Demystifying Kashmiri Rasa Ideology: Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s Theory of Aesthetics in Their Nāṭyadarpaṇa

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Abstract This paper presents a study of Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s theory of aesthetics in light of the Kashmiri rasa ideology and demonstrates that the Jain authors offer a new and original conceptualization of aesthetic experience, in which the spectator remains cognitively active in the course of watching the drama. In their model, the relationship between rasa and pleasure is mediated by a cognitive error, and the feeling of pleasure does not coincide with the savoring of rasa but emerges after the savoring of rasa ceases. This paper argues that Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra demystify the Kashmiri theory of aesthetics by identifying affinities between the lived world and the fictive world of drama and by rendering the regular means of knowledge, such as inference and memory, as instrumental for the experience of rasa. It further suggests that this new conceptualization, in which pleasure is contingent upon the dissolution of illusion, may have facilitated the development of playwrighting among Jain monks from the twelfth century on.

Keywords Sanskrit poetics · Aesthetics · Rasa · Jainism · Nāṭyadarpaṇa · Rāmacandra

Introduction

By the twelfth century, poetics had become an important field of scholarship among Indian pandits, who had developed sophisticated literary theories and philosophical arguments on how audience members comprehend aesthetic experiences. The
Naṭyadarpaṇa (“Mirror of Drama”) of Rāmacandra (1093–1174) and Guṇacandra (twelfth century) reflects the influence of Kashmiri theoreticians, particularly Abhinavagupta, in that it, too, takes rasa as primarily the spectator’s experience and focuses on the production of rasa as the organizing principle of the dramatic and poetic work. That said, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra see themselves as continuing the lineage of Sanskrit scholars of dramaturgy, beginning with Bharata and Kohala, and they envision the Naṭyadarpaṇa as a textbook for novice poets and playwrights. This practical, applied orientation sets the Naṭyadarpaṇa apart from the Kashmiri tradition of Sanskrit poetics and literary theory, which, as Bronner (2016) has recently argued, had its beginnings in the court of Jayāpīḍa (r. 776–807) chiefly in Udbhatā’s commentary on Bhāmaha’s Kāvyālāmkāra. Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra were inspired by contemporary theatrical production to compose their Naṭyadarpaṇa: “After seeing plays of great poets over and over again and composing our own plays, we wrote a text on dramaturgy with our own commentary.”

The Naṭyadarpaṇa is organized in four chapters or “discussions” called vivekas. The first viveka focuses on the nāṭaka type of drama and discusses its narrative and structural characteristics, including typological states (avasthā) and plot stages (sandhi). The second viveka explains the other eleven types of dramas and thirteen variations of figurative speech (vakroktī) that are found in the vīhī and other types of dramas. The third viveka focuses on the four dramatic modes (vṛtti), nine rasas, emotions (sthāyibhāva, vyabhicāribhāva), physical reactions, and four registers of acting (abhinaya). In the fourth, final, viveka, a classification of dramatic characters and male and female protagonists is followed by a brief discussion of languages, dramatic modes of address, and other minor dramas (anyāni rūpakāṇi).

This paper focuses on Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra’s distinctive contributions to Sanskrit poetics: their new and original rasa theory, which categorically differs from the Kashmiri rasa ideology. Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra do not envision aesthetic

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1 SV to 1.2: kiyato ‘pi lakṣaṇavidhāv abhipretasya | tena kohalapraṇīṭalakṣmānāḥ sātakādayo na lakṣyante | “And that much’ pertains to what is intended in this book. As such we will not define saṭṭaka etc., whose characteristics have been explained by Kohala.”

2 Naṭyadarpaṇa, preface, v. 2:

mahākavinibaddhāni dṛṣṭvā rūpāṇi bhārīsah | svayaṁ ca kṛtvā svopajñān naṭyalakṣmya vivṛṣṭhe ||

3 For a brief description of the lost plays, mentioned in the Naṭyadarpaṇa, see Gandhi (1999). For a discussion of some of these plays, see Granoff (2013).

4 Pollock’s phrasing, see Pollock (2016).
experience as a blissful form of awareness that is similar to the relishing of the Supreme, as Bhaṭṭanāyaka and Abhinavagupta do. Nor do they embrace Ānandavardhana’s theory about the production of rasa through the semantic function of suggestion (dhvani). Further, they question Bhaṭṭanāyaka’s and Dhanaṇḍana-Dhanika’s focus on pleasure as the sole objective of aesthetic experience. Finally, their goal in creating a new text on dramaturgy and poetics decisively differs from that of Hemacandra, whose treatise is an assemblage of others’ theories and examples from Prakrit and Sanskrit literature. Rāmacandra and GUṇacandra acknowledge that there has already been much written on their subject and they have no intention to repeat everything others have said: “While there is a great deal that demands discussion, the authors will discuss only those things that they deem important.”

In this paper, I show how Rāmacandra–GUṇacandra’s literary ingenuity, informed by their Jain background, resulted in a novel conceptualization of aesthetic experience. Rāmacandra and GUṇacandra establish affinities between the lived world and the fictive world of theater and show that both worlds are characterized by equally real pleasurable and unpleasurable emotions. As such, rasa in drama and poetry is not the source of mere pleasure, but the means by which the actors and poets recreate the real-world experience and thereby entertain and excite the audience. The audience members in the course of watching the drama forget about the distinction between the actors and characters and identify with the characters’ happy and sad emotional states. In doing so, they do not have their ego dissolved, as in Abhinavagupta’s theory, but remain cognitively active, so much so that they can even direct their aesthetic emotion towards a specific person who they may know in their own lives. The experience of pleasure, which occurs upon the termination of the experience of rasa, is a distinct state that is contingent upon a series of cognitive errors. In the conclusion, I suggest that Rāmacandra–GUṇacandra’s theories might have enjoyed greater resonance than scholars have noted so far.

The Nāṭyadarpaṇa has attracted surprisingly little scholarly attention. Trivedi (1966) produced an independent intertextual study of the treatise where he outlined its similarities with other works on dramaturgy and poetics. Kulkarni (1983a, pp. 181–183) also offered a short discussion of the aesthetic theory in the Nāṭyadarpaṇa in light of the other works on dramaturgy. In his article on the contributions of Hemacandra’s Kāvyāmūsāsana to the legacy of Sanskrit poetics, Tubb (1998, pp. 58–59) only briefly mentioned the Nāṭyadarpaṇa as one of the non-Brahmanical works that exemplified the unification of two originally divergent disciplines: alaṅkārastra or poetics and nāṭyastra or dramaturgy. Granoff (2009, 2013) pointed out the importance of Dhanaṇḍa’s Dasarūpaka for Rāmacandra–GUṇacandra’s work and Rāmacandra’s preoccupation with originality in both his plays and the Nāṭyadarpaṇa.

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5 On Abhinavagupta’s commentaries, see Gnoli (1968), Masson and Patwardhan (1969), Granoff (2016) and Pollock (2016, pp. 187–223); on Bhaṭṭanāyaka’s theory, see Gnoli (1968, pp. 43–48), Pollock (2010, 2016, pp. 144–154) and Shulman (2012, pp. 64–67).
6 On Ānandavardhana’s dhvani theory, see McCrea (2008).
7 For an analysis of Hemacandra’s “amalgamative” method in his Kāvyāmūsāsana, see Tubb (1998).
8 SV to 1.2: laksanāyaḥbāhulye ’pi hi yāvaty eva bhāge laksayituh śraddhā tāvān eva laksyate |
Recently, Pollock (2016) translated two sections from the *Nāṭyyadarpāṇa* and included a short introduction to the text in his *Rasa Reader*.

The rather meager amount of attention that the *Nāṭyyadarpāṇa* has elicited among South Asian scholars and in Western scholarship may be explained in part by the fact that the figure of Hemacandra (1088–1172) overshadowed the work of his disciples Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra. However, as Pollock (2016, pp. 239, 255) has indicated, Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s notion of a personalized aesthetic experience was disseminated widely enough to find a place far from their homeland of Gujarat in the works of south Indian theoreticians, such as Rudrabhaṭṭa’s *Rasakalikā* (twelfth century, Karnataka) and Vidyānātha’s *Pratāparudrīya* (c. 1320, Andhra-Pradesh). Trivedi (1966, p. 290) and Kulkarni (1983a, pp. 182–183) also identified Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s influence in the *Kāvyaprakāśakhanda* of Siddhicandragaṇi (sixteenth century), who posited that aesthetic experience was pleasurable by nature, which led him to recognize the existence of only four rasas: the erotic, heroic, comic, and marvelous. Furthermore, I suggest that in Jagnāṭa Paṇḍitarāja’s discussion of “new” views in his *Rasaṛaṅgādhara* (c. 1650, Telangana), we find some of the central principles of Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s theory, such as the experience of aesthetic pleasure through cognitive error, the possibility of painful aesthetic experience, the idea that rasa can be experienced in a dream, and the notion that illusion can generate real emotional and physical effects.

I argue that while Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra relied heavily on the terminology and concepts of the Kashmiri theoreticians, they repurposed them to redefine aesthetic experience into a demystified, personalized experience of drama as a form of reality. The element of pleasure in this model acquires a fundamentally different value and nature: it does not coincide with the savoring of rasa, a special type of awareness according to Abhinavagupta, but emerges after the savoring of rasa ceases. This is because drama and poetry are not, in actuality, the sources of mere pleasure, even if the audience is eventually led to believe so. Rather, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra argue that poets and actors construct a reality filled with vicissitudes and characterized by a diversity of painful and joyful events. These events elicit both pleasant and unpleasant rasas, and their alternating serves to entertain or excite (raṇī) the audience. The spectators’ feeling of delight or astonishment (camatkāra) and the concurrent state of the highest bliss (paramānandatā) ensue from the realization that the genius of the actors and poets has beguiled them by crafting a dramatic reality that appeared indistinguishable from the lived world. In other words, camatkāra stems from the realization that the fictive world of drama appears identical with the lived world. The spectators mistakenly attribute their joy to all the rasas, despite the fact that not all of the rasas were pleasurable.

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9 It received no commentary, besides the auto commentary, in the centuries to come.

10 See also Pollock’s translation (2009, p. 251, 2016, pp. 283–284) of Bhānudatta Miśra’s *Rasataraṅginī*, where Bhānudatta considers the rasa “occurring in a dream” as a type of supermundane (alaukika) rasa.
Rāmacandra’s Penchant for Freedom

We know virtually nothing about Guṇacandra, besides the fact that he and Rāmacandra were Jain Śvetāmbara monks. There is more information about Rāmacandra, as he was a prolific writer, having authored eleven dramas, a text on Jain doctrine, and perhaps a number of stotras (hymns of praise). 11 Rāmacandra is mentioned in the prabandha literature as the one-eyed author of one hundred works, 12 who served in the court of the Cauḷukya kings Jayasimha Siddharāja (1094–1143) and Kumārapāla (1143–1173/1174) in Gujarāt. 13 The story of Rāmacandra relates that the seemingly anti-Jain king Ajayapāla (1173–1176), who succeeded Kumārapāla, ended up brutally murdering Rāmacandra by making him “sit on seats of red-hot iron.” 14

Rāmacandra is often depicted as someone who was not afraid to go against authority or the crowd. For instance, in the Prabandhacintāmaṇi (no 145, p. 64), we find a slightly comical explanation for why he has only one eye. In praising Jayasimha Siddharāja, the court poet Śrīpāla pronounces a verse that everyone applauds, but Rāmacandra identifies two flaws in it. As a result, Jayasimha Siddharāja casts the evil eye on Rāmacandra, which makes him lose one eye. 15 Other versions of the story about the eye-loss also point to Rāmacandra’s propensity to rebel. 16

Scholars describe Rāmacandra as someone who was deeply concerned with personal freedom 17 and who was “fearless” 18 and firm in his principles and beliefs. They base their assessment on verses from his dramas and hymns of praise attributed to him. For instance, in the Nalavilāsanātaka, “Nala’s Adventures,”

11 See the discussion of Rāmacandra’s authorship of stotras in Caturvijaya (1932, esp. pp. 48–49). Kulkarni (1983c, p. 22) and Dave (1982, p. ix), for instance, do not doubt the authenticity of Rāmacandra’s authorship.

12 See, for instance, Kaumudimitrāṇandā (p. 2, prabandhasata); see also Kulkarni (1983c, p. 22) and Dave (1982, p. ix).

13 Trivedi (1966, p. 209ff.) collects accounts about Rāmacandra from the prabandha literature, including the Prabhāvavakacaritā of Candraprabhasūrī (1277 CE), the Prabandhacintāmaṇi of Merutūṅgasūrī (1310), the Prabhanda of Rājasēkharasūrī (1348 CE), the Kumārapālāprabandha of Jinamandana-gani (1343 CE), and the Upadeśatarāṅgini of Ratnamandiragani (1460 CE).

14 Granoff (1989, 1994b) translates the story of Ābhada from the Prabhanda (Singhi Jain Series, Vol. 6, 1935, p. 97ff.). The same reference to the death of Rāmacandra is found in other hagiographies; for instance, see Tawney (1901, pp. 152–153). For references to the animosity between Ajayapāla and Rāmacandra in other Sanskrit hagiographies, see Deleu (1981, pp. 61–72). According to legend, after killing several Jain court poets, the newly crowned Śaiva king Ajayapāla engaged in the destruction of Jain temples and Jain faith as a whole in Gūrjaradesa. It is difficult to establish whether these accounts of Ajayapāla’s viciousness and anti-Jain agenda are true, because his rule lasted for only 3 years. Thereafter, during the reign of the Cauḷukya king Bhīma II (1178–1242) and the Vāghela vassal kings of Lāvanyaprasāda and Viradhāvala, the Jains acquired the generous patronage of the ministers Vastupāla and Tejapāla. On the controversy concerning King Ajayapāla, see Majumdar (1956, p. 129ff.).

15 For a translation of the episode, see Tawney (1901, p. 94).

16 See Trivedi (1966, p. 212) for other versions of the story about Rāmacandra’s eye-loss.

17 See Kulkarni (1983c, p. 25) and Trivedi (1966, p. 216).

18 See Kulkarni (1983c, p. 3).
actor asks the director if Rāmacandra composed this play himself or borrowed from others, and the director replies thus:

To this question the poet himself has responded thus: “When I come up with [new] words and meanings of words, people still say that I am merely following in the footsteps of others. This is the way people talk. When lilies bloom even on the moonless night, people say they have bloomed because of the moon.” 19

Rāmacandra explicitly inserts his own voice in the conversation between the director and the actor in the prologue to the play in order to advocate for the originality of his poetry. In two of his dramas, the Satyahariścandranāṭaka, “Truthful Hariścandra” (1.5), and the Nirbhayabhīmavyāyoga, “Fearless Bhīma” (1.2), Rāmacandra praises independence (svāntantra) as one of the five showers of joy and creations of joy, respectively.

Most significantly, every extant drama of Rāmacandra features a final verse that glorifies independence, a state of self-reliance. 20 In the Raghuvilāsanāṭaka, “Rāma’s Adventures” (8.29), Rāmacandra declares that he has obtained glorious freedom (svāntantryalakṣīmī). In the Mallikāmakarandaparakarana, “Mallikā and Makaranda,” he plays on his own name, which incorporates the word rāma, “lovely,” and the word for the moon, candra, a standard simile for something that is white:

(Joyfully) By the grace of the Lord Jina, attaining supreme glorious fame that is as white as the rays of the lovely moon—the fame of Rāmacandra and as white as a jasmine petal, may you long enjoy independence. 21

In his Kaumudīmitrāṇṇandaparakarana, “Kaumudī and Mitrāṇṇanda,” the final verse reads in a similar manner, with the same play on Rāmacandra’s name and the moon. In this instance, the metaphor is extended: the rays of the moon are said to be cooling, relieving the torment of the heat of the sun. Rāmacandra’s works also help to relieve suffering:

United with your wife and friends, having achieved supreme and glorious fame that is as white as the rays of the lovely moon—the deeds of Rāmacandra, and a balm for suffering, may you long enjoy independence. 22

Similarly the final verses of Rāmacandra’s Satyahariścandranāṭaka (6.20), Nalavilāsanāṭaka (7.14), and Nirbhayabhīmavyāyoga (1.27), each end with the injunction “be independent” (svatantro bhava), which he associates with the

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19 atrārthe tenaiva kavinā dattam uttaram | janaḥ prajñāprāptam padam atha padārtham ghaṭayataḥ paradvādhvanyān naḥ kathayatu girāṃ varitan iryam | amāvāsyāyam apy avikalavikāśi kumudāṇy ayaṃ lokaś candravyaktaravikāśiṇi vadati || 1.7.
20 For a study of the relationship among independence, control over the senses, and pleasure in the context of the court, see Ali (2002).
21 jinaḥpatipadaprasādāṃ nu rāmacandrāṃśukundadalavīśadāṃ | āśāya yasolakṣmīṃ parāṃ svatantrāṃ [sic] cīraṃ bhūyāḥ || 6.19.
22 upanatamitrakalatrah santaptārāmacandrakaravīśadāṃ | āśāya yasolakṣmīṃ parāṃ svatantraś cīraṃ bhūyāḥ || 10.18.
attainment of fame (yaśas). Fame, as he suggests, precedes and promises freedom from dependence on others. That Rāmacandra establishes a connection between fame and independence may reflect a culture in which a poet’s fate was in the hands of his patron, often the king, and often with disastrous results, as the story of Rāmacandra’s partial blinding suggests.

In this context it is particularly interesting that Rāmacandra does not mention a patron—Jayasimha Siddharāja or Kumārapāla—in the Nāṭyadarpaṇa or in any of his plays. Working in the shadow of his renowned teacher Hemacandra who secured a sound position at the Caulukya court, Rāmacandra does not appear to have been overly concerned with his station at court. One could argue that this monk-playwright carves out a freedom from both court politics and religious institutions, seeking protection in fame alone through his scholarly and poetic genius. As he states in the prologue to the Raghuvilāsa:

Truly, what wise person does not know Rāmacandra, who never tires of writing poetry, who is famous for the knowledge of the three Vedas, whose fame dances in the assembly that is the minds of scholars to the five drums in the guise of his five works?23

That Rāmacandra omits mention of his political patrons but emphasizes his relationship with Hemacandra in each of his six extant plays and his text on poetics indicates that his loyalties were largely located in the domain of his monastic lineage.24 His close ties with Hemacandra, however, did not inhibit the considerable degree of intellectual and poetic freedom Rāmacandra enjoyed. In addition to being one of the earliest Jain playwrights, Rāmacandra developed a theory of rasa that could hardly be more different from Abhinavagupta’s conception of aesthetic experience presented, among other theories, in his religious teacher’s Kāvyāmasāsana. With this image of Rāmacandra as an independent, and even rebellious, author who believes freedom to be the highest human value, we can proceed to outline some of the specific ways in which Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra laid out their original ideas in the Nāṭyadarpaṇa.

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23 pañcaprabhandhamśapāṇcamukhānakena vidvanmanahsadasani nṛtyati yasya kirtih | vidyāravīcānacumitkāvyaśandram kasyaṁ na veda kila rāmacandraṁ ll 1.3
In this verse, Rāmacandra implies that by the time of the composition of the Raghuvilāsa, he had written four works—the Dravyaśāmkāra, Rāghavābhuyadaya, Yādvābhuyadaya, and Nalavilāsa (p. 2). He also states in the Satyaharīscandra (p. 2) that it is his first drama (ādirūpakaṁ) and in the Kaumudimitrāṇanda (p. 3) that it is his second drama (avīṣṭarūpakam). See also Kaumudimitrāṇanda (p. 2) where the director describes Rāmacandra as someone who “is tireless and never wavers from composing poetry and plays” (avīṣṭarūpakāvyanirmāṇasthanda).

24 For instance, Nalavilāsa, p. 2:
DIRECTOR: The audience members have requested that I present without delay a play called “Nala’s Adventures” composed by Rāmacandra, a disciple of the venerable Ācārya Hemacandra. sūrādhāraḥ: dattah śrīmadācāryahemacandraḥsya śiṣyeṇa rāmacandreṇa viracitaṁ nalavilāsābhhidhānam ādyam rūpakaṁ abhinetum ādeṣaḥ |
The Jain Background of Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra

As a Jain monk writing about poetics, Hemacandra comes immediately to mind as the predecessor to Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra. While Hemacandra’s work on poetics is particularly valuable for its collection of theories and literary texts, he did not develop an independent philosophy of aesthetic experience.\(^{25}\) The goal of Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra appears to have been different: to highlight selective tenets of dramaturgy, correct inconsistencies in others’ theories, and propound a new way of conceptualizing aesthetic experience.

Both Hemacandra and Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra begin their respective treatises with a benedictory verse (1.1) dedicated to Jain Speech (jainīvāc). Unlike their teacher,\(^{26}\) however, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra employ the literary figure of double entendre to imbue the verse with two meanings. According to the first meaning, the verse extolls Jain Speech or Doctrine, and according to the second, it praises drama.

I worship Jain Speech that always brings about the fourfold fruit and holds the world in the right path by means of the twelve canonical texts.

I contemplate victorious speech that always brings about the fourfold fruit and holds the world in the right path by means of the twelve types of dramas.\(^{27}\)

In the first reading of the benedictory verse (SV to 1.1), “the right path” is characterized by virtues such as non-violence and generosity that bring about the goals of humankind. In the context of drama, “the right path” implies good conduct (kṛtya) that is defined as adherence to justice and is taught by nāṭakas and other types of drama by means of the display of the results produced by the protagonists and antagonists’ moral and immoral conduct (nayānayaphala). Plays instill the notion of good conduct even in people whose minds are difficult to tame (durdāntacetas). Furthermore, good conduct is desirable, because it leads to fame (yaśas) and wealth (sampat).\(^{28}\)

Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra expectedly declare the four human ends of dharma, love, wealth, and liberation to be the goals of drama.\(^{29}\) They describe which events

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\(^{25}\) For his restatement of Abhinavagupta’s theory, see AC to 2.1, p. 88. For the other sources of the Kāvyānuśāsana, see Kulkarni (1983b).

\(^{26}\) Kāvyānuśāsana 1.1: “I worship the Jain Speech that contains words that are natural and sweet, that denotes the highest truth, and that takes the form of all languages.” This last attribute is a reference to the supernatural quality of the speech of the Jina, which is heard by all of his listeners in their own language.

\(^{27}\) caturvargaphalāṃ nītyāṃ jainīṃ vācāṃ upāśmahe | rūpair dvādaśabhir viśvāṃ yayā nyāye dhṛtam pathi ||

It has been observed that Rāmacandra’s benedictory verse was inspired by that of Dhanañjaya. Dhanañjaya compares the ten types of drama to the ten incarnations of Viṣṇu, while Rāmacandra likens twelve dramas to the twelve canonical texts.

\(^{28}\) SV to 1.1.

\(^{29}\) See Masson and Patwardhan (1969, pp. 54–55) on Abhinavagupta’s views on pleasure and instruction that attends to the four human ends; see also Pollock (2016, pp. 31–34) on “rasa and instruction.”
can be included in the nāṭaka type of drama by elaborating on Hemacandra’s analysis, which states that all people desire to see plays about wealth (artha) and love (kāma) and thus there should be many such plays.\(^{30}\) Wealth entails having a kingdom, and love presupposes playfulness. Moreover, a play with the prevailing themes of dharma and liberation should not result in the king giving away his entire kingdom to Brahmans or going into the forest, because the audience typically wants to see a play with a successful outcome in the here and now (drṣṭasukhārthī hi bāhulyena loka iti). Otherwise, the audience’s pleasurable experience will be ruined (asya prītir virasībhavet).\(^{31}\)

The same argument appears in the Nātyadarpaṇa with two important modifications. First, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra bring the definition of nāṭaka to the beginning of the text (1.5) and lay down these conditions for the composition of a play early on. This points to the significance of these rules and indicates the very practical goal of the Nātyadarpaṇa: to provide clear and distinct instructions for playwrights. Second, they expand Hemacandra’s assertions by drawing a sharp line between prescriptive or didactic literature and aesthetic dramas. They state that “doctrinal texts are not a play,”\(^{32}\) because doctrinal texts demonstrate the attainment of future results, while plays must produce immediate gratification of the protagonist in response to the audience’s desire for an immediate fruit in this world (sākṣādṛṣṭaphalārthī). Therefore, even in plays about dharma, the otherworldly achievements of the protagonist can be characterized by compassion, steadfastness, generosity, and justice, but not by the loss of the kingdom, abandoning of attachments, or carrying out a vow.\(^{33}\) In plays about love, the protagonist enjoys the company of extraordinary noble women, sex, musical shows, freedom of movement, and pleasures in the garden. In plays where wealth is the central theme, the hero kills enemies, makes alliances, declares wars, and performs other actions pertaining to the kingdom. The human end of liberation is an auxiliary (gauṇa) goal by virtue of being an outcome of dharmic activity.\(^{34}\)

In his drama, the Mallikāmakaranda, Rāmacandra responds to potential criticism leveled at him for composing plays that are neither didactic nor overtly religious. In the prologue to the play, the actor expresses doubts about the ability of Rāmacandra, as a Jain monk, to compose a play filled with erotic, comic, or heroic rasas, since everyone knows that mendicants are only capable of preaching sermons on the Jain dharma that elicit the peaceful (praśama) rasa:

(Disdainfully) Sir, the mendicants are learned only in evoking the aesthetic emotion of peacefulness. Observing restraint in speech, they only use their eloquence for teaching the Jain dharma. They are completely incapable of

\(^{30}\) Viveka to 8.3, p. 434.

\(^{31}\) Ibid.

\(^{32}\) SV to 1.5: bhāvīdvarmakāmrāṛṭphalavād āgamā na nāṭakam | “The didactic texts are not dramas, since in them the results of the human ends of dharma, love, and wealth occur in the future.”

\(^{33}\) Ibid.

\(^{34}\) Ibid. See Trivedi (1966, p. 275.2) where he compares Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s idea of the human end of liberation to that of Hemacandra’s.
composing dramas that exhibit the erotic, comic, and heroic aesthetic emotions.  

The director, however, points out that it is a foolish thought:

Oh worthy friend, now you are saying things, which betray that you do not have the cleverness of [even] a villager!

Everyone in the world knows that peacefulness is the true nature of great monks, but they know the worlds, too. Although the gods are born in heaven, they roam about on earth as well.  

Kulkarni (1983d, p. 5) rightly notes that the actor’s criticism must reflect certain reservations of Rāmacandra’s contemporaries about the monks’ competence in evoking the rasas that they themselves should not experience. Rāmacandra refutes the notion that the experience of erotic and other aesthetic emotions results in a deviation from religious practice. This idea often appears in Jain didactic literature and is articulated by his contemporary scholar Malayagiri, who posits that watching drama impedes the monks’ study and discipline (śvādhyāya). Notwithstanding this criticism, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra valorize poetic skill to be as aesthetically pleasing as a female breast:

Two things are embarrassing like pimples on the nose for experts in the experience of pleasure: the absence of breasts on a woman and the absence of poetic skill in the learned.  

This illustration and the discussion above both indicate that Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra assert their poetic independence from religious constraints. The Jain

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35  nātaḥ: (śāvajñam) bhāva | praśamarasikavaiduryena dharmadeśānāvidhānaikapragalbhavāco vācanyamānāḥ śriṅgārahāsyavirapramukharasamayānām anarhāḥ kuṭalāḥ nātyaprabhandhānām | Mallikāmakaṟaṇa p. 2.  
36  sātradhārāḥ: mārga śāmpratam grāmiṇacāturīvantvandhyam abhidadhāsi | śamas tattvaṁ munindrānām jānate tu jaganty api | jannaiva divi devānām vihāro bhuvaneṣv api || Mallikāmakaṟaṇa 1.6.  
37  Vṛtti to Rāyapaṇeśiyasutta, p. 245: … gautamādīnām ca nātyavidheḥ śvādhyāyādīvīgḥattakāṅkāḥ | “… because watching various dramas impedes the religious study and discipline of Gautama and other monks.”  
38  Nātyadarpana, preface v. 10, p. 22: nāšikānte dvayaṃ śvīrāṃ dvayor vṛddā rasajñayoh | kucābhāvoḥ kuraṅgāksyāḥ kāyābhāvo vipaścītaḥ ||  
39  Monius (2004) observes a similar motive in the legend about the composition of the Civaṅcitāmāṇi in the Tamil-speaking region. Its author, the Jain monk Tiruttakatēvar, was mocked by the poets of Maturai who claimed that Jains were incapable of composing a love poem and were only “skilled in the poetics expressive of renunciation” (p. 128). Flügel (2010, p. 373) argues that the existence of many love stories in Jain narrative culture can be explained by the “rhetorical strategy… to disguise religious meanings with a worldly plot … to attract the attention of an audience.” Contra to these examples, Granoff (1994a, p. 184ff.) discusses a tale about King Kurucandra from the Ākhyānakamanikāsūra who desired to find the right religion for himself and asked his minister to invite ascetics who represented all types of religions. When they were all assembled in the court, the king requested them to finish a “cupping verse” (sanyasāypūrṇi) that started with the description of a woman (“whether she wore earrings or not”), a common exercise in poetic competitions described in medieval Indian literature. While all the other ascetics betrayed their lust and passion in their verses, the Jain monk evinced true dispassion and equanimity, which convinced the king to choose Jainism.
monks—Hemacandra, Rāmacandra, and Guṇacandra—do not locate religious value in their dramatic works. Rather, they emphasize the works’ this-worldly pleasurable aspect. Beyond the benedictory verse, virtually nothing in the Nātyadarpana overtly speaks of the religious affinities of its two authors. However, there are several ways in which the knowledge of their Jain background helps us better understand their text.

First is their propensity to integrate multiple possibilities and positions at once. This is the case in their discussion of the location of rasa and the source of rasa. They posit that the statement “there is no rasa in an actor” is incorrect, because it would be an absolute (ekāntaḥ) and thus flawed assertion.40 Rather, rasa may be located in the actor, the character, the listener, the reader, or the spectator of the play.41 The source of rasa, they argue, can be not only poetry and drama, but also an illusion such as a dream, which serves to refute Abhinavagupta’s position that rasa exists exclusively in drama. As Jains normally do, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra employ the philosophical principle of pluralism (anekāntavāda) when they find it suitable and do not employ it when they prefer to take a more categorical position on an issue.

The ubiquity of rasa further points to the affinities among drama, illusion, and reality: all of them make a person experience real pleasant and unpleasant emotions that produce physical, material effects, such as anubhāvas (e.g., stupor, swoon, etc.) in a spectator or a dreaming person. Jain philosophy is known for its predilection for realism, and it imagines the world to be comprised of jīva and ajīva, soul and matter, where soul is eternal and matter is without beginning. Through worldly activity, the soul becomes bound by material karmic particles that can be removed by means of mental and physical austerities. Within this philosophical framework, aesthetic experience cannot anticipate the experience of pure consciousness as it does in Abhinavagupta’s work. Instead, the spectator experiences the fictive world of drama as identical to the lived world, reaffirming the connection between dramatic illusion and reality as it is ordinarily experienced. Both the fictive world of the drama and ordinarily perceived reality are misleading. Since the karma that results in wrong perceptions of the soul is something that is real, a cognitive shift alone, such as one might experience from a drama, cannot remove it. It is only the Jain path of monasticism that can procure freedom from karma and hence from delusion.

Finally, Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s emphasis on real distress produced by unpleasurable rasas is significant for the Jain literary tradition, in which narratives were thought to be capable of bringing about substantial changes in their audience. Flügel (2010), Phyllis Granoff (1994c, 1995) and John Cort (1992), among others, have pointed to the Jains’ employment of narrative techniques as particularly powerful tools for proselytizing. Many of the stories that Jains told rely on shock

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40 SV to 3.7, p. 142: na ca nātasya raso na bhavatī ekāntaḥ | Pollock’s translation (2016, p. 243) as “since there is no hard and fast rule that an actor cannot feel rasa” misses the reference to the Jain teaching of anekāntavāda.

41 SV to 3.7, p. 142: rasaṣ ca mukhyalokagataḥ preksakagataḥ kāvyasya śrotanusandhāyakadvayagato vetti | Pollock (2016, 399, note 17) notes that the word anusandhāyaka is unclear but could denote “composer,” i.e. “author.”
and negative emotions. Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s insistence upon the authenticity of cognitive effects generated by aesthetic emotions—comforting or unsettling—works to further validate narrative strategies as effective tools for purposes of religious indoctrination and popularization.

**Pleasure and Entertainment in the *Nāṭyaadarpaṇa***

The relationship between moral instruction and aesthetic pleasure is often foregrounded in Sanskrit texts on poetics. Bhaṭṭanāyaka (c. 900) and his student Dhanaṇḍayā (c. 975) rendered aesthetic pleasure as the primary goal of drama. Bhaṭṭanāyaka famously ridicules fools who regard only the knowledge of the four human ends (*vyutpattimātra*)—dharma, love, wealth, and liberation—to be the fruit of drama (*phala*). Dhanānika (Dhanaṇḍayā’s commentator and younger brother) also posits that the fruit (*phala*) of the ten types of plays is the savoring of rasa that takes the form of the highest bliss (*paramānandarūpo rasāsvāda*). Abhinavagupta asserts that pleasure and instruction are not distinct categories, but two intertwined drives of drama that converge in propriety (*aucitya*). The distinction that Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra highlight between the genres of didactic literature or āgamas and drama appears to be in opposition to Bhaṭṭa Toṭa’s statement that “rasa consists of pleasure, and rasa alone is drama, and drama alone is the Veda.” For Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra, a separation of religious discourse from entertaining literature and performance is crucial.

In his *Kāvyāmūsāsana*, Hemacandra (1.3), following Mammāta’s *Kāvyaprakāśa* (1.2) (c. 1100), reiterates the principle of the tripartite division of literature into the didactic, historical, and poetic. In conformity with the theories of Bhaṭṭanāyaka and Abhinavagupta, Hemacandra (AC to 1.3) states that joy (*ānanda*), one of the three primary goals of kāvyā, ensues from the relishing of rasa (*rasāsvādajāmnā*), a pleasure (*prīti*) akin to the relishing of the Supreme (*brahmāsvādasādṛśī*). Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra also identify the savoring of aesthetic emotions to be the key component of watching the drama, but it is not analogous to the state of the highest bliss (*paramānandarūpatā*). Rather, rasa is responsible for the

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42 Daśarūpaka 1.6.

43 Avaloka to 1.6.

44 Masson and Patwardhan (1969, p. 55) quote Abhinavagupta: “Nor are pleasure and instruction really different things, for they both have the same object;” in Locana p. 336: *na caite prītyāvuttī phinnarūpe eva dvayor ekavīṣayavatvāt* | Pollock (2016, pp. 31–34, 181ff.) shows that with Abhinavagupta’s commentaries on Ānandavardhana’s *Dhvanyāloka* and particularly on Bharata’s *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the focus on instruction (*vyuttītī*) that enables the attainment of the four human ends returns.

45 Tr. by Masson and Patwardhan (1969, p. 55); Locana p. 336: *prītyātmā ca rasas tad eva nātyam eva vedā ity asmadupādhyāyāḥ* | The other two goals of kāvyā are fame for the poet (*yaṇaye*) and counsel like that of a lover (*kāntāṭulyayopadeśāya*) (1.3). Hemacandra criticizes Mammāta and others for including wealth (*artha*), etc. into the list of poetic goals, as they can be acquired from other sources and may not be acquired from poetry (AC to 1.3).

46 SV to 3.7, p. 141.
entertainment or excitement (rañjana) that drama must provide. The feeling of the highest bliss ensues only after the relishing of painful and pleasurable rasas ends. In repeating Dhananjaya almost verbatim, they posit that a play should possess all of the nine aesthetic emotions, whereby one must be dominant, others auxiliary, and the marvelous (adbhuta) at the very end. 48

The Nātyadarpana further suggests that dramas, particularly nāṭakas, prakaranaś, nāṭikās, and prakaraṇīs (SV to 1.3), provide valuable instruction and examples to emulate in order to guide the audience onto the path towards renown and wellbeing. They do so by means of instructive stories about great men (mahāpurusopadeśaracarita) 49 that guide even fools in the right direction. 50 The nāṭaka type of drama, as Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra state, teaches the celebrated principle, “Behave like Rāma, not like Rāvana,” 51 and therefore must have a human being for the main character; gods are known to be whimsical, to manifest desired objects by mere thought, and to act as they wish. 52 Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra hold, however, that dramas should not focus on instruction at the expense of entertainment.

It is important to clarify the terminology that Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra employ to denote varieties of pleasure and entertainment. An alternation of pleasurable (sukhātmaka) and unpleasurable (duḥkhātmaka) rasas generates excitement and entertainment (rañjana). 53 After the experience of rasa ceases, the spectator feels delight (camatkāra), which then leads to the sensation of the highest bliss (paramānanda). This classification of pleasurable states enables one to avoid the assumption—that Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra wish to avoid—that all rasas produce pleasure. In their view, the combination of sad and happy events serves to entertain the audience, but it does not grant pure pleasure. 54

The Nātyadarpana, therefore, holds that a story must be entertaining (rañjaka) and the poet may disregard real events (sat) and include fictional elements (asat) for the sake of entertainment (rañjanārtham). 55 Moreover, plays (nāṭakas) must relate events that happened in the past, but if a poet slightly embellishes or changes something for the purpose of entertainment, it is not a flaw. 55 As Granoff (2009, 123)

48 SV to 1.15: nāṭakam hi sarvarasam kevalam eko ‘ṅgī tad apare gaṃpāḥ | adbhuta eva raso ‘nte nirvahaneyatra | Cf. Daśārūpaka 3.33cd-34ab, where Dhananjaya adds that the dominant rasa must be either the erotic or the heroic.

49 See SV to 1.3–1.4: Plays such as nāṭaka and prakarana instruct people by means of stories of great men (SV to 1.4). Plays such as nāṭikā and prakaraṇī also revolve around the stories of great men and thus offer moral instruction (upadeśa), in contrast to the remaining eight types of dramas that do not relate edifying stories (anupadeśaracaritaprayātvena) (SV to 1.4).

50 SV to 2.4: durmedhasāṃ hi nyāyye vartmani vrtyartham kavayo ‘bhineyaprabandhōn grathnānti |
51 SV to 1.5. See also Kāvyaparakāśa 1.2 and Kāvyānusāsana 1.3.
52 For a discussion of these verses and comparison of them with Abhinavagupta’s, see Trivedi (1966, p. 260); Lecle`re (2013, pp. 119–121).
53 The bhāna type of drama is said to mainly entertain the audience (rañjanātmaka) by virtue of containing episodes with jesters, courtesans, etc.; see 2.16 and SV to 2.16.
54 SV to 1.5.
55 Ibid.: alpaṃ kim api rañjakam kalpitam api na dosāyeti | See also McCrea (2011) where he shows that Ānandavaradhana encourages playwrights to deviate from the shastric rules in order to enhance the dominant rasa. See Leclère (2013) for a discussion of how and for what purposes medieval playwrights
p. 3) observes, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra “are clear when they talk about drama and poetry that an author could and at times was even required to be free and creative with his material.” In giving the etymology of the word nāṭaka, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra posit that it comes from the causative verb nāṭ that means “making the audience’s hearts dance from a variety of entertainments” (rañjanāpraveśena). The opposite of rañjaka, “entertaining,” is nīrṣa, “boring,” and the author should not create boring scenes. In the definition of the act (aṅka), the authors of the Nāṭyadarpaṇa state that it must consist of compelling events such as the protagonist’s actions and pleasant experiences. If the act does not feature the hero’s actions, the audience will not learn anything; if the hero has no pleasant experiences (sambhoga), the audience will be frustrated and think: “What was the point of all this immense trouble (mahākleśa)?”

Instruction is identified as one of the two definitive characteristics of drama, but we are repeatedly told that entertainment is the lifeblood of the drama. When entertaining, even activities which are considered repulsive, such as sleeping, may be acted out on the stage. Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra give two examples of sleeping—that of Sītā in the Uttarakarāmacarita of Bhavabhūti and that of Damayantī in Rāmacandra’s own Nalavilāsa—and explain that these examples do not constitute a flaw (na duṣṭam) on account of the entertainment they produce (rañjakatvā) and their narrative relevance (prastutopayogitvā). Entertainment, again, is singled out as the main criterion in the discussion about the ways of constructing a narrative (vṛtta). It must contain recurring lofty and entertaining events (udāttā rañjakā bhāvāh sthāpanīyāh puraḥ puraḥ) for the enhancement of rasa. Even if the entertaining events are not lofty or not worthy of the characters of the highest nature (uttamaprakṛtiyogyāh), they should still be included for the sake of rasa.

Although the experience of rasa does not directly evoke pleasure, for Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra, rasa is, indeed, at the heart of the dramatic work. In his Satyahariścandra (1.3) and Raghuvilāsa (1.4), Rāmacandra constructs a dialogue, in which the director envisions the audience’s suspicion about the aesthetic dimension of the play:

(\textit{In the air}) What are you saying? “As for us, we certainly possess these charming virtues, but not every performance makes the most beautiful
aesthetic emotions flow into a play.” *(Laughing)* Are you asking about aesthetic emotions of this play? Well,

What need I say about instruction, which is the first thing to be mentioned when one talks about the qualities of a drama? And there are definitely new expressions here and there, fragrant like budding sprouts.

But those who know the secrets of literature declare with great fanfare that it is rasa, the lifeblood of the ten types of dramas, that is supreme in Rāmacandra’s verses.

In allocating the dominant position to rasa, Rāmacandra and Gunacandra operate within the consensus of theoreticians, beginning with Ānandavardhana (c. 875) in whose *Dhvanyāloka* “rasa becomes the central phenomenon of literariness for poetics as well as dramatic forms.” In other words, literature begins to revolve around the production of rasa. Rāmacandra and Gunacandra incorporate a kind of preface of twelve verses in their treatise. The preface delineates who has the right to compose drama and why they are entitled to do so. It states that making stories (*kathās*) and other texts charming (*mṛdu*) through literary figures (*alaṅkāras*) is easy, while imbuing a play (*nāṭya*) with rasa is difficult. Among the requirements for the poet we find the knowledge of singing, music, dance, worldly ways (*lokasthiti*), and rules of propriety for all from a servant to a king. Rāmacandra and Gunacandra also place poetry above all other types of knowledge in the preface, proclaiming it the very life-breath of learning, and shaming those learned people who do not possess a poetic talent (*akavitva*) and who plagiarize by stealing others’ poetry.

The entertaining nature of drama does not imply the absence of painful experience. On the contrary, audience members are more affected by pleasurable rasas when they have experienced unpleasurable rasas, just as a sweet drink appears even sweeter after tasting something bitter. Unpleasurable rasas, therefore, intensify the entertaining aspect (*rañjaka*) of pleasurable rasas, but it is important not to undermine the suffering that these *duḥkhātmaka* rasas produce, as Rāmacandra and Gunacandra make clear:

Moreover, how can the sensitive audience savor pleasure while seeing the abduction of Sītā, Draupadī being pulled by her hair and disrobed,

63 *kim ādiśata yathoditaγunagrāmābhirāmā eva vayam āsmahe | kimtu paramarasanisyāmadasumdarah ko ‘pi prabamdha ‘bhinaya iti | (vihasya) sarasatāyān kim ucye prabamdhasya | yataḥ
vyutpattir mukham eva nātaγuṇunyāse tu kim varnyate saurabhyaapravasā navā bhaṇītir apy asty eva kācit kvacit |
yam prāṇāṁ daksarūpakaśya sakarotkepam samācakṣate sāhityapaniṣadvidāh sa tu raso rāmasya vācām param || Satyahariścandra 1.3.
64 Pollock (2016, p. 87).
65 *Nātyadarpana*, preface, v. 3, p. 21.
66 *Nātyadarpana*, preface, vv. 4, 8, p. 21.
67 *Nātyadarpana*, preface, vv. 9-11, p. 22.
68 SV to 3.7, p. 141: *pānakamādhuryam iva ca tīkṣṇāsvādena duḥkhāsvādena sutarām sukhāni svadante iti* |
Hariścandra’s servitude to a caṇḍāla, [his son] Rohitāśva’s death, Lakṣmaṇa being wounded by a lance, and Mālatī being prepared for killing.69

The painful rasas—pitiful, violent, gruesome, and terrible—bring about some ineffable distress in spectators and terrify them.70 And if these scenes happen to evoke pleasure in the audience, it only indicates that the acting is bad.71 Rāmacandra and Gunacandra anticipate the valid question of why people are not put off by the theater if they experience disturbing emotions such as fear or grief in the course of watching the drama. In addressing this question, Bhaṭṭānāyaka, for instance, states that rasas cannot be real emotions, because aesthetic experience is always pleasurable, even when painful rasas are in question.72 Both Bhaṭṭānāyaka and Abhinavagupta envision emotions of the lived world and aesthetic emotions as completely different experiences, in part to explain why painful aesthetic emotions do not cause suffering to the spectator. While Ānandavardhana famously posits that Vālmīki’s grief over the separation of the krauca birds turned into a verse,73 Abhinavagupta refutes the notion that the poet was actually suffering from grief. For Abhinavagupta, one can only write of others’ pain that one experiences as an aestheticized emotion.74 Abhinavagupta describes what may appear as unpleasant emotions of the spectator thus:

In our view, the consciousness itself is savored as pure bliss. How can one even doubt that there might be pain? The latent dispositions of passion, grief, and the like serve only to give variation.75

The spectator’s seemingly negative emotions such as grief or disgust are simply his latent dispositions (vāsanās), which do not interfere with the highest pleasure of savoring his or her own consciousness. Rāmacandra and Gunacandra solve the question of negative experience in the theater differently, as will be discussed below.

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69 SV to 3.7, p. 141: api ca sītāyā haraṇaṁ draupadyāḥ kacāmbarakarṣanam harīścandrasya caṇḍāladāsyam rohitāsvasya maraṇaṁ lakṣmaṇasya śaktibhedanam mālayā vyāpānārambhaṇaṁ ityādyabhīnāmānaṁ paśyatiḥ sahṛdayānāṁ ko nāma sukhāsvaḍāḥ |

70 Ibid.: kāvyābhīnāyopānātavībhāvopacito ‘pi bhayānako bībhatāḥ karaṇo raudri vā rasāsvādavatām anākheyāṁ kām api klesadāśāṁ upanavati | bhayānākādibhir udvijate samājaḥ | The pleasurable rasas are the erotic, heroic, comic, marvelous, and peaceful.

71 SV to 3.7, p. 142: yadi cānukaraṇo sukhātmānaḥ syuṁ na samyaṁ anukaraṇaṁ svāt |

72 See Pollock (2010, p. 148).

73 Dhvanyāloka p. 85: kraucadvandvavīyogothāḥ śokāḥ ślokatvam āgataḥ |

74 Locana pp. 85–86.

75 Abhinavabhārati p. 286: asmanmate saṃvedanaṁ evānandagahanam āsvādyate | tatra ka dvākhāsaṅkā | kevaloṁ tasyaiva citratākaraṇe ratiśokādivāsanāvyāpāraḥ |
Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s Theory of Aesthetics

As is well known, Abhinavagupta reworked the ideas of his precursors, particularly those of Bhaṭṭānāyaka and Ānandavardhana, into the foundational blocks of his own celebrated theory. Abhinavagupta’s theory also became a major source of reference for the works that Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra used, such as the Kāvyaprakāśa of Mammaṭa (c. 1025) and the Kāvyānusāsana of Hemacandra (twelfth century). Both texts largely restate Abhinavagupta’s theory of rasa production and aesthetic experience. Abhinavagupta confined rasa to drama, suggesting that poetry is an imitation of drama, and located the savoring of rasa in the spectator. He defined the savoring of rasa in a variety of ways: aesthetic enjoyment (bhoga), delight (camatkāra), and, ultimately, mental repose (viśrānti) or the experience of one’s pure consciousness, free from aberration (saṅkāta) and illusion (moha).

Aesthetic experience begins after understanding the meaning of the sentence; this is when the self goes into the state of cognitive abstraction and savors its own unobscured awareness as camatkāra. For both Bhaṭṭānāyaka and Abhinavagupta, the savoring of rasa is brought about (bhāvyamāna) by aesthetic elements such as vibhāvas and anubhāvas and is characterized by the process of universalization (sādhāraṇikaraṇa). The spectator identifies with the emotional states of the character, while transcending the particularities of the situation, including notions of pain, pleasure, place, or reason. In a staged drama, the audience perceives (pratīti) Rāma’s love for Sītā through the characters (ālambanavibhāvas, “foundational factors”) and their physical reactions (anubhāvas). But the erotic rasa is relished as the pure emotion itself, devoid of the particularity of Sītā. This sort of aesthetic pleasure is akin to that of the highest bliss, in which the Supreme is experienced (brahmāsvāda). For Abhinavagupta, the nature of aesthetic experience has nothing in common with quotidian situations in people’s lives:

What aesthetic relish (rasatā) would there be in the mere inference of emotional states that are found in the everyday world? The relishing of rasa is a supernormal (alaukika) delight. It consists in savoring the vibhāvas, etc., which are found in poetry, and it must not be degraded to the level of memory and inference, or the like.

Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra borrow this terminology to express a different meaning. While for Abhinavagupta the savoring of rasa consists in supermundane delight and causes “the dissolution of the spectator’s personality,” the Jain

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76 See Masson and Patwardhan (1969, p. 77).
77 Abhinavabhāratī p. 273: sa cāvighnā saṃvīc camatkāraḥ |
78 Ibid. See Pollock (2010) and Granoff (2016, pp. 283–284), n. 6.
79 Bhaṭṭānāyaka compared this feeling with Yogis’ elevated state; see Shulman (2012, pp. 65, 294, n. 48); see also Gnoli (1968, p. 48).
80 Tr. by Ingalls et al. (1990, p. 191). Locana p. 155: lokagatacittavṛttyanumāṇamātram iti kā rasatā alaukikacamatkārātmā rasāsvādaḥ.
81 Cf. SV 3.7: yat punar ebhir api camatkāro drṣyate, sa rasāsvādavirame sati yathāvasthitavastupradarśakena kavinaṭaśaktikaukālaena.
theoreticians envision the savoring of pleasurable and unpleasurable rasas as a life-like diverse experience of joy and pain that “involves continuous cognitive activity in the course of watching the drama.” They emerge as early psychologists who postulate that people do not always know the true causes of their emotional states and assume incorrect conclusions: the spectators post factum misattribute the feeling of the highest bliss (paramānanda) to the effects of rasas. If Abhinavagupta aesthetic pleasure implies the removal of delusion, which unveils pure consciousness, for Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra the final pleasure occurs when one mode of deception is exposed and another commences. These are the key passages for understanding Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s aesthetic theory:

That they (the four unpleasurable rasas) elicit the feeling of camatkaśa is what happens after the savoring of rasa has ended, and is the result of the genius of the poet or the skill of the actor in showing things as they really are. Indeed, those who take pride in courage are astounded by the deft attack of a hero, even if it leads to someone’s decapitation. Wise people, having been deceived by the feeling of camatkaśa produced by the talent of a poet or an actor, which causes the whole body to be suffused with pleasure, experience the state of the highest bliss even in unpleasurable rasas such as pitiful, etc.

And on hearing the word “Rāma” and [grasping] its conventional meaning, while also becoming captivated by the beautiful music, the spectator identifies actors with Rāma and the other characters, who, distinguished though they are from those characters by difference in time, space, and nature, appear to be the characters by concealing that distinction through the fourfold process of acting. As a consequence, the spectator becomes fully absorbed in all Rāma’s and the other characters’ states, happy or sad.

Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra employ the notions of camatkaśa and paramānanda, firmly established in Sanskrit poetics by the twelfth century, and present them in a novel way. The audience comes to enjoy drama or poetry as a result of being in a state of double deception. Firstly, by presenting things realistically, brilliant acting or excellent poetry leads the audience members to forget that drama portrays a fictional world and to identify actors with the characters. Further, the viewers themselves become so absorbed in the dramatic action that they identify with the characters’ states and experience pleasant and unpleasant rasas along with them. After the savoring of the rasa ends, they realize that they have been beguiled by the genius of actors and poets and attain the state of camatkaśa. Secondly, while

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82 David Shulman, electronic correspondence from 02/24/2018.
83 Somewhat modified translation of Pollock (2016, pp. 241–242). SV to 3.7, p. 141: yat punar ebhir api camatkaśa drśyate sa rasāsvādavirāme sati yathāvasthitavastupradarśakena kavināṣaṅktikaśalena | vismayate hi śiraśchedakāriniṇā api prahārakusālena vairinā śauṇḍāramāniḥ | aśeṣaka ca sarvāṃghādhādaṇena kavināṣaṅktiṣṭaṃ manāmam camatkaśenā vipralabdhaḥ paramānandarigatam duḥkhaṁmakṣev api karunāḍuṣu sumedhasaḥ pratījānate | Somewhat modified translation of Pollock (2016, p. 246). SV to 3.50: prekṣako ‘pi rāmādiśabdhasaṅkaṭaśravanād atīhṛdayasāngatākāhāvivaśyāc ca svarūpaṇadēkābhedanātābhāḥśeṣev api abhyivecaucatājñāchedaṇāt tathābhāteṣev iva nateṣu rāmādīn adhyavasyati | ata eva tāṣu tāṣu sukhaduḥkharupāḥ su rāmādyavasthās tu tanmayībhavati |
captivated by this pleasurable sensation of camatkāra, the viewers feel the highest joy and misconstrue its true cause by locating it in the rasas themselves. In this way, the audience is first deluded by poetry and acting that present the fictional world with such realism, and then they are led to misidentify the source of their intense pleasure. Rāmacandra and Gunacandra support their theory, which involves a series of cognitive errors, by reminding the reader that the erotic and other rasas can indeed be produced by an illusion (bhrānti), such as a dream.  

For Abhinavagupta, as we have seen, the savoring of rasa, as a form of awareness, belongs only to the spectator. The authors of the Nātyadarpaṇa locate rasa in the character, the actor, the spectator of drama, and the listener or reader of poetry, and classify the perception of rasa into direct and indirect and as pertaining to oneself and to another (svaparayoh pratyakṣaparokṣābhāvām). Because the spectator cannot read the character’s mind (cetodharmāṇāṃ atīndriyatvāt), he or she perceives rasa in the character or actor only indirectly (parokṣa), through the actor’s physical reactions (anubhāvas). Meanwhile, the actor may or may not experience rasa himself; if he does, his physical reactions are the effects of his rasas (rasakāryāḥ); alternatively, they merely generate rasa in the audience (prekṣaka-gatarasānāṃ kāraṇam).

Only the actual characters are capable of experiencing rasa in a clear form (spaṣṭarūpāḥ), since the foundational factors are real for them (vibhāvānāṃ paramārthasattavāḥ), and thus both their foundational factors and physical reactions, produced by rasa, also appear in a clear, unobscured form. Spectators, alternatively, perceive rasa in an unclear form (dhyāmalenaiva rūpeṇa), because foundational factors (ālambanavibhāvas) such as Sītā, as wife, or Rāma, as husband, do not exist for them in reality (vibhāvānāṃ aparāmārthasatāṃ eva). While rasa in the spectator appears in the unclear form, it also manifests as a stable emotion that is an intensified mental state. Upon understanding the meaning of the drama or poem, spectators savor rasa as their own internal state such as joy. Enjoying rasa is not like eating sweetmeats, that is to say, savoring something external to oneself. It is an entirely internal experience; one’s own feelings of fear or grief are transformed into the fearful or pitiful rasa by means of the appropriate vibhāvas in the drama.

This ontological model raises a question: How can the spectator’s rasa have an unclear and indistinct form (dhyāma), if it is ultimately his or her internal feeling such as joy or fear? Prabhācandra’s Prameyakamalamārtanda, “The Sun of the Lotus of the Objects of True Knowledge” (eleventh century), a treatise on Jain logic, states that sukha and other internal states are perceived directly (pratyakṣa).

85 SV to 3.49, p. 167.
86 SV to 3.7, p. 143.
87 SV to 3.7, p. 142.
88 Ibid.  
89 SV to 3.7, p. 143.
90 Ibid.: śritotkarṣo hi cetovṛttirūpāḥ sthāyī bhāvo rasah |  
91 Ibid.: pratipattāś cāmasthamāṃ sukham iva rasam āsvādayanti |  
92 SV to 3.7, p. 144.  
93 Prameyakamalamārtanda p. 600: sukhaśīrasāpanāṃvedanavat.
without the intervention of another means of knowledge or an obstacle.\textsuperscript{94} Unlike most non-Jain philosophers,\textsuperscript{95} Jains do not believe that the eye makes contact with an object of perception.\textsuperscript{96} As such, \textit{pratyakṣa} or direct perception is simply understood as clear knowledge, \textit{viśada} or \textit{spaṣṭa}.\textsuperscript{97} Indirect knowledge, which is mediated through invariable concomitance (\textit{vyāptijñāna}), is different from \textit{pratyakṣa} in that it is not clear (\textit{aspaṣṭatvena-pratyakṣam}).\textsuperscript{98} Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s term for a rasa that is not clear (\textit{spaṣṭa}) and has the generalized foundational factor as its object (\textit{sāmānyastrīviṣayah}) is \textit{dhīyāmala}.\textsuperscript{99} Therefore, the question posed at the beginning of this paragraph can be rephrased: How do Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra resolve the discrepancy in which the spectator’s rasa is not clear (\textit{spaṣṭa}) or within the purview of direct perception (\textit{pratyakṣa}), while it is ultimately an internal feeling such as joy or fear? The answer is that they do so by rendering the spectator’s rasa supernormal or \textit{lokottara}.\textsuperscript{100}

Rāmacandra and Gunacandra must have borrowed the term and concept \textit{lokottara} from Abhinavagupta, who glosses tasting (\textit{rasanā}) as a type of awareness (\textit{bodharūpaiva}), different from other normal types of awareness (\textit{kiṃtu bodhāntarebhhyo laukikebhyo vilakṣanaiva}), and rasa as a \textit{lokottara} object of that experience.\textsuperscript{101} While Abhinavagupta makes \textit{carvanā} or \textit{rasanā} a type of \textit{alaukika} or supernormal knowledge, distinct from direct perception, or \textit{pratyakṣa}, memory, or \textit{smṛti}, and inference, or \textit{anumāna}, he admits that in the initial stages rasa is contingent upon inference, even if it is a different kind of inference.\textsuperscript{102} Rāmacandra and Gunacandra, too, suggest that the spectator must first infer the correct emotion from the physical reactions of the actors (which serve as the inferential mark or \textit{liṅga}) and the foundational factors they enact. Additionally, they accept the possibility of a normal epistemological means for the comprehension of rasa such as memory, a proposition that I will explain below.

\textsuperscript{94} Prameyakalamārtaṇḍa, p. 600: \textit{pramāṇāntaravyavadhānāvyavadhānasadbhāvena vaiśadyetarasambhavāt}.
\textsuperscript{95} See Granoff (1978, pp. 45–47) for Śrī Harṣa’s refutation of the Mīmāṃsaka definition of perception.
\textsuperscript{96} Prameyakalamārtaṇḍa pp. 606ff., Tattvārthasūtra I.1.19.
\textsuperscript{97} In the Prameyakalamārtaṇḍa, \textit{pratyakṣa} is understood as \textit{viśada}, where \textit{viśada} is glossed as \textit{spaṣṭa}; v. 3, p. 589: \textit{viśadām pratyakṣam} | Comm.: \textit{viśadam spaṣṭam yad vijnānam tat pratyakṣam} | See also Hemacandra’s \textit{Pramāṇāmāṁśā} 1.13: \textit{viśadāḥ pratyakṣam}.
\textsuperscript{98} Prameyakalamārtaṇḍa pp. 591ff.; p. 592: \textit{tanna vyāptijñānam apy aspaṣṭatvāt pratyakṣaṇa yuktaṃ}.
\textsuperscript{99} SV to 3.7, p. 143.
\textsuperscript{100} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{101} Abhinavabhāraṇī p. 279: \textit{tathāvidharasanāgocaro lokottaro ‘rtho rasa iti}.
\textsuperscript{102} Ingalls et al. (1990, p. 224). Locana p. 187: \textit{pratītir eva viṣiṣṭa rasanā} | \textit{sā ca nātye laukikānām aparātār abhiṣekās vilakṣanān, tāṃ ca pramukhe upāyatāvā sanādhānā} | See also Pollock’s translation (2016, p. 83) of Śankuka who distinguishes the inference of rasa from regular types of inference; see Masson and Patwardhan (1969, p. 10) on Śankuka’s rejection of regular types of knowledge.
Drama and the Lived World

Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra state that the actors follow real-world behavior (loka- vyavahāra), thereby recreating the world that we know as it really is. They further endorse this thesis by equating worldly and aesthetic emotions in their effects on people. In the benedictory verse, which we have examined above, the world or viśva is said to be held in the right path by means of the twelve canonical texts in the first reading of the verse and the twelve types of dramas in the alternative reading. In both readings, viśva in the singular must be understood in the sense of the whole (samudāyāpeksaṃ ekatvam) that comprises the human world and the story-world of drama.

The story-world largely illumines past events. How do we know these events actually took place? The sages saw the past events through their eyes of wisdom (jñānadṛś), which never lie, and described them in detail, so actors can recreate the past exactly as it was in front of the audience. Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra use the word loka throughout their text to refer to both the lived world and the story-world, reinforcing the sense that they are closely related. For instance, they note that some people, who are steeped in the terminology of the drama, even in real life, or loka, call effects (kārya), causes (hetu), and associate causes (sahacārin) by the technical terms of drama as physical reactions (anubhāva), factors (vibhāva), and transient emotions (vyabhicārin).

The savoring of rasa pertains to all connoisseurs, including the characters in the story-world, or loka, and the spectators or listeners of the literary work, or kāvyavākyavat, and in each case the experience is similar, as it consists in the enhanced stable emotion in the form of a special mental state (cittvṛttiṣesas ca rasah).

Abhinavagupta maintains that the complete equation of rasa with the stable emotion is wrong and would entail the existence of rasa in the lived world. But for Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra, the existence of rasa in the characters and the story-world presupposes the presence of rasa in the real world.

Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra divide the foundational factors (vibhāvas) into aparāmārtha-sat or “not really existing” and paramārtha-sat or “really existing.”

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103 SV to 3.49, p. 167: paramārtha-sat tu lokavyavahāram evāyam anuvartate | See Pollock’s (2016, pp. 184–185) and Gnoi’s (1968, pp. 33–41) translations of Bhaṭṭa Toṭa’s refutation of the notion of imitation, as restated by Abhinavagupta.

104 SV to 1.1: viśvaṃ iti samudāyāpeksaṃ ekatvam | karmabhūmitvāt prādhīṇyavivakṣaṃvā manusyaloko va viśvaṃ | “viśvaṃ is in the singular in the sense of the whole, or in the sense of the human world as it is the most important by virtue of being the land of karma.”

105 SV to 3.50ab.

106 SV to 3.8.

107 SV to 3.7, p. 143: evaṃ ca loke kāvyeye vā sarvarasikādīhārano rasāsvādo, na punah sarvathāpy ādhārānulkekhī |

108 Abhinavabhāratī p. 278: sthāyivyilaksana eva rasah |

109 Ibid.: evaṃ hi loke ’pi kim na rasah?

110 See Pollock (2016, pp. 233–234).
The former pertain to the actors, spectators, listeners, and readers, and the latter pertain to the characters. In other words, Sītā, as wife, is an existing (paramārtha-sat) foundational factor for Rāma but does not really exist as wife (aparamārtha-sat) for the spectator. The existing vibhāvas (paramārthena santāḥ) serve as specific objects for the characters’ rasas, while the vibhāvas that only appear to exist for the spectators serve as generalized objects (sāmānyaviṣaya) of their rasas. The same dichotomy appears to apply to real life experiences, as in a situation when a young man feels passion (rati) for a particular young woman who also feels passion for him. However, when the woman who is the object of the young man’s passion is in love with someone else, the erotic rasa he experiences is for a woman in general. Similarly, one experiences the pitiful rasa of the generalized object upon seeing a woman crying over her husband (bandhu). These illustrations apply to both drama and loka where loka should be taken as the story-world and the lived world.

Dhanañjaya-Dhanika’s notions inform some of these tenets. First, the idea of the generalized object appears in the Daśarūpaka, where Dhanika explains that the word Sītā signifies a generalized woman, free from the particularities such as her being the daughter of King Janaka. Moreover, when Dhanika speaks about loka or the story-world, he describes it as though it was the lived world with its own, distinct rasa:

An actor does not experience rasa as a real-world rasa, because at that moment he does not perceive his own wife as the object of pleasure.

Pollock (2016, p. 381, n. 229) notes that by the “real-world rasa,” Dhanika understands the emotion that the character Rāma feels for his wife Sītā. In a similar vein, Dhanika observes that poetic sorrow is different from “real-world sorrow,” implying the world of the characters.

Rāmacandra and Gunacandra reuse Dhanañjaya-Dhanika’s terminology and take their ideas further by equating the effects of aesthetic emotions with those of real-world emotions and suggesting that rasa exists outside of drama and poetry. The spectator can even become like the character in the drama and feel rasa towards a specific object (pratiniyataviṣaya eva rasāsvādah) through the recollection of a particular person from his or her own life (niyataviṣayasyamaranādinā). In other words, while watching Rāma’s expression of love for Sītā, the audience members can recall their beloved and direct the erotic rasa evoked by the dramatic performance toward them. In this way, Rāmacandra and Gunacandra appear to erase the boundary between the lived world and drama with its story-world, which earlier theoreticians had been unwaveringly constructing.
A similar notion appears later in Kumārasvāmin’s commentary (c. 1430) on Vīyānātha’s Pratāparudrīya.117 Kumārasvāmin first states that one can imagine Rāma and Sītā as one’s own husband or wife and then proceeds to establish the fact that they are a man and woman and as such “real-world beings who are consecrated in the position of aesthetic element by way of literary representation or dramatic acting.”118 He further adds that “Rama and Sīta’s desire and so on are real-world feelings” in the form of “supermundane stable emotions.”119 In his Rasakalikā, the South Indian scholar Rudrabhaṭṭa (twelfth century) restates Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s ideas about the possibility of using memory to intensify one’s aesthetic experience. However, for Rudrabhaṭṭa memory does not generate rasa of the generalized object:

Some argue that words such as Mālatī remind one of a woman in general and words such as Rāvaṇa of an enemy in general. Therefore, when this non-specific woman is called to mind through memory, she becomes the foundational factor [of rasa] for the audience. This statement is not flawed by not perceiving the specific [nature of rasa’s foundational factor], as one can see from [the way] memory [works]: even though I have seen Devadatta, I do not know what his complexion is like. And it is not the case that since pitiful, etc. rasas are unpleasurable, literary texts with such rasas as predominant should not be produced. Indeed, all rasas eventually take the form of pleasure in the audience members.120

If Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra use the means of memory (smaraṇa) to suggest that rasa can have a specific object, Rudrabhaṭṭa points to the fickleness of memory that often retains only the general impression of a past experience, devoid of particularity. Contra to Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra, Bhāṭṭanāyaka’s tripartite structure of aesthetic experience also presupposes the transcendence of individual particularities through the process of generalization or universalization (sādhāraṇī-karaṇa). Further, Abhinavagupta states that for the spectator as well as for the actor and character, in the experience of savoring rasa the self “is neither entirely obscured nor is it presented to consciousness in all its unique particularity.”121 In fact, Abhinavagupta declares the awareness of aesthetic experiences as only one’s own (svaikagatānāṃ) to be a chief obstacle (paramo vigñah) for aesthetic savoring.

117 Pollock 2016, 239, 255.
118 Tr. by Pollock (2016, p. 258).
119 Ibid.
120 Rasakalikā pp. 101–102: atra kecit samādhānāṁ ahuḥ mālatyādiśabdāḥ yośinmātrodbodhakāḥ | rāvaṇidīśabdāḥ śatrumātrasyeti | tena sāmānyena smṛtyārūḍho yoṣidādiḥ sāmājikānām ālambanatvam bhajate | na ca viśeṣapratisāptīdoṣah | drṣṭo devadattāḥ kīḍgyaṁra īti na jñāyate iī smarānaḍararśanātm | na caiva karuṇādubhūtakarunāyātatpradhānānām prabandhānām anupādeyatvam, sarvasvāpi rasasya sāmājikāvaś ānandarūpatvam paryavasānāt |
121 Tr. by Granoff (2016, p. 283, n. 6). Abhinavabhāratī p. 273: nātmaṁyantatirāskṛto na viśeṣata upliṅkhitāḥ | evam para ṁ | Granoff disagrees with the translation of Pollock, who interprets the last phrase as referring to other spectators. She shows that Abhinavagupta further explicitly states that aesthetic experience is characterized by the absence of impediment, particularity, in perceiving oneself or the other (para ṁ).

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and pleasure. He also posits that the spectator who is preoccupied with his or her own pleasurable and unpleasurable emotions would not be able to focus on anything else. One’s cognitive state must eschew individuality and forget about the self.

Nowhere do Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra indicate that rasa belongs only to drama or poetry; rather, they, either overtly or implicitly, state that regular men and women undergo the same processes as actors on the stage. The wide presence of rasa including in the actor, character, and even dreamer, and its real effects on the audience members are important, as we have seen earlier, for Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra in that they render the aesthetic emotion as identical to worldly emotion. Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra compare real persons such as a prostitute and a singer who entertain others with actors in a drama. Just as the prostitute, who expresses a passion for money, may sometimes feel an intense passion (parāṃ ratim), and just as a singer, who delights others, may also be greatly delighted, so the actor performing an emotion can occasionally become absorbed in it (tanmayībhāvam upayāty eva).

The authors of the Nāṭyadarpaṇa do not envision the experience of rasa as an impersonal consciousness absorbed into relishing itself. Rather, they demystify aesthetic experience by drawing parallels between the lived world and drama and establishing affinities between them. They paint an ambiguous picture, in which the imitation of the story-world of drama (where the story-world is true based on the sages’ accounts) and the lived world become indistinguishable in terms of the audience’s experience.

Conclusion

I have shown that Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra suggest that drama is an imitation of reality, and therefore, should evoke life-like unpleasurable and pleasurable emotions. Through music and skillful acting, the spectator begins to believe that the actors are actually the characters they are playing. This process is essential for the spectator’s absorption in the states of Rāma and the other characters. However, this type of absorption is different from the one described by Abhinavagupta: it does not presuppose a complete dissolution of the ego in the relishing of the highest bliss that is the pure consciousness itself. Rather, as we have seen earlier, the spectator remains cognitively active and his or her deep empathetic response to the character’s pain and happiness can be personalized through the mechanism of memory, whereby the spectator’s experience of rasa has a specific object taken from the lived world. In other words, the spectators (like the characters) can experience

122 Abhinavabhāratī p. 274.
123 Abhinavabhāratī p. 275: tathā nijasukhaduhkhādvivaśibhūtaś ca kathāṃ vavvantāra samvidam vīśramayed iti | Pollock (2016, p. 399, n. 30) identifies this as “the third hindrance” for aesthetic pleasure and suggests that for Abhinavagupta, “the intrusion of the viewer’s real life would seem to fall under his third ‘hindrance.’”
124 SV to 3.7, p. 142.
125 For a recent study on the blurring of boundaries between drama and life in Bhavabhūti’s plays, see Tubb (2014, p. 410ff).
rasa in relation to a particular object that is paramārtha-sat (“really existing”) for them, such as their beloved, as well as to the generalized man or woman through foundational factors such as Rāma or Sītā, who are not their real beloved and thus remain aparamārtha-sat (“not really existing”) for them. The entanglement between the experience of the story-world of drama and the lived world in this understanding may produce an even more powerful effect on the audience.

Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra envision aesthetic experience as progressing from a form of deception and cognitive error to the feeling of pleasure, followed by yet another cognitive error of misattribution. The feeling of intense pleasure occurs upon the spectator’s realization of the fact that he or she has been beguiled by the actors into thinking that the dramatic illusion is in fact reality. This delightful insight (camatkāra) is coexistent with the feeling of the highest bliss (paramānanda) that the spectator then misattributes to the rasas. In other words, pleasure ensues from seeing through the deception and from uncovering the complex interactions between illusion and reality. Through drama, the spectator thus realizes that experience is deeply entwined with error. This structure of aesthetic experience suggests that drama may become a vehicle to induce the state of disillusionment with worldly experience on a more general level. The insight, which presumes the dissolution of illusion through the recognition of the skill of the actors to depict reality, may in turn lead the spectator to acquire even greater joy produced by seeing through worldly illusions and to learn the truth about the world itself. As Doniger (2009, p. 517) states: “When you realize that the snake is not a snake but a rope, you go on to realize that there is not even a rope at all.”

The notion that aesthetic experience is contingent upon the cognitive error reappears in a discussion of “new” views in the seventeenth century theoretician Jagannātha’s Rasagaṅgdhara. As Tubb and Bronner (2008, p. 625) have pointed out, one such view locates the aesthetic experience in “a temporary identification with a fictive character,” which occurs through “a form of a cognitive defect (doṣa).” This conceptualization, as they further add, upends Abhinavagupta’s interpretation:

For Abhinavagupta the rasa experience results from the removal of a veil (bhagnāvaraṇa cit); in the “new” view, it results from the imposition of a veil (avacchādite svātman).126

This view resonates with Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s idea that a form of deception of the audience by actors and poets is at the heart of aesthetic experience. Jagannātha explains that in the course of watching the drama, the spectator’s self becomes “veiled by the illusion of being Dushyanta,”127 and then proceeds to discuss objections that can be posed to the notion that aesthetic experience is solely pleasurable. One of them suggests that even if the experience is based on a cognitive error, that does not prevent it from generating real emotions and effects, just as in the case of the illusion of a rope taken for a snake that can cause fear and

126 Tubb and Bronner (2008, p. 625).
127 Tr. by Pollock (2016, p. 320).
trembling. We have seen that it is the argument of Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra that an illusion or error (bhrānti) can generate real, material effects, illustrated by the dreaming person who shows physical reactions (anubhāvas) that are the primary consequences of rasa. The latter view—that the dreaming person can also experience rasa—is further refuted by Jagannātha, who states that it cannot be rasa because “it is not produced by reflection on the subject matter of the literary work.” In his encyclopedic treatment of the “new” views, Jagannātha engages with some of the important ideas propounded in the Nāṭyadarpana: erroneous cognition as the source of aesthetic experience, unpleasurable rasas, and the possibility of producing rasa in a dream or illusion. This indicates that the views which Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra entertained had spread widely enough to be reckoned with five centuries later amid the other theories discussed in the Rasagaṅgādhara.

Rāmacandra–Guṇacandra’s theory of aesthetics can suggest two conclusions. First, experiences in both the lived world and the fictive world of drama are contingent upon erroneous cognition, which indicates that it is only on the path of monasticism that one can attain freedom from deluding karma. Second, through excitement and pleasure, just as through didactic discourse and religious sermons, the audience members can be led to detachment and freedom from this world in all its manifestations. We have seen the significance that Rāmacandra assigns to freedom or independence by lauding it as the supreme value and wishing his audience “to be independent” and “to enjoy independence” in the final verses of his plays. Kulkarni (1983c, p. 105) surmises that the playwright implies by independence a freedom from karma and rebirth. While Rāmacandra does not offer this meaning explicitly in his plays, the way in which he and Guṇacandra imagine aesthetic experience reaffirms Kulkarni’s intuition.

The Nāṭyadarpana, as a textbook for novice authors, as well as Rāmacandra’s eleven dramas might have facilitated the sudden explosion of playwriting among Śvetāmbara Jain monks in the twelfth century. The new conceptualization of the aesthetic experience complicated it in ways that were amenable to Jain sensibilities. First, Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra employed the principle of pluralism (anekāntavāda) to increase the possible loci of rasa, and in his Mallikāmaharanda-prakarana, Rāmacandra vindicated the fact that Jain mendicant authors could feel various rasas beyond that of peacefulness. Moreover, the Nāṭyadarpana uncoupled the experience of rasa from that of pure pleasure and presented a more complex relationship between rasa and pleasure, one that is mediated by a cognitive error. Finally, the affinity between the world of drama and the lived world along with its potential consequence of disillusionment might have rendered the vocation of playwriting a more meaningful activity. In light of these considerations, we may, for once, trace the source of innovation, which pertains to the development of the dramatic genre in Jain monks’ literature, to the disciples of Hemacandra, rather than Hemacandra himself.

128 Rasagaṅgādhara p. 44: rajjusarpāder bhayakampādyanupadakātāpatteḥ |
129 Tr. by Pollock (2016, p. 322). Rasagaṅgādhara p. 46: svāpṇādis tu tādṛṣabodho na kāvyārthacintanajnanmeti na rasaḥ |
Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of interest The author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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