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THE SOCIAL AESTHETIC AND SANSKRIT LITERARY THEORY

Scholarship on Sanskrit literary theory, like Sanskrit scholarship more generally, tends to cleave to the intellectual agenda set by the tradition itself. There are good reasons for this conformism, of a historical-anthropological sort: if we are to make sense of Sanskrit culture we need to know in the first instance what the Sanskrit tradition itself thought worth knowing. Thus, if Indology has been indifferent to the social-and-moral imagination of Sanskrit literary texts – throughout this essay I will take the social and the moral as forming a unified sphere of knowledge in premodern India – it is in part because the shastric tradition has not thematized it in any pronounced way. To be sure, poets as early as Aśvaghoṣa, literary theorists starting with Bhāmaha, commentators from Aruṇagiri on may describe the purposes of literary discourse as the formation of moral persons – *vyutpatti* or education in the largest sense – but they provide little in the way of strong argument or analysis to ground their claim.¹ In terms of sheer column inches, the topic is certainly the least discussed of any in *sāhityasāstra*.

We might highlight this point by contrasting the understanding of *vyutpatti* in medieval India with another highly consequential intellectual value of antiquity, *paideia*. Both were ideally based on a tripartite knowledge: a *vidyātraya* of *vyākaraṇa*, *mīmāṃsā*, and *nyāya* in the first case, a *trivium* of *grammatica*, *rhetorica*, and *dialectica* in the second. It is the middle term here that marks a large difference in these otherwise strikingly similar (and in fact almost contemporaneous) systematizations:² Indian literati were trained in the science of discourse analysis (*vākyaśāstra*, as *mīmāṃsā* is often called), European literati in the arts of persuasion, especially forensic persuasion. *Mīmāṃsā*, developed to enhance the understanding of the Vedas, teaches the conditions of meaning to philosophers of language; *rhetorica*, which emerged largely out of the Sophist movement and its complex democratic politics, means to shape behavior on the part of people acting in the world. The one conceives of literature as verbal icon, the other as exhortation. And it was the analysis of literature as a specific kind of language use that truly came to engage the interests of the Sanskrit readers (the ones we know most about, commentators and literary theorists), or better put, the orientation that produced the most influ-

ential kinds of reading. Beyond that, such readers were concerned at the theoretical level with literary experience not as a form of social knowledge but as a form of abstraction from, even transcendence of, the social by way of aesthetic self-transcendence. According to Sanskrit literary theory – or, at least, according to usual interpretation of this theory – one does not ultimately *learn* anything specific to the reading of Sanskrit literature from the reading of Sanskrit literature. True knowledge as such belongs, axiomatically, to the domain of *śāstra*, social and moral knowledge in particular to the domain of *dharmaśāstra*.

It may not be entirely accurate, however, to say that medieval readers understood Sanskrit literature according to the model just described, and it is almost certainly not a trans-historical predisposition of Indian culture to understand it that way. On the contrary, it seems to me something of a new emphasis, even a new mentality produced in large part by the remarkable achievements of literary theory in Kashmir between 850–1050. In the case of the commentarial tradition, the precise impact of this transformation is a matter of some conjecture, since (and here is a fact not often registered) we have no scholia on Sanskrit literary texts before this period.³ But the history of *sāhityaśāstra* certainly corroborates this assessment of the influence of the Kashmiri transformation. This was a complex shift, consisting in a range of new conceptual moves, but two of them were especially crucial. For one thing, this was the first time that *mīmāṃsā* was directly appropriated by literary theory, signaling a far more intense concern than previously with *kāvya* as a linguistic system.⁴ For another, whereas the relationship between *kāvya* and religious values had often been a close one, literature for the first time came to be seen as a model or even kind of religious experience. Emblematic of this conceptual move is the redefinition of aestheticized emotion, *rasa*. In the same way that literary theory itself now became less prescriptive of the writing process and more descriptive of the reading process, the notion of *rasa* was radically displaced from text to reader. What had long been the defining question, how the literary artifact embodies human affect, was transformed into a question of reception, how the reader actually experiences this aestheticized emotion. The answer was found to lie in a close analogy with religious experience.⁵

The preoccupations of Kashmiri theorists with language philosophy and theology, which have colored our understanding of the entire tradition, have preoccupied much of the most serious contemporary scholarship on Sanskrit literary theory, again for very good reasons. Kashmiri theory was, after all, highly influential, and thoughtful students of Sanskrit – and Daniel Ingalls was pre-eminent among them – know

that careful reading of the literature of others presupposes careful listening to others' theory. This is all the more true when this theory was some of the most sophisticated in antiquity and hardly equaled in modernity. The concentration on language philosophy and religion, however, was also reinforced by certain proclivities in the modern West, especially a pervasive indifference in Indology itself to the social in Sanskrit literary discourse. The reasons themselves for this indifference are complicated, but they include the character of the critical trends that dominated western literary theory and philology during the formative period of Sanskrit literary studies (formalism and its progeny, and linguistics), the subservience of Sanskrit in the western academy (as handmaiden to religious studies), the intellectual politics of Sanskritists themselves (predominantly conservative). One manifestation of such tendencies that many readers will recall is Ingalls' critique, largely justified if entirely subjective, of D. D. Kosambi's mechanical, Plenkhanovian denunciation of the literary text he himself had so brilliantly and devotedly edited.⁶

I want to ask here whether we can historically recuperate the social in Sanskrit literary theory, and find ways to understand its significance as something other than a feature merely inside the text (a mere narrative addition, say, such as could be stripped from the pure textuality of the literary work), or merely outside (as the ideology of an exploitative class, for example). It is striking to observe, as I hope readers will agree we can observe, how fundamentally the social grounds Sanskrit literary theory, and yet at the same time how this grounding is often occluded in the theory itself. The treatment of two central problematics of *sāhityaśāstra*, *dhvani* (aesthetic suggestion) and *rasa* or more particularly *rasābhāsa* (the invalid shadow of aestheticized emotion), illustrates this well: if *rasābhāsa* foregrounds sociality for theory, *dhvani* seems to hide it. I examine these in the first two parts of this paper, and in the third, I address a specific body of literary theory, Bhoja's early eleventh-century masterpiece, the *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* (Light on Passion, ŚP). Here the social occupies a place in the conceptual scheme of Sanskrit literary culture very different from what we might be led to believe from most scholarly accounts of *sāhityaśāstra*, and from the Kashmiri focal points, linguistic and theological, upon which they are based. If I disagree on occasion with Daniel Ingalls in my understanding of some of these issues, it is disagreement made possible only by the strong and serious arguments he himself provided in his magisterial scholarly oeuvre. And that Bhoja's work is at last becoming available to us in a definitive

edition is partly due to his long and distinguished work as editor of the Harvard Oriental Series.

SOCIAL SUGGESTION

At the beginning of his *Dhvanyāloka* (Light on Aesthetic Suggestion, DĀ) Ānandavardhana makes a claim for scientific innovation that, viewed from a purely intellectual-historical perspective, is perhaps without precedent in India. He declares he intends to analyze a feature of literary speech that all sensitive readers grasp but that no one before him, because of its subtlety and complexity, has yet been able to theorize. Ānanda's analysis of *dhvani* or aesthetic suggestion is remarkable both for the overall design of his argument and the subtlety of his exposition, and has rightly absorbed the attention of all who have studied his great work. But more pertinent for the present inquiry than what Ānanda is concerned to theorize is what he is unconcerned to theorize. And this is an unconcern shared by all later writers, who in literary-critical texts over ten centuries following Ānanda pondered his problems and the poems he adduced in illustration. If we reflect on what they omit from the sweep of their conceptualization, what they fail to analyze that is patently required in order to understand *dhvani*, we begin to see at once how central social discourse is to the constitution of the theory of suggestion, yet how consistently it escapes the language-philosophical inquiry promoted by the Ānanda and his followers.

We may begin with the first example of *dhvani* that Ānanda offers:

- (1) You're free to go wandering, holy man.
The little dog was killed today
by the fierce lion making its lair
in the thicket on the banks of the Godā river.
(*bhama dhammia*, etc.)⁷

Ānanda prefaces this illustration with a general account, well-known to every student of Sanskrit literature, of how literary texts signify. In addition to the explicit meaning of a literary discourse, he tells us, there is a second signification that "comes to be understood" (*pratīyamāna*), one "thrown forth" (*ākṣipta*) by the explicit meaning when one senses one cannot "rest content" with it, and which one "'gets' immediately when one's mind is looking for the truth."⁸ Three text features can be projected in this process of literary implication: a figure of sense (*arthālakāra*), an aesthetic emotional state (*rasa*), and, as in the above verse, some bare narrative matter (*vastumātra*). Ānanda's first five

examples are of this third category, not only because implication is most easily demonstrated in *vastudhvani*, but also because it is no doubt this form that first suggested the phenomenon that Ananda elaborated into a unified theory of literariness. *Vastudhvani* contains various subspecies, usually characterized in terms of the commands or prohibitions they communicate (given the traditional Sanskrit understanding of sentence meaning, which Bhoja, discussed below, p. 218 explains for us). The first, in which the explicit meaning is a command whereas the meaning one “comes to understand” is actually a prohibition, is illustrated in the poem “You’re free to go wandering, holy man.”

Ananda is explicitly concerned only with the “bare narrative matter” implied, and not with the question of who understands the prohibition that comes to be understood. And indeed, whose mind is “looking for the truth”? Is it the mendicant, someone else in the poem listening on, the reader? The next four examples complete his typology and provide us with the answer (I give them in the fine translation of Ingalls):

- (2) Mother-in-law sleeps here, I there:
look, traveler, while it is light.
For at night when you cannot see
you must not fall into my bed

Here, an explicit prohibition implies a command (an invitation), which, like the express meaning, is directed to and meant to be understood by the addressee, the traveler (and misunderstood by the mother-in-law listening on);⁹

- (3) Go, and let the sighs and tears
be mine; nor let them rise
from you as well, tortured,
being without her, by your hateful courtesy.

Here, the point of the explicit command is not to tell the male addressee either to leave or to stay, but just to reproach him; this implied meaning, like the express statement, is directed to the addressee.

- (4) Turn back, I beg you. You are making trouble
for other ladies stealing to their lovers.
The moonlight of your countenance destroys
their covering darkness, wretched woman.

Here again, the point of the explicit prohibition is not to tell the female addressee either to go or not to go, but just to pay her a compliment; this implied meaning, again like the express statement, is understood by the addressee.

- (5) Who wouldn't be angry to see
 his dear wife with her lower lip
 bitten?
 You scorned my warning to smell
 the bee-holding lotus. Now you must
 suffer.

This last example differs from the previous four, according to Ānanda's explicit statement, in that the literal meaning and the implication are directed to two different people.¹⁰ In the first verse, we must therefore assume, Ānanda believes it is the mendicant who is meant to understand the implied prohibition, as well as the express command.

It is easy enough to see, in the second example, what the implied command to the traveler is, and why it has to be conveyed by way of an express prohibition (which only the mother-in-law takes at face value). But what precisely is the prohibition to the mendicant, why should it be conveyed by implication, and who in fact is speaking? One might assume, in view of example two, that the prohibition is "You're not free to go wandering," but why is he not free? The presence of the lion presumably is meant to cancel out what the absence of the dog makes possible, but the lion has its lair at the riverside, no obvious place for a mendicant to be told to go wander. Yet it is there, evidently, that the prohibition is directed, since the only thing mentioned in the poem that can negate the explicit permission is the lion. Example two, again, would lead us to suppose that the prohibition is conveyed by implication because a third party is listening whom the speaker may be trying to deceive, but that seems not to be the case here, and there appears to be no deception. And from the information in the four bare lines of the poem itself, we have no clear idea who is speaking – beyond the fact that he or she is aware of the mendicant's earlier troubles with "the" dog – and it is the identity of the speaker that would seem to be key to answering the other questions and to making sense of the verse.

Moreover, why would someone speak this way, and not just issue a prohibition plainly and directly: "Stay away from the river"? One can hardly imagine the speaker to be another mendicant, for example, for he would simply have said, "You can go wandering wherever you want but don't go near the river, there's a lion there." To assert that this is poetry and poetry is precisely a use of language that differs from plain and direct statement – *vakratā* or indirection is actually a category familiar from the earliest Sanskrit systematic thought on literariness – would only be to restate the problem of meaning production, not analyze it. What we want to know is what we need to know to unravel the problem of indirection

satisfactorily. To put this in Sanskrit terms: underlying all implication is some contradiction (*bādhā*) in the denotation, a contradiction that itself derives from a specific intention (*prayojana*), and it is this intention we cannot begin to make sense of without more information. From the fact that the speaker only expresses the prohibition implicitly we might infer some reluctance to evince interest, or a desire to evince a lack of interest, in the mendicant's keeping away from the riverside. But who wants to stop him without saying so openly, and to avoid indicating too keen a desire – or again, to conceal all desire – in doing so? Someone who has something to hide, perhaps, about something in the thicket at the riverside. But that is as far as the rational common reader can go, with the mere four-line poem at hand – and remember that the mere quatrain is not a fragment of some larger work but constitutes in itself a complete and self-sufficient piece of literature.

Ānanda comments no further on his first example of *dhvani*, and the analytical system he proceeds to construct does nothing to help in understanding the verse. Evidently, unless the poem is embedded in a more complete context, a richer language, so to speak, that supplements the sign system in use, there can be no access to the implication let alone its significance, that is, the *dhvani*.¹¹ Such a language or context can only be the socio-literary tradition itself; in the case of *bhama dhammia*, the social conventions traditionalized in Prakrit poetry. The commentators on Ānanda will, of course, contextualize the poem, albeit without explaining why it is necessary, let alone reasoning through the process of contextualization. And that this is indeed a matter in need of rationalization becomes evident when we observe the social complexities, and sometimes confusions, of the interpretations themselves.

Here, for example, is what Abhinavagupta, Ānanda's only extant commentator, has to say about the verse: "These are the words of a certain woman spoken in order to save a trysting place . . . from the intrusions of a mendicant. . . . His walking in that place is a natural activity that has been inhibited by fear of a dog." Abhinava's interpretation seems strikingly underdetermined; indeed, his translators believe it even misses the point of the verse. Nothing in the poem itself tells us the speaker is a woman, that the thicket is a place of rendezvous, and that the point of the verse is to keep the mendicant away, and the commentator does nothing to justify or even conceptualize his understanding. Moreover, as Ingalls et al. rightly point out, if the dog had frightened the mendicant from the place of rendezvous, what is the point of her inventing a lion to terrify him further? It would certainly be astonishing if the celebrated commentator failed to grasp, or did not care to show he wholly grasped,

the point of the first illustration of the central matter of the book he is setting out to explain.¹² Evidently the “richer language” called for above is necessary not only for outsider readers such as ourselves.

Abhinava’s contemporary, Bhoja, who is the next commentator in chronological order, is too terse to allow us to see his full understanding of the verse, but at least he explains the difference between the implied and the suggested meanings: “In this poem, whereas the statement of command, ‘You are free to wander’ is explicit, a prohibition is understood: ‘There is a lion in that thicket, and since you are afraid even of a dog, don’t go there.’ The prohibition implicit in the express command suggests [another] meaning, i.e., about [the speaker’s] rendezvous with someone in a thicket at the river,” a suggestion that, obviously, only the reader understands.¹³ In the generation after Bhoja, Mahimabhāṭṭa offers a fuller explanation. Mahima’s principal objective throughout his *Vyaktiviveka* is to prove that the logical procedures of inference are entirely adequate to explain the phenomenon of suggestion (or at least implication), and that therefore no new category, such as “dhvani,” need be invented. Our interest here is in his understanding of the verse itself (rather than in how he understands the logical process of understanding), and he shows just how complicated this is:

A certain woman, hungry for the sweet pleasure of undisturbed lovemaking, has made a rendezvous with some lucky fellow in a deserted forest spot alive with bees attracted by the sweet-smelling flowers. There is an ascetic who wanders there to pick the flowers, and she perceives his coming to her spot as an impediment to her plans. Being clever, she acts like a simple girl in mentioning to him only the absence of any reason to fear through the death of the dog – though of course she knows full well that lions are vicious creatures – in hopes of giving him some good news. And thus by means of a command she brings about a prohibition of his wandering.¹⁴

The same problems as in Abhinava’s interpretation confront us in Mahima, and it will not be until Hemacandra (ca. 1175) in his subcommentary on his own *Kāvyaṅnuśāsana* that things seem to get fully sorted out:

A certain loose woman is always leaving her house, under the pretext of fetching water from the river, in order to meet her lover in a thicket on the bank of the Godāvarī river. She regards a mendicant as an obstacle in that he destroys the thicket by gathering flowers [for his worship]. And though she is a clever woman she speaks here like an ingenue: “The dog” that used to harass you whenever you entered our compound was careless and, to our good fortune, was “killed” or slaughtered today by “the,” i.e., well-known, “fierce,” i.e., taking no pity on the dog, “lion,” i.e., invincible. . . . The lion will not bother you here [in the village], since it is “making its lair” or constantly staying in a thicket on the banks of the Godāvarī. You may therefore continue to wander without worry.¹⁵

We are now told that it is the mendicant’s wandering, not at the river (so Abhinava and Mahima) but at the woman’s house in the town that

had been interrupted by the dog, and it is there that he is being invited to continue.¹⁶ That would make no sense in the case of the riverside, however, where he is implicitly prohibited from going. Hemacandra, accordingly (as both Mahima and Abhinava) adds that mendicants gather flowers for their religious observances at riversides and even end up stripping bare the dense camouflage offered by thickets on riverbanks. It still remains unclear, however, why a village dog would be killed at the river side; some commentators suggest the point of the adjective “fierce” is to indicate that the lion has entered the town, but that of course would stand in hopeless contradiction with the express command as understood by Hemacandra.¹⁷

Moreover, unlike example two, where the explicit is cancelled by the implicit (“Don’t get into my bed at night” → “Get into my bed at night”), here a command is not negated (“You’re free to go wandering” → “You’re prohibited from going wandering”), but only restricted or otherwise prohibited: The mendicant is free to go in one place, but not in another; he can continue to beg, but must not go to the river. The problem of the absence of co-referentiality (*vyadhikaraṇatva*) of the command (to beg at the house) and the prohibition (to stay away from the river) was intimated by Mammaṭa when restating Mahima’s logical argument, but only fully answered by Kamalākara in the seventeenth century.¹⁸

What should be clear from this example is that the linguistic theory of suggestion it is adduced to illustrate (like Mahima’s inferential logic meant to challenge that theory) does nothing to help us grasp what we really need to grasp in order to understand this verse. We should note at once, too, that the absence of its semantic core is no peculiarity of this verse, but is actually fundamental to *vastudhvani* poetry (and in a more general way, to much Sanskrit poetry); similar complexity attaches to the other examples. At first glance, the fifth example seems to have no point at all – that of course is precisely the reason we seek something more. We know this is a poem (though Sanskrit theory is uninterested in how we know), and poets do not write poetry that ends in pure banality. But how do we come to understand what more is in play here? What else is implied and suggested and to whom? Again, the commentators only supply the putative context and are unconcerned with explaining how it is known, but, again, nothing about it is self-evident. According to Abhinava, “The literal sense is directed to an adulterous wife. The suggested (*vyāṅgya*) sense, on the other hand, is directed to her husband, and informs him that she is not guilty of offense.”¹⁹ Bhoja similarly identifies both the implication and the suggestion: “The literal sense

is the girlfriend's reproach, which is meant to carry the implication (*pratyāyayan*) to the husband, so as to allay his jealousy, that his wife's lip was wounded by a bee and not by her paramour, and it suggests (*dhvanati*) the friend's cleverness at hiding indiscretions."²⁰ Once more, we find interpretation underdetermined by the poem itself – obviously, none of this essential information can be gotten except from a social subtext altogether unthematized by the commentators. Even then the meaning of the verse is not self-evident, but rather depends on what element is emphasized. Ananda's exposition so far has led us to assume that the implied meaning is the meaning truly intended ("Do not go to the riverside"; "Come to my bed") emerging out of the duplicitous express meaning ("You're free to go wandering"; "You must not fall into my bed"). Here, accordingly, we might assume that the literal sense is intended rather for the husband ("It is just a bee-sting"), and the implicit sense ("It is really a lover's bite"), if not for some third person in the vicinity, or simply the reader, then for the wife herself, who is thereby being admonished by her friend with reference to the effort required to keep her affair secret. This will be reversed if it is the suffering that is stressed. Here the wife becomes the addressee of the explicit statement, "You will have to suffer your husband's jealous anger because of his misinterpretation of your act," even though the wife knows it is not a misinterpretation, and the husband becomes the addressee of the implication that it would be a misinterpretation.

But here again, whatever the truth (if there is a singular truth) of the meaning of this or any of the other verses – and much Sanskrit and Prakrit poetry are indefinitely interpretable – it is clear that far more than a theory of implication and suggestion is necessary to explain implication and suggestion. Later theoreticians do try to supplement Ananda's system with a theory of speech pragmatics; Mammāṭa offers the first full systematization: "Aesthetic suggestion is a semantic function (*arthasya vyāpārah*) that produces in sensitive readers the idea of something different [from the direct sense], by means of [nine different factors of pragmatic] specificity (*vaiśiṣṭya*): that of the speaker, the addressee, the tone of voice, the syntagm of the sentence, the expressed sense, the presence of a third person, the context, the time, or the place."²¹ Yet it remains uncertain whether Mammāṭa's system does more than organize the knowledge presupposed to exist, while failing to explain how the knowledge comes about in the first place. Consider his first example:

It's a very heavy water jug I'm carrying,
my friend, and I've come back quickly.

I've got to rest a second since I'm weak
and sweating and sighing from exhaustion. (KP 3.13, p. 73)

Now, it is perfectly true that what makes it possible for the sensitive reader to understand that this verse is about “concealing stolen love-making,” as Mammaṭa puts it, is the “specificity of the speaker.” But the only thing that allows us to specify this specificity is the reader’s participation in and acceptance of a particular universe of social meaning as made available in the texts of a literary culture.

It is precisely the embeddedness of these poems in a set of particular conventions and rules of literary communication, their particularity and localization, that constitutes their meaning, but in a way that Ānanda, Mammaṭa, and the rest seem unable to observe. Although they show uncommon acuity in revealing the mechanisms by which implication and suggestion arise, nowhere do they tell us how we come to know what we need to know in order to understand them. What is necessary for us to know is not available through any pure theory of language, such as is envisioned in the analysis of semantic powers (*vṛtti*) that Ānanda offers, and the whole analytical tradition that follows him.²² What is needed, instead, is an account of the social particular. In other words, the semantics of Sanskrit literary theory requires supplementation not only by a general linguistic pragmatics but by a specific social pragmatics, which can explain to us what thickets on riverbanks signify (beyond the fact of their being thickets on riverbanks), what people do there, why privacy in thickets should be desirable; how adultery is regarded in this world, how it is hidden, who does so and why.

Except by acquiring and theorizing this social-literary competence, we cannot know that riverbanks in Prakrit poetry, especially densely overgrown riverbanks, are places where lovers go, that is to say, unmarried couples who have no other place to be alone together. But couples who are not married cannot, in Prakrit poetry, licitly be together (though of course they are always together in Prakrit poetry). An so calling attention to one’s desire to preserve the privacy of the rendezvous spot – by use of a direct prohibition (“Don’t go there!”) – is tantamount to revealing the illicit liaison itself. The very linguistic form causes us to ask who would make such a statement, and it is only from familiarity with the larger social text that we can know it is the woman in the illicit relationship. The gender relations that constitute the social world of Prakrit poetry demand that it is always the woman, never the man, who organizes adultery. Only when we know such social-literary facts does the real suggestion behind the poems become available: the very formulation of the statements – meaning without saying, communic-

ating by not communicating – suggests that the women speakers are sophisticated and clever, and ardent to preserve, in the one case, a place of lovemaking, and in the other, a girlfriend's marriage (or rather, her affair). And in a way, once we know all this, our own reading becomes a satisfying exercise in the revelation of our own sophistication, since not only can we understand the meaning of the clever women's meaning, but we understand something that the holy man and the cuckolded husband necessarily cannot, since the whole point is artfully to allay their suspicions, in the first case about the place of rendezvous while keeping him away, and in the second, about his faithless wife.

More important than supplying the conditions for aesthetic suggestion to succeed, however, the social text of the Prakrit world is presupposed and thereby reproduced as a stable text. When both readerly expectation and theoretical concern are focused on the linguistic mechanisms of meaning, and the complexities that allow different meanings to occur, the social conditions of aesthetic suggestion escape observation let alone interrogation. The conditions for understanding this literature are the permanence, predictability, the common-sense of the social world, and by the very writing and reading of this and all other poetry – and this seems to be a crucial social effect – these conditions are made all the more permanent, predictable, and commonsensical. It is the very taken-for-grantedness of this world, for its part, that renders it invisible to readers like Ānanda; the sphere of social (or literary) convention was one they inhabited too deeply to see. Language is only the mechanism of such poetry, yet it has monopolized theoretical reflection. The poetry is about the people and their world, and is intelligible only through that world. Yet it is a world occluded to theory because it is too far inside consciousness to be rendered an object of consciousness. In a word, literary suggestion is social, and sequesters the social from critical inspection.

FALSE FEELINGS

On its face, the problem of *rasa*, aesthetic emotion, and its complement, *rasābhāsa*, the semblance of such emotion, would hardly seem to impinge on the problem of the social aesthetic. As conventionally understood, *rasa* refers to the reader's emotive response to literature, and especially to the uniqueness of this response, the fact that we take pleasure in sad stories, for example, but not in real sadness. It is accordingly often treated as a philosophical question.²³ *Rasa* – and here is the common understanding – is a produced when certain “stable” or

primary emotions (*sthāyibhāva*) of ours are fully developed by stimulation from a suitable object (*ālambanavibhāva*) under appropriate external conditions (*uddīpanavibhāva*), and nuanced by more evanescent feelings (*vyabhicāribhāva*) that are themselves made manifest by physical reactions (*anubhāva*). All this activates our own latent dispositions (*vāsanās, saṃskāras*) to respond sympathetically. *Rasābhāsa*, for its part, is usually understood to refer to a “counterfeit” form of readerly response that results from some deficiency in the causal set, as when the object of the primary emotion is an unsuitable one. This negative analysis of *rasābhāsa*, as inauthentic, deficient aesthetic experience, is widespread; it is implicit in the following remarks of Ingalls and his collaborators:

The concept of *rasābhāsa* is highly restrictive of literature. If we are to limit *rasa*, the sole aim of literature, to only such subjects as conform to propriety and even to the *śāstras*, as Udbhata would have it, not a little of Sanskrit literature and surely the greater part of Western literature will be judged to be of little worth. Abhinava seems to have been the first Indian critic to face this problem and find an answer: the *ābhāsatva*, the impropriety, of such experiences is something we realize only later; during the actual experience we are absorbed. . . .

Interesting are [Abhinava’s] remarks on *rasābhāsa*, false or improper *rasa*. . . . If one guides one’s criticism strictly by the words of Bharata . . . such false love should lead to comedy. In fact, says Abhinava, it may lead to comedy only at a time long after our experience. When we hear Rāvaṇa’s passionate words in the *Rāvaṇakāvya* [now lost] there is no occasion for relishing comedy. . . . This qualification opens up to favorable evaluation much that would have been rejected or reprehended by older standards.²⁴

This assessment of *rasābhāsa* – as an audience response that is somehow inauthentic – seems to me misleading. For one thing, far from solving an old problem, Abhinava and the school to which he belonged may be said to have created a new one. For another, the category *rasābhāsa* is not the cause of unfavorable literary evaluation, but rather is constitutive of the moral concern at the core of Sanskrit literature and literary theory, if one with its own long and complicated history. Understood in accordance with the dominant tradition that preceded Abhinava, *rasābhāsa*, like *rasa* in general, had originally far less to do with psychology and axiology than with the sociology of the Sanskrit aesthetic.

To sustain the first part of this argument, it is necessary briefly to recapitulate the history of thinking about *rasa* and to grasp the true magnitude of the Kashmiri transformation of the concept.²⁵ Like the “taste” that *rasa* metaphorically references, which may be regarded as a property of the food, of the taster, or of the act of tasting, *rasa* can theoretically be regarded in three dimensions: as a dimension of a textual object, as a competence of a reader-subject, and as a transaction between the two. It is a process that exists as a totality even while its moments

can be analytically disaggregated, and it is this analytical disaggregation – or rather the different emphases that such disaggregation permits – that marks and makes the history of Indian thinking on the subject. Thus, one issue that fundamentally concerned theorists (it is well known, since it is widely discussed in *alankāraśāstra* itself) pertains to the location of *rasa*: Is aesthetic emotion to be considered, in the first instance, as a text-immanent phenomenon, relating primarily to the narrative itself, or as a reception phenomenon, relating primarily to the audience? In Sanskrit terms, who “has *rasa*,” the character or the reader?²⁶ The “old view,” ascribed by Abhinava to Lollaṭa and others, unequivocally accepted, and no doubt only knew, the first alternative: “*Rasa* is nothing more than what in its initial stage is a stable emotion, after this has combined with the transitory feelings and so on to become fully developed; and it is located in the character and there alone.” This was more or less the position of Ānandavardhana himself in the mid-ninth century; he seems to know nothing of the doctrine of readerly *rasa*. It is certainly the position of Bhoja, Sanskrit’s greatest synthesizer of literariness (a contemporary of Abhinava, as noted, and ignorant of his work). Indeed, it is widespread misunderstanding about the analytical primacy of the literary text in Bhoja’s account of *rasa* that has produced such confusion about the sense of his doctrine of “Passion.”²⁷

This long-standing conception of *rasa* was first challenged in the theological aesthetics of Kashmiri writers of the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. Viewing literary and religious experience as paradigmatically related, they redirected the analysis of *rasa* toward the consciousness of the experienter. For Bhaṭṭa Tauta, for example, the focal point became the commonalities of reader, writer, and character; for Abhinava, the processes of response itself; for Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, the language operations underlying this response and the specificity of its epistemological status. One move in this transformation that encapsulates it entirely is Abhinava’s recoding of Bharata’s foundational *rasasūtra*: *rasaniṣpatti* is made to refer, no longer to the production of *rasa* in the text, but to the production of *tadviṣayarasanā*, the tasting of the object of *rasa*.²⁸

It was only when *rasa* and its semblance-forms became a matter of the reader’s reading rather than the character’s character, that the idea of *rasābhāsa* became a problem to be solved.²⁹ The psychological and axiological difficulties that bothered Abhinava – when precisely do we realize that our aesthetic experience is only a semblance, a shadow of the real thing, and what precisely are we feeling before we come to that realization? – arise only when *rasābhāsa* is held to be in essence a reception event. He offers an interesting solution: “The *ābhāsatva*, the

impropriety, of [our] experiences is something we realize only later; during the actual experience we are absorbed,” whereby, accordingly, the aesthetic experience of *rasābhāsa* itself becomes a semblance, a *carvaṇābhāsa*, specious aesthetic relishing.³⁰ But this, I believe, is a solution to a problem of his own making.

In the episteme Abhinava so successfully overthrew, what is at issue is the genuineness or semblance, or better, validity or invalidity of a character’s affective state as such, qualifications that we shall see are eminently social (and not philosophical, as when Aristotle terms feelings false when they are irrational and groundless).³¹ Here, the idea of *rasābhāsa* can in no way be construed as “restrictive” or evaluative of literature, as if *rasābhāsa* signified a shortcoming, “only *rasābhāsa*.”³² For Bhoja, it is in fact a species of *rasa*:

Rasa is of three sorts: developed (*prakṛṣṭa*); remaining in the form of a feeling (*bhāvarūpa*); and a semblance (*ābhāsa*). A “developed” *rasa* is that which the leading character, the one who occupies the chief role in the narrative, comes to feel in reference to a commensurate object. That which “remains in the form of an feeling” is what a supporting character comes to have, and which is not fully developed. That which the antagonist comes to have, or is ascribed to an animal, is a semblance of *rasa*.³³

Like *guṇa*, *bhāva*, and *rasa* itself, *rasābhāsa* is an *alāṅkāra*, a general factor of literary beauty, according to Bhoja’s terminology. Its presence in combination with these other components (*samsrṣṭi*) is a necessary feature of *rasāvīyoga*, the indispensable presence of *rasa* in a work of art. In all this, as so often elsewhere in his work, Bhoja seems to me to express a general consensus of the entire earlier tradition.³⁴

Accordingly, *rasābhāsa* represents, not deviation or deficiency needing some new theory of response, but a necessary dimension of complex narratives, those that explore the complexity of the sentiments of persons acting in the world, and what it is that makes some valid (according to some social scale) and some invalid. But the presence of *rasābhāsa* as such does not enfeeble literature, as if, since “the sole aim of literature” is *rasa*, when “real *rasa*” is not present, the true aim of literature is not attained.³⁵ How, after all, could one have a *Rāmāyaṇa* without Rāvaṇa? What is most important for our concerns here, it is through the process of the reader’s gaining an awareness of this aesthetic, by grasping how and why certain sentiments as presented in literature are counterfeit and false while others are genuine and true, that its social force is generated. The issue is not the invalidity of our emotional response to a narrative, but rather what in narrative is taken to constitute invalid emotion.

Obviously the entire question of *rasābhāsa* becomes intelligible only against the background of a broader normative discourse on what

constitute true and false emotions. This discourse finds expression in a variety of ways from the earliest periods of systematic reflection to the latest. In the *Nāṭyaśāstra* itself, for example, although the term *rasābhāsa* is not used, the social boundaries of aesthetic sentiment are clearly delineated. As is well known, characters are categorized according to a social-moral typology (the two concepts, again, forming an indissoluble whole) as “high, middle, and low” (*uttama, madhyama, adhama*), and *rasa* is achieved only when these types are properly aligned. In the case of *śṛṅgāra*, the erotic sentiment, for example, the characters must be a heterosexual couple, young, and socially-morally “high” (*strīpuruṣahetuka, uttamayuvaprakṛti*).³⁶

The normative discourse first is clearly articulated where the term *rasābhāsa* itself is first used, in the work of the early ninth-century thinker, Udbhaṭa. But there is no question that he meant to reprehend certain texts let alone reject them from the domain of the literary. He is instead interested in the problem of an ethical aesthetic. For him, *rasa* seems to have been a form of moral consciousness, a peculiar one that, unlike other such forms, has a dimension of physicality. There is no reason to believe he would have disagreed with the verse his commentator cites: “*Rasa* is that specific kind of consciousness of the moral order (*caturvarga*) – what should and should not be done – that can be ‘tasted’ (*āsvādya*).” For its part, *rasābhāsa*, for which Udbhaṭa also uses, as part of an older typology, the term “the vehement trope” (*ūrjasvin*), is “composition of emotions or *rasas* where the action violates social norms (*anaucityapravṛtta*-) because of desire, anger, and so on.”³⁷ As his commentator Indurāja remarks: “In the literary form known as ‘the vehement,’ *rasas* and *bhāvas* are represented as immoral (*anaucityena*) because [here the actions underlying the *rasas* and *bhāvas*] are caused by passion, hatred, and delusion. That is in fact why it is called ‘the vehement’ form (*ūrjasvin*): vehemence, that is, physical force (*bala*), exists in it given that the use of force is prompted by one’s miscognition of reality [that invariably underlies action motivated by passion, etc.]”³⁸ The example supplied by Udbhaṭa is a verse describing Śiva’s impetuous (*haṭhena*) and immoral (*apāsya satpatham*) sexual impulses toward the virgin Pārvatī – a verse from his own (lost) *Kumārasambhava*.

A more explicit dimension of this social discourse, already glimpsed in some of the remarks cited above, came to be articulated through the concept of *aucitya*, propriety, in the last centuries of the first millennium, leading to a synthetic statement in Kṣemendra’s mid-eleventh century *Aucityavicāracarcā* (Inquiry into the Analysis of Propriety).³⁹ *Aucitya*,

which according to Kṣemendra's definition is a kind of correspondence between a textual signifier and an extra-textual signified (*sadṛśam kila yasya yat*, vs. 7), is a category applicable to every feature of the literary work: from the most minute formal element, the individual lexeme or even sub-lexical preverb and particle, to the largest component of the signification: the time and place of the action, the social status of the hero, and so on. As a state of being in accordance with the *svabhāva* of a person or thing, *aucitya* is clearly related to and extends a wide range of earlier conceptions. But Kṣemendra's importance for us, if not his novelty, lies in his unequivocal affirmation of the constitutive relationship of propriety and aesthetic sentiment: *Aucitya* now has become explicitly the life-force (*jīvita*) of *rasa* itself: how laughable and disruptive of the heroic mood, Kṣemendra says, is martial violence directed toward a suppliant, or, in the case of the piteous mood, compassion toward an enemy.⁴⁰

This perspective on true and false feelings as essential components of a rounded narratives does, however, begin to shift noticeably in later thinkers. Particularly instructive is the discussion in Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja's mid-seventeenth-century masterpiece, *Rasagāṅgādhara* (The [Five-Faced] Śiva of Aesthetic Emotion, RG). As so often in his work, Jagannātha begins his analysis by exploring a finer point of controversy. There is no uncertainty as to the fact that *rasābhāsa* results from some transgression of the social order measured against a set of moral norms. Jagannātha wants to elucidate this set, however, and thereby the causal mechanism of *rasābhāsa*,⁴¹ by drawing a distinction between an emotion directed toward an inappropriate object and an emotion inappropriate in itself:

"The property *rasābhāsa* derives from there being an inappropriate object or other cause." [This *kārikā* appears to represent an older position under examination]. The impropriety of an object or other cause is something people understand from social practices (*vyavahārataḥ*). Some critics hold that [*rasābhāsa* arises only when] it is the object cause [or other factor]⁴² that people regard as unsuitable. Others disagree, on the grounds that, whereas that would cover such cases as desire for the wife of a sage [who is an inappropriate love-object], it would not include desire for more than one lover or desire not shared by both partners in a relationship. In the latter two cases there is no impropriety in the object cause as such [in the first, the cause is the fact of many lovers, all of whom may be appropriate love-objects; in the second, the cause is the attitude but not the social status of one of the partners]. Therefore, the primary emotion itself [in this case the emotion of desire, *ratisthāyibhāva*] has to be characterized by impropriety [for there to be *rasābhāsa*]. And in this way both desire for an inappropriate object, as well as desire for more than one lover or not shared by both partners would be included. "Impropriety" would remain as defined above [i.e., established by social convention]. (RG, p. 118)

It may seem a fine point to distinguish between inappropriate feeling and inappropriate object in the production of invalid sentiment. But it is easy enough to grasp, and the general thrust of Jagannātha's argument becomes clear through his examples, which concern the paramour of a queen, a girl casting her seductive glances at the many suitors at her front door, and a new bride trembling before her husband's embraces. A summary verse that he cites anonymously indicates that adultery, in addition to these three other conditions, all produce *rasābhāsa* in the case of *śṛṅgāra*.

What becomes clear in reading through Jagannātha's account is that aesthetic sentiment has transmogrified into something like aesthetic moralism. Here is how he lays out the social-moral boundaries of the emotions underlying each of the *rasas*:

Desire for an inappropriate object (a teacher's wife, a goddess, a queen), desire that is not reciprocated, desire on the part of a woman for more than one lover: none of these can produce the erotic *rasa* (*śṛṅgāra*) in its pure or authentic form. A father's grief for a son who is querulous and wicked, or grief on the part of ascetic [who has given up all attachments]; transcendental disenchantment with life (*nirveda*) on the part of an untouchable, who has no right to participate in transcendental Vedic knowledge; martial energy on the part of a low-born man, or anger on the part of a timorous man or directed toward someone like one's father; amazement in response to a mere magic trick; laughter directed at one's father; fear in a hero; disgust felt for the fat or flesh or blood of a sacrificial animal – all these produce the semblance of the *rasas* of (respectively) pity, tranquility, the heroic, cruelty, wonder, the comic, terror, and loathing. (RG, p. 122)⁴³

If *rasa* is a way of speaking about the literary promulgation of an ideal-typical social order, *rasābhāsa* seems now to be viewed, not as its necessary complement, something required to complete that ideal type, but as the literary promulgation of an immoral order, against which theory imposed increasingly harsh strictures. Desire for someone beyond one's station (a queen, a teacher's wife), like desire for someone who does not share it, and a woman's desire for more than one lover, violate this order and so are false feelings. So, too, when a father is shown to grieve for a wicked son, or when an untouchable is shown to have gained wisdom. Low-born men do not or cannot show martial energy, any more than cowards can show anger or heroes fear. Laughter and rage toward one's father are as much violations of this order as disgust in the face of sacrificial slaughter. All these are inversions, so to speak, of real eroticism, and pity, and heroism – and real sentiments, moreover, are absolute and unchanging, not situational and adaptive.⁴⁴ Clearly, not only is literary theory concerned with the moral discourse that lies at the heart of literature. It seeks to explore, by use of the components of *rasa* analysis, precisely how that moral discourse is

violated. In Jagannātha, *rasābhāsa* does indeed verge on becoming an index, not only of a different order of literature, but of an inferior, even reprehensible kind of literature; no longer a category for explaining the dynamics of affect in the complex narratives that mark real life, but a sign of the unwanted intrusion of real life into literature.

This negative evaluation was already there in Abhinavagupta himself, and construed with much broader trends we will find expressed by Bhoja, too. Abhinava's concerns with reader-response notwithstanding, he retained a commitment to precisely the social-moral aesthetics that we find extending from Bharata to Jagannātha:

Appropriateness of the [*sthāyi*]*bhāvas* is derived from appropriateness of the characters. Characters differ by their having the emotions (*bhāvas*) of the upper, middle, or lower classes and by their having the emotions of gods or humans. A basic emotional drive [*sthāyibhāva*] that is described by following these distinctions and not confusing them will be "appropriate". . . . If we assign a type of love to characters of the upper class by recourse to what is appropriate to the lower class [*uttamaprakṛti*, *adhamaprakṛti*], how ridiculous will be the result. Even in India what is appropriate in love differs according to the three classes of men.

If the "attainment" (*sampad*) appropriate to one's caste and family (*nijajātikulānurūpa-*) is not present, sexual desire must not be represented (*anupadeśyā*) at all, because it does not lead to the fulfillment of the life-goals.⁴⁵

Here we glimpse what it was that did eventually become "restrictive of literature." This was not *rasābhāsa* itself – which was a necessary component of narrative complexity, and a consequence of it – but some angst in the face of real-life socio-moral problems, and the threat posed by their reproduction in literature.

In addition to the assumption, implicit everywhere, that literature is not supposed to surprise with deviations from the typical, *rasa* and *rasābhāsa* become the principal locus where criticism of the literary work and criticism of life intersect, where literary practice becomes a social practice. If propriety lies at the heart of *rasa*, *rasa* becomes the heart of a moral economy of literature. It can produce its effects only to the degree that the imaginative discourse represents, and thereby inevitably serves to reproduce, what is appropriate to a given situation, which in turn is intelligible only in terms of a unified vision of the social order. Thus when one learns what literature is, how it works and the canons by which it may be said to represent what is valid or invalid, when one learns to be a good reader, a *rasika* or a *sahṛdaya*, one is learning what is normative in the everyday world. To produce readers of Sanskrit literature is to produce certain kinds of social subjectivities. *Rasābhāsa* and the *anaucitya* that provides its logic are the locus where criticism of literary form and criticism of literary representation – criticism of life – intersect.

MORAL PASSION

If the social structuring of Sanskrit literary theory was obscured after the linguistic and theological turn of Kashmiri criticism, or remained unthematized precisely because it was so taken for granted,⁴⁶ its true significance is still visible in Bhoja's remarkable *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa*. Bhoja is by no means uninterested in literature as a particular kind of language – the work as a whole is in fact organized around the topics “word,” “meaning,” and modes of “unity” of the two (ŚP, pp. 6.8–17). But his express concern with the social grounds of literary imagination manifests itself with a clarity not easy to parallel in other *alaṅkāra* texts. This may be attributable, not only to his main objective of providing a *summa poetica* of the entire antecedent tradition, and making explicit what was often simply assumed, but also to the fact that as king of the Paramāra dominion, Bhoja was especially sensitive to his social role: The writer of the ŚP, Bhoja tells us in his commentary on the first *kārikā* of the work, “is not just anyone but a great king appointed by his elders to protect all that has been inherited, and who in this verse beseeches God that there should be no violation against the established order (*sthita*) and practices of estates and life stages while he is engaged in the composition of this book.”⁴⁷

There are three specific themes in Bhoja's treatise centrally concerned with the social aesthetic that I want to concentrate on here: the argument for the unitary meaning of a literary work and the idea of plot revision; the varieties of Passion; and the nature of the hero. In brief, Bhoja's general conception seems to me as follows: Literary texts make moral arguments, and in view of this fact, received plots must be revised in the interests of such arguments. A moral argument is a general discursive phenomenon, however, not specific to literature. What is specific is *rasa*, and Bhoja shows that the moral order is inseparably connected with it: Passion – *śṛṅgāra*, the one *rasa* – is moral force. This is no Platonic-Christian conceptual scheme where the virtues and the passions are at war with each other; passions are virtues. The different kinds of protagonist embody the four main species of this force, and each one's relationship with his antagonist must manifest this.

The validity of such a summary depends, of course, on how carefully Bhoja's idiom, categories, and modes of argument have been understood. Since these are sometimes unusual – and his work is essentially unknown – I have tried to provide as much of the argument as possible in literal translation.

That the literary work has a unitary meaning above and beyond the meanings of the individual verses of which it is composed is

something almost never addressed in Sanskrit theory except in the most perfunctory manner. Bhoja's rich account therefore merits close attention. I re-arrange the sections into an order more appropriate for our purposes here, starting with a passage where the literary text as a whole is situated within the overall structure of his exposition:

So much for what we have called "the necessary presence of *rasa*" (*rasāviyoga*) at the level of the sentence. Now we may consider it at the level of the work (*prabandha*). This, too, manifests itself by the eliminating of faults, the procuring of virtues, and the mixing of elements of beauty, and becomes thereby a source of intellectual delight for intelligent readers. The "eliminating of faults" is the avoidance of impropriety. . . . (711.13) The "procuring of virtues" is the perfect construction (*susūtratā*) of a composition such as is achieved through adherence to genre rules (*samyaglakṣaṇayoga*) of the different kinds of literary works we will discuss. The "mixing of elements of beauty" is excellence in the arrangement of [the thematic components] of these works, such as the various descriptions of cities, oceans, and the like. (710.19ff.)

It is necessary for Bhoja next to establish the logic that allows us to comprehend the literary work as an individualized formal structure:

With regard to that [definition of the "procuring of virtues"], a "literary work" is a sequence of words, a succession of sentences, or a series of episodes that has a specific intended meaning (*iṣṭārthavyavacchinna* [cf. Daṇḍin 1.10]). Words whether verbs or nouns are commonly used for many purposes and cannot be more narrowly specified on the strength of their mere form; sentences are no less commonly used for all kinds of activities and have no [inherent] distinction that allows us to differentiate one [use] from another; similarly, episodes – for example, the portions of poems that describe mountains, cities, oceans, and the like – are components of every poetic text and contain in themselves no distinctiveness (*vyatireka*). Accordingly, there must be some large meaning (*mahāvākyaṛtha*) above and beyond that of the individual sentences, which is made available by these [sequences, successions, and series], a definite meaning that can delimit (*avacchedahetu*) a literary text like a courtly poem, which is a totality of many [words], sentences, and episodes. This "meaning above and beyond" [the parts] "specifies" – that is to say, particularizes – the sequence of words, succession of sentences, or series of episodes, which thereby become a literary work: something like *Jānakīharāṇa* (The Abduction of Jānakī) or *Kumārasaṃbhava* (The Birth of the Divine Prince). (712.3ff.)

But the literary work is not just a totality different from other totalities in its words, sentences, and episodes. It also has a unified meaning:

Now, the larger meaning (*mahāvākyaṛtha*) generated by these episodes, [in any of the three great genres], whether courtly verse epic, historical prose-poem, or [the mixed form of the drama]; with its various parts standing in a hierarchical relationship (*kr̥tānyonyaviśeṣaṇaviśeṣyabhāva*); which is known by a name reflecting this larger meaning – *Subhadrāharāṇa* (The Abduction of Subhadrā), for example, or *Jānakīharāṇa* – is called the "penultimate unified meaning of a work of literary art" (*prabandhaikārthibhāvo 'paraḥ*). There is, however, an "ultimate unified meaning beyond the larger meaning" (*para mahāvākhyaiḥkāṛthah*). It is a particular kind of insight (*pratibhāviśeṣa*)⁴⁸ as to moral right and wrong generated in a person with innate receptivity (*upahītasamskāra*) by the act of contemplating the meanings of a

literary work – some insight like “act like Rāma, and not like Rāvaṇa” in the case of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. This [moral consciousness] is the sole cause of attaining the four life-goals, and undergirds the cosmos. It may rightly be called the beginningless and endless perfect *śabdabrahma* transformed into the form of verbal meaning.⁴⁹ (471.16ff.)

A *prabandha* or literary work results from a connected series of sentences that make an episode, and a connected series of episodes that make a total meaning, and a total meaning that makes a moral argument. Elsewhere this series of equations is collapsed into its simplest form: “The literary work is a sentence totality that causes us to understand what we should and should not do” (*vidhiniṣedhāvagatihetuḥ mahāvākyaṃ prabandhaḥ*, p. 194.6). The fact, however, that literature has a capacity for moral communication – that the ultimate meaning of a literary text resides in a deontic statement – is grounded in a larger theory of sentence meaning. Bhoja elaborates on this definition in an important argument in Chapter Six:

Every sentence terminates in communicating a command or a prohibition. Even where an optative [imperative, or gerundive] is not expressly used we find that they are contextually supplemental (*vākyaśeṣa*) to every sentence, since every sentence aims toward a command or a prohibition. For example, in the sentence, “Alms are readily given in this region,” what is understood is [the command] “Remain here”; . . . in the sentence, “There are sharks in the water,” what is understood is “Do not swim here.” A “larger meaning,”⁵⁰ too, like the *Rāmāyaṇa* also communicates (*vyutpādyate*) in a similar manner: Rāma though dwelling in the forest obeyed his father’s command and achieved success, whereas Rāvaṇa, though capable of victory over the whole world, lusted after another man’s wife and was destroyed. Therefore, obey your father’s order, do not lust after another man’s wife, act like Rāma and not Rāvaṇa. (337.7ff.)

Given his view that the literary work has a unified meaning and necessarily communicates an ultimate moral commandment or prohibition, Bhoja is able more convincingly to argue the position, which after Ānanda came to be widely held, that a work as a whole has a unified overall aesthetic impact (*prabandhaviśaye rasāviyoga*). For Bhoja, this comes about especially through the “elimination of faults” by the avoidance of impropriety (*anaucityaparihāra*). One way to achieve this is to revise historical narratives. These constitute one of the five bodies of literary composition (*prabandhaśarīrāṇi*): those derived from the epics (*itihāsāśraya*, e.g., *Kumārasambhava*), those derived from story literature (*kathāśraya*, e.g., the Udayana cycle), those that are pure inventions (*utpādyetivṛttam*, e.g., *Kādambarī*), those that are historical (*anutpādyetivṛtta*, e.g., *Harṣacarita*), and those, finally, whose plots stand in need of emendation (*pratisaṃskāryetivṛtta*). On the last he remarks as follows:

If one were to compose a literary work on the basis of a story just as it is found to exist in the epics, it could come about that [one character,] though acting properly (*nyāyapravṛtteh*), might not only fail to attain the desired result but might attain precisely the result he does not desire; whereas [another character,] though acting improperly, might attain the result [he desires]. In such cases, emendation must be made in such a way that the character acting properly is not denied the result he desires, whereas the other not only should fail to attain his desire but should also attain what he does not want. Such is what [the category *pratisaṃskāryetivṛtta*] causes us to understand (*vyutpādayati*) (p. 746.7).

Bhoja offers a range of examples of literary works whose plots have been revised in the interests of removing faults and so producing a unified aesthetic experience: the *Nirdoṣadaśaratha* (Faultless Daśaratha), in which Rāma is exiled by two magical creatures imitating his father Daśaratha and his step-mother Kaikeyī; Bhavabhūti's *Mahāvīracarita* (Story of the Great Hero), in which Vālin is slain by Rāma after provoking Rāma (rather than Sugrīva) to a fight; Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa's *Veṇiśamhāra* (The Tying of the Braid), in which Duḥśāsana's blood is drunk not by Bhīma but by a demon who had taken possession of him; the *Harivaṃśa* (Lineage of Hari, a *mahākāvya*, and not the appendix to the *Mahābhārata*), in which Māyāvātī is not really the wife of the guru of her lover Pradyumna, but is represented, along with Pradyumna himself, as reincarnations of the god of love and his wife Rati; and, most famously, Kālidāsa's *Śākuntala*, in which it is because of Śakuntalā's insult to the sage Durvāsa that Duṣyanta is caused to forget about his relationship with her, and not because his love is inconstant.⁵¹

Bhoja's argument in general will be familiar to readers of Ānandavardhana:

[A]nother means by which a work as a whole may become suggestive of *rasa* is the abandoning of a state of affairs imposed by historical reality [*itivṛttavaśāyātā sthiti*] if it fails in any way to harmonize with the *rasa*; and the introduction, by invention if need be, of incidental narrative appropriate to that *rasa*. This is to be carried out as it is done in the works of Kālidāsa and in the *Harivijaya* of Sarvasena and in my own *mahākāvya*, the *Arjunacarita*. A poet when writing a poem must concentrate with all his soul on the *rasa*. If he observes some state of affairs in the historical fact that goes against the *rasa*, he should eliminate it and invent some other story appropriate to the *rasa*. No purpose is served in a poet's providing merely the historical facts (*itivṛttamātra*). That is a task accomplished by historiography itself (*itihāsād eva*).⁵²

What Bhoja and Ānanda both insist upon (and there were dissenters) represents a real and an important historical tendency.⁵³ Some of the texts Bhoja cites are no longer extant, but there is no reason to doubt that they all did once exist; they are no invention. The broader history of Sanskrit literary culture – we saw precisely this in the history of the idea of *rasābhāsa* – fully testifies to a progress, slow but certain,

in the elimination of core varieties of conflict, a gradual retreat to an ever more complete disengagement from the world of life's unpleasant realities, in favor of a single moral vision. In literature if not in life, as Bhoja says, "It must be the good guy, not the bad guy, who wins."⁵⁴

That the social informs the most basic architecture of Bhoja's work is equally evident in what self-avowedly constitutes his single most original contribution. As I read his treatise, Bhoja's important new insight, one informing his entire exposition, is the nature of passion itself. He argues that the forces and principles operative in what *rasasāstra* had always called *śṛṅgāra*, the erotic or, more simply, passion, are actually found to be present as the animating principle in all affective states (common language usage shows this, he notes: people can be said to "love to quarrel, or "love to joke" p. 662.12). To this higher-order Passion (I signal it thus) Bhoja gives a variety of other names: *abhimāna* (here a highly valorized trait, something like self-confidence and self-esteem, *amour de soi* as distinguished from *amour propre*), *ahaṃkāra* (sense of self), *prema* (love), and *rasa* (in the singular). Passion is what enables people – and again, he appears to mean those people selected for representation in literary texts – to experience the world richly. It represents their capacity for emotional intensity as such, and hence may be taken as the origin of all other affective states, or *rasas* (plural). Moreover, it is this intensity that leads them to strive to fulfil the most crucial life-needs: "Passion alone is *rasa*, [and] the sole means of fulfilling the four life-goals" (p. 5.16), identical with the kind of moral consciousness (*pratibhā*) that, as we saw above, emerges out of penultimate literary meaning.⁵⁵ In its fullest explication, Passion is shown to be understood fundamentally according to a moral typology, one that accordingly structures the interpretation of all features of the literary text.

There are four species of Passion, one relating to each of the four life-goals, *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa*.⁵⁶ In each of the four contexts "Passion" is defined as *abhimāna*, the confidence and drive that enable one to proceed toward the acquisition of the value in question.⁵⁷ Passion for *dharma*, for example, is illustrated by Duḥśānta's conviction, on seeing Śakuntalā, that she must be a suitable mate in terms of caste, for otherwise his noble heart would not long for her; Passion for *artha*, by Rāvaṇa's words as suitor to Janaka (from *Mahāvīracarita*) explaining the social profit the king would derive in giving him Sītā in marriage.

The entire literary work, for Bhoja, is structured in accordance with these four life-goals. For each one of the four forms of Passion a different variety of dramatic mode (*vṛtti*), costume style (*pravṛtti*), and

compositional technique (*rīti*) is to be employed.⁵⁸ Most important, a different kind of protagonist (*nāyaka*) incarnates each of the four kinds of Passion. What makes us call a hero a hero is the fact of his possessing “continuity” or “stability” of character (*dhairyam*). “This is a mental attribute (*cittadharmā*) that keeps the senses from perturbation. When it is present, despite his many virtues [as for instance his caste (*jāti*), which could be a source of pride, *garva*, p. 1083], arrogance (*utseka*) and the like do not arise at all.” Bhoja goes on to define the four kinds of firmness that characterize the different heroes: the dignified (*udātta*) [for *dharma*-Passion], the energetic (*uddhata*) [for *artha*-Passion], the romantic (*lalita*) [for erotic-Passion], and the serene (*praśānta*) [for liberation-Passion].” In the case of the dignified hero, his kind of firmness makes for the absence of arrogance in the event of success; of anguish in the event of grief; of sadness in the event of tragedy; he never violates *dharma* out of passion, he strives for virtuous conduct, abhors vile things, shows forbearance even when he has the power to act, is patient with those who stray in error. The firmness of the energetic hero makes for pride in the event of success, anguish in the event of grief, despondency in the event of failure, the readiness even to oppose *dharma* because of passion (p. 1108), and so on.⁵⁹

What is important to register here is not simply Bhoja’s well-known fascination for formal analytical structures that are elegant in their symmetry but ultimately empty (the normal scholarly response). The point of all this – and Bhoja’s full exposition demonstrates this – is that the varieties of Passion that make up literature, and the varieties of heroes that embody them, are all to be understood principally under the rubric of moral agency. That the hero is conceived of as moral agent, indeed nothing but moral agent, finds its most pointed expression when Bhoja discusses the narrative relationship of hero to antihero, a topic on which there had long been some uncertainty in the Sanskrit critical discourse.

One of the double figures of sound and sense (*ubhayālaṃkāra*, p. 728.11) is termed by Bhoja “adherence to the two ways” (*mārgadvayānuvartanam*). This, he explains, “makes reference to a certain literary convention followed by great poets” regarding hero and antihero. Its basis is Daṇḍin’s old prescription, which Bhoja goes on to cite:

The naturally agreeable procedure is when the poet, having first established the protagonist’s virtues, has him overcome the antagonist. However, it enhances the hero’s achievement if the antagonist he defeats has also been shown to be of high birth, brave, learned and the like, and this brings the reader pleasure.⁶⁰

This contrasts with Bhāmaha's position that the poet should not, in an attempt to elevate his hero, establish the antagonist's high birth, bravery, and learning before he is destroyed. For it is futile to describe and praise a character at the beginning of a work if he is not going to be present throughout the narrative and win in the end. Here is how Bhoja adjudicates the dispute:

It may be asked, Is the enemy whom the hero is going to destroy a virtuous or a flawed man? What difference does that make? Well, if he is flawed, his flaws are sufficient cause of his destruction. It is no achievement of manly effort to push a man into the water when he is sitting on a riverbank ready to crumble. As [Kauṭilya] says, "Like a log eaten by termites a royal family with undisciplined princes will break apart the moment it is attacked." If, on the other hand, the enemy is virtuous he should not in fact be destroyed.⁶¹ For who would place any stock in acquiring virtues if even a virtuous man is shown to be destroyed? Furthermore, if both the hero and his enemy are equally virtuous, then it would be necessary to specify some hard and fast cause for the victory of the one and the defeat of the other – but [given their equality, ex hypothesi] what could that be other than fate? And if success is brought about by fate, then the hero would be engaging in no manly effort, and there would be no difference between such a hero and his antagonist.

The answer to this is, first, that literary texts are meant to provide moral instruction (*vidhiniṣedhavyutpattiphalatvāt prabandhānām*). In the *Rāmāyaṇa* and similar works, by the poet's showing the pre-eminence of a virtuous man and the destruction of a flawed man, we are being taught to act like Rāma and not like Rāvaṇa: As Rāma obeyed his father's order and despite being exiled to the forest achieved ultimate victory, whereas Rāvaṇa, though he was capable of conquering the three worlds, was destroyed because he had lusted after another man's wife, so will it turn out for others. Such is the moral instruction of this text, and of other literary works, courtly epics and the like, composed in the same spirit.

As for the other questions – i.e., what pre-eminence could accrue to a hero shown to destroy a flawed enemy who would be brought down as a matter of course; and who would place any stock in acquiring virtues if even a virtuous man is shown to be destroyed? – my answer is as follows: The antagonist's flaws are not described in connection with [the hero's] manly effort, nor his virtues as a grounds for his destruction. Quite the contrary, his flaws are described as the grounds for his destruction, and his virtues in order to magnify the hero's pre-eminence. And the grounds for the antagonist's destruction is his violation of social norms. Thus in the *purāṇas*, we see that antagonists like Hiraṇyakaśipu, who had acquired great power by worshipping the gods, were destroyed because of their cosmic evilness. The pre-eminence they possess owing to their high birth, bravery, learning, becomes in turn a source of pre-eminence for the hero who defeats them. (ŚP 741.5ff.)

This position, which for the first time a literary critic has argued out in any detail, is fundamental to the entire tradition of reading and writing Sanskrit literature, to the very end of its creative history, when Jagannātha returns to the question under the rubric of faults relating to *rasa*, arguing that the greatness of the protagonist must also be established directly, not just indirectly as a consequence of defeating someone great.⁶² And the greatness of the hero is not just an aesthetic condition, but a social and a moral one.

* * *

The social thus impinges on Sanskrit literature and literary theory at every possible level. Aesthetic suggestion presupposes and reproduces social knowledge of, and correspondingly assent to, a structure of social action, and without this knowledge suggestion itself often remains all but incomprehensible. The emotional experience coded in the literary text works homologously. As the category of false feelings serves to highlight, aesthetic sentiment becomes intelligible only against a broader discourse on social sentiment. Characters act the way they do, and we may discriminate among their actions, only by a theory of socially valid and invalid emotions. That the ability of Sanskrit thinkers to theorize the social ground was completely constrained in the case of suggestion, partially so in the case of sentiment, seems to have been due, at least to some extent, to the language-philosophical and theological turn of criticism in the last quarter of the first millennium.

By contrast, the work of Bhojarāja, the last great representative of the tradition before this development became normalized, illustrates just how self-consciously literary theory could recapitulate social theory. Literature has totalizable meaning, its meaning is Passion, and Passion for its part is something understood within a conceptual framework that is entirely social-moral: that of the four life-goals, which, as Kenneth Burke might have put it, offer the strategies for action that have direct bearing on matters of human welfare. And Bhoja shows us, too, that only by going through theory, and doing so historically, can we go beyond it, to see that literature in India was conceived of not only as verbal icon or metaphysical experience, but also and eminently – even when denied – as social practice, indeed, equipment for living.⁶³

NOTES

¹ *Saundarananda* 18.63–64 (*kāvyaavyājena tattvam*, etc.); *Kāvyaśāstra* 1.3 (*dharmārthakāmamokṣeṣu vaicakṣaṇyam*); Aruṅagirinātha's *Prakāśikā* (twelfth century?) on *Kumārasambhava* 8.92 (TSS ed. p. 327: *evaṃ nānāvidhātra prabandhe puruṣārthavyutpattir bhavati*).

² Although in both cases the three forms of knowledge are ancient, it is only in the medieval period in India that *padavākya-pramāṇa* seems to become a disciplinary unit (perhaps first in the *Bhavabhūti*, early eighth century, see *Uttararāmacarita*, 1 + in most mss.; from then on it is common, from e.g. Mukulabhaṭṭa, *Abhidhāvṛttimātrkā* vs. 13, to Nīlakaṇṭha, colophon to MBh. 5.46 vulg.). The *trivium*, for its part, is a coinage of Alcuin's in the latter half of the eighth century.

³ The first extant commentarial writing is that of Prakāśavaṛṣa of Kashmir (fl. 950), who wrote a *Laghuṭīkā* on Bhāravi's *Kīrātārjunīya* (still unpublished). He was the teacher of Vallabhadeva, who produced the first widely-circulated commentaries on the courtly poems of Kālidāsa and Māgha (references to earlier scholia are found

in inscriptions from the seventh century, e.g., the *ṭikā* by King Durvinīta of the western Gaṅgas on the *citrakāvya* chapter of the *Kirātārjunīya*). Bhoja's ŚP, in the generation after Vallabha, gives evidence throughout of an intense exegetical concern with the literary classics; he also refers to commentators on Bhāravi and Kālidāsa (p. 667.9). The beginning of the second millennium witnesses the first flowering of commentaries in other traditions, too. Maṅakkuṭavar's commentary on the *Tirukkural*, for example, which dates from the end of the tenth century, is the first known Tamil commentary devoted to a literary work.

⁴ The best account of the paradigm shift in literary theory in Kashmir and the role of *mīmāṃsā* is McCrea, 1997, especially Chapter Two. See also the discussion of authorial intentionality, and metaphor/metonymy in Pollock in press.

⁵ For this argument, see Pollock, 1998.

⁶ Kosambi, 1957: xlv–lxii (“The analysis must therefore derive from the class divisions of every society in which literature was cultivated,” etc., p. lvii); Ingalls, 1963: 49–53 (“[Who] is more unreasonable than one who will not listen to beauty until he knows that it comes from a new economic class that advances the techniques of production?” p. 53).

⁷ DĀ, p. 52.

⁸ *vācyārthavimukhātmanām | buddhau tattvārthadarśinyam jhaṭity evāvabhāsate*, DĀ 1.12.

⁹ Abhinava implicitly believes the mother-in-law to be present, and it is for this reason he understands *maha* as “our [bed]” (not as a royal plural, as taken by Ingalls et al., 1990: 99) (DĀ, p. 71). Mahimabhāṭṭa is explicit about her presence (*śvaśrūsamnidhau*, VV, p. 468). This militates against the interpretation of *ṇimajjai* as “sleeps dead to the world” (found in other commentators), which is meant to allay the traveler's worries of being discovered, and which would hardly be used in the mother-in-law's presence.

¹⁰ DĀ, p. 76: *vācyād vibhinnaviśayatvena vyavasthāpitaḥ*. Abhinava affirms here that in the first four verses, both the literal and implied meanings are supposed to be addressed to the same person (DĀ, p. 76).

¹¹ Observe that Ānanda does not make clear with respect to this verse that the *vastumātra* does not itself constitute the content of the aesthetic *suggestion*. Bhoja seems to be the first to do so; see below.

¹² A fact not, perhaps, fully appreciated by Ingalls et al., who only record the error (“One may correct Abhinava's comment. . . . Abhinava's incorrect interpretation of the verse here leads him to a farfetched hypothesis,” 1990: 84; 98).

¹³ Bhoja adds: “Since this suggested meaning is perceived as something above and beyond the meaning of the sentence, it is the type of suggestion known as echo (*pratiśabdadhvani*) rather than the type known as reverberation (*anunādadhvani*)” (ŚP, pp. 390, 395).

¹⁴ VV, pp. 463ff. I understand *-māraṇamātrātrāsa* (for *-māraṇamātrātrāsa*).

¹⁵ *Kāvyaṇūsāsana*, p. 47.

¹⁶ This is actually connoted, according to Ingalls et al., by the word *bhama*, which they accordingly translate “go your rounds” (1990: 83), though neither Abhinava nor Mahima heard such a connotation.

¹⁷ Mahima thinks it entirely “inappropriate” (*anucita*) to have a noble lion, fierce or not, kill a dog (“I have given this a lot of thought and still cannot figure out the poet's intention”), and in despair decides to emend the text (to “fierce bear”) (p. 466).

¹⁸ KP, pp. 254ff. (note that Mammaṭa silently emends Mahima's interpretation of the verse). The implicit problem of *vyadhikaraṇatva* in Mammaṭa is addressed in the *Kamalākārī*, p. 186.

¹⁹ Ingalls et al., 1990: 104. They seem to mistranslate on p. 105: *sahasvety api ca tadviśayaṃ vyaṅgyam* means: “The sentence ‘Now you must suffer’” – i.e., swallow

your anger – “contains another implication directed to the husband” (not, “There is also a suggestion that he must suffer”). Abhinava’s usage of *vyaṅgya* here is loose, as Bhoja shows in what follows.

²⁰ ŚP, p. 395. Bhoja adds, “This is suggestion of the echo type [rather than the reverberation type] because what is meant as admonition [about bees] for one person [the wife] produces its effect [about her fidelity], contrarily, in the mind of another [the husband]” (*anyopadeśāparatvena pravṛtto 'nyasya cetasi pratiphalitah*).

²¹ KP, p. 72. The seeds of Mammaṭa’s system are found in the work of his teacher, Mukulabhāṭṭa, see *Abhidhāvṛttamārkā*, pp. 24 (*kārikā*) and 31–41 (*vṛtti*). I thank Lawrence McCrea for this reference.

²² Or contemporary western theory. A literary application of speech-act theory, for instance, might help make more precise the perspectival shift whereby one sort of speech act is transformed into another. (Thus a constative utterance, a statement of something’s being true or false, becomes really a performative of the illocutionary sort, seeking to bring about a new state of affairs – to stop the mendicant from wandering along the Godāvārī river – and not to make a statement about the wild kingdom or any such thing.) But that, I believe, is about as far as such an analysis is going to take us. For a suggestive exposition see Hanks, 1992: 99ff. (on Grice’s “conversational implicatures”), who makes the important point that “Literal meaning is defeasible: If you alter the situation of utterance, the literal meaning of the form will change” (p. 108).

²³ Indeed, sometimes as a “speculative paradigm for theology,” see Gerow, 1994. What follows here is a historical critique, not a philosophical evaluation, of Abhinava’s aesthetic. To measure just how sophisticated this is, one need only compare the relatively simplistic solutions to the same problem that the best in contemporary aesthetics has to offer, e.g., Feagin, 1997.

²⁴ Ingalls et al., 1990: 111; 37. For some general remarks on the topic of *rasābhāsa*, see also Krishnamoorthy, 1974 and Bhattacharya, 1935.

²⁵ I can be brief here, since I have set forth my understanding of the problem at length in Pollock, 1998.

²⁶ I ignore here less consequential views that invested the actor with *rasa*, or the poet. The first is quickly dismissed. The second remains in play as a supplementary position, though for some it is the principal, thus Rājaśekhara (see *Kāvyamīmāṃsā*, pp. 45ff., especially p. 46.8: it is the expressions of the poet, not the characters, that have or do not have *rasa*; whatever the *rūpa* of the thing itself, the fact of its having *rasa* or not is dependent on the particular talents of the poet).

²⁷ Abhinava discusses the history of the idea of *rasa* in various places; I cite from DĀ, p. 184. The one time Ānanda actually mentions the locus of *rasa* he identifies it as the character or the narrative voice (p. 318). Ingalls et al. note the difference between him and his commentator (1990: 18–19; especially p. 413: “It is perfectly clear that Ānanda is here using *rasa* in its old sense of a particularly vivid emotion . . . not in the new sense established by Abhinava, of aesthetic delight”), but the implications of this difference are not developed in their work.

²⁸ See in general Pollock, 1998: 117–142; and for Abhinava in particular, NŚ, p. 279.

²⁹ The term is first used in Udbhāṭa (see below), but his own views on *rasa* are hard to work out. He describes *rasavat* as “[a trope] in which the rise of *rasas* is clearly displayed” (“that is, by which *rasa* is manifested, *āvīrbhāvah*, in a clear form,” says Indurāja, p. 58), suggesting strongly that *rasa* for him is in the hero. Indurāja accordingly comments, on the example quoted, that “Śiva’s *śṛṅgāra* is set forth literarily” (*[upa]nibaddhah*) (on 4.3–4).

³⁰ NŚ, p. 289; DĀ, pp. 78–79.

³¹ A remarkable recent account of varieties of analysis (philosophical, moral and so on) of the emotions is de Sousa, 1987.

³² Ingalls et al., 1990: 37.

³³ ŚP, p. 665.12ff. For *rasābhāsa* as ornament, see p. 666.3ff. and p. 693.15. The expression of passion on the part of animals becomes a stock example of *rasābhāsa*, despite the fact that the “grief” of a krauñca hen lies at the origin of Sanskrit poetry (or at least is the cause of the real grief in the poet that lies at the origin of poetry, *Rāmāyaṇa* 1.2.9ff.). Yet some later thinkers rejected the view that the causal factors of *rasa*, including primary feelings, do not apply to animals, and accordingly they are said to have *rasa* (so Vidyādhara and Bhīmasena Dikṣita, cited in Bhattacharya, 1935: 241). Considerably less discussed was the question whether a *mleccha* can be the site of *rasa* (this is denied by Vidyānātha, *Pratāparudrīya*, p. 60).

³⁴ Moreover, thinkers after Abhinava increasingly found his views on *rasābhāsa* problematic. Thus Viśvanātha, while unequivocally accepting the view that *rasa* is located in the reader, rejected the his account of the cognitive status of its semblance-form. For Viśvanātha, *rasābhāsa* is simply *rasa* (*Sāhityadarpaṇa* 3.260).

³⁵ Even in its own terms I can make little cultural-historical sense of Abhinava’s argument that readers realize a *rasa* to be *ābhāsa* only at the conclusion of the literary event, whereas in the course of it they experience it as *rasa*. In what sense would any traditional Indian experiencing the *Rāmāyaṇa* believe Rāvaṇa’s feelings for Sītā to be not an *ābhāsa*, that is, to be in some sense “valid” (as Sanskrit culture understands that phrase) prior to the point of narrative closure? Surely we are aware from the start that it is a counterfeit, ultimately failed affect – real desire (*rati*), no doubt (though again Abhinava calls it *ratyābhāsa*), but false love (*śṛṅgāra*).

³⁶ NŚ prose after 6.45, p. 295. Bhoja brings out the full implication of this in the *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharana*: *śṛṅgārābhāsa* will always result in the case of a low character (*hīnapātra*), an animal, the antagonist (*nāyakapratīyogi*), as well as in cases of anthropomorphism (p. 477; see also Krishnamoorthy, 1974: 125–129). Given that Bharata’s definition of *rasa* is itself social, the view of some commentators that *rasābhāsa* lies in a failure to accord with the definition of *rasa* is really identical with the view that it lies in a violation of social norms, which therefore does not constitute an opposed position (*pace* Bhattacharya, 1935).

³⁷ *Kāvyaḷaṅkārasarasaṃgraha* 4.5–6. The sentence “*Rasa* is that specific kind . . .” is cited anonymously by Indurāja ad loc. (it is not known to Tilaka). The four types of literary text, *rasakāvya*, *bhāvakāvya*, *rasābhāsakāvya*, and *samhāhitakāvya* (this last is where a break occurs in the continuity of *rasa* because the intensity of the *vāsanā* of the prior *rasa* inhibits any other from manifesting itself, see Indurāja on 4.8) are equated with the older categories (cf. *Alaṅkārasarvasva* cited in *Pratāparudrīya*, p. 208: *rasabhāvatadābhāsataiprasāmananibandhane rasavatpreyāurjasvisamāhitāni*).

³⁸ I am not altogether certain about the last phrase: *svakalpanāparikalpitatvena*.

³⁹ For a brief historical overview of the category see Raghavan, 1942. He argues that, although the term *aucitya* is first used in literary discourse only in Yaśovarman’s early eighth-century play, the *Rāmābhyudaya* (lost), and in literary-critical discourse first in Rudraṭa’s (probably early ninth century) *Kāvyaḷaṅkāra*, the concept is already implicit in the NŚ (pp. 205, 209ff., 198). In the case of the *Aucityavicāracarcā*, too, if its analytical focus is certainly novel, it seems to me to enunciate a great deal that is implicit in earlier thinking.

⁴⁰ See *Aucityavicāracarcā* vss. 8–10 for the programmatic statement, and, on *rasa* in particular, vss. 3, 4, 5 + prose, vs. 6 + prose. I noted above that both Ananda and Abhinava take *rasa* and *aucitya* to be intimately related (and *rasābhāsa* and *anaucitya*); see also DĀ 3.15 and 3.32; so *Vakroktijīvitā kārikā* 53 and 54.

⁴¹ Jagannātha asks whether the term *rasābhāsa* is a *karmadhāraya* compound (“It is *rasa* and an *ābhāsa*”): “One view holds it cannot be such because once a thing is a mere semblance, it ceases to be what it was, as in *hetvābhāsa* [a mere semblance of a good reason, a non-reason or logical fallacy]. On the second view, the essence of

a thing is not lost just because it has some flaws: we can call an old horse a 'pale shadow of a horse' (*aśvābhāsa*) without its thereby ceasing to be a horse' (RG, pp. 118–119). Jagannātha seems to accept the second view.

⁴² The *-ādi* (in *vibhāvādau*) seems impossible to me, since it is precisely the additional factors, notably the *sthāyibhāva*, that are under examination.

⁴³ Krishnamoorthy (1974: 135) errs in ascribing a similar passage to Govinda Thakur; the passage he cites is actually Vaidyanāth Tatsat's paraphrase of Jagannātha.

⁴⁴ At one point Jagannātha seems to suggest the opposite when discussing what is suggested in a verse depicting Draupadī's glances at her five new (or soon-to-be) husbands. The *navyās*, he tells us, consider this is a case of *rasābhāsa* because the objects of her desire are multiple, whereas the *prāñcas* restricted the *ābhāsa* of *śṛṅgāra* to a case of multiple lovers to whom the woman is not married (p. 121). Whatever else this observation might mean, Jagannātha apparently saw his social world as discontinuous from that of the past; the scope of "impropriety" has changed. On the distinction between "new" and "old" scholars in the intellectual history of seventeenth-century India, see Pollock, 2001.

⁴⁵ DĀ 3.10–14 (trans. Ingalls et al., pp. 428, 432); NŚ, p. 305, and especially p. 265: *arthaḥ prayojanaṃ ca prītipurassaraṃ vyutpattimayam* ("The 'meaning' [of poetry] also signifies its purpose, which is moral instruction through a pleasurable experience").

⁴⁶ As Viśvanātha puts it (p. 5), *caturvargaprāptir hi kāvyato . . . supratītaiva* ("It is perfectly well known that poetry enables us to achieve the four life-goals").

⁴⁷ ŚP, p. 405.10ff.; see Pollock, 1998: 140.

⁴⁸ *Pratibhā*, along with *bhāvanā* and *vidhi*, constitute for Bhoja the three types of sentence-meanings (p. 336, defined p. 339).

⁴⁹ Note that, whereas Bhoja employs the *brahma* metaphor to capture the core of moral insight, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka likens the experience of *rasa* with that of *brahma* as negating awareness (*parabrahmāsvādasabrahmacāritvam . . . rasāsvādasya* (cited by Abhinava, DĀ, p. 190). So later writers such as Viśvanātha: *vedyāntarasparśasūnyo brahmāsvādasahodarah* ("Rasa, emptied of all contact with other objects of cognition, is akin to the taste of the *brahma*") (*Sāhityadarpaṇa* 3.2).

⁵⁰ I am assuming the reading *mahākāvyaḥ* is an error for *mahāvākyaḥ*.

⁵¹ ŚP, p. 711. The *Chalitarāma* (lost), *Tāpasavatsarāja*, and *Vikrāntasūdraka* (lost) are adduced as further revisions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Svapnavāsavadattā*, and legends associated with King Śūdraka. Similar questions are discussed in *Vakroktijīvitā*, pp. 249–251. Kuntaka sees the invention of the new plot rather as enhancing the requirements of *rasa* than removing a moral impropriety; but of course, these are two sides of the same coin.

⁵² Somewhat different is the translation by Ingalls et al., 1990: 435.

⁵³ A school of thought represented by the king-poet Yaśovarman of the eight-century that insisted on "no departure from the [received] story" (*kathāmārga na cātīkramaḥ*) (cited by both Bhoja [p. 711], and Ānanda [3.14, p. 335], but with no indication that they saw a discrepancy).

⁵⁴ ŚP, p. 728.24: *jigīṣuṇā guṇavataiva bhāvyaṃ na doṣavatā*.

⁵⁵ Abhinava discusses the relationship of *rasas* with the purposes of man in NŚ, pp. 275–276.

⁵⁶ A particularly unfortunate lacuna in the text occurs at the beginning of Chapter 13 (p. 840), where these categories are first discussed. To what degree Bhoja is indebted to earlier thinking on this subject is unclear. He surely knew NŚ 18.72ff. (GOS ed.) (*śṛṅgāraḥ kartavyo dharme cārthe ca kāme ca*, etc., even if he nowhere cites the verses, cf. Raghavan, 1963: 455), though Bharata is interested only in the different motivations of love, and Bhoja's understanding of the four types of Passion,

as the full array of his illustrations shows, is far more capacious. For an account of the abiding structure of the *trivarga* and *caturvarga* amid the manifold ramifications in traditional Indian thought, along with some of the few coherent reflections on Bhoja's analysis here, see Malamoud, 1982, especially pp. 46ff.

⁵⁷ *tatra* [*sc.*, *dharme*] *pravartamānasya tadavāptyabhimāno dharmasṛṅgāraḥ* (p. 1079); [*up*]āyataḥ *pravṛttau tadavāptyabhimāno 'rthasṛṅgāraḥ* (p. 1106); *tadanukūlāyāṃ pravṛttau tadupāyānatikrameṇaitadanubhavābhimāno kāmasṛṅgāraḥ* (p. 1144); *tadadhigamayogyatābhimāno mokṣasṛṅgāraḥ* (p. 1177). For the first phrase, *tadavāptyabhimāno* is my conjecture for the *tarākhyān* (?) [sic] *atimāno* of Raghavan's edition; for the last, *tadadhigamayogyatābhimāno* is my conjecture for *tadadhiga-* <lacuna>*tābhimāno* (cf. p. 840.2).

⁵⁸ For *dharmā*, *bhāratī vṛtti*, *paurastyā pravṛtti*, *pāncālī rīti* (p. 1080); for *artha*: *ārabhaṭī vṛtti*, *udhramāgadhī pravṛtti*, and *gaudīyā rīti* (p. 1106); for *kāma*, *kaiśikī vṛtti*, *dāksīṇīyā pravṛtti*, and *vaidarbhī rīti* (p. 1144); for *mokṣa*, *sāttvikī vṛtti*, *āvantiyā pravṛtti*, and *lāṭiyā rīti* (p. 1178).

⁵⁹ ŚP, p. 917 (cf. 746.10 and 1083) for the general account of *dhairya*; the four heroic types are discussed on pp. 1083, 1108, 1145, and 1180 respectively.

⁶⁰ *Kāvyaḍarśa* 1.21–22; cf. Ratnaśrī, who makes it clear that Daṇḍin accepts the *prakāradvayam* (p. 14).

⁶¹ Hereafter (ŚP, 741.9–11) is printed what to my eyes is a clear dittography (from *nāyakasya . . . na doṣaḥ*). I conjecture: *tasyānucchedyatvāt* followed by *ko hi*. For *puruṣārthaviṣayatvena* (line 20) we should read *puruṣakāra-*.

⁶² RG, pp. 62–63.

⁶³ Burke, 1973: 296, 304.

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