

Vol. 6

Year 2012

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Vyakti and the History of Rasa

Sheldon Pollock

शेल्डन् पोलक् महाभागः भट्टनायकाभिमतयोः भोग-भोगकृत्वयोः अभिनवगुप्ताद्यङ्गीकृत-व्यक्तिव्यञ्जनाभ्याम् अभिन्नत्वं ब्रुवतो जगन्नाथ-पण्डितराजस्य पक्षमसमीचीनं प्रतिज्ञाय, अलङ्कारशास्त्रेतिहासे आदित एव रसविषयकशाब्दबोधात्मकज्ञानस्य रसविषयकस्यानुभवात्मकस्य च ज्ञानस्य विषये पारस्परिकभेदाग्रहवशात्, रसाश्रयविषये भिन्नभिन्नपक्षाणा-माश्रयणेन च सञ्जातं वैचारिक-व्यामिश्रणं विशदतया सप्रमाणमुपपाद्य धनिक-धनञ्जय-महिमभट्ट-रुय्यक-विश्वनाथादीनां ग्रन्थावलम्बनेन पूर्वोक्तज्ञानयोः पारस्परिकभेदं सम्यक् प्रत्यपादयत्। आनन्दवर्धनेन तु व्यक्तेः शब्दवृत्तित्वं रसाश्रयत्वं चोरीकृतम्, तत्परवर्तिभिस्तु तस्याश्चित्तवृत्तित्वं सहृदयाश्रयत्वं च निरूपितमिति विशेषः। भट्टनायक एव अस्य प्रस्थानभेदस्य वस्तुतो नायक इति पोलकवर्यस्यात्र स्वारस्यम्।

A small but significant chapter in the intellectual history of rasa is opened by the philological history of the word *vyakti* (and its virtual synonyms *vyañjanā* and *abhivyakti*). The fact that this term underwent fundamental redefinition after Ānandavardhana's time, for whose new linguistics of literature it was a keyword, seems to have been as invisible to the premodern Indian thinkers who wrote on aesthetic theory as it has been to the modern scholars who have studied them. And while Indian thinkers may actually have been more aware of some crucial components of the intellectual history of rasa than most modern scholars of the subject, their awareness was incomplete without a sense of the historically contingent semantics of *vyakti*.

A case in point is Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja. In an earlier publication I argued that when, in reviewing the history of rasa theory in his *Rasagaṅgādhara*, Jagannātha claims Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's notion of "experience" (*bhoga*) to be no different from Abhinavagupta's idea of *vyakti*, and his "experientialization"

(*bhogakṛttva* [sic]) no different from Abhinava's *vyañjanā*,¹ the great seventeenth-century poetician was seriously mistaken. My reasoning was that, from the moment Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka redirected attention away from the internal production of emotion in the text to the external reception of rasa in the reader, Ānandavardhana's conception of *vyakti/vyañjanā* was rendered irrelevant for the understanding of rasa and hence ceased to have the pivotal role in literariness that had been claimed for it. As Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka famously put it, "As for the other process called 'implicature' (*dhvani*), which is essentially the process of manifestation (*vyañjanātmakaḥ*), even were it proven to be different from the other two [verbal modalities, i.e., literal and figurative meaning (*abhidhā* and *lakṣaṇā*)], it would only be a component of literature, not its essential form."²

My account was correct, I believe, but only up to a point, for I failed to make clear the radical difference between what Jagannātha meant by *vyakti/vyañjanā* and what Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka himself meant (though Jagannātha should of course have registered it himself, in view of the citation I gave above). It is this difference, its origins, and its significance for the history of rasa—which I think can be considered (and which at all events I will consider) separately from the history of the term in broader philosophical and linguistic thought—that I want to try to delineate here.

I

To the degree that we can reconstruct his views from the pitifully few fragments surviving from his masterpiece, the *Hṛdayadarpaṇa*, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka was concerned to rethink the notion of rasa in part by refuting the doctrine propounded by Ānandavardhana. In fact, Ruyyaka in the mid-twelfth century

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1. *matasyaitasya pūrvasmān* [sc., *abhinavaguptasya*] *matād bhāvakatvavyāpārāntarasvikāra eva viśeṣaḥ. bhogas tu vyaktiḥ. bhogakṛttvaṃ tu vyañjanād aviśiṣṭam* (*Rasaṅgādhara* p. 30 l. 2).
 2. See Pollock 2010: 147, the note there, and appendix #9. See also the fragment of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka cited in *Dhvanyālokalocana* p. 88: "[Since implicature is supposed to be found everywhere in discourse] we would be forced to say that all discourse can be called literature," and his downgrading of *dhvani*, *ibid.* pp. 171-172.

called the *Hṛdayadarpaṇa* “a book meant to overthrow the concept of implicature” (*dhvanidhvamsagranthaḥ*), though it was undoubtedly far more than a mere polemic.¹ As we can see from the fragment quoted above, in Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka’s usage *vyañjanā* was synonymous with *dhvani*. And, unsurprisingly, that is precisely how Ānandavardhana himself uses the term throughout the *Dhvanyāloka*. There, the verbal root *vyañj* and its derivatives *vyakti*, *abhivvyakti*, *vyañjakatva* (curiously he nowhere employs the term *vyañjanā* itself) refers exclusively to a *śabdavṛtti*, the new verbal modality Ānanda postulates and designates *dhvani*.² It represents exclusively a *linguistic*, specifically a semantic, dimension of the literary text; what is *vyakta* is an *artha*, a layer of textual signification.³ As in narrative or rhetorical implicature (*vastudhvani*, *alaṅkāradhvani*) and no doubt analogized from those cases, *rasa* is held to be communicated by implicature as well (*rasadhvani*): the emotional content of a literary work is something that cannot be signified by metaphor or metonymy let alone directly expressed; it can only be implied (*dhvanyate*), that is, “manifested” (*[abhi]vyajyate*).⁴

All of this is in complete harmony with Ānandavardhana’s overall aesthetic theory. His striking critical innovation in the area of literary meaning notwithstanding, Ānanda belonged to the traditional school of *rasa* analysis, which was entirely formalistic. His attention is directed almost exclusively to the text-centric problems of *rasa*: how it is related to “language qualities” or figures of sound or sense (chapter 2), or to “texture” (e.g., degree of compounding) (chapter 3.5); by what processes it

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1. Ruyyaka’s comment on *Vyaktiviveka* p. 5.
 2. *vyañjakatvasāmyād dhvanir ity uktāḥ (Dhvanyāloka p. 135); śabda vyañjakatām bibhrad dhvanyukter viśayībhavet (1.15), etc.*
 3. *so ’rthas tadvyaktisāmarthyayogī śabdaś ca kaścana ... (Dhvanyāloka 1.8).*
 4. *tṛtīyas tu rasādīlakṣaṇaḥ prabheda vācyasāmarthyākṣiptaḥ prakāśate, na tu sākṣāc chabdavyāpāraviśaya iti vācyād vibhinna eva (Dhvanyāloka pp. 78-80). The terms *vyakti* and *abhivvyakti* are used synonymously: *upanibadhyamāno ’laṅkāro rasābhivvyakti- hetuḥ (p. 233); rasavyaktinimittam idaṃ cāparam ... (p. 342); rasavyaktyanugūṇatayaiva ... (p. 354); gītādiśabdebhyo ’pi rasābhivvyaktir asti (p. 405), etc. So too in *Vyaktiviveka*, e.g., *vyaktīlakṣaṇa- ... abhivvyaktir iti tal lakṣaṇam (p. 80).***

is produced at the level of the literary work as a whole (3.10-14); what obstructs or contradicts it (3.18-20), and so on. In short, what Ānandavardhana wants to understand is the basic mechanism immanent in the text by which rasa is made manifest in the character, and why this mechanism cannot be comprised under the normal verbal modalities of literal or figurative signification (*abhidhā, lakṣaṇā*). Like all his predecessors he shows no interest whatever in rasa as an epistemological problem let alone in the subjective aspect of rasa, that is, the question of how the viewer/reader experiences it, though of course it is the viewer/reader who is always the one making the judgments about the successful or unsuccessful manifestation of rasa on the basis of his antecedent reactions.

It is this *vyakti* (*vyañjanā/abhivyaṅgi*), in the technical sense of the verbal modality thought to explain how rasa can be communicated, that in the following generation formed the principal target of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's critique of Ānanda's theory in general. We shall see that it may well have been Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka himself who already recoded the sense of *vyakti*, but, as the citations adduced above suffice to show, the principal sense of the term for him was undoubtedly the linguistic.¹

We are able to get a firmer grasp of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's actual critique thanks to the *Avaloka* of Dhanika (c. 975), which offers the fullest exposition available of the ideas of the *Hṛdayadarpaṇa*.² That critique was partly derived from a reassertion (against *dhvani*) of the older theory of the process by which the final purport of a sentence is produced (*tātparyā*), to which Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka as a Mīmāṃsaka was committed (I cannot detail the

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1. In a brief excursus at the end of this article I consider one complex passage that has confused scholars on this point. I am not entirely sure what to make of the few earlier uses of (*abhi-*)*vyañj* in rasa discourse, namely in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (the *sthāyibhāvas* are *nānābhāvābhīnayaṅgi*-, NŚ 6.31+, GOS 4th ed. p. 283; the *bhāvas* are *kāvyarasābhivyaṅgihetavaḥ*, NŚ 7.6+, GOS 4th ed. p. 342). Assuming these passages are old (which is not a given), it is most unlikely they are referencing the *śabdavṛtti*; perhaps they are simply playing on the metaphor of the *nānāvyañjanasamskṛtam annam* (p. 282).
 2. As argued in Pollock 2010 *passim*.

complexities of that discussion here). But it certainly also seems to have been partly tied up with the hermeneutical shift itself that Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka effected, from his redirecting the analytical focus of aesthetics away from its long-standing concern with the textuality of the production of *rasa* to the psychology of its reception. That the theory of implicature was rendered irrelevant by this new hermeneutics is indicated by Dhanika:

All this being the case, the view that *rasa* can be “manifested” (*rasādīnām vyaṅgyatvam*) stands refuted. For an entity can only be manifested by something after it has been brought into being by something else: a pot, for example, can only be manifested by a light when it has already been produced by the clay.¹ It is certainly not possible for an entity to be brought into existence by the very things that are supposed to manifest it, and this at one and the same moment. But that *rasa* can be “reproduced” (*bhāvvyante*) by means of the factors and the rest in the spectators is something that has already been cogently argued.²

To understand this passage we must first understand what “All this being the case” (*evaṃ ca sati*) refers to. It would seem to signal the conclusion of Dhanañjaya’s core argument on which Dhanika is commenting, that is, the argument concerning the location of *rasa* (and hence its real nature). To quote the *kārikās* of the *Daśarūpaka* at issue:

Rasa belongs to the spectator experiencing the *rasa*, and to him alone, because he is alive and present. It does not belong to the character, because (1) he is no longer alive and present; (2) the ultimate aim of literature cannot pertain to the character; (3) we would otherwise have the absurd situation of the spectator being overcome with shame, jealousy, passion, or hatred—just as if he had seen a man in

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1. One of four types of manifestation, see *Vyaktiviveka* p. 80; and compare *Pramāṇavarttika* below, p. 250 n 3 (cited by Ruyyaka and Viśvanātha).
 2. *Daśarūpaka* p. 217.

everyday life in the embrace of his beloved—or else having a merely indifferent apprehension.¹

First, and generally, what Dhanika’s comment suggests is that any given theoretical position on the location (or, generally, ontology) of *rasa*—whether it exists in the text or in the receiver—was intimately connected with a particular modality of its cognitive genesis (or, generally, epistemology)—such as here whether “manifestation” or “reproduction” (*bhāvakatva*) is the more appropriate explanation. If *rasa* is not something located in the text it cannot be “manifested”; if it is something in the mind of the viewer/reader it must be experienced (or, rather, re-experienced) in the way peculiar to aesthetic objects. Second and more specifically, this is the argument that Dhanika seems to be presenting, however elusively, in his comment just cited. If *rasa* is thought to be something “manifested,” it can only be manifested in the character, where it already exists, having attained its existence from something else—that is, presumably, from the real events recounted in the narrative—like a pot from clay, and is only being brought to light, like a pot by a lamp, by the language or representations of the literary text or drama. But since it makes no sense for *rasa* to exist in the character, as Dhanañjaya (following Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka) so cogently argues, some other epistemological/causal process must be involved, such as *bhāvanā*, where *rasa* is actually brought into existence—in the viewer/reader—by the words of the author.²

II

It was this powerful critique, or something close to it, from Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka that would seem to have prompted the recoding of *vyakti* into the new meaning—indeed, into something on the order of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka’s *bhoga*—that would become so blindingly present to Jagannātha’s eyes seven centuries later. The term in

1. *Daśarūpaka* 4.38-39.

2. In the *Vyaktiviveka* (pp. 80-83) it is the causal relationship of the aesthetic elements and *rasa* that is adduced to refute the simultaneity presupposed by Ānanda in his theory of the “manifestation” (*Dhvanyāloka* p. 404, sequentiality [cause and effect]; p. 424, simultaneity [lamp and jar]). Contrast the critique of the *Sāhityadarpaṇa* (see below).

the context of rasa theory would no longer refer to the manifestation of rasa through the text—the character’s stable emotion enhanced by the aesthetic elements (*vibhāvādi*)—but rather to the “manifestation” of the viewer/reader’s own stable emotion; *vyakti* in this context would no longer refer to a linguistic process, a *śabdavṛtti*, concerning the text’s production of meaning, especially affective meaning, but instead to a psychological process, a *cittavṛtti*, concerning the viewer/reader’s experience of rasa. As Jagannātha himself puts it, “In the statement ‘The stable emotion, *manifested* by the aesthetic elements, is known as rasa’ [*Kāvyaṣaṣṭkā* 4 *kārikā* 28], the word ‘manifested’ (*vyakta*), or being made an object of ‘manifestation’ (*vyakti*), *refers to the consciousness* [of the viewer/reader] from which obscuration has been removed (*bhagnāvaraṇā cit*).”¹ And this of course was the sense he had in mind when he equated Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka’s *bhoga* with Abhinavagupta’s *vyakti*.

What can we say, however, about the actual history of this recoding prior to Jagannātha? If we trace our steps back from the mid-seventeenth-century, we find the new sense of the term in the *Kāvyaṣaṣṭkā* (c. 1475), where Govinda in glossing *vyakta* in the same Mammaṭa passage declares that “‘manifestation’ is synonymous with aesthetic relishing” (*vyaktiś carvaṇeti paryāyaḥ*), that is, with the experience of the viewer/reader.² Some three centuries before Govinda, Hemacandra (d. 1172) defines rasa as the stable emotion existing in the form of the predispositions of the spectators when manifested (*abhivyakta*) by the aesthetic elements (*vibhāvānubhāvavyabhicāribhir abhivyaktaḥ sthāyī bhāvo rasaḥ*, which he glosses: *abhivyaktaḥ sāmājikānāṃ vāsanārūpeṇa sthitaḥ sthāyī ratyādiko bhāvaḥ*).³ Hemacandra’s definition, however, has been borrowed from the summary of Abhinavagupta’s aesthetic doctrine in Mammaṭa’s *Kāvyaṣaṣṭkā* (c. 1050).⁴

1. *Rasaṅgādhara* p. 26.

2. *Kāvyaṣaṣṭkā* p. 116. “That is to say, rasa is the stable emotion [that exists in the form of the viewer/reader’s latent predisposition, p. 117] when it is qualified by *vyakti*, or relishing” (p. 118).

3. *Kāvyaṣaṣṭkā* p. 88.

4. *Kāvyaṣaṣṭkā* p. 92.

The text that would seem to establish something of a baseline in our semantic reconstruction is Mahima Bhaṭṭa's *Vyaktiviveka*, which highlights our keyword in its very title. This work must have been composed sometime in the first quarter of the eleventh century, since it cites the *Dhvanyālaṅkāra* (c. 1000) at least once and was itself cited by Mammaṭa. There is no hint in the *Vyaktiviveka* that by *vyakti* Mahima Bhaṭṭa understood anything but Ānandavardhana's *dhvani*, the "manifestation" of linguistic meaning; it is certainly never used in the sense of the revelation of a subjective response to the aesthetic object. In fact, like Ānanda himself Mahima Bhaṭṭa is largely indifferent to the reception theory of *rasa*—as he puts it explicitly, "We hold *rasa* to be an imitation of a stable emotion" (*sthāyīyanukaraṇātmano hi rasā iṣyante*)—and, like his fellow logician Śrī Śāṅkuka from whom he borrowed this view, he was concerned with the cognitive process by which we infer the presence of *rasa* in the literary text.¹ Of course, Mahima, writing in the wake of Abhinavagupta's reconceptualization (he had no direct knowledge of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's work), agrees that in the final analysis *rasa* is an "experience of rapture on the part of the responsive viewer/reader" (*sacetanacamatkāritvam*),² but the only possible application of the term "manifestation" to that process can be a figurative one (*vyāṅgyatvopacāra*). We actually infer *rasa* from the aesthetic elements—these elements do not "manifest" *rasa*—but the use of "manifestation" in a metaphorical sense, he suggests, may be allowed as pointing toward the uniqueness of the final experience.

We are finally, and not unexpectedly, brought to Abhinavagupta, where we encounter a commentator forced to transfigure the very meaning of the work he is commenting on to

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1. *Vyaktiviveka* p. 73. When Mahima Bhaṭṭa refers to "apprehending desire or any other stable emotion at the same time as [we apprehend] the meaning of the sentences [that convey] the foundational factor and the other aesthetic elements" (p. 62), he is talking about the stable emotion of the character in the work, not the stable emotion of the apprehending subject, the viewer/reader.
 2. *Vyaktiviveka* p. 59. Note that the term *camatkṛ* is found only once in the *Dhvanyāloka*, in what is almost certainly a gloss that has crept into the text (p. 549).

save it; but also, and unexpectedly, perhaps to Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka himself, where we may be finding a critic turning his opponent's weapons directly against him.

What is striking about the Abhinavagupta material is that, *pace* Mammaṭa, there seems to be no explicit reformulation of *vyakti* as the revelation of the viewer/reader's *sthāyibhāva*. Of course, it is everywhere clear in Abhinava that *rasa* is an experience of the reader and an experience brought about by *vyakti*; indeed, the equivalence of his categories with Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's was drawn by Abhinava himself:

*bhogīkaraṇavyāpāraś ca kāvyasya rasaviśayo dhvananātmaiva, nānyat kiñcit.*¹

(The process of “experientialization” in literature is nothing other than implicature with *rasa* as its object.)

But while all the components of the theory are present here and elsewhere—the idea that *rasa* is an apprehension in the subject having the *rasa* experience; that the subject's latent predispositions are stimulated by the experience; that the language of *vyakti* can continue to be used—I have been unable to locate anywhere in the *Locana* or the *Abhinavabhāratī* a passage where Abhinava says directly that it is the latent emotion of the viewer/reader that is “manifested”; the phraseology that will become so common later (*abhivyaktaḥ sāmājikānām vāsanārūpeṇa sthitaḥ sthāyī* and the like) is not found in Abhinava, so far as I can see, and while Abhinava is committed to the view that the viewer/reader's predispositions are activated in the aesthetic process, he does not seem to say that they are “manifested.”² The closest we come are in the following two passages from the *Locana* (I find nothing quite comparable in the *Abhinavabhāratī*):

tasmāt sthitam etad abhivyajyante rasāḥ pratīyaiva ca rasyanta iti. (p. 190)

1. *Dhvanyālokalocana* p. 188.

2. E.g., *Abhinavabhāratī* p. 279, *tadvibhāvādisādhāraṇyavaśasaṃprabuddhocitanijaratyādivāsanāveśa-*, etc.

(Hence it is settled that the rasas are “manifested,” and are tasted in the form of an apprehension [thereby attained].)

vyaṅgyasya ca cārutvaṃ rasābhivyaṅgiyogyatātmakam, rasasya svātmanaiva viśrāntidhāma ānandātmakatvam.... (p. 473)

(“The beauty of a suggested meaning is no more than its ability to manifest *rasa*, and ... *rasa*, as the end product of the aesthetic process, is itself bliss....”)¹

The semantic transformation, whereby what is “manifested” or revealed is a new form of consciousness in the viewing/ reading subject, which is implicit throughout Abhinava’s work, may in fact have begun before him, just possibly with Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka himself. Given how little we know about the great critic, however, it is not entirely surprising that making this determination comes down to how we understand a single, intrinsically and contextually complex verse found in the *Abhinavabhāratī* and the *Vyaktiviveka*, and what sense we are to make of its history. Here is the verse in question:

*saṃvedanākhyayā vyaṅgyaparasaṃvittigocaraḥ /
āsvādanātmānubhavo rasaḥ kāvyārtha ucyate //*²

(The purpose of literature is *rasa*, which is an experience consisting of savoring; it may be said to be “manifested” only by way of a manifestation called awareness, and its domain is the highest consciousness.)

The reading in *pāda* a is that given in the second edition of the Gaekwad Oriental Series edition of the *Abhinavabhāratī*,³ which the editor of the fourth edition imprudently emended to accord with the version transmitted by Mahima Bhaṭṭa: *bhāvasaṃyojanāvyaṅgya*-.⁴ In addition to the problematic variant, we are confronted with several complications in understanding

1. Trans. Ingalls et al. 1990: 611.

2. *Abhinavabhāratī* p. 271.

3. *Abhinavabhāratī* p. 277 (*saṃvedanākhyayā*, sc., *vyañjanayā/vyaktyā*). The *sāpekṣasamāsa* is difficult. Kangle conjectures *saṃvedanākhyavyaṅgyas tu* (1973: 150); *vyaṅgyaḥ* would be easier. See also below p. 247 n 2.

4. *Vyaktiviveka* p. 70 (“Revealed by the conjuncture of aesthetic elements”).

the verse. First, while in the *Abhinavabhāratī* it is found at the end of Abhinava's review of the ideas of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, it is not self-evident that the verse is to be attributed to him. A second, closely related question is posed by the context of Abhinava's quotation of the verse and his comment on it. And a third is how to explain the fact that the verse is absent from the parallel passage in Hemacandra's *Kāvyaṅuśāsana*: where Abhinava gives *yat tūktam saṃvedanākhyayā*, etc., Hemacandra (and the *Kalpalatāviveka* following him) offer another verse undoubtedly to be attributed to Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka but one with entirely different concerns.

Whether or not the verse is to be attributed to Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka is complicated by the fact that Mahima Bhaṭṭa confesses never to have had the chance to read the *Hṛdayadarpaṇa* (*adrṣṭadarpaṇa*-, v. 4). It is of course entirely possible that a verse from Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's work could have been circulating anonymously and found its way into the *Vyaktiviveka* (indeed, he may have taken it from the *Abhinavabhāratī* itself, though I know of no evidence that he had access to this work). More tellingly, we might wonder why Abhinava should quote the verse immediately after citing two other verses from the work of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka if it were not by the same author.¹ The context of his citation is somewhat confusing, however, and one is easily misled into supposing that the point of Abhinava's quotation is the same in all three instances, i.e., to reject his *pūrvapakṣin*. Here is how Abhinava introduces and explains the verse:²

[H: *bhāvanābhāvya eṣo 'pi śṛṅgārādigaṇo hi yat*] *iti tu yat kāvyena bhāvyaṅte rasāḥ ity ucyate, tatra vibhāvādijanitarcarvaṇātmaśvādarūpapratyayagocarātāpādanam eva yadi* [H: *bhaved*] *bhāvanam* [sic] *tad abhyupagamyata eva. yat tūktam saṃvedanākhyayā* [etc.] *tatra vyajyamānatayā vyaṅgyo lakṣyate. anubhavana tadviṣaya iti mantavyam.*³

(If in saying that “‘Reproduction’ brings into being the things we categorize as rasas ...” [Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka] means that “Rasas

1. A simple point I overlooked until C. Rajendran called it to my attention.
2. “H” indicates additions or variants from Hemacandra's *Kāvyaṅuśāsana*.
3. *Abhinavabhāratī* p. 371.

are caused to come into being by a literary work”—that is, if he means thereby, “bringing rasa within the scope of an apprehension [on the part of the viewer/reader] in the form of a savoring (i.e., relishing) produced by the aesthetic elements,” then that sort of “bringing into being” is something we fully accept. As for what is said in the following, “The purpose of literature is rasa ...,” here rasa itself is figuratively being referred to as “manifested” as [the reader’s awareness itself] that is being manifested;¹ while by the use of the word “experience” what is meant is that rasa is the *object* of an experience.”²

The introductory phrase *yat tūktam* normally prompts us to expect a refutation—but no refutation ever in fact arrives; on the contrary, rather than introducing yet another *pūrvapakṣa* the verse is clearly adduced to *corroborate* Abhinava’s interpretation of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka’s *bhāvanā*. This strongly suggests that original reading was not *yat tūktam* but *yathoktam*, “as indeed he has said.” True, this still leaves open the question of who said it—and of course the possibility that it was Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka himself.

In interpreting the verse I am inclined to believe that Mahima Bhaṭṭa preserved its principal thrust of emphasizing the experiential as opposed to the linguistic idea of *vyakti* and hence its figurative and not literal meaning here (as Ruyyaka clearly indicates in his commentary). Mahima’s reading of *pāda a*, on the other hand, may be a later revision, perhaps by Mahima himself, to make the quotation fit better with his concerns in the *Vyaktiviveka* passage regarding the normal production of rasa.

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1. Translation uncertain.
 2. So Ruyyaka (on *Vyaktiviveka* p. 71): “*vyaṅgyo*” *vyaktivādinā tathātvenābhipreta iha darśane tūpacaritavyaṅgyabhāvaḥ ... “anubhavo” yady api tasya [sc., rasasya] grāhakas tathāpy abhedopacārād iyam uktiḥ*. I do not think it makes much difference to the historical argument I am offering whether *-vyaṅgya* in *pāda a* is read as *-vyaṅgyaḥ* or as the first member of an *ubhayapadaviśeṣaṇasamāsa*, both construed as referring to *rasaḥ* in *pāda d* (so Ruyyaka), or as modifying *-saṃvitti-* in *pāda b* (which would be somewhat redundant in the presence of *saṃvedanākhyayā*).

That the *Kāvyaṅuśāsana* fails to transmit the verse is less problematical than what it substitutes. Hemacandra does not hesitate elsewhere to emend the original *Abhinavabhāratī* for one reason or another (such as the Vedic citations *rātrim āsata*, etc. on the page following the verse in question). The substitute verse that he offers here, however, while it undoubtedly belongs to Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, is entirely out of place in the current context, and someone, if not Hemacandra himself, understood it in a way that, given what we know of Nāyaka and Abhinava both, seems to me simply impossible.¹

Regardless of whether or not we ascribe the verse to Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka (though I think we should), or accept as genuine the reading *saṃvedanākhyayā* given in the manuscripts of the *Abhinavabhāratī* (though I think we must), the verse would still appear to be the first instance of the migration of the idea of *vyakti* from its linguistic sense of manifestation of a latent meaning in the text, to its psychological sense, the revelation of a new consciousness in the viewer/reader. Were the transvaluation in fact owing to Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, it would be a clever move. “*Vyakti* does not work the way you think it works,” he would be telling Ānanda, “because *rasa* does not work the way you think it works, from within the text. I am prepared to accept *vyakti* only in a figurative sense, in connection with the real nature of *rasa*, which is a process unfolding in the mind of the witnessing subject.”

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1. The complete verse is: *saṃsargādir yathā śāstra ekatvāt phalayogataḥ / vākyārthas tadvad evātra śṛṅgārādī raso mataḥ //* (Just as in the Veda, where syntactic construal and the other linguistic operations constitute sentence meaning—since sentence meaning is a unity given that it must bear a relation to a single outcome of action—so here in literature does the erotic and every other *rasa* constitute a kind of sentence meaning). This is authenticated, by my lights, as the work of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka by the arguments provided by Dhanika (*Avaloka* on *Daśarūpaka* 4.37, p. 211; see Pollock 2010: 152-153). In the *Kāvyaṅuśāsana*, however, the following citation is added: *tad asmākam abhimatam eva*, which makes no sense. Abhinavagupta should not be shown accepting a view of *rasa* as constituting a sentence meaning (*vākyārtha*) when that was precisely what Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka used to refute Ānanda’s doctrine of *dhvani/vyañjanā*.

III

What remains troubling in this tentative reconstruction of mine is that the Indian tradition seems to have only rarely gestured toward, and never fully acknowledged, the transmutation of *vyakti* from a linguistic into a psychological phenomenon. The most telling case, I believe, is that of Ruyyaka (c. 1150). In his commentary on the *Vyaktiviveka* he sets out to justify precisely what Mahima Bhaṭṭa had sought to refute, namely, the applicability of *vyakti* to the notion of *rasa*. What he has to say is valuable, and merits citing at length:

The reasoning of the advocate of manifestation¹ for his acceptance of that explanation is as follows.... It would be incorrect to attempt to vindicate inference instead of manifestation, or to claim that “manifestation” can only have a figurative sense [see above, p. 243], by resorting to the idea that the aesthetic factors and the stable emotions are actually factitious.² It is relishing that actually animates (*anuprāṇa*) *rasa* and it is the sensitive viewer/reader alone who relishes *rasa*; hence, when we characterize *rasa*’s essence, it must be as something that exists in the viewer/reader. *Rasa* does not exist in the character or the actor, because we can only apprehend *rasa* through “commonization” (*sādhāraṇya*), which requires eliminating (*avatoṭana*) all the character’s (or actor’s) particularities, those of space, time, social status, and literary type. It is not, of course, entirely incoherent to ascribe *rasa* to a character such as Rāma or the actor portraying him, since they participate (*anupraveśa*) in *rasa*. But it is altogether incorrect to classify (*vyavasthāna*) *rasa* as *existing* in them, given the authoritative statement of the Sage himself, that “The stable emotion itself is *rasa*.”³

Since, accordingly, it is the stable emotion that is *rasa*, and since those who lack *rasa* (*nīrasa*) themselves cannot relish it,

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1. This is actually the position of Ruyyaka himself.
 2. The theory of Śrī Śaṅkuka, with which Mahima Bhaṭṭa in fact agrees.
 3. This makes sense only if Ruyyaka takes “stable emotion” as referring to the actual feelings of the viewer/reader.

the stable emotions really and truly exist in the form of our predispositions, and they become *rasa* when they are made accessible to the act of relishing. Such is our position. There is nothing factitious here about the *rasas*, desire and the rest, nor indeed, even about the causes, effects, and ancillary causes that come to be designated ‘factors’ (‘foundational’ and ‘stimulant’), ‘reactions,’ and ‘transitory emotions’ when apprehended by the viewer/reader as common to him, because these actually do exist: they are called ‘foundational factors’ and so on in the primary sense of the terms only when apprehended by a sensitive viewer/reader; otherwise they remain ‘causes’ and the like. (This was intention of the Sage in giving these things their supermundane designations in the *rasasūtra*.) Therefore, the truly existing stable emotion in the form of a predisposition is manifested by the aesthetic factors without the interposition of any recollection of some connection among them.¹ Given this, *rasa* is “manifested” in a quite literal and not figurative sense, while its being something that must be inferred is refuted. The same holds for the emotions.

As for the four different kinds of manifestation that have been recognized,² depending on whether the object of manifestation is real or not, that subject is quite irrelevant here, because we accept for our theory of manifestation the model of the lamp and the pot. It is also false to raise the specter of the absurdity that, if the manifestation were real, the *rasa* would have to become visible. We do not refute our opponent’s view by way of his own definition as “coming to visibility”; and in fact no one has defined manifestation this way. The term can be defined generally (according to the statement, “Manifestation produces a cognition of something else—if that something is an already existing entity—by the cognition of itself, as in the case of a lamp”)³

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1. Such as would support Mahima Bhaṭṭa’s rival doctrine of inference.
 2. *Vyaktiviveka* p. 80.
 3. *Pramāṇavārttika* of Dharmakīrti, *kārikā* 262 (p. 137).

as “coming to awareness.” There is accordingly no objection whatever to the application of “manifestation” to rasa.¹

There are several key moves we should notice in Ruyyaka’s argument. The first is to assert that the “stable emotion” at issue in rasa theory has, *from the beginning*, been the stable emotion of the viewer/reader, in the form of his latent predispositions: rasa only lives when it is experienced, and it is only the viewer/reader who does experience it (precisely the axiom, we will recall, that led Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka and Dhanika to *reject vyakti*). The character may “participate” in the actual events of rasa but rasa as such cannot exist in him, since (aside from the fact that only the *sahṛdaya* can savor rasa) we must in effect erase the specific character if commonization is to take place. In the same way, the *vibhāvas* and the rest actually do exist insofar as they are real apprehensions of the viewer/reader. And it is these that manifest the predispositions, in the primary sense of the term “manifest”: “bring into the domain of aesthetic experience.” In short, according to Ruyyaka, since the theory of rasa was never about the rasa of the character, and “manifestation” can never have meant anything other than simply “bringing to awareness,” there can never have been a transformation of the term *vyakti* in the first place.

This is quite an astonishing reassessment, and we might expect to have encountered somewhere some criticism of it, a demurral, or at least an acknowledgement. But in fact, the only slight hesitation that is registered, so far as I have been able to discover, is in the *Sāhityadarpaṇa* (late fourteenth century). When Viśvanātha uses the language of *vyakti/vyañjanā*, we find someone for the first time confronting, or so it seems to me, the difficulties inherent in the term’s redirection from the semantics of rasa to its phenomenology. He starts with the imagined objector arguing that, since what exists in the case of rasa is only a process of tasting—of aesthetic consciousness—and not some actual object, how can the language of “manifestation” (*vyañjanā*) continue to be applied to it? The author’s answer is to concede the point, and to defend himself by saying that the use of “manifestation” is borrowed from the language of *dhvani*:

1. *Vyaktiviveka* pp. 62-63.

Objection: If it is indeed the case that rasa is not some *thing* different from the experience of it, then one winds up arguing that rasa is not an object of knowledge. And since manifestation, which you accept as the mechanism for knowing rasa, is the making known of some particular object, rasa and manifestation would wind up being one and the same thing (since both are *forms* of knowledge and not *objects* of knowledge). And how then could rasa possibly be something that is manifested, as you claim [at the beginning of the chapter: *vibhāvenānubhāvena vyaktaḥ ...* (2.1)], when the source of manifestation and the thing manifested must be absolutely separate entities, like a lamp and a pot. To quote: “Manifestation produces a cognition of something else....”

Answer: This objection is entirely valid. And for this reason it has been argued that “Rasa must be completely distinguished from all acts of making and knowing. It is a unique function, something we can call ‘savoring.’”¹ And that is why scholars use distinctive terms for it: tasting, savoring, rapture (*camatkāra*), and so on.² It is only because we are keen to establish the process as such and as different from all other language functions, that we have said that rasa is something “manifested.”³

The best commentary on this passage is the vacillation expressed by Viśvanātha himself later, in chapter 5, where he vindicates the verbal function of *vyañjanā* in general but demurs

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1. Source unknown.
 2. Commentators and manuscripts are in disagreement on this passage. Anantadāsa construes the whole passage from *vilakṣaṇa-* to *bhavatīti* (which he reads thusly) as the direct discourse introduced by *āhus* (whom he calls the ancient authorities). I read *iti* after *vyāpāraḥ* and omit it after *vyapadesāḥ*. The last line seems to me Viśvanātha’s defense (*asmābhiḥ*) of *vyañjanā* despite its logical irrelevance to a theory based on a hermeneutical *vyāpāra*.
 3. *Sāhityadarpaṇa* pp. 79-81 (NSP). As Andrew Ollett has pointed out to me, it is possible that Viśvanātha is responding directly to Dhanika; at the same time, his strategy—insisting on a metaphorical use of *vyakti* in order to accommodate the doctrine of subjective appreciation of rasa (*rasacarvaṇā*)—seems very similar to Mahima Bhaṭṭa’s.

when applying it to rasa: “This linguistic function [“a fourth function above and beyond *abhidhā*, *lakṣaṇā*, and *tātparya*”] is called ‘manifestation’ by scholars. But when it comes to the ‘manifestation’ of rasas, others”—that is, Viśvanātha himself—“say that the function should be called ‘tasting.’”¹

* * *

I have tried to show that we must distinguish both conceptually and historically between two kinds of *vyakti*, one a *śabdavṛtti*, a linguistic phenomenon and an objective process, the other a *cittavṛtti* (or *antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*), a psychological phenomenon and a subjective process. (While a linguistic fact is of course at one and the same time a cognitive fact, the two can be analytically separated and were actually separated in India.) When Ānandavardhana and Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka were employing the language of *vyakti* they were doing so in the former sense. The latter sense arose only after Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka’s hermeneutical transformation of the idea of rasa—and possibly thanks to Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka’s own ironical usage—when rasa was no longer held to be the stable emotion manifested (rather than directly or figuratively expressed) in the character but rather (according to Abhinavagupta’s reformulation of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka) the stable emotion manifested in the viewer/reader, that is to say, the revelation to himself of his own *vāsanās*.

Why later discussions fuse (or confuse) these two senses, why, that is, the language of linguistics was retained for the language of psychology, is a question we can definitively answer only when we have a fuller understanding of when and where the transformation took place. If we conclude, on the basis of the little evidence I could find, that it started with Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, the purpose would appear to have been to turn Ānandavardhana on his head, and demonstrate that the terminology he uses properly applies to something he never considered. If it begins with Abhinavagupta or in his lineage, the purpose might be the desire—and the sheer intellectual bravado in the face of so arduous a task—to vindicate the *dhvani/vyakti* concept that Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka had sought to refute even while deploying the

1. *Sāhityadarpaṇa* 5.5., p. 271 (NSP): *sā ceyaṃ vyañjanā nāma vṛttir ity ucyate budhaiḥ / rasavyaktau punar vṛttiṃ rasanākhyāṃ pare viduḥ //*

new hermeneutics that made this refutation essential. In the same way, when seven centuries later Jagannātha asserted Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's *bhoga* to be identical with *vyakti*, he was eliding the critique that led to the terminological redefinition—a critique, he thereby implied, that the term had anticipated from the start.

Equally striking, if my analysis here is even remotely correct, is the internal intellectual history of the transformation: first, the very fact that the transformation was so rarely thematized by the tradition itself, and second, when it was thematized, as by Ruyyaka, the move made to defend the new theory by locating its justification in the founding doctrine of the aesthetic system. While the latter phenomenon is hardly novel—the growth of knowledge in the Sanskrit world often has the *satkāryavāda* (or Platonic) character of discovery of something there all along rather than invention of something entirely new—the former merits careful scholarly attention: clearly what traditions fail to see (if this was failure) must be as much a part of our concern as what they do see. Let me also highlight in closing the small but consequential methodological point illustrated by the foregoing exercise and which I will characterize by way of another old Sāṃkhya figure: intellectual history without philology will be as blind as philology without intellectual history will be lame.

Excursus

Whether or not it was Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka who first (and if then, ironically) redeployed the term *vyakti* in the psychological sense it was to have for writers from Mammaṭa onward, elsewhere in the fragments it is clear he had only the linguistic meaning in mind. That some scholars have thought otherwise is due to a suspect passage in the *Locana* in the course of Abhinavagupta's restatement of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's critique. We may compare the *Locana* version with the *Abhinavabhāratī* rendering and Ruyyaka's later summary from his *Samketa* commentary on the *Kāvyaaprakāśa*:

- (a) *Dhvanyālokalocana*: śaktirūpasya hi śṛṅgārasyābhivyaaktau viṣayārjanatāratamyapravṛttiḥ
- (b) *Abhinavabhāratī*: śaktirūpatvena pūrvam sthitasya [sc. rasasya] paścād bhivyaaktau viṣayārjanatāratamyāpattiḥ

(c) *Samketa: viṣayārjanatāratamyād api rasanīyatvābhāvaḥ*.¹

As I understand it, the idea being attributed to Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka here is that if Ānanda's "manifestation" were to be accepted as the mechanism behind rasa, it could come about that, "since rasa exists only in potential form² and has to be 'manifested,' there would be 'gradations' (*tāratamya*) in the acquisition of all the pertinent objects" (i.e., the aesthetic elements, *vibhāvādi*), so much so that (as Ruyyaka concludes) one might never have a full experience of the rasa.

On this interpretation the reading *-pravṛtti* in the *Locana* passage would be a corruption for *-āpatti*. And indeed, the received reading makes little sense, as the recent translation of Ingalls et al. shows: "If the erotic rasa were a power [located within him] that is manifested, the spectator would make even greater efforts to obtain those objects [which bring about the manifestation]" (1990: 221). They also seem to be in error when they say, with reference to the use of *abhivyajyate* in the *Locana* passage that follows, "It seems unlikely ... that [Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka] is using *abhivyakti* in Abhinava's more restricted sense, namely the manifestation of a suggestion by verbal means" (1990: 227). In fact, it is Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka who has the more restricted understanding of the term here. The theory of *abhivyakti*, says Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, is subject to the same criticism as the theory of *utpatti*, since rasa can be "manifested" neither internally, in the perceiving subject, nor externally, in the actor or the characters (*tatrāpi kiṃ svagato 'bhivyajyate rasaḥ paraḡato vā*). On the first option, the viewer/spectator would be having the exact same experience as the character (and so recoil from tragedy, and so on); on the second, he would have no experience at all. This dilemma would make no sense if it were the later, non-

1. *Dhvanyālokalocana* p. 182; *Abhinavabhāratī* p. 270; *Kāvyaṣaṣṭakāśa* p. 563.

2. One of the four varieties of *abhivyakti* reviewed by Mahima Bhaṭṭa; an example is the curd existing *in potentia* in milk (*Vyaktiviveka* p. 80).

I thank C. Rajendran (Calicut) for his remarks on an earlier version of this essay, and Andrew Ollett (New York) for his editorial assistance.

“restricted,” psychological meaning of (*abhi*)*vyakti* that were in play.

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