

Deven M. Patel 
devenp@upenn.edu
(University of Pennsylvania, USA)

***Kāvya*'s Repeat Performances
Intersections of Aesthetics, *yoga-parikarma-bhāvanā*, and the Logic
of Medium-Specificity in *Daśarūpaka*'s Discussion of *śāntarasa***

SUMMARY: Largely left underexplored in *rasa* studies has been an implication made in the middle of the tenth century that *śāntarasa* eludes theorization with respect to the theater (*nāṭya*) but may function within an exclusive theory of poetry (*kāvya*). A discussion in the *Daśarūpaka* (“The Ten Dramatic Forms”) and its commentary cryptically imply in the fourth chapter of that work that if *śāntarasa* is viable at all as a genre of *rasa* theory, it is medium-specific to *kāvya* and not possible in *nāṭya*. Though *śāntarasa* is a dubious category for theater theory and pragmatics, they seem to argue, it may be acceptable in poetry through a synergy of two theoretical schemas: poetics and Yoga psychology. Reviewing these arguments opens up a larger conversation about the significance of medium to *rasa* theory and the inherent limitations for conceiving unified theories of art.

KEYWORDS: *rasa*, *śāntarasa*, *parikarma*, *bhāvanā*, genre, medium, *Daśarūpaka*, Abhinavagupta

Introduction

In the spirit of this special volume, the following essay explores an emergent line of thinking about *rasa* theory during and after the tenth century CE. A particularly pregnant debate among Sanskrit literary theorists during and after this era targeted the viability of *śāntarasa* from

philosophical, affect-theoretical, literary-critical, and text-historical perspectives. By the tenth century, the ground for debating *rasa* theory had reached a saturation point. The ninth century produced the foundational theories about *rasa* while the long tenth century inaugurated the great *rasa* debates that spilled over into the next millennium and to our new one.¹ Behind these discussions, the sixth and seventh chapters of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, which focus squarely on *rasa*, cast their authoritative shadow. Here and in other sections, the *Nāṭyaśāstra* ultimately centers around stage performance (*abhinaya*)—actors’ speeches (*vācīkābhinaya*), bodily movements (*āṅgīkābhinaya*), involuntary expressions of emotion (*śāttvikābhinaya*), costuming and stage-design (*āhāryābhinaya*)—and introduces a rich nomenclature for the theater experience. In other contexts, it also anchors future discourses on all matters of literary formulation, including figuration (*alankāra*), qualities (*guṇa*), style (*rīti*), indirect speech (*vakrokti*), and implicature (*dhvani*), and, with respect to *rasa*, lays the groundwork for later formulations about its ontology and epistemology, its origination, location, perception, inference, or manifestation.

With respect to the *locus* of *rasa* (*āśraya*), many theories emerge after the eighth century: are *bhāva* and *rasa* within the character, in or constitutive of the text itself, within the audience member, or are they mutually operational in some undefinable concatenation? Questions about *āśraya*, in turn, reignited already heated epistemological debates about apprehension. One problem that does not receive sufficient attention concerns medium. Both medieval and modern scholars of *kāvya* and *rasa* generally sidestep or altogether ignore the implications of casually conflating poetry that is seen (*drśya*) and poetry that is heard (*śravya*). When it comes to applying *rasa* analysis to *kāvya* and *nāṭya*, the tacit

¹ See Pollock 2016 for selected translations accompanied by a historical and analytical assessment of the *rasa* debates of the ninth and tenth centuries. In many cases, I have borrowed his thoughtful translations of technical terms, such as *śāntarasa*, *saḥṛdaya* and *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*, while, in other cases, I have opted for different semantic equivalencies.

consensus seems to be that the *rasa* theory holds steady across all artistic modes and formats. This is perhaps justifiable in the case of treating the *Nāṭyaśāstra*'s traditional eight *rasas*, usually unquestioned in their availability for reception through visual and auditory presentation. The debates over *śāntarasa*, however, which perhaps begin in the early ninth century itself with the acceptance of the *rasa* by Udbhata (c. 800), expose a gap in viewing the significance of medium uncritically.²

The *śāntarasa* problem

A provisional translation of *śānta* is the 'peaceful' *rasa*, or perhaps more technically, the extraordinary art-experience (*rasa*) which relates to yogic tranquillization (*śama*) of the operations of consciousness (*citta-vṛtti*). In this scenario, one assumes that *śama* would be something available in the real world (to dedicated yogis, at least), whereas *śāntarasa* would be only available to a responsive viewer/reader (*sahṛdaya*) through *drśya*- (or *śravya*-) *kāvya*. Even while conditionally accepting the logic behind this unusual *rasa*, most scholars who held *rasa* to be a purely verbal or mental phenomenon rendered moot any *śāntarasa*-specific problems related to staging/composing or viewing/listening/reading.³ The interesting outlier, if we can ably reconstruct an argument they seem to be making, is the collective work of the author Dhanañjaya (c. 975), commentator Dhanika (c. 975), and sub-commentator Bhaṭṭa Nṛsiṃha (date uncertain, but post-1050) on the *Daśarūpaka* ("The Ten Dramatic Forms"). The *Daśarūpaka* and Dhanika's *Avaloka* ("Observations") seem to restrict the representational and receptive scope of *śāntarasa* to non-theatrical performance

² Modern scholarship on *śāntarasa*, and its vexed inclusion in the *rasa* canon, has been extensive. Beginning with V. Raghavan's monograph (1940), other important books and articles include J. L. Masson and M. V. Patwardhan (1969), E. Gerow and A. Aklujkar (1972), S. P. Bhattacharya (1976), G. Tubb (1985), E. Gerow (1994), and L. McCrea (2013).

³ See Pollock 2012 for an extensive discussion on the significance of *śravyakāvya* and *drśyakāvya* for classical authors.

contexts, arguing its potential (though unlikely) feasibility in *kāvya* but never in *nāṭya*. A reconstruction of their argument of why and how *śāntarasa* might operate in poetry but not in theater is worth considering in some detail.

The conclusion that Dhanañjaya and Dhanika reach against *śāntarasa* in theater contexts is brief: an appropriately stable emotional experience (*sthāyibhāva*) for theatrical presentation is lacking, and therefore, no extraordinary experience (*rasa*) for the spectator of the play is possible. Before arriving at this conclusion, they rehearse the history of the controversial *rasa*. Commenting on the third *pāda* of *kārikā* 4.35, that “some include even yogic tranquillization [as a potential *sthāyibhāva*] rejecting [however] its development in plays” (*śamam api kecit prāhuḥ puṣṭir nātyeṣu naitasya*), Dhanika first summarizes the various opinions on the matter, concluding with his rejection of *śama* as a suitable stable emotional experience for a ninth *rasa*:

*tatra kucid āhuḥ—nāstyeva śānto rasaḥ...anye tu vastuto 'bhāvam varṇayanti. anādi-kāla-pravāhāyāta-rāga-dveṣayor ucchetum aśakyat-vāt...sarvathā nāṭakādāv abhinayātmani sthāyitvam asmābhiḥ śamasya neṣyate. tasya samasta-vyāpāra-pravilaya-rūpasyābhinayāyogāt*⁴

Some hold that there is no such thing as *śāntarasa*...Others say that it is merely an absence since it is impossible to uproot the beginningless and endless conditions of attachment and aversion that mark the human condition... In every way, we do not accept yogic tranquillization as a stable emotional experience suitable for performance in any kind of theatrical context because one cannot stage the folding up of all emotive processes.

The sub-commentator Bhaṭṭa Nṛsiṃha (in his *Laḡhuṭīkā* or “Brief Annotation”) says that even were we to accept the independent existence of *śānta*, some would argue that the nature of its experience is not known

⁴ See *Daśarūpaka* 4.35 (Venkatacharya 1947: 202–203). All translations in this essay are mine, unless otherwise indicated.

(*tasya svādātmakatvaṃ na vidyate*) or that it has no essential nature at all (*tat-svarūpam eva nāsti*).

Countering the *Daśarūpaka*'s more straightforward ontological view of the theater experience—that *sthāyibhāva* and, by extension, the transformational experience of *rasa*, is located in the spectator of the play—Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka* ("Light on Implicature") had earlier located *rasa* in the character and agreed with predecessors about its being manifested through "textual processes" (Pollock 2016: 88). Ānandavardhana (*Dhvanyāloka* 4.5) argues that the *sthāyibhāva* of the *Mahābhārata* is 'the pleasure' (*sukha*) that increases when worldly desires are eroded (*tr̥ṣṇā-kṣaya-sukha-paripoṣa-lakṣaṇaḥ śānto raso*) (Sastry 1940: 533). In his commentary on *Dhvanyāloka* 3.23, Abhinavagupta extrapolates this *sukha* as "essentially disenchantment-leading to-dispassion (*nirveda*) from the totality of worldly sense-objects which arises from a recognition of what is ultimately real" (*śāntasyāpi tattva-jñāna-samutthita-samasta-saṃsāra-viṣaya-nirveda-prāṇatvena*).⁵ In his commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, Abhinavagupta clearly identifies his position on *nirveda* as coextensive with both *śama* and *śānta* (*śama-śāntayoḥ paryāyatvam*) and, by even further extension, with an awareness of the true nature of the self (*ātma-svarūpa* or *tattva-jñāna*). He undermines arguments that *nirveda* or *śama* can be a *sthāyibhāva* for *śāntarasa*. If *śama* was indeed the *sthāyibhāva* for *śāntarasa*, he argues, then the same logic for the distinction between all *bhāva* and *rasa* would apply: *śama* would already be established (*siddha*), available in ordinary experience (*laukika*), and particular in its nature (*asādhāraṇa*) while *śānta* would be aesthetically produced (*sādhya*), a uniquely extra-ordinary experience (*alaukika*) and universal in nature (*asādhāraṇa*).⁶

⁵ See the *Locana* on *Dhvanyāloka* 3.23 (Sastry 1940: 381). Also, see Tubb 1985: 145-150 for an extensive discussion of Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta's understanding of *nirveda* in *rasa* theory.

⁶ Gerow (1994: 198, n. 107) clarifies what he sees as a confused analysis by Masson and Patwardhan, who offer the original passage from the *Abhinavabhāratī*, as follows: *siddha-sādhayatayā laukikālaukikatvena sādhāraṇāsādhāraṇatayā ca vai-lakṣyaṃ śama-śāntayor api sulabham eva* (Masson and Patwardhan 1969: 128).

Holding awareness of *ātma-svarūpa* as the sole *sthāyibhāva* for *śāntarasa*, no question of its being established (*siddha*) or in need of being established (*sādhyā*) would arise for Abhinavagupta, for this *rasa* or for any other, unlike for his teacher Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, who apparently held the *sthāyibhāva* and *rasa* to be *siddha*. Abhinavagupta would probably agree, however, that both *bhāva* and *rasa* are *siddha* in the spectator, insofar as they await ‘manifestation’ (*abhivyakti*) through the experience of ‘commonolization’ (*sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*), but *sādhyā* to the extent that it requires some sort of act to bring about that manifestation.⁷ For Dhanika, on the other hand, the problem of representing *śāntarasa* underwrites the primary objection to including it among the other eight *rasas*. If *nirveda* and *śama* are taken to be *siddha*, then the role the theater plays in representing *śama* is totally left unaddressed, in a way that does not apply to the other eight *rasas*. Therefore, with respect to *śāntarasa*, while Dhanika would probably accept the latter two criteria of the standard view of *rasa* (its being *alaukika* and *asādhāraṇa*), one surmises he might take strong issue with the assertion that *śama qua nirveda* is an established (*siddha*) *sthāyibhāva* and not one that needs to be brought into being (*bhāvanā*) through other processes. As significant as the philosophical divide between the *Daśarūpaka* view and that of Abhinavagupta’s predecessor Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka appears, concerning the ontology of the *śāntarasa* experience and the epistemology for apprehending it, the related empirical divide—of acting/staging vs. reciting/writing (and the attendant differences of reception therein)—poses an even more

According to Gerow, their confusion stems from the mistaken interpretation that this is Abhinavagupta’s final position. Gerow argues that it indeed is Abhinavagupta’s position but only in the limited capacity for countering the opponent’s assertion that by *nirveda* Bharata meant *śama*. Gerow’s translation of this passage is as follows:

[T]heir difference can (also) easily be stated (as it has been in our own aesthetics) in terms of the relation between the given and that which is to be realized, or that between the mundane and the transcendental, or between the common and the special (Gerow 1994: 198).

⁷ See Reich 2018: 543–543 for an interesting discussion about *siddha* and *sādhyā*, with respect to *bhāva* and *rasa*, in Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka and Abhinavagupta’s thought.

potentially incommensurable difficulty. Certainly, therefore, Dhanañjaya and Dhanika's apparent concession for *śāntarasa* in non-theatrical media invites focused commentary.

Application of the *parikarma-bhāvanā* schema onto the genre of *śāntarasa* in *śravyakāvya*

Building on Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's 'literary hermeneutics' (Pollock 2010: 146-148), which transpose theories of sentence meaning (*bhāvanā* or *bhāvakatva*) onto formulating how *rasa* comes to be meaningful for the spectator, Dhanika's role in drawing the two intellectual strands together has been instrumental. Recently, scholars have addressed the sources from which Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, Dhanika, and ultimately Abhinavagupta drew upon to formulate innovative homologies and nuanced perspectives about how *rasa* comes to mean something in *nāṭya* and *kāvya* akin to how words and sentences function in ordinary language.⁸ Across the diversity of views, a shared understanding held that, however conceptualized, a syntax of elements collaborating to produce a staged *rasa* experience mirrors a similar tripartite linguistic process. Words form sentences that, in turn, form sentence-meanings (*vākyārtha*) which, in performance, correspond to triggering factors on the stage (*vibhāva*); those, in turn,

⁸ Pollock's pioneering reconstruction of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's ideas and sources, especially as they relate to aesthetics applications of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa's *bhāvanā* theory (Pollock 2010), has received several productive responses. H. David (2016) offers a revision to Pollock's identification of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's sources by identifying a *mélange* of earlier Mīmāṃsā and Nyāya influences on both Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka and especially on Abhinavagupta's original synthesis of various views, while A. Ollett (2016) delivers a rejoinder to David's revision and an expansion of Pollock's initial argument (2016). J. Reich (2018) minimizes Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's Mīmāṃsā-inflected contribution to Abhinavagupta's *rasa* paradigm, finding Nāyaka's Advaita Vedānta views more influential on Abhinavagupta's formulation of *rasāsvāda* as *brahmāsvāda*. For a more general discussion of *bhāvanā* in Mīmāṃsā contexts, see Ollett 2013: 221–262. See also Shulman 2012: 17–23 for a wide-sweeping look at the cultural significance of the conceptualization and application of the term *bhāvanā* across linguistic, ritual, philosophical, yogic, literary, and broadly 'imaginative' domains.

invite physical reactions (*anubhāva*) and transitory emotional experiences (*vyabhicāribhāva*) that syntactically construe and generate a stable emotional experience (*sthāyibhāva*) which ultimately culminates in *rasa*.⁹

Related to but different from the conceptualization of *bhāvanā* in Mīmāṃsā contexts, Dhanañjaya and Dhanika suggest another direction one may take with *bhāvanā* discourse. In *kārikā* 4.45 (Venkatacharya 1947: 223–224), the author of the *Daśarūpaka* seems to negotiate a role for something akin to *śāntarasa* in non-*dr̥śyakāvya* without actually allowing its existence as an independent *rasa*. For this, Dhanika curiously invokes the Yoga concept of *parikarma bhāvanā* to explain the process by which a *sthāyibhāva* for *śāntarasa* can be brought into being (*bhāvanā*) and then enhanced or, alternatively, altogether transformed to the level of *rasa*. *Daśarūpaka* 4.45 reads: “The absoluteness of *śama* is beyond words. Its essence consists of those conditions beginning with sympathetic joy for another’s happiness” (*śama-prakarṣo ’nirvācyo muditādes tad-ātmatā*), alluding here to *Yogasūtra* 1.33:

maitrī-karuṇā-muditopekṣāṇām sukha-duḥkha-punyāpunyāṇām
bhāvanātaś citta-prasādanam |

⁹ According to Dhanika, one apprehends *rasa* through the sentence meaning which, though not a word-meaning or entity (*padārtha*) itself nevertheless is intentionally meaningful (*tātparyārtha*) and functionally equivalent to *vibhāvas* and other factors presented on the stage. The various factors beginning with *vibhāva* allow for the apprehension of the *sthāyibhāva*, which is none other than the intended meaning of the sentence in the form of the play. Dhanika 1.8 (Venkatacharya 1947: 8–9) thus connects mimetic dance (*nṛtya*) with the performance of the *padārtha* and *nātya* with the performance of sentence-meaning (*vākyaṛthābhīnaya*): *vākyaṛthābhīnāyātmakān nātyāt padārthābhīnāyātmakam anyad eva nṛtyam*. See also Dhanika on *Daśarūpaka* 4.37 (Venkatacharya 1947: 211–212). Also, see Ollett (2020) for a thoroughgoing study of the variously theorized correspondences (and attendant shifts in nomenclature) between *vākyaṛtha* and *rasa* in Dhanika, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, Bhaṭṭa Jayanta, and others.

The mind can be brought to a happy state if one can cultivate the attitude of friendliness toward beings experiencing pleasant states, compassion for those undergoing unpleasant states, sympathetic joy with respect to the virtuous actions of others, and indifference toward the non-virtuous actions of others.

This formula also appears, in different language, in Upatissa's *Vimuttimagga*, Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*, and Umāsvāti's *Tattvārthasūtra*.¹⁰ Aligning with a tradition of *Yogasūtra* commentary on this formulation, Dhanañjaya intriguingly seems to yield to the possibility that *śama*—a suitable *sthāyibhāva* for *śāntarasa*—can be brought about through the mental cultivation of *muditā* (and the other three members [*maitrī*, *karuṇā*, *upekṣā*] of the *parikarma* quartet from Yoga tradition). A question seems to arise for Dhanika: how can the audience experience *śāntarasa* without experiencing *śama*? *Rasa* implies, after all, a modification of one's *citta* (*citta-vṛtti*) and, if *śama* is an absence of modification—a nullification of the core human phenomena that comprise the eight other *rasas* in the eternal theater of attachment and aversion (*rāga* and *dveṣā*)—then logically *śāntarasa*'s existence is precluded. In the preface to 4.45, he thus dismisses *śāntarasa* in *nāṭya* but unexpectedly makes a provocative case for it in *kāvya*:

¹⁰ In commenting on this *sūtra*, among the *Yogasūtra* commentators, Bhoja and Vācaspati Mīśra introduce the word *parikarma* to describe these four attitudes, understanding them as a necessary movement in the direction of preparing the mind for *samādhi* (see Apte 1904: 38–39). Buddhist and Jain meditation manuals call these practices *brahmavihāra bhāvanā* or *aprameya/appameya*. See Chapters 7 and 8 of the *Vimuttimagga*, Chapter 9 of the *Visuddhimagga* (especially 9.108), *sūtra* 7.6 of the *Tattvārthasūtra*, and Hemacandra's *Yogaśāstra* 1.18–1.20. For translations and discussions of the aforementioned passages related to *parikarma-bhāvanā* or the *brahmavihāras*, see Patel 2013: 327–330; 337 n. 5–12 for Sanskrit text; Tatia 1986 and Bapat 1937.

nanu śānta-rasasya anabhineyatvād yady api nāṭye 'nupraveśo nāsti tathāpi sūkṣmātītādi-vastūnām sarveṣām api śabda-pratipādyatāyā vidyamānatvāt kāvya-viṣayatvaṃ na nirvāryate |

It has been argued that *śāntarasa* cannot be staged. Even if this is so, and *śāntarasa* is not available in theater, still it does not necessarily have to be left out altogether from the discourse on *kāvya*, since all kinds of subtle and sublime things can be described by words.

While seemingly recapitulating that a responsive viewer (*sahṛdaya*) cannot have a taste of the *śāntarasa* in the theater (*na ca tathā-bhūtasya śānta-rasasya sahrdayāḥ [abhineye] svādayitārah santi*), Dhanika seems to endorse its possibility in *kāvya*, as Bhaṭṭa Nṛsiṃha makes explicit in his explanation of Dhanika's suggestion: "Even if some kind of *rasa* called *śānta* is available, still its domain would be in the 'heard' *kāvya* and not in the 'seen' *nāṭya* since the *rasa* cannot be enacted in performance (*yady api śānto nāma kaścīd raso vidyate tathāpi śravyabandha-gocara eva saḥ | na dṛśyabandha-gocaraḥ tasyānabhineyatvāt*). Why even allow it in *kāvya*? Dhanika continues his explanation, although the editor has filled in the ambiguity of Dhanika's text with Bhaṭṭa Nṛsiṃha's gloss (in brackets)¹¹:

athāpi tad-upāya-bhūtaḥ śamo [yadi] muditā-maitrī-karuṇādi-lakṣaṇo [vivakṣitas tarhi tasya rūpakeṣu na poṣaḥ kāvye saṃbhāvitasya] tasya ca [svāde manaso] vikāsa-vistāra-kṣobha-vikṣepa-rūpataiveti tad-uktyaiva [kāvya-saṃbandhi-] śānta-svādo nirūpitaḥ |

[If] *śāma*, [understood as] having the characteristics of *maitrī*, *karuṇā*, *muditā*, and *upekṣā*, is a means toward it (*śāntarasa*) [then it is possible for it to develop in *kāvya* if not in plays], taking the form of expansion (*vikāsa*), enlargement (*vistāra*), turbulence (*kṣobha*), and agitation (*vikṣepa*) [in the minds of the audience] and ascertained as the relishing of the *śāntarasa*.

¹¹ See Note 309a in Venkatacharya 1947: 272.

If we interpret this passage as suggesting that Dhanika is open to *śāntarasa* in *kāvya* and if the *parikarma* practices are the bridge between the *citta*'s engagement with human emotion and its ultimate quelling of those emotions, then, for Dhanika, this very same yogic engagement with emotion in experiencing *kāvya* may come closest to fulfilling the social function of theater.

Parikarma practices imply real beings in real circumstances requiring real engagement. Aesthetics and *yoga* discourse come closest here to sharing a common language of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*, whereby one sublimates one's own personality to make universal in the external worlds of theater, poetry, and ordinary life what can only really be experienced within the experiential memory of one's own individuated, conscious self. Both discourses—*rasa* and *Yoga*—share in the same tendency toward discursive confusion: how close do the words utilized and the objects they represent come to identify the cognition or experience of *rasa* or *śama*? Here, the *Avaloka* implies a *yoga-bhāvanā* structural analysis akin to Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's staged conception of *rasa-bhāvanā* (that is to say, the production or cultivation of *rasa*) along a *bhāvanā* model of sentence meaning. Not surprisingly, in expatiating on the *parikarma-bhāvanā*, all *Yoga* commentaries use the standard optative-heavy *Mīmāṃsā* language of *bhāvanā* (*yajñena svargaṃ bhāvayet*) to speak to the injunctive qualities of *parikarma* practice (*maitrīṃ bhāvayet*, etc.). Dhanika's formulation could suggest that the yogic *parikarma* practices can themselves be likened to the *vibhāvas*, etc. which lead to the *sthāyibhāva* of *citta-prasādana*, i.e. *śama*, which is then fit to be relished as *śāntarasa*. The verbal statements of *parikarma* in yogic practices (the wishing for oneself and all beings *maitrī-karuṇā-muditā-upekṣā*) and the objective content they point to transform into meditations and processes (*vyāpāra*). Meaning-making thus takes primacy over the stable meanings of words. It is perhaps through this kind of transformative process that Dhanañjaya and Dhanika imagine *śāntarasa* can be 'experienced' in poetry.¹²

¹² Vidyācakravartin, in the fourteenth century, also seems to utilize this *parikarma* model to explain Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's theory of *rasa* in Sāṅkhya terms. Although

Rather than understanding *bhāva* as an emotional state and *sthāyibhāva*, therefore, as a ‘stable’ emotional state, a reliance on the etymological basis of the word *bhāva* (‘being’ or ‘becoming’) may emphasize the processual aspect (*sādhya*) of emotion and not the processed aspect (*siddha*). Overcoming this category error of confusing a concept of stable emotion with the phenomena of stable emotional experience (*sthāyibhāva*) that produces *rasa* may be what Dhanika intends in forging this compromise. The spectator of the play spontaneously experiences the other eight *rasas* (and their respective *sthāyibhāvas*). To accept *śāntarasa*, in poetry at least, the causal process of apprehending the *rasa* through subsidiary mental motions (‘bringing something into being’, i.e. *bhāvanā*) must be theoretically restored and the problem of theater appreciation’s requirement of temporal immediacy must be circumvented. Following the implied logic in Dhanika’s ambivalence, even though *śāntarasa* remains unavailable for *drśyakāvya*, perhaps the *parikarma* schema mediates *śāntarasa*’s adaptation to the available *rasa*-genres of *śravyakāvya*. The schema might be built on a progressive depersonalization (*sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*) experientially intuited through recursive sensory and mental encounters (*bhāvanā*) with the poem that make plausible the arousing of *śama* in the reader/listener which then may

he does not mention where the passage occurs, and I have been yet unable to track it, here is what P. R. Vora writes:

Vidyācakravartin explains [Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka’s] theory with the help of the *Yoga-darśana*. He points out that by acts of purification (*parikarma*) like cultivation of friendliness (*maitrī*) towards happiness (*sukha*), compassion (*karuṇā*) towards pain (*duḥkha*), joy (*muditā*) towards merit (*puṇya*) and indifference towards pain (*duḥkha*), joy (*muditā*) towards merit (*puṇya*) and indifference (*upekṣā*) towards demerit (*apuṇya*), the *sattva* quality becomes free from the other two qualities, *rajas* and *tamas*, which struggle to overpower it and the mind-stuff assumes a state of complete calm like that in a *samādhi* which is of the nature of consciousness (*prakāśa*) and bliss (*ānanda*). According to Vidyācakravartin’s interpretation of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, the *sāmājika*’s pleasure partakes of the ecstatic bliss which a yogin enjoys in the state of *samādhi* (Vora 1986: 66).

trigger in the *sahṛdaya* an effective combination of configured elements from the experience of poetry to produce *śāntarasa*.

The logic of medium-specificity

V. Raghavan is the only modern Indologist to have a blunt opinion regarding the *Daśarūpaka* arguments about *śāntarasa*: “Kāvya is, in essence, only drama... [i]f it is possible to develop Śānta as the theme of Kāvya, equally it is possible to handle it as the motif of a drama” (Raghavan 1967: 54–55). Raghavan, unconvinced that there is any qualitative difference in the *rasa* experience offered by *kāvya* or *nāṭya*, dismisses the idea that Dhanañjaya’s and Dhanika’s ‘clumsy’ compromise offers a compelling challenge to the unchecked momentum that *śāntarasa* was gaining among theorists in their era. For Abhinavagupta, the blending of *nāṭya* and *kāvya* was clearly necessary and unproblematic, for the most part, since *rasa* was, at once, *sui generis* and an experience coterminous with the work itself. Raghavan’s insistence to link the subject matter (*vastu*) of literature (‘themes’ and ‘motifs’) with the development of *rasa* seems a weak criterion for inclusion into a genre, as it fails to take into account how the *vastu* is treated and actually received by an audience. If *rasa* is nothing other than a theme or motif that is to be developed in a play or a poem, what special experiential status is given to *rasa* over and above, say, plot or even ordinary, instantaneous visceral and emotional experience (*bhāva*)? Does the mere description of a ‘peaceful’ scene, for instance, offered as a theme or a motif, lead to a unique aesthetic experience of *śānta* in the audience? With respect to the audience, can *śāntarasa* be so rarified that only one who has diligently whittled away the passions could experience it in the theater? Would it be different for the reader or hearer of poetry who can quietly deliberate over the work?

Placing *śānta* among other genres of *rasa* cannot simply be about the features, forms, and conventions of its content; if it were, one could restrict its interpretation by simply assigning certain works to the genre. To be accepted as a viable *rasa* genre, *śānta* needs to provide theater with

a clear mediating framework that moderates between the poet/composer, the actor/reciter, and the audience, and makes a mutually understood communication within a functional social setting possible. *Śāntarasa* arguably works in a private or personal setting, through abstract conception and *bhāvanā*, but not in a play, where, like in a movie, the images (with their minute pixels) and sounds (with their multiple subtones) flash across a viewer's consciousness and are processed quickly and wholly, not deliberately and in parts. While neither Dhanika nor Bhaṭṭa Nṛsiṃha expand on their earlier point about *śāntarasa* in *kāvya*, one may reasonably speculate that the logic for this rests in the limitations of experiencing *śāntarasa*, which requires some mental conceptualization and cultivation pursued within the immediacy of viewing a drama on the stage. One can return to poetry and mull it over, an act akin to repeatedly returning to a meditation object, a process unavailable in the theater. Relating the Yoga notion of *citta-prasādanam*—guided by *parikarma bhāvanā*—with the stable emotion that leads to enjoying *śāntarasa* may be Dhanika's gesture toward reconciling a role for *śama* in the aesthetic experience, giving scope to the deontologized experience of *rasa* as brought about through a process neither wholly cognitive nor ultimately sudden and spontaneous.

To draw so sharp a line between *kāvya* and *nāṭya*, I surmise that Dhanika recognizes the need to surmount the difficulty of temporality, or more specifically, synchrony. The element of 'time' makes the two mediums incommensurable. *Nāṭya* is synchronous to a singular, empirical event that follows a fixed procedural sequence whereas *kāvya*, be it metered (*padya*) or unmetered (*gadya*), can be repeatedly recited and heard, its recursive content open to any number of recapitulations by the reciter or reading audience. For the audience of ancient and medieval India, drama bears the practical constraints of space and time—seeing the scene as a whole, from a fixed distance and angle—rendered obsolete in modern times by the ability to record what is seen and rewind or re-sequence it through technological manipulation. This fact alone underscores the need to periodically update whatever is universal and coherent in *rasa* theory. With respect to the points Dhanañjaya and

Dhanika raise, Tubb's study of *śāntarasa* in the *Mahābhārata* indirectly addresses some of the temporal considerations involved in apprehending the various suggestive elements (*dhvani*) in poetry, as Ānandavardhana unfolds them in his discussion of the epic's *rasa* (Tubb 1985: 157–158). If Dhanañjaya's and Dhanika's acceptance of Ānanda's notion of *rasa* precludes *śānta* in drama but makes it available in *kāvya*, the assumption is that the necessary immediacy of the *rasa* cognition is unavailable in *nāṭya* alongside the absence of the appropriate *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, and *vyabhicāribhāvas* and the *āśraya* and *sthāyibhāva* within which they are located or triggered. However, where there is time to ponder the implications of the sense, or the ability to bring into being through ancillary actions (*parikarma*) the necessary *sthāyibhāva* that, in turn, fashions a suitable *āśraya* for the *śāntarasa* cognition to arise, the difficulty of accepting *śāntarasa* may be averted.

Tubb seems to suggest this very possibility for *śāntarasa* in the *Mahābhārata*:

In a non-dramatic poem the poet is free to leave much more to the imagination of the reader. Once again, it is Abhinavagupta who gives the most provocative explanation of the process involved, in discussing the differences between plays and poems in presenting the elements connected with the evocation of *rasa* (Tubb 1985: 151).

Abhinavagupta concedes that the experience of *rasa* happens only when the *vibhāvas*, *anubhāvas*, and *vyabhicāribhāvas* come together, as they do naturally in a play; however, because there is so much flexibility in the poetic arts, one can have those factors work to produce *rasa* on or off stage. Thus, the conflation of *nāṭya* and *kāvya* is conclusive for him. S. S. Barlingay interprets Bharata's formulation of *rasa* through a Sāṅkhya lens and strongly objects to what he sees as Abhinavagupta's casual dismissal of the significant implications of medium in the empirical experience of *rasa*, insisting that, for Bharata, the medium of the stage/acting forms "the language of *nāṭya*," whereas the "language or medium of *kāvya* is *śabda*" (Barlingay 1981: 438).

As Barlingay suggests, after the tenth century flurry of philosophical engagement, *rasa* discourse seems to have become less about exploring individual experience in art than to cater to an internalized set of social facts, about how audiences might ‘uniformly’ respond to this or that generic *rasa* property in a work of art.¹³ It is perhaps not surprising that contemporary literary theory has moved away from attempts to unify or make uniform a universalizing art theory, opting instead for seeing the art-experience as essentially private, inexpressible, and discrete, productively dividing, as the *Daśarūpaka* would have it, a world of words from a world of images.¹⁴ In reflecting on the “threshold...between a verbal world and a visual one,” the art historian T. J. Clark articulates his practice of returning to view the same painting over a stretch of time:

But astonishing things happen if one gives oneself over to the process of seeing again and again: aspect after aspect of the picture seems to surface, which is salient and what incidental alter bewilderingly from day to day, the larger order of the depiction breaks up, recrystallizes, fragments again, persists like an afterimage. And slowly the question arises: What is it, fundamentally, I am returning to in this particular case? What is it I want to see again? Can it be that there are certain kinds of visual configuration, or incident, or play of analogy, that simply cannot be retained in the memory, or fully integrated into a disposable narrative of interpretation; so that only the physical, literal, dumb act of receiving the array on the retina will satisfy the mind? But what prevents the retention? Does it have to do simply with a certain level of complexity in the array, or elusiveness, or interdependence of parts? Surely that begs the question of what it takes to reach such a level. Isn’t real complexity

¹³ For a history and discussion of the social aspects of reading in Sanskrit literary culture, from analytical, text-historical, and extratextual perspectives, see Pollock 2001 and Leavitt 2011.

¹⁴ Śāradātanaya’s *Bhāvaprakāśana* seems to suggest a similar perspective about the role that the individuated mental states (*bhāva*) of the spectator play in the *rasa* experience (*tādāt[m]ika-manovṛtti-bheda-bhinnāḥ*) [quoted in Cox 2013: section 45 (online edition)]. See Cox 2013: 45–48 for an elaborate discussion.

(the kind that holds and obsesses) over-determined? Don't we go back to it because we sense that in it is re-enacted a death or terror we would all like to experience again in this harmless, ordered, palliative mode?... Maybe we deeply want to believe that images happen, essentially or sufficiently, all at once (Clark 2008: 8).

Here, Clark recounts his recursive deliberations on a single painting, resonant with Dhanika's apparent repurposing of *parikarma-bhāvanā* to understand literary hermeneutics. Clark's last sentence reminds one of Abhinavagupta's ambitions for the ideal experience in the theater, described in his commentary on *Nāṭyaśāstra* 1.107 (Shastri 1971: 113–114). To paraphrase, Abhinavagupta explains how, in the theater, the spectators suddenly recognize something so engrossing (*samādarāṇiya*) and extraordinary (*lokottara*) that they wish to share the experience with others and forget themselves, transforming the heart into a spotless mirror (*vimala-mukura-kalpībhūta-nija-hṛdaya*), responding sympathetically (*hṛdaya-saṃvāda*) to what they see and hear, divorced from time and place (*deśa-kāla-viśeṣāveśānalīngite*). Abhinavagupta reminds us of the important contrast owing to the origins of *rasa* theory in the theater and not in poetry. The theater offers a simultaneously private and communal experience. As such, it is natural that a *rasa* theory grounded in theater would attempt to shape a common identity of experience among its most sensitive viewers (*sahṛdaya*). Clark's daily, ritual pilgrimage to his painting, on the other hand, echoes the largely secluded experience of the reciter or reader of *kāvya*. Reader and listeners, like yogis, can return to their object of contemplation repeatedly and uninterruptedly. If lucky, they may also experience something transcendent and peaceful.

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