ‘Protend’ or stretch consequential future moments of conscious thought.

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612 In Husserl’s phenomenology, ‘retention’ generally refers to a property of consciousness, namely to its ability to retain the immediately previous instants. The closely related term ‘protention’ is used to refer to consciousness’ ability to ‘protend’ or to stretch to immediately future instants. (Empathy and Purpose Form, De Preester, H 2010)

613 Concepts such as internal time consciousness play a large part in protention and links closely with ‘ksana’ the smallest unit of duration, in Indian Sankhya view.
The above is a painting as a derivative of the recording soundscape of seed mantras. The mantras are written on multiple canvases as a form of meditative practice (likhita japa) and these canvases and then painted upon, in ‘performative consciousness’.

The accounts of my lived experience resonates (in time-space-force

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614 This is one of a series of paintings named “Sahridhaya Paintings” that includes the observing audience of cast and crew members to interact with the artwork by writing the relevant soundscape seed mantras as a form of likita japa, a meditative writing exercise similar to mandala creation as per buddhistic practice by monks.
and force-time-space\textsuperscript{615}) the body ‘as a point of reference’ as well as body as the ‘null point of orientation\textsuperscript{616’}. As phenomenological insights, as the lived experience of a dancer- artist- meditative seeker, is experienced in the 1\textsuperscript{st} person sense rather than from a third-person critique. This experience thus protends the phenomenological experience of drawing and painting, “the complex interrelation of marking and meaning, making and viewing”, as iterated in Rossands’ observation.

\begin{quote}
“Helena De Preester’s, comments on Rosand’s enquiry; “Rosand thus notices that to perceive a drawing is to become involved in the act of drawing, which is a projection of the embodied self of the draftsman. Clearly, this is, on a pre-reflective level, an empathic re-enactment of the way the line was produced and in a similarly Husserlian vein it shows an essential feature of any truly cultural product: an inter-subjective dimension where viewer and maker can meet.” (Rosand 2006) (De Preester 2011)\textsuperscript{617}
\end{quote}

In my lived experience, the peculiarity of this situation is that the maker, and the viewer as the subject and object, lose their polarity. The ‘I-it’

consciousness becomes, even for flashes within the moment, “an I-Thou”

entity:

\begin{quote}
“This changeless background or canvas, is what is known as
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{615} In the writings of Laban and Maxine-Sheets Johnstone’Man Has Always Danced’: Forays into the Origins of an Art Largely Forgotten by Philosophers

\textsuperscript{616} Husserl as in Chapter 6

consciousness. The Sense of ‘I Am’ (Nisargadatta, Frydman, Dikshit 1973)

So now I experience this changeless background of the consciousness; there is an entity “I”, whose interactions, and markings are made upon this canvas. This then perpetuates a perception of what I experience, with respect to those markings and interactions, from which I calibrate an impression of the ‘spanda’ flashes, within me (in those moments of performative consciousness).

The relevance of exploring Samkara’s exegesis in Advaita philosophy is in constructing methods of ‘awareness transfers’ in my practice as an artist, as a means to understand perceptual experience in the very act of the transfer from non-form (primal impression) to performativity (Nair 2007).

Thus the ‘primal impression-retention-protention’ of lived experience, is an isolated pocket of awareness that only the dancer-artist encounters and this

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618 Nisargadatta, I Am That 1973
619 "According to Husserl (1991), the basic unit of temporality is not a ‘knife-edge’ present, but a ‘duration-block’ i.e., a temporal field that comprises all three temporal modes of present, past, and future. Just as there is no spatial object without a background, there is no experience without a temporal horizon. We cannot experience anything except on the background of what it succeeds and what we anticipate will succeed it. We can no more conceive of an experience empty of future than one empty of past. Three technical terms describe this temporal form of consciousness. There is (i) a ‘primal impression’ narrowly directed toward the now-phase of the object. The primal impression never appears in isolation and is an abstract component that by itself cannot provide us with a perception of a temporal object. The primal impression is accompanied by (ii) a ‘retention’, which provides us with a consciousness of the just-elapsed phase of the object, and by (iii) a ‘protention’, which in a more-or-less indefinite way intends the phase of the object about to occur. The concrete and full structure of all lived experience is thus primal impression-retention-protention.” (Thompson and Zahavi The Cambridge Handbook of Consciousness, Cambridge University Press 2007, 67-87)

620 ‘Performativity’ is a term used by S.Nair (Restoration of Breath 2007)
then gets transferred to become ‘concretized’ to a performance mode, that will then be experienced by the spectator.

Identifying and over-viewing the vital relevance of the ‘jiva’ or ‘self’ that exists in Advaita as witnessing consciousness, in Husserl’s ‘minimal self’ and Quantum theory of the ‘observing entity’ and Samkhya621 (Nair 2007) theory of ‘self’ that observes in fractional time, was the project that instigated this enquiry. Testing the limits of this enquiry from a personal experience as an artist seemed relevant.

It was interesting to note, that this important form of self-observation/meditation/silent witnessing, created a certain tranquil stillness within in my mind: watching one’s own breath, and stilling thoughts. This stillness induces a quanta shift in-wards. I am aware of processing sensory information that is impinging on my senses. This, I believe, may lead towards an exponential transformation in my sensory awareness. Perception sharpens. Being silently aware of this shift in consciousness, I process information differently: a sine qua non in unpacking and rediscovering that Rasa within me. 622 (De Preester 2011)

621 ibid.

622 Our appreciation of a drawing is thus dependent not only on the representational capacity of the line and its illusionary potential, but also on the ‘inner’ movement it causes in us, beings equally capable of moving and gesturing (Helena De Preester 2011).
“All true artists, whether they know it or not, create from a place of no-mind, from inner stillness” 623. Farandhari (Tolle 1999)

Thus when Tolle refers to the place of no-mind, the experience in my being is of that space where thoughts are stilled. Sense of body, self, thinking and technique are ‘non-important’; the only awareness is the flow of breath, within a space, stilled. The Shanta Rasa’s enduring sentiment is that of tranquility and the resultant joy is peace.

Therefore the aim of the theatre of Bharata is to first create this awareness of a possible peace and tranquility within the consciousness, ‘Cit’. Cit is that vast space of consciousness. Chit-Ambaram or Chidambaram624 is a celebrated temple in Tamil Nadu, South India, where Lord Shiva is said to dance in the ‘Cit-sabha’, is also a The analogy of ‘sabha’ or ‘audience’ in the word Cit-sabha is perhaps also indicative of the observer-space. It is this space, ‘Cit-sabha’ the enclosure that is our consciousness. When it is emptied of superfluous thoughts a silence is created. That is when that lord of dance, Shiva Natarajah, symbolic icon of a great stillness, begins to

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624 Citambaram (or Chidambaram) is situated about 150 miles south-west of Madras in South India. The name, Citambaram, ‘clothed in cit (consciousness), is said to be a Sanskritized derivation from Tamil cirrambalam: ‘little hall or temple’. The holy place of Citambaram is also known as Tillai, named after a tree (Excoecaria agallocha), and Puliyil: (Tiger’s town orsettlement)- S. Singaravelu “INVOCATIONS TO NATARAJA IN THE SOUTHEASTASIAN SHADOW-PLAYS With Special Reference to the Kelantan Shadow-play”
create a deep reverberation, a vibratio, a cosmic dance. This dance is not only symbolic of the universe resonating in harmony, but also that Shiva is himself “the sentient Universe625” (Srinivasan 2001). The oscillating, cyclic macro-movement is aligned to the almost imperceptible micro-movement within the individual consciousness. Thus the poem by Nandikeshwara626;

“Angikam Bhuvanam Yasya,
Vachikam Sarva Vaangmayam,
Aharyam Chandra Taraadi,
Twam nama Saatvikam Shivam”

“All body is the Universe, His speech is every conceivable sound,
The planets, stars and moons form his attire
I bow to that state of utter purity,
that is the state of Shiva”

This stillness within the consciousness is the supreme Rasa, complete and in harmony. It is actuated, realised and experienced only through observation. Thus ‘the role and function of the observer in a staged performance’, my primary investigation in this dissertation, finds the Self, the observer, dissolve and what remains is, that rare and intriguing paradox of the, ‘dancing’ Shiva, an embodiment of that ‘Rasa of stillness’, within our consciousness.

“His dance that is pure consciousness
He, inconceivable, performs
In the heart more subtle than subtle,

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626 Abhinava Dharpana 5 century BCE.
In the palace called the lotus of consciousness,
In the little cave
Him, whose foot is curved,
I worship." (Smith 1996)

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Appendix A

Youtube links to the work of Sarasa Krishnan

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kS2NeEjOkcs&list=PLhEpVhai_R_JZ9y1Q6XzUQDp3O0tVTml6

- Action Abstraction (2013, Perth)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7g7B2X8H_uY

RASA - Paris 2002
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=71YkkprCDUM

2014 Canning World Arts Exchange Perth
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NgNzbpbii9Z8

Brilliant Display of Rhythmic Colour – 2011, Singapore
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9AP0RIQoBQ

Once upon a PEACOCK’S tail – 2014, Singapore
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJE5NwTRw3k

Action abstraction
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nHzmRiEeCko
Appendix B

Responses to RASA by Artists and directors

Aakash Odedra (http://www.aakashodedra.co.uk/)

1. What does the term ‘Rasa’ mean to you?
Rasa to me personally means when all elements combine, mind body soul, it affects the space surrounding the individual.

2. Have you experienced Rasa?
I have experienced being immersed fully in what I call Rasa 7 times in the last 23 years. It’s like reaching ecstasy, one strives to be completely in sync with the totality of mind body and soul every show, but only gets glimpses.

3. How can you describe this experience?
When you reach a point of everything but nothing or when movement becomes still. It’s when time takes on a different structure/ form and when you start to pierce through the human form of logic.

4. Can you create and recreate Rasa in yourself and in the audience at every performance?
No. Each moment is unique and belongs to the particular time and space. One can try and recreate it but it will never hold the same value as it did in its original time and space.

5. In your experience, what are the main factors are responsible for the creation of Rasa?
Emptiness, stealth, search and openness.

6. Can you tell me your opinion of audience response in performance? How do they contribute to the performance?
Any individual placed in a space closely surrounding you changes the potential energy around of that particular environment. The more the audience drawn in internally, the more they connect, and the more they sync and connect with you, the higher the level of response is. This is because they start to identify with the individual and this in turn feeds back to me and
becomes a supplying source of energy.

7. **What difference do you feel when you perform in a room by yourself and when you perform in front of an audience?**

When I am by myself it feels as though the walls and mirrors become my teachers and speak to me, making me want to correct my self, till I reach a point where everything becomes silent. Then, I hear no corrections, no desires, no ambitions, and I am allowed to surrender, and the feeling afterwards cannot be described in words. When an audience is present it feels like something else takes over, whether that might be the energy from them, the energy of the space or simply the feeling of being a drop submerged in an ocean, I do not know.

8. **When you play/dance/sing in a room by yourself, are you conscious of something watching you?**

Depends on the frame of mind at that point.

9. **Would you say that Rasa transforms audience and performer to a certain extent?**

Yes, but Rasa means something very different to each person and the result of that differs from person to person.

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**Aarthi Kamalesh (www.smv.org.au)**

1. **What does the term ‘Rasa’ mean to you?**

Rasa is what I as the spectator/audience member experience/feel from a performance. As a performer, it is the emotion/journey I experience from “feeding off” this feeling that is evoked in the audience member to begin with.

2. **Have you experienced Rasa?**

Yes I think I have many a time, especially when watching/experiencing the art of world renowned artistes ie. dancers and musicians who have made their art transcend that of an ordinary/mundane form of entertainment. Personally as a performer, I think I have on a very small scale experienced it - as a performer this can be almost spiritual when this connection/link between the performer and audience member is forged.
3. How can you describe this experience?
It is indescribable...sometimes pure joy, sometimes spiritual, at other times it can be draining, more often than not it is a combination of all of the above.

4. Can you create and recreate Rasa in yourself and in the audience at every performance?
I personally do not think it is possible. As a performer you have to be totally connected with your subject mentally, emotionally and physically to be able to powerfully emit the bhava which will then hopefully evoke the rasa. And this does not particularly happen at every performance personally for me for whatever reason.
As a spectator, I do not think it is possible again as I have have to be totally engaged and involved with what I'm witnessing to create/feel rasa.

5. In your experience, what are the main factors are responsible for the creation of Rasa?
As a performer:
- Complete understanding/involvement in the chosen subject which than enables suitable creation of bhava and rasa
- Uninhibited performance ie. loss of self within limits in the chosen subject
- Complete mastery mentally, emotionally, physically over the chosen art form and subject matter

As an audience member:
- A sense of being open to whatever experience/feeling that is evoked without any preconceived notions, bias or prejudice
- Complete engagement mentally and emotionally with the performer

6. Can you tell me your opinion of audience response in performance? How do they contribute to the performance?
Audience response in a very direct way changes the mood of the performer be it in a positive or negative way. In short, they make or break the performance.

7. What difference do you feel when you perform in a room by yourself and when you perform in front of an audience?
In a room by myself, I am completely uninhibited which I personally feel as a performer is the best way to be. This state of being happens sometimes in front of an audience and at other times there is nerves, anxiety, and inhibition
that can affect the standard of performance.

8. When you play/ dance/sing in a room by yourself, are you conscious of something watching you?
Not really.

9. Would you say that Rasa transforms audience and performer to a certain extent?
Yes very much so...and usually it is a one-off experience that cannot be replicated.

Jyotsna Prakash (www.tfa.org.my)

1. What does the term ‘Rasa’ mean to you ?
Rasa to me is a feeling that is evoked when the one watches any performance.

2. Have you experienced Rasa?
Yes I have. But it is not very easy to describe.

3. How can you describe this experience?
On the creation of rasa, i feel that its easier when the audience have a pre-existing knowledge of the "tools" used in the performance. For example, mudras gestures and in my case even instruments. I use many Malaysian traditional instruments in my ensemble and they are meant to represent an Idea. For those who have some knowledge, this message is easily communicated.

4. Can you tell me your opinion of audience response in performance? How do they contribute to the performance?
It's always fantastic when the audience "gets" you. It rarely happens where 100% concur. To me, I dont know about Rasa but I certainly dont take every response as a positive or negative one. I have come to appreciate applause but i value feedback even negative ones.

7. What difference do you feel when you perform in a room by yourself and when you perform in front of an audience?
Taking my general demeanor into consideration, I am not an extrovert and there are times that I wish I could perform the way I do when I am alone in a room practicing and creating.

8. When you play/ dance/sing in a room by yourself, are you conscious of something watching you?
Yes and no. Yes I am conscious that someone "may" hear me and no I am conscious that I am not on stage.. In a "non-performing" zone. This is when I am in The TFA (Temple of Fine Arts) ...which is still a public place. When I am at home, alone, I am at my best performance.

Prakash Kandasamy (www.tfa.org.my)

1. What does the term ‘Rasa’ mean to you?
Rasa to me means feeling what the artist is feeling during a performance.

2. Have you experienced Rasa?
Yes.

3. How can you describe this experience?
As an audience it is different and as a performer it is different. This is because a performer has a different motivation from just being an audience who reacts to what is being performed.

4. Can you create and recreate Rasa in yourself and in the audience at every performance?
I am not sure if its possible but as a performer, if the artist and his medium are almost one, then whatever he/she wants to express or feel can be easily transferred to the audience's psyche or felt by them.

5. In your experience, what are the main factors are responsible for the creation of Rasa?
A) Mood of the performer B) Type of audience receiving the artist's outpouring C) Accompanists or fellow artists D)The ambience of the performance E)The motivation for the performance(performing for the art or for the audience or financial)
6. What difference do you feel when you perform in a room by yourself and when you perform in front of an audience? Depending on the artists' level of honesty, when alone, the artist might not be experiencing him/herself in a performance mode. This could mean they could be more relaxed and could be emoting deeper levels of themselves compared to when in front of an audience. I guess practising on your medium is to allow yourself to become relaxed about your medium and performance practice is to make yourself relaxed on stage so that we can be alone even in a crowd and therefore emote uninhibitedly.

7. When you play/dance/sing in a room by yourself, are you conscious of something watching you? I feel we ourselves need to be that 'something' watching ourselves. Meaning our 'higher selves' are actually called into the equation when we want to critically listen or watch ourselves. This is an extremely important process if we are serious about growing as artists.

The answer I think is in the Ekalavia story. Even though Dronacharya didn't want to teach him, he managed to learn "from" Dronacharya. (from a clay construction) Which proves that guru, or the perfection or the guidance we seek is always within us and can be summoned by earnest desire to achieve (sadhana).

8. Would you say that Rasa transforms audience and performer to a certain extent? Yes it is and is in fact, I think, the main unstated motivation of an artist.

Sooraj Subramaniam (http://www.soorajsubramaniam.com)

1. What does the term ‘Rasa’ mean to you? Rasa means flavour or taste. Specifically to the creative arts, it means feeling or sentiment created by the art form.

2. Have you experienced Rasa? Yes, I think I have. I have sat through some exquisite performances where I've stop analysing anything and just been caught up in the emotion of the artistry. I think when one fully experiences the intentions of the artist one has gained the Rasa of the art. For example, when I can reduce the intellectual experience (analysing, debating, questioning) and simply allow myself to be...
carried by the experience (seeing, hearing, feeling, experiencing, enjoying), then I have experienced Rasa.

3. **How can you describe this experience?**
   For me it is not a cerebral experience. I allow myself to be carried by the performance. For example, if the art form I’m experiencing is credible then it will make me feel what it intends to. A good storyteller draws the audience into the tale, making them feel the intentions of the characters, empathise with their conditions, rally for their cause.

4. **Can you create and recreate Rasa in yourself and in the audience at every performance?**
   It is important that the artist does not become bored with his/her art form. If there is continual evaluation and consideration on how to create a convincing performance, then Rasa is more likely to be achieved. Obviously, this will fluctuate depending on the mood of the performer and the circumstances. But a well-prepared artist should, hopefully, be able to overcome situational circumstances to present convincing work.

5. **In your experience, what are the main factors are responsible for the creation of Rasa?**
   I suppose there are many variables that may affect the outcome of a performance: state of the performer, state of the audience member, venue, atmosphere, circumstances, etc. Integrity — that is, a respect for what you’re doing, and a conviction that what you do is true and honest. This conviction will radiate, and find vicarious resonance in others. The other factor is efficiency, and by that I mean if the artist is well-prepared to deliver their art form. In dance, for example, a trained, practised, efficient dancer is more equipped to convey their art. Someone who has put in the work and dedication to hone their skills and craft will be more likely to produce credible work. And, of course, an open-minded and receptive audience.

6. **Can you tell me your opinion of audience response in performance?**
   How do they contribute to the performance?
   In my opinion the purpose of all art is to communicate, to convey. Whatever that is being conveyed will help create Rasa. If there is no audience then Rasa cannot be fulfilled. If the artist is immersed in the state of being of their art form they could create Rasa for themselves, but then without an audience nothing would have been communicated to anyone. You can prepare a good
meal, but if there is no one to serve it to then the flavour of the food will not been savoured.

7. What difference do you feel when you perform in a room by yourself and when you perform in front of an audience?
There’s some abandon with which I can perform for myself. But even then it is to an imagined audience. There are times, however, after having done a lot of practice and preparation, when I’m finally performing I experience more abandon on stage and can ‘play up’ to the audience. It is not a conscious decision; it happens spontaneously, perhaps because of a surge of adrenaline from nervousness or excitement.

8. When you play/dance/sing in a room by yourself, are you conscious of something watching you?
No, I don’t believe anything is watching me.

9. Would you say that Rasa transforms audience and performer to a certain extent?
Yes, I most certainly hope Rasa transforms all involved parties. If the purpose of art is to ‘lead’ to another place, i.e. to transcend regular boundaries, then the vehicle to achieve that transcendence is Rasa.

Siddha Pandian Natarajan (www.smv.org.au)

1. What does the term ‘Rasa’ mean to you?
As a dancer, I guess rasa, to me, is the very reaction, response of my inner being, that I realise through my senses - the initial emotional impact or ‘taste’ of witnessing or experiencing an event - I guess?

2. Have you experienced Rasa?
I sure hope so!

3. How can you describe this experience?
When I feel Goosebumps or feel somewhat ‘moved’ both physically and emotionally whilst watching some amazing performances.

4. Can you create and recreate Rasa in yourself and in the audience at every performance?
I guess so, but I am not sure I am able to pin point the exact points when
these shifts occur in my being.

5. In your experience, what are the main factors are responsible for the creation of Rasa?
When a being expresses emotions as a result of an event - the reaction and response to any event, that inevitably takes place

6. Can you tell me your opinion of audience response in performance? How do they contribute to the performance?
Depending on the audience of course, if they can ‘feel’ or engage with the energy that is being expressed through dance, then their reaction or response can also be felt back by the dancer. It is what I believe, and have experienced, as a dancer. And this feeling that is received from the audience, whether it is rasa or not, is what sometimes, motivates performers to go a bit further.

7. What difference do you feel when you perform in a room by yourself and when you perform in front of an audience?
The truth is that I dont believe I have ever danced alone, in a room by myself, although that may be the rational analyses from a non-Indigenous viewpoint. But in the case of having been the only physical entity in the room, I generally feel that such performances are navigated by my worldviews and therefore I am motivated to dance in this manner. Although the same religious sentiments often motivate performances in front of an audience, these experiences are always framed by so many elements - such as choreography, the choreographer, the event and purpose for which we are performing, the dancers involved, and if have rehearsed the item enough to perform with confidence.

8. When you play/ dance/sing in a room by yourself, are you conscious of something watching you?
Please see above.

9. Would you say that Rasa transforms audience and performer to a certain extent?
I think it is a central idea in classical or Indigenous dance perspectives - a fundamental substance of performance which I believe exists, with or without rational analyses - as this is what our ancients have said. And if they have said thus - then that it shall be.
Vick Riaz (www.smv.org.au)

1. What does the term ‘Rasa’ mean to you?
Rasa is an Indian word which is commonly referred to as a sentiment, or an emotion. It is regarded as one of the fundamental qualities in classical music, dance, and poetry and literature.

2. Have you experienced Rasa?
I have certainly experienced rasa in many or all occasions while performing and practicing Tabla (North Indian Classical Percussion).

3. How can you describe this experience?
In my opinion, there are no words to describe this experience. It is something to be felt and cherished. It is a state of higher consciousness.

4. Can you create and recreate Rasa in yourself and in the audience at every performance?
It is definitely possible to create rasa during performance. In Hindustani classical music, there are no set or fixed compositions. So the same raag(raga) can be performed over and over by the same person, but it will be impossible to recreate the same rasa each time. This is because each time he is performing based in his feeling at that very moment and as a percussionist, I have to feel the music to be able to accompany him in such a way to finally reach the point of climax. Most of the time the audience are unable to understand what is a raga or the rhythmic cycle the percussionist plays. But they will certainly feel the emotion if they listen to the music and slowly allow it to take over their understanding which ultimately creates a rasa.

5. In your experience, what are the main factors responsible for the creation of Rasa?
The characteristics of each performer and the method and medium in which he or she chooses to deliver their art is the main factor, responsible for the creation of rasa.

6. Can you tell me your opinion of audience response in performance? How do they contribute to the performance?
Normally there are 2 types of audience. They either like or dislike the performance. The audience response is very important because a good audience will definitely help stimulate the performance as it brings a whole positive and encouraging vibe to the musicians. The audience who dislike
what they watching are normally not responsive, thus emulating a very monotonous/negative energy which reflects on the delivery of the performer.

7. What difference do you feel when you perform in a room by yourself and when you perform in front of an audience?
I always practice my instrument when I'm by myself. My mind is normally fixated on points like why am I practicing, what am I practicing and how do I practice it. But sometimes I like to imagine there are an audience in front of me.
This is certainly very different when you are seated on an actual stage in front of hundreds of audience. On stage sometimes I feel nervous, excited, happy, anxious all at the same time. In a room by yourself, I do feel much emotion because even with a good imagination, the reality is that there are actually no audience, only 4 walls.

8. When you play/dance/sing in a room by yourself, are you conscious of something watching you?
No. As explained in the answer to question 7, I'm mostly engrossed in the actually quality and dynamics and clarity of the sounds being produced on the tabla. Why, what and how I practice keeps my focus while practicing.

9. Would you say that Rasa transforms audience and performer to a certain extent?
I certainly agree that Rasa transform audience and performer. As a performer I always feel elated at many points during the concert. I always feel a force taking over me as I am playing and this only can happen when I'm at the point of complete surrender to the blissful ness of the Rasa being created.

Sukhi Krishnan (www.smv.org.au)

1. What does the term ‘Rasa’ mean to you?
A feeling experienced by the audience watching a performance.

2. Have you experienced Rasa?
Yes I think!!

3. How can you describe this experience?
Connected to the sentiment felt by the performer and a deep sense of
satisfaction within providing a mood of reflection within.

4. Can you create and recreate Rasa in yourself and in the audience at every performance? Not all the time but I believe you can.

5. In your experience, what are the main factors are responsible for the creation of Rasa? The performers mental mood, thoughts, focus before performing, the environment eg outdoor or indoor performance. If it is an out-door performance then the influence of nature wind water sky horizon. Also the performers skill and experience doing a particular role/ performance adds to it.

6. Can you tell me your opinion of audience response in performance? How do they contribute to the performance? If a performer can feel the response from the audience they may feel inspired and that connection between the audience and performer could help elevate the quality of that particular performance.

7. What difference do you feel when you perform in a room by yourself and when you perform in front of an audience? It's easier to forget the "I" the ego, am dancing/ performing when you perform alone in a room. Sometimes these spontaneous creations cannot be recreated!

8. When you play/ dance/sing in a room by yourself, are you conscious of something watching you? Yes you watch yourself. It's like closing your eyes and being aware of each breath you take.

9. Would you say that Rasa transforms audience and performer to a certain extent? Yes I think it does because they experienced something intangible. Sometimes it produces one same a collective rasa felt by both And at other times it may produce individual different rasas that each audience and performer takes back.

David Moody (http://profiles.murdoch.edu.au/myprofile/david-moody/)
1. **What does the term ‘Rasa’ mean to you?**
   I think it refers to an emotional experience that the audience have, as communicated by the actors. In seems to me to refer to the pleasure that audiences have which is based on distance; on the idea that, while the senses are cultivated, there is an understanding that what is being done is not real. But I am also aware that there is a great deal of metaphysical freight to the theory, linked to the transformation of consciousness in the spectator.

2. **Have you experienced Rasa?**
   I am sure I have: I think most audience members who have seen a range of theatre have experienced it, if rarely. Of course, I am not sure I would have understood it was Rasa at the time. And whether it was authentically “Rasa“- I am not sure; whether there is an “authentic“ experience of the concept anyway. It does seem to me a very useful experience of the fullness, complexity, sensuality and the intensity of the aesthetic, emotional experience. I think it also catches its almost paradoxical nature.

3. **How can you describe this experience?**
   It is hard to describe it in words without losing its sensuality, intensity and “present-ness.“ I think it is a total immersion in the experience, an emotional engagement which is no longer rational. But also, there is never a sense that this is also not a performance. I think the term “carried away“ or “immersed“ is a help here.

4. **Can you create and recreate Rasa in yourself and in the audience at every performance?**
   No. I think it is rare. I mean, theoretically, yes, of course, and maybe the most experienced- the so-called “Masters“ (sic) of the art can. I do think that to think it happens routinely is to under-estimate the uniqueness and power of the concept.

5. **In your experience, what are the main factors are responsible for the creation of Rasa?**
   I think there are several factors all working together, and it’s quite complex.

   a) Skill of the actors- their physical virtuosity and sensitivity: their “energy“ and “presence“ to use the theatrical terms.

   b) The creation of the theatrical world itself; its capacity to involve, engage and influence the physicality, the sense, and the emotions (moods) of the
spectator. Here I mean the “signs” of performance too: lights, sound, music, set etc.

c) The power of the narrative is sometimes relevant, but not always.

d) The preparedness of the audience to enter into the experience: its willingness, openness and what it brings as its own assumptions and emotional condition.

6. **Can you tell me your opinion of audience response in performance?** How do they contribute to the performance?
I think the audience is key- I think the relationship between audience and actors is the event itself. It is what theatre actually IS.

7. **What difference do you feel when you perform in a room by yourself and when you perform in front of an audience?**
I feel all the energy that the collective experience brings: the multiple is more than the single. As Stanislavski knew, as much as you prepare, what happens between audience and actor in the “present” is unpredictable because of all the complexity and power of the exchange between them: the “feed-back” loop.

8. **When you play/ dance/sing in a room by yourself, are you conscious of something watching you?**
No, not usually. I guess I am aware of my own critical response sometimes. So, yes, there is an observer (myself).

9. **Would you say that Rasa transforms audience and performer to a certain extent?**
Yes, for certain. The nature of that transformation is open to debate; its extent, nature and permanence. I do think that in the best theatre, something fundamental is changed in both actors and audience. I do think that after such an “event”, neither are the same again. It is hard to quantify, even describe, the nature of this transformation.
“The tapas or sadhana is the practical application of ‘polishing’ to reveal the true divine nature of the human being”\(^{628}\)

“Yat bhavam tat bhavati” – What you feel and think that you become.

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, the verse (chapter 1;18)

“prthivyai cainam agnes ca daiva
vag avisati, sa vai daiva vag, yaya
yad yad eva vadati, tad tad bhavati.\(^{629}\)”

“The speech becomes divine, the mind becomes divine, and the Prana also becomes divine thereby, due to which the capacity of spoken words increases infinitely, because the limitations imposed upon speech by its connection with the present body are lifted on account of the practice of this meditation.” (Swami Krishnananda\(^{630}\))

The term, bhava, I would also interpret as “the ‘feeling’ or emotional response that takes the shape of the thought expressed”. In my practice in creating these paintings comprised of mantras\(^{631}\), I aim to create a form of meditative writing (likita japa) that channels thought activity for the duration of the writing period (atleast). This meditative writing, practiced in silence, induces the writer to focus energy within, and there by create coherence.

\(^{628}\) As explained in detail in chapter 3.
\(^{629}\) Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, the verse (chapter 1;18)

\(^{630}\) http://www.swami-krishnananda.org/brdup/brhad_I-05e.html

\(^{631}\) Specific sound syllables and sacred poetry.
within consciousness. A coherence that channels mind to matter (writing) this in turn slows down the inbreath and outbreath of the writer. The writing of Sanskrit mantras as opposed to writing ‘lines’ as a form of punishment metered out to delinquents is quite different. These sounds of the Sanskrit words closely correspond to meaning as ascertained by ancient seers.

This transference of ritual (likita japa) (when an entire production cast/crew or community writes upon the canvases, using a similar theme or specific mantras), produces a collective coherence. This coherence within the collective consciousness of the production cast and crew, corresponds with the precepts of the production especially in sacred theatre, like in the production of Ramayana, Vishwa Vinayaka, Saraswati Mandala dance.

Thus the act of rehearsing and perfecting dance, acting, by actors, dancers (and in all crew that create the modes of expression including lighting design, sound stagecraft etc.) in a theatrical performance, is aligned consistent and cogent. The collective consciousness of the production team is as ‘one’, living, breathing (Prana) together, invoking the sacred within.

“When this meditation is practised, the Prāṇa also gets harmonised with the cosmic Prāṇa, even as it is the case with the speech and the mind of a person. Then the divine Prāṇa enters the person. The Sūtra-ātman takes
possession of the individual, and he becomes the vital force, or energy, of everything that moves and does not move, visible or invisible. And then one is not affected by what happens anywhere in the world. The Prāṇa of an individual is subject to limitations on account of the presence of persons and things outside. (S. Krishnananda)

This then is true ‘Sahridaya’. Where the observer within me, and the observed entity align, and ‘meaning’ is understood and experienced as ‘one’.

The sadhana is the polishing or the act of penance (as quoted by Swami Krishnananda from the Upanishad) either by writing upon the canvases, or perfecting dance, acting, singing albeit all modes of articulation of the performance finds fruition or realization in the creation of Rasa in the audience.

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Ibid.

see chapter 4 pg 162, 163
Student contributing to the work (Ramayana July 2015)
Before and after - from writing to painting - Sita (Ramayana –July 2015)

Note language of choice (Chinese/Japanese/English, Hindi, Marathi, etc)

Before and after - from writing to painting - Maricha (Ramayana July 2015)
Face of Lord Rama (Ramayana July 2015)
Sita points to the golden deer, Maricha.

Before and after of Rama and Sita (Ramayana- July 2015)
Complete Sahridaya Ramayana Painting (July 2015)

Supporting students in their contribution (VishwaVinayaka 2012)
Working to bind the minds of cast and crew, to create a focused energy in performance. (Ramayana 2010 and Vishwa Vinayaka 2012)

Face of Lord Hanuman (Ramayana 2010)
Full size Hanuman, part of the production by the Temple of Fine Arts, (Ramayana - 2010, Perth)

Full size Ganesha, part of the production by the Temple of Fine Arts (Vishwa Vinakaya – 2012, Kuala Lumpur)
Detail of the above Ganesha painting.

Before and after of the hand of Goddess Saraswati (Saraswati Shata Naama Stotra Meditation April 2015)
Complete Sahridhaya painting of Goddess Saraswathi, comprising of the 1000 names of the Goddess written 16 times. (April 2015)