

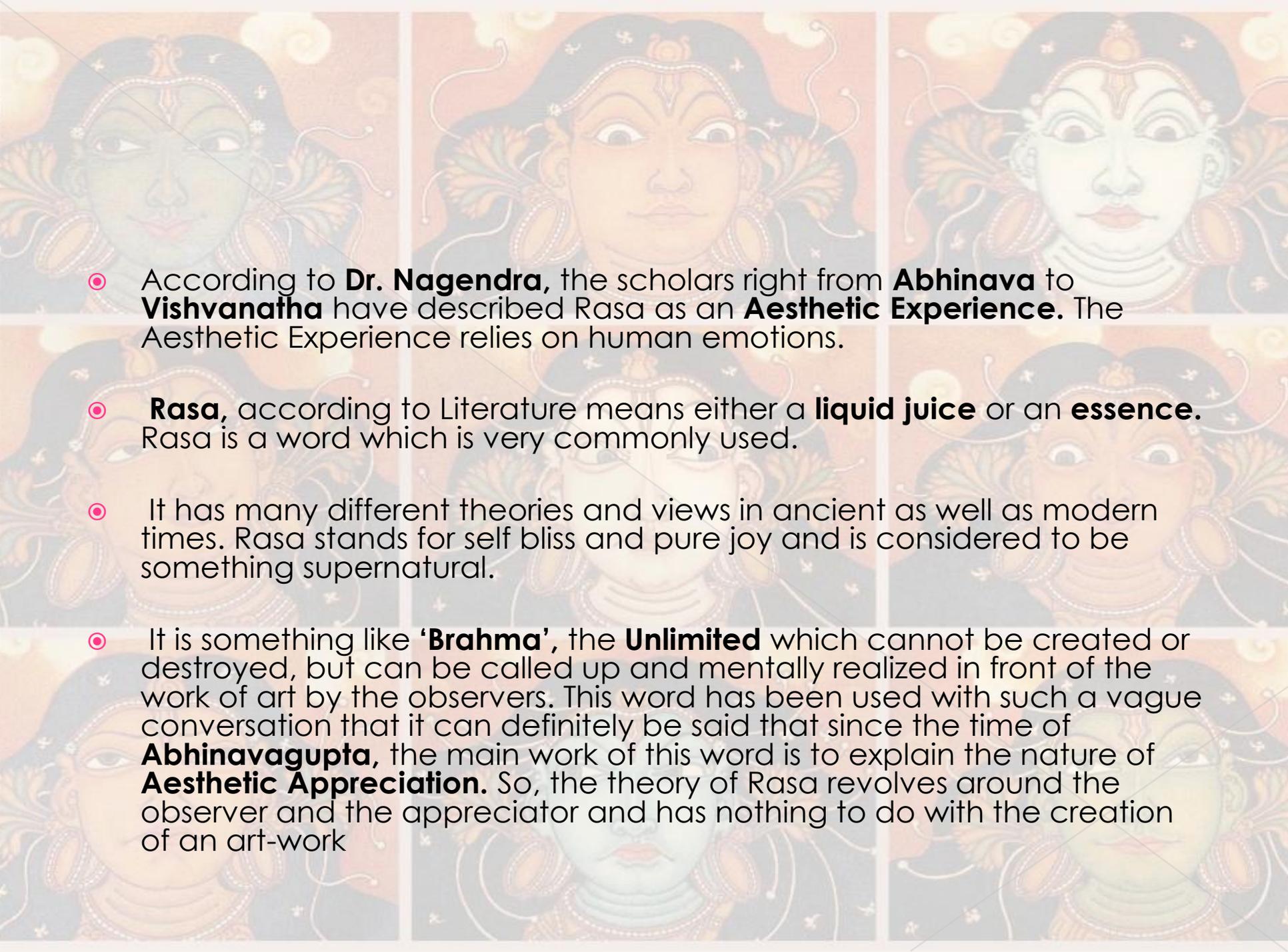


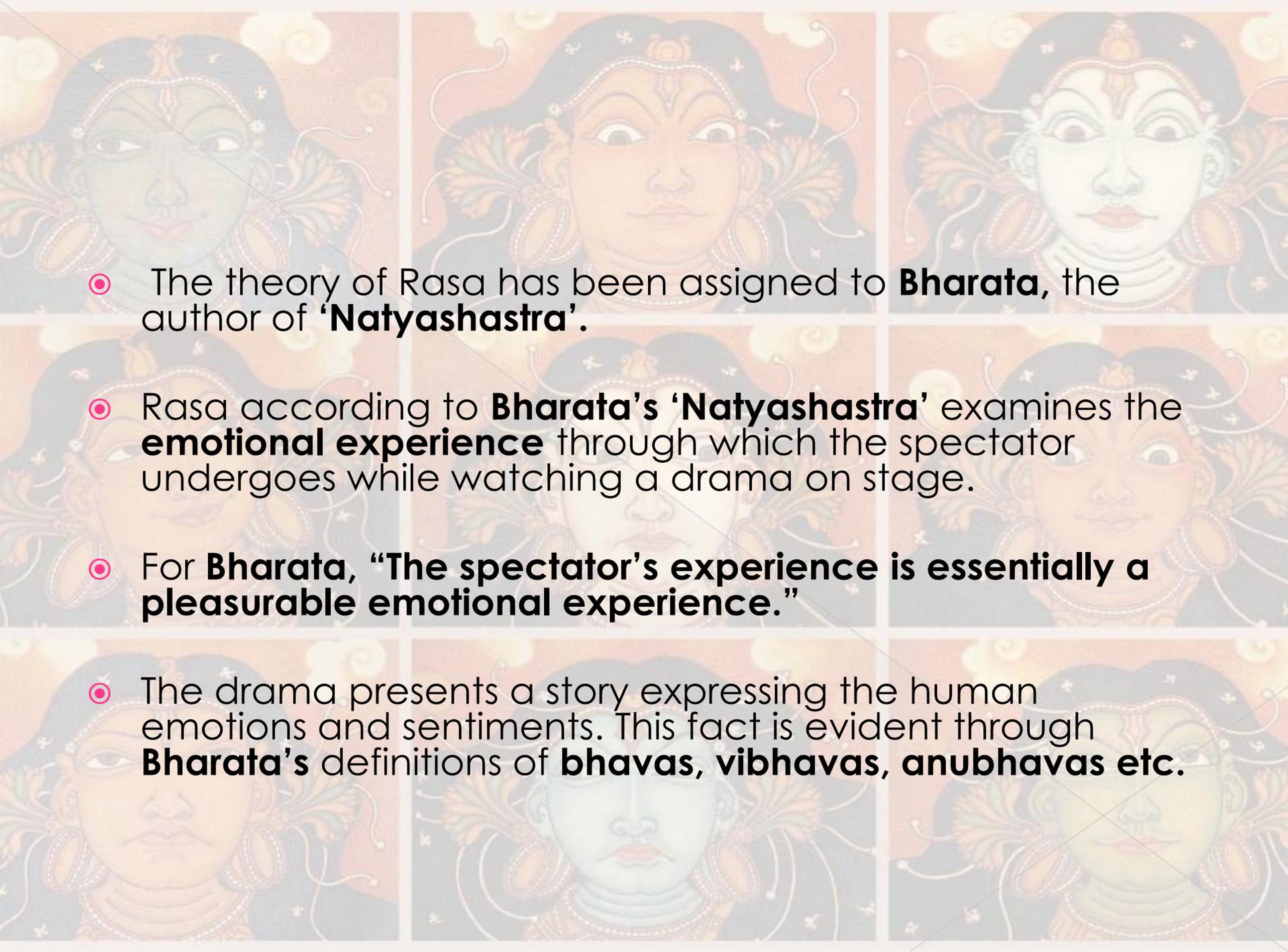
# AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE (RASA)

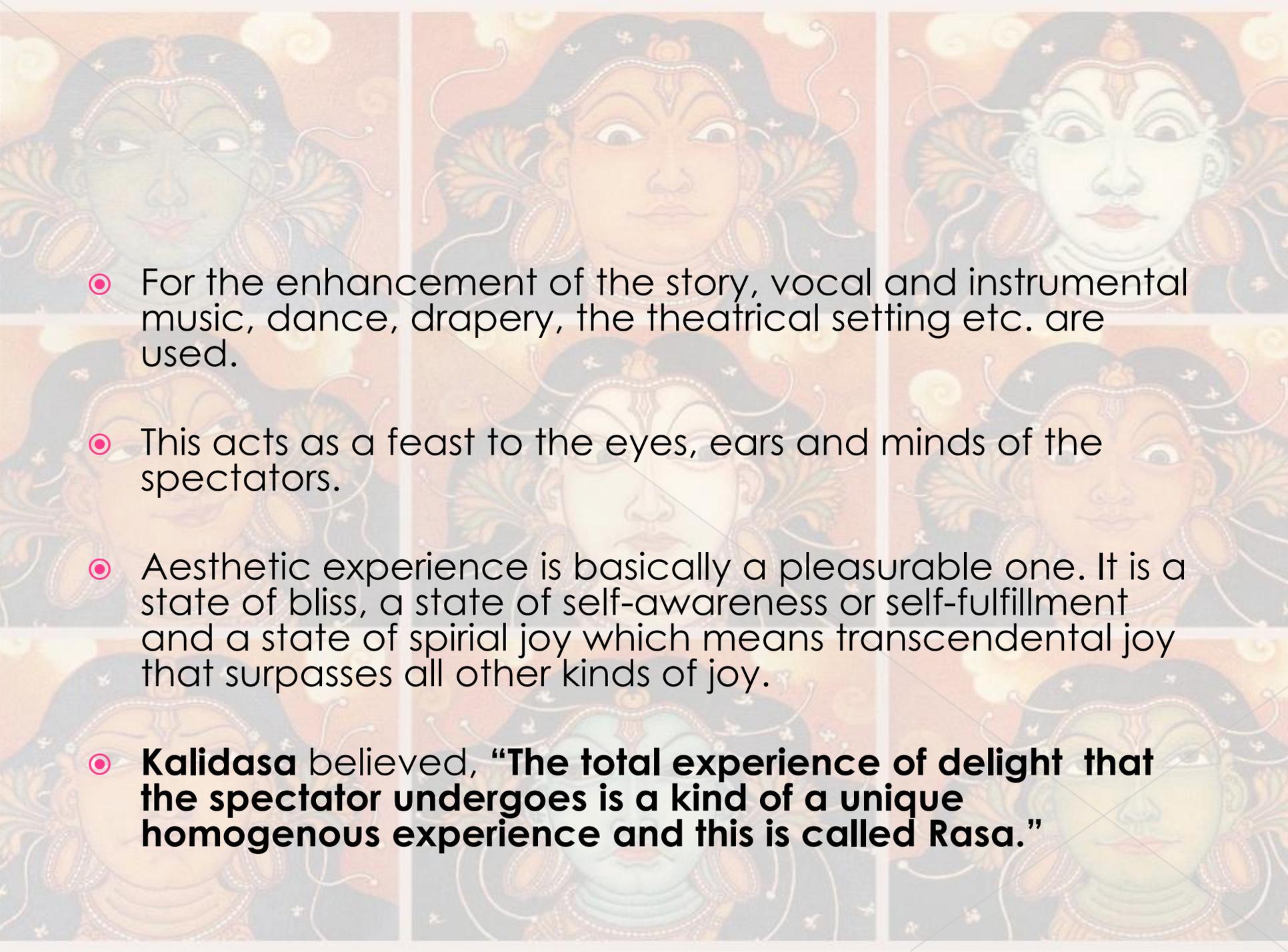
**Submitted By:**  
**Dr. Neeru Bharti Sharma**  
**Asst. Professor in Fine Arts**  
**Hans Raj Mahila Maha Vidyalaya**  
**Jalandhar.**

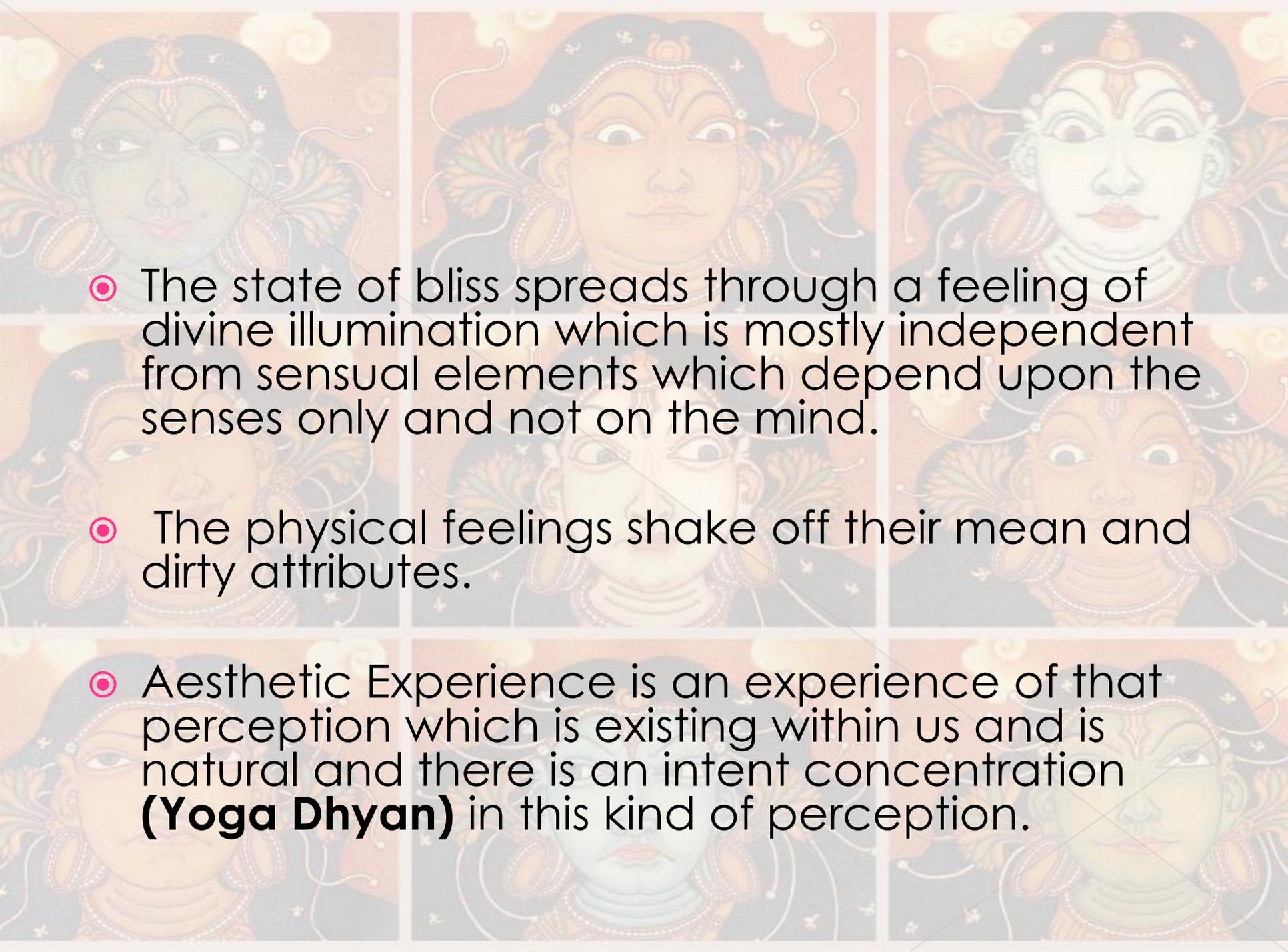
# RASA DEFINED

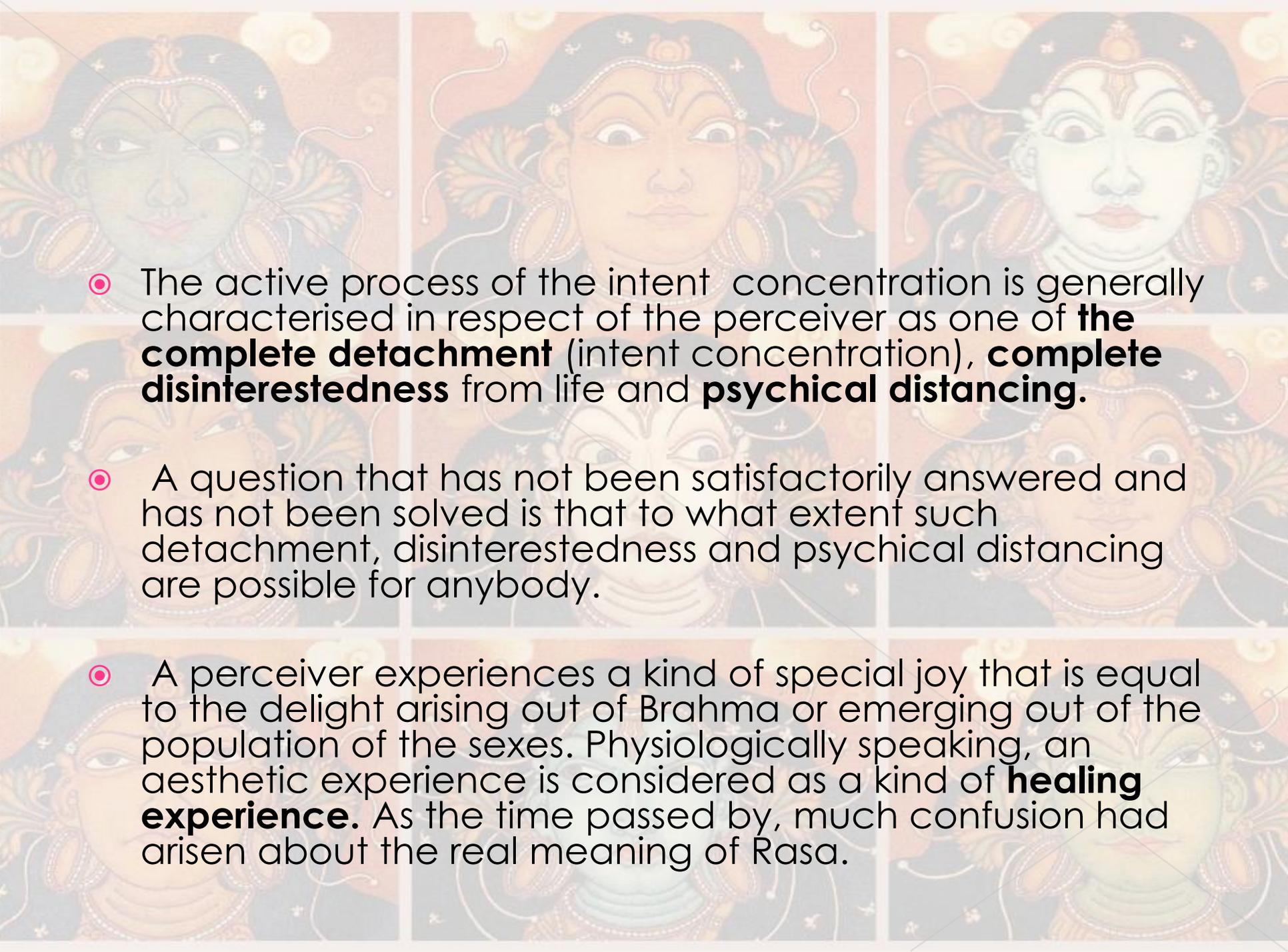
- ◉ Aesthetic Experience - context of '**Rasa**' largely constituting the care of poetic experience based on the Indian theory of poetry and art.
- ◉ Since ever, rasa constituted only the dramatic work. Gradually, it constituted poetry and from poetry to art which includes music and painting.
- ◉ So, to understand the Aesthetic Experience, we have to pay attention firstly to the analysis of the components of **rasa**. After this only, we will be able to define the term '**Aesthetic Experience**' properly.

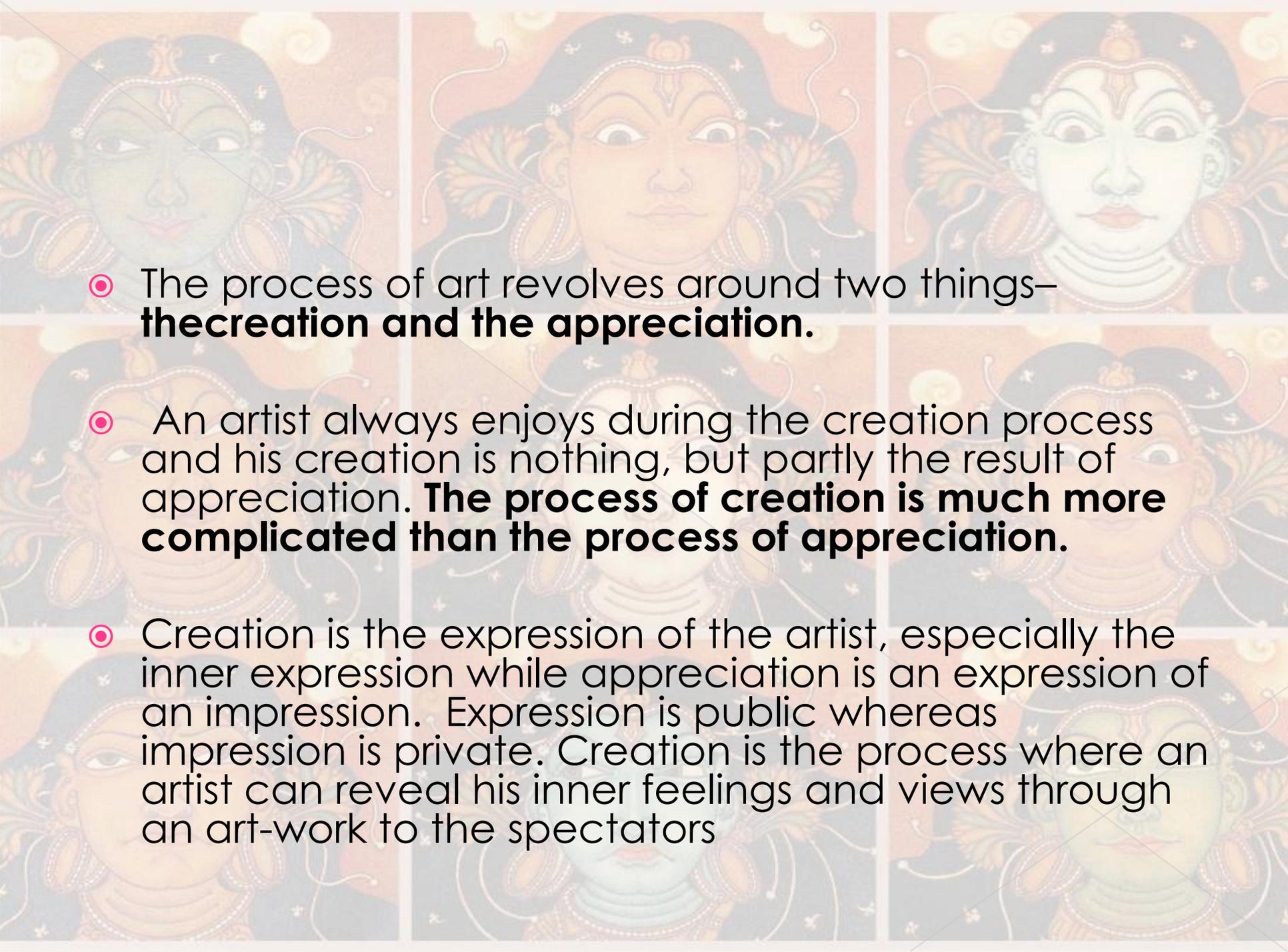
- 
- According to **Dr. Nagendra**, the scholars right from **Abhinava** to **Vishvanatha** have described Rasa as an **Aesthetic Experience**. The Aesthetic Experience relies on human emotions.
  - **Rasa**, according to Literature means either a **liquid juice** or an **essence**. Rasa is a word which is very commonly used.
  - It has many different theories and views in ancient as well as modern times. Rasa stands for self bliss and pure joy and is considered to be something supernatural.
  - It is something like '**Brahma**', the **Unlimited** which cannot be created or destroyed, but can be called up and mentally realized in front of the work of art by the observers. This word has been used with such a vague conversation that it can definitely be said that since the time of **Abhinavagupta**, the main work of this word is to explain the nature of **Aesthetic Appreciation**. So, the theory of Rasa revolves around the observer and the appreciator and has nothing to do with the creation of an art-work

- 
- ◉ The theory of Rasa has been assigned to **Bharata**, the author of '**Natyashastra**'.
  - ◉ Rasa according to **Bharata's 'Natyashastra'** examines the **emotional experience** through which the spectator undergoes while watching a drama on stage.
  - ◉ For **Bharata**, "**The spectator's experience is essentially a pleasurable emotional experience.**"
  - ◉ The drama presents a story expressing the human emotions and sentiments. This fact is evident through **Bharata's** definitions of **bhavas, vibhavas, anubhavas etc.**

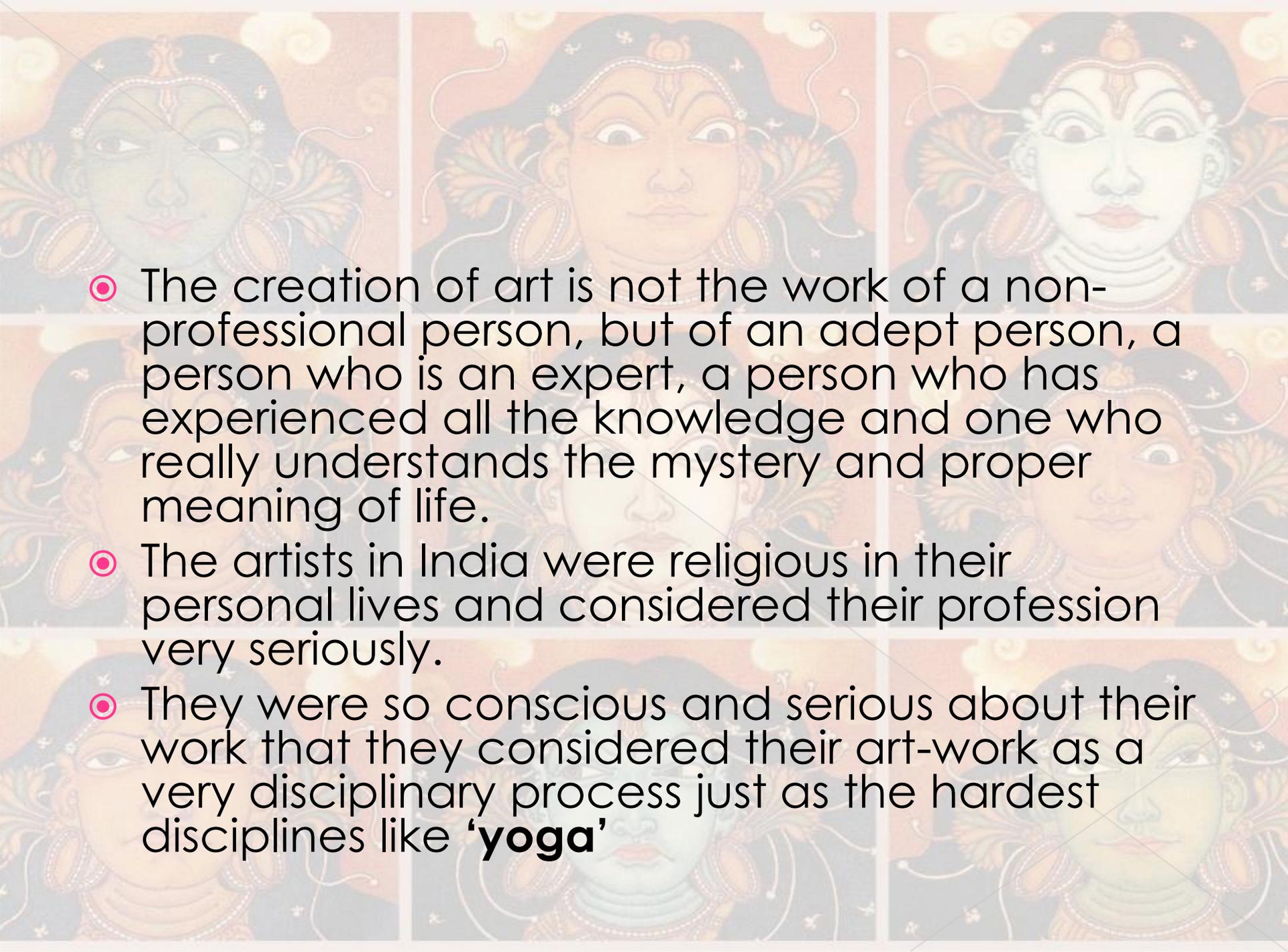
- 
- For the enhancement of the story, vocal and instrumental music, dance, drapery, the theatrical setting etc. are used.
  - This acts as a feast to the eyes, ears and minds of the spectators.
  - Aesthetic experience is basically a pleasurable one. It is a state of bliss, a state of self-awareness or self-fulfillment and a state of spirial joy which means transcendental joy that surpasses all other kinds of joy.
  - **Kalidasa** believed, **“The total experience of delight that the spectator undergoes is a kind of a unique homogenous experience and this is called Rasa.”**

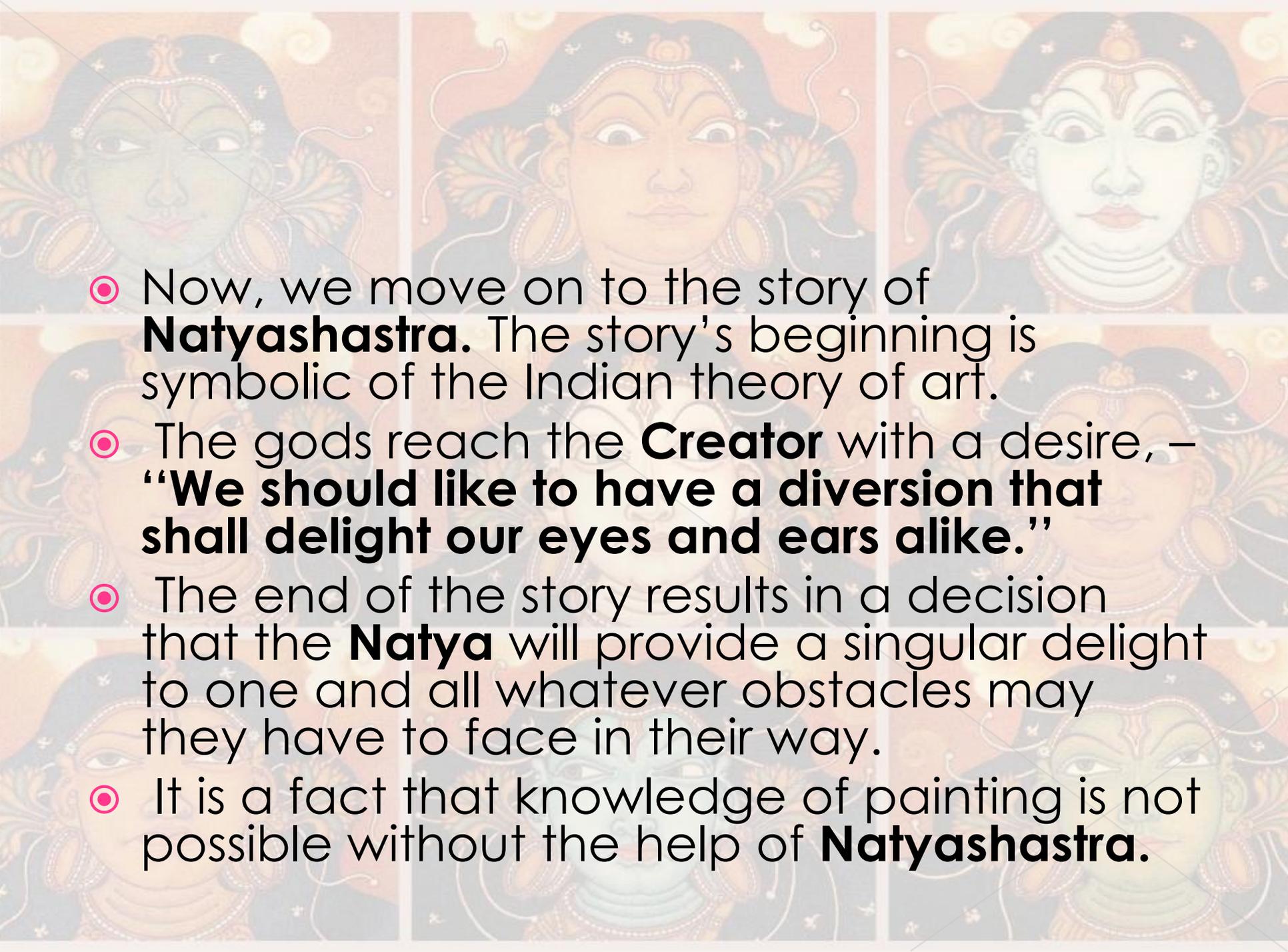
- 
- The state of bliss spreads through a feeling of divine illumination which is mostly independent from sensual elements which depend upon the senses only and not on the mind.
  - The physical feelings shake off their mean and dirty attributes.
  - Aesthetic Experience is an experience of that perception which is existing within us and is natural and there is an intent concentration (**Yoga Dhyana**) in this kind of perception.

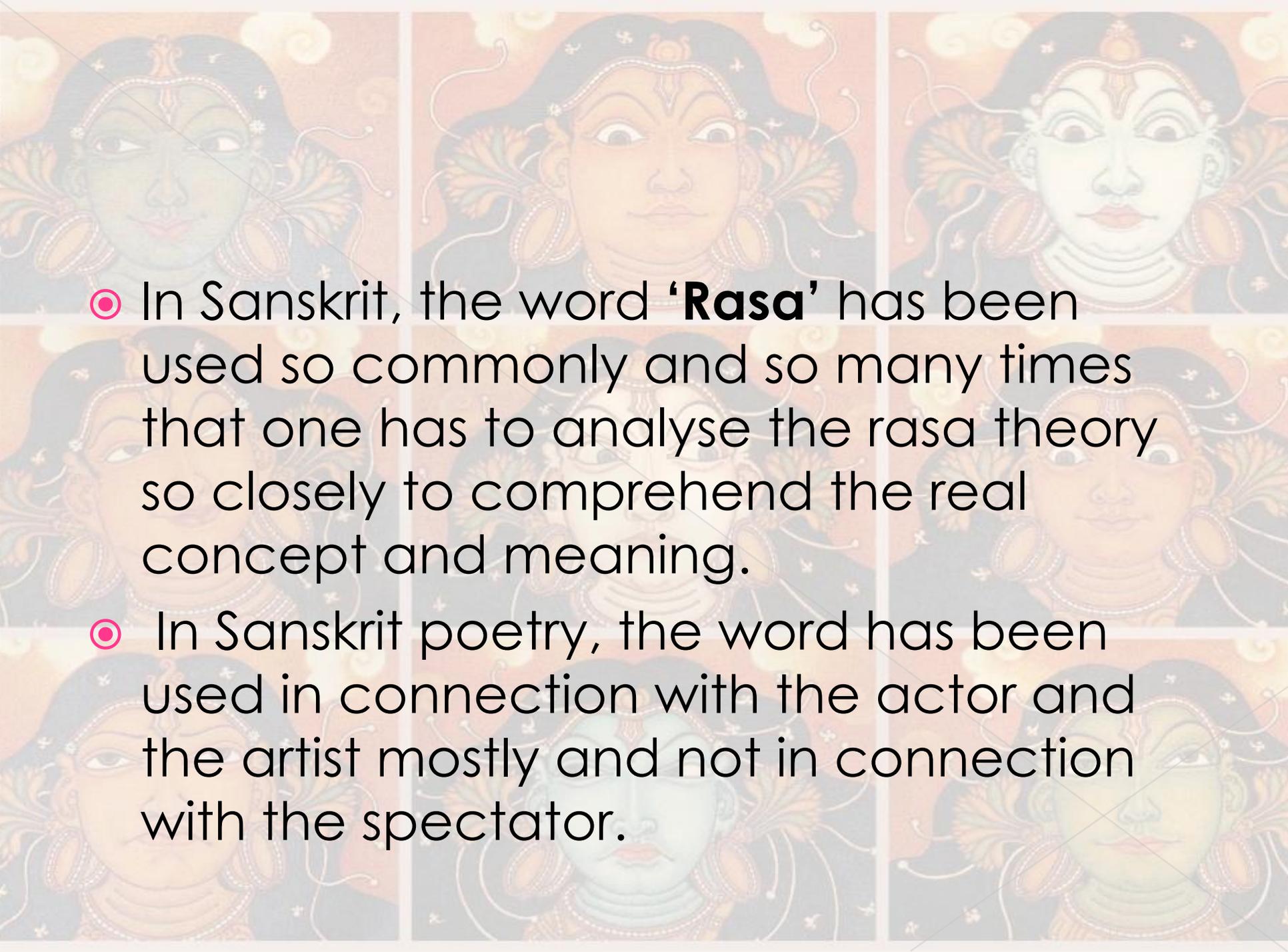
- 
- The active process of the intent concentration is generally characterised in respect of the perceiver as one of **the complete detachment** (intent concentration), **complete disinterestedness** from life and **psychical distancing**.
  - A question that has not been satisfactorily answered and has not been solved is that to what extent such detachment, disinterestedness and psychical distancing are possible for anybody.
  - A perceiver experiences a kind of special joy that is equal to the delight arising out of Brahma or emerging out of the population of the sexes. Physiologically speaking, an aesthetic experience is considered as a kind of **healing experience**. As the time passed by, much confusion had arisen about the real meaning of Rasa.

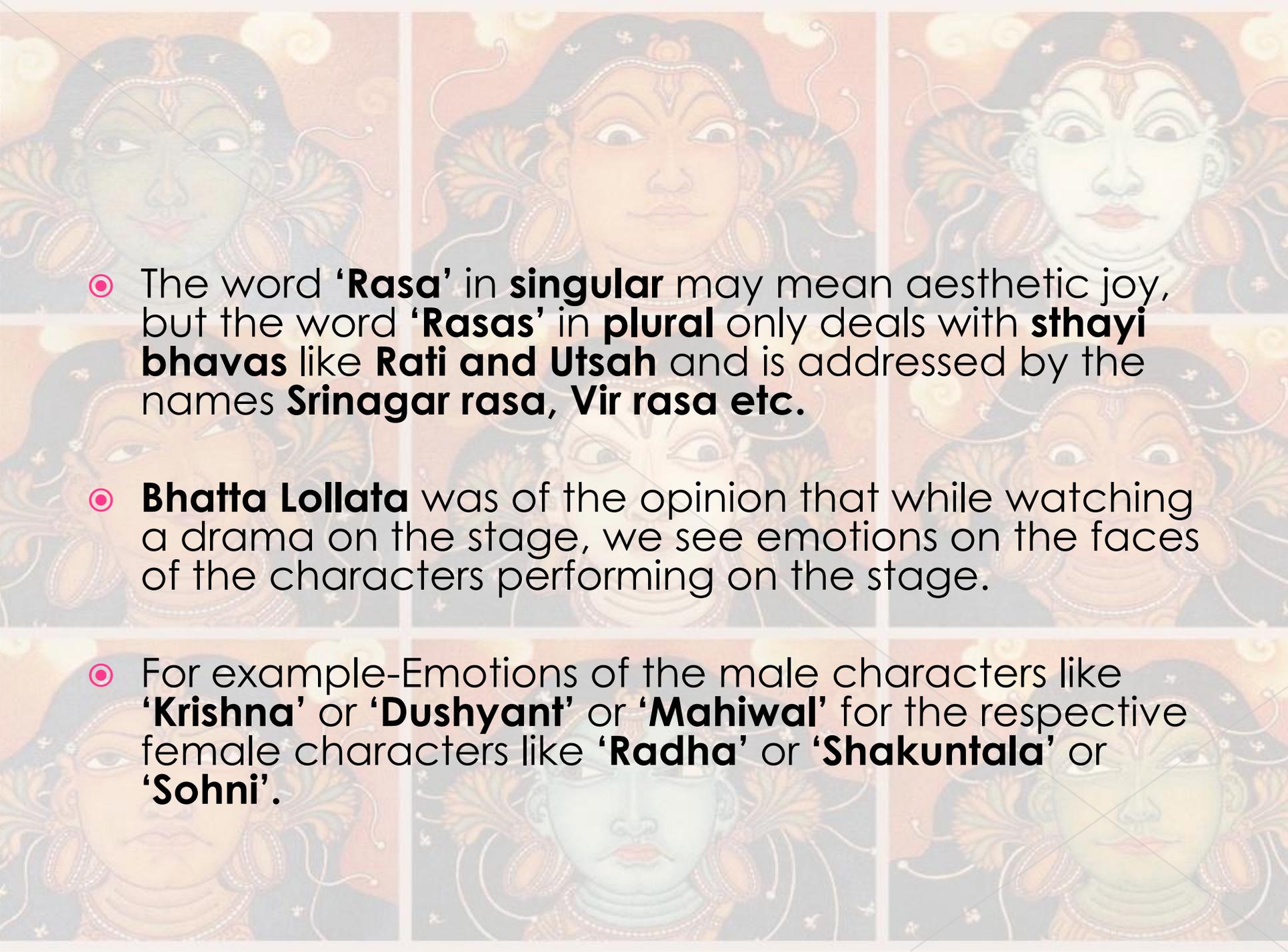
- 
- The process of art revolves around two things—**the creation and the appreciation.**
  - An artist always enjoys during the creation process and his creation is nothing, but partly the result of appreciation. **The process of creation is much more complicated than the process of appreciation.**
  - Creation is the expression of the artist, especially the inner expression while appreciation is an expression of an impression. Expression is public whereas impression is private. Creation is the process where an artist can reveal his inner feelings and views through an art-work to the spectators

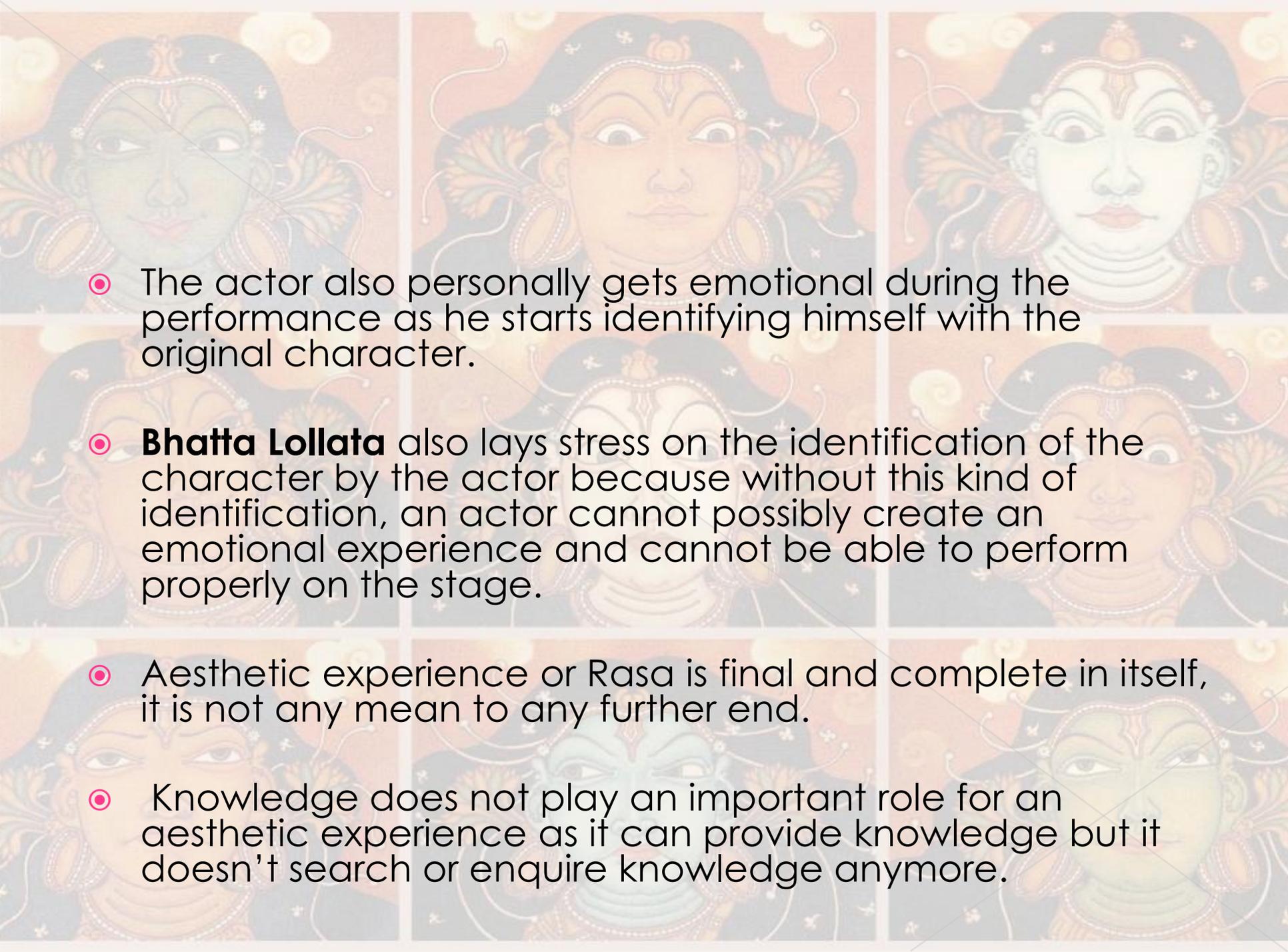
- 
- Once an artistic form is given to an expression, a capacity to communicate arises.
  - This communication plays a very essential role for creation and connects the artist with the observer in the form of appreciation.
  - **Bharata** regards an artist as a '**Kavi**' because a Kavi can see behind and beyond the sensible world.

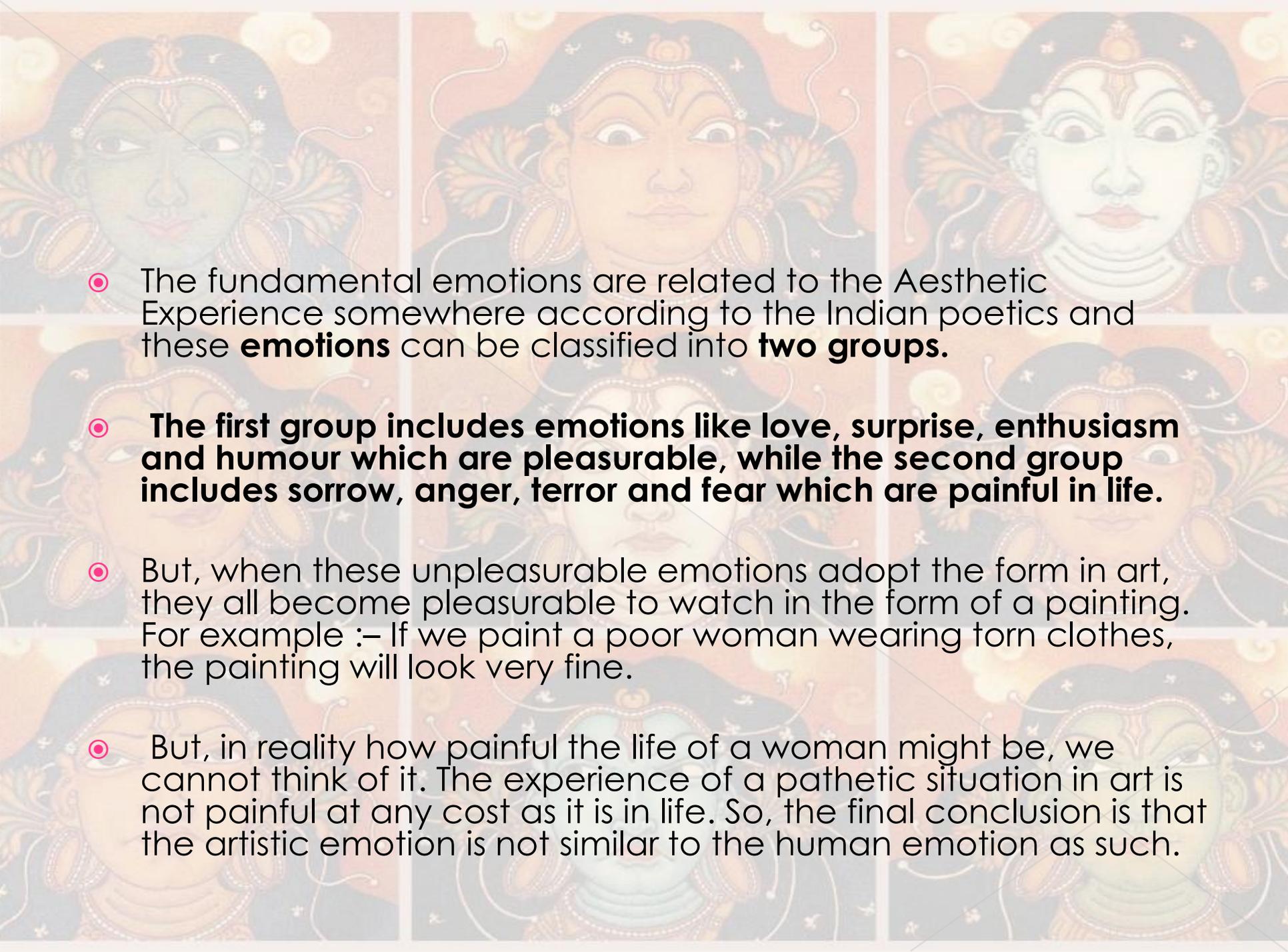
- 
- The creation of art is not the work of a non-professional person, but of an adept person, a person who is an expert, a person who has experienced all the knowledge and one who really understands the mystery and proper meaning of life.
  - The artists in India were religious in their personal lives and considered their profession very seriously.
  - They were so conscious and serious about their work that they considered their art-work as a very disciplinary process just as the hardest disciplines like **'yoga'**

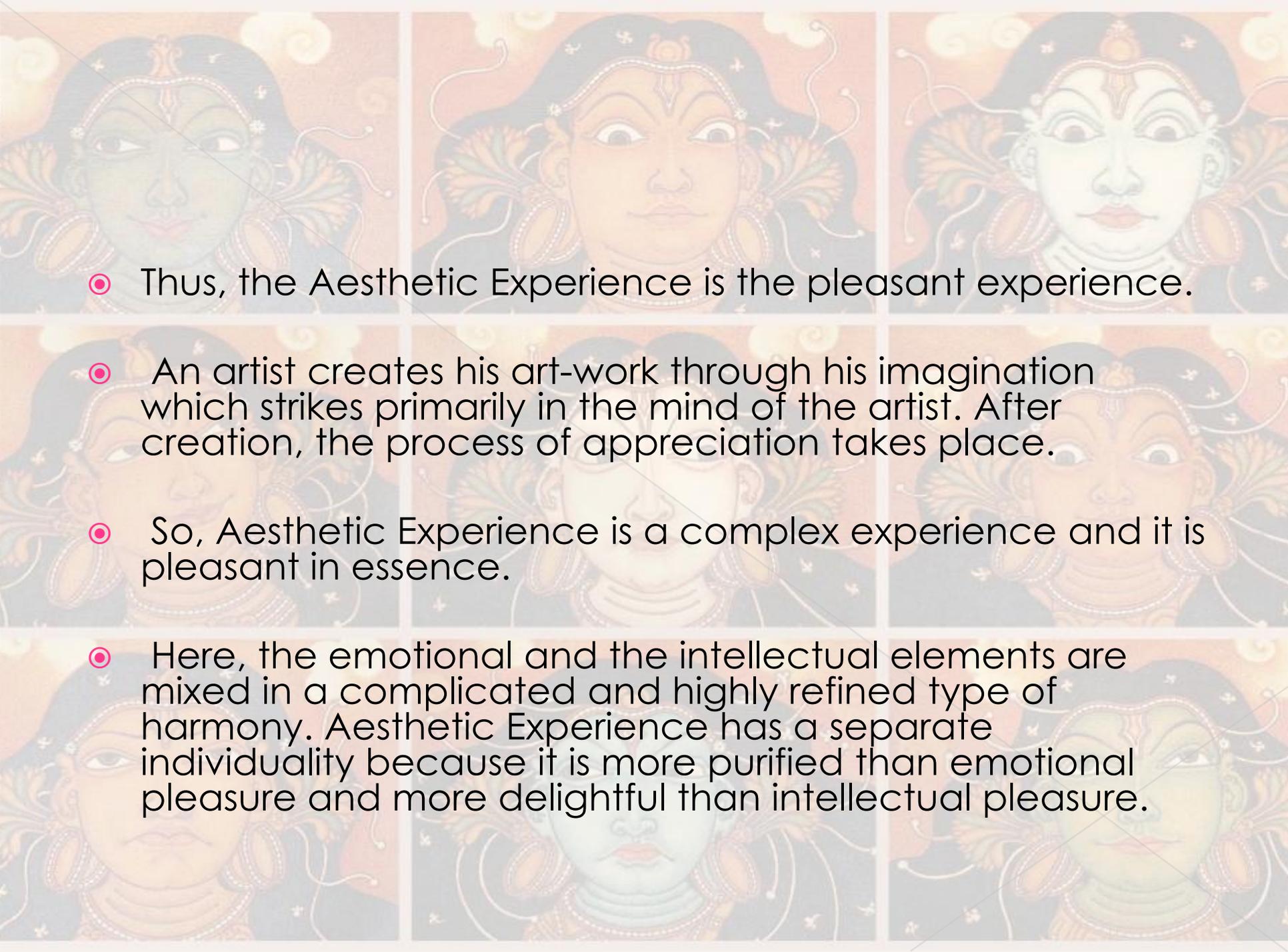
- 
- Now, we move on to the story of **Natyashastra**. The story's beginning is symbolic of the Indian theory of art.
  - The gods reach the **Creator** with a desire, –  
**“We should like to have a diversion that shall delight our eyes and ears alike.”**
  - The end of the story results in a decision that the **Natya** will provide a singular delight to one and all whatever obstacles may they have to face in their way.
  - It is a fact that knowledge of painting is not possible without the help of **Natyashastra**.

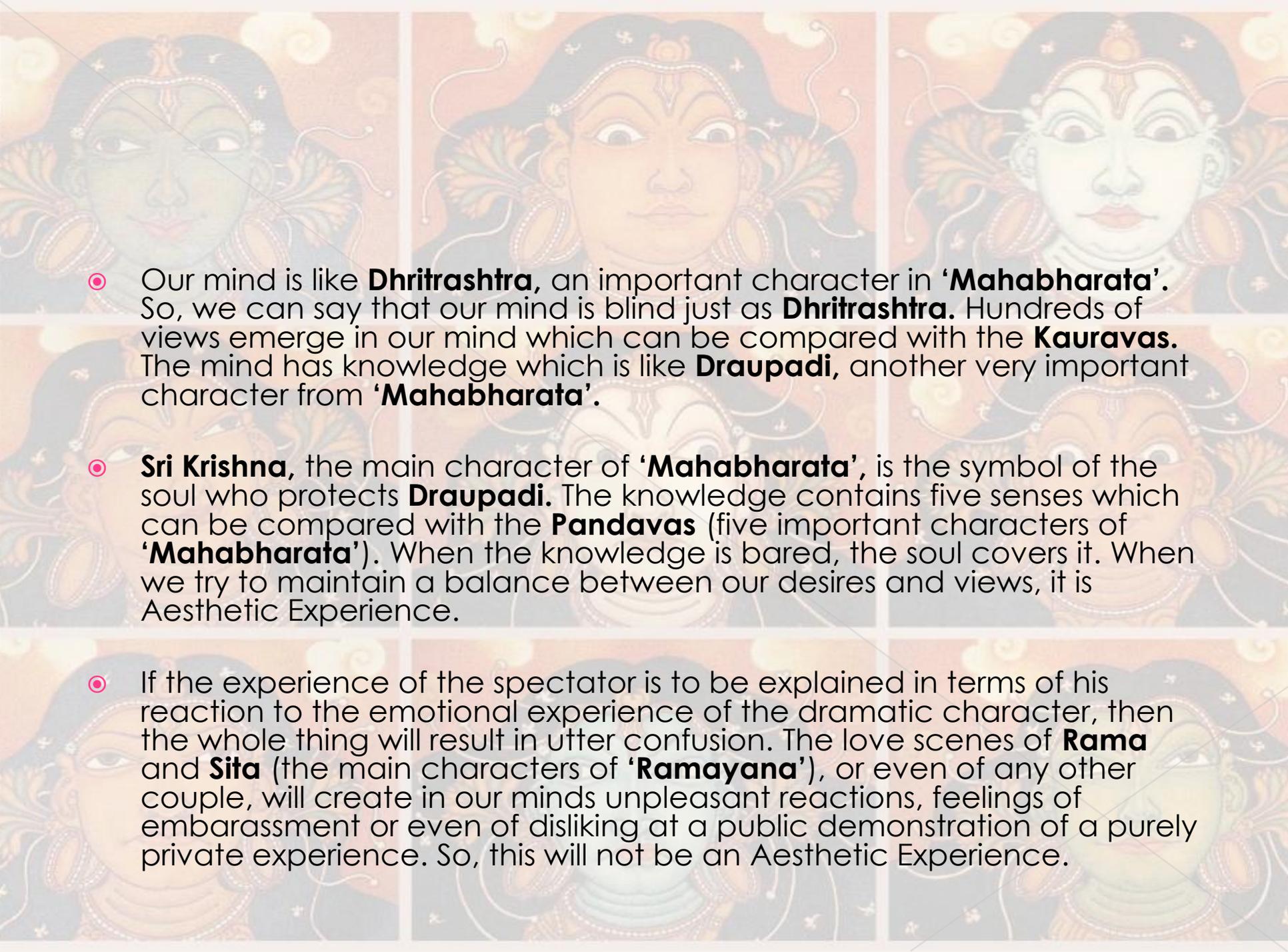
- 
- ◉ In Sanskrit, the word '**Rasa**' has been used so commonly and so many times that one has to analyse the rasa theory so closely to comprehend the real concept and meaning.
  - ◉ In Sanskrit poetry, the word has been used in connection with the actor and the artist mostly and not in connection with the spectator.

- 
- The word '**Rasa**' in **singular** may mean aesthetic joy, but the word '**Rasas**' in **plural** only deals with **sthayi bhavas** like **Rati** and **Utsah** and is addressed by the names **Srinagar rasa**, **Vir rasa etc.**
  - **Bhatta Lollata** was of the opinion that while watching a drama on the stage, we see emotions on the faces of the characters performing on the stage.
  - For example-Emotions of the male characters like '**Krishna**' or '**Dushyant**' or '**Mahiwal**' for the respective female characters like '**Radha**' or '**Shakuntala**' or '**Sohni**'.

- 
- ◉ The actor also personally gets emotional during the performance as he starts identifying himself with the original character.
  - ◉ **Bhatta Lollata** also lays stress on the identification of the character by the actor because without this kind of identification, an actor cannot possibly create an emotional experience and cannot be able to perform properly on the stage.
  - ◉ Aesthetic experience or Rasa is final and complete in itself, it is not any mean to any further end.
  - ◉ Knowledge does not play an important role for an aesthetic experience as it can provide knowledge but it doesn't search or enquire knowledge anymore.

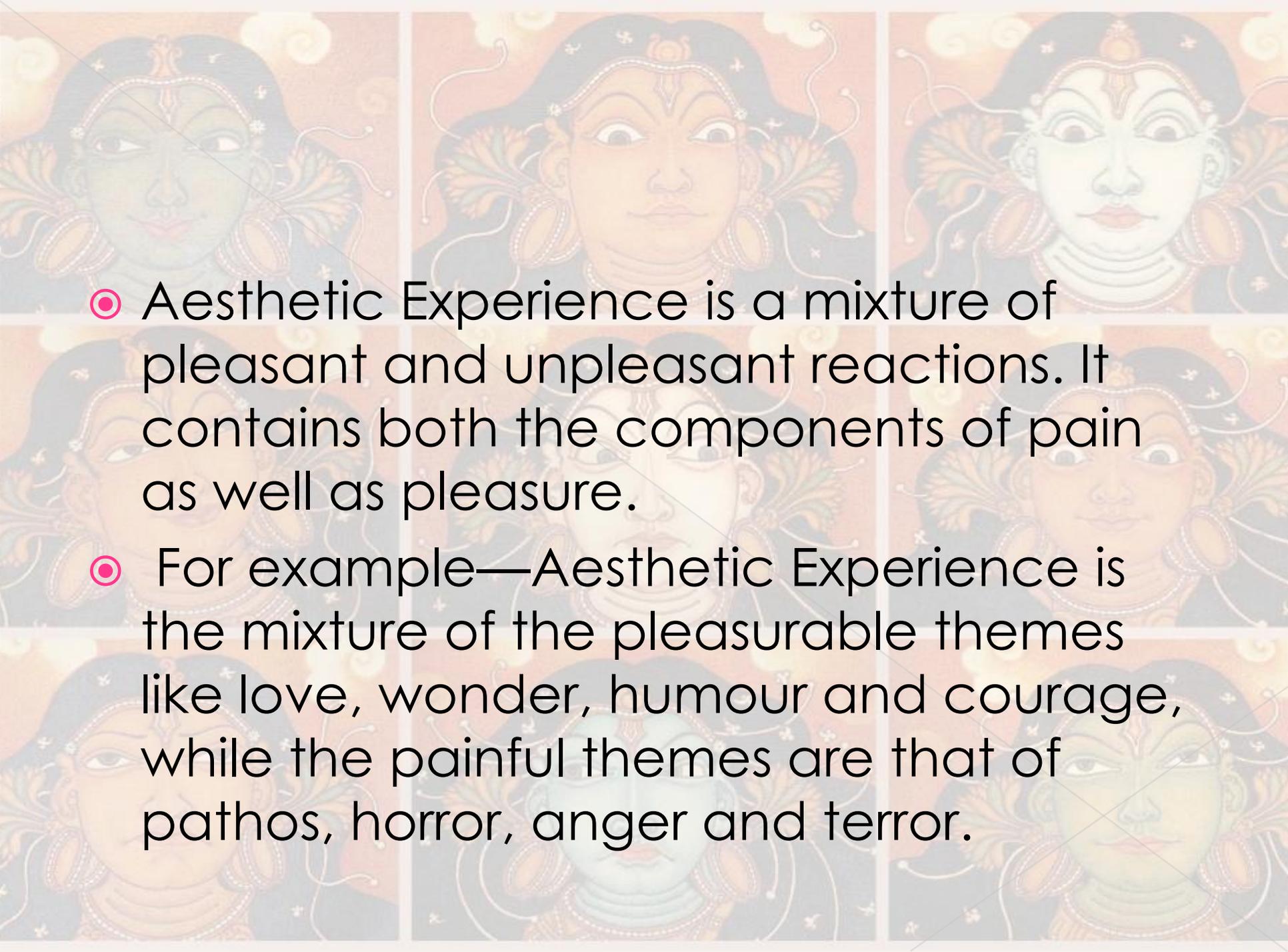
- 
- The fundamental emotions are related to the Aesthetic Experience somewhere according to the Indian poetics and these **emotions** can be classified into **two groups**.
  - **The first group includes emotions like love, surprise, enthusiasm and humour which are pleasurable, while the second group includes sorrow, anger, terror and fear which are painful in life.**
  - But, when these unpleasurable emotions adopt the form in art, they all become pleasurable to watch in the form of a painting. For example :- If we paint a poor woman wearing torn clothes, the painting will look very fine.
  - But, in reality how painful the life of a woman might be, we cannot think of it. The experience of a pathetic situation in art is not painful at any cost as it is in life. So, the final conclusion is that the artistic emotion is not similar to the human emotion as such.

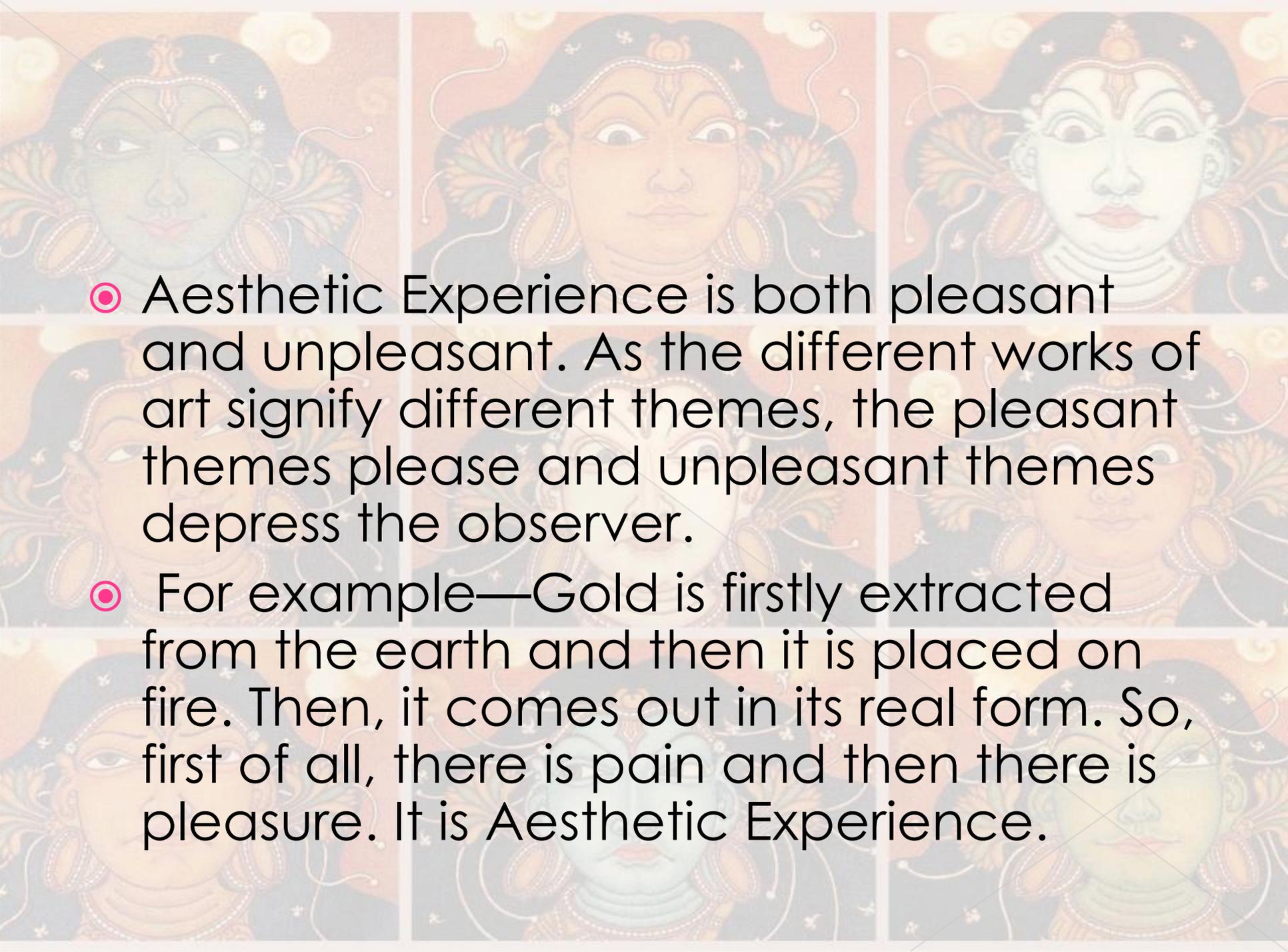
- 
- ◉ Thus, the Aesthetic Experience is the pleasant experience.
  - ◉ An artist creates his art-work through his imagination which strikes primarily in the mind of the artist. After creation, the process of appreciation takes place.
  - ◉ So, Aesthetic Experience is a complex experience and it is pleasant in essence.
  - ◉ Here, the emotional and the intellectual elements are mixed in a complicated and highly refined type of harmony. Aesthetic Experience has a separate individuality because it is more purified than emotional pleasure and more delightful than intellectual pleasure.

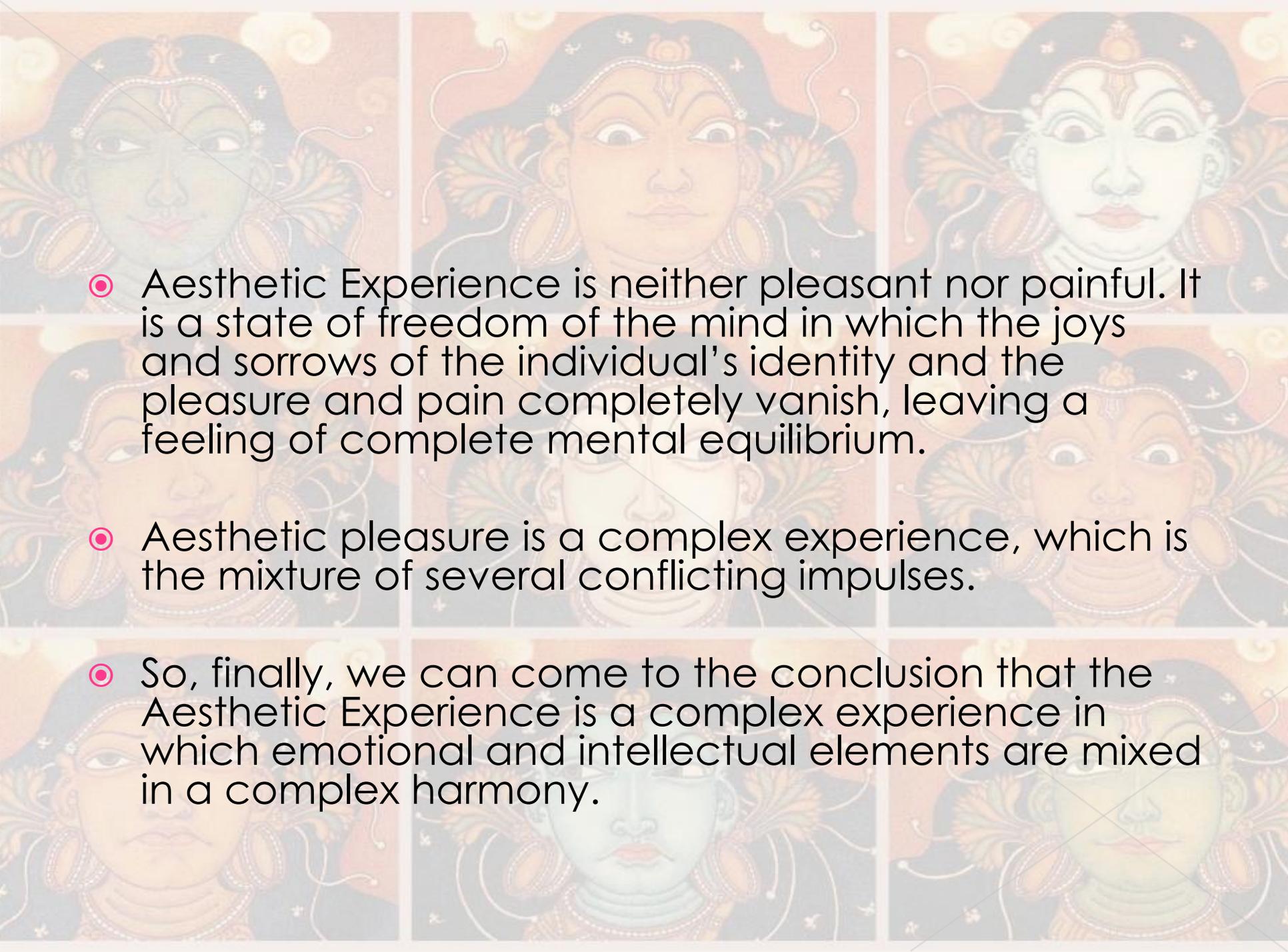
- 
- Our mind is like **Dhritrashtra**, an important character in '**Mahabharata**'. So, we can say that our mind is blind just as **Dhritrashtra**. Hundreds of views emerge in our mind which can be compared with the **Kauravas**. The mind has knowledge which is like **Draupadi**, another very important character from '**Mahabharata**'.
  - **Sri Krishna**, the main character of '**Mahabharata**', is the symbol of the soul who protects **Draupadi**. The knowledge contains five senses which can be compared with the **Pandavas** (five important characters of '**Mahabharata**'). When the knowledge is bared, the soul covers it. When we try to maintain a balance between our desires and views, it is Aesthetic Experience.
  - If the experience of the spectator is to be explained in terms of his reaction to the emotional experience of the dramatic character, then the whole thing will result in utter confusion. The love scenes of **Rama** and **Sita** (the main characters of '**Ramayana**'), or even of any other couple, will create in our minds unpleasant reactions, feelings of embarrassment or even of disliking at a public demonstration of a purely private experience. So, this will not be an Aesthetic Experience.

# Following are different views about the above problem—

- Aesthetic Experience is a state of bliss which is of two types—(a) the tranquil joy of the spirit and (b) the psychic pleasure.
- So, the above types reveal that the common factor between all these types is that of pleasure, may it be the tranquil joy or psychic pleasure.
- Thus, Aesthetic Experience is a pleasant experience.

- 
- Aesthetic Experience is a mixture of pleasant and unpleasant reactions. It contains both the components of pain as well as pleasure.
  - For example—Aesthetic Experience is the mixture of the pleasurable themes like love, wonder, humour and courage, while the painful themes are that of pathos, horror, anger and terror.

- 
- Aesthetic Experience is both pleasant and unpleasant. As the different works of art signify different themes, the pleasant themes please and unpleasant themes depress the observer.
  - For example—Gold is firstly extracted from the earth and then it is placed on fire. Then, it comes out in its real form. So, first of all, there is pain and then there is pleasure. It is Aesthetic Experience.

- 
- Aesthetic Experience is neither pleasant nor painful. It is a state of freedom of the mind in which the joys and sorrows of the individual's identity and the pleasure and pain completely vanish, leaving a feeling of complete mental equilibrium.
  - Aesthetic pleasure is a complex experience, which is the mixture of several conflicting impulses.
  - So, finally, we can come to the conclusion that the Aesthetic Experience is a complex experience in which emotional and intellectual elements are mixed in a complex harmony.

# Conclusions

- A question now arises about the importance of the Rasa theory in the present modern times. It has been generally believed that **Bharata's** theory of the eight or nine rasas, their vibhavas etc. is neither scientific nor understandable and it is also not good for modern literature even.
- Modern age is the age of machines, computers, nuclear weapons etc. and the population is depressed and burdened with stress, strains, tensions etc.
- So, the **Bharata's** theory of Rasa cannot match the modern world as a great advancement has taken the place of those old traditional methods of the past centuries.
- So, in the end, we can say that **Bharata's** theory of Rasa is not worth applicable and useful. So, our modern society will not accept this theory.



***THANKS***