Meaning and Appearance: The Theology of Literary Emotions in Medieval Kashmir

The Harvard community has made this article openly available. Please share how this access benefits you. Your story matters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>Reich, James D. 2016. Meaning and Appearance: The Theology of Literary Emotions in Medieval Kashmir. Doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, Graduate School of Arts &amp; Sciences.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citable link</td>
<td><a href="http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:33493514">http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:33493514</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terms of Use</td>
<td>This article was downloaded from Harvard University’s DASH repository, and is made available under the terms and conditions applicable to Other Posted Material, as set forth at <a href="http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA">http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:dash.current.terms-of-use#LAA</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meaning and Appearance: The Theology of Literary Emotions in Medieval Kashmir

A dissertation presented

by

James D. Reich

to

The Committee on the Study of Religion

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the subject of

The Study of Religion

Harvard University

Cambridge, Massachusetts

April 2016
Meaning and Appearance: The Theology of Literary Emotions in Medieval Kashmir

Abstract

This dissertation examines a major debate in tenth- to twelfth-century Kashmiri literary theory between two famous theorists: Abhinavagupta and Mahimabhaṭṭa, and shows that we cannot fully understand the debate between these two thinkers if we do not properly understand the religious context in which it took place. This is because the philosophical issues at stake in this debate, which concern the difference between how things appear and what they truly are, overlapped in important ways with theological debates going on at the time. So when a twelfth-century literary theorist discussed how the words of a poem relate to the mood at the core of the poem, he was at the same time discussing issues that were of basic theological importance in his context, such as God's relationship to the world, the self's relationship to actions, or the relations between knowledge, intuition, and memory.

Part One looks at the famous theory of "poetic manifestation" developed in the ninth century by Ānandavardhana and radically updated 150 years later by Abhinavagupta. In this half of the dissertation I explore the connection between Abhinavagupta's literary theory and his Hindu theology. Part Two of the dissertation looks at a famous attempt to refute the theory of poetic manifestation by Mahimabhaṭṭa, a theorist writing in Kashmir within a generation of Abhinavagupta who relied heavily and explicitly on the Buddhist philosophy of Dharmakīrti. I show that Mahimabhaṭṭa's use of Dharmakīrti was a direct response to the religious basis of Abhinavagupta's theory, as Dharmakīrti represented an inverted religious worldview from that of Abhinavagupta. This difference, in turn affects the conclusions these theorists reach about the ethical value of literature. Whereas Abhinavagupta ultimately concludes that the pleasure
literature affords us is itself an ethical goal, Mahimabhaṭṭa attributes only an instrumental value to the pleasure of literature, saying that it is like sugar coating on the bitter medicine of ethical lessons. These conclusions, I show, are not arbitrary, but are deeply tied to the assumptions underlying both aesthetic and religious ideas.
# Table of Contents

Introduction.........................................................................................................................1

**Part One: Emotion Manifested**

Chapter One: Ānandavardhana and the Metaphysics of Literature.................................43
Chapter Two: Abhinavagupta and the Theology of Literature........................................108

**Part Two: Emotion Inferred**

Chapter Three: Mahimabhaṭṭa on Literary Knowing.......................................................225
Chapter Four: The Will of Objects....................................................................................314
Chapter Five: Mahimabhaṭṭa on Literary Being..............................................................361

Conclusion..........................................................................................................................393
Bibliography......................................................................................................................404
Acknowledgments

This dissertation would have been simply impossible without generous guidance, help, friendship, advice, conversation, and collaboration, and it gives me great pleasure to show some small bit of gratitude to all those who have been there along the way. My advisor, Parimal Patil, introduced me to the study of South Asian philosophy and first set me down the path on which I now find myself. His intellect and enthusiasm has been an inspiration over the years as he helped me acquire the knowledge and skills to eventually begin participating in the scholarship on this subject myself. Anne Monius introduced me to the study of South Asian literature and literary theory, and showed me how to read these subjects more sensitively than I ever would have on my own. Her endless and diligent feedback and comments on drafts of this dissertation are beyond my ability to repay. Without them I would surely be in poor shape, to say nothing of the dissertation itself. Lawrence McCrea very generously spent a summer with me in Ithaca reading Mahimabhaṭṭa and explaining many of the (very complex) nuances of the text. His feedback was invaluable during the years in which I worked on this project.

Many other scholars have been helpful to me as well. Frank Clooney’s classes at Harvard provided me with numerous opportunities to think carefully about religious philosophy from India. Charles Hallisey’s classes on Buddhism and Buddhist literature expanded my understanding of how texts could be read and how we might think about them. Janet Gyatso, who also helped me learn how to teach, gave a generous ear and helpful feedback when needed. Guy Leavitt taught me Sanskrit and gave me help with the Sanskrit materials at a few critical points in this project. Jack Hawley’s warm hospitality made me feel welcome and at home during a year spent taking graduate classes at Columbia University, and he has always been a valuable resource and source of scholarly inspiration for me. Sheldon Pollock welcomed me into his Sanskrit classes and gave thoughtful and serious comments on the papers I wrote for him on Sanskrit literary theory, from which I learned a great deal and for which I am very grateful. Somadeva Vasudeva showed me how to read Sanskrit analyses of literature early in my career, and also taught me a great deal about how to carefully and responsibly work with texts from the ancient past, lessons that I hope I have lived up to, as much as I can. It was Somadeva who introduced me to the work of Ruyyaka, from which I found my way to the subject of this dissertation. John Nemec provided much needed encouragement during the course of this project, and it was in conversation with him that I gained the critical insights necessary to write Chapter Four. Sudipta Kaviraj, with whom I studied Western literary theory at Columbia, has been a kind and generous mentor, and I have often motivated myself over the long years by reminding myself that I aspire to be worthy to share an intellectual community with him.

No less helpful than these professors have been my colleagues and friends in various places. Ben Williams has been a trusted partner in crime for many years now, and has given me advice and shared materials whenever necessary. He and I have read a great deal of Sanskrit together, including many of the Śaiva texts cited in this dissertation, and I look forward to reading more. Rosanna Picascia has also been a great reading partner and colleague, as has Hamsa Stainton. Drew Thomases read parts of this work and commented on them, and conversations with him about India always leave me invigorated and enthusiastic. Tyler Richard gave great editorial comments on Chapter One. Ofer Dynes read my introduction as well as Chapter Two, and spent many coffee breaks outside of libraries listening to my ideas and sharing perspectives from his work on European literature. Luke Bender has been a great friend, and we talked a great deal during our graduate careers about the parallels in our research, his on China.
and mine on India. He and I traded chapters of our dissertations as we wrote them, and being taken seriously and read carefully by him was always helpful and always flattering, given the quality of his own work. Oded Na’aman has been a close friend and inspiration for many years, and his depth, sincerity, and humor constantly remind me of what is really valuable. He read Chapter One and gave me feedback from a philosopher’s point of view, as did Anuk Arudpragasam, another close friend to whom I am grateful, and with whom I have shared many important conversations. Bernardo Zacka and Daniel May are two more friends who have contributed to my conviction that genuine intellectual work grows out of conversation and should feed back into it. Very special gratitude is due to Brenna McDuffie, friend and partner, who has been endlessly helpful and supportive. She has been there during the brightest as well as the darkest moments of this project, and her skill as an editor is matched only by the patience and warmth of her heart.

Finally, I would like to express deep gratitude to my parents Matthew and Karen, as well as to my aunt and uncle Gary and Susanna, all my grandparents—in particular my grandmother Nancy Reich, the first PhD I knew, who taught me at a young age to know the label “intellectual” as a compliment—my sister Julia and cousin Laurel, and all of my ancestors who came before those named here. All of them together received, guarded, augmented, passed on, and surrounded me with a family tradition of conversing, opining, questioning, learning, and approaching the world with curiosity, humor, and kindness. I can only hope that I live up to the gifts they have given me, and that this project is one small part of a lifelong effort to pay it forward.
The sea was not a mask. No more was she.
The song and water were not medleyed sound
Even if what she sang was what she heard,
Since what she sang was uttered word by word.
It may be that in all her phrases stirred
The grinding water and the gasping wind;
But it was she and not the sea we heard.

- Wallace Stevens, "The Idea of Order at Key West"
Introduction

I sit in my room and imagine a character. I think up the scenario she is in and find the words to describe her, and I write them down. This character—let's say her name is Diana—has recently lost her boyfriend in a car crash. Let's say that before she met her boyfriend, Dennis, she spent many frustrated years in bad relationships, and that when she met him, she finally felt she had met someone with whom she could spend her life. At first she was distrustful, but gradually she relaxed and opened up, and in time she felt it was effortless to be with him, and that she had never felt that way before. He hadn't proposed yet, but she could tell it was coming soon, because they talked and she knew that he felt the same way. The car crash, in a way, was her fault. He had been driving and they were lost, and she was frustrated with his navigation so she tried to grab his GPS away from him to fix it (she was generally short-tempered), and in the moment of struggle over the phone Dennis didn't notice he had drifted a bit onto the shoulder of the road. When he tried to correct he corrected too far and swerved into oncoming traffic. Diana was bruised. Dennis went into a coma and two weeks later his father, legally his health care proxy, decided to end his life support. Diana, eight months after this, sits at a desk in her room trying to write a letter to Dennis on the suggestion of a therapist that her parents have urged her to see. Her hair is pulled back in a pony-tail and she has no make-up on. Her pen is frozen after having written, "Dear Dennis." She sits for a long time. She crumples up the page and starts again, this time writing "Dear Dingy," her pet name for him based on an inside joke from their third date. As soon as she writes this she laughs. Then she reads it over and slowly puts her head down on the page, feeling it against her cheek, and she breathes haltingly a few times. Tears begin to soak into the paper, blurring the ink marks.
Having written all this down, I give the page to someone. They look at the white sheet of paper with the black smudges on it in recognizable shapes, they read, and they begin to feel sad. (You will have to imagine, please, that my short story is of much higher quality than it is. But this shouldn't be too hard for you, human imagination being what it is.) Maybe they even feel sorry for Diana. My reader feels this way despite knowing with certainty that Diana is not real. And even if she were real, my description of her never actually states directly that she feels sad, or that she is dealing with grief, or that she is pitiable. All I have described, and all the reader has encountered, are facts and images, not an actual mood, and not even a word for a mood. A dead lover, a desk in a room, tears; these are what I wrote about. There is no need at all to say, "she felt sad," "she missed Dennis," or "her grief was deep." My reader is able to surmise all of this from the facts of the plot. And what is more amazing is that my reader does not just coldly contemplate the emotions they surmise Diana must be experiencing. My reader actually participates in them, in some as-yet-unexplained way. My reader is moved by Diana's fictional feelings, and finds the description of them intriguing or engulfing.

Perhaps even more strange and amazing than all of this is the fact my reader not only feels moved but values such experiences, even when the emotion depicted is one that would be unpleasant to experience directly. They probably likewise feel that the job of imagining scenarios about emotions and then writing down the words for those scenarios is valuable and admirable, if done properly. It is even possible that my reader feels that writing such scenarios down and disseminating them can be harmful if done improperly—that bad literature can corrupt the youth or encourage selfishness or laziness or racism or something like that. When asked, they might be able to give some account of why they thought this, and such an account, even if inchoate, would tell us something important about them. They might, on the other hand, be stymied by the
question and have no ready answer. Still, I feel fairly certain that even the stymied reader would feel that something important would be lost if story-telling and literature were banished from human life.

All this might seem simple, and even quite familiar. But it is really also quite mysterious and amazing if we step back and think about it. Really, what are we to make of the rather miraculous fact that black marks on a page, representing an assemblage of imaginary facts, make us feel some sort of emotional response that we find to be pleasing and even valuable? How do we explain or even describe what I am doing as the author, or what the reader is encountering and experiencing? How do we account for the common judgment that this is a valuable enterprise? And beyond this, how might we determine whether what is written down is "good" or whether it has been a failure? Why would some stories be "gripping" or "moving" and others be "dull" or "confusing"? What could these terms refer to, and on what basis can we apply them? Or can we even apply them accurately at all?

These questions are not new. They are the basis of what is now commonly called literary theory. And if the questions are puzzling, the proposed answers are teeming, spanning a variety of different sub-disciplines—semiotics, hermeneutics, psychoanalysis, formalism, to name a few. All of these are well-known in the modern academic study of the humanities. What is less widely known, although still studied in the modern academy and for a long time now, is that literary theory was also a thriving field of inquiry in pre-modern South Asia, and that intellectuals working in Sanskrit addressed themselves to a surprisingly similar set of questions and developed their own range of answers. Modern studies on the literary theoretical ideas of pre-modern Sanskrit intellectuals are too numerous to cite here individually. But what they all have to offer is a window into a different intellectual world, where familiar questions were answered
and debated within a network of unfamiliar ideas and assumptions. And this network offers a valuable opportunity, because not only does studying literary theories from South Asia offer us a fresh perspective on questions we are all already grappling with, it also gives us new ways to understand how answers to such questions are related to other types of values and conclusions, and how articulating a position on literature might be fit integrally into more general attempts to understand and evaluate human life.

This dissertation will focus on a few of these South Asian intellectuals, specifically two men living in the small, northern kingdom of Kaśmīr at a time when the connections between literary theory and the broader network of ideas about life became particularly pronounced and particularly interesting. These intellectuals lived within 100 years of each other, from about 950CE to about 1100CE. Both of them wrote their theories within a context in which the connection between literary theory and other realms of discourse had recently undergone a radical shift, and both of them were part of a broad exploration of the implications of this shift. And what makes them so illuminating to analyze together is that their literary theories are diametrically opposed, each aimed at refuting the other's basic assumptions. One of these intellectuals, Abhinavagupta, has been the subject of extensive studies, while the other of them, Mahimabhaṭṭa, has been subjected to little more than summaries of his main ideas. But in both cases this dissertation will try to break new ground not just by looking at their literary theories, or even by determining what contributions their ancient ideas might make to the modern discipline of literary theory, but by trying to show that in Kaśmīr in these centuries the endeavor to answer literary theoretical questions was closely tied to what we today would call religion, so much so that neither of the two fields can be fully understood in isolation from the other. This approach is new within the study of South Asian religion, where literary theory and religion are
often assumed to be separate and are treated as such, and also within the modern academy, where "religion and literature" is almost always taken to mean the appearance of religious ideas within literature, and not the relationship between literary theory and theological theory. But for the thinkers I am discussing, even the most staunchly and patently secular literature was taken to have religious import, simply because the mechanism by which that literature conveys emotions was thought to be inseparable from how the universe works as a whole, which was in turn inseparable from all the themes and questions that are ordinarily considered "religious." So even without mentioning God or the afterlife or ritual or any other religious theme, Sanskrit literature, simply in virtue of the fact that it presents *stimuli* that convey emotion, was taken to be an important subject of discussion for religious thinkers.

Therefore, this dissertation will show, first, that ideas we today would clearly classify as "religious" actually did come to influence, and were influenced by, ideas about literature in medieval Kaśmīr, and that this developed for particular intellectual historical reasons a few generations prior to Abhinavagupta and Mahimabhaṭṭa. I will also explain why this might have happened, and what we might learn from this.

**The Vortex of Religion**

When I say that religious ideas influenced ideas about literature in medieval Kaśmīr, I don't mean myths or ritual or other religious practices. I am referring specifically to second-order, theoretical and even philosophical reflection on the nature and meaning of myths and practices. This is what was closely related to literary theory for these thinkers, and I will call this

---

1 See, for example the entire issue of *The Journal Religion and Literature* 41.2 (2009), where the field is reviewed and overviewed and where the two terms of the relation are unanimously taken to be religion and the literature itself, not the literary theory.
kind of theoretical reflection "theology" and will propose that it bears roughly the same relation
to religion as literary theory does to literature. It was on the level of theological reflection that
religion and literature were related in medieval Kaśmīr, and in this dissertation I will trace out
the structure of this relationship. But before I do this I need to explain a bit more about how I
understand religion, how what I am calling theology fits into that understanding, and how this
might be relevant to the study of Abhinavagupta and Mahimabhaṭṭa even though these men did
not have equivalent concepts in Sanskrit and lived in a world where the neat discursive
boundaries we are accustomed to drawing between religion, theology, and secular life were not
present, or at least not at all the same.

The first thing I should say about religion is that I don't think it actually exists. That is to
say, there is no thing in the world such that religion is it. Religion is not a thing that can be
 cleanly defined once and for all and then picked out in various places. The term religion is a
heuristic device, not a "natural kind," as the philosophers would say. It is a conceptual tool that
serves to take the whole psychotic kaleidoscope of human experience and filter it so as to make it
easier to understand and think about and talk about. It does this by uniting many different
elements into a single category—things like myth, ritual, community, heritage, belief, violence,
sex, law, ethics, textual transmission etc. This much has already been argued, famously, by J.Z.
Smith, who wrote: "religion is solely the creation of the scholar's study. It is created for the
scholar's analytic purposes by his imaginative acts of comparison and generalization. Religion
has no existence apart from the academy."²

I basically agree with this assessment, but what I want to emphasize in this quote is the word "purpose." Definitions of religion always serve a certain purpose, or at least they express and reinforce an ideology or self-understanding. Historically, that purpose has often been colonialist or imperialist. We use the term religion because we want to show that this or that group does or doesn't have religion, or has a perverted religion, or needs religion, or even just that we are in control of the key concept that unlocks the practices of people all over the world: that they are all "religious," and that only we can see the full picture. In all cases, if the purpose of the concept is forgotten or overlooked—or if we don't see that the term is supposed to highlight certain connections and downplay others for the sake of showing the world in a certain way—the term becomes "naturalized" and we start to assume it picks out a real thing. We then start to apply it to purposes it never was intended for, and we wind up doing things like endlessly fine-tuning the definition so that it serves all the different purposes we might want it to, or puzzling over why other languages or cultures have no word for "religion" even though they clearly have what we would call religion, and even though they do have lots of words for other things we would recognize, like sex, war, parenthood, food, kings, etc.

Other terms that work in this way would be terms like "gender," "nationality" (in the older sense, the sense in which it refers to a group of people and not just a legal or governmental arrangement), or "non-fiction." There is no single essence of religion out there in the world any more than there is an essence of nationality inside people. And yet like the concept of nationality, the concept of religion can have remarkable effects. To say that people from Sweden and people from Greece are both "European," while people from Turkey are "Arab" is a powerful move and

---

changes how people see the world, even if we want to say it has changed the world for the worse, and even if it is one that can be undermined by genetic or cultural studies. So to say that religion is a construct doesn't undermine its power as a concept, or its usefulness.

The question, then, is not what religion is, but how to use the term. Like any useful tool, the word "religion" can serve nefarious or noble purposes, and I don't believe that its purposes are necessarily nefarious simply because its history has been. In my case, the purpose is to show that certain deeply held ideas were related in complex and important and even indivisible ways to other deeply held ideas in the work of certain Kaśmīri intellectuals, and to show that these relations have various ramifications, which I will try to trace out in this introduction and the following chapters. So the definition of "religion" I will develop below is intended to serve this purpose; it is intended to help us better understand and appreciate the work of these Kaśmīri intellectuals. In the long run this will also, I hope, help us better understand ourselves, but that is a more indirect goal.

If it true that religion is a concept that doesn't exist in the world, it is also true that it is a concept that grew organically out of European religious and political experience, and is therefore in some sense an imposition onto the material I am reading. It is not native to the material, and might have been unrecognizable to the material's authors. But I do not believe this is necessarily problematic. English itself is already an imposition onto the material. Unless I'm going to write a dissertation in Sanskrit, this much is inevitable, and even if I did write a dissertation in Sanskrit, the more "accurate" my terminology the more dissertation would begin to resemble the map of Borges's mapmakers, who succeed in creating a map of exactly the same size and proportions of the territory they are mapping, at which point the map ceases to be of any use.4 The work of

understanding simply always requires translation, transformation, and interpretation, and this always requires the exercise of sympathetic imagination, and this is so even with people from our own time and place and within our own "community." To imagine otherwise is to indulge in a mythology of unmediated organic communities where each member's meanings and intentions are entirely transparent to the others. But such communities do not exist, no matter how small; we don't even have such a relationship to ourselves. There is no meaning or communication without interpretation and translation and the possibility of disagreement or imposition. So the concept "religion" can be seen here as one aspect of an inevitable task of translation. It is not important whether the concept is native to the material or even whether it would have been recognizable to the intellectuals I am studying so much as whether it is a plausible interpretation of the material, based on evidence found there, and whether it illuminates things that can be shown to be present in the material, even if the method of illumination could not have been. Anyway, I hope it will become clear in the following chapters that the definition of religion I am working with would actually not have seemed so far-fetched to Abhinavagupta and Mahimabhaṭṭa.


6 Another point that might be germane here, made by Arthur Danto, is that simply doing the work of history always involves giving true descriptions of events that would have been false or impossible to recognize at the time of the event being described. It is perfectly true, and even historically indispensable, to say, "The Thirty Years War began in 1618." No one in 1618, however, or even 1619, would have been able to agree to this statement, or understand it. They might have even vociferously rejected it. This does not mean that such a statement is false, or an alien imposition onto the people of 1618, or an invalidation of their first-hand experience of the war. It is a true statement about them from our perspective, which wasn't true from theirs. (See Arthur Coleman Danto, Narration and Knowledge, Morningside edition [Columbia University Press, 1985], Chapter Eight). It is true that this particular example, and Danto's book, is about historical archives and the nature of narrative, and doesn't apply directly to the case of translation. Danto's example also implies that one party, the historically latter party, "knows more" than the prior party. But this "knowing more" is really only relative to the story the latter party is trying to tell, and what I take to be relevant about the example is the fact that there are many cases in which we simply have to accept that certain kinds of linguistic "truth" are a matter of a dialectic between our terms and the material available to us, and not reducible to one or the other. Danto makes the point diachronically, but the point holds synchronically as well.
So in order to show the connections I want to show, I need a way of understanding religion that will make them visible; not an exhaustive or final definition, but a way of tracking certain types of ideas and their significance and relations to other ideas and actions, which fits with a plausibly common use of the term "religion." Here, then, is how I propose to understand religion for this project.

Religion, for the duration of this project, will be thought of as a field of influence. It is a force that exerts influence on the meanings of various areas of life, pulling ideas, actions, attitudes, and experiences into relationship with each other and with something that is considered to be of ultimate significance, something beyond which there is nothing. This last part is crucial. It is the sense of finality, or of ultimate priority, that makes such a field of influence "religious". Sometimes this is ultimacy is articulated and sometimes it is inchoate or unconscious, but in either case there is a relationship to something central and ultimate. Religion is not only this. But it is this. And in developing this idea I take myself merely to be articulating one way in which religion is already commonly understood in ordinary life. When people use the word "religion," I believe they often have something like this in mind, and the point of making this explicit is to show that the kinds of ideas and dynamics at play in South Asian literary theory were related to what most people would intuitively call religion.

---

7 This differs from Tillich's "ultimate concern" in that it is not concerned so much with the object of ultimate concern as it is with the structures that crystallize around this object, and the relationship between the different parts of these structures.

8 This is why I use the term. One could ask, if religion is just a heuristic, why use it at all? Why not just talk about ideas of ultimate significance or ideas or practice related to notions of ultimate significance? The answer is that it is available and it works. If I am trying to talk to a designer, I could give him my ideas about "mid- to large-sized objects of different shapes and colors with different weights arranged around the room in such a way as to make the room fit for human work and leisure." I could also just talk to him about "furniture." The word "furniture" is a useful way to pick out a class of objects that I want to talk about by means of a description that is useful to me. Avant-garde designers or aesthetic theorists might be able to point to furniture that doesn't fit this definition. Fine. I still find it useful to use the term. With religion, the stakes are higher and the issues more politically fraught, which is
Religion, again, is not exhausted by this idea of a field of meaningful influence. Certain types of animism, for example, don't fit this definition. In order to understand them as religious we would need a different heuristic, with a different purpose, which would bring forms of animism into connection with other kinds of practices or ideas in different ways. But my definition is one way to understand religion. Neither is religion a bounded sphere. There is no line to be drawn where "religion" ends and the "secular realm" begins. Religion is rather like a vortex, pulling human actions and ideas into orbit and radiating its pull outwards. The center of the orbit is what I have described as whatever is of ultimate significance.

Like a vortex, some things are near the center and spin quickly, having a tangible and undeniable relationship with the center. Other things are way out on the edge, rotating so slowly that it may not seem, to an observer out at this point, that they are orbiting anything at all. And yet the trained observer can determine that what looks like a straight line is actually a slight curve, and that the curve is caused by the pull of the center of the vortex. A Catholic kneels in church and prays with a rosary—this is clearly and directly related to some notion of ultimate meaning, and is religious by my definition. A Catholic craftsman lovingly constructs rosaries as part of his devotion, crafting them and selling them as a gift to the church and to God; still religious. The craftsman goes to buy wood for the rosary. Is this religious? Is it religious when he goes to the bank to take out money to buy the wood? What about when he ties his shoes to go to the bank? The relationship with the center of the circle is getting fainter and fainter, but it doesn't really make sense to say that the first two activities are definitely religious and the others not at all, or the first three, or whatever. It makes more sense to say that religion is like a vortex fading in power as you move out from the center, or like a sound that becomes less audible as it travels.

why I spend so much time emphasizing the provisional and heuristic nature of the term. But I don't want this to imply that we would be better off without the term.
further. There may be things floating in the water beyond the pull of the vortex. It is not necessary for something to be absolutely totalizing for it to be religious, but it may, in certain cases, reach towards totality. The "stronger" a religion is, in one sense, the further out the vibrations are felt, until in extreme cases either everything is understood to be in orbit or anything that cannot be brought into orbit must be cut, ascetically, out of life.

Notice that this understanding of religion includes ideas as well as actions and it also, importantly, includes ideas about the vortex itself. Religion is not the center of the vortex. It is the relationship between the center and the edges. To articulate this vortex, or to understand it, or to say what its proper shape should be is the role of theology if the center of the vortex is assumed to be ultimate,9 in which case notions about the vortex are themselves part of the vortex in the sense that their movements are influenced by the pull of the vortex; or it is the role of religious studies, if one brackets the question of the actual significance of the center and is only interested in the shape itself (in which case one's ideas are actually being influenced by some other, larger vortex—secular humanism, for example—around which the studied "religious" vortex is tacitly assumed to be orbiting). This is obviously an extension of the term theology from its Christian origins. But it is a warranted extension, I believe, because it plausibly captures the spirit and nature of Christian theological reflections while allowing us to see the common denominator those reflections have with other traditions, including those traditions that don't have a concept of God, like Buddhism.10

---

9The nature of the "assumption" at play is a separate issue and I have deliberately left the term vague in order to leave plenty of room for diversity of opinion.

10I am not the first one to notice the connections between theoretical and normative reflection from within a tradition and Christian theoretical reflections on God. Jackson and Makransky ("Introduction," in Buddhist Theology: Critical Reflections by Contemporary Scholars, Roger R. Jackson and John J. Makransky, eds, [Richmond: Curzon Press, 2000]), also make the case that "Buddhist Theology" is a sensible term, and their description is similar to what I am describing.
From the perspective of both theology and religious studies, an actor need not notice an action as religious in order for it to be religious. Someone can act religiously without fully knowing it. Faith as "ultimate concern" might be one way that someone swirls in the vortex, but it isn't necessary in order to be considered swirling. This is why, for example, scholarship in the twentieth century has been able to make such fruitful arguments about the unconscious religious assumptions underlying various political or legal ideas. This is also why we want to call attending a mass "religious" even if someone does so primarily for social reasons. So someone need not be consciously religious to be religious, nor would someone necessarily need to understand the overall shape of the vortex, or be concerned with the center, as long as their activities were being shaped by the pull of that center. The theologian, however, is someone who is conscious of the entire structure, and feels a need to articulate and reveal it to others, and often even to construct it or shape it themselves, pulling in certain activities, ideas, or attitudes and pushing others out. This might not be fully rational—there may be places at which theologians bridge gaps by arguing apophatically or mystically, or by pointing out where logic ends and faith takes over. But in these cases at least these bridges themselves will be rationally and theologically described. It is one thing not to talk about something; it is another to say that it can't be talked about.

Perhaps I can illustrate the theologian's role better if I use a mundane example, which I will take from the Indian philosopher Bhartṛhari. In this example Bhartṛhari is describing his philosophy of action, which bears significant resemblance to what I am trying to describe. Bhartṛhari tells us:

---

11 The most famous example of this is Carl Schmitt, Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty, trans. George Schwabb (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005). Example of works influenced by this and continuing its tradition are too numerous to cite.
What is called action is a collection of parts produced in a sequence mentally conceived as one and identical with the parts which are subordinate to it. The parts which occur in a sequence and are partly existent and partly not so cannot enter into contact with the senses such as the eyes, whose objects are always the existent. Just as the whole word 'cow' is not perceptible [at one instant] to the senses but, after its [phonetic] parts are perceived [sequentially], is understood by the mind, in the same way, after actions are differently (that is, in parts) perceived, they are understood as a unity. . . Just as pouring water etc. are parts of the action of cooking, in the same way, pouring water etc. have also parts of their own. The name action cannot be applied to the solitary point reached by extreme sub-division. That attains sequence through the earlier and later parts and the non-present action being superimposed on it, it can also be expressed by the verbs.¹²

An action, according to Bhartṛhari, is a unitary entity that is divided into temporal parts, each of which gets its meaning from the atemporal unity it participates in. We say, for example, "John cooks." This is an action. But within the flow of real time, there is no single thing John does that is cooking. What John really does as we look on is pour water, light a fire, bring a pot over, chop things, put things in the pot, etc. Only the unity of these things together is cooking, and it is an ideal unity, understood by us in abstraction but not immediately present in any single activity we can observe. The ideal abstraction is rather superimposed by us onto all the individual parts to make sense of them. And so it makes sense, looking at John brushing dirt off the edge of a carrot, to say that he is cooking.¹³

Now, cooking is a tangible activity that no one is apt to lose track of. But imagine an action so drawn out and complex, perhaps one that is collectively realized by multiple people, that we are apt to forget that there is one activity being carried out; even the participants might


¹³The main differences between the understanding of religion I am offering and Bhartṛhari's theory of action are, first, that I am describing a vortex that fades out at the edges, whereas for Bhartṛhari I think it would have been clear what was included in cooking and what was not. Or at least it was supposed to be clear. The other difference is that Bhartṛhari thinks that the temporal divisions are essentially illusory, and he privileges the unified action over the subordinate, divided moments. What I am describing is closer to Abhinavagupta's version of this theory, where divisions are held to be real in their own right, not purely illusory. But here I am jumping ahead of myself.
not entirely sure what they are participating in. The building of pyramids might be an example, where a slave mixing mud for bricks need not have any idea what a pyramid is in order for us to correctly say of him that he is building a pyramid. The theologian, in scenarios like this, is the one who points out how the different activities are related to the unity they all create. In the case of cooking, the theologian would explain to an onlooker, or to John, that pouring water and lighting a fire are related to the activity of cooking, and why they are related, why water is a necessary part of cooking, why cooking itself is desirable, why one person should get the pan and one should cut the vegetables, etc.

To be a theologian requires, again, that the center of the vortex be seen as ultimate, in the sense that there is nothing beyond it. This is what distinguishes theology from philosophy or other kinds of theory, which may become theological on my terms under certain conditions, but which are not necessarily so. Take political theory as an example. Voting and education are both integral parts of liberal democracy. But to talk about how voting and education are related to the health of liberal democracy is not theology on this understanding, because liberal democracy is very deliberately not ultimate. It is only intended to enable certain kinds of freedom and well-being, and to allow individuals to choose for themselves how to spend that well-being, and what they feel is ultimate. If one were to argue for liberal democracy from the standpoint of God, perhaps to say that our freedom to find meaning for ourselves is God's gift and that no human organization can justifiably alienate it, then this would be theology—in fact it would be political theology. But political theology is no longer liberal democratic theory; it would be a theological justification for liberal democratic theory, one which liberal democracy couldn't itself absorb without ceasing to be liberal democracy.\(^{14}\)

\(^{14}\)Philosophy may also be distinguished from theology in this way. Such a distinction was not always observed, and ancient theologians are often read as philosophers and ancient philosophers as theologians, right up until the time of
This means that what I am calling religion is doubly constructed, so to speak. I am constructing the concept for a certain purpose. But the phenomenon that my construction is intended to bring to light is itself constituted in many cases by an imaginative construction that authoritatively unifies (descriptively or normatively) many different things (attitudes, actions, rituals, attitudes, etc.) into a coherent structure, centered around something believed to be ultimate (or, we could say, final). The unification can take many forms, and can often take the form of advice or even command. Thus a theologian normatively describing the vortex might tell people it is their job to swim to the center of the vortex, and in this or that particular way. Or he might tell them that the center is by definition unreachable; they will forever orbit it and that their orbit must follow particular paths, perhaps because scripture commands as such. Or he might look at the motion of the swirl and the way other eddies and currents move and say that because language always works in this or that way, scripture must be interpreted in this or that way, yielding this or that prescription. Or he might explain that certain experiences have a certain relation to the center, or that certain types of ethical actions will carry one to varies parts of the vortex. These are all forms that a theologian's unification of the vortex can take, and this unification is itself a part of the vortex. It is not always the case that a religious vortex has theologians, certainly not philosophically minded ones. But it often is, and the Sanskrit intellectuals that I will soon discuss are such theologians.

---

Kant and Hegel, who also bridge the gap between philosophy and theology. Only modern philosophy that deliberately limits itself to certain questions, or to questions of technique and method, is atheological, and I take it that it is the refusal to answer questions of absolute meaning that truly makes this kind of philosophy atheological, and not its refusal to answer questions about God or questions about certain metaphysical issues. One can easily refuse to answer such questions on theological grounds; there are easy theological explanations for why we cannot and must not speculate about what happens after death, or before birth. Theology, on the other hand, as a much broader and more foundational field of inquiry, is always able to absorb techniques or methods from philosophy and remain theological, or from other types of theory (Liberation Theology, for example, which draws on Marx).
Now, unlike my construction, the theologian's is naturalized. It is not heuristic or provisional but is intended to articulate the real structure of the universe. It is obviously the case, however, that no two theologians agree entirely, even within the same tradition, and also that theology, both formal and popular, changes over time. The theology of twelfth-century Paris and of seventeenth-century England and of twentieth-century Texas are entirely different, though they all are Christian.

It is not my intention to offer a theory of theological history. However, one way that we might fruitfully think about theological change is to think about the fact that theologians don't simply try to understand the center of the vortex. They try to construct the whole vortex; or, from their point of view, to articulate its structure, which might be hidden to the average person. It is not only the center that is important. What is important is the relationship between the center and the edges. Because of this, various eddies, counter-swirls, or anomalous shapes can change the whole vortex, even the shape of the center of the vortex, when incorporated. The vortex, in other words, is dialectical. The center doesn't entirely dictate the shape of the edges any more than phenomena at the edges make up the shape of the center. Theological change may happen, in part, because the kinds of experiences and activities that need to be theologically unified have changed.

In my definition there is room to assume that eddies and swirls and objects at the outer edges of the vortex can change its overall shape just as much as the center can. A stray eddy or a new object disturbing the swirl might even prompt a shift in how one understands that center (since, after all, the center is really nothing but the vanishing point, the mathematical limit, as it were, of the direction of the surrounding swirls). The definition also prevents us from over-indulging in a hermeneutics of suspicion and trying to reduce the outer edges to nothing but the
center or vice versa. To return again to the example of cooking, we wouldn't want to say, watching John chopping vegetables, that he thinks he is chopping vegetables but what he is really doing is cooking, nor would it make sense to say that we first have to understand cooking to understand chopping and boiling, and at the same time to assume that we can understand cooking without understanding boiling and chopping. Similarly, we can't assume that changes in one level are always subordinate to changes at another level. If the cook-theologian is committed to the idea of describing cooking, and if John's actions start to deviate significantly from what he formerly thought cooking to be, and if he can't just dismiss John as a bad cook, then the theologian may subtly shift his understanding of what cooking is. Cooking might be thought of first as the creation of sustenance that is easy to digest. But if John starts blanching the tomatoes and peeling them so the texture of the food is better, or putting boiled vegetables in an ice-bath to preserve their color, or using some of the extra trimmings to create garnishes, then it might start to seem like creating sustenance isn't the sine qua non of cooking. An enterprising cook-theologian might, in fact, try to say that sustenance refers not to a purely physical process, but to an emotional one as well. They might develop the idea of "culinary experience," and they might develop an aesthetics and a theory of sensations and psychology to go along with this. Now the "center" of the vortex has changed slightly, not so much that we can no longer call it cooking, but enough that we can say that John's little flourishes have prompted a new conception of the "ultimate" point of cooking, the cooking telos. Alternatively, the cook-theologian's idea might come first, and his theories might trickle down and affect the way ordinary people do their cooking. There is no reason to assume the influence could only go in one direction.

I hope readers will bear with the triviality of the example, because what I want to argue is that something like this happened in medieval Kašmīr, and that arguments about literary
phenomena came to be self-consciously in religious orbit, their motion both shaped by that orbit and also shaping it, as aesthetic ideas were developed and incorporated into religious traditions. This is why it is not possible to fully understand these literary theories in isolation, apart from the religious vortex they were swirling in. Treated in isolation these theories start to look arbitrary and groundless, and no amount of philosophical or philological parsing will really explain why it was so important to the theorists in question to take and defend the positions they did.

Unfortunately our modern universities draw disciplinary divisions right down the middle of what Sanskrit intellectuals in these centuries were trying to do, so that even a thinker like Abhinavagupta is usually studied either as a literary theorist by people who have a cultural or historical interest in South Asia, or as a theologian by religious studies scholars. Mahimabhāṭṭa, to the extent he has been studied at all, is also usually treated this way.¹⁵ As I hope to show in this dissertation, such a disciplinary division obscures more than it clarifies. Where others read

¹⁵ Some exceptions in the study of Abhinavagupta have been J.L. Masson, M.V. Patwardhan, and Edwin Gerow (see for example Jeffrey L. Masson and M.V. Patwardhan, Aesthetic Rapture: The Rasādhyāya of the Nāṭyaśāstra, 2 vols. [Deccan College, Postgraduate and Research Institute, 1970]; Jeffrey L. Masson and M. V. Patwardhan, Santarasa and Abhinavagupta's Philosophy of Aesthetics [Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1969]; and Edwin Gerow, "Abhinavagupta's Aesthetics as a Speculative Paradigm," Journal of the American Oriental Society [1994], 186-208.) But these writers have still only begun to scratch the surface of Abhinavagupta's work. These writers have been far from exhaustive, and I believe I have been able to greatly expand on their work and improve it in various ways. In the wider field of South Asian studies this attitude of genre separation also prevails, although again there are important exceptions. Anne Monius's work (for example Anne Monius, "Literary Theory and Moral Vision in Tamil Buddhist Literature," Journal of Indian Philosophy 28.2 [2000]: 195-223; Anne Monius, Imagining a Place for Buddhism: Literary Culture and Religious Community in Tamil-Speaking South India [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001]; and Anne Monius, "Love, Violence, and the Aesthetics of Disgust: Śaivas and Jains in Medieval South India," Journal of Indian Philosophy 32.2-3 [2004]: 113-172.) is an important exception, and her work on religious aesthetics in South Asia has been very influential on me. Yigal Bronner's recent work on Appaya Dīkṣita (Yigal Bronner, "Singing to God, Educating the People: Appayya Dikṣita and the Function of Stotras," Journal of the American Oriental Society 127, no. 2 [2007]: 113-130) is another example of research on a literary theorist that takes his theological convictions seriously. Some Indian writers of the previous generation also were also occasionally interested in questions of the kind I am interested in. K.C. Pandey, for example, generally reads across Abhinavagupta's genres, and he has an interesting article on Mahimabhāṭṭa's possible Saiva affiliations (K.C. Pandey, "Kashmir Śaiva Tendencies of Mahimabhāṭṭa," Bharatiya Vidya 10 [1950]: 187-194). Rajendran also, more recently, discusses Mahimabhāṭṭa's possible Saivism (C. Rajendran, A Study of Mahimabhāṭṭa's Vyaktiliveka [Calicut: Dr. C. Rajendran, 1991]: 47-51). In general, though, Pandey and Rajendran are unsatisfying to me because they are only interested in determining, based on quotations, Mahimabhāṭṭa's personal religious affiliation, and they rest content with establishing this and, in Rajendran's case, summarizing his arguments. I, on the other hand, am much more interested in what his religious identity tells us about his literary theory, or the intellectual context of medieval Kaśmīr, that a mere summary would never reveal.
Abhinavagupta's literary theory as self-contained and separable from his preference for the theory of poetic manifestation, or take his literary theory as an unimportant sidetrack from his more "serious" works of theology, I want to take seriously the correspondences between his various ideas. Where others assume that genre divisions among the works of a single thinker mark gulfs in one's conceptual apparatus, I want to read across these genres. Where others summarize Mahimabhaṭṭa's arguments and note in passing that he quotes Dharmakīrti, or assume that these denotations are not significant, I want to inquire into the possibility that they were significant, and ask what work they are doing. Grasping the full complexity of these thinkers' work, and the significant differences between their work and previous, early examples of South Asian literary theory, requires transcending our habit of focusing on literary theory or theology to the exclusion of the other. I hope my understanding of religion will help challenge this tendency.

So with this definition as my tool I will look at the work of these literary theorists and track the connections between their ideas about literature and the wider questions of the nature of the universe that their ideas were orbiting. I will do this without assuming that our conceptual divisions are the same as theirs, and without assuming that the influence among "spheres" only goes in one direction or the other. I will take these thinkers seriously by reading them closely and paying attention to the ideas that are important to their work, whatever those ideas are and whether or not they are stated outright or left implied or are obviously philosophically required. It is a fact that some of these ideas are marked explicitly while others are implied or left unstated. This does not mean the connections are not there. Abhinavagupta, for example, defines the ideal literary experience as blissful, and in his theological works he explains human bliss by relating it to the divine nature at the center of each human being's mind. The fact that his theological
explanation of bliss fits perfectly with the details of his description of the aesthetic experience is simply not a coincidence.\textsuperscript{16} The fact that he rarely spells it out only means that he found it unnecessary or undesirable to state, for reasons I will explore to some extent, but which will probably always remain partially obscure to us.

To uncover these connections between different ideas when they are not stated requires first of all contextualizing them within the intellectual world of medieval Kaśmīr, and thinking about what would have seemed obvious or glaring in that context but which may be less obvious now. Does a thinker neglect to say something because he doesn't believe it, or because it was too obvious to need stating? Thus far, for example, I have neglected to say explicitly that I believed it necessary to read the sources for this dissertation in the original Sanskrit, and I have neglected to justify this choice by describing a theory of translation and a theory of historical research. Does this imply that I read these works in the original Sanskrit simply because I didn't feel like reading translations or because it was easier for me to read Sanskrit? Or do I obviously subscribe to a basic model of philological research that is unnecessary to explain and justify?

Second of all, I will try to read Abhinavagupta and Mahimabhaṭṭa as philosophically carefully as possible. When Abhinavagupta makes an assertion, or makes a choice between philosophical options, our first task should be to assume he had reasons for doing this, and to explore them. We may not find reasons, and in that case we may be justified in assuming he had none. But in most cases we can, and we will find that they are fairly clearly laid out across his body of work. But seeing them requires reading across that body of work and being able to see the structure of his system and the philosophical implications, or the philosophical requirements, of various ideas that he presents.

\textsuperscript{16}All this is discussed in detail in Chapter Two.
To put this more succinctly, when I discuss Abhinavagupta and Mahimabhaṭṭa I am not interested in merely summarizing what they say in one or another individual text. I want to think about the implications of what they do say and what they don't say, and to try to trace out the connections between various texts and ideas that require some analysis to see but which I believe are clear and even necessary to fully understand their works. Of course it will be crucially important that at the level of summary my grasp of the details is factually correct. I am just not content to stop here. The concept of "religion-as-vortex" is a tool that will help us go deeper than this because it will help us trace out the larger complex of ideas in which their ideas on literary theory are located, the vortex in which they swirl.

However, more than simply showing that all this is the case in the work of Abhinavagupta and Mahimabhaṭṭa, it will also be my contention in this dissertation that the entrance of literary theory into the vortex of religion was a development that took place at a particular point in history, and I will attempt to trace the intellectual history and causes of this development. The point at which I will locate its origin is the work of the famous ninth century theorist Ānandavardhana, with his theory of "poetic manifestation" [dhvani or vyañjanā]. Before this, although there were references to religious ideas in some literary theoretical works, the connections, as far as I can determine, are not structural in the way I am trying to describe. After Ānandavardhana, however, certain potentials crystallized in Kaśmīr such that a serious exploration of the mechanisms of literature become inseparable from describing life and the nature of the universe overall. This is perhaps surprising, since Ānandavardhana's theory itself is

---

17 The opening section of Bharata's Nāṭyaśāstra gives the entire text a strongly religious frame, describing it as originating in heaven at the behest of the gods, and ritually reenacting their actions for their entertainment. But while this is fascinating, and clearly religious, I don't see enough of its influence on the themes and structures of the Nāṭyaśāstra to call it an early example of what this dissertation is about. But I would be interested to be proved wrong on this.
not religious in the way I am trying to describe. But when we understand why it was that these two intellectual endeavors, theology and literary theory, came to interact, we can understand better why it was that Ānandavardhana's theory created the conditions for the interaction without itself participating in them. The reasons for this lie in what I call "the ontological gap," which will be a theme in this dissertation that requires some explanation of its own.

The Ontological Gap

The key to understanding the reasons for the historical development I am describing in medieval Kaśmīr can, perhaps surprisingly, be found in an observation made by Arthur Danto, in his work *Transfiguring the Commonplace.* In that text, Danto is concerned to explain the difference between artworks and ordinary objects, and to identify what it is that changes when an ordinary object is made into a work of art. In the course of this investigation, Danto poses an intriguing question. Why is it, he asks, that there should be philosophy of art at all? And why is it that all seriously systematic philosophers sooner or later come around to developing a philosophy of art, even if they were originally indifferent to artistic experience, like Kant.

Danto's answer to this question is complex, but a summary of his reasoning might look like this. Philosophy and art are internally related because both arise out of the same conceptual rupture whereby a culture develops a concept of reality, defined in opposition to a co-emergent

---


19 "... a question very seldom mooted in the history of art: why it is that art should be that sort of thing of which there can be a philosophy, and why, as a matter of historical fact, there has not been a major philosophical thinker from Plato and Aristotle, to Heidegger and Wittgenstein, who has not had something to say about this subject... To be sure, this may be merely inductive... I think otherwise: I believe the set of things of philosophical moment to be logically closed, and that the energy of philosophy requires the serious and systematic philosopher (and there can be no other kind) sooner or later to work through the whole cycle of internally related topics, so that inevitably he will come to art, if indeed it falls within that cycle, supposing he has started elsewhere, or that he will come to whatever else is within the cycle if he has begun with art." Danto, *Transfiguration,* 54.
concept like illusion, representation, or imitation. Before this gap opens, there is no difference between what seem to be artistic creations on the one hand, and ordinary reality on the other. The concept of reality in such a world would be like the concept of "water" to Wallace's fish. A statue or image created by a craftsman in this world immediately becomes part of the furniture of reality, and is real in just the same sense as any other object. This means, I presume, that once one creates an image of a god, for example, that image is the god, or at least, bears much of the god's power and importance.

The gap that Danto refers to is a division of the world's phenomena into ones that are real and "something else that contrasts in a global way with reality." This second order of reality can refer to reality, or represent it, or express it; but it is not the same as it. It can also be false or illusory, depending on its relationship with reality. But once this second realm of the quasi-real is distinguished from the real, philosophy and art are born. Images of gods can now be representations of gods. This is the origin of art. And what would otherwise be simply statements of fact are now arguments about the way things are that may or may not line up with the way things actually are. We are thus required to think carefully about statements, and to

---

20. "There are these two young fish swimming along, and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says, 'Morning, boys, how's the water?' And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes, 'What the hell is water?" David Foster Wallace, This is Water: Some Thoughts, Delivered on a Significant Occasion, About Living a Compassionate Life. (UK: Hachette, 2009), 1.

21. Danto never mentions Walter Benjamin, but the parallels between some of Danto's assertions and Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproduction" are striking.

22. Danto, Transfiguration, 55.

23. Danto spends a chapter of the book, Chapter Six, carefully distinguishing art from "mere representations," like blueprints or yearbook photos. The difference is beyond the scope of my project, because it is unimportant for my argument whether Danto is right or wrong in that chapter. What I am interested in is the existence of an ontological gap in the first place.
discuss them in order to figure out how they relate or don't relate to the reality they refer to; hence the origin of philosophy.

The creation of works of art is premised on this split, and once this split is in place, we can say that to turn an everyday object into art is to lift it out of the world of real things and set it in an expressive relationship with something in the world—to re-present something in the world. As representations, these objects are not quite part of the world, and therefore they bring something of themselves along with their relationship to the world, and they represent it in a certain way, an observation upon which Danto bases his discussions both of "content" and of "style". The details of this theory aside, we can at least say that whatever content and style are, they are things that pertain only to representations, not to actual represented objects. The difference between artworks and objects then is metaphysical, not physical, and this allows Danto to explain the work of art that he claims led him to these questions in the first place: Andy Warhol's facsimile Brillo boxes. Using the notion that some things are expressive and distinct from ordinary "real" things even if that distinction is invisible to the eye, Danto can explain how something like Andy Warhol's facsimile Brillo boxes, indistinguishable to the naked eye from regular Brillo boxes, can count as art, while their real-world counterparts in the supermarket did not.  

24 Danto's theory therefore applies to all art, including classical painting, which is not so easily conflated with "everyday objects." But the point is that insofar as the Mona Lisa is an object it is just a configuration of canvas and globs of paint. It is an artwork insofar as it refers to something. The difference is metaphysical, not physical. All this applies much more clearly to conceptual works like Warhol's Brillo boxes or Duchamp's urinal. But Danto's point in this book is that there is no categorical difference between the Mona Lisa and Duchamp's urinal, regardless of their respective quality as art, and that describing what makes one art rather than just an object is the same as describing what makes the other art and not just an object.
Interestingly, Danto claims that the opening of this gap is unusual in history, and that it has only happened twice—once in Greece and once in India, both times with vast historical consequences: once in Greece, and once in India. This statement is too sweeping and Hegelian for my taste—I really have no idea whether Mesopotamians or Incans or the ancient Kikuyu had something like our concept of art, philosophy, or reality. But I am sure that pre-modern South Asians did, particularly those writing in Sanskrit. And I am sure that their theories on art have an important relationship to exactly the kind of gap Danto is describing, and to how they understood that gap.

Where their ideas depart from Danto's description is that this gap between representations and reality was philosophically tied in South Asia to a much larger gap—that between appearances and reality, or between appearances and meanings or essences (meaning being, in certain South Asian philosophies, the essence of what the words really are, as we will see). This gap will show up in various ways throughout this dissertation, so I should clarify a bit what I mean by it. It is not entirely different from the gap Danto was talking about, although it is not quite the same either. It is similar in the sense that it is a recognition that some things are more real than others, so to speak, and that some things represent or refer to other things without necessarily being them. In Sanskrit, however, thinking about this gap was not limited to human representations like literature or art, but was seen as part of the metaphysics of a variety of issues, including the relation of parts and wholes, the relationship of uttered sounds to linguistic signs and of those to meaning, the relationship of inferential signs to inferred objects, the relationship between universals and particulars, and also to even more clearly religious issues, such as the relationship between the universe and the mind that created it and the relationship between the experience we have of ourselves and what we really, ultimately, are. All of these
metaphysical questions trade on the ontological gap noticed by Danto, but in an expanded form. Where Danto saw a distinction between artistic representations and real things, we can rephrase the issue slightly and point out that art trades in a more general difference between how things appear (as Brillo boxes) and what they really are (artistic representations of Brillo boxes). This broader issue was tracked by South Asian intellectuals in a variety of philosophical spheres, all of which will come up over the course of our exploration of their literary theory. But in all cases, the central issue is the relationship between how things appear and what they are or mean.

The details of all the various metaphysical issues listed above will become clear in future chapters. What I want to point out for now is that language, and human representations in general, were seen as a subset of a larger group of metaphysical questions in South Asia because what we encounter as language and human representation were thought to be part of the structure of the universe, including the central or ultimate processes that drive the universe. This makes these questions religious. Thus, we will see Buddhists assimilating linguistic cognition to inferential cognition more broadly because linguistic cognition has to be explained as part of a general Buddhist view of how the universe works and how cognition relates to it. We will see Śaivas, on the other hand, assimilate linguistic cognition to cosmogony because although their explanation of the universe is different, they agree with Buddhists that whatever mechanism governs the appearance/meaning gap in language is a mechanism that holds broadly. What is even more significant for this dissertation is that in both cases, the Śaiva and the Buddhist, the issues are directly related to things like doctrinal polemics and soteriology, and this is no coincidence. Nor is it a coincidence that these two religious approaches to semantics correlate exactly with the alternative literary theories we will examine. So however one approaches these issues, the answers will hold broadly; our human representations are inextricable from ultimate
metaphysical issues. The difference, in short, between how things appear and what they really are or what they really mean was a metaphysical question so central to the ultimate questions of life and death for Sanskrit philosophers, that it was an unavoidable theological issue. And once it was recognized that literature is one of the premier venues in which humans confront, emotionally and intellectually, the difference between how things appear and what they really mean, it was bound to get swept up in these religious questions sooner or later.

Ānandavardhana marks the point when this happened because his was the first work to analyze the emotional resonance of literature by borrowing a concept from a field of discourse that traded on exactly the kinds of metaphysical questions described above. The field he borrowed from was philosophical grammar, and the term he borrowed, dhvani (and its synonym vyañjanā), was the name he gave to his central aesthetic concept. Dhvani was so important to Ānandavardhana that his text, Dhvanyāloka, is named after it. Philosophical grammar might not seem to be a field pregnant with theological potential, but the particular grammarian he borrowed from was Bhartṛhari, famous in South Asia for his theological philosophy of language. And the term Ānandavardhana borrowed, while not prominent in Bhartṛhari's work, was nevertheless a term that was used by Bhartṛhari precisely to discuss the difference between appearance and essence, and was an integral part of a larger structure of ideas that Bhartṛhari connected explicitly to theology.²⁵ So when Ānandavardhana borrowed this term and made it central to his work, he inevitably opened the door to a theological aesthetics. I don't believe it was Ānandavardhana's intention to do this—or at least, I don't see any evidence in the text that he intended this.²⁶ But whether he meant to or not, the fact is that Ānandavardhana's ideas brought

---

²⁵ All this is analyzed more extensively in Chapter One.

²⁶ The only explicitly religious issue at stake in Dhvanyāloka is the theory of ritual structure that he imports from the school of Vedic ritual hermeneutics [mīmāṃsā], which is now well known since McCrea's groundbreaking work The
literary theory into the orbit of religion. Later theorists, as I hope to show, were well aware of this.

**Synopsis**

Chapter One will explore the nature of Ānandavardhana's theory of "poetic manifestation," which claims that meaning in poetry is communicated by means of a *sui generis* linguistic function called "manifestation," irreducible to any other mode of acquiring information, linguistic or cognitive. Chapter One will also explore Ānandavardhana's debt to Bhartṛhari in developing this theory, and it will explore a peculiar fact about Ānandavardhana's text, *Dhvanyāloka*, which is that despite how historically successful it was, the text is actually full of philosophical problems, ambiguities, and inconsistencies, which I will attempt to trace out. This calls into question the common assertion that Ānandavardhana's text was historically triumphant simply because poetic manifestation was the "best" theory ever invented.\(^{27}\) The source of its popularity then has to be traced to something other than just strength of argument,

---

\(^{27}\) See, for example, K. Krishnamoorthy, *The Dhvanyaloka and Its Critics* (Mysore: Kavyalaya Publishers, 1968), 23: "The masterly treatment of the subject by Ānandavardhana, combined with the authoritative interpretation of it by Abhinavagupta, was able to overcome all opposition to the theory by rival schools and to elicit universal admiration and acceptance of it by later theorists."; Also S.K. De, *A History of Sanskrit Poetics*, vol. I, (Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1976), 175: "No other work on Sanskrit Poetics [sic] has indeed exerted so much influence as the *Dhvanyāloka*, which brought to a focus the tentative efforts of earlier thinkers, and by its thoroughness and masterly exposition eclipsed all its predecessors, dominating, as it did, thoughts of generations of theorists down to the present time." The opinion is fairly unanimous and unquestioned. Other examples of the sentiment are given in McCrea, *Teleology*, 1-2. McCrea (ibid., 2ff) responds to these assertions by rightly questioning whether the history of the text was actually a simple history of dominance and triumph. My response, which I believe is entirely compatible, is rather to question whether the extent to which the text did triumph can be chalked up simply to the strength of its analysis, and to show that, firstly, its analysis is not as strong as commonly accepted, and secondly, there were other factors involved that were equally, or even more important.
and one of the sources of the popularity, I argue, at least in Kaśmīr in these influential centuries, was the theological potential buried in the metaphysical questions of appearance and essence that were imported into the theory along with Bhartṛhari's terminology.

This explains why the next major proponent of the theory of poetic manifestation, Abhinavagupta, both adopted and completely rewrote it, a fact that perhaps has not puzzled scholars the way it should. Abhinavagupta's version of the theory, which is the version that went on to become historically dominant, is remarkably different from Ānandavardhana's, and is based largely on coopting the aesthetic ideas of a completely rival theoretician, Bhaṭṭanāyaka. This cooptation requires, in Sheldon Pollock's words, a great deal of "acrobatics" to make Ānandavardhana's theory fit "an ontology for which is was never intended." This much I agree with. But then this raises an important question. Given that Abhinavagupta did indeed go to such trouble to rewrite Ānandavardhana's theory using many of the ideas of a rival theoretician, one must ask why he bothered to rewrite the theory at all. Why not abandon Ānandavardhana? Was it because Ānandavardhana's theory was so strongly constructed and well argued that it seemed undeniable? Then why change it so radically? And why borrow so much of Bhaṭṭanāyaka's theories without simply becoming a Bhaṭṭanāyakan? Why write a commentary on Ānandavardhana using ideas borrowed from Bhaṭṭanāyaka, and not the other way around? I don't think it will do to say that he simply liked the theory, or preferred it, or had an intuition that it was the correct theory. This is simply pushing the question back a level, so that we then have to ask what it was about the theory that he liked or preferred. Nor am I willing to accept that such a prominent and serious intellectual as Abhinavagupta chose and defended the theory whimsically. He must have had had real reasons for choosing it, and these only become apparent within in the

---

context of Abhinavagupta's life's work, which was deeply religious. All this is the subject of Chapter Two, which will show that Abhinavagupta's entire theory, as well as his individual theoretical choices, such as borrowing from Bhaṭṭanāyaka without following him entirely, or deepening the connection of literary theory to Bhartṛhari, become fully intelligible only when we take seriously the fact that he was thinking through issues central to his theology, and that this theology was in turn influenced by his efforts to articulate a literary theory.

The theology in which Abhinavagupta was engaged was part of the religious vortex called Śaivism; that is, Abhinavagupta was a devotee of a religious tradition centered around the god Śiva and the texts and rituals connected to him, as well as an important theologian in that tradition. Śaivism, in Abhinavagupta's Kaśmir, was newly ascendant. Although it had already been part of the life of the valley for generations, the valley had previously been politically dominated by Buddhists and Vaiṣṇavas.29 By Abhinavagupta's time however, Śaivism was not only ascendant, but diverse and in flux. Śaivism at this time was an evolving pastiche of textual traditions and theologies, ranging from popular devotionalism to mystical contemplative practices to transgressive ritual to speculative theology.30 And these various strands were being reconciled and synthesized by leading theologians of the time, Abhinavagupta foremost among them. To be sure, there were aesthetic precedents in the traditions Abhinavagupta inherited. He

29 See Alexis Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age: The Rise and Dominance of Śaivism During the Early Medieval Period," in Gensis and Development of Tantrism, ed. Shingo Einoo (Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, 2009), 107.

himself didn't invent the connection between religious and aesthetic experiences. But he did use Ānandavardhana's theory of poetic manifestation, and many ideas from Bhaṭṭanāyaka's rival theory, to give this connection a deeper grounding.

This grounding will be explored extensively in Chapter Two, but we can summarize it for now as follows: Abhinavagupta's aesthetics involves developing an elaborate analogy between poet, poem, and reader on the one hand, and god, world, and religious adept on the other. In both cases, the relationship between the members of the group is governed by a particular kind of "meaning" that moves between them, changing in form as it moves, but not changing in substance. In both cases, the poetic and the religious, the meaning that transfers is a kind of transpersonal subjectivity, which can take either the form of an aesthetic appreciation of a mood, or, on a deeper level, an aesthetic relish of the mind's own capacity for experience in the first place. When it moves from the poet into the form of the poem, or when it moves from the poem into the subjectivity of the reader, Abhinavagupta says it is "manifested" in the new location, a use of the term that is different from Ānandavardhana and analogous to Abhinavagupta's religious ideas. Aesthetic experience, seen in analogy to religious experience in this way, can now be understood as a "piece" of God's own divine experience, and the pleasure it gives us is explained by this fact. God, on the other hand, can be understood as a sort of aesthete who has an essentially poetic and creative relationship to himself and to the world. Some of this has been

---

31 For example Vijñānabhairava Tantra vss. 71-73: "When great bliss is attained, or relatives are met with after a long time, one should meditate on the bliss that arises. The mind will dissolve into that and become that. When the bliss of rasa blows open from the joy of eating or drinking, one should bring about the state of satiety, and from that, great bliss will [also] arise. The yogin who one-pointedly experiences the same bliss from savoring songs etc, he becomes identified with that and his mind opens up and it becomes his very essence." ānande mahati prāpte drṣṭe vā bāndhave cīrāt / ānandam udgataṁ dhyātvā tallayas tanmanā bhavet // jagdhipānakṛttollāsarasānandaviṃśaṃbhānāt / bāvaved bhārītavasthāṃ mahānandas tato bhavet // gitādiviṣayāśvādāsamasaukhyaikatātmanah / yoginās tanmayatvena manorūḍhes tadāmatā //
described before, but I believe that I have some original contributions to make in the course of this discussion, partially by filling out and expanding some of the observations that others have made, and also by adding some new observations, for example that Abhinavagupta's view of artistic creativity matches his view of cosmogony, or that his choice to locate emotions within the reader or spectator rather than within the play is closely tied to his theological arguments for the irreducible and non-objectifiable nature of subjectivity itself.

All this leads Abhinavagupta to a particular view of the ethical value of literature, and this is also something that has not been fully noticed or described in scholarship. For Abhinavagupta, literary experience is real, even if it is true in a simple sense that the characters and events depicted in literature are not real. The experience one has while reading it is a legitimate subjective experience of real literary stimuli, and it is an accurate recreation, within one's own mind, of the same experience that the poet originally had. When joined to a theology in which the *summum bonum* is a form of transcendent subjectivity, Abhinavagupta was able to claim a value for the pleasure of literature in and of itself. Although literature is unreal in the sense that it portrays imaginary characters and scenarios, Abhinavagupta actually wound up arguing that the experience of reading literature is even more real than ordinary experience, because it enables something deeper than our ordinary experience.

Mahimabhaṭṭa's response to all this will be the subject of Part II, comprised of Chapters Three, Four, and Five. The claim will still be that Mahimabhaṭṭa's theories are in the orbit of religion, and that they are therefore religious. But this means something a bit different here than it did in the chapters on Abhinavagupta. Where Abhinavagupta was a theologian who deliberately included literature within the religious vortex he was describing, Mahimabhaṭṭa used

---

32 For example in Gerow, "Abhinavagupta's Aesthetics"; *Masson and Patwardhan, Śāntarasa*; and Masson and Patwardhan, *Aesthetic Rapture*.
religious ideas deliberately to exclude literature from this vortex. That is to say, Mahimabhaṭṭa used religious ideas for different reasons, and in fact, as we will see, he used borrowed religious ideas to which he does not seem to subscribe himself. So while he was not a theologian, like Abhinavagupta, I will argue that his literary theories were still in the orbit of religion, in the sense that they were shaped by religious ideas and issues, even if negatively. Moreover I believe that he did this for religious reasons. That is, he had religious reasons for excluding literary theory from the realm of theology. But the basic point I want to make is that this makes his theories impossible to fully understand without seeing them against the background of that religious orbit.

In some ways the methodology of these chapters will be a bit different from that of Part I, for the fact that the archive of evidence is much smaller here than it was for Abhinavagupta, and the claims much larger than they were for Ānandavardhana. I will argue both that Mahimabhaṭṭa was motivated by a concern to refute Abhinavagupta's theory of literary emotions, and also that the religious ideas he enlists in service of this project were not cosmetic, but structurally quite important to his work. The overt evidence for this, however, seems a bit thin at first glance, which I think is why it has so often been overlooked. Mahimabhaṭṭa does not spend a great deal of time discussing poetic emotions, and he only refers to Abhinavagupta obliquely (but quite clearly) a few times. Meanwhile, the religious ideas that he borrows come in the form of a smattering of quotes, with no overt confessions of religious identity on Mahimabhaṭṭa's part. But what we have to keep in mind is that sheer page count is not necessarily a good indicator of the philosophical importance of certain ideas to an entire work; nor are overt declarations of intent or interest, or lack thereof. And it is often the case in South Asia that philosophers keep their overt influences submerged, and to dredge them up requires careful attention to the structure of the
work and the implications of various claims and statements. Larry McCrea showed this most clearly in his groundbreaking work on Ānandavardhana, where he argued cogently that Ānandavardhana's literary theory is modeled in large part on systems of Vedic hermeneutics, though Ānandavardhana nowhere refers to these systems. McCrea's argument is built instead on paying close attention to the structure of Ānandavardhana's arguments and showing that they match Vedic hermeneutic ideas in ways that cannot be coincidental.33

I want to take a similar approach to reading Mahimabhaṭṭa. Rather than hunting for a place in which he says x, y, and z in order to prove that he thought x, y, and z, I want to find places in which he says x and y and show that it would not have made sense for him to hold these positions unless he also held z. Or, comparably, to show that to say x in the intellectual context of medieval Kaśmīr would have been such a loaded assertion that y and z would have been assumed as well unless Mahimabhaṭṭa went specifically out of his way to deny them. What this reading practice reveals, I believe, is first of all that Mahimabhaṭṭa's borrowed religious quotes are not merely ornaments or rhetorical flourishes in service of the appearance of authority, but actually inform the structure of his ideas in deep and important ways. If we accept this, then the fact is that Mahimabhaṭṭa is presenting a theory of literary emotion that is diametrically opposed to Abhinavagupta's in almost all its particulars, and not to Ānandavardhana's, is itself evidence that he had Abhinavagupta in mind as a target; perhaps not as an exclusive target, but enough of a target that the main points of his theory are arrived at by essentially flipping Abhinavagupta on his head. The fact that Mahimabhaṭṭa goes on to discuss many other topics aside from literary emotions shows that he is indeed interested in other topics. But the refutation of Abhinavagupta, who had reduced discussion of poetry almost entirely to

33McCrea, Teleology of Poetics.
discussion of aesthetic emotions, is part of what opens up space for this expanded discussion of other issues. When we combine this with the fact (this time proven quite explicitly, I believe) that Mahimabhaṭṭa did not subscribe to the religion underlying the religious ideas he borrowed, but was himself a Śaiva just like Abhinavagupta, then we are left to hypothesize about why he made such a choice. But hypothesizing is not the same as speculating or guessing, and I hope to show over the course of this dissertation that my hypothesis about what Mahimabhaṭṭa was actually saying, and my assertion that his ideas are bound up by religious influences and demands even though he himself was not a theologian and was not trying to articulate a theological literary theory, are the best explanations of the available material, and are supported by evidence that actually makes them quite plausible, even likely.

To be more specific about Mahimabhaṭṭa's ideas and how I will lay them out: the literary theory he proposes is, on the surface, to argue that what Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta had called poetic manifestation is nothing but a form of inference—that emotions aren't "manifested" by the poem, but rather inferred to be in the poem by a reader on the basis of gestures and words displayed by the characters or narrator. Such is the common summary given in most of the secondary literature. But this cursory summary obscures a much deeper objection to the theory of manifestation. For Mahimabhaṭṭa does not just assert that poetic emotions are understood by inference. He uses, as I mentioned, ideas and definitions and terms borrowed from the famous Buddhist philosopher Dharmakīrti to explicate and prove it. And

34 For example in Rajendran, Mahibhaṭṭa's Vyaktiviveka; Amiya Kumar Chakravorty, Studies in Mahimbaṭṭa: A Critical and Comparative Study of Mahimbaṭṭa's Vyaktiviveka (Calcutta: Calcutta University, 1975); and K. Krishnamoorthy, The Dhvanyāloka and Its Critics, Chapter VII.

35 Among scholars, only Larry McCrea has recognized the depth of Mahimabhaṭṭa's dependance on Dharmakīrti's ideas (McCrea, Teleology, 399), and laments that Mahimabhaṭṭa has not received the attention he deserves. This dissertation in some ways might be seen as just a response to that observation, and an expansion of the original work McCrea did on this subject.
Dharmakīrti, as a Buddhist, had an ontology and a philosophy of language that was almost diametrically opposed to that of Bhartṛhari, the philosopher on which Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta rely. Mahimabhaṭṭa uses Dharmakīrti's philosophy to break the continuity between appearance and essence that undergirded Abhinavagupta's literary theory. The words and letters and gestures and characters of a poem are no longer, as in Abhinavagupta, an outward manifestation of the same subjectivity in which the poem originates, and which can be transformed by the reader back into that same subjectivity. They are now an assemblage of artificial signs by which the reader can draw an inference about the character's mood—a mood that is considered to be ontologically distinct from them, not continuous with them as in Abhinavagupta. The use of Dharmakīrti for this purpose will be the subject of Chapter Three.

By breaking this continuity between appearance and essence, Mahimabhaṭṭa also breaks the theoretical continuity Abhinavagupta had established between the poet's experience and the reader's. This, in turn, undermines the basis for Abhinavagupta's claim that literary experience is real and thus valuable in itself. In its place, Mahimabhaṭṭa posits that the reader or spectator's experience of the poem is basically a form of cognitive error. When we infer the emotion as an object present in the poem, the emotion we are inferring is not really there where we think it is. In fact it is nowhere. Rather, we are not re-experiencing the poet's own emotion that has been transmitted to us via a manifestation of it. We are being tricked by a clever arrangement of elements that a poet has arranged for this purpose. For Abhinavagupta, literary experience is when the reader correctly realizes the emotion that the poet had. But for Mahimabhaṭṭa, literary experience is when the reader incorrectly surmises that a character is having a particular emotional experience, when in fact the character is unreal and therefore isn't having any sort of
experience at all. This sort of experience can't possibly have religious value in and of itself, because as an illusion it leads us further away from reality, not closer to it.

It does, however, have value, and in order to explain how this is so Mahimabhaṭṭa again relies on Dharmakīrti, because Dharmakīrti's own Buddhist philosophy had led him to a similar problem, and he had already proposed a solution, which Mahimabhaṭṭa also borrowed. For Dharmakīrti, for philosophical reasons that will be explored in Chapters Three and Five, words, concepts, and inferences are misleading, in the sense that they never actually correspond to reality, which is always beyond all words and concepts. The goal of the Buddhist path is a direct apprehension of this reality. The Buddhist path itself, however, can only be transmitted to students via words and concepts and philosophically guided inferences. In fact, the Buddhist student requires these in order to make progress on the path, according to Dharmakīrti. In order to reconcile all of this, Dharmakīrti develops a theory of pragmatically useful illusions. Some illusions, according to Dharmakīrti, are completely misleading. But others, because of having a "connection" to reality, are pragmatically useful even if they don't accurately represent reality.

Chapter Five will explore this idea and the way in which Mahimabhaṭṭa appropriates it to argue that literature is instrumentally useful. Rather than an ethical end in itself, Mahimabhaṭṭa thinks that literature is a way of inculcating ethical development in readers, an ethical development that is distinct from the experience of literature and only instrumentally related to it. The beauty of literature and the depth of the aesthetic experience are only a way to elicit the necessary interest in readers or spectators. While they are paying attention, they inadvertently absorb moral lessons, which could just as well have been presented directly except that this would have made them more dry and less engaging. Literature, in other words, is the sugar coating on bitter medicine, added on to that medicine externally in order to trick us into
swallowing what we might otherwise spit out, a metaphor traceable to Buddhist literature and used explicitly by Mahimabhaṭṭa. And again, I will argue that he relies on Dharmakīrti to develop this idea because Dharmakīrti represents a strong theological alternative to Bhartṛhari, the theologian that Abhinavagupta had used to develop the idea that literature is not sugar coating so much as delicious medicine.

What is peculiar about Mahimabhaṭṭa, in fact extremely puzzling, is that he himself was not, in fact, a Buddhist. By all available evidence he was a Śaiva, and probably a non-dual Śaiva, like Abhinavagupta. Why then does he rely so heavily on a Buddhist philosopher? Chapter Four, an interlude between the other two chapters tracing out his literary theory, attempts to address this question by looking at a strange digression at the beginning of Mahimabhaṭṭa's text on the use of gerundives in poetry. This digression, I will argue, like many other aspects of literary theory in these centuries, is actually part of a religious orbit, and is impossible to fully appreciate when taken apart from its religious context. When read in context, however, it becomes clear that Mahimabhaṭṭa is quite cleverly using an argument about gerundives in order to press on a weak point in Abhinavagupta's theology. The weak point is roughly as follows. Although Abhinavagupta and his predecessor Utpaladeva adopted Bhartṛhari wholeheartedly and their theology, Bhartṛhari was not always so well regarded in the tradition. In fact, Somānanda, Utpaladeva's teacher, spent an entire chapter of his Śivadṛṣṭi refuting Bhartṛhari's ideas. Bringing Bhartṛhari into the theological tradition in this way involved making some philosophical shifts that were, technically speaking, inconsistencies in the philosophical tradition—that is, Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta found themselves, in an extremely conservative, tradition-centric scholastic environment, arguing for ideas that their predecessor and teacher Somānanda not only

---

36 On the understanding of religion and theology that I am using, Dharmakīrti clearly qualifies as a theologian.
never held, but in some cases actively rejected. Mahimabhaṭṭa uses a digression on a seemingly pedestrian topic to press on exactly these inconsistencies in the tradition, and to side with Somānanda against Abhinavagupta and Bhartṛhari.

Combined with the broad scale attack on Abhinavagupta's Bhartṛharian literary theory, I think this warrants the tentative assumption that Mahimabhaṭṭa was a Śaiva in a lineage descending from Somānanda that did not accept the popular innovations made by Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta. Because Mahimabhaṭṭa rejects the importation of Bhartṛhari into Śaivism, he rejects the synthesis between theology and literary theory that Abhinavagupta used Bhartṛhari to forge. That this rejection of this should take the form of adopting the ideas of a non-Śaiva theologian is perhaps a bit surprising, but not unusual in Mahimabhaṭṭa's circumstances. For one thing, if I am correct, and if Mahimabhaṭṭa really was trying to say that literary experience is incommensurate with religious experience, it would be more strange for him to have used tantric or even exoteric Śaiva teachings to analyze literature. It makes more sense that he would describe it using a "lower" teaching, one that is useful in certain respects and which can be accepted to a degree, but which is flawed or incomplete, or doesn't encompass what a Śaiva would consider the ultimate truth. This in itself would then be a rhetorical point, somewhat like coming across a text that describes human sexuality in terms of divine love, and responding by writing a text that explains sexuality in the terms of neo-liberal economics, or plumbing: it doesn't necessarily mean you don't believe in divine love, but it certainly means you have a different view of it and its relation to human sexuality.

Even if Mahimabhaṭṭa wasn't making a rhetorical point like this, it is still not surprising that he would borrow ideas from a Buddhist, and this finally, can contribute to our understanding not just of Mahimabhaṭṭa or Abhinavagupta, but of the fascinating cultural context in which they
lived and wrote. For the fact is that Kaśmīr in these centuries was home to a remarkably widespread adoption of Buddhist ideas by various religious groups. Abhinavagupta himself was famous for adopting the views of rival schools and synthesizing them into a grand hierarchy culminating in his own version of non-dual Śaivism, including the views of Dharmakīrti. In this respect, this study offers a chance to deepen our understanding of how religions actually interacted and influenced each other in pre-modern South Asia. Mahimabhaṭṭa's use of Buddhist ideas might not fit our current understanding of religious polemics, but this only goes to show that the lived experience of Sanskrit intellectuals was not neatly divided along the lines we are habituated to drawing, and gives us an opportunity to glimpse a different intellectual configuration.

37 In poetry there are the Vaiṣṇava Kṣemendra's verse summaries of the Buddha's past lives and the Śaiva poet Śivasvāmin's Kappinābhudāya, a poem about the triumphant conversion to Buddhism of King Kapphina. In philosophy we have Ānandavardhana's (now lost) commentary on the Buddhist philosophy of Dharmottara, and Abhinavagupta's deep, extensive, and often appreciative, familiarity with many Buddhist philosophers.

38 Paul Hacker's famous concept of "inclusivism" is relevant here. Hacker defines inclusivism essentially as "...claiming for, and thus including in, one's own religion what really belongs to an alien sect." (Paul Hacker, "Aspects of Neo-Hinduism as Contrasted with Surviving Traditional Hinduism," in P. Hacker, Kleine Schriften, ed. L. Schmithausen [Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 1978], 599). Hacker's idea is that this is a kind of religious tolerance of alternative ideas that is usually done in such a way as to subordinate the other ideas to one's own religious system, granting them the status of partial or proto-truth while one's own religion is the complete truth. Hacker's idea has been criticized for various reasons (for some criticisms see Wilhelm Halbfass, "Chapter 22: 'Inclusivism' and 'Tolerance" in the Encounter Between India and the West," in India and Europe: an Essay in Understanding [Albany: SUNY Press, 1998]: 403-418) but what he is describing is clearly a philosophical and rhetorical strategy that is present in some Indian sources, if not elsewhere, and clearly it is relevant to the thinkers I will discuss, particularly Abhinavagupta. However there is much going on with these thinkers that is not described by inclusivism, and goes beyond it. Richard Davis's notion of "productive encounters," (Richard Davis, "The Story of the Disappearing Jains: Retelling the Śaiva-Jain Encounter in Medieval South India," in Open Boundaries: Jain Communities and Cultures in Indian History, ed. John E. Cort [Albany: SUNY Press, 1998]: 213-224) is also relevant, in that it describes ways in which religious traditions inhabiting the same polities can influence each others ideas in ways that go beyond cooptation or competitive mimesis.
Part One: Emotion Manifested
Chapter One: Ānandavardhana and the Metaphysics of Literature

The goal of this dissertation is to understand the religious dimensions of certain debates about aesthetics in Kaśmīr. But before we look at the religious dimensions of these debates we first need investigate their origin: the very first version of the theory being debated, the theory of poetic manifestation. We need to look here first because although this first formulation of the theory was not explicitly religious, it contained certain elements that opened up religious possibilities that the later debates explored; elements which might not be immediately apparent to modern readers. That is, the religious issues at play in the debates we will examine were not arbitrary. They were an expression of a potential that was there, latently, right in the first formulation of the theory being debated. And in fact, we will come to see that it was this religious potential in the theory of poetic manifestation that seems to have been most interesting to later intellectuals who debated it; more interesting even than the precise details of the theory, many of which were actually problematic or confused, and which were jettisoned or rewritten precisely in order to strengthen their latent religious dimensions.

The first formulation of the theory of poetic manifestation comes from Ānandavardhana's ninth-century text, Dhvanyāloka. Based on some of the comments he makes in that text it seems that the concept may have been circulating around courtly circles in a disorganized and informal way before he stepped in and formalized it,¹ but in any event his is the first written text on the

¹The very first verse of his text is phrased as an intervention in an ongoing debate about poetic manifestation: "Some have said that the soul of poetry, which has been handed down from the past by wise men as "[manifestation]" (dhvani), does not exist; others that it is an associated meaning (bhākta); while some have said that its nature lies outside the scope of speech: of this [manifestation] we shall here state the true nature in order to delight the hearts of sensitive readers." (Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, The Dhvanyāloka of Ānandavardhana with the Locana of Abhinavagupta, trans. Daniell H.H. Ingalls, Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, and M.V. Patwardhan [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990], 47). For reasons I discuss below, I have taken the liberty of changing their term "suggestion" to the term I am using instead: manifestation. In their footnote 1 on page 48 they also suggest that the term had been in use in poetics before Ānandavardhana. The original is Ānandavardhana, The Dhvanyāloka of Śrī Ānandavardhana With the Lochana Sanskrit Commentary of Śrī Abhinavagupta and the Prakāśa Hindi Translation of Both The Texts, ed. Āchārya Jagannāth Pāthak, The Vidyabhawan Sanskrit Granthamala no. 97 (Varanasi:
subject, and he is widely recognized as the originator of the theory. Ānandavardhana's idea was that this theory would pick out and describe what he says is the "soul" of poetry: its ability to convey meaning indirectly through a process he called "manifestation," a process which is linguistic, but which is nevertheless different from literal or figurative speech. The theory is intriguing, and its details will be discussed more below. But what is most important about the theory for our purposes (and, I will argue, most historically influential), is the way it borrows from fields outside of literary theory to make its points.

The patterns of Ānandavardhana's borrowing are not always easy to discern. The study of Ānandavardhana's theory was given a huge push forward when Larry McCrea showed for the first time that Ānandavardhana borrows heavily from traditional theories of Vedic hermeneutics. Ānandavardhana apparently used these theories as models to describe the way in which a literary text as a whole—or even individual scenes, verses, or sentences—can be coherently organized toward a single end and all its elements understood with respect to that end. What I would like to point out, however, is that this is not the only source for Ānandavardhana's ideas. As we will see, Ānandavardhana also borrows from other areas of Sanskrit philosophy as well, particularly metaphysics and epistemology, and the borrowing is not casual or superficial. In fact, more than any previous literary theorist in South Asia, Ānandavardhana's theory involves, and even requires, thinking through complex philosophical questions regarding the relation between how things appear and how those appearances are related to the realities or essences that they represent or arise from, a set of philosophical issues that has been more fully described in the

---

Chowkambha Vidyabhawan, 1965), 8 (from here forward this will be the edition of the text referred to):

kāvyasyātmā dhvanirīti budhāir yaḥ samāmnātihaṁ purvas tasyābhāvam jagadurapare bhāktam ākus tam anye / kecid vācaṁ sthitam aviṣaye tatvam ācūs tadiyaṁ tena brūmah sahṛdayamanaḥprītyaye tatsvarūpam //

McCrea, Teleology.
Introduction. This connection is sometimes referred to tangentially by scholars when they point out that Ānandavardhana himself acknowledges his own debt to the ideas of philosophical grammar. But the extent of this debt, and its relation to religion, has not yet been fully understood.

The connection to these philosophical issues is most obvious in the names he chooses for his theory. "Poetic manifestation" translates two Sanskrit terms: dhvani and vyañjanā. These terms have slightly different provenances, both significant. The former term means "sound" or "murmur" and originates in philosophical discussions of grammar and phonetics, where it is used to describe the way in which the uttered sounds of speech are related to the language that they represent and convey. The latter term, vyañjanā, is more closely related to metaphysics. It means, literally, "manifestation," and it is often used in metaphysical discussions to describe the relationship between causes and effects. The question in this discussion is essentially this: are effects new things that appear in the world, or are they really just outward "manifestations" of latent potentials that already existed in the causes, the way curds appear out of milk? When we say something is created, or appears, does that mean it didn't exist at all previously and now does, or does it mean that it already existed but has only now become perceptible? The usage of this term, however, is not limited to the cause-effect relationship. It is also sometimes related to epistemological discussions about how one thing can be a condition for knowledge of another thing without being constitutive of it; in other words how it can cause us to know something without creating that other thing or being caused by it. The clearest example here is a lamp

---

3 One possible exception is Bhāmaha, who devotes an entire chapter of his poetics to theories of inference. But the point of this chapter seems mainly to be that poetry comprises a separate realm where ordinary logical considerations can be inverted or played with. Issues internal to the philosophy of inference are not implicated the way they are in Ānandavardhana's text.

4 A good start is A.N. Hota's work *Sphoṭa, Pratibhā, Dhvani* (Delhi: Eastern Book Linkers, 2006).
manifesting something in a dark room. The pot is "manifested" in the sense that it is moved from a state of invisibility to one of visibility, and the lamp is the agent in this change. But the lamp doesn't create the pot, nor is it an effect of the pot. Contrast this with the way a seed eventually allows us to see the flower that sprouts out of it, or, alternatively, the way that smoke that allows us to know about a hidden fire. In the latter case the smoke is caused by the fire and so leads to an inference about that fire. The lamp, however, isn't caused by the pot, and doesn't allow an inference of the pot. It manifests the pot. All these distinctions are important to the philosophical notion of "manifestation," and when the term manifestation is applied to poetry they thereby become important to poetry as well.

These issues of causation and epistemology are quite closely related to the grammatical discussions mentioned above, which concern the relation between the sounds we hear and the language we understand. But they are not exactly the same. Both describe relationships between phenomena that seem distinct but are somehow substantively linked. Dhvani, however, is a more specifically linguistic issue and vyañjanā a more broadly metaphysical term. The terms therefore retain slightly different shades of meaning, and their differences will become important at certain points. But despite these shades of difference, the two terms revolve around a shared set of philosophical concerns, and the questions involved are fairly consistent, even though their application may vary. This is the reason why I have chosen to translate the terms as "poetic manifestation," rather than the more common "suggestion," or Pollock's more recent

---

5 McCrea insightfully suggests in a few places that in Ānandavardhana's text, the terms aren't actually fully synonymous, dhvani referring more to the poetic phenomenon itself and vyañjanā referring to the more general linguistic process on which this is based (McCrea, Teleology, 162-163). But we will set this distinction aside for now in the interest of understanding the more general features of the theory. McCrea also notes (Ibid, 173, n12) that the term has a history outside of Ānandavardhana's text and that the standard translations obscure this, points with which I obviously agree.
"implicature." The terms "suggestion" and "implicature" have the effect of downplaying or obscuring the connection to these philosophical concerns, while "manifestation" forces us to reckon with them. Curds are not a "suggestion" or "implicature" of a potential latent in milk; but they may well be a manifestation of it, and the question of whether or not they are is part of a family of questions relevant to Ānandavardhana's theory.

This family of questions is not extensively analyzed in the text itself. Ānandavardhana is careful to set himself particular goals and to stick to those, and he ventures into more foundational issues only occasionally and minimally. On his own terms, his text will be successful if he can define poetic manifestation, showing that it exists and that it has always been central to poetry (that is, to actual historical poetry, in which Ānandavardhana claims to find abundant examples of poetic manifestation). He also wants to prove that it is philosophically distinguishable from all other linguistic or non-linguistic modes of knowledge, and that it is neither ineffable nor mysterious, but can be described and analyzed. For these reasons,


7 The idea that curds are a manifestation of a potential latent in milk is a typical example used by proponents of a theory called satkāravāda, which holds that effects always pre-exist in their causes. My use of this example here is not intended to suggest that Ānandavardhana himself was a satkāravādin or that his literary theory is a type of satkāravāda theory. But later interpretations, particularly Abhinavagupta's, were, and not by coincidence. Moreover, the debate over how exactly transformation, change, and creation occur (the parināma/vivarta debates), which is closely related to satkāravāda, was certainly relevant to Bhartṛhari, at least as he was interpreted in later centuries, and was relevant to exactly those parts of Vākyapadīya that, as I will argue in this chapter, Ānandavardhana draws from. So although Ānandavardhana was not a satkāravādin, the ideas he uses in his text are very closely related to satkāravāda, and practically require the question to be addressed if a commentator is to engage seriously with the work and try to expand on it. But all this is slightly beside the current point, which is that "manifestation" forces an English speaker to think about the way that appearances and essences are related, while "suggestion" does not, and this makes it a better choice for a theory that is at least partially about the relation of appearances and essences.

8 For example, Ānandavardhana states near the beginning of his text: "In view of such disagreements [over the existence and nature of poetic manifestation], we shall state its true nature in order to delight the hearts of sensitive
Ānandavardhana would probably not have felt required to elaborate and prove all of the foundational and assumed ideas built into his text. But this doesn't mean there aren't any, nor that they are unimportant. So in trying to understand Ānandavardhana's text we will be concerned not just with what he said, but also with what he could have said, what he left unsaid, and what would need to be said to develop his theory more. By bringing these background issues into focus, we will see that while his text eventually came to be remembered as a triumph of literary analysis and argument, in terms of these more basic issues it actually contains inconsistencies and ambiguities, and is not necessarily convincing on its own. The debates over the theory of poetic manifestation that ensued immediately after its introduction can be seen, in large part, as an extended conversation about just these sorts of issues, and the defenses of the theory, as we will see, become more intelligible when we see them as an expression of religious investment in the philosophical issues at stake, rather than in the substance of Ānandavardhana's arguments.

9 In addition to this, there is the possibility that the genre he is writing, a set of kārikās, or root verses, with a short appended commentary, or vṛtti, is not one that is intended to be exhaustive, but one that implicitly expects a series of future commentators to elaborate and expand the tradition. For more on this see Jonardon Ganeri and M. Miri, "Sanskrit Philosophical Commentary," Journal of The Indian Council of Philosophical Research 27 (2010): 187-207.
In order to show all this, this chapter will proceed in three stages. First, it will summarize Ānandavardhana's theory of poetic manifestation, highlighting some key terms and examples. Then, it will analyze the details of this theory, which Ānandavardhana mostly explains negatively, by distinguishing it from other possible alternatives. Here we will see the philosophical problems and inconsistencies in Ānandavardhana's text, which only become clear on close examination. To my knowledge, these problems have never really been pointed out, as studies of Ānandavardhana focus instead on the criticisms and alternatives faced by the theory, which is not necessarily the same thing as describing its internal problems. Finally, we will look at the few positive descriptions of the theory that Ānandavardhana does give. Here also problems and contradictions are evident. It is in these areas of the text, however, that Ānandavardhana can be found most clearly borrowing from Bhartṛhari. So it is in looking at these parts of the texts closely that we can see how exactly Ānandavardhana's work changed future Sanskrit literary theory. For it is in these sections that Ānandavardhana suddenly made it possible to talk about meaning and emotions in literature using a set of concepts—concepts of appearance and essence, as described in the introduction—that happened already to be of great import to the religious traditions popular in Kaśmīr during Ānandavardhana's life. Once this happened, once Bhartṛhari's ideas were wedded to poetics, religion and theories of aesthetic emotion became mutually repercussive; a position on one pole of this dialectic had inevitable implications for the other. More importantly, this would have been the case even if no one had noticed it. From this point on, literary theory began to orbit in a religious vortex; small wonder that it was only a matter of time until someone noticed this and described it explicitly, a move first made by the theologian Abhinavagupta one hundred years after Ānandavardhana. Abhinavagupta's
clarification of the implicit religious dimensions of the theory of manifestation will be the subject of Chapter Two.

But this is already jumping ahead too far. Before we understand these later debates, we first have to understand Ānandavardhana's theory.

Overview of the Theory

The theory of manifestation might best be introduced by way of an example. Here is one, quoted early in the text by Ānandavardhana to illustrate his topic:

Go your rounds freely, gentle monk;  
the little dog is gone.  
Just today, from the thickets by the Godā river  
came a fearsome lion and killed him.¹⁰

Abhinavagupta's short commentary on this verse clarifies what exactly the meaning is that is "manifested" here.¹¹ The words, he tells us, are spoken by a young woman who has been secretly meeting a lover by the Godā river. Her trysting spot is frequently disturbed by a Buddhist monk, who goes there to collect flowers for religious offerings, and this bothers her. This exhortation to wander freely is actually a cleverly disguised prohibition, a way for the young woman to tell the monk to avoid the river-bank without betraying her own desire to have the river-bank to herself, which would arouse suspicion.

This contextualization may seem fanciful. And in fact, the poem originally occurs in an anthology of free-standing, unconnected verses, all of which are given without context, so we can't really be sure to what extent this context was part of the original intention of the poet. We

¹⁰Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, Dhvanyāloka, 83. (The original is Dhvanyāloka, 52. For the poetic examples I will only cite the page and will not represent the original.)

¹¹Ibid., 84.
only know what the character says and what the reader encounters (this triad of poet-character-reader/spectator is important to mark). But even without this contextualization, there are clearly narrative details that a sensitive reader would notice. The monk is "gentle" and on his alms rounds is frightened by a small dog.\(^{12}\) Whoever is speaking to the monk wants him to know not just that the village is free of the terrifying little dog, but also to know the reason the dog is gone: a much more terrifying animal living by the river. Any monk scared by a little dog would obviously have good reason to stay away from a lion infested river-bank. So while the verse appears as an exhortation, and an exhortation is what the words of the verse actually denote, the sensitive reader understands there to be a prohibition. Ānandavardhana's contention is that we understand this because of a linguistic process that brings this information to light without stating it directly or even figuratively, a process which he terms poetic manifestation. This linguistic function lends a special beauty to poetry that makes it unique, and this is the most important element in poetry.

Ānandavardhana goes on to give an exhaustive analysis of the types and categories of manifestation, complete with numerous examples. One way of categorizing it is with reference to what is manifested: whether it is a narrative fact, a rhetorical figure, or an aestheticized emotion, that is, a rasa. In the verse above, what is manifested is simply a narrative fact: that the monk should not travel to a certain area. But one can also manifest a figure of speech, like, for example, a simile. An amusing example of the manifestation of a simile is given by Ānandavardhana at 2.27: "The eyes of the warriors take not such joy / in their ladies' saffron painted breasts / as they take in the cranial lobes, painted with red minium / of their enemies'"

---

\(^{12}\)The suffix in the original verse is generally taken to be a diminutive, in the form of the Sanskrit suffix -\(\text{ka}\).
elephants." The simile here, according to Ānandavardhana, is that the warriors' wives' breasts are as large as the bumps on an elephant's head, a comparison which is conveyed by the verse without being stated directly, and which is ostensibly more pleasing because of this.

Now, these two types of manifestation might not seem particularly unique, or uniquely poetic. They are examples of the way in which language conveys all sorts of information without stating it directly—a common process, familiar to anyone, which is found in almost all areas of language use. But the third kind of manifestation, the manifestation of rasa, is different. An example of the manifestation of rasa is given by Ānandavardhana at 2.22, from Kālidāsa's famous poem Kumārasambhava: "[The goddess] Pārvatī, standing at her father's side while the divine sage Nārada spoke [of her marriage arrangements], counted the petals of a play lotus, with downturned face." This verse is supposed by Ānandavardhana to manifest young Pārvatī's shyness and eager expectation of her wedding to Śiva, and thus to manifest an erotic rasa. What makes the manifestation of rasa distinct from the other two kinds of manifestation, according to Ānandavardhana, is that, unlike them, rasa can only be manifested, and never stated directly. This difference is potentially quite significant and implies that whatever Ānandavardhana thought a rasa was, he did not think of it as the kind of information that could be conveyed directly. Something about it makes it necessarily indirect.

The difference is evident in comparison to the other two examples above, which can be rephrased as direct statements. We could say, "The women's breast were as large as the bumps

---

13 Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, Dhvanyāloka, 335. (The original is Dhvanyāloka, 286)

14 Ibid., 311. The verse is Kumārasambhava vs. 6.84. (The original is Dhvanyāloka, 268).

15 Ibid., 105: "The third variety, involving rasa, etc., which appears as something implied by the inherent capability of the literal sense but as an object on which no words can operate directly [i.e., which can never be stated directly], must necessarily be different from the literal." Dhvanyāloka, 81: trīyās tu rasādilakṣaṇāḥ prabheda vācyasāmarthyāksiptāḥ prakāśate, na tu sāksācchabdadvāpāraviṣaya iti vācyād vibhinna eva.
on elephants' heads," and the same simile would still be conveyed, although directly and perhaps in a less suggestive or beautiful way. But things are different with rasa. Kālidāsa could have told us, "Pārvatī really loved Śiva, and awaited the chance to make love to him with embarrassed eagerness," and in terms of the raw facts, this paraphrase would be the same. But, according to Ānandavardhana, our paraphrase would be devoid of rasa. Unlike the first two examples, if this verse is translated into a factual statement the rasa is actually lost, not just conveyed in a less beautiful way, and this means that rasa, whatever it is, must somehow be more than a mere statement of fact. What is significant about this for now is that, regardless of this difference among the examples, Ānandavardhana claims that they are all examples of the same linguistic process. So whatever it is that differentiates the manifestation of rasa from the transmission of information applies to the other types of manifestation as well. Though some types of manifestation can be paraphrased, all of them involve a shared sui generis linguistic operation.16,17

16 Some readers may notice that Ānandavardhana's theory seems to bear some resemblance to what is currently called "pragmatics," that is, the study of the meaning of utterances in context, beyond their formal, context-free, "semantic" meanings. In particular it seems related to the subcategory of pragmatics called "implicature," pioneered by H.P. Grice (as opposed to the study of, say, speech-act theory or the study of indexicals, which are also part of pragmatics). This is presumably why Pollock has chosen to translate dhvani as "implicature" (Sheldon Pollock, "What Was Bhaṭṭanayaka Saying?"; Sheldon Pollock, "Vyakti"; Sheldon Pollock, Rasa Reader). But implicature and the theory of manifestation do not easily line up. It is true that there are important similarities between the two theories. These similarities concern the capacity of language to bear meanings that are distinguishable from conventional meanings and are indexed to a variety of changeable, contextual factors, which would allow the exact same sentence to mean two different things in two different contexts. But the similarities should not be taken for identity. For one thing, implicature is widely held to be a matter of speaker's intention, and understanding implicature is held to be a matter of inference to speaker's intention based on commonly accepted rules of discourse (Wayne Davis, "Implicature," The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy [Fall 2014 Edition], ed. Edward N. Zalta, URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/implicature/>). This is probably because it is a very plausible explanation, and because it is very hard to imagine making sense of the phenomenon in any other way. Ānandavardhana, on the other hand, considers it important to distinguish manifestation from both inference and from speaker's intention, and to eschew the possibility of a body of rules that could guide our understanding of it, as we will see. In addition to this, implicature is commonly understood to include figures of speech like metaphor or irony (Kepa Korta and John Perry, "Pragmatics," The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy [Winter 2015 Edition], ed Edward N. Zalta, URL = <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2015/entries/pragmatics/>), and often to include any form of non-literal usage. Ānandavardhana, on the other hand, is at great pains to distinguish manifestation from the processes of figurative speech, and other types of non-literal usage. So although Ānandavardhana does seem to be interested in ways in which sentences can have contextual, non-semantic meanings, the comparison to
In a rough, general sense, all this seems plausible enough. Language can convey things indirectly, and poetry is the use of this capacity to create specific kinds of beauty—not such a controversial claim. It is, however, vague, and moreover it is unclear why this warrants some sort of new terminology. This vagueness and lack of clarity is due to the fact that, despite the apparent exhaustiveness of his categorizations, what is missing from Ānandavardhana's text is an explicit description of the exact semantic mechanisms by which manifestation takes place. In fact, Ānandavardhana gives very few positive explanations at all of what manifestation might be, despite the fact that he feels the mechanism is discrete enough to warrant its own term. He seems much more to prefer arguing by a process of elimination, first establishing that we do in fact understand meanings in poetry that are distinct from the expressed meanings, and then arguing implicature only restates the question, which would now be how does implicature work. And on this question Ānandavardhana's theory is first of all completely incompatible with current theories of implicature, relying far more on metaphysics than they do, as evidenced by his choice of names for the theory. And second of all, the theory is bent on distinguishing among types of meaning that current theories of implicature are designed to treat in one category. The comparison is therefore misleading at best. Even if the comparison were to hold in certain respects this itself would be far from illuminating, since to hold true the comparison would have to be so broad that it wouldn't tell us much. In addition to all this, the nature of implicature in general is an open field, and quite complex, so that we would then be stuck with all the same questions of philosophical exegesis, none of which would be answered by a comparison to implicature, and many of which (the metaphysical ones) would be obscured by it. So in a very broad sense, it might not be inaccurate to say that Ānandavardhana is attempting to develop some form of what we would consider pragmatics, perhaps a new form, not really compatible with currently theorized forms of pragmatics like implicature. But this really only tells us that Ānandavardhana is concerned with forms of meaning that are not denotational, whereupon we would have to ask how these meanings are communicated, the answer to which would be "by a unique process called manifestation."

There are other ways to categorize manifestation, which are interesting but not relevant to this project. For example, manifestation can be categorized according to how the two meanings are related or according to what specifically triggers the manifestation. There is manifestation where the literal meaning is entirely set aside and a new meaning takes over, manifestation where the literal meaning is intended but shifted to another meaning, manifestation where the gap between literal and understood meanings is noticed, manifestation where it is not noticed, manifestation that is conveyed by a sentence, by a grammatical particle, by a tense suffix, manifestation that is subordinated to a figure of speech or expressed meaning and vice versa, etc, etc. Examples are given for all of these. In doing this, Ānandavardhana enacts his claim that manifestation is not ineffable, and that it can be understood and catalogued according to the scholastic style popular in Sanskrit philosophy.

McCrea (McCrea, *Teleology*, 197, 206-207) has already observed that a certain ambivalence and shyness about language philosophy characterizes Ānandavardhana's work as a whole. Even in the places where he does engage in language philosophy, Ānandavardhana always points out that even if he is wrong about the particular language philosophical assertion he is making, his main theory will still hold true.
that since this phenomenon cannot be explained in terms of any of the other commonly theorized processes of language or knowledge there must therefore be a new, hitherto un-theorized process at work.

Perhaps Ānandavardhana deemed this strategy sufficient for his task of proving that manifestation exists and can be categorized. But since we are interested not just in the existence but in the intellectual history of manifestation, and especially in the significance of later innovations and debates, it becomes important to try to understand as specifically as possible what Ānandavardhana actually thought manifestation was, as well as what remained to be clarified after him. One way to do this is to read closely his few positive discussions and see what is implied by them. Another way, which we will try first, is to adumbrate his idea by looking at how he distinguishes manifestation from other processes. In both cases, some clarity is gained, but at the same we encounter slippery ambiguities. In distinguishing manifestation from other processes, the main ambiguity is whether Ānandavardhana is ultimately describing a unique linguistic process or whether he is describing a common linguistic process that is used for a unique purpose, namely the creation of beauty in poetry. This ambiguity is due to the fact that Ānandavardhana is never quite confident that the distinction can be made, and so he is never as clear about it as one might like. He goes back and forth over the distinction, exploiting the ambiguity to avoid the fact that his distinctions between manifestation and other processes are not always so compelling. When we turn to his positive discussion, we will see that this section also contains significant ambiguities, which have to do with the source material from which Ānandavardhana draws his concepts from. This positive discussion, however, also initiates a conversation about the metaphysics of how certain phenomena, most importantly aesthetic
moods, appear in literature, and seeing this will set us up to see, in future chapters, some of the ways in which Ānandavardhana's ideas were adopted, modified, or refuted.

**Arguing By Elimination**

To say that a verse of poetry can say things indirectly is all well and good. Ānandavardhana, however, goes further than this. He claims that this implication happens by means of a unique process, irreducible to any other, which therefore requires a new name and a new taxonomy. Objections to this theory immediately arise, especially in South Asia, where language had always been deeply and carefully studied. These objections will be carefully analyzed in turn in the following pages, but we can summarize them as follows. One objection is that Ānandavardhana is not describing anything unique, but simply another form of figurative speech. That is, what Ānandavardhana calls "manifestation" proceeds in exactly the same way as metaphor or metonymy or hyperbole, a process that was already well-known and well-theorized in Ānandavardhana's time and place. I will call this "The Figurative Speech Objection." Another objection is that Ānandavardhana is not describing a special mechanism of language but simply language-as-such. This objection, which I will call "The Language-As-Such Objection," is premised on the assumption that speech is defined by the meanings it conveys to the hearer. If I say $x$ in order to get you to understand $y$, then $y$ is simply the meaning of $x$, regardless of what the connection is between them. On this theory, differences between types of meanings are made irrelevant. Some meanings are in the dictionary and some are not, but in all cases $x$ is used to communicate meaning $y$, and this instrumental connection the only salient fact about the matter. A third objection is that all speech has extra-semantic qualities. Some speech is harsh, some is mellifluous, or playful, or threatening. Sanskrit theorists were already aware of this, and had
described it, and so it was plausibly objected that the meanings Ānandavardhana thinks of as "manifested" are just qualities of the statements being made. I will call this "The Qualities of Speech" objection. If all Ānandavardhana is referring to with his new term is a quality of speech, the objector says, then it is hard to see what the fuss is about. On the other hand, if the manifested meaning is not a quality but actually a piece of information we learn, then it raises another objection. Perhaps it is merely inference that accounts for this process "manifestation." Perhaps we know what Pārvatī is feeling in the same way that we draw inferences in other areas of our life. I will call this "The Inferential Objection." Again, if this objection holds, and if manifestation is just inference, then there is nothing new or unique about what Ānandavardhana is describing.

These are the objections Ānandavardhana felt obliged to address, and in addressing them he negatively characterizes poetic manifestation, telling us a great deal about what it is not. From these negative characterizations we learn important things about what he took himself to be describing. We also find, if we examine his ideas on this closely, that the details don't always work out so smoothly or coherently. So we will go through each objection and see what Ānandavardhana's response is, and what these responses might tell us about how he understood his own theory.

The Figurative Speech Objection

Figurative or non-literal speech is a mode of speech that was extensively analyzed and debated in many Sanskrit philosophical traditions.\(^{19}\) Regardless of one's specific understanding

\(^{19}\) For some recent work on this see Roy Tzohar, "Metaphor (Upacāra) in Early Yogācāra Thought And its Intellectual Context" (Ph.D. Diss, Columbia University, 2011); and Malcolm Keating, "Speaking Indirectly: Theories of Non-Literal Meaning in Indian Philosophy" (Ph.D. Diss, University of Texas at Austin, 2015).
of how figurative speech works, an opponent to the theory of manifestation might argue that the process by which we understand the manifested meaning is really just the same as the way we understand metaphor, or simile, metonymy, synecdoche, or any other form of figurative speech. For these also convey information that isn't directly or explicitly stated. When Kafka said, "Great literature is an axe to break the frozen sea inside us," all sorts of things come to mind beyond the objects of the words "axe," "sea," and "frozen," and since this is already accounted for by theories of metaphor, there is no need for any new theory.

This position was not given a full theoretical defense until Mukulabhaṭṭa did so in the following century, but Ānandavardhana himself was clearly either acquainted with this argument or at least anticipated it. In Dhvanyāloka he gives various extended arguments distinguishing manifestation from figurative speech, from 1.14 to 1.19 and again at 3.33. These arguments have already been very well explicated by McCrea,20 but they are worth repeating here, since they help us understand Ānandavardhana's theory better, and also since they provide the background against which later debates about the idea need to be understood.

In 1.14, Ānandavardhana argues that manifestation must be different from figurative speech because such an identification would suffer from "over- and under-extension" (Sanskrit: avyāpti and ativyāpti). This is a Sanskrit scholastic way of saying that figurative speech can occur where there is no manifestation, and that manifestation can occur without figurative usage. An example of figurative usage without manifestation is given by Ānandavardhana: "You kiss a hundred times, / embrace each other a thousand / and rest only to unite again. But when this happens with a lover / it is not a tautology."21 A "tautology" (Prakrit: punaruttam, Sanskrit: punaruttamaṇḍita):
punaruktam), is a philosophical term that in Sanskrit usually designates the logical or linguistic flaw of unnecessarily saying something that has already been said and so doesn't need to be repeated. It is used figuratively here as a way of saying that the lovers repeat the same actions, but that in this case it isn't a flaw, as it would be in a logical context. Although there is information conveyed here beyond the literal, Ānandavardhana does not feel it is enough for this to be considered an example of what he is trying to theorize. In his explanation he employs the ambiguity mentioned above, and plays on the slight difference in valence between the two Sanskrit terms for manifestation, vyañjanā and dhvani, which here might be usefully translated as manifestation and poetic manifestation. He tells us, in 1.15, that, in contrast to ordinary cases of manifestation, "Poetic manifestation [dhvani] refers to words bearing the capacity to manifest [vyañjakatāṃ bibhrat] a beauty that couldn't be stated in any other way." In other words, figurative language does use manifestation to convey a non-literal meaning, but the phenomenon that Ānandavardhana terms "manifestation" is not just the bare capacity to do this. It is rather the use of this capacity to create some special poetic beauty. Since this verse lacks this sort of beauty, it is merely figurative speech, and not manifestation. This argument might seem a bit weak or equivocal. It is based on the plausible assertion that figurative usage and manifestation are different because the latter has a different effect than the former, namely the creation of beauty. But then this means that the process of poetic manifestation itself is not unique. It is differentiated only by a particular effect it creates, not by the process it uses. Might this be all that Ānandavardhana intended? Is difference of purpose enough to distinguish what he is talking

---

22 Ibid., 179, 3.

23 Dhvanyāloka,155: uktyantareṇaḥsakyam yat tac cārutvaṃ prakāśayan / śabdo vyañjakatāṃ bibhrad dhvanyukter viśayībhavet // The translation is mine. The context makes it clear that manifestation is being contrasted with ordinary, non-poetic manifestation.
about, even if it isn't distinct in any other way? Is Ānandavardhana simply saying that manifestation is only a particularly lovely use of the same mechanism that animates figurative speech?

It seems that Ānandavardhana does not want to say this, ultimately. This kind of argument doesn't really capture what he claims to be describing. Manifestation is not just a new use for an old process. He claims that the soul of all poetry is a capacity of language that no one has previously described, something hitherto completely unrecognized, and he wants to prove that this is actually the case, not just that figurative language can be used in a way that is a bit more pleasing than usual. So he extends his argument. In 1.16 he points out that not only are there instances of figurative speech that are not beautiful enough to be called "poetic manifestation," but there are also such things as dead metaphors, which are figurative although they have no longer have any halo of manifestation at all. The example he chooses is the word lāvanya, which technically means "salty," but is often used in Sanskrit in the sense of "beautiful." Ānandavardhana counts this as a metaphor because he thinks that words have particular meanings that are formally fixed by the Sanskrit tradition, and all a metaphor is for him is the use of a word to refer to something other than this fixed meaning. The use of "salty" to refer to beauty rather than salinity is a deviation from what the word properly means, so it is a metaphor. And yet it is widely known and used, and is devoid of manifestation of any kind, poetic or otherwise. It doesn't connote or imply anything in particular beyond its commonly understood definition, nor does it hold any particular beauty. The fact that this is both a metaphor and devoid of manifestation means, for Ānandavardhana, that "being a metaphor" and "being manifestation" are two completely different things.
In 1.17 he gives an even stronger argument, which disambiguates the kinds of things that figures of speech do. First, he points out that in order for figurative speech to take place, there must be some blockage of the literal meaning. Figurative speech only takes place when the statement does not make sense without resorting to a figurative meaning. This is a standard theory of figuration in Sanskrit philosophy.²⁴ When I say, "The boy is a lion," the primary meaning of the word "lion" is blocked; a boy cannot literally be an animal. This blockage is what makes the word deviate from its proper meaning and come to refer to a different meaning.²⁵ After this shift, "The boy is a lion" means "The boy is brave." The obvious question this raises is, why not simply say "The boy is brave" to begin with? Why say it in such a roundabout way? The answer Ānandavardhana gives is that using a turn of phrase like this bestows an extra bit of beauty on this verse, and he refers to this as the "purpose" [prayaṣṭa] of the figurative usage.²⁶ This beauty proceeds directly from the literal words, alongside of and separately from the figurative meaning. That is, the word "lion" itself is the source of the beauty of the verse, not the meaning "brave," and "lion" conveys this beauty differently than it conveys the meaning "brave," and simultaneously with it. The procession from "lion" to "brave" is metaphorical. There is a proper meaning, and a blockage of that meaning, and a shift to a new meaning, a "metaphorical" meaning. Entirely different from this is the procession from "lion" to the special beauty that is the purpose of the metaphor. This happens without blockage and without a stumbling gait.

²⁴ Although the particular word used by Ānandavardhana, skhaladgati, literally "stumbling", is, interestingly, traced by McCrea only to the Buddhist philosopher Dhammakīrti. McCrea, Teleology, 192 n42.

²⁵ This is either because the word itself shifts meaning or because the reader is forced to reinterpret it. The difference is subtle, but becomes important later on in the debate between Mukulabhaṭṭa and Mammaṭa over this issue. But this is outside the scope of this project.

²⁶ McCrea helpfully points out that this idea—that figurative usage takes place because of some special purpose—is borrowed from Vedic Ritualist hermeneutics, although the concept is used in a different way here than it is there. McCrea, Teleology, 192 n. 43.
Another way to put this is that while the metaphorical meaning "brave" replaces the literal meaning "lion," the beauty of the verse coexists with the word "lion," and depends on it. So it is only reasonable to conclude that the manner in which beauty is conferred on the verse is distinct from the shift in meaning that defines the metaphor. Even when figurative usage takes place alongside manifestation, Ānandavardhana argues that the two processes are analytically separable, and not reducible to each other.

Certainly one could imagine more sophisticated or broad understandings of metaphor or figurative speech that might be used to respond to Ānandavardhana's arguments here, and historically speaking this did happen. But insofar as we are concerned with what Ānandavardhana himself thought, we can only take the discussion as far as he did. If one finds his argumentation here dissatisfying, perhaps it should cast doubt on the notion that the theory of poetic manifestation was so popular and so historically triumphant simply on the strength of its philosophical arguments.

*The Language-As-Such Objection*

Another possibility that Ānandavardhana excludes is that manifestation might just be a type of denotation, the most basic and ordinary process by which words convey meaning, the process by which the word "cow" refers to the spotted animal chewing its cud in the field. Ānandavardhana's arguments for manifestation are based on proving that there is a meaning that is understood that cannot be arrived at through commonly accepted linguistic functions, and he assumes that the most ordinary linguistic function, denotation, has a particular and limited scope. It is limited to conventional meanings, the kind tracked by the dictionary, and it only produces

27 Both Mukulabhaṭṭa and Pratīhārendūrāja do this.
this type of meaning. But what if someone were to widen the scope of denotation and simply define denotation as the communication of an idea, arguing that the "denotation" of a word is just whatever a listener might reasonably wind up understanding from it? In other words, someone might say that in all usages of language, there is only one process—the process of prompting your listener to understand something. Whether the thing understood is found next to the word in the dictionary or not is a negligible distinction. "Lion" can sometimes denote a fearsome animal and sometimes a brave boy—in both cases language is prompting the listener to understand a meaning, and so both cases are essentially the same.

A version of such a view was held among some members of a philosophical school called Vedic Ritualism [mīmāṃsā], a school of Vedic scholars who developed an elaborate system of interpreting Vedic ritual instructions. According to the Prābhākara sub-school of Vedic Ritualists, it is really the sentence that carries meaning, not the individual word. Ānandavardhana refers to their position but doesn't elaborate on it very much. We can summarize it as follows. Individual words only have meaning within the context of a complete sentence. Their connection to this sentence, and to the other words in it, is included in their meaning, and so their meaning in any given case is just what they mean within the sentence in which they occur.28 In an evocative

---

28 The obvious rejoinder, that the word "cow" on its own still has meaning, might be explained away by pointing out that in this case, "cow" is a one-word sentence. A stronger argument for the theory in general, which would also answer this concern, would be to distinguish between what we might call "global" and "local" meaning. That is, rather than words being tabulae rasae whose meanings are entirely determined by context each and every time they are used, one might interpret the Vedic Ritualist here to simply be holding a theory of meaning in which the meaning of a word is determined by the way it is used in actual sentences. This would then be a refutation of a referentialist theory of meaning, where the meaning of sentences is built up out of individual word meanings that are determined individually, outside of and prior to any usage (which was the position of the Bhāṭṭa sub-school of Vedic Ritualism). According to this kind of "usage theory," even though the meaning of the word is globally determined by all the sentences in which it is used, that doesn't thereby mean that our understanding of a word starts from scratch each and every time it is used. Its meaning in any individual utterance is still determined by the way it is used in other sentences. A word would only lack meaning outside of any usage, not outside of each local instance of usage. These ideas are often debated in the Sanskrit texts in a roundabout way, by arguing over whether a word denotes an isolated meaning that is then semantically construed, or a meaning that is already in semantic connection to other meanings, but I take it that what is actually at stake is whether words have meaning outside of all usage or not (this itself mattered to Vedic Ritualists for further reasons that we won't go into now). I believe the original idea
metaphor, the denotive power of words is said to be like an arrow, which continues penetrating further and further until it reaches its mark; and there it stops. On this view, the word "lion" doesn't have a fixed meaning that pre-exists its use in a sentence, and which is then distorted metaphorically in the sentence "The boy is a lion." "Lion" in this sentence is used as part of a

in Prabhākara's works was almost certainly the global one, which I take to be more plausible (the following is taken from Ganganatha Jha, *Purva-Mimamsa in Its Sources* [Benares: Benares Hindu University, 1942], 135-139). I believe this because in the *Brhaṇi* and its commentaries, the point Prabhākara and his followers make is that we can't acquire knowledge of word-meanings without seeing word-usage in connection with action. This is why the Prabhākara position is so often glossed in Sanskrit texts with discussions of childhood development and children seeing elders' speaking. It is only by being connected to action in at least some cases that the meanings of words are revealed, and it is only through action that we can 'find a way in' to the system of language, which otherwise would remain entirely sealed off from us. The point at which language and action meet is the injunctive verb, and by observing the use of injunctive sentences, and the ensuing activities they provoke, we begin to learn the meaning of words. These words, however, can then be abstracted and applied to other sentences, even ones that don't have injunctive verbs. In these cases the meaning is still a meaning-in-use, connected with a sentence, and it is a meaning that is anchored by the words' use in other, injunctive sentences, and not solely by each sentence in which it is used. The word in isolation is just a theoretical abstraction—in actual life we only ever encounter used words, and we only start to understand what they mean when we see their connection with action. It is not totally clear to me which of these two interpretations of the Prabhākara position, global or local, Ānandavardhana intended to depict (or how actual interlocutors he may have encountered in Kāśmīr presented it). The counter-arguments he gives (see below) imply that he intended to depict the local version of the argument, or at least a modified version of it whereby the use of the word in other sentences prior to any given instance somewhere helps us understand, to some extent, its meaning in a new instance, but wouldn't constitute it or define it. This is the version of the theory that would work better with the argument that manifested meaning is just denotation. If a word's meaning in each instance of use is constituted by the meaning of the sentence in which it participates, then in cases where a sentence conveys a *rasa* it would follow that the *rasa* is part of the word's meaning. This would be harder to make sense of if the word's meaning were already actually constituted by its use in other sentences. So I have interpreted the position here accordingly, and I have tried to make as much sense of that position as I can. Abhinavagupta also seems to want to take it in the local sense, but is aware that there is more to it (the following is from *Dhvanyāloka*, 62-64. The original is too long to reproduce in full). Abhinavagupta points out that if the meaning of a word were determined by the meaning of the sentence in which it occurs, we would be caught in a vicious hermeneutic circle, having to understand the sentence in order to understand the words and having to understand the words in order to understand the sentence, and he quips that the Vedic Ritualist holding this theory might as well claim to be his own great-grandfather (*Dhvanyāloka*, 63). This is really only a criticism of the local version of the theory, since the global version of the theory escapes the hermeneutic circle by anchoring the meaning in at least one instance of injunctive usage. Abhinavagupta, however, is aware of this, and makes some counter-arguments that show there is more to the Prabhākara theory then what I am calling the local interpretation. One is that even if the word is connected somewhere to action through an injunctive verb, we still will never obtain the *meaning* of the word, we only obtain its meaning as construed in that sentence. If the Prabhākara then tries to say that the word's meaning in the first instance can be abstracted from its usage and applied to another instance, then this is already to admit that the word does have an isolated, semantically non-connected meaning, which we can recognize in other instances. Abhinavagupta considers this a refutation of the Prabhākara position, and it is a refutation of a position in which meaning is thought to be determined by global usage, not local usage. In any event, this passage is short, and seems more like an attempt to correct Ānandavardhana's oversimplification than anything else. I think it is clear that the Prabhākaras are not given a fully fair treatment by Ānandavardhana. Discussions of this topic in secondary literature are mostly unsatisfying, but the best summaries I have found are K. Raja, *Indian Theories of Meaning*, 2nd ed. (Madras: Adyar Library and Research Center, 1969), 189-213, and Jha, *Pūrva-mīmāṃsā*. Masson, Ingalls, and Patwardhan's translation of this section of the *Dhvanyāloka*, on page 89-90 of their text, doesn't fully clarify the philosophical issues at stake.
statement that prompts a cognition of bravery; that's it. It denotes a brave boy here in the exact same way that, in other cases, it denotes a fearsome animal. To be sure, lion-as-animal is a meaning familiar from other contexts, and it might be useful to someone trying to understand "the boy is a lion." In that case, it would be a stage through which cognition passes on the way to the real meaning, just like one has to cognize the individual words before cognizing the sentence meaning. But the sentence means that the boy is brave, and the words derive their meaning from participating in that larger meaning, not the other way around. To say that "lion" denotes a large animal but metaphorically indicates bravery is just as nonsensical, this school might argue, as saying that the sentence "the boy is brave" has two meanings: "the boy" and "the boy is brave." The same goes for examples of manifestation like "Wander freely..." If the sentence is used to express a prohibition, then a prohibition is what it expresses, even if there are other stages it passes through on the way.

If this view is correct, Ānandavardhana's claims will not hold. He would turn out to just be describing what always happens in language, not something special. But, on a first pass, the Prābhākara view seems a bit problematic. For one thing, it fails to account for the force of metaphors and figurative ways of speaking. As we have seen, if "lion" just means brave in the sentence, then we can well ask why one would say "The boy is a lion" at all? We do so because to say "The boy is a lion" is for some reason more pleasing and evocative than its alternative. This theory cannot explain why that is. Moreover, it is not clear why intermediate stages of understanding are irrelevant to the question of how a sentence means what it means. "Lion" in the sentence above might ultimately refer to a brave boy, but it makes a substantial difference that to understand this we first have to pass through the stage of understanding it as referring to a fearsome animal. This is not irrelevant to the meaning of the sentence. If anything these
intermediate stages are the only thing that might plausibly explain why we use metaphors at all. And this is actually what Ānandavardhana seems to have recognized. The whole purpose of Ānandavardhana's text is, one might argue, to show that it makes a great deal of difference how we arrive at what we understand from a sentence. So to dismiss the idea of different kinds of meanings by simply defining meaning as the end result of a chain of cognitions doesn't seem to speak to Ānandavardhana's particular point at all.

Part of the reason this objection might seem a bit simplistic is because Ānandavardhana does not spend much time on it or give it its proper due. The Prābhākaras were not quite as simple-minded as Ānandavardhana depicts them. They were a serious school of language philosophy that lasted for over a thousand years in the contentious world of Sanskrit philosophical debate. They developed answers to the kinds of first-pass questions just raised. But by and large, Ānandavardhana doesn't spend too much time elaborating the position. This may be because he didn't see them as a threat, either philosophically or within the power-politics of the royal court or patronage networks in Kaśmīr. Or perhaps he just wasn't as familiar with their arguments. Whatever the case may be, since we are trying to understand Ānandavardhana, a full defense of the Prābhākara position is outside the scope of what is required here. We just need to understand what Ānandavardhana takes the threat to be, and how he responds to it.

Ānandavardhana first responds to the Prābhākaras by emphasizing, as I mentioned above, the relevance of the stages in sentence cognition:

When a word, in denoting its own meaning, gives us to understand some further meaning, is there a difference between its nature as denoter of its own meaning and its nature as

29 See note 28, above. Abhinavagupta spends more time on them and develops a more sophisticated response to them, but he too treats them with a bit of scorn, in contrast to the so-called Bhāṭṭa Vedic Ritualists, a rival school of Vedic Ritual theory that was more popular historically. While Abhinavagupta dismisses the Prābhākara theory as incorrect, he accepts the alternative Bhāṭṭa theory of sentence meaning, and tries to show that manifestation doesn't contradict it.
cause for the understanding of the other meaning, or is there not? It cannot be that there is no difference, for the two operations are perceived to have different objects and be of different natures. In "The boy is a lion," the word "lion" might only pass through a stage of referring to an animal on its way to participating in the general meaning that the boy is brave. But the fact remains that it still has two objects in this process: the animal and the qualities of bravery. These aren't the same, and so we have to accept that the word has two different meanings, one "connected with the word," and the other "connected with that which is connected with the word," as Ānandavardhana tells us. Equally different, he continues, are the operations that lead to these meanings, for denotation is only ever linguistic, while manifestation can happen even via melodies or gestures.

Ānandavardhana continues by attacking the idea that the relation between word-meaning and sentence-meaning is analogous to the case of manifestation. It would indeed be silly to say that "The boy is a lion" means both "the boy" and "the boy is a lion." Cognizing the individual meaning of the word "boy" is a part of cognizing the sentence-meaning, but it does not comprise a separate object from the meaning of the sentence. The world "lion," however, has a different semantic status. In fact it seems part of the whole point of using it that we are aware of the literal meaning even after having shifted it to the metaphorical meaning. The manifested meaning is not

30 Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, Dhvanyāloka, 554. Dhvanyāloka, 458: atrocyate—yatra śabdah svārthamabhidhānāno 'ṛthāntaram avagamayati tatra yat tasya svārthābhidhāyītvām yac ca tadarthāntaratāvagamhetvatām tayor aviśeṣo viśeṣo vā. na tāvad aviśeṣaḥ; yasmāt tau dvau vyāpārau bhinnaviśayau bhinnaruṣau ca pratīyate eva.

31 Here we clearly see Ānandavardhana imagining his opponents, the Prābhākaras, to be holding a "local" version of the theory of contextual meaning (see note 28, above), arguing that other uses of a word that determine it to have other meanings are not constitutive of the meaning at hand and that, ultimately, the word-meaning is entirely determined anew by the context of each sentence. We can see this because when Ānandavardhana says it is relevant that "lion" means an animal first and then comes to connote bravery, it is clear that he imagines his opponents to be saying that this intermediate meaning is irrelevant, and that bravery is the only meaning of the word here in this sentence.
like this either. Another way to put this is that literal word-meanings disappear into the sentence-meaning when the interpretation is complete, but figurative and manifested meaning don't. We can cognize them distinctly even while we cognize the literal meaning of the sentence.

Ānandavardhana introduces here, as an example for manifested meaning, the example of a lamp that shines on a pot and allows us to see it. This example, as we will see in Chapter Three, becomes important in later debates over the theory of manifestation, but here Ānandavardhana uses it in a fairly circumscribed way. He just wants to find an example where the cause of a cognition doesn't disappear into the final cognition. When we see the pot, the lamplight doesn't disappear. The parts of the pot, however (Indian pots were traditionally made of two halves fused together), do disappear in the cognition of the final product. And similarly, while the literal meaning of a sentence might be made up of individual meanings that disappear into it, the way the parts of a pot disappear into the whole pot, there can nevertheless be another meaning that remains separate from it and cognizable simultaneously with it, like the lamplight shining on the pot. The manifested meaning is like this. Whether this is a sophisticated or plausible theory of metaphorical speech is not as important here as the fact that Ānandavardhana thinks that manifestation is a process where certain factors somehow enable a perception without thereby becoming part of that perception, or being replaced by it.

Later on, Ānandavardhana gives an even more robust theory of word-meaning in order to distinguish denotation from manifestation. Words, he tells us, are bound to their denoted objects in a metaphysically stable way.\(^{32}\) Their denotation is their "fixed nature" (niyata ātmā). From the time that we learn this fixed nature, the word is never seen to be without it.\(^{33}\) Manifestation,

\(^{32}\)This claim and what follows are based on a passage that is too long to cite in the original, but which can be found at Dhvanyāloka, 476-482. The translation is Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, Dhvanyāloka, 577-582.

\(^{33}\)This claim is an iteration of the Bhāṭṭa, referentialist meaning-theory mentioned above.
however, is not like this. The capacity to manifest (rather than just denote) a particular meaning only appears in certain words under certain conditions. And whether or not a word can manifest a meaning depends entirely on context.34

In fact, says Ānandavardhana, further strengthening his argument, it is only in this respect that ordinary speech differs from the sentences of the Vedas, which are thought by Vedic Ritualists to be eternal and infallible. The argument that the Vedas are eternal and infallible was grounded, at least by the Bhāṭṭa school of Vedic Ritualists (rivals to the Prābhākara school), in their argument that the relation between a word and its denoted meaning is "inborn" (autpattika), eternal, and unchanging.35 The Bhāṭṭas hold that, in its natural state, language is a system of referential relationships with no distortion and no mistakes. It becomes distorted when humans intervene and apply their intentions to it. Human language, as opposed to the words of the Veda, is obviously susceptible of changing conventions and ambiguity of meaning, and moreover it can be intentionally or unintentionally false. So, Ānandavardhana argues, if one wants to maintain, in the face of this human fact about language, that denotation is an inherent, fixed, and eternal

---

34This is opposed to figurative speech, where it is not only context but something about the referent of the word itself and its connection to the metaphorical referent that allows the shift to take place. Lions themselves have to be brave in order for "The boy is a lion" to make sense as a metaphor. On the other hand, lotus petals don't need to have any connection at all to eroticism in order for the verse about Pārvatī picking at the lotus in her hand to manifest the Erotic rasa.

power of words, one must assume that there are also incidental relations that can pertain to words. These relations are distinct from denotative relations. They are present in words as adjunct properties under certain conditions and are part of particular, impermanent situations, unlike "natural" meanings, which are always present in words by default, and which are ideal and unchanging. These incidental relations change the denotative power from a natural, and naturally true, relation into a distorted one. More specifically, the relation that distinguishes Vedic words from human words is their capacity to bear an incidental relation to a speaker's intention. That is, ordinary human words denote objects in the world, but they also manifest the intentions of the speaker. Vedic words do not do this, as the Vedas have no speaker. In the case of human speech, the words manifest the human speaker's intention, and they do this in the full sense of the word. But this happens inadvertently, just as a matter of course, each time one speaks. Ānandavardhana distinguishes this from manifested meanings that are intended as such, which are what are used in poetry, and which produce a special beauty. In any event, when words are misleading it is the human intention that does the misleading. Only this intention can be deceptive or mistaken, and it is only this that accounts for the potential falsity of human words. Since the Vedas are authorless and have no particular speaker's intention behind them, they don't manifest any speaker's intention, and therefore they cannot be false. So they only inform; directly, eternally, and infallibly.36 Thus, in order to hold that Vedic words are infallible, Ānandavardhana argues, one would have to hold that manifestation is real, because manifestation is the only way to hold

36 In his commentary, Abhinavagupta helpfully refers to a quote from the Šabarabhāṣya, a foundational Vedic Ritualist text: "'This is what this man thinks' is what we understand [from human sentences], not 'this is actually the case.'" (Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, Dvanyāloka, 581) The original is Jaimini, Mīmāṁsādārṣanam with the Šabarabhāṣya of Šabara, Prabhā of Sri Vaidyanāthaśāstri (Adhyaya 1, Pāda 1 only), Tantravārttika and Ṭuptikā of Kumārilaṃbhaṭṭa, ed. K.V. Abhyankar and G.A. Joshi, 7 vols., 2nd edition, Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series 97 (Pune: Ānandāśrama, 1970-1976), 1:16-17.
on to the infallibility of Vedic speech while still admitting that human speech can be mendacious.

It is unclear whether Ānandavardhana really wants to commit himself to the theory that the Vedas are authorless and infallible. He may just be using this idea to show that these Bhāṭṭa Vedic Ritualists can't maintain their own theories without accepting his as well. However, the important point here in this section is not that Ānandavardhana gives us, in the twenty-first century, strong reason to believe his theory, but that by looking at his reasons we can learn something about what he was trying to say: that manifestation is an incidental relation that a word can take on separately from its true, denotative meaning, and that speaker's intention is one such manifested relation.

The Qualities of Speech Objection

The examples given so far all entail certain characteristics, and begin to give us a somewhat positive description of what manifestation is. Manifestation seems to be something that is related to the words of a sentence and their meanings, and comes out of them, but isn't reducible to them or the same as them. This position accords well with the analogy Ānandavardhana gives for manifestation when he first introduces the concept. Here he says the manifested meaning is similar to the beauty of a woman, which appears clearly, but is distinct from all the elements that make it up—parts of the body, jewelry, make-up, etc. But this example itself needs to be interpreted, and on its own it doesn't add much to the discussion. Like the examples above, it implies that the manifested meaning somehow appears from the collection of parts, and is somehow apparent to the viewer. But how?

---

37 Dhvanyāloka, 47: pratiyamānam punar anyad eva vastv asti vānīṣu mahākavīnām / yat tat prasiddhāvayavātiriktaṃ vibhāti lāvanyamivaṅganāsu //
One possible way to understand this is that manifested meaning is an emergent property, somewhat like the image of a face emerging from the lines that compose it in a drawing. But this doesn't seem to be exactly what Ānandavardhana has in mind. The case of a face and its lines, which Ānandavardhana himself never uses as an example, leads to a complicated discussion of mereology and supervenience that only enters the tradition at a later date.\(^{38}\) We can observe now, however, that the main reason Ānandavardhana would not agree that a face is manifested by its lines is that the lines disappear into the cognition of the face. And, as we saw with the example of the pot and its constitutive parts, he clearly feels that the manifested meaning is separate from the elements that manifest it.

This separation becomes more apparent in another part of the text, 3.33, where an opponent tries to argue that rasa is not a manifested meaning, and not even really a meaning at all, but just a quality that inheres in the expressed meaning. The opponent at this point probably represents an older tradition of South Asian literary theory, where it was a standard practice to describe different types of poetic speech as having different "styles," consisting of various types of diction, alliteration, use of compounds, etc., each of which was supposed to convey a different sort of mood and be suitable for different types of subjects. The argument is translated by McCrea as follows: "The expressed meaning appears as consisting of rasa, etc., not as something separate along with rasa, etc."\(^{39}\) McCrea notes that this sort of argument against Ānandavardhana is really only possible with respect to the manifestation of rasa; it isn't possible to raise this kind of argument for other types of manifestation, such as manifestation of a plot fact, since in these types of manifestation it is possible for the expressed meaning to contradict

\(^{38}\)It becomes more relevant, for example, in Mahimabhaṭṭa's *Vyaktiviveka* and Ruuyaka's commentary on it.

\(^{39}\)Dhvanyāloka, 402: *rasādīmayam hi vācyam pratībhāsate na tu rasādībhīḥ pṛthagbhūtam iti*. McCrea, *Teleology*, 111-112.
the understood meaning. In "Go your rounds freely...", what is stated (the injunction to wander) and what is understood (the prohibition from wandering), are contradictory, and it is obvious that a prohibition can't be present in an injunction as a property of it. But *rasa*, which is not propositional the way injunctions and prohibitions are, is a different case, and raises the possibility that what we think of as "manifested" is just a property inhering in the elements that express it, more similar to the pleasing sound of alliteration than to the implied meanings of a suggestive sentence.

Ānandavardhana replies that if were to adhere in its expressive elements, then we would expect *rasa* to be immediately apparent when the literal meaning is apparent, and thus much more easily accessible than it actually is. Anyone who understood the literal meaning would thereby understand the *rasa* as well, because the *rasa* would be an element of that literal meaning, a quality of it. A person with a light complexion, Ānandavardhana claims, consists of his complexion: someone who sees him also sees his complexion, provided his sense of sight is properly functioning. This is not so much because the complexion is apparent along with him or alongside him but because seeing him just consists in seeing his complexion. In poetry, however, it is frequently the case that people understand the literal meaning of a poem perfectly well yet miss the emotional resonance. For Ānandavardhana this counterexample proves that the relationship between words and manifested meaning is not quite so immediate as this objection would require.

But surely we can think of plenty of examples where an item can be said to have qualities that are not immediately apparent to anyone who encounters it. Some qualities are just exceedingly subtle and require trained discernment. What if *rasa* is like one of those qualities,

---

qualities that are present in their substratum, and present without mediation, but nevertheless are only perceptible to trained experts? Ānandavardhana considers this possibility next, and the example he gives is the genuineness of a jewel. Genuineness is a quality of that jewel and not really separate from it, but it is not immediately apparent and can only be recognized by someone with training, and then only after careful inspection. The problem with this analogy, says Ānandavardhana, is that when a jewel is recognized as genuine, that is a recognition of the nature of the jewel itself: the genuineness is the very essence of the jewel, the thing that makes it what it is, its svarūpa, in Sanskrit. But to recognize an emotion in a verse of poetry is not to recognize the nature of that verse.

To see what Ānandavardhana means here, we might think about this a bit beyond the arguments that he himself gave. Let's take the example of tears. Sadness isn't the essential nature of tears and no one, Ānandavardhana seems to say, would argue that it is. Tears may be produced by sadness, and because of this relationship they can inform you about the presence of sadness, in conjunction with other contextual factors. And the rapidity of one's understanding might produce the illusion that they are the same thing. But they aren't the same thing. We can look at this example from the other direction as well. Tears are usually the result of sadness. But if they were produced by joy, or by irritation of the eye, they would still be tears, and that primary perception holds firm regardless of any further determination. This is because sadness is not their nature, but something with which they are adventitiously connected. A jewel, on the other hand, is by definition not a jewel if its genuineness is not present; genuineness is its essential nature. Because of this definitional necessity, it exists for us in a kind of perceptual limbo until this nature is recognized. We see a shiny red stone. It might be a ruby, but on the other hand it might be just red spinel, a worthless stone that is notoriously easy for an amateur to
mistake for ruby. What an expert does is look closely and determine that yes, this is indeed a ruby, or no, what we thought was a ruby is actually red spinel. But before this close examination, even the expert is not quite sure what she is looking at, and any conclusion she comes to prior to recognizing the essential nature of the object is provisional, and might need to be revised retrospectively after further examination. Tears, on the other hand, remain tears no matter what kind of mood we discern behind them, or even if we discern that there is no mood behind them and only an irritation of the eye. No amount of insight into the cause of the tears or the emotions behind them will reveal that what we thought were tears were actually something else.\textsuperscript{41} So these emotions are not the nature of the tears in the way that genuineness is the nature of the ruby. Of course, we might strengthen the opponent's argument by refining our categories: there are tears of joy and tears of sadness. \textit{This} is what we recognize if we are sensitive, and this is what the nature of the tears is, and this is what might be revised retrospectively. We thought we were seeing tears of sadness, but now it turns out we were seeing tears of joy. But still, this does not affect their standing as tears, and does not really seem comparable to the gem example. The difference between tears of joy and tears of sadness is merely a way of speaking about their causes, while the difference between a ruby and red spinel seems much deeper. And so Ānandavardhana's argument seems based on the insight that it isn't really proper to call sadness or joy the \textit{nature} of tears, and that the relationship that a spectator draws between tears and sadness is better understood as some sort of informative relationship, rather than one of essences and qualities.

\textsuperscript{41} Of course, the tears in question here are fake, as they are being presented by an actor on stage, but the falsity here takes place at an entirely different level than the one we are talking about, and wouldn't help the opponent's argument.
The Inference Objection

It is clear that whatever the manifested meaning is, it is distinct from the elements that inform us of it, not a quality of them or simply an emergent property. But if the manifested meaning is something separate from the elements, and if we know of it through these elements, then why not think of this as a purely epistemic relationship and consider it a type of inference? When we see smoke on a distant mountain we become aware, if we have prior experience with fires and the smoke they produce, that there is fire on the mountain. Since we know that smoke is only ever caused by fire, we can confidently conclude, we can infer, that fire is there, although the fire never appears directly to us. Such is the common, basic understanding of inference across various schools of Sanskrit philosophy. In distinguishing the manifested meaning from the nature of the elements that manifest it, and which inform us of it, it starts to sound very much like what Ānandavardhana is trying to describe fits entirely within this model of inference. The elements that "manifest" the meaning might just be an elaborate system of signs that allow us to infer, depending on our degree of emotional experience and sensitivity, what sort of mood the character is experiencing, or, alternatively, what sort of narrative fact or rhetorical figure is being communicated. But this, of course, would be greatly problematic for Ānandavardhana, insofar as he thinks that poetic manifestation is a sui generis process, irreducible to any other process.

Ānandavardhana picks up this very same problem in the discussion on verse 3.33, immediately after the aforementioned distinction between human speech, which manifests speaker's intentions and can be false, and Vedic speech, which is authorless and infallible. An imagined opponent notices an inconsistency in the argumentation here, and points out that Ānandavardhana has just given proof that manifestation is merely inference, since the example he has given—the manifestation of speaker's intention—is a clear and widely accepted example
of inference. "You have to accept [that manifestation is just inference]." the opponent says, "because you have just explained that manifestation is dependent on speaker's intention, and speaker's intention is something inferred."\(^{42}\)

The argument that manifestation is just inference is the position that Mahimabhaṭṭa took, and that is the subject of Part II of this dissertation. Here in Dhvanyāloka, however, this argument gets only a very brief treatment. Ānandavardhana is again coy with his arguments, claiming that even if it is proven that manifestation is only inference, it won't damage what he is ultimately trying to do in his work.\(^{43}\) He doesn't really seem to believe this, though. If it really made no difference, he could easily have let the matter rest there. The fact that he continues on to argue against the claim means that, despite his caveat, it is important to him to show that manifestation is distinct from inference, and that this distinction can be made convincingly.

Ānandavardhana's argument for this distinction goes like this: The inference of fire when we see smoke is based on a fixed, causal relationship between smoke and fire. Smoke is always caused by fire. Ānandavardhana admits that such a causal relationship holds between the use of

\(^{42}\)Dhvanyāloka, 484: ataś ca itaś ava yāsāya eva bodhavyām yasmād vaktabhīpṛāyāpēksāya vyāṇajaktvam idānīṃ eva tavyā pratipādiṃ vaktabhīpṛāyaś cānumeṣṭeṣa eva.

\(^{43}\)He makes this quite clear at Dhvanyāloka, 485: atrocyate—nān evam api yadi nāma syāt tat kiṃ naś chinnam. vācatakavaṇavrīṭiyatīrīkto vyāṇajaktvanāsaḥ śabdavyāpīrō'śtītī asthābhīh abhyupagatam. tasya caiva nyām api na kācit kṣatih. tad dhi vyāṇajaktvam līṅgatvam astu anyad vā. sarvathā prasiddhaśābdapraṇāvālaksanatvām śabdavyāpāravitasatvām ca tasyāstītī nāṣītī evāvāyor vivādah. na punar ayam paramārtha yad vyāṇajaktvām līṅgatvam eva sarvatra vyāṅgypaṛatītī ca līṅgipraṇātī eveti. Masson, Ingalls, and Patwardhan translate this passage, quite accurately in my opinion, as follows on page 587 of their text: To this [inferential objection] we reply: Come now, even if things were as you say, what harm would that do us? What we are insisting on is the existence of a verbal operation other than denotative and secondary operation, one that is characterized by suggestiveness. Even if the operation were as you say, our thesis would not suffer. Let the suggestive operation be the operation of an inferential mark or let it be something else: in any case, it will still be within the area of verbal operations and yet different from other known verbal modes. So there need be no argument between us. But it is not really true that the suggestive operation is simply an inferential operation, nor that our apprehension of a suggested meaning is always the apprehension of [an inferential mark]." The point that Ānandavardhana seems unsure of himself is drawn from McCrea, Teleology, 206. The fact that later proponents of the manifestation theory never really use this particular argument to distinguish manifestation from inference may be taken as evidence that their understanding of what manifestation is had already changed substantially.
the *words* and the *intention* of a speaker. But, he says, such a relationship doesn't hold between those *words* and their *meaning* (recall that manifestation is a type of meaning, albeit not a denoted or figurative one. It is a third type of meaning). We can infer from words that the speaker intended them, but we cannot infer from words what their meaning is. This is a different process.

This might seem a bit confusing, so we will elaborate here on the notion of speaker's intention, following Ānandavardhana. A speaker's intention is a kind of cause: it causes the speaker to utter certain words, with certain meanings, which he knows will fulfill his intention. When I hear someone say, "there are fruits on the bank of the river," I understand two things. I understand the meaning—that there are fruits on the bank of the river—and I also understand that this person who is speaking *intends to tell me* that there are fruits there. This second piece of knowledge, about the speaker's intention, and only this piece of knowledge, is gained by inference, because it is only between the words and the speaker's intention that a causal relationship holds. And inference requires a causal relationship in order to operate. Someone intending to say that $x$ will say "$x"; the intention is the cause, the utterance is the effect. And therefore when I see the effect, I can infer the cause.

But according to Ānandavardhana, the *meaning* of a word is not causally related to the words in the way the intention is, and so understanding the meaning cannot be an inferential process. It is a semantic one, which Ānandavardhana holds as distinct. Inference allows us to know the speaker's relationship to the words he speaks: that they convey a meaning he intends. But it is semantics that allows us to gain knowledge of what that meaning is in the first place. "What is inferred from the words is the fact that a given meaning is the object of the speaker's

---

44 Or a relationship of identity, but that addendum is not relevant here.
intention, but the form [of that meaning] is not [inferred].” To clarify this difference, Ānandavardhana again brings up the analogy of the lamp. The lamp does not help us infer that there is a pot in the room, it only helps us see it. Presumably, semantics is more like seeing the pot with the help of lamplight than it is like drawing an inference, although once we see the pot, we might then infer that someone wanted to show us to see it and therefore placed the lamp in the room.

How does this play out in poetry? In "Go your rounds freely..." the words denote an injunction to wander, and they manifest a prohibition against wandering. Although the manifested meaning is not the same as the denoted meaning, it is still a meaning. That is, it is still semantically related to the injunction, and not causally related. Once we understand this manifested meaning, then we draw an inference about the speaker. But we can't make this inference until we understand that a prohibition has been manifested, and we reach this understanding via another process that is not reducible to an inference about the girl's intentions.

45 Dhvanyāloka, 487: vivaksāviṣayatvam hi tasyārthasya śabdair liṅgītaye na tu svarūpam.

46 Ānandavardhana himself does not spell out how this example correlates with inference of a speaker's intention. He focuses only on the difference between seeing the pot by lamplight and inferring the pot from lamplight. But it is clear that there is also an inference possible in this situation, and that it has to do with someone's decision to light a lamp in the room. So to complete the analogy we might say poet : words : meaning :: person who lights a lamp : burning lamp : pot. The connection between the first two terms on each side of the analogy is a causal connection and allows for inference. The connection between the second two items is "semantic," so to speak.

47 Now, in reality things are actually a bit more complicated than this, since, as we saw above, Ānandavardhana has already admitted that the inference about speaker's intention is also a kind of manifestation. But his point is that this inference, though a type of manifestation, does not exhaust, or define, what manifestation is. Because manifestation exists also outside of inferential relations, it is distinct from them, and can't be included within them, although they may sometimes overlap. "Thus," writes McCrea, "the domain of suggestion [ie, manifestation] as Ānandavardhana has described it is partly reducible to inference—but only partly." (McCrea, Teleology, 210) The obvious question of how large that overlap is, and what exactly the difference between them might be, is not discussed by Ānandavardhana.
But here again, it seems Ānandavardhana has solved one problem by creating another. For he has already said that the manifested meaning is an incidental property that attaches to the word only under certain conditions. In the absence of these conditions, the word reverts to denoting its natural meaning. But what conditions could these be apart from the speaker's intention? If the conditions are not part of the speaker's intention, then the speaker doesn't have control over the meaning of the sentence, and the manifested meaning is conveyed inadvertently. But Ānandavardhana has already said, as we saw above, that inadvertent manifestation is not what he is interested in, and he is only interested in manifested meanings that are intended to be understood as manifested. To put this idea succinctly: if the manifested meaning is part of the semantics of a statement, and if semantics are supposed to be distinct from both the speaker's intention and also from conditions outside the speaker's control, it is far from clear what, if anything, would account for the presence of the manifested meaning. Perhaps one could say that it is the intention of the poet that is the condition for the manifested meaning. In the verse above about the wandering monk, it is the poet who puts the words into the girl's mouth, and he also describes the conditions of her utterance, and so it is his intention that creates the manifested meaning of the girl's words, and this intention is distinct from the intention of the girl. So then the manifested meaning of a character's utterance would be causally related to the intention of the poet, but not to the intention of the character, and the character's meaning is semantic even if the poet's is not. But this only rearranges the problem and leaves us with the unwanted conclusion that manifestation is a type of inference after all—the inference that a poet intended a character to be saying a certain thing, which is the cause that creates the effect of the character's

---

48 On the question of whether this might be better explained as pragmatics, rather than semantics, see note 16 above.
manifested meaning. Once again, a seemingly plausible argument by exclusion actually contains some ambiguities and problems upon closer analysis.

All these negative characterizations, these arguments by exclusion, tell us a few things. Ānandavardhana seems to think that a manifested meaning is distinct from the elements that manifest it, in the sense that it is not their literal meaning, and it is not their essential nature. And unlike denoted meaning, manifested meaning is related to them only under certain accidental conditions. On the other hand, it is not totally distinct from those elements the way the intentions of a speaker are distinct from the words they speak. Manifested meaning is semantically related to the words of the sentence, not causally related, although it is not quite clear how.

So these hypothetical objections and responses gives us some sort of picture, but it is still vague what exactly manifestation is. What sort of relationship actually holds between the words and the manifested meaning? Is its difference from other linguistic relations really an important part of what it is, as Ānandavardhana sometimes argues, or are questions of irreducibility unrelated to what he is trying to say, as he argues at others? Is it an entirely new process, or is it just a particular use of a familiar process? And is this latter argument merely a provisional acceptance for the sake of finding common ground with his opponents? Sometimes it seems this way, but in the argument about figurative speech, in particular, it does not seem this way. It seems that Ānandavardhana is actually saying that it is the use to which manifestation is put that manifestation is differentiated by the use to which it is put, and not by the mechanism it relies on.

49 Furthermore, all this raises another important question that Ānandanvardhana never addresses, and seems to prevaricate on, and this is that it is never quite clear whether the "speaker" in question is the poet or the character, or both. Abhinavagupta resolves this question by making it clear that it is the poet, not the character, although this doesn't fit easily with many of the statements Ānandanvardhana makes. Mahimbhaṭṭa, who takes up the inferential argument in later centuries and is the subject of Chapters Three through Five, is also unclear about this issue.
Maybe the problem here is that most of this argument by exclusion involves little positive description of what manifestation might be. But there are some sparse positive descriptions in Dhvanyāloka, and perhaps they can help us better understand what Ānandavardhana meant. It is to these arguments that we now turn.

Positive Descriptions of Poetic Manifestation

In the whole text, the most telling indication Ānandavardhana gives as to the specific nature of manifestation comes in the form of an oblique reference to another field of inquiry entirely: philosophical grammar, a common topic in the world of classical Sanskrit. The reference is worth examining in depth, because it is the stated basis for Ānandavardhana's theory and tells us a great deal about what he was trying to say. Just as in the previous section, however, we will find that when we look closely into the connection Ānandavardhana draws to philosophical grammar we uncover deep ambiguities and unsolved problems that run to the heart of his theory. These unresolved issues, I argue, strengthen our conclusion that the historical popularity of Ānandavardhana's theory can't be explained simply in terms of the strength of his arguments, and must therefore be explained in other ways.

In the commentary on 1.13, Ānandavardhana tells us that the concept of "manifestation" is borrowed from the grammarians. He explains:

For they are pre-eminent among the wise, since all knowledge systems are based on grammar. And [grammarians] give the name "manifestation" [dhvani], to the syllables that are heard [by the ear]. In the same way, other wise people, who follow their theories and who know the nature of poetry, give the term [poetic] manifestation to that essentially linguistic thing called "poetry," in which expressions and the expressed are mingled, on account of the fact that it is the same with respect to its quality of manifestation.⁵⁰

⁵⁰Dhvanyāloka, 142: prathame hi vidvānśo vaiyākaraṇāḥ, vyākaraṇamālatvāt sarvavidyānām. te ca śrīyamāneṣu varṇeṣu dhvanir iti vyavaharanti. tathātvayais tanmatānusāribhiḥ süribhiḥ kāvyatattvārthadasāribhiḥ vācyavācakasammiṣraḥ  śabdātmā kāvyam iti vyapadeśya vyānjakatvāt sānyād dhvanir ity uktāḥ.
This theory—that the syllables produced by the vocal organs make something manifest—admits of a variety of interpretations. And this view was held both by grammarians and, as we will see, by Vedic Ritualists. But Ānandavardhana seems to be drawing his particular version of the theory from the famous grammarian Bhartṛhari. The reason we can identify Bhartṛhari as the grammarian in question is that later on in Dhvanyāloka, when discussing how his theory fits with various other schools of thought, Ānandavardhana says:

[This] linguistic function of manifestation doesn't contradict the doctrines of those who know the nature of sentences [i.e. grammarians], but rather accords with it. [In fact], this term "manifestation" [dhvani] has only been set forth in reliance upon the doctrines of those wise people who have thoroughly determined the pure nature of the God Who Is Language, so we can't even consider whether there is disagreement with them or not.51

The "God Who Is Language", or śabdabrahman, is a hallmark doctrine of Bhartṛhari's Vākyapadīya. The text is long, complex, and wide-ranging. It is written in three chapters, in metrical verses, and discusses both large-scale metaphysical issues such as the nature of language and the universe, as well as detailed grammatical issues like the semantics of compounds and conjugational endings.

The discussion of dhvani occurs mostly in the first and to some extent in the second chapter. Broadly speaking, the theory is an attempt to explain how a sequence of individual sounds hang together to form, for the listener, a unified word or sentence. That is, given that we cognize a linguistic unit—say, for example, the word "antelope"—as one coherent whole, one single word, what is the relationship of this whole to the phonemes that give rise to our cognition

---

51 Dhvanyāloka, 489: tasmād vākyatattvavidāṃ matena tāvad vyañjakatvalaṅkuṇāḥ śābdo vyāpāro na virodhī pratyutpānuguṇa eva lakṣyate. parinīcitāṇiraprabhramśaśabdabrahmanāṃ vipaścitāṃ matam āśrityaiva pravṛtto 'yam dhvanivyavahāra iti tāt saha kīm virodhāvirodhau cintyete? Ingalls takes these two sentences as referring to Vedic Ritualists and Grammarians respectively, but I see no reason to take them as having different referents, especially since the Vedic Ritualists seem to borrow their theory of manifestation from the Grammarians to begin with.
of it, none of which is itself the word and each of which are uttered one by one in turn: "AN-TE-LOPE"? This is the issue Bharṭṛhari is trying to answer with his theory of dhvani.

It is important to be aware that this issue is different from the question of how the word "antelope" relates to its referent—the actual animal or the concept of the animal, depending on one's theory of reference. To that question Bharṭṛhari relies on the term pratibhā, which is a different issue and which will be discussed later. Here we are only concerned with the relationship between the separate sounds and the unified phonetic unit that they comprise. To understand this difference better we might take the example of a stop sign. With a stop sign, we might reasonably ask how it is that a driver understands all the bits and pieces of paint and metal to be one single, round, red sign rather than just discrete sense data that are not unified in any particular way, like random splotches of color on a paint-stained sidewalk. One answer, which we will clarify in the following pages, might be that the paint and metal somehow "manifest" a stop sign. But then to ask how that unified sign relates to the action of stopping and the imperative to do it would be a separate (though related) question. Bharṭṛhari's theory of dhvani is only an attempt to explain how all the colors and shapes make up one single sign; the question of what that sign means and how it means it is answered in different parts of his text, with different theories.

Now, one of the biggest problems with understanding Bharṭṛhari's theory of dhvani is that it is actually presented in two entirely different ways in the text, and Bharṭṛhari makes little explicit attempt either to unify them or choose between them. This makes it unclear what exactly Ānandavardhana meant to say by referring to dhvani, so we will have to go through both possibilities in turn. The first theory is more likely what Ānandavardhana intended, as it evinces a basic philosophical and theological intuition that fits very well with what Ānandavardhana
needs, although the second theory would avoid or solve certain problems raised by the first. So we will look first at the first theory. As we will see, however, either theory would involve problems if taken as the basis for Ānandavardhana's ideas.

*Bhartṛhari's Theory Version 1*

To understand the first version of the theory of *dhvani* in Bhartṛhari, we first have to understand a few things about his text, *Vākyapadīya*. And one of the most important things to understand about *Vākyapadīya* is that its proposal of two different, unreconciled theories of *dhvani* is not an anomaly for the text, but quite characteristic of it. The text records many different views on many different subjects, and in many places it is not immediately clear what to make of this. *Vākyapadīya* is, in fact, difficult to understand in general because it is often difficult to tell at what points in his text Bhartṛhari is taking a polemical stance and putting forward his own position, and at what points he is merely collecting and systematizing other points of view encyclopedically. Jan Houben has argued that this is because Bhartṛhari is actually far less of a polemicist than he seems, and that on many issues he simply does not have one particular viewpoint that he espouses. This is especially the case, according to Houben, for the opening portion of the text, which gives the hallmark theology of *sabdabrahman* mentioned above. Houben claims that this section doesn't entail any strong religious commitments, and has little relation to the rest of the text except as the basis for showing that different theories are true when taken from different perspectives. Houben calls this "perspectivism" or "conceptual relativism," and claims that it is more open and agglomerative than the kind of thing we
ordinarily think of as systematic philosophy.\textsuperscript{52} This tendency shows up at a number of points in the text, including in explication of the concept \textit{dhvani}.

But actually, although there are multiple views given in the text, it is possible to find a coherent framework that reconciles and contains them, a framework whose very inclusiveness seems itself to be the central philosophical argument of the text, more so than any of the individual arguments that are fit into it. This framework is given precisely in the opening, theological portion of the text that Houben downplays. Moreover, this inclusive framework seems to be the basic idea behind the first of version of the theory of \textit{dhvani}; that is to say, the first version of the theory of \textit{dhvani} is an instance of precisely that philosophical intuition that unifies the whole text and which is described in its opening portion. I draw this connection because, just like the first version of the theory of \textit{dhvani}, the opening section of the text addresses the issue of how unified entities relate to the fragmented appearances through which we apprehend them. The framework for understanding this is grounded by the text theologically, by grounding it in the nature of the universe itself,\textsuperscript{53} and therefore one could argue that the theory of \textit{dhvani} is also, indirectly, theologically grounded.

Bhartṛhari's text begins with a description of \textit{śabdabrahman}, the God Who Is Language, and how this God (really more of an impersonal divine absolute than a personal God) gives rise to the universe. The description of \textit{śabdabrahman} is a description, with some significant wordplay, of a cosmic absolute that is eternal and partless, and that brings everything in the

\textsuperscript{52}Jan Houben, \textit{The Sambandha-samuddeśa (Chapter on Relation) and Bhartṛhari's Philosophy of Language: A Study of Bhartṛhari Sambandha-samuddeśa in the Context of the Vākyapādiya with a Translation of Helārāja's Commentary Prakīrṇa-prakāśa}, (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1995), 16-18.

universe (including the phenomenon of language) into being by undergoing an illusory division into parts. The text begins:

1. Brahman, without beginning or end, the essence of language,\textsuperscript{54} indestructible [or, made of syllables] Who appears as objects [or "meanings"] and from whom the unfolding of the world proceeds
2. Who is taught as one, [and who] on the basis of [its] various powers, appears different from those powers, although not [really] distinct [from them].
3. Whose power of Time, which superimposes [adhyādhā] parts [onto the world], Is the basis for [upāśrita] the six transformations such as birth etc., which give rise to the divisions of existence,
4. And who, being singular [and] the seed of everything, has a state of multiplicity That takes the form of the subject and object of enjoyment, as well as that enjoyment [itself].\textsuperscript{55}

This opening passage shows how the multiplicity of appearances all participate in a single transcendent unity and are contained by that unity, the same way that Vākyapadīya as a whole shows how a multiplicity of philosophical views can all be contained within Bhartṛhari's theology of linguistic non-dualism.\textsuperscript{56} This is, according to Johannes Bronkhorst, the theological version of a philosophical intuition that characterizes Vākyapadīya overall: in this text, wholes are always theorized as more real than the parts that they are composed of.\textsuperscript{57} Bronkhorst describes this principle as pertaining to every kind of whole, at every level of reality, from macro...

\textsuperscript{54} Bronkhorst argues in Bronkhorst, "Études sur Bhartṛhari 4," for the interpretation of śabdatattvam as a śaṣṭitatpurusa rather than a bahuvrīhi compound.

\textsuperscript{55} Vākyapadīya, vs. 1-4: anādinidhanaṃ brahma śabdatattvam yad aksaram / vivartate 'rthabhāvena prakriyā jagato yataḥ // ekam eva yad āmnātanyā bhinnasaktivyapāśrayat / aprthaktve 'pi śaktibhyah prthaktveneva vartate // adhyāhitakalāṃ yasya kālaśaktim upāśritāḥ / janmādayo vikārāḥ sād bhāvabhedasya yonayah // ekasya sarvabījasya yasya ceyam anekadīḥ / bhoktṛbhoktavyarūpena bhogarūpena ca sthitih // (Unless otherwise noted, all Vākyapadīya references are taken from Bhartṛhari, Vākyapadīya, ed. Wilhelm Rau [Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1977])

\textsuperscript{56} This is another example of what Paul Hacker famously called "inclusivism" (see Introduction). For a good summary of the notion of inclusivism, see Wilhelm Halbfass, "Chapter 22: 'Inclusivism' and 'Tolerance" in the Encounter Between India and the West," in India and Europe: an Essay in Understanding [Albany: SUNY Press, 1998]: 403-418.

\textsuperscript{57} Bronkhorst, "Études sur Bhartṛhari 4," 6: "La relation entre l’absolu et le monde phénoménal est donc la relation entre le tout et ses parties."
to microcosm: "For Bhartṛhari, the whole is real, even if its parts are not. This principle extends to all things. An ordinary object like a jar has no parts, and the same goes for an atom."\(^{58}\) This idea that wholes are more real than their parts includes spatial wholes (i.e. extended objects), and thus yields a mereology and a philosophy of universals, and it also includes temporal wholes, yielding, among other things, a philosophy of time and action. And the theological point of this opening passage is that this basic dynamic is not just an incidental part of the universe, but is built in to its basic structure.\(^{59}\)

Bronkhorst devotes another article\(^{60}\) to explaining how this applies to the relation between universals and the particulars that instantiate them. For Bhartṛhari, the universal is the real aspect of an object, and the particular a sort of shadow; an illusory division of that partless universal into different times and places. He quotes 3.32-33:

32. From among the real and the unreal parts which are present in each thing, the real [part] is the universal, while the individuals are traditionally said to be unreals.
33. Being itself, when divided into cows etc. on account of the different things with which it is connected, is called 'universal'; all words are based on it.\(^{61}\)

If we take the example of a pot, the universal "potness" would be real. It undergoes an illusory division into the individual pots that appear at distinct times and places, and these are what we encounter in our lives, although they are merely phenomenal, and not actually real in the way they appear to be. This process creates the appearance of individual pots out of a real potness universal in the same way that the entire phenomenal world comes into being when

---

\(^{58}\)Ibid, 4: *Pour Bhartṛhari le tout est réel, tandis que ses parties ne le sont pas. Ce principe s'étend à toute chose. Un objet ordinaire comme une cruche n'a pas de parties, et le même vaut pour l'atome.*

\(^{59}\)Ibid, 5.

\(^{60}\)Bronkhorst, "Études sur Bhartṛhari 3."

\(^{61}\)Translation from ibid., 12.
Brahman undergoes illusory division. In both cases the reality is different than the appearance. In reality there is only the universal "potness," one and eternal, just as there is really only Brahman. The same also goes for activities extended across time, which are temporal divisions of one single, real activity, say, cooking, that appears divided up into different aspects: chopping vegetables, lighting a fire, salting, etc.

Bhartṛhari's is a distinctive and unusual theory of universals, and it is important to see how. It is very different, for example, from the understanding of universals in other traditions of Sanskrit philosophy like Vaiśeṣika, where a universal is thought to be distinct from the individual that instantiates it, and related to that individual by a relation of inherence. For Bhartṛhari there isn't really a relation between universal and individual, because only the universal is actually real. Bronkhorst explains Bhartṛhari's idea: "It is incorrect to think that there is a pot, and the universal potness which is different from it. Quite on the contrary, the pot in as far as it really exists, is the universal; its not really existing shadow in the phenomenal world is the individual." Bronkhorst adds: "It is therefore not possible to say that pot and potness are different, even though the former has a spatial and a temporal dimension, which the latter has not." The reason for this is that the individual pot only appears to exist as an individual. But all that is really happening is that the universal is being misapprehended. Hence there is only really the universal, and no distinct individual from which it is separate and in which it is inhering.

Now, when we look at Bhartṛhari's treatment of uttered sounds (which, remember, is presented in two different ways), we find that the first of the two views he presents is based entirely on this metaphysical structure. Uttered sounds—which Bhartṛhari calls nāda and also dhvani—are particulars. They exist at different times and places and each time that, say, the

---

62 Ibid., 14.
sound "ka" appears, it seems distinct from other instances of this sound. But all of these particular sounds are just manifestations of a universal. They are illusory divisions in a partless, timeless whole, which is all there really is. This phonological whole is referred to as the sphoṭa.

Verse 1.96 says, in Bronkhorst's translation:

96. Some consider that the sphoṭa is the universal revealed by the various individual instances, and they consider that the individuals belonging to this [universal] are the sounds.63

The sphoṭa is revealed by sounds, and the coherent unity it comprises can take the form of a phoneme, a word, or a sentence. But in each case it is a partless, undivided whole, which undergoes illusory division in time and space by means of which it appears as a particular sequence of uttered sounds. Verse 49 reads:

49. Because the sounds arise in a sequence [the word], which is non-sequential and without prior and posterior [parts], arises as if having division and sequence.64 [emphasis added]

Moreover, just like with universals and particulars, there isn't a real difference between the sphoṭa and the sounds that comprise it. Verse 99 reads, in Bronkhorst's translation:

99. And a connection with space etc. is also seen in the case of corporeal objects (such as pots); [in the same way] there is no difference between sound and word (i.e. dhvani and sphoṭa), even though we distinguish different locations [in the case of sound].65

More importantly, these unreal, divided individuals are precisely what allow us to have access to and interact with partless and eternal wholes. Without these individuals the universal would be unavailable to us; it would be unmanifest. Verse 47 says:

63 Translation from ibid. Original is Vākyapādiya 96: anekavyaktyabhivyanya jātiḥ sphoṭa iti smṛtā / kaiś cid vyaktaya evāsyā dhvanitvena prakalpitāḥ //

64 Vākyapādiya vs. 49: nādasya kramajātatvān na pūrvo na paraś ca saḥ / akramaḥ kramarūpeṇa bhedavān iva jāyate //

65 Ibid., 15
47. First conceived in the mind [and] placed onto an object [the word] is grasped by sounds [dhvani], which are set in motion by causes.

These sounds are very important, because they give us access to something which otherwise would be totally unavailable to us. But we have to then distinguish between the appearances that we encounter and allow us to know something, which have certain qualities, and the thing that they allow us to know, which doesn't have these qualities, or has different qualities. Bronkhorst gives the helpful example of the difference between various letters of the Sanskrit alphabet. The letters u and ū are considered to be different letters in Sanskrit, the letter ū sounding similar to u but being held in pronunciation for twice as long. But since the actual sphoṭa of these letters is partless and eternal, it does not admit of differences of length or time. The difference in the length of pronunciation belongs entirely to the dhvani, the pronounced sounds. This difference in pronunciation might help us distinguish between the letters, but it doesn't comprise the difference between them, in the same way that a litmus test might help us determine the pH balances of various solutions without defining the actual differences in chemical structure that are really distinguishing them. In other words, the difference between the two letters is not reducible to pronunciation. The letters have a sui generis difference; they are completely different entities, which is why one of them is correct in certain words while the other is incorrect, and vice versa. But the important point is that the characteristics that allow us to distinguish between the two letters only appear when the sphoṭa, which is an eternal, partless whole that is inaccessible to us,

---

Because this point is especially difficult, here is another example. Imagine two iron boxes, one with fire inside and the other empty. The iron box with fire inside might be glowing red, and we might look at the boxes and know that this is the box that has the fire in it because it is glowing red. But this does not mean that "having fire inside" just means "having a red glow." Having fire inside is a real distinction, and the glow is just one thing that might help us notice the distinction. In the same way, the difference in pronunciation between u and ū might be the only way that we can determine which letter is being uttered. But this doesn't mean the letters are distinguished just by a difference in pronunciation. This example is somewhat misleading because it is a clear example of inference, but the particular point I am trying to make here is unaffected by this.
divides into illusory sequences that admit of degrees of time and length. Only then can we know which letter is being stated. Without the pronunciation and its illusory distinctions, we would have no way of knowing which letters we were encountering.

All these ideas can be summed up in verse 97, which reads:

97. The sound, which undergoes modification due to the causes [of its enunciation] becomes a cause for the cognition of a word which has no modification. Like a lamp [and a pot].

This relationship is precisely the relationship of manifestation that Ānandavardhana is talking about, right down to the lamp/pot analogy, and in other verses close by this one, such as verses 96 and 100, Bhartṛhari describes the process using the words vyakti and abhivyakti, "manifestation": the very same verbs that Ānandavardhana uses in his text. The idea in the verse here is that the sounds, the dhvani, are a sort of version or expression of the sphoṭa, one that is sequential and divided and makes the sphoṭa appear to be so as well, even though in reality it is not. In other words they are a manifestation of the sphoṭa. Similarly, Ānandavardhana seems to say, a poem is a manifestation of certain things, like emotions, which appear to us divided up into characters, gestures, words, or verses, but which are actually unified and partless. The phenomenal aspects of the poem, the sounds and words and characters and plot facts, give us

67 Bronkhorst, “Études sur Bhartrhari 3,” 6. Here, Bronkhorst discusses the difference between two important kinds of dhvani in the Vākyapadīya: prākṛta dhvani and vaikṛta dhvani. I have ignored this difference here, since it is a bit tangential to understanding the process of manifestation itself. But put simply, Bronkhorst proposes that the difference is as follows: the prākṛta dhvani is where the ideal and formal phonological differences between letters appears. The vaikṛta dhvani is where further, superfluous distinctions, such as accent and pronunciation, appear. These differences don't pertain to the differences between letters per se. But they represent differences between the various manifestations of the letters that still need to be accounted for in a text like Vākyapadīya.

68 Vākyapadīya, vs. 97: avikārasya śabdasya nimitair viṅkrto dhvaniḥ / upalabdhäu nimitattavam upayāti prakāśavat //

69 Incidentally, vyakti is the very same word used in various metaphysical texts to describe a particular. Bhartṛhari's philosophy gives us a way to understand this use of the word. An individual is called a vyakti because it manifests the universal, giving us access to what would otherwise exist in a sort of "Platonic heaven," so to speak.
access to this unified whole, to which, at least in the case of an emotion, we would otherwise have no access.

But they also cause it to appear as something that isn't, both in the sense that it seems divided into words and gestures, but also, as in the example above of the gentle monk, that it can appear as an injunction to wander when it is really a prohibition. This is not such a hard idea to grasp. If I want to convey to you an emotion I felt, I would have to describe it in stages, and in words, giving you a sense of different things that happened in a situation, etc. But the emotion that I felt wasn't necessarily spread out gradually, and it certainly didn't exist at the time in the form of words. This is simply the only way in which I can make the emotion available to other people. I have to manifest it. In verse 52, Bhartṛhari uses the example of painting an image on cloth—though the image begins as a unity in the mind of the painter, he still has to paint it in stages in order for it to be completed. In many ways this is a perfect analogy for what happens in poetry.  

It is also important to see that since the uttered sounds manifest a partless whole, the whole is present to the listener from the moment the very first sound is uttered. If I have a cloth that is concealing a chair, and I begin to pull it back to show you the chair, then the very second you start to see a bit of wood it can be plausibly said that you are seeing the chair. But you do not yet understand what it is you are seeing, and so I continue to pull the cloth back to help you understand, revealing more and more of the chair, until at a certain moment you realize what you are looking at; or, more properly, until you realize what it is you have been looking at the whole time. It is the same with the sounds of a sentence, and it is also the same, presumably, for the

---

70 The analogy should not be taken too far. The discussion above about why the relation of a drawing to the lines that make it up is not one of manifestation, still holds. The example here is just intended to show that certain things have to come into being in the world in stages, despite being themselves unified.
emotion in a poem or play. From the very moment that I write "T-" I am attempting to write a particular sentence, say, for example, "The cat is inside of the house." The rest of the letters only serve to clarify the sentence that was presented to you right from the first letter. Similarly, though we may have the experience of an emotion or emotional theme being deepened over the course of poem or play, Ānandavardhana would say that it is not that the emotion itself is growing stronger or deeper, but that it is becomes more fully manifested, and so your awareness of it becomes more complete, although it is the same emotion that was present right from the beginning.

This goes a long way towards clarifying what Ānandavardhana is trying to describe. The problem, however, is that what Ānandavardhana is describing is explicitly meant to be a type of meaning. As we saw earlier, Ānandavardhana definitely intends manifestation to be part of the semantics of the text, and calls it a way of conveying meaning. But for Bhartṛhari, as I mentioned above this process of dhvani manifesting the sphaṭa is distinct from the way that language bears meaning. For Bhartṛhari, the sphaṭa that is manifested by the sounds is not the sentence-meaning, nor is it the word in its aspect as meaning-bearer. It is simply the formal, phonological structure of the sentence or word, which exists over and above its pronunciation. A.N. Hota, in a good study of these aspects of Ānandavardhana's thought, bases his interpretation on that of S.D. Joshi, and explains: "...the sphaṭa concept of Bhartṛhari represents the auditory level of language. The sphaṭa stands for auditorily grasped speech units which may or may not be semantically understood." In other words, sphaṭa and dhvani were concepts used by Bhartṛhari only to discuss whether a word or other linguistic unit exists formally over and above its parts, and for

---

71 I.e. a formal and unified speech unit that is grasped via heard sounds.

72 Hota, Sphota, Pratibha, Dhvani, 17.
him, this is what "manifestation" explains. How that unified whole relates to meanings was, as I mentioned, another question, separate from the issue of manifestation, and Bhartṛhari reserves the term *pratibhā* for this meaningful aspect of language. Therefore, since the *dhvani* is related in Bhartṛhari's text only to the phonological aspects of language and not to meaning, it seems to be a strange basis for Ānandavardhana's theory.

Now, it is true that later grammarians and other philosophers conflated the two subjects *sphoṭa* and *pratibhā* (either intentionally or unintentionally), and this conflation could perhaps make Ānandavardhana's choice more intelligible. By the time Ānandavardhana inherited the term, *sphoṭa* would already have acquired the extra-semantic dimensions of *pratibhā*; in other words, later grammarians thought that "*sphoṭa*" referred the meaning of the sentence, which was made known directly by *dhvani*. This latter way is certainly how Abhinavagupta seems to understand the idea in his commentary on Ānandavardhana, and it may be how Ānandavardhana himself understood it. If this is so, it would explain why Ānandavardhana, when justifying the use of the term *dhvani*, tells us that it is applied to "that essentially linguistic thing called 'poetry,' in which expressions and the expressed are mingled." This statement makes good sense if *sphoṭa* is taken to be the meaning of the sentence, i.e., "the expressed," whether that be expressed by denotation or manifestation. Just as for Bhartṛhari, a particular is not really separate from the universal that it manifests—the universal that it makes perceptually available to us by being an illusory division of it into time and space—so for Ānandavardhana, the words of a poem are not

---


74 Hota, *Sphota, Pratibha, Dhvani*, 41

75 See above, p. 82.
totally separate from the meanings they manifest, i.e. make available to the reader. Neither are they intimately related to or the same as them, as with a jewel and its genuineness. Rather, they are "mingled."

If this is what Ānandavardhana intends, however, it raises a problem for him. He wants his terms for manifestation, *dhvani* and *vyāñjanā*, to connote the way in which sounds bring something ideal into the realm of appearances. If this "something" is limited to phonological patterns and excludes semantics, the comparison makes sense. The terms would just refer to the way in which sounds are a phenomenologically available version of something that would otherwise be unavailable to us, which they are not strictly separate from and not caused by (recall that if the relationship is purely causal, manifestation would be reducible to inference). The terms of the relation may be different in poetry and phonetics, but relation is the same: it is one of manifestation. But then in that case, manifestation is not a semantic process at all, and Ānandavardhana, as we saw, clearly wants to say that it is. The process of manifestation is based on the words of a sentence and yields a particular type of *meaning*, and, as we saw, it is distinguished from inference precisely because the relationship between manifestor and manifested is said to be semantic rather than causal. So Ānandavardhana needs manifestation to be a semantic process and not a purely phonological one.

But on the other hand, if Ānandavardhana goes with a semantic version of Bhartṛhari's theory of manifestation, conflating *sphoṭa* with *pratibhā*, then he loses the ability to differentiate manifestation from other ways of conveying of meaning. Ordinary denotation and ordinary sentence-meaning are supposed to be excluded from the realm of poetic manifestation, for the reasons given above. But if Ānandavardhana thinks that manifestation refers to the way that the sounds of speech make the *sphoṭa* available, *and if sphoṭa is also understood as the meaning of a*
sentence, then it seems that manifestation is just the same process by which we cognize the meaning of any sentence, and it becomes difficult to explain why it is any different from any other ordinary cases of sentential understanding. I can use ordinary English sentences to refer to a topic you've never heard of before, but that doesn't mean I'm using English in a new way. I'm using English in an ordinary way to refer to something new. Ānandavardhana wants to go further than this. He wants to say that poetry actually uses language in a new way.

To put all this more succinctly: Ānandavardhana can't think that Bhartṛhari's theory of manifestation is a non-semantic process, because he means it to be a semantic one. But neither can he theorize it as a semantic process, because the structure that he borrows from Bhartṛhari when he uses his terminology would make him unable to defend against the criticism that he is just giving a fancy name—poetic manifestation—to our basic capacity to understand any sentence at all. And defending against this criticism does, in fact, seem to be very important to him. If the criticism holds, we are left without any way to explain what makes poetry special or how it differs from other kinds of language, other than perhaps its production of "beauty," which seems to beg the question. If Ānandavardhana had any solutions to this problem, they certainly are not to be found in his extant work.76

I should add that all these problems accrue even if Bhartṛhari's dhvani is only intended to be an analogy for Ānandavardhana's dhvani. So it is no use trying to obviate these problems by appealing to the claim that it is only an analogy. Analogies are always made in order to illuminate something about the case in point, i.e. some relevant set of properties shared between the terms of the analogy. In this case, Ānandavardhana tells us quite clearly that the relevant quality that makes the analogy work is the quality of manifestation [vyañjakatva], which inheres

76As for the possibility that Ānandavardhana's intention is to develop a theory of meaning in between semantics and non-semantics, i.e. that he is trying to develop what we might call pragmatics, see note 16 above.
both in the sounds of speech that the grammarians describe, and in poetry. Although there may be many other dissimilarities between the two terms of the analogy, the property of manifestation as such can't be one of them; it is the property that the analogy is founded on, in virtue of which the analogy holds true. And manifestation is either the way we understand the meaning of a sentence, or it isn't. If manifestation is not a way in which we understand meaning, then whatever a poem "manifests" is not a type of meaning, or else the poem is not really manifesting. If, on the other hand, manifestation is how we understand meaning, then this goes for all sentences and makes manifestation so common as to be trivial. So as soon as Ānandavardhana makes his analogy these problems necessarily carry over into Ānandavardhana's theory along with the analogy and cause the problems we have just outlined. And if they do not carry over into his theory, then the analogy is so weak that it doesn't hold at all. Of course, it is possible that Ānandavardhana thought that he could stop the analogy before it goes this far. But I find this quite implausible as an argument, for reasons I have just

---

77 Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, Dhvanyāloka, 169: "...wise men, who knew the true essence of poetry, have followed the example of the grammarians by giving the title dhvani to that verbal entity which contains a mixture of denotative and denoted elements and which is designated as "a poem." They did so because of the similarity [to acoustical dhvani] in its being a manifestor." Dhvanyāloka, 141-142: tathaivānyas tam anusāribhīḥ sāribhīḥ kāvyatattvārthadarśībhīḥ vācyavācakasammiśrāḥ śabdātma kāvyam iti vyapadeśyo vyānjakatvasāmyād dhvanir ity uktāḥ.

78 We might understand this counter-counterargument better if we look at a different case. Let's say, for example, that I use the analogy of a building to describe the arguments in a philosophical text, as I do sometimes in this dissertation. The analogy is intended to convey that the ideas in the text cumulatively depend on one another, and if one of the basic ones is wrong, the ones that depend on it don't hold either, just as a building might collapse if the bricks on the first floor are made of loose sandstone. I can stop the analogy at a certain point and say rightly that, unlike the bricks in the building, the ideas are not material, nor are they red. So if someone accuses me of a faulty analogy and says "But ideas aren't red!" I can plausibly respond, "But it's only an analogy." I can't, however, apply this reasoning to the way in which the ideas depend on each other in a planned way. I can't say that text is like a building, except that unlike a building it has no structure. This statement would undermine the purpose of the analogy in the first place, and render it pointless. In what sense then is a text like a building? Just that it, like a building, is a kind of thing? If I make an analogy, certain things are necessarily implied by that analogy in order for it to make sense, even if not all things are, and if Ānandavardhana compares poetic manifestation to the way the sounds of speech illuminate their objects, and if those "objects" are sentence meanings, then he is either describing the way we cognize sentence-meaning, or he is not describing anything at all.
explained, and I further find it hard to believe that Ānandavardhana would propose such an implausible argument. Perhaps, on the other hand, Ānandavardhana was aware of these problems and felt some measure of anxiety about them. If this is the case, it would explain well why he does not dwell very long on the analogy to philosophical grammar, despite his high regard for its authority.

_Bhārtṛhari’s Theory Version 2_

There is, however, a second theory of _dhvani_ given in _Vākyapadīya_, and it is possible that it is this latter theory that Ānandavardhana intended. Abhinavagupta, in his commentary, actually spends more time on this second understanding of _dhvani_, signaling that he either thought it was more important or that he thought it was less problematic. This second view is quite different than the first, and it bears much less obvious relations to the theory that Ānandavardhana presents in _Dhvanyāloka_. But it is worth looking at this second view because it is important to see that whichever way we choose to resolve the ambiguity built into Ānandavardhana's theory—an ambiguity which comes from Bhārtṛhari's dual presentation of the theory of _dhvani_ itself—problems arise that cannot be resolved. Moreover, these ambiguities and problems are all directly related to the issues of appearance/essence discussed in the introduction, and they are important for understanding the later debates about Ānandavardhana's theory, which pick up on these issues and resolve them in various ways.

So, on to the second understanding of _dhvani_. Recall that the explanation of _dhvani_ in _Vākyapadīya_ we have been discussing so far—which begins at verse 96 in the first chapter—is prefaced by the phrase "some consider" [kaiścit prakalpitāḥ]. A few stanzas later, Bhārtṛhari begins describing an alternative view, saying:
105. Others declare that the *sphoṭa* is [the utterance] produced by the organs [of speech] on account of their contact and separation; the utterances born from [this initial] utterance are the sounds *[dhvani]*.

According to this view, the *sphoṭa* is not a universal, but the moment of a sound's expression. It takes place at the point of articulation in the mouth. The *dhvani* then ripples outwards from it through the air, like ripples in a pond, in a quite literal and physical sense that is very similar to our current theory of sound. It is these ripples that reach and affect our ears. Bharṭṛhari tells us that these ripples are susceptible to differentiation in a way that the original *sphoṭa* is not:

"Whether the sound is long or short, the *sphoṭa* is not divided in time."79 But both *sphoṭa* and *dhvani*, in this view, are particulars.

This view is tied to the view that language is a kind of substance *[dravya]*, a view which is the subject of the second chapter of the third book of *Vākyapadīya*. The first view of *dhvani*, on the other hand, is tied to the view that language is an ideal or universal that breaks up into individual instantiations, a view that is presented in the first chapter of the third book.80 In verse 121, which is part of the second view, the view under which language is a substance, Bharṭṛhari explains that language, however we understand it, is omnipresent, and only perceptible under certain conditions:

121. The [real] word [whether it be wind, atoms, or knowledge], though ceaselessly active, is not perceived, because of its subtle nature; it is noticed because of its cause, just as wind [is noticed] on account of a fan [which moves it].81

In this view, language is an omnipresent, unified substance, which is not perceptible until it is pushed into motion by the activity of the breath. To understand this, we might think of laser

79 *Vākyapadīya*, vs. 105cd: *sa sphoṭah śabdajāh śabdā dhvanayo ‘nyair udāhṛtāh //*

80 Bronkhorst, "Studies on Bharṭṛhari 3."

beams crisscrossing a room: they are invisible until the moment that smoke is blown across them, and when the smoke clears they become invisible again, although they remain there. The "smoke," in Bhartṛhari's theory, is the physical vibrations we make in the air, which begin as sphoṭa and ripple outwards as dhvani, and what they reveal to us an ideal realm of language which is eternal and always surrounding us, but is usually imperceptible—in other words they manifest this realm. This is how the idea of manifestation fits into this alternative theory of dhvani. And although this theory of dhvani is very different from the other, we see here that one thing both theories have in common is that the qualities of the sounds we make with our mouths are very different from the qualities of whatever it is we are manifesting with those sounds.

If this the understanding of dhvani that Ānandavardhana applies to poetry, then he would seem to be saying that moods or emotion are always present, but require the particularity of a poem to make them suddenly perceptible. The poem is a kind of object or activity that makes the moods perceptible to us the way wind makes the air perceptible to us, or smoke makes a laser beam perceptible. This is different from the first view because it doesn't involve a unified whole breaking into illusory parts, but an imperceptible substances being made perceptible by certain activities.

It is this view of dhvani that Abhinavagupta actually quotes first in his commentary on this section of Dhvanyāloka, though he has a somewhat different explanation of what the point of the analogy might be. For Abhinavagupta, it is the manifested meaning, and not the poem, that is the dhvani in the analogy, and he explains that the relationship between poetry and this view of dhvani is that both "reverberate like a bell." In other words, just as the words one speaks ripple outwards and linger after being produced in the mouth, so does a poem's meaning echo around in
our minds after the literal meaning is understood, as its force sinks in and we contemplate and savor it.

It is far from clear, however, that Ānandavardhana had this view in mind. Ānandavardhana does say that certain forms of manifested meaning echo and reverberate like a struck bell, but he says this happens only in some forms of manifestation, not all. So, one might justifiably wonder why this idea would be used to characterize manifestation over all. Abhinavagupta's clever answer to this question is that poetic manifestation is "adventitiously marked" [upalakṣita] by this property, which is his way of saying that naming it on this basis is a form of metonymy. The fact remains, however, that certain types of manifestation described by Ānandavardhana don't fit with this idea at all (e.g. the kind in which the sequence happens so quickly that it is not noticed). So clever metonymic explanations aside, this seems a dubious exegesis of Ānandavardhana's idea, although it may turn out to be a philosophically defensible rewrite of his ideas. But we leave this latter issue for Chapter Two.

In some ways, however, this second understanding of dhvani fits better with Ānandavardhana's project than the first one, because it avoids the messy problems involved if sphota is considered to be the meaning of the word or sentence. The problem is that Ānandavardhana himself never draws this comparison explicitly. He only tells us that the similarity between his view and that of the grammarians is that both involve the process of manifestation, and that because of this, the term is applied to poetry, in which expression and expressed are mixed. He never says that he intends the second view of dhvani, and he never says that the basis for the comparison is that poetic meaning reverberates like a bell in the same way that uttered sounds move outward from our mouths when we speak, which would actually be a strange idea in his text. Moreover, when he refers to the grammarians' idea of manifestation, he
states clearly that the term applies to the poem, and not to the suggested meaning, and this claim undermines the idea that *dhvani* is meant to connote the way in which extra, added meanings reverberate after the poem has been understood.

Abhinavagupta does go on to the first view of *dhvani* as well in his commentary, saying that Ānandavardhana intends it also in this sense.\(^8\) So he is aware that it is ambiguous what Ānandavardhana means, and he tries to turn it to his advantage, saying that both senses are intended. But beyond the fact that it is ambiguous which sense of *dhvani* is intended lies the deeper problem that both senses are each problematic in their own way. And it is important to see that the ambiguity that gives rise to them goes back to Bhartṛhari himself, but the problems do not, since the theories were originally used by Bhartṛhari in a context where they fit more smoothly; that is, in the explanation of phonological issues only, not in issues of meaning, and certainly not for the purpose of distinguishing certain kinds of meaning from others. When Bhartṛhari's theory is taken out of context and used to explain poetry, we are given intriguing and potentially interesting ideas that fail to hold up under close examination.

Still, the use of Bhartṛhari is an important part of Ānandavardhana's theory, and, as we will see, an important part of its subsequent history. Bhartṛhari does not choose between these two alternative theories of *dhvani* that he presents. On the one hand, this is an expression of what Houben calls his "perspectivism," as mentioned above. On the other hand, the two views are unified by a particular conceptual framework that has an illuminating relationship to Ānandavardhana's theory. Both views are given because Bhartṛhari wants to fit them into the larger point that regardless of how one thinks of language—as a substance or as a universal—the

\(^8\)Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, *Dhvanyāloka*, 170.
distinctions in the sounds heard by the ear are not part of the structure that they express. In other words, the appearance of language in words and sounds is sequential and has parts, but these divisions do not apply to the language itself, on either view. For our purposes we can note that, on both views, the sounds we hear are a way of making something phenomenologically available that we couldn't otherwise perceive. And this much, at least, must be intended by Ānandavardhana as an analogy for the poetic process he is describing; manifestation is somehow a way of making something available to experience that otherwise would not be. And this aspect of manifestation only becomes clear when we read the various theories of dhvani in the light of the opening section of Vākyapadīya and takes its theology seriously.

Conclusion

Returning to Ānandavardhana's theory as a whole and taking all of our observations in sum, we see that the theory has the following structure. The essential element in poetry is the communication of information, images, or emotions in an oblique or indirect way. This communication is linguistic, and at least partially semantic; we need to understand the semantic dimensions of the sentence in order to have access to it. But it is not entirely semantic in the ordinary sense, because it is conceptually distinguishable from the way sentences ordinarily convey meaning. This linguistic function is in fact distinguishable analytically from all other


84 Krishnamoorthy [Dhvanyāloka and Its Critics, 38-39] is not really correct when he says that the second view of dhvani makes dhvani the vyāṅga, rather than the vyañjaka. The sounds that ripple outwards from the sphoṭa may be produced by that sphoṭa. But then, in Bhartṛhari's theory, the individuals are also produced by the universal, which takes an active role in their manifestation. The difference is not really which comes first or which produces what. The difference is really a cognitive one: the vyañjaka is that by which we know the vyāṅga. And even in this second theory, the sounds that reach our ear are the means by which we know the original, unified sphoṭa, even if that sphoṭa is produced rather than eternal.
linguistic and cognitive processes, because it is even more fluid and contextual, and more resistant to reliable conventionalization or standardization than any other form of knowledge, linguistic or otherwise. The basis for this concept is borrowed from Bhartṛhari's philosophical grammar, in which the sounds of speech are described as revealing phonological patterns that we otherwise wouldn't have access to. Ānandavardhana then uses this description analogically to describe other aspects of language for which the original, phonological analysis was not intended. Although this process exists in all language to some extent, it takes on particular importance in poetry, where it is used as the central element to give rise to the beauty and charm that makes poetry special. Its types and subtypes can be analyzed. Finally, a poem must be teleologically oriented towards its use, preferably its use in evoking rasa.

The theory is attractive. It gives us many interesting and even lovely ways of thinking about poetry, and it also suddenly allows for a whole group of new classifications and descriptions of poetic phenomena that were previously unavailable. But it is also problematic. It is vague in various ways. It is not always clear what Ānandavardhana means exactly, or how what he is describing is different from other processes previously described. It is not even clear how much it should matter whether the theory describes something unique or not. At some points, it supposedly matters a great deal, and at others, the issue is dismissed lightly. Most importantly, the metaphysical issues that Ānandavardhana raises by taking a concept from Bhartṛhari come along with an important ambiguity that, whichever way we try to resolve it, seems to involve problems for his theory.

The point of all this is not to say that Ānandavardhana was a sophist. The point is that the strength of his arguments, on its own, is not enough to account for the later history of the theory. The controversy over this theory that ensued in Kaśmīr and lasted for a few hundred years should
be seen as a sign that the problems and argumentative gaps in his theory were widely noticed. But the vigorous defense of the theory in spite of these problems should also be taken as a sign that something else was riding on the theory, something important, which made the problems and ambiguities seem irrelevant, or less relevant, or worth trying to solve.

One clue as to what this was lies in the difference between the manifestation of a *rasa* and the manifestation of a plot fact or rhetorical figure, mentioned at the beginning of the chapter. While the first two examples made it seem as if manifestation is merely a way to convey information that could be paraphrased, the third example, the transmission of an aestheticized emotion, or *rasa*, is one where the meaning transmitted is not paraphraseable. A *rasa* is not simply a reference to an emotion, or information about it. It is something that cannot appear to the reader of the poem in any linguistically direct way, and so it raises intriguing questions about modes of appearance. Although calling this form of transmission "manifestation" might be vague and fraught with problems, Ānandavardhana's special genius was to realize that explaining the appearance of a mood or emotion within a work of literature involves complex metaphysical issues of how things appear and how we know them, and that to discuss these moods it is necessary to discuss the metaphysical issues surrounding them. In short, Ānandavardhana noticed that certain things necessarily need to change form in order to appear and be communicated, and that emotions fall into this category. In order to articulate how this works in poetry he brought literary theory into conversation with Bhartṛhari, a philosopher with elaborate theological ideas about just these issues, whose views were widely regarded as authoritative. To tie literary theory to these issues, on which the religious traditions around him had quite a bit to say, and to tie them to Bhartṛhari, whose ideas were being widely debated and assimilated among these same religious traditions, seems to have created, even if unintentionally, an overlap
between religious ideas and literary theory, and this fact, I argue, turned out historically to be more important than any gaps in the details of his text.

It is therefore no coincidence that, beginning with Abhinavagupta, as we will see in the next chapter, it is the manifestation of emotions in particular that becomes by far the most important and discussed form of manifestation, because it is this type of manifestation in which these issues become most poignant. It is also no coincidence that Abhinavagupta chose to rewrite Ānandavardhana's theory by bringing it into closer correspondence with the rich theological reflections on appearances and essences that he inherited as a theologian, nor is it a coincidence that in doing this he also deepened the connection of literary theory to the philosophy of Bhartṛhari. If the theory of manifestation is seen in a vacuum and judged solely on its philosophical merits, it becomes puzzling why so much energy was spent defending a theory that was both philosophically problematic and without the sanction of long tradition. But if we look at it against the background of religious traditions that had a strong stake in the metaphysical issues raised by the theory, specifically the relationship between appearances and reality, then we will understand much better why it was defended, and what the defense really involved.
Chapter Two: Abhinavagupta and the Theology of Literature

Ānandavardhana was not an unreligious man. He is known to have composed an elaborate hymn to the Goddess, called Deviśatakam, or One Hundred Verses on the Goddess, which is still available, and a work called Tattvāloka, or Lamp on Reality, which has been lost, but which Abhinavagupta tells us was about metaphysics and theology. Abhinavagupta also tells us, interestingly, that Ānandavardhana wrote a sub-commentary on a famous Buddhist work, Dharmottara's commentary on Dharmakīrти's Pramāṇaviniścyā, or Determination of Authoritative Means of Knowledge. Dharmakīrти's work and Dharmottara's commentary are still extant, but Ānandavardhana's sub-commentary has been lost, and we know little about it except that, based on his remarks, it was probably at least partially critical of Buddhist ideas. Finally, Dhvanyāloka itself opens with a benedictory verse in praise of the god Viṣṇu, in his form as Narasimha, the man-lion. The location of this verse is a probably a signal that Ānandavardhana was a Vaiṣṇava, the traditional term for someone whose religious life was defined by the god Viṣṇu and the scriptures and rituals connected with him.

But beyond this very prominently placed announcement and the scattered references to other works that treat of religion, it's not clear how religion affected Ānandavardhana's theory of poetic manifestation. Larry McCrea has shown convincingly that Ānandavardhana's theory is heavily influenced by the hermeneutics of the Vedic Ritualists. But although this school of thought is Vedic and has its own view of theology and religious issues, it was often used by

---

1 The commentary on Dharmottara is mentioned at Dhvanyāloka, 555. Tattvāloka is referred to on p. 67 of the Kashi Sanskrit Series edition of Dhvanyāloka, in Abhinavagupta's commentary on vs. 1.4. It seems to be absent from this section in Jagannath Pathak's edition, but is found referred to again in the commentary on vs. 4.5 and later on in the first chapter. In any event no one disputes that Ānandavardhana wrote such a work, and nor does anyone dispute that not much can be said about it other than that it treats of metaphysical and philosophical issues.

2 McCrea, Teleology.
various religious traditions as a basic theoretical framework, and seems often to have been
divorced and abstracted from its particular theological assumptions. So Vedic Ritualism shows
many tendencies that might be considered religious, but Ānandavardhana doesn't seem to import
these into his theory in any deep way, and certainly not in any way that would be particular to his
own Vaiṣṇava convictions.

As we also saw in the last chapter, Ānandavardhana states that his theory is indebted to
Bhartṛhari, a grammarian with a theologically inflected philosophy of grammar. Grammar, like
Vedic Ritualism, was a science that was widely shared across religions in medieval India, and
Bhartṛhari was considered an authority by many different religious traditions (most of which
were, at a later time, lumped together as "Hinduism"). He was never the exclusive property of
any one tradition, and even Buddhists sometimes showed an affinity for his work. Using
Bhartṛhari, particularly in the vague and ambiguous way that Ānandavardhana does, does not
involve Ānandavardhana directly in religious polemics, or place him clearly into a religious
camp.

What borrowing from Bhartṛhari does do, however, as the last chapter tried to show, is
that it explicitly ties analyses of literature to a host of metaphysical questions about the way
things appear to us and they way they really are. These questions are applicable to a number of
issues—the relationship between language and meaning, between parts and wholes, universals

3McCrea, Teleology.

4See, for example Toshiya Unebe, "Jñānaśīrbhadra's Interpretation of Bhartṛhari as Found in the Laṅkāvatāravṛtti (phags pa langkar gshegs pa'i 'grel pa)," Journal of Indian Philosophy 28:4 (2000): 329-60; on the history of
Bhartṛhari's reception in Tibet, see Hajime Nakamura, The History of Early Vedānta Philosophy (Delhi: Motilal
Banarsidass, 2004); for a fascinating and very late occurence of some remarkably Bhartṛhari ideas in nineteenth
century Tibet, see Matthew Kapstein, The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation, andMemory
(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 126, 252 n24; most famously, Dīnṇāgas entire Traikālyaparikṣā is lifted
almost word for word from Bhartṛhari's "Chapter on Relations," or Sambandhasamuddeśa.
and particulars, the relationship between what we experience and what we can know from that, relationships of causality and transformation—but throughout all of these the core issues remain consistent, and are conceptually and historically tied to both of the terms used for the theory: dhvani and vyañjanā. In the wake of Ānandavardhana's Bhartṛhariān literary theory, analyzing literature became in large part a matter of analyzing these questions. Taking a stand on the theory of manifestation—either for or against—involved taking a stand on the relationship between how things really are and how we experience them, and improving or refining Ānandavardhana's theory often involved fixing, or reconciling, or innovating in precisely those areas of ambiguity or incoherence that are related to these issues; areas that were discussed in the previous chapter.

These issues, however, were not religiously neutral. They had already long been the province of theological reflection, and religious philosophers and theologians often had a large stake in how these questions were decided, particular in Kaśmīr in these centuries. Whether or not Ānandavardhana intended it, therefore, his reflections had strayed into the realm of religion, implicitly. It is this fact that largely explains the striking prevalence of religious ideas in Abhinavagupta's reconceptualization of the manifestation theory; in fact it explains his engagement with this theory in the first place. For unlike Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta spent most of his career as a theologian, a philosopher of religion, and religious authority, and he was most well-known in these capacities, and not as a literary theorist. And unlike Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta's literary theory shows a deep and explicit relationship to theology. So the reason Abhinavagupta was so interested in the theory of manifestation is that Ānandavardhana's formulation of it made it a useful vehicle for Abhinavagupta to think through and elaborate many of the aesthetic-theological concerns that were circulating around the Śaiva traditions that he had inherited. As we will see, paying careful attention to what I am calling issues of appearance and
essence, and tracking them as they move back and forth between theological and literary theoretical registers, will allow us to see more clearly why Abhinavagupta would choose to back Ānandavardhana's theory rather than some other, despite the fact that it required a defense so far-reaching that the theory basically had to be completely rewritten. It will also help us understand the structure of Abhinavagupta's defense itself, which largely consisted in taking many ideas from another theological aesthetician, Bhaṭṭanāyaka, and adapting them to his non-dual Śaiva theology. Finally, tracking these issues will ultimately allow us to understand better the ethical dimensions of Abhinavagupta's literary theory, which will be discussed in the conclusion to the chapter.

In describing Abhinavagupta this way, however, it would be a mistake to conclude that his Śaiva theology came first and the literary theory simply followed from it, or that his Śaiva theology was fixed and immobile and simply dictated the shape of a literary theory that was more malleable because it is less "serious." Abhinavagupta's Śaiva theology was inherited by him in the midst of transformation, and he himself continued innovating and transforming that tradition in subtle ways. So when Abhinavagupta transformed the theory of manifestation by grounding it in Śaiva theology, it is important to remember that he was using a Śaiva theology that was itself being transformed during this process. Rather than trying to figure out one as primary and the other as its handmaiden, it would be much more accurate to treat the literary theory and the theology as co-emergent, crystallizing together around a core set of metaphysical concerns common to both, which fascinated Abhinavagupta throughout his life.\footnote{This is partially because we know so little about Abhinavagupta's biography. We may be able to determine when particular works were written, but we have no idea when they were conceived, or which topics he was interested in or thought about when. More importantly, it is because there is clearly a dialectical, rather than a static, relationship between his aesthetic and theological ideas. His theology, as we will see, is just as aestheticized as his aesthetics is theological, and this gives us reason to assume that neither was conceptually prior.} \textit{This is one}
reason, for example, why Abhinavagupta's defense of the theory of manifestation and his innovations in Śaiva theology both involved deepening a conceptual reliance on Bhartṛhari, historically rather new in both disciplines, but tied closely metaphysical issues we have been discussing, and brought into the realm of literary theory by Ānandavardhana.

The difficulty in seeing this lies partly in the fact that even though the two disciplines may have co-emerged for Abhinavagupta in intellectual-historical terms, his theology accords clear priority to Śiva, who sits at the apex of the hierarchy of creation, which is composed of thirty-six so-called "levels of reality" [tattva]. Human literature and human experience is, needless to say, located further down the chain of being.\(^6\) This means that within Abhinavagupta's worldview, Śiva is prior to human literature, even if we, looking on, can determine that his depiction of Śiva has itself been influenced by literary theory. This distinction will be important to keep in mind as we examine Abhinavagupta's work.

There is also a difficulty in that although Abhinavagupta's literary theory clearly shows a deep relationship to theology, untangling this relationship is a complicated matter. This is partly because Abhinavagupta himself tends to respect differences of genre and doesn't fully synthesize his literary theory and his theology. So the connections, though made explicit by him from time to time, are often not thoroughly analyzed, and the details are left for the reader to work out on his or her own. On top of this, Abhinavagupta's theology is itself enormously complex. Not only are his ideas spread out over a huge corpus, but that corpus itself also was created during the late stages of a long process of historical accretion of various distinct schools of Śaivism. This process predated Abhinavagupta, and he spent a considerable amount of his genius reconciling

---

\(^6\) Even if, as a non-dualist, Abhinavagupta ultimately holds that the entire universe and everything in it is really just Śiva, still, he accords provisional reality to divisions and distinctions, and it is intelligible within his system to say that from a certain point of view one thing is "lower" than another, though ultimately they are the same.
and synthesizing the different theologies that he inherited because of it. This results in a series of correspondences not only between theology and poetics, but also between various terminologies and systems of describing God and the universe, and this of course adds to the difficulty in understanding his work overall.

It is unnecessary for the purposes of this project to give the full historical background of all the different versions of Śaivism that coalesced in Abhinavagupta's work. It would be more helpful to treat his theology synchronically, provisionally accepting Abhinavagupta's own presentation of it as one coherent, ahistorical system. This overview will be far from exhaustive, but it will provide a basic structure in which to place the various ideas we will encounter as we explore his literary theory, ideas whose influence on the theology will in turn be marked as we go along. Drawing connections back and forth in this way between the theology and the literary theory will allow us to see the concerns and ideas that are shared across the two genres, and will help us understand their relationship without being forced to accord an artificial priority to either one of them, a priority which would necessarily be an a priori assumption, and an unhelpful one at that. Some of the theological overview will involve the actual philosophical arguments that Abhinavagupta uses to defend his theology, which are extensive and complex. But for the most part these philosophical arguments will be set aside. The focus, instead, will be on the content of the theology, rather than its philosophical defense. This is because we are only trying to see how Abhinavagupta's understanding of literature is related to what he thinks about God. Whether or not we also should think about God this way is a separate question, and this is the question that the philosophical defenses are intended to answer. Therefore they will be left out unless and until they become relevant to the content of the theology itself.

This point was also partially made in Harvey Alper, “Śiva and the Ubiquity of Consciousness: The Spaciousness of an Artful Yogi,” in *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 7:4 (1979), 345.
Abhinavagupta's Theology

The most important point to keep in mind when looking at Abhinavagupta's theology is that he belonged to a monistic school of Śaivism. Nothing in the universe was thought to be separate from Śiva, and the very universe itself was seen as Śiva's unfolding and emanation. The school was also idealistic. Śiva is consciousness, and since the entire universe is him, the entire universe is therefore of the nature of consciousness. Even seemingly material reality only really exists as an aspect of Śiva's awareness and experience. And since the whole universe is made of Śiva's consciousness, to describe Śiva—his being, his characteristics, his relationship to himself—is to describe everything in the universe, although the nature and functioning of individual phenomena may be subject to varying degrees distortion away from Śiva and their nature as Śiva consequently more or less apparent.

It is this basic fact, I think, that underlies in an important and often-noticed feature of Abhinavagupta's theology, and of non-dual Śaivism in general: the repetition of structural patterns at different levels of cosmology, which Lawrence refers to as "reciprocally encompassing codes."\(^8\) The creation and destruction of the universe, for example, is structurally the same, for Abhinavagupta, as the emergence and dissolution of a thought, and is described in the same terms.\(^9\) Padoux summarizes well: "Śaiva cosmogony often appears as a 'cosmicization'

---


\(^9\) See, for example *Tantrāloka* vs. 1.244-246 (all references to the Tantrāloka will be to Abhinavagupta, *The Tantrāloka of Abhinavagupta with the commentary by Rājānaka Jayaratha*, ed. M.R. Shāstrī, Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies, vol. 23, 28, 29, 30, 35, 36, 41, 47, 52, 57, 58, 59 [various presses and publication years]. Where the reference is to the verses only the verses will be given. Where the reference is to a page, the volume and page will be given) in which, as Silburn and Padoux point out, "les moment du processus mental de connaissance des objets, en souligne le parallelisme avec celui de la manifestation et de la resorption cosmique." Lilian Silburn A. Padoux, *Abhinavagupta. La lumière sur les tantras, chapitres 1 à 5 du Tantrāloka*, (Paris: Institut de civilisation Indienne, 1998), 39.
of psychological experiences and vice-versa."¹⁰ This same correspondence can be seen across different areas of human life like ritual, sex, and, most importantly for our purposes, aesthetics. These correspondences are not metaphors or analogies but expressions of the same fundamental patterns, just as the swirl of water as it goes down your drain is not an analogy for the rotation of a hurricane but another example of the Coriolis force; in other words the correspondences are quite literal, built into the structure of the universe in virtue of the fact that the universe is all the emanation of one single, conscious being. Abhinavagupta's theories on aesthetics all grow out of this fundamental cosmological fact.

So if Śiva's nature is the nature of the universe, what is Śiva's nature? At the ultimate level, Śiva is alone. He is complete and perfect, lacking nothing because he is everything. Nothing is outside of him or apart from him. He is eternal, beyond all division. At this level, although he is beyond all division and so beyond gender, he is still either referred to with masculine names Śiva or Bhairava, or else with feminine names if one wishes to emphasize the divine feminine. The ultimate is never referred to, in this form of Śaivism, with neuter pronouns, as it is in the non-dual Vedānta tradition.

The reason for this peculiar fact is that although Śiva is complete and perfect, he is not inert or insentient, nor is he static.¹¹ On the one hand he is pure awareness, described as shining light or prakāśa, a term in Sanskrit that commonly extends to words for knowledge, awareness, or phenomenal appearance. This light is equated with Śiva's very being and thus with consciousness, creating an equation between existence, awareness, and luminosity. To exist is to shine, which is to be aware; they are all the same thing. But this light does not simply shine

¹⁰ André Padoux, Vac: The Concept of the Word in Selected Hindu Tantras (New York: SUNY Press, 1990), 78 n. 122. See also ibid., 37, 82.

¹¹ This is explained well in Harvey Alper, "Śiva and the Ubiquity of Consciousness."
outwardly, it also interacts with itself. It reflects back on itself, has a relation to itself. Since this light, unlike ordinary light, is awareness itself, this self-illuminating dynamic means that the light is self-aware. This self-awareness is why Śiva is often, in Abhinavagupta's theology, described as the ultimate I, or I-consciousness, which transcends all individual, limited subjectivities. Mark Dyczkowski calls it the "super-ego."\textsuperscript{12} Siva's most basic and fundamental act, beyond the primary act of just being aware in the first place, is to think, "I."

This self-awareness is extremely important in Abhinavagupta's theology. It is called by many words in the tradition, but the most common are words derived from the verbal root \textit{mrś}, which means "to touch, to rub, or to consider".\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Vimarśa, parāmarśa, and pratyavamarśa} are the most common of these words, and although there are slight variations in how they are used, they are mostly used synonymously.\textsuperscript{14} They are difficult to translate, and scholars have made many different attempts.\textsuperscript{15} Some of the most useful, for this project, are Muller-Ortega's translation as "self-awareness," which captures the cognitive aspects of the term, and Sanderson's translation as "self-representation," which augments the translation of "self-awareness" by emphasizing the active quality of \textit{vimarśa}: it is not just a passive awareness but the self-interaction of an agent. To these translations we also need to add the qualification that \textit{vimarśa} entails a mode of subjectivity that is not reducible just to self-objectification, but is somehow

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{12}\textsuperscript{12}Dyczkowski points out that this was new to the tradition with Utpaladeva, and was a provocative statement in the context of classical Indian religion, which almost uniformly considered egoity to be the prison that enlightenment is supposed to be a release from. Mark S.G. Dyczkowski, \textit{The Doctrine of Vibration: An Analysis of the Doctrines and Practices Associated with Kashmir Shaivism} (New York: SUNY Press, 1987), 37-47.
\item \textsuperscript{13}\textsuperscript{13}The \textit{Practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary}, "\textit{mrś}," by V.S. Apte, accessed online Feb, 2015, <http://www.aa.tufs.ac.jp/~tjun/sktdic/>
\item \textsuperscript{14}Kerry Martin Skora, "Consciousness of Consciousness: Reflexive Awareness in the Trika Saivism of Abhinavagupta," (PhD Diss., U. Virginia, 2001), 31.
\item \textsuperscript{15}For a good summary of these various approaches, see ibid., 28-37.
\end{itemize}
more intimate or immanent, than that. This is important because, as we will see in later pages, the irreducibility of subjectivity is an important element in Abhinavagupta's philosophy.

Śiva's light and his self-interaction, his prakāsa and vimarśa, are not, ultimately, two separate things. They are ways of describing what Śiva is and what his existence is like, and Śiva, ultimately, is a single, unified being. But once a distinction is drawn between these two aspects of his nature, more can be said about them. His nature as luminosity, or consciousness, is thought of as the masculine pole of his being, and is equated with Śiva himself. His self-awareness, on the other hand, is thought of as feminine, and is represented symbolically as his consort Śakti, whose name literally means "power" or "capacity," presumably because she is the power through which Śiva acts, i.e. interacts with himself. Symbolically and mythologically, Śiva and Śakti are locked in perpetual sexual embrace. In the famous words of the poet Kālidāsa, Śiva and Śakti, the parents of the universe, are as intimately united as a word and its meaning.16

In Abhinavagupta's time it was more common to speak of them being as intimately united as a capacity (śakti) and the entity that possesses it (śaktimān); fire and its capacity to burn, for example. Śiva and Śakti are thus not really separate.17 They are only two poles of an undivided absolute, their embrace the self-embrace that is constitutive of God's being; self-aware luminosity perpetually making love to itself.

16Kālidāsa, Raghuvaṃśa, vs. 1: vāgarthāv iva sampṛktau vāgarthapratipattaye / jagataḥ pitarau vande pārvaratipareśvarau //

17Thus Abhinavagupta says in Parātrīśikāvivaraṇa (Abhinavagupta, Parātrīśikā-vivaraṇa: The Secret of Tantric Mysticism, ed. Bettina Baumer and Swami Lakshmanjoo, trans. Jaideva Singh [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1988], 3): parameśvaraḥ pañcavidhakṛtyamayaḥ, satataṁ anugrahamayāḥ parārūpayā śākyā ākrānto vastuto 'nugrahaṃkātmāva, na hi śaktiḥ śivāḥ bhedam āmarṣayet. "The Highest Śiva, whose nature is the five-fold activity, is perpetually united with Śakti, whose nature is grace and whose form is unsurpassed. But in reality he himself has grace as his very nature, for Śakti never represents herself as separated from Śiva".
The sexual nature of this imagery is not a coincidence. The very term *vimarśa* itself carries sexual connotations.\(^{18}\) The "touching" and "rubbing" it refers to are words often used in the Sanskrit epics to refer to sexual caresses, and it is from here that the word takes on the connotation of knowing or understanding.\(^{19}\) Kerry Martin Skora's Ph.D. dissertation was in large part an exploration of the sexual and embodied aspects of this term, and although he acknowledges that etymology on its own is a flimsy guide to the meaning of a term,\(^{20}\) he shows in great detail that Abhinavagupta did indeed intend these connotations, and that he emphasizes these aspects of the term even more strongly than the philosopher who introduced the terms into the tradition, Utpaladeva.\(^{21}\)

The reason for the sexuality of the imagery is that God's relationship to himself is blissful. God isn't just self-aware or self-interactive, he blissfully *enjoys* himself. This is part of his very nature, and it is an aspect of his reflexive relationship with himself, his *vimarśa*. This is why one could reasonably translate *vimarśa* not just as self-awareness or self-representation, but as self-caress. The sexual connotations of the term are not so much a metaphor derived from human life and superimposed onto God to allow us to understand him better. Rather, human sexuality is itself a derivative form of this aspect of God's existence, and is blissful because of the way it echoes his divine bliss. Abhinavagupta and others in his tradition often connect the

---


\(^{19}\) Ibid, 21-22.

\(^{20}\) Ibid., 22-23

\(^{21}\) Ibid., 14.
idea of *vimarśa* to the term *camatkāra*, a term that denotes delight, astonishment, or bliss. This term is also used in aesthetics and literary theory, where it refers to the delight produced by a work of art, but here in the theology it is described as an aspect of God's being: his self-interaction. Theologically, Abhinavagupta explains that this delight is "the action of enjoying, the bliss composed of reaching the state of enjoying," and says it is the "life-breath of [God's] luminosity [i.e., his awareness]." Already we can see the incipient connections to literary theory, as the picture of the divine emerging here is one that is fundamentally aesthetic, but the more we delineate this aspect of the theology the more clear the literary theory will be when we turn to it.

Abhinavagupta also says that this type of delight is what separates sentient from insentient entities, a distinction that is complicated to uphold for a monist idealist. Since everything, both objects of knowledge and the subjectivities that apprehend them, is a part of Śiva's awareness, everything naturally consists of the same luminosity. Therefore everything is, strictly speaking, awareness. So what makes some things insentient? The answer is that sentient entities are those that experience *vimarśa*. Every time a subject knows an object, it is in some sense a form of God's interaction with himself; it is *vimarśa*. But only sentient subjectivities such as people experience this *vimarśa*. The insentient objects they are aware, although they are "sentient" in the sense that they are composed of awareness, are not subject to the experience of *vimarśa*. They are only one pole in a dialectic, not the dialectic itself. "*Vimarśa* alone is bliss, and that alone is sentient; therefore, for this reason, the *vimarśa* 'this' with respect to a blue

---

22 See, for example, Abhinavagupta, *Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivṛtivimarśini*, ed. Madhusūdan Kaul Shāstrī, Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies no. 60, 62, 65 (Bombay: Nirmaya Sagar Press, 1938-1941), 3:251, where *camatkāra* is described as the state of undistracted *vimarśa*: *camatkāro hi iti svātmanī ananyāpekṣe viśramaṇam. evaṃ bhuṣṭjānataśrūpaṃ camattvam, tad eva karoti saṃrambhe, vimṛṣati nānyatra anudhāvati.

23 Ibid. 2:177: *camatkṛtī hi bhuṣṭjānasya yā kriyā bhogasamāppattimaya ānandaḥ. . . prakāśasya prānatvena uktaḥ.*
object, for example, doesn't repose [viśrānti] in the blue object itself, but finds repose only in the knower. On the subject of repose we will say more further on, but notice for now that "repose" implies that while the blue object is an aspect of God's being and is composed of the light of awareness and touched by it, the subject that knows it is an aspect of God's being and can touch himself with his awareness; can say, "I." The blue object not only does not but cannot do this.

This idea, if we think about it closely, implies another of God's qualities, which is tied up inseparably with his capacity for vimarśa: that of independence. In a theology where knowledge is described as luminosity and luminosity is equated with existence, the fact that the sentient being knows itself means that it is self-existent, i.e. independent. In other words, if to be known is to exist, then to know oneself is to exist without any outside assistance, which is independence. The insentient object, on the other hand, is not like this. A blue ball doesn't know itself. It is only known by something else, a subjectivity apart from it, which means that its existence depends, metaphysically, upon something outside itself; it only exists as an object for an independently existing subject (either an individual being or God). So it is dependent. To put all this succinctly: self-luminosity, or self-knowledge, is called vimarśa, and so to say that something has vimarśa is to say that it is independently existent, and to say that it is devoid of vimarśa is to say that its existence depends upon something external to it, or to put it in Hegelian terms, that it exists for another. This close relationship between self-awareness and independence

---

24 Ibid. 2:179: yato vimarśa eva camatkārah, sa eva ca ajādyam [sic]: tato hetor nīlādau idam iti yo vimarśaḥ, sa nīlādiśarīre viśrānto na bhavati, kintu pramātvī eva viśrāmyati.

25 This will be described more in Chapter Four.
is the reason why freedom, sovereignty, or independence, in Sanskrit svātāntarya, is frequently connected closely to vimarśa, or even treated as synonymous with it.\textsuperscript{26}

Earlier it was stated that this vimarśa (which is the same as independence) is blissful, and not simply neutral. Now we can see the reason for this even more clearly. The reason is that the more full, independent, and self-contented a subjectivity is, the more pleasure it feels, precisely because pain is defined by Abhinavagupta as a feeling of lack, dependence, or need. In the Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivrtivimarśinī, Abhinavagupta defines bliss just as the opposite of this felt sense of need. In Isabelle Ratié's translation, he says: "What is called ‘bliss’ (ānanda) is the [manifestation] of ‘one’s own form,’ that is to say, of oneself; [in other words,] it is the manifestation, which takes the form of a conscious grasping (parāmarśa), of one’s own nature, which is absolutely full (paripūrṇa)."\textsuperscript{27} Approaching oneself as complete without needing or missing anything is the experience of bliss par excellence. This is a facet of all forms of

\textsuperscript{26} See, for example, Abhinavagupta and Utpaladeva, Īśvarapratyabhijñā of Utpaladeva with the Vimarśinī of Abhinavagupta, ed. MK Shastri and MR Shastri, Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies no. 22, 33 (Bombay: Nirmaya Sagar Press, 1918-1921), 2:181: parāmarśalakṣaṇaṁ tu svātāntrayaṁ... "Freedom, which is defined by self-awareness..."; And ibid. 1:198: tathā parāmarśanam eva ajādyajāvitam. antarbhahiskarāṇasvātāntrayasyavāyām svābhāvikam avabhāsasya svātmavivṛtānāḥlavīṣaṁ ananuyamukhapekṣiṣṭvaṁ nāma. "Therefore, the self-awareness of consciousness, the life-force of sentiency, whose essential form is the freedom to manifest internally and externally, is natural; it is the state of not looking towards anything else, and is defined by repose in the Self." Most clearly, see Utpaladeva's root verse 1.5.13, (ibid., 1:203-204): cītiḥ pratyavamarṣātmā parā vāk svarasoditā / svātāntrayam etan mukhyām tadaśvaryaṁ paramātmanah // "Consciousness, whose essence is reflective awareness, is Highest Speech, spontaneously arising. That is absolute freedom, the sovereign power of the supreme Self." Abhinavagupta's commentary on this is entirely in accord. Freedom is also often equated with Śiva's omnipotence and his power of will. I take this to follow derivatively from this fundamental fact of independence. Because Śiva exists independently, nothing can impede his activity, and because he is independent his activity is an active interaction with his Self; he interacts with himself by transforming himself into any form he chooses. The will to do this is constituted in the first place by a self-awareness, and takes the form "I will x." See Ibid., 1:214: sarvāḥ śaktiḥ kartṛtvāsaktih aśvavyātmā samākṣipati. sā ca vimarśarūpā. "Omnipotence, which is the power to be an agent, includes all [other] powers [here I follow Pandey's translation. See Abhinavagupta, Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivarānvarṣinī: Bhāskaracāsamvalī, 3 Volumes, ed K.C. Pandey K. Balasubrahmanya Iyer [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1986], 3.76], and it has the form of vimarśa."

subjectivity, but for God, who is everything and therefore ultimately complete, the bliss is ultimate, and this bliss is the same as his self-awareness and independence. Put simply, God is aware of himself as all things, lacking nothing, separated from nothing, and this is, by definition, complete bliss. Individual, limited subjectivities experience the same bliss to the extent that their needs subside and they become aware of themselves as complete. This admits of degrees. It happens to a small degree during any pleasurable experience in which people feel satiated, such as a filling meal or a pleasing sight.\(^{28}\) It happens to the ultimate degree at the moment of enlightenment, when one's identity with Śiva is laid bare. Abhinavagupta sums all this up nicely and connects it explicitly to artistic issues in his theological commentary, Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivrtivimarśinī:

> At the highest level, the very self-awareness of the luminosity, which is essentially just bliss, is freedom... "For bliss" [here he is quoting from the root text he is commenting upon, ed note.]: [bliss] is just repose in one's own self, which is independent. Thus the camat-ness [of camatkāra] just has the form of enjoymet [bhujñānatārumam], [and bliss] creates that, [i.e.] it caresses itself primarily and doesn't run off anywhere else. . . On the other hand, bliss is described elsewhere as the relishing, or savoring, that is devoid of obstacles with an essentially fixed form that arises as the mental function of emotional beings in the rasa of plays and poems.\(^{29}\)

So God, Śiva, is self-luminosity, independent self-existence, which is perpetually sexually entwined with itself, touching itself blissfully and experiencing the delight of being completely satiated and full of all things, and this essentially aesthetic theology is structurally

---


\(^{29}\) Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivrtivimarśinī, 3:251: prakāsasya ca paradaśāyām camatkāramātrātmā yo vimarśas tad eva svātantryama... "camatkāro hi": iti svātmani ananyāpekṣe viśramaṇam. evaṃ bhujñānatārūpaṃ camattvam, tad eva karoti saṃrambhe,[this comma seems to be misplaced. I take it as more properly placed after karoti, making saṃrambhe the locus for vimṛṣati, which contrasts nicely with anyatra] vimṛṣati na anyatra anudhāvati... kāvyanāyaśarasādvapi bhāvicitvāvyantarodayaniyamātakavighnavirahita eva āśvādo rasanātmā camatkāra iti uktam anyatra.
related, by Abhinavagupta, to the experience of enjoying art. There are countless examples of these ideas in Abhinavagupta's writing. But the idea goes further than this. God is not merely entwined in self-satisfaction. Somehow a universe gets created; a universe that is not separate from God himself, but which appears to be so. How does this happen?

The process that leads to the creation of the universe begins with the self-division of Śiva into Śiva and Śakti that we have already been describing. This is the first seed of the appearance of division that causes the universe, and it is a conscious choice by Śiva. We can see this in a passage found at the beginning of Abhinavagupta's commentary on the Parātrīśikā. This text takes the form of the goddess Śakti asking questions to Śiva, and Śiva delivering religious instruction as answers to those questions. Abhinavagupta, explaining this narrative device, tells us that this division into Śiva and Śakti with their questions and answers is not the highest reality:

This thing [vastu] which has the form of question and answer arises perpetually and is, in the first instance, without division into portions [i.e. without division into question and answer]. Therefore here is the purport [of the text]: He whose own self is the essence of all entities, who is independently luminous, who enjoys his own self [camatkurvan] as the subjectivity that is composed of questioner and answerer with their question and response, which are in reality not different from his own self, caresses himself [vimṛśati] thusly: "I myself, thus desiring wonderful delight [vicitracamatkāra], consciously become [divided into question and answer] in that way.\textsuperscript{30}

Once this primordial self-division takes place, Śiva's self-questioning becomes possible, as well as his self-apprehension as blissfully complete. But since nothing else exists at this stage other than this, this self-apprehension must somehow become the material cause for the universe, as well as the efficient one. Not all versions of Hinduism believe this. The god imagined by the

\textsuperscript{30} Parātrīśikāvivaraṇa, 5: vastu ca praśnataaduttararūpam satatoditam eva prathamam avibhāgamayam, tena etāvad eva atra tātparyam—svātmā sarvabhāvavabhāvah svayam prakāśamānah svātmānāmeva svātmāvibhinnena praśnapratiśvacanena prasṛṭpratīvaktṛsvātmamayena ahantayā camatkurvan vimṛśati—aham eva evaṃ vicitracamatkārecchuḥ tathā jānaneva tathaiva bhavāmi.
Nyāya philosophical school, for example, creates the universe by taking the role of an architect, or artisan. When the time comes to create the universe he takes the eternal atoms, which exist apart from him, and arranges them into the universe. But in Abhinavagupta's theology there is nothing apart from Śiva, and more precisely nothing apart from Śiva's self-apprehensive consciousness. So somehow the universe might come out of this self-divided consciousness.

Abhinavagupta in various places explains that the universe comes into being when the bliss of Śiva and Śakti's union reaches such a pitch that it overflows outwards and crystallizes into the universe. Kerry Martin Skora again makes a convincing argument that this productive union is described in explicitly sexual terms, often using the Sanskrit word saṃghaṭṭana, which is used in the 29th chapter of Tantrāloka to discuss tantric sexual rituals. Skora translates the term suggestively as "banging together," rather than as something more refined and disembodied, like "union" or "friction" or "joining." Skora then cites Tantrāloka 3.68 to show that this "banging together" is responsible for the production of the universe, which is described using a word for "emission" that also literally means ejaculation: "The doubled form of these two [Śiva and Śakti] is known as 'banging together.' That very [form] is called 'energy of bliss,' from with the totality is ejaculated." This is the source of what we experience as the universe. And as this is essentially a philosophy of creativity, it is this aspect of the theology that will surface when we look into Abhinavagupta's description of the act of poetic creation.

Śiva and Śakti's creation need not be one single, final act. The process of emission can be layered, or formed of interlocking self-caresses of various scope, like a spiral made of smaller spirals, or the plot of a Mandelbrot set. It can also be described in different ways. In

---


32 tayor yady āmalam rūpaṃ sa saṃghaṭṭa iti smṛtaḥ. ānandaśaktih saivoktā yato viśvam visṛfyate. Skora's translation. Ibid., 51.
Abhinavagupta's commentary on Parātrīśikā the emanation of the universe is described using an elaborate mystical interpretation of the Sanskrit alphabet where the movement from the first letter to the last letter describes the creation of everything in the universe, beginning from Śiva's absolute nature down to earth, the lowest of all the elements. The details are not important here; they have been described extensively by Padoux. What is important is that at each stage of the alphabet, the letters are produced by the "banging together" of the previous letters, which themselves have been formed from the banging together of the previous letters. This begins with the vowels, which are all thought to represent aspects of Śiva's energy, and continues on to the consonants, which represent the grosser, physical aspects of the universe, and the shift from vowels to consonants is described in terms of a larger moment of vimarśa, comprehending all the vowels together. But all the way through, the light keeps spilling outward, reproducing the same dynamic of self-caress. Padoux sums up nicely: "The entire manifestation will therefore appear first within the primary principle, within its energy, as a paradigm. . . From there it is emitted (visṛ), as a throbbing, radiating light (sphurattā, ullāsa), as a shining forth or luminous projection." A more specific summary, showing the layering of vimarśa within Śiva that culminates in the "emission" of the manifest universe, is given later by Padoux:

In the supreme Godhead, the Absolute, prior even to the first phoneme. . . there arises the primordial sound-vibration, and through an initial [vimarśa], the vowel a will appear, then out of the latter and through further [vimarśas], the rest of the vowels. . ., then the diphthongs, and finally the anusvāra or bindu, and the visarga [further vowel-like letters]: Sixteen phonemes altogether, all of them regarded as vowels (svara) and associated with the śiva tattva [i.e., Śiva's nature], wherein their birth brings about the emergence of different aspects of the divine energy. This divine energy finally focuses upon itself (this is bindu) and becomes thus ready for the emission (visarga), the emitting

---

33 Padoux, Vāc, Chapter Five.

34 Ibid., 80-81.
act, which sends forth the manifestation and also precedes the emergence of the consonants.  

It is important to keep in mind that because this is a non-dual system, not only is there no separate material basis for creation, there also isn't really an "outside" for Śiva to emanate into. All of the emanation is all taking place within Śiva himself, which is why he is often described as the "screen" [bhitti] upon which the universe is projected. This idea shows up often in Abhinavagupta's Tantrāloka. For example 3.65 says: "In this manner, the universe is a reflection on the sheet of Lord Bhairava's [i.e. Śiva's] clear consciousness. This is enough, without the assistance of anything outside [of Śiva]."  

At 3.141b he says again: "The creation and destruction of the universe is all just the emission [visarga] of the Lord. The existence [of the universe], which is [also] an emission, is the self's projection [kṣepa] of itself onto itself." This, again, is the reason for the repetition of patterns along macro- and microcosms, mentioned earlier. Since nothing is ever really separate from Śiva, all things in one way or another participate in his nature, which is sovereign subjectivity, delighting as it interacts with itself.

---

35 Ibid., 229-230

Tantrāloka vs. 3.65: ittham viśvam idaṃ nāthe bhairavīyaacidambare. pratibimbamalam svacche na khālvaṁ anyaprāsadātaḥ. Silburn and Padoux translate the word ambara into French as ciel [Silburn and Padoux, Abhinavagupta, 150] I have chosen to go with an alternative meaning of ambara, cloth or sheet, because it makes more sense as substrate on which to project or reflect an image than the sky does, and because Śiva is often described in this way, as a projection screen [cf Īśvarapratyabhijñākārika vs. 2.3.15, where Śiva is described as viśvavaicityitrasya samabhittitolopama, "similar to the surface of a smooth wall [for] the variegated painting that is the universe."]

36 Tantrāloka vs. 3.141: visargamātraṃ nāthisya srṣīsamhārabhiḥramāḥ. svātmanāḥ svātmani svātmakṣepo vaisargikī sthitih. Again I have diverged from Silburn and Padoux (Abhinavagupta, 172), who translate vaisargikī sthitih as "l'état de l'émetteur." I have also diverged from Skora, who translates it similarly as "emissional abiding-place." (Skora, "Consciousness of Consciousness," 145) Presumably they are both following Jayaratha, who says (Tantrāloka, 2:144), "iyam eva nāma vaisargikī—srṣīsamhārakārīvalakṣanā sthitiḥ..." However it seems more plausible to me to take sthiity as forming the third member of the triad consisting of sthitī and samāhāra, mentioned in the first line, and to read it is the "emanational endurance," i.e. the enduring existence of the emanation. Abhinavagupta presumably phrases it in this convoluted way to fit the meter. The verse, in my reading, defines creation, endurance, and destruction as the three states of emanation [visarga], and says that for the universe to exist is for it to be projected by Śiva onto himself. However if I'm wrong about this particular translation it is of no consequence to my argument.
This then raises the obvious question of why, if all things partake of Śiva's nature and are aspects of his divine self, they do not seem that way. More urgently, why do individual subjects not experience themselves as Śiva? The answer is that while Śiva's emanation is an outpouring, it is also at the same time, a process of obscuration, or hiding. Śiva creates not just by overflowing, but by obscuring his own nature. He hides inside of his creation. Abhinavagupta explains this at the beginning of chapter 4 of *Tantrāloka*:

4.9 ...The awareness that is the Self is, by it's very nature, without measure. In it there is nothing to add or subtract...
4.10 However, in virtue of his stainless liberty, which accomplishes difficult things, the Highest Lord is clever at the game of hiding himself.
4.11 Although his [true] form is not undone [āvṛtta, lit. "turned round, averted"], this hiding of Himself is the Lord's power of illusion [māyā], from which [comes] the divisions that make the universe take place.\(^{38}\)

So Śiva hides his own complete fullness and thus appears as a universe that is fractured into divisions. This process of a complete, transcendent unity dividing up into a fractured appearance is also described in terms of the "levels of speech," a concept borrowed from Bhartṛhari, the grammarian discussed above. The concept is elegant, and important to the literary theory, but a bit of explanation is needed to see how it appears in Abhinavagupta's work.

In *Vākyapadiya*, Bhartṛhari theorizes that when an idea in one's head passes into language, it does so in three phases. The first phase is called *paśyantī*, The Seeing One. *Paśyantī* is a holistic idea, undivided into words. When the words for this idea begin to take shape in one's mind, it is the second level, called *madhyamā*, the intermediate, which is a kind of internal language, possessed of sequence and division but without appearance to others. Finally the spoken words that are perceptible to others are called *vaikharī*, an outward manifestation of the

---

\(^{38}\) *Tantrāloka* vss. 4.9-11: ...svātmasaṃvittīḥ svabhāvāḥ eva nirbhāraḥ / nāsyāṁ apāsyam nādheyam kimcid... // kim tu durghaṣṭakāritvāt svācchāndyaṁ nirmalād asau / svātmapracchādānakrīḍāpanḍitaḥ paraṁśvarah // anāvṛtte svarūpe 'pi yad ātmācchādanam vibhoḥ / saiva māyā yato bheda etāvān viśvavṛttikaḥ //
idea that originally existed as a unity at the level of paśyantī. When a hearer hears this string of words they are led to a sudden intuition of this unified idea, which is the meaning of the sentence. This sentence meaning is a unified whole above and apart from the words of the sentence, and is manifested by them. The sentence meaning is not, for Bhartṛhari, a composite meaning built out of the words of the sentences, but something that only appears as words and sentences, while not itself containing any real division.

The faculty that leads the hearer from the words of the sentence back up to the meaning they manifest is called pratibhā by Bhartṛhari. He also uses this word for the meaning of the sentence itself. It is a word that has many meanings in Sanskrit. It literally means to illuminate, or to shine on. It also can mean insight, imagination, intuition, and even instinct. Bhartṛhari uses the same word to refer to the force that makes the cuckoo sings in the spring or the spider weave its web. The most helpful explanation I have come across that can explain why the term is applied in all these ways is by A.N. Hota, in his book Sphoṭa, Pratibhā and Dvhani:

Pratibhā is the guiding instinct which by appropriate [sic] meaning whole, leads to proper action. It is not only comprehension or manifestation of an idea, but also the knowledge of how to act...[it] is a unifying and selecting instinct which organizes the isolate parts of a meaning situation into a structural whole of meaning.

---

39 The meaning of vaikharī is uncertain. For a discussion of various theories and interpretations, see Padoux, Vāc, 216 n. 115.

40 See, for example lākyapadiya 2.143: viechedagrahāne 'ṛthaṇāṃ pratibhānyaiva jāyate / vākyārtha iti tām āhūth padārthair upapāditām // "Once the objects [of individual words] have been grasped in isolation, an altogether different intuition [pratibhā] arises; they claim that this [intuition], made possible by the word objects, is the object of a sentence." The translation is from David Hugo, "Cognition Without an Object? Maṇḍana Miśra on the Epistemological value of intuition (pratibhā/prātibha)," (Unpublished presentation, World Sanskrit Conference, 2015).

41 See above, Chapter 1 n. 72.

42 Ibid., 74
So a speaker has an idea. It is a unified, semantic whole, but it can't be communicated as such, because communication requires phenomenal appearance to others, and nothing can appear in the phenomenal world without having parts or sequence. So the idea needs to be transformed and broken down into words that are spoken one by one, each of which is a manifestation of the entire sentence meaning, the way different glimpses of different, individual parts of an elephant will all be glimpses of the same, single elephant. When a hearer hears enough words, they have an insight that makes them aware of the sentence meaning. This sentence meaning is whole and non-composite, just as the viewer of the elephant parts doesn't piece the elephant parts together into a kind of composite being in his head, but rather becomes suddenly aware, after seeing enough parts, that it is an elephant they have been looking at. In both directions, the creation of the sentence and the intuition of its meaning, pratibhā is the guiding instinct. It is what allows the speaker to select words that will convey their idea, and it is what allows the hearer to see the idea that the words are expressing. The capacity for pratibhā can originate from tradition, from

---

43 This process will be recognizable to anyone who has struggled to express themselves properly. Speakers often find themselves in the position of having an idea but of not quite knowing how to say it. If it is purely a lexical problem, just looking for the right word, the problem is at the vaikhari level. But the struggle can take place at the madhyama level as well. A speaker might be struggling to express an insight. They actually have something they are trying to say, but they are struggling to articulate it, even to themselves. The person listening might understand and point out what the speaker is "really" trying to say, which hadn't occurred to the speaker previously, even in thought, although the speaker can immediately recognize their idea in it and feel assisted.

44 A.N. Hota, Sphota, Pratibhā, Dhvani, 73-74.

45 This theory, of course, makes the rather large assumption that ambiguity is only an accidental part of language, and that a properly trained speaker and listener should, in theory, be able to understand each other perfectly. Ambiguity as a constituent or unavoidable part of language is nowhere acknowledged in Sanskrit philosophy. Even the elaborate treatment of punning and "crooked speech" assumes that the multiple meanings expressed by the pun are all perfectly clear and enumerable. Interestingly, one of the important benefits of the theory of poetic manifestation seems to have been that it allowed for the scholastic acknowledgment and analysis of ambiguity; of verses whose meaning "resonates like a bell" or who throw off multiple and multiplying manifested meanings.
karmic traces of past lives, or from practice. Bhartṛhari is a little unclear on which of these is most responsible. He simply lists them.46

This looks similar to the issues of dhvani and sphoṭa discussed above, but it is important to remember that even though similar philosophical intuitions about the dialectics of parts and wholes are at work, issues of dhvani and sphoṭa are primarily phonological issues of sounds and the words or phrases they represent, whereas here Bhartṛhari is concerned with the relation between those words and the meaning they communicate. How does an idea I have in my head transform into words, and in what sense do those words "mean" the idea that I have? The three levels of speech is Bhartṛhari's answer to that question, and, as we saw, if Ānandavardhana were to allow his theory to be too closely conflated with the three levels of speech, it would become indistinguishable from any other type sentence meaning. It is very important to Ānandavardhana that dhvani and sentence-meaning be distinct. So we have to assume that he didn't intend this kind of three-level semantic structure in his theory, or that if he did, it was an inconsistency that he was aware of and thus intentionally vague about. Part of the reason the two theories may seem so similar that they both trade in the same dialectic between wholes on the one hand, and the parts that are required for them to manifest on the other.

The idea of levels of speech was imported into Śaiva philosophy around the time of Abhinavagupta and Utpaladeva and used extensively in various works, particularly Parātrīṣikāvivaraṇa, but also the commentaries on the Īśvarapratyabhijñākārika, and elsewhere.47 What is surprising about this, famously surprising in fact, is that Utpaladeva's

46 For a discussion of this see Hota, Sphoṭa, Pratibhā, Dhvani, 74-78.

47 For the adoption of Bhartṛhari as an ally by Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta, see Rafalle Torella, "From an Adversary to the Main Ally: The Place of Bhartṛhari in the Kashmirian Śaiva Advaita," in Linguistic Traditions of Kashmir: Essays in Memory of Pandit Dinanath Yaksa, ed. Mrinal Kaul and Ashok Aklujkar (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 2008): 508-524. For some descriptions of the use of the levels of speech by Bhartṛhari, see Padoux, Vāc,
teacher, Somānanda, ruthlessly criticized the idea in his Śivadrśṭi. The entire second chapter of that work is given over to demolishing Bhartrhari's idea that since language is the origin and essence of the universe, the highest, unified level of the universe, i.e. God, must actually be a unified linguistic whole, that is, paśyantī. Despite these arguments, Bhartrhari and the three levels of speech become part of Śaiva philosophy from Utpaladeva onwards.

The details of Somānanda's arguments against the idea of God as paśyantī are beyond the scope of this project.48 What is important is that the dramatic change in Bhartrhari's status initiated by Utpaladeva was totally unacknowledged,49 and many of Somānanda's original arguments were circumvented by positing a higher, fourth level of speech above paśyantī, which was called parāvāc, Highest Speech. This level is not just the unified fullness of an idea to be expressed, but the unified fullness of all meaning as such, before the seeds of individual ideas even begin to appear; a sort of semantic plenum, something perhaps like Walter Benjamin's divine language, discussed in "Task of the Translator."50 When Bhartrhari's theory of the levels of speech was imported into Śaiva philosophy, this additional notion of parāvāc was crucially important, especially in the work of Abhinavagupta, and his literary theory, as we will see, can't be understood without it.


48 They can be found well translated and analyzed in Nemec, Ubiquitous Śiva, Chapter Thirteen.


Highest Speech is often, unsurprisingly, equated with vimarśa, who is equated with the goddess Śakti and the power of independence [svātantrya]. Utpaladeva says in Īśvarapratyabhijñākārika 1.5.13: "Consciousness, whose essence is self-awareness [pratyavamarśa], is Highest Speech, spontaneously arising. It is fundamental independence, the sovereign power of the supreme Self."\(^{51}\) Abhinavagupta gives an extensive gloss on this:

_Pratyavamarśa_ [a synonym for _vimarśa_], is by nature a verbalization that is essentially an inner murmur. And that verbalization, which is independent of conventions [on which human language is based], is essentially an uninterrupted delight, similar to an internal nod of the head. This becomes the life-force of worldly, conventional language like the letter "a" etc., because it is the internal screen [antarbhīti] for [other] _pratyavamarśa_-s such as "This is blue", "I am Ḫaitra", etc.\(^{52}\)

Since this Highest Speech is Śakti, or _vimarśa_, this means it is the source of the emanation of the universe, and its material cause.\(^{53}\) This in turn means that the creation of the universe is nothing but a gradual division and coarsening of what is already implicit in the fullness of Highest Speech. As the universe is emanated this speech becomes more divided and "congealed," and simultaneously its true nature is hidden, in the sense that it starts to appear as what it is not. It starts breaking into subject and object, appearing as various phenomena until it eventually coarsens into (apparently) material reality. This proceeds according to the levels of speech first described by Bhartṛhari. "At the level of Highest Speech the universe rests without any division. In _paśvantī_, division is [first] woven in [āsūtrītā]. In _madhyāma_ division opens up. At the level of _vaikharī_ division appears clearly in the form of distinct objects to be reflected

\(^{51}\) Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī 1.203-204: _citiḥ pratyavamarśātmā parā vāk svarasoditā / svātantryam etanmukhyam tad aśväryaḥ paramātmanaḥ //

\(^{52}\) Ibid., 1:205: _pratyavamarśaḥ ca antarabhītāpātmakaśabdanavabhāvah, tac ca śabdanāṁ saṅketanirepekṣam eva avicchinnacamatkārātmakam antarmukhasironirdesaprabhyam akāṛādmāyāyāsāṅketikasadbajīvitabhūtāṃ—nilam idamcaitro 'ham ītyādipratyavamarśāntarbhītibhūtvāt.

\(^{53}\) Padoux, Vāc, 78.
upon." In Padoux's translation, "a desire for the division of the Word into phonemes, words, and sentences." In Highest Speech, on the other hand, there is only the fullness of God's being, waiting to be divided.

But if conceptual division only appears at the level of madhyamā, in what sense can Highest Speech be language? What could it possibly mean to say it is a non-conceptual language? If the idea of non-conceptual language seems strange to us, it would have seemed equally strange in ancient South Asia, where Buddhists famously defined conceptuality itself as "the capacity to be expressed in language." So what is it? Utpaladeva gives the answer to this in his gloss on Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā 1.6.1: "Self-awareness [pratyavamarṣa] has the form of Highest Speech, and so it is linguistic, [but] it is not said to be a concept, for [conceptuality] is [defined as] ascertainment preceded by excluding an opposite, and here there is no opposite possible." Abhinavagupta concurs, in his commentary, that conceptuality is defined as excluding an object of cognition from what it is not. This is an important point. Unlike the

---

54 Īśvarapratyabhijñāvīrītīmasāra, 1:16: paravākāt tattvē vibhāgaṁīṁ vīśvēṁ sthitāṁ, paśyantīṁ māṅśūṁ rūṁ rūṁ bhuddhēadavābhāsāṁ.

55 Padoux, Vāc, 205.

56 cf. Dharmakīrti's Nyāyabindu vs. 1.5 (Dharmakīrti et al, Paṇḍita Durveka Miśra's Dharmottaranādīpā [being a sub-commentary Dharmottara's Nyāyabindu], a Commentary on Dharmakīrti's Nyāyabindu, ed. Paṇḍita Dalsukhīval Malvania, Tibetan Sanskrit Works Series, vol. 2 [Patna: Kashināsad Jayaswal Research Institute, 1955], 47): abhilāpasamsargayogyapratībhāsā praṭīṭh kalpanā. "A concept is a cognition whose appearance is fit to be connected with language."


58 Īśvarapratyabhijñāvīrītīmasāra, 1:238: vividhā kalpanā vividhatvena ca saṅkitasya kalpo 'nyayavacchedanaṁ vikalpaḥ, vividhatvaṁ ca vahnaṁ anagnisamabhavānasamāropanirāse satī bhavaṁ dvaṁ vahnyaunārāpamāṅkṣipta, tena vikalpe 'vaṣyam tacca niścetayām—atacca vyapohitayām bhavati. "A concept is a variegated image and a choice, that is, an exclusion of possibilities, by means of that variegation. And since the superimposition of the possibility of non-fire on fire is excluded, variegation implies the double form of both fire
Buddhists, Abhinavagupta and Utpaladeva do not define conceptuality as inherently linguistic. They define it rather as an act of exclusion, or differentiation [apohana, vyavacchedana]. A concept is something that can always be defined as the negation of its own opposite; it is always an exclusion of something. "Fire" has a positive meaning, but it can be paraphrased as "Not non-fire" with no change in meaning, and to call something "fire" always implies that it is not non-fire. Highest Speech, however, is literally everything; everything that ever was or could be. It is the totality of the universe. So there is no possible object to be excluded from it, nothing that it could not be. Both fire and non-fire are here. So since there is no possible opposite implied by Highest Speech from which it is excluded, it isn't conceptual, on this definition of conceptuality.

It is, however, linguistic. What I take this to mean is that nothing new or separate is added to reality by words and concepts, or by the appearance of diversity. Human words, language, and all appearances are made out of Highest Speech; Highest Speech is a higher, more unified version of the same thing that ordinary words are made of. Words appear in virtue of the appearance of divisions within Highest Speech, and they are fragments of it, rather than impositions on it. Philosophically, this is represented by Abhinavagupta as the priority of non-conceptual over conceptual cognitions: a non-conceptual cognition must precede and underlie any conceptual cognition, which is formed by dividing up the original totality that the non-conceptual cognition represented.⁵⁹ Linguistically, this means that all human speech is present in

---

⁵⁹For iterations of this idea see Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarṣinī, 274-293 and Parātrīṣikavivarana, 93-97 (in the Sanskrit portion).
an inchoate way in Highest Speech. Abhinavagupta's disciple Kṣemarāja, in a beautiful metaphor, describes it as like the undifferentiated sounds of a babbling brook. This may be related to why Highest Speech is sometimes referred to by words like sphurattā and spandana, which mean shimerring, vibrating, throbbing, etc.60 She is a kind of supersaturated solution containing every word that could ever be uttered, along with all of their possible referents, waiting to be precipitated out. Although She is not audible in ordinary terms, Abhinavagupta does refer to Her as dhvani at more than one point.61

Because Highest Speech is something like a material cause for all phenomena, she remains connate in all of them, at all levels of reality.62 Abhinavagupta says, "[Highest Speech], which is composed of the non-duality of the consciousness of all subjects, has a form that is perpetually present,"63 and he goes on to describe how it is present at the levels of paśyantī, madhyamā, and vaikharī: "Actually, she [Highest Speech] is present at later stages such as paśyantī and so forth, for without her there would be no illumination, and therefore no consciousness."64 In Tantrāloka he states that Highest Speech pervades not just material reality,

60 For one example, see Isvarapratyabhijñākārika vs. 1.5.14: sā sphurattā mahāsattā deśakālāviśeṣinī / saishā sāratayā prokta hṛdayaṃ parameśthīnāḥ //

61 Tantrāloka vs. 29.147: samvitparimarśātīma [sic?] dhvanis tadeveham mantravīryam syāti. "Dhvanī is essentially the mind's reflexive awareness, and for this very reason it is the strength of mantras." Jayaratha's gloss on this is equally clear (Tantrāloka, 11.3: tatraiva samviṇīparāmarśātmānaḥ ahamcamatkāramaye dhvanau... "With respect to that very dhvani, which is essentially the mind's reflexive awareness, composed of the delight of [the experience of] 'I'..." See also Tantrāloka vss. 4.181b - 4.182a (3:211): parāmarśasvabhāvatvādetasyā yaḥ svayam dhvaniḥ // sadoditaḥ... "Because she [the Goddess] has the nature of reflexive awareness, her own dhvani, which is spontaneously arising..."


63 Parātrīṣikāvivarana, 2: saiva ca sakalapramātrasaṃvidadvamayī satatameva vartāmānarūpā.

64 Ibid. This, interestingly, is a strong echo of vs. 1.4 of Daṇḍin's Kāvyādarśa: idam andhatamah kṛtsnam jāyeta bhuvananatrayam / yadi sabdāhavyam jyotir āsamsārān na dipyate. Daṇḍin was rarely mentioned in Kaśmīri literary theory, but he was known. See Yigal Bronner, "A Question of Priority: Revisiting the Bhāmahā-Daṇḍin Debate," Journal of Indian Philosophy 40:1 (2012): 71, n. 11.
but also all limited knowing subjects as well. Though they are unaware of their true nature, nevertheless they themselves are Śiva who has "sprung up" in their form.\footnote{\textit{Tantrāloka} vs. 3.128-129: \textit{ucchalantyapi samvittih}. . . \textit{mātrmyādirūpinī}. . . "Although consciousness springs up in the form of the knower and the known. . ." Jayaratha (Ibid., 2:133) glosses this as: \textit{mātrmyādirūpatviena bāhirullasantyapi samvittih}.

The pervasion of all things by Highest Speech provides the explanation for how the appearance of duality can co-exist with the non-duality of the Lord, which is never compromised by any of this.\footnote{Ibid., 132: \textit{uditaiva sati pūrṇā}. "It remains complete as it arises." This is explained by an analogy to a theory of action. Commenting on \textit{Īśvarapratyabhijñākārika} 2.1.8, Abhinavagupta explains that the intention to cook something pervades all of the subsidiary activities that go into it, like lighting a fire and preparing the ingredients, and remains uninterrupted through all those activities:

The internal act of will of this or that person, expressed as "I cook," is itself the activity, and it isn't broken up even when connected with various subsidiary movements like placing something on the fire. But the act of will that has the form "I cook" appears as composed of those sorts of activities. In reality though there is no succession in it. Thus, to just the same extent the Lord's self-awareness "I," which is essentially will-power that has the form "I govern, I shine, I vibrate, I self-caress," doesn't undergo succession... But just as act of will-power in the form "I cook" appears to be covered over with succession attached to bodily movements, in the same way the Lord's will, which amounts to the divisions of subject and object, appears mixed up with their succession, as the surface of a mirror [might] reflect the succession of the current of a river.\footnote{\textit{Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī}, 2:23: \textit{caitramaitrāder api pacāmi iti yaiva antaricchā saiva kriyā, tathā ca adhiśrayanādihutaraspadanasantyapi samvittih. . . "The same example is used in \textit{Tantrāloka} vs. 3.129b-130a. Again I have gone with Iyer and Pandey's edition (p. 27) over the KSTS edition, preferring the reading \textit{yathā/tathā} over \textit{yadā/tadā}. The same example is used in \textit{Tantrāloka} vs. 3.129b-130a.}
This theory of action was clearly influenced by Bhartṛhari's preference for wholes over parts. But Abhinavagupta and others in his school differ from Bhartṛhari and other forms of non-dualism in that they think the parts are real, and not just illusory divisions. This is the famous doctrine of ābhāsavāda. The division into manifestation is not an illusion or a mistake but an expression of God's will. It is the way in which he appears, and since appearance and existence are equated in this system, the divisions real as an appearance. Moreover these appearances are, literally, made out of God, the way curds are made out of milk. There is no break; no gap. There is no level at which Śiva stops and something else begins, nothing new enters to cover him over or obscure him, so nothing unreal enters at any point. He himself hides himself. He projects himself onto his self by means of his self, and hides himself behind himself. Nothing exists but the clean continuity of God's essence through a variety of forms and metamorphoses.

Like Bhartṛhari's levels of speech, Abhinavagupta's levels of speech also work in reverse, and as in Bhartṛhari, the basis for the movement back and forth across the pattern is pratibhā.

---

68 This theory of action in particular seems to be taken from the Krīyāsamuddeśa in the third book of Bhartṛhari's Vākyapadiya, discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, but tracing out the connection here would be too great a digression.

69 For an introduction to ābhāsavāda, see K.C. Pandey, Abhinavagupta: An Historical and Philosophical Study, 2nd ed. (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1963), 320-352. See also Alper, "Śiva and the Ubiquity of Consciousness."

70 Alper, "Śiva and the Ubiquity of Consciousness," 374 has an interesting interpretation of this idea, and Abhinavagupta's use of it.

71 This is, of course, a version of the Sāṃkhya idea of satkāryavāda, the pre-existence of the effect in its cause, which merely "manifests" it. This is not a coincidence. Abhinavagupta's monism [and Utpaladeva's], is philosophically defended partly by taking up the older satkāryavāda arguments and inverting them, using them to prove an idealist system, rather than a dualism of matter and spirit for which they were originally intended. For a fascinating analysis of this, see Isabelle Ratié, "On the Distinction Between Epistemic and Metaphysical Buddhist Idealisms: A Śaiva Perspective," Journal of Indian Philosophy 42.2-3 (2014): 353-375.

72 See, for example, Tantrāloka vss. 1.2, 1.116, 3.66, 6.13
The arrangement of a unified meaning into the words of a sentence is not a terminal process. Once the sentence exists a hearer comes along and re-figures the meaning that the words are manifesting, and which unifies them all from a sort of hidden position behind them. Similarly, the universe doesn't just move outward into manifestation and obscuration, it is also destroyed. After emitting the universe by playfully fooling himself, Śiva reabsorbs it into himself by reversing the game and recognizing that it was all nothing but himself to begin with. And on the level of the individual subject, this appears as the moment of enlightenment, when Śiva, who has "sprung up" in the form of the limited individual, now redisCOVERs himself as Śiva in the form of that individual. God's power to conceal himself [tīrodhāna], when reversed, becomes his grace [anugraha], which allows the limited subject to recognize their true nature as Śiva, the ultimate ego. Padoux writes:

[The idea of levels of speech] is essential also from the standpoint of liberation, which can be achieved through the same, but reversed process, either by going back from words up to the source of speech, or, as we have seen, by apprehending the background of undivided consciousness behind words, the non-discursive, undifferentiated Absolute, lying in the space between two thoughts. . . or else, through identification with the pre-discursive primal impulse [icchā] of consciousness which gives rise to all phonemes.73

What is important to note here is that the process enlightenment is just the process of delusion run in reverse, just as the process of destruction is the inversion of the process of creation, and just as understanding a sentence is the mirror image of uttering it. As we will see, this is also the structure of aesthetic experience. Recognizing the rasa of a poem is the inverse of the poem's creation. In all cases, it is pratibhā that governs the movement in either direction.

Enlightenment, or, speaking cosmologically, the destruction of the universe, doesn't put an end to manifestation—it is, after all, God's nature to continue creating and hiding—but one is

---

73Padoux, Vāc, 219. In the same work, p. 94, Padoux points out that the yogin's enlightenment is parallel to the destruction of the universe, and that this idea comes from the Netratantra vss. 21.6-70.
now aware of these activities from the point of view of the Lord, rather than the limited subject. Utpaladeva puts it succinctly: "The one who, being the soul of the universe, knows 'All of this evolved universe is me,' he possess the state of being the Great Lord even amidst the stream of concepts. The liberated soul thinks of all knowable objects as undivided from himself, like the Great Lord. The bound soul, on the other hand, [thinks of them] as completely divided."  

This return is also, of course, vimarśa. It is Śiva's recollection of himself; a recollection that takes place within the (apparently) limited subject. And since, in reality, this recognition has been going on the whole time, and since Highest Speech has never really lost Her status despite appearing at lower levels, recognizing this is not the same as acquiring new information. It is not something one "learns," but something one remembers, or realizes. This is why Utpaladeva chooses to call it pratyabhijñā, recognition. In the strict world of Sanskrit scholastic philosophy, epistemology was focused mostly on those forms of knowledge which delivered new information. Only these were granted the status of pramāṇa, an "authoritative means of knowledge." Different schools argued over their number and nature. Perception is generally accepted as a pramāṇa, as is inference. Memory, however, and recognition, were universally excluded from this category, not because they are inaccurate, but because Sanskrit scholastic philosophers limited the category of knowledge to the moment of its acquisition. A "knowledge-event" only counted as such for the first time. All secondary transformations of that knowledge, like remembering it or reinterpreting it, were derivative, and weren't "knowledge" in the sense the philosophers wanted to discuss when they argued over pramāṇa.  

Utpaladeva chose the

---

74 Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā vss. 4.12-13: sarva mamāyaṁ vibhava ity evaṁ parijñānataḥ / viśvātmano vikalpānāṁ prasare 'pi maheṣatā // meyaṁ sādhāraṇaṁ muktaḥ svātmābhedena manyate / maheśvaro yathā baddhah puna atyantabhedavat //

75 For a good theory as to why this was the case, see John Dunne, *Foundations of Dharmakīrti’s Philosophy*, (Somerville: Wisdom Publications, 2004), 223-229, 298-309.
"recognition" intentionally, knowing that it would exclude his religious epistemology from
the realm of formal "knowledge." Again, this wasn't because he thought it wasn't true or
accurate. It was because he thought the moment of enlightenment didn't introduce any new,
objective knowledge into the subject's awareness, but merely changed how they understood what
they already saw. In fact, he himself states that the purpose of his text is not to provide
knowledge about God as an object; he actually implies in the second verse that this is not
possible. Rather, his text is intended to prompt recognition of one's divinity on the part of those
who read it. 76 In a beautiful metaphor given at the end of Ishvaraprayabhiñākārika, he explains
what this is like, and compares the limited soul to a woman in love with a prince she has never
met, who she doesn't realize is standing right in front of her:

Like a beloved who is esteemed by the world, who has come near through multiple
solicitations, who, even though standing right in the vicinity of a slender waisted woman,
is not recognized [and] thus does not please her, just like this is the Lord of the universe,
whose qualities are not seen by the world although he is one's own Self. This is not
enough for his own majesty, and that is why his recognition is taken up [in this text]. 77

Once the beloved has been recognized—once, that is, the limited subject has realized that they
are not a limited subject at all but actually Śiva pretending to be a limited subject—they then
experience the repose [viśrānti] of Śiva's blissful self-caress, which includes all things, and
which vibrates, or pulsates, eternally, like a struck bell; a transcendent subjectivity beyond the

76 Ishvaraprayabhiñākārika vss. 1.1.1-1.1.3: katham cīd āṣāḍya maheśvarasya dāsyam janasyāpy upakāram icchan
/ samastasampatsamavāpīhitem tatpratyabhiñām upapādayāmi // kartari jñātari svātmāy ādīsiddhe maheśvare
/ ajaḍātā niṣedhaṃ vā siddhiṃ vā vidadtāna kah // kim tu moheśvādaḥ asmin drṣte 'py anupalāksite
/ śaṭyāviśkaranteṇyam pratayabhiñopadarṣyate // "Having somehow become a servant of Lord Śiva, and desiring
the benefit of humanity as well, I will bring about their Recognition [of themselves as Śiva] in order to cause the
attainment of all success. What intelligent being could [ever] establish a proof or refutation regarding the agent and
knower, the Self— the Lord, established from the beginning? And yet, this is seen [by everyone]. It is only not
noticed due to the power of delusion. Since this is the case, the Recognition [of it] is revealed by means of bringing
to light (His) powers."

77 Ishvaraprayabhiñākārika vs. 4.17: tais tair apy upayācitair upanatas tanvyaḥ sīhato 'py antike kānto lokasamāna
evan aparījhato na rantuṁ yathā / lokasyaśa tathānavekṣitagunaḥ svātmāpi viśveśvāro naivālam nijavaibhavāya
tad iyaṃ tatpratyabhiñōdita //
limits of ordinary individuality. But this repose can't possibly be a fact that is cognized objectively. It is merely a recognition of the nature of one's own experience. This, as we will see, bears a deep and important relationship to Abhinavagupta's theorization of *rasa* as part of the spectator's experience rather than an objective element of the poem or play, as Ānandavardhana had thought.

One might legitimately ask why Śiva goes through all of this in the first place. Why does he hide himself and suffer as a limited being only to eventually rediscover himself? The only answer the tradition gives is that all of this, the emanation of the universe, the hiding of his nature, the rediscovery and the return to the source, the creation and destruction, all of this is done as a game, out of playfulness. Since he is totally independent, with nothing constraining him and nothing to answer to, there can't be a motive, properly speaking for his emanation. Nor is God's action an instrument for achieving any good, because there is nothing higher than God or outside of him. Nor does God need anything, because he lacks nothing. On the other hand the creation is joyful. It begins and ends in bliss. It is an activity done out of pure spontaneity, without any purpose or ulterior motive, and so it can only be described as play; cosmic play.78

Such is the outline of Abhinavagupta's theology. It is only a summary. There are many subsidiary issues and philosophical arguments within this framework that have been left out, along with many ritual and textual considerations. The theology has been presented ahistorically, skipping over the complex tangle of different traditions and theologies that Abhinavagupta

---

78See, for example, Silburn and Padoux. La lumière sur les Tantras, 42: "D'où ce jeu complexe de l'obscurcation et de la grâce. D'où par example, le fait qu'un être éclairé agisse parfois comme s'il ne l'était pas ou, inversement, qu'un être humain pris dans le réis du monde se conduise cependant parfois comme s'il en était libre." (TA 14.7-9). Ce ne sont là qu'autant de jeux de la totale liberté de la Lumière (prakāśasvātantryam), c'est-à-dire de Śiva, le dieu aux cinq fonctions, qui est Conscience manière de jeu; en une vibration subtile et innée de sa conscience...” There is a sophisticated theory of play here, one which bears further analysis, but unfortunately it is outside the scope of this project.
inherited and synthesized. Finally, this outline has presented Abhinavagupta's corpus as a coherent whole, ignoring ruptures, inconsistencies, or possible shifts in Abhinavagupta's theories over the course of his life. Still, this theological outline is, I believe, accurate, and it gives us enough information that we can now look at Abhinavagupta's interpretation of the theory of poetic manifestation and understand better both why he adopted it and why he altered it, not in the sense that his theology drove him to certain aesthetic conclusions, but rather in the sense that we can see how aesthetics complemented and fit into a larger project of understanding and describing the universe. We will also have the opportunity, as we explore Abhinavagupta's literary theory, to fill in some more of the details of the theology.

Abhinavagupta's Poetics 1: Bhāṭṭanāyaka and the Influence of Vedānta

When we turn to Abhinavagupta's literary theory in comparison to Ānandavardhana's, one of the first and most obvious differences we encounter is that Abhinavagupta spends much more time analyzing the nature of rasa, the ideal aesthetic experience. He does this in his commentary on Ānandavardhana, which he titled the Dhvanyālokalocana, or Locana, for short, as well as in his commentary on Bharata's manual of dramatic performance, the Nāṭyaśāstra.

---

79 Dominick Lacapra makes a very good case for the importance of asking this kind of question in the study of intellectual history. See Dominick Lacapra, Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983): 55-56. As I mentioned at this beginning of the section, I have treated Abhinavagupta's works as a unified whole not because I believe them to be purely so, but provisionally, and because I want to take Abhinavagupta's word for it in order to show the relationship among some of his ideas as he saw it. Certainly there are no major or obvious ruptures within the framework of Abhinavagupta's ideas, but this doesn't mean there aren't more subtle ones. The question of whether and where Abhinavagupta changed his mind about things is important and fascinating, but it is made exceedingly difficult by the fact that we know very little about his life and very little about the order in which he wrote his works. Anyway these kinds of questions are more fit for a full-length study of Abhinavagupta, or many full length studies, and are well outside the scope of this dissertation.

80 McCrea, Teleology, 384.
which he titled the *Abhinavabhārati*. To understand Abhinavagupta's literary ideas we will have to look back and forth between both texts.

Understanding his theory of *rasa* is important because Abhinavagupta understands "manifestation" to refer not just to the process of conveying poetic information, but also to the words of the poem that convey it, and to what is conveyed (i.e. the *rasa*, among other things).⑧¹ "Manifestation," according to Abhinavagupta, means all three of these things, and this is the basis of his defense of the theory. This will be crucial to keep in mind as we analyze his thought.

Moreover, in Ānandavardhana's theory the information conveyed by manifestation can either be a plot element, a rhetorical figure, or a *rasa*. Abhinavagupta doesn't disagree with this, but he elevates the third one, *rasa*, to a new level of importance, making it central to poetry, and thus to the theory of manifestation.⑧² Where Ānandavardhana claims that manifestation in general that is the "soul" of poetry, Abhinavagupta comments:

> Although that [literally] refers to any meaning that is understood [via manifestation], it is really the third type, namely manifestation of *rasa*, that is intended here. . . therefore *rasa* alone is really the soul [of poetry]. But since manifestation of a plot element or a rhetorical figure always culminate in *rasa* [at some point], it is with the intention of

---

⑧¹ Abhinavagupta states in *Dhvanyālokacarita* (*Dhvanyāloka*, 98. This is the same edition I have been using for Ānandavardhana's text, and I will cite it the same way): *evaṃ vyaṅgasyārthasya vyaṅjakasya śabdasya ca prādānīyaṃ vadatā vyaṅgavyaṅjakabhāvasyāpi prādānīyam uktam iti dhvanati, dhvanyate, dhvananam iti tritayam apy upapannam ity uktam*. "Thus, when [Ānandavardhana] states the predominance of the manifested meaning and the words that manifest it, he also thereby states that the three meanings 'it manifests', 'it is manifested', and 'manifestation' are [all] appropriate." Even more explicit is *Dhvanyālokacarita ad vs. 1.13*. Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, *Dhvanyāloka*, 132 translate: "We may consider the reference to be to the sense, or the word, or to the operation [of word and sense]. And the sense may be either the literal sense, for it suggests (*dhvanatī*), as does the word, or the suggested sense, for it is suggested (*dhvanyate*), [while] the operation is an alternative [because it is] the suggesting (*dhvanana*) of word and sense. But the Kārika would convey by the word *dhvani* primarily the sum total of these elements in the form of poetry." The original is *Dhvanyāloka*, 104-105: *artho vā śabdo vā, vyāpāro vā, artho ’pi vācyo vā dhvanatīti, śabdo ’pyevam. vyaṅgyo vā dhvanyate iti vyāpāro vā śabdārthayor dhvananam iti.*

showing their superiority over the expressed meaning that he says 'manifestation is the soul of poetry.'

So while "manifestation" can refer to the words of the poem, the poetic process, or to the result of that process, the result of that process that is particularly interesting to Abhinavagupta, and within that really the experience of *rasa*. *Rasa* is so important, in fact, that Abhinavagupta occasionally simply equates manifestation with the savoring of a *rasa*. What this means for us is that in examining Abhinavagupta's defense of the theory of manifestation, we will actually often be focusing on his theory of *rasa*. If this seems inconsistent, the inconsistency is Abhinavagupta's, since he is the one who intentionally blended these two questions, which Ānandavardhana had originally kept separate. In defending the theory of manifestation it is really his theory of *rasa* that Abhinavagupta wants to elaborate and defend. Other types of manifestation, like manifestation of plot elements, are defended derivatively, using the same process of elimination that Ānandavardhana used with only a few changes that we won't examine here, and their importance seems to derive merely from the fact that in bolstering manifestation in these cases, Abhinavagupta bolsters the idea of *rasa* as something that is manifested.

A more subtle change introduced by Abhinavagupta, which long went unnoticed and was only recently pointed out by Pollock in a series of fascinating articles, is that Abhinavagupta

83 *Dhvanyāloka*, 86: sa eveti pratiyamānāmātre 'pi prakrānte trīya eva rasadhvanīrī mantavyam. . . tena rasa eva vastuta ātmā, vastvalānklāradyanī tu sarvathā rasam prati paryavasyete iti vācyādutkṛṣṭau tāvityabhiprayena dhvanih kāvyasyāte 'ti.

84 See, for example *Dhvanyāloka*, 89, when he states that Bhaṭṭānāyaka's theory would be correct if what he is referring to is a process of manifestation whose nature is relishing: vyāpāro hi yadi dhvananātmā rasanāsvabhāvastannāpūrvamuktam.

85 For a useful summary of these changes, see McCrea, *Teleology*, Chapter Nine.

has a different understanding of the location of rasa than Ānandavardhana. Ānandavardhana's theory is text-centered. He tries to explain how it is that a text contains an emotion, or, in Pollock's words, how "an emotion can come to inhabit the literary work." Abhinavagupta's theory, on the other hand, is a spectator-centered theory, concerned primarily with how a text prompts a certain type of experience within the audience, and he reads this perspective back in to Ānandavardhana as if Ānandavardhana himself had thought it, which he did not. The shift, as Pollock points out, is central to the intellectual history of literary theory in South Asia, but went almost completely unnoticed by later commentators, who all read Ānandavardhana's work exclusively through Abhinavagupta's interpretation.

Abhinavagupta, however, was not the first to make this shift. That honor, according to Pollock, belongs to an earlier Kaśmīri theorist named Bhaṭṭanāyaka, who also had a strong influence on Abhinavagupta. His text, Sahṛdayadarpaṇa, or Ḥṛdayadarpaṇa (The Mirror of the Connoisseur or The Mirror of the Heart), is no longer extant, but we know from ancient sources that it was devoted to refuting the notion of poetic manifestation. Since it critiques Ānandavardhana and is in turn quoted extensively by Abhinavagupta, Pollock thinks it must

---


87 Pollock, "Bhaṭṭanāyaka," 145.

88 Pollock, "Vyakti," 3.

89 Pollock ("Bhaṭṭanāyaka, 143) thinks the text disappeared fairly early, as Mahimabhaṭṭa already in the 11th century mentions he was unable to consult the "darpaṇa" before writing his own critique of poetic manifestation. Whether this means the text had already disappeared or was simply unavailable to Mahimabhaṭṭa is unclear to me, but in any event the text is not now extant and seems not to have been for quite some time.

have been written some time between 850 and 1000 CE, and Pollock, basing himself on the twelfth-century Kaśmīri royal chronicle Rajatarāṇī, thinks it can be more precisely dated to the reign of King Śaṅkaravarman, 883-902 CE, where we are told that a certain Bhaṭṭanāyaka was a master of the Vedas, and was given charge of an important Śiva temple by the king.  

Although the text has been lost, many of the arguments can be reconstructed due to the fact that Abhinavagupta was deeply influenced by them and recounts and quotes them extensively in his commentary on the Nāṭyaśāstra, and also to some extent in his commentary on Ānandavardhana. Although it is true that reconstructing Bhaṭṭanāyaka's ideas from the summaries of a later, rival thinker is somewhat risky and will always to some extent be speculative and incomplete, I believe that the collected quotations themselves are enough for a picture to emerge. When we add to this the fact that these quotations line up in important ways with the ideas in represented in Abhinavagupta's summaries, and that they fit well with how and why Abhinavagupta rejects and accepts various of Bhaṭṭanāyaka's ideas, and that they match certain other ideas and texts and tendencies circulating in the context of medieval Kaśmīr—when we add all this together we start to see very compelling evidence for some of Bhaṭṭanāyaka's basic assumptions and commitments. And even if Abhinavagupta is distorting the evidence and being unfair to Bhaṭṭanāyaka, so that Bhaṭṭanāyaka himself should remain forever buried under Abhinavagupta's depiction of him, this depiction itself can tell us a great deal about how Abhinavagupta thought about Bhaṭṭanāyaka, and how he tried to portray him, and this can help us understand Abhinavagupta better. This figure, who looms so large in Abhinavagupta's aesthetic writings, clearly had a large influence on him. And understanding the shape of that

---

91 Pollock, "Bhaṭṭanāyaka," 144.
influence, to the greatest degree the evidence allows, is the first step in understanding Abhinavagupta's literary theory.

Bhaṭṭanāyaka's position is presented by Abhinavagupta as an answer to the question of how *rasa* arises, and it is part of Abhinavagupta's very long and famous summary of different interpretations of Bharata's statement that *rasa* arises from a combination of literary elements, meaning that when the proper combination of factors is present in the scene, the *rasa* will be as well. The view Abhinavagupta is building up to in this section is that "arises" [*nispatti*] in this verse actually means "manifested." Before this, however, he goes through and rejects various alternative views, including Bhaṭṭanāyaka's.

The summary he gives of Bhaṭṭanāyaka begins with Bhaṭṭanāyaka pointing out the contradictions and problems involved in all earlier understandings of *rasa*. These theories, he implies, all understand *rasa* as a particular, locatable emotion, occurring in particular people: either in the character, in some theories, or in the audience member, in other theories. This, Bhaṭṭanāyaka thinks, is not possible. He takes for his example the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the tragic story of King Rāma and his separation from his queen, Sītā. The sadness one feels while reading the poem can't be perceived as located in oneself, says Bhaṭṭanāyaka; that is, we don't experience it to be our own suffering. If this were the case no one would enjoy sad literature. Moreover how would this kind of experience arise in an audience member during the love scenes? In order to

---

92 The *locus classicus* for this idea is the prose commentary on *Nāṭyaśāstra* vs. 7.33. There are various types of "elements": stimulating, foundational, co-emergent, etc. I have not listed them out or discussed them here because this topic is peripheral to my concerns.

93 Pollock, in his discussion of Bhaṭṭanāyaka, continually refers to him as locating the *rasa* in the spectator (see, for example, Pollock, "Bhaṭṭanāyaka," 146; and Pollock, "Vyakti," 233). This interpretation seems based on Dhanika and Dhananjaya, who do indeed take this position on the location of *rasa*. While it is plausible to attribute this position to Bhaṭṭanāyaka in the sense that Bhaṭṭanāyaka thinks the *rasa* is a certain kind of experience to which the spectator has access, I find it ultimately a bit misleading, precisely because his whole critique begins from the assumption that *rasa* is not locatable, either in the spectator or anywhere else.
feel the emotion of love in such scenes a reader would either have to remember a particular
person they themselves are in love with, which doesn't happen, or else remember their own
experience of Sīta and Rāma, which is impossible because they have never perceived them. The
assumption here is that love is ordinarily an intentional state, and that the spectator can't be
feeling it in the aesthetic experience because there is no object towards which it could sensibly
be directed.

On the other hand if the spectator doesn't feel the emotion themself but encounters the emotion as an object on the stage or the page—the emotion somehow being "produced" there for them to encounter—then the emotion would have to be located in the character, not the spectator. In this case the proper reaction would not be delight but indifference, shame, envy, or disgust, as would be the case if one were to spy on a couple in real life. And Bhaṭṭanāyaka alleges that this same problem would apply whether we think of the emotions as "produced" or just "manifested," with the additional problem that "manifestation" admits of degrees, whereas a rasa is never partially manifested. 94 One way to summarize all this criticism briefly might be simply to say that neither "Rāma is suffering" nor "I am suffering" could really describe the experience one has sitting in the theater or reading a poem.

So if rasa is not produced or manifested or perceived in oneself or in another, then what actually happens? Bhaṭṭanāyaka's answer is that there is a three stage process consisting in what he calls 1) abhidhā, 2) bhāvanā or bhāvakatva, and 3) Bhogikaraṇa.

Abhidhā in Sanskrit typically just means denotation—ordinary, literal speech. This refers to the plain communicative aspect of the words of the poem, which insofar as they are words, are

---

94 This, at least, is Pollock's ("Bhaṭṭanāyaka," 165) interpretation of the strange phrase viṣayārjanatāratanamya. Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, Dhvanyāloka, 221, translate it as "the spectator would make even greater efforts to obtain those objects." I confess myself at a loss to improve either of these translations, or even choose between them.
just like other types of speech. However, a poem does not simply contain ordinary speech. It also ornaments this speech in various ways, with rhetorical figures, stylistic flourishes, etc. This aspect of poetic speech is called bhāvakatva. Bhāvakatva transforms the plain, communicative aspects of the language into something more. In other words, while all speech conveys meaning, literary speech has a second aspect over and above this denotative aspect that augments it and transforms it into something more. When Wallace Stevens, remembering a lover, writes "The sea of spuming thought foists up again the radiant bubble that she was," this is indistinguishable, at the level of abhidhā, from the statement, "I thought about lots of things and then remembered her." The denoted meanings are the same. The difference—and it is a powerful

95Pollock (ibid.) asserts that this refers specifically to literary speech, which is stylistically distinguished from ordinary speech by having rhetorical figures and other flourishes, which signal to the reader that they should begin to let go of their ordinary reactions to language. This interpretation is based on later Sanskrit explanations of Bhaṭṭanāyaka's position and one small word in the Locana [Dhvanyāloka, 183] and I think it is a mistake. For one thing, in the Abhinavabhāratī's summary of Bhaṭṭanāyaka, rhetorical figures as well as dramatic gestures and other forms of stylization are clearly included within the second function, bhāvakatva, not abhidhā: "rasa, which is caused to exist [bhāvyamāna] by a stage that is second to denotation [i.e. that comes after denotation], a stage that is essentially a commonalization of the vibhāvas that wards off the denseness of one's own thick delusions, a stage whose function is causing to exist [bhāvakatva] and whose form in drama is the four-fold system of dramatic gestures and which is marked in poetry by being made of ornaments and guṇas and an absence of flaws..." [emphasis added. The original is Raniero Gnoli, The Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta, 3rd ed. (Varanasi: Chowkambha Sanskrit Series Office, 1985), 10: käye dośābhāvagunālāmadhāramayatvalaḥkṣanena nātye caturvidhābhinhāryāpyena nīvidanījamahasamakṣaṭātyanvaraṇākārinā vibhāvādīśādhāraṇānmanābhīdhdhāto dvītiyenaṃśena bhāvakatvāvyāpāreṇa bhāvyamāno raso...]. As for the passage from the Locana that Pollock says means that abhidhā is "something 'completely different' from the language of scripture and everyday discourse," [Pollock, "Bhaṭṭanāyaka," 153] it actually says that it is only due to the power of the second function, bhāvakatva, that abhidhā becomes different from ordinary speech. Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan translate this same sentence more correctly as "Therefore, there is a second operation... thanks to which denotation assumes a new dimension." Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, Dhvanyāloka, 222. The Sanskrit (Dhvanyāloka, 193), reads: tena... dvītyo vyāpāraḥ yadvaśād abhidhā vilakṣaṇaiva.

96Gnoli, The Aesthetic Experience, 10: käye dośābhāvagunālāmadhāramayatvalaḥkṣanena nātye caturvidhābhinhāryāpyena... vibhāvādīśādhāraṇānmanābhīdhdhāto dvītiyenaṃśena bhāvakatvāvyāpāreṇa. "By means of the function of bhāvakatva, which is the second aspect, after denotation, whose essence is a commonalization of the vibhāvas and whose form in drama is the four types of dramatic gestures, and which is marked in poetry by being composed of the absence of flaws, the presence of literary qualities, and rhetorical figures..."

one—is found at what Bhaṭṭanāyaka called the second level, the level of bhāvakatva or bhāvanā, the aspect of an expression that goes beyond straight reference to facts.

The transformation that bhāvakatva brings about in language is that it defamiliarizes the objects of denotation, stripping them of their particularity. Bhaṭṭanāyaka calls this "sādhāranāṅkaraṇa," commonalization; it makes Sītā, for example, into a representation of woman-as-such, rather than a particular person who lived in a particular time and place and whom we have never met. This is what allows the spectators to relate to her.98 At the same time, however, commonalization also applies to the spectator, dilating his or her awareness. When it strips the objects of their particularity it also strips the spectator of the ordinary, habitual reactions they would have to such objects. Bhaṭṭanāyaka says it dissolves "the denseness of one's own thick delusions."99 Bhaṭṭanāyaka doesn't expand on this phrase, but given that Abhinavagupta incorporates this concept into his own theory and expands on it there, it is safe to say that this delusion has to do with a kind of stubborn self-consciousness that interferes with one's ability to get completely absorbed in the drama. The persistence of the awareness that one is an individual with a particular history and background, looking at a spectacle as an object, blocks the aesthetic experience.

98 Pollock, "Bhaṭṭanāyaka," 155. Pollock further adds here that Dhanika and Dhanamjaya use this idea to get around a sticky moral problem: the problem of an audience member feeling lust or desire for Rāma's wife. It is not Rāma's wife they feel desire for, say Dhanika and Dhanamjaya, but woman-as-such. This is an interesting and important point, but Dhanika and Dhanamjaya seem to emphasize this much more than Bhaṭṭanāyaka, for whom it seems to be only a minor and oblique part of his argument.

99 nibidanijamohasaṃkaṭāṅkivānākāriṇā. Gnoli, Aesthetic Experience, 10, and Bharatmuni, The Nāṭyaśāstra with the commentary Abhinavabhārati by Abhinavaguptācārya, 4 volumes, 4th rev. ed., ed. K. Krishnamoorthy (Vādodara: Oriental Institute, 1992-2006), 1:271 (Hereafter this text will just be referred to as Abhinavabhārati). Pollock insists ("Bhaṭṭanāyaka, 173 n. 44) that no "metaphysical concerns need be assumed," meaning presumably that no religious concerns need be assumed and that the (strongly) apparent similarity between Bhaṭṭanāyaka's views and Vedānta or Yoga philosophy is merely apparent. He makes the same point on p. 156 and again in footnote 49. I see no reason for this, and Pollock gives none other than his own assurance. In fact I see many good reasons to assume "metaphysical" concerns.
The functions of generalizing Sītā and dilating the audience are not separate functions. They can be seen as a single function if we understand that this function loosens up both sides of the problematic dialectic that Bhaṭṭanāyaka started with: that rasa can't be located either in the character or the spectator, and so can't be a thing of which one is aware. Bhāvakatva as a concept enables a literary theory that is free of this problem, by positing a character (object) who is transformed by art into a generalized, depersonalized, non-locatable entity, and a spectator or reader (subject) who is freed of his own identity and self-consciousness. So if locating rasa in a particular place is an aesthetic problem, bhāvakatva solves the problem by dissolving the two places rasa might be located.

Dissolving the locations that ordinary emotions are found is exactly what transforms those emotions into rasa. One might even say that this is constitutive of rasa for Bhaṭṭanāyaka; that Bhaṭṭanāyaka defines a rasa just as an emotion that is freed from identification with a particular personality—one's own or another's. This is why bhāvakatva can be said to "bring the rasa into being," which is after all the meaning of the Sanskrit term.\[^{100}\]

Once this rasa exists, however, savoring it is described as a third function. Bhaṭṭanāyaka calls this function bhogīkaraṇa, "transformation into enjoyment." In Abhinavagupta's summary, Bhaṭṭanāyaka tells us this is an enjoyment that is "different from experience and memory," and "marked by repose in one's own consciousness, which is comprised of light and bliss." He also tells us it is "similar to the relishing of highest brahman," a reference to the God of the Upaniṣad's and of the non-dual Vedānta religion. He further says that this experience has three forms—melting, spreading, or radiance—and that the differences in these three forms comes from the difference in how the three basic elements of the universe, sattva, rajas, and tamaș, 100

---

\[^{100}\]Gnoli, The Aesthetic Experience, 10: bhāvakatvavāpyāpāreṇa bhāvyamāno raso. "The rasa is brought into being by the bhāvakatva function."
which are something like lightness/purity (sattva), passion/energy (rajas), and darkness/dullness (tamas), get mixed in the spectator's mind. These terms come originally from Sāṃkhya philosophy and are used extensively in Yoga philosophy, Vedānta, and also Śaivism to describe the make-up of the universe and of human psychology.\footnote{The full passage reads (Gnoli, The Aesthetic Experience, 10): ...raso anubhavasṛtvādādivilakṣanena rajas tamo anuvedhavicīryabalād drutivastāravikāśātmanā sattvodrekaprakāśānandamayanijasamvidviśrāntilakṣanena parabrahmāsvādasavidhena bhogena param bhujyate. I translate this as "...rasa is supremely enjoyed with an enjoyment that is similar to the relishing of the highest brahman, which is marked by repose in one's own consciousness that is made of bliss and light due to the surplus of sattva, [and] which is essentially melting, spreading, or blossoming due to the force of the various intermixtures of rajas and tamas, and which is difference from memory or experience etc." Pollock, "Bhaṭṭanāyaka," 156, notes that there is a confusion in the textual transmission as to whether Bhaṭṭanāyaka accepted three variations of enjoyment or four, but this is not relevant to the argument I am trying to make.}

This theory is intended not just to refute the idea of poetic manifestation, but to make it irrelevant. Abhinavagupta quotes Bhaṭṭanāyaka as saying dismissively, in Pollock's translation: "as for the other process called 'implicature' [dhvani], which consists of manifestation, even were it proven to be different from the other two, it would only be a component of literature, not its essential form."\footnote{Dhvanyāloka, 39: dhvanir nāmāparo yo 'sau vypāro vyañjanatmakaḥ. tasya siddhe 'pi bhede syāt kāvyāṃsatvaṁ na rūpatā.} Manifestation can at most explain how we apprehend the presence of an emotion. It can't explain how that emotion transforms into aesthetic pleasure, nor can it can't tell us what that pleasure consists in.

Abhinavagupta responds to this critique by co-opting large parts of it: rasa as a form of experience and not an aspect of a text, commonalization of textual elements, elimination of "obscurations" that block the aesthetic experience, the idea that aesthetic relishing bears resemblance to religious experience (Bhaṭṭanāyaka's "relishing of Highest brahman"), etc. Abhinavagupta imports all of this into his theory of poetic manifestation and uses it to show that the theory of poetic manifestation can indeed account for how an emotion is transformed into

\textbf{152}
aesthetic pleasure. In the process, as we will see, he alters Ānandavardhana's theory quite dramatically. Pollock describes him as "a commentator forced to transfigure the very meaning of the work he is commenting on to save it,"\(^{103}\) and refers to "the acrobatics required by Abhinava[gupta] to retrofit [poetic manifestation's] epistemology for an ontology for which it was never intended,"\(^{104}\) that is, an ontology in which \( \text{rasa} \) is a quasi-religious experience.

This is an accurate description of Abhinavagupta's project. However, it is worth asking ourselves, now that Pollock's work has put us in a position to see the question, why Abhinavagupta bothers to "save" the theory at all. If it required so much acrobatics, and if it doesn't fit with the ontology of \( \text{rasa} \) that Abhinavagupta wants to use, why do it? Why not just write a commentary on Bhaṭṭanāyaka's \( \text{Sahṛdayadarpaṇa} \) and be done with it, rather than labor over a forced interpretation of the \( \text{Dhvanyāloka} \) that is mostly based on the \( \text{Sahṛdayadarpaṇa} \) anyway? Without looking at his theory in the context of religion this choice seems arbitrary, or else based on some whimsical intuition of Abhinavagupta's that poetic manifestation \textit{must} somehow be the right theory, even if he had to change almost everything about it to prove it. But when we take religion into account, the choice immediately starts to make more sense. This is because Bhaṭṭanāyaka, by all available evidence, was a proponent of a religious tradition called Vedānta, which was opposed to Abhinavagupta's Śaivism in deep ways.

The fact that Bhaṭṭanāyaka was a Vedāntin has, surprisingly, gone almost completely unrecognized in previous scholarship,\(^{105}\) and so it will require a bit of careful exegesis to prove,

---

\(^{103}\) Pollock, "Vyakti," 239-240.

\(^{104}\) Pollock, "Bhaṭṭanāyaka," 170.

although, again, I believe it is an accurate and even obvious characterization once we look at the evidence.

According to Pollock, Bhaṭṭanāyaka's theory is based entirely Vedic Ritualism [mīmāṃsā]. Pollock is not alone in this interpretation; it is the typical understanding of Bhaṭṭanāyaka. The Vedic Ritualists, as we have seen, were concerned with understanding and interpreting the rituals enjoined and laid out in the Vedas, which they considered the central religious obligation of the Brahman male. In service of this project they developed an elaborate theory for how it is that language prompts people to undertake activities. The idea is that language has a prompting force within it, called bhāvanā, which, again, means something like "bringing about." All language, according to these philosophers, is action-oriented, intended to produce activity, and it does so by means of this pushing force. This pushing force in language has three aspects [āṃśa], which, work together to produce a similar pushing force within the listener. This pushing force in the listener impels the listener to action, and it also has three moments. The three aspects in both cases are the answers to three urgent expectations that arise when one is made aware of the need to act, which are "What should be done?", "How should it be done?", and "By what method?" In the case of a Vedic injunction to sacrifice, where the stock example always given is, "One who desires heaven should sacrifice," one is made aware that one should do something. But what? The answer is: bring about heaven. How? By sacrifice. By what

---

106 Pollock, "Bhaṭṭanāyaka."


108 This summary of bhāvanā is just a sketch. The subject is enormously complicated and still not well understood in scholarship, though a very good summary is Andrew Ollet, "What Is Bhāvanā?" in Journal of Indian Philosophy 41 (2013): 221-262.
means should the sacrifice be carried out? The answer to this is the elaborate sacrificial instructions given in the sacred texts. Pollock argues that these three moments line up with Bhaṭṭanāyaka's three functions of abhidhā, bhāvakatva, and bhogīkaraṇa, and so he concludes that Bhaṭṭanāyaka's explanation for how literature produces aesthetic experience is modeled on how the Vedas cause human to carry out sacrifices.109

It does seem to be the case that Bhaṭṭanāyaka's ideas bear some connection to Vedic Ritualism, although the evidence is a bit ambiguous, and it isn't clear exactly what this connection is. The fact that Bhaṭṭanāyaka imputes some functional effect to language, and that he divides it into three parts seems significant. However, beyond this basic structural schema there is little in common between Bhaṭṭanāyaka's triad and the triad of the Vedic Ritualists' pushing force, or bhāvanā, and Pollock doesn't provide any details that indicate otherwise.110 On the

---

109 It may seem strange to a careful reader that Bhaṭṭanāyaka would use the term bhāvanā to apply to both the whole process as well as to one of its own parts. Hugo David, "Time, Action and Narration. On Some Exegetical Sources of Abhinavagupta's Aesthetic Theory," Journal of Indian Philosophy, published online August, 2014, has recently called into question whether Bhaṭṭanāyaka does, in fact, do this, and argues that for Bhaṭṭanāyaka, bhāvanā really only refers to the second of the three parts, and not to the process over all. Ollett (Andrew Ollet, "Ritual Texts and Literary Texts in Abhinavagupta's Aesthetics: Notes on the Beginning of the ‘Critical Reconstruction’," Journal of Indian Philosophy, published online April, 2015) argues in response that this fails to make sense of Bhaṭṭanāyaka's description of the second step as "another kind of bhāvanā" [anyā bhāvanā], and claims that this must intended either to contrast poetic bhāvanā with Kumārila's version of the idea, or else contrast it with the name for the process overall, thus making bhāvanā the name for the whole three-stage process and also for one of the stages. I doubt this, mostly for reasons which I will give below, but for now I will say that there are other kinds of bhāvanā to which Bhaṭṭanāyaka may be contrasting his bhāvanā, namely the Vedānta notion of bhāvanā. This on its own is not evidence for Bhaṭṭanāyaka's adherence to Vedānta, but ample evidence can, I believe, be found.

110 The interpretation of Bhaṭṭanāyaka as a Vedic Ritualist is actually based on evidence that is quite slim, although it can't be dismissed entirely. It seems to have first been outlined in a 1927 article by T.R. Chintamani (T.R. Chintamani, “Fragments of Bhaṭṭanāyaka.” Journal of Oriental Research, Madras 1 (1927): 267-276). There are two small pieces of evidence for this given on page 269 of that article, one of which Pollock ignores and one which he refers to obliquely. Both of these pieces of evidence seem to me quite weak. One of them, the one Pollock ignores, but which is mentioned in Ollet, "Ritual Texts and Literary Texts," is a quote from the Lōcana. The quote comes when Abhinavagupta is arguing with Bhaṭṭanāyaka's interpretation of a particular verse of poetry and he lists a small series of possible arguments in favor of Bhaṭṭanāyaka's position. These possible supporting arguments are refuted in various ways, and the very last argument of the series is refuted by saying, essentially "This might work in Vedic Ritualism, but it doesn't work in poetry." jaiminīyasūrāṃ hi evam vajyate, na kāvyam (Dhvanyāloka, 63). But this is not a characterization of Bhaṭṭanāyaka's argument. It is merely the way Abhinavagupta dismisses one of a variety of different hypothetical ways of bolstering Bhaṭṭanāyaka's argument. The other piece of evidence in Chintamani's article is a quote from a place in the Abhinavabharatī in which Abhinavagupta dismisses one of Bhaṭṭanāyaka's ideas by saying: kevalam jaiminir anusṛtaḥ. "He is just following Jaimini here." (Abhinavabhāratī,
Balasubrahmanyay (N. Balasubrahmanyay, "The Bhavanavada of Bhatta Nayaka," in Anandi Bhara: Dr. K. Krishnamoorthy Felicitation Volume. ed. B. Chanakeshava and H.V. Nagaraja Rao [Mysore: D.V.K. Murthy, 1995], 60) presents this as if it were Abhinavagupta's characterization of Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka's use of the term bhāvanā, and he cites it as evidence that Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka dwelt this term from Kumārila, but this is plainly a misrepresentation. The idea in question here has nothing to do with bhāvanā, which is not mentioned at all in this section. It is instead about the definition of success in theatrical productions, and the specific quote that Abhinavagupta is referring to is about whether a play's success is the goal to which it the play is oriented, or whether success is itself subordinated to the production of the play, based on considerations of which more closely accomplishes the "goals of man" [puruṣārtha]. In this section, as with the other piece of evidence, Abhinavagupta is referring to a small aspect of Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka's argumentation, and not trying to characterize his theories overall. In fact, Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka has already been quoted as saying that enlightenment constitutes the highest "goal of man" (see note 134, below). In addition, as we have already mentioned, "following Jaimini" is something that many, many thinkers, including Abhinavagupta, did at times. So I think it is fair to say that neither of these two pieces of "evidence" really proves that Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka's use of the term bhāvanā, much less his whole literary theory, is based around Vedic Ritualist principles. There is another place in the Iśvarapratyabhijñāvivrttvimārsini (3:96) at which Abhinavagupta refers to Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka as "foremost of Vedic Ritualists" [mīmāṃsakāgraṇī]. This piece of evidence, which Pollock also ignores, would seem to make his case stronger. However, Abhinavagupta surprisingly uses this epithet to introduce a quote in which Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka praises Śiva in the popular Kaśmirī form of Svācchanda Bhaiśara, and in this quote Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka says that it is by Śiva's command alone even the gods fall into hell. This is not exactly standard Vedic Ritualist fare, to say the least, Vedic Ritualists famously being staunch atheists. It is plausible that Abhinavagupta is even being sarcastic here for one reason or another when he says that Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka is the "best" of Vedic Ritualists. Finally, in Dhvanyāloka, 199-200 (in Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan the passage is translated on 225) Abhinavagupta responds to Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka's idea of bhāvanā by interpreting it according to Kumārila's model. I am not convinced, however, that he intends this to be an interpretation of Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka's idea. It may rather be a deliberate and rhetorical misinterpretation for the sake of an argument. This is certainly how Ingalls reads it (Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, Dhvanyāloka 232 n. 45). However, even if we assume that he is accurately and faithfully describing Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka's idea, it is significant that he does this only in order to point out a stark contradiction between the Kumārila use of this term and Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka's other, non-Kumārila commitments, namely his assertion that rasa is ādīha, established, and not sādhyā, to-be-brought-about. Finally, there is the Avalokā commentary of Dhanika (975 CE), who, according to Pollock, seems to have imputed Vedic Ritual ideas into Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka (see, e.g. Pollock, "Vyakti," 235). I won't go into great detail here but will only remark that Dhanika didn't mention Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka by name, and aside from a concern with the problems arising from the location of the rasa, and a use of the term bhāyate to say that the rasa is "produced" rather than "manifested," which he attributes to an anonymous former thinker who successfully argued this, I don't see much reason to assume that Dhanika takes himself to be presenting a complete and accurate recapitulation of Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka's views, as Pollock implies (Pollock, "Vyakti," 235 and Pollock, "Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka," passim). Moreover, he is writing almost one hundred years later and in a very different court and geographical context from Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka's Kaśmir, and his interpretations and insinuations shouldn't be taken just on faith, especially over and against very clear evidence of Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka's affinity with Vedānta and Abhinavagupta's more explicit and extensive summaries. It is even possible that Dhanika attempted to summarize Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka and misunderstood him. Pollock's own scholarship itself is full of insightful observations about the ways in which later literary theorists radically misunderstood or misinterpreted the work of earlier theorists, and in particular how they did this to Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka. Anyway, even if we take all this evidence at face value and accept that Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka borrowed ideas from Vedic Ritualism, this doesn't preclude his involvement in other theologies, and it shouldn't be taken as a guide for interpreting all his ideas. Non-dual Vedānta in particular was known to have a close relationship with Vedic Ritualism, and many Non-dual Vedāntins knew Vedic Ritualism well. In fact, the foremost authority on non-dual Vedānta in Kaśmir in these centuries, Kaṇḍānamiśra, was known to have written texts in both traditions, and is considered an authority in each. And even apart from all this, Kaśmiri theoreists of all stripes were heavily influenced by Vedic Ritualist ideas and borrowed them frequently, including Abhinavagupta and Anandavardhana himself. In light of all this it would be strange, in retrospect, had Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka not borrowed a few ideas from Kumārila, no matter what his own theological affiliations were. So even if there are points at which Abhinavagupta attributes Vedic Ritualist ideas to Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka on minor topics, or indeed, even if Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka had one foot in Vedic Ritualism in the same way that the Vedāntins Kaṇḍānamiśra did, I still believe that this will only partially (and unsatisfactorily) explain what Bhaṭṭanāyaṅka was trying to say about aesthetics. Other pieces of evidence, as I hope to show, overwhelmingly oblige us to interpret his aesthetics as being strongly grounded in non-dual Vedānta, and it is only by taking this into account that we can make full sense of his ideas.
other hand there are important differences between Bhaṭṭanāyaka’s theory and that of the Vedic Ritualists. For one thing, Vedic Ritualists were famously atheistic, holding that the Vedas were eternal and without any author, human or divine.\footnote{Vedic Ritualism did, eventually become theologized, but there is no evidence that it happened as early as Bhaṭṭanāyaka’s life, and it probably happened much later; according to McCrea not until the mid-eleventh century. Larry McCrea, "Desecularization in Indian Intellectual Culture, 900-1300 AD," forthcoming.} The sacrifice is performed not out of devotion to any God, but because it is simply part of the structure of the universe that doing so brings about desirable or morally obligatory results.\footnote{The relationship between the desirability and the obligation is actually quite complex, and the subject of detailed debate among Vedic Ritualists themselves. See Rajam Raghunathan, “Why Do As I Say?: The Theory of Command Utterances in Classical Indian Philosophy (Ph.D. Diss, Harvard University, 2010)} This doesn't fit well with Bhaṭṭanāyaka's "relishing of highest brahman," or his praise of Śiva.\footnote{See note 103.} Furthermore his description of the mind as consciousness "composed of light and bliss," as well as his use of the psychology of the three elements sattva, rajas, and tamas are ideas that are out of a place in strict Vedic Ritualism, which is totally unconcerned with psychology and personal experience except insofar as they explain why we feel compelled to follow sacrificial instructions, and is unconcerned with "bliss" except perhaps as an abstract idea that might motivate us to perform the sacrifice. Most significantly, while the bhāvanā of the Vedic Ritualists pushes one to perform an activity, the process that Bhaṭṭanāyaka is describing prompts a particular kind of awareness, which is based on the clearing of mental obscurations and consists in a blissful experience. In fact, in the summary of his view in Dhvanyālokalocana, Bhaṭṭanāyaka explicitly states that rasa is something already fixed and existing, implying clearly that it is not something that is to be accomplished, as a sacrifice is for the Vedic Ritualists. This is an explicit rejection of the action-based teleology of
Vedic Ritualism, and it precludes any interpretation of Bhaṭṭanāyaka's bhāvanā as the same as the Vedic Ritualists.\footnote{114}{Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, Dhvanyāloka, 222. The original is Dhvanyāloka, 193: sa eva ca pradhānabhūto 'ṃśaḥ siddarāpa.}

The sum of all this compels us to the conclusion that there is more going on in Bhaṭṭanāyaka's theory than simply the application of Vedic Ritualist principles to literature. These can explain some of what is going on, but not nearly all of it. In order to fully see what Bhaṭṭanāyaka was saying, and why Abhinavagupta both borrowed from him and abandoned him, the picture has to be completed by looking at the other major body of thought that obviously influenced Bhaṭṭanāyaka: non-dual Vedānta.

Non-dual Vedānta has always been closely associated with Vedic Ritualism, theorizing itself as an extension and fulfillment of that school's ideas.\footnote{115}{Vedānta famously refers to itself as uttaramāṃsā, and to ordinary Vedic Ritualism as pūrvamāṃsā, and Pollock helpfully translates these two terms as Posterior and Prior Analytics, respectively. (Sheldon Pollock, "The Meaning of Dharma and the Relationship of the Two Māṃsās: Appayya Diksita’s ‘Discourse on the Refutation of a Unified Knowledge System of Pūrvamāṃsa and Uttaramāṃsa," Journal of Indian Philosophy 32.5 (2004): 769) Vedānta, in other words, literally calls itself the culmination of something for which Vedic Ritualism is the prolegomenon.} So there would have been no contradiction between Bhaṭṭanāyaka being influenced by elements of both schools; in fact it would be strange if he weren't. So none of this is intended to refute the influence of Vedic Ritualism on his thought. It is simply to say that he clearly incorporates more than this.

Vedānta is a strand of Hinduism with a long history and many interpretations, and the philosopher Śaṃkara is the most famous exponent of this school. It's not clear exactly which interpretations were circulating in Kaśmīr then, but it seems clear that Śaṃkara's fame hadn't yet been secured in these centuries (despite later myths of his journey there,) and that the most
common representative of the school there was Maṇḍanamiśra.\footnote{See Ratie, \textit{Le soi et l'autre}, 257 n. 5. On ibid., 669-679 Ratie also cites many instances where Abhinavagupta's Vedāntin interlocutors rely on arguments very close to Maṇḍanamiśra's and farther from Saṃkara's; See also Karl Potter Karl, ed, \textit{Advaita Vedanta Up to Saṃkara and His Pupils}. Vol. 3 of Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1981), 604 n. 25; and Lynn Bansat-Boudon, and K.D. Tripathi, \textit{An Introduction to Tantric Philosophy. The Paramārthasāra of Abhinavagupta With the Commentary of Yogarāja}, Routledge Studies in Tantric Traditions.,(London: Routledge, 2011), 8 n. 41, where Bansat-Boudon and Tripathi note that Kaśmīri writers of this era in general seem rather unconcerned with the particular issues that Maṇḍanamiśra and Saṃkara disagreed over, though they seem quite aware of the distinction between this kind of non-dual Vedānta and that of Bhartṛhari.}

We also know that at least one particular non-dual Vedānta text, the \textit{Paramārthasāra} of Ādiśeṣa, also circulated in Kaśmīr in these centuries.\footnote{Ādiśeṣa, \textit{The Essence of Supreme Truth: Paramārthasāra}, ed. and trans. Henry Danielson (Leiden: Brill 1980).}

Both of these philosophers, Maṇḍanamiśra and Ādiśeṣa, despite their differences, basically present the following religious view: the ultimate reality, \textit{brahman}, is all that exists. \textit{Brahman} is eternal and unchanging. It is consciousness with no division into subject and object, and its essential nature is bliss.\footnote{For Maṇḍanamiśra's views on \textit{brahman}'s blissfull nature, see Potter, \textit{Advaita Vedaṭa}, 76.}

\textit{Brahman} does not apprehend itself the way Śiva does in Abhinavagupta's theology, primarily because even self-apprehension would be a kind of division into subject and object. \textit{Brahman}'s nature is not to apprehend itself, or even to act in any way,\footnote{For \textit{brahman}'s lack of activity, see ibid., 92. Ibid., 7 for the idea that Brahman is not the object of its own self-awareness.} but just to exist as perfectly still, calm, eternal and blissful awareness.\footnote{See ibid., 76 for the idea that \textit{brahman} has no self-awareness in non-dual Vedānta.} \textit{Brahman}'s state as pure awareness can combine with its actionlessness in this theology because the theology is grounded in a broader philosophy of mind in which cognition is held to be a passive, actionless reception
of information; to be aware of something is different than to act, and even when the object is dissolved the awareness can still remain as an actionless state of being.\(^{121}\)

For the non-dual Vedāntins, nothing apart from brahman is real, but due to the power of illusion divisions seem to appear within brahman, which cause this consciousness to seem to split into individual subjects and individual objects, though in reality it never changes. Brahman then takes on the illusory form of individual beings, who forget that in reality they are brahman, and who falsely perceive themselves to be limited persons occupying a world full of distinct objects and concepts. This state of ignorance is commonly described as "name and form" [nāmarūpa] or sometimes more specifically the "proliferation of name and form" [nāmarūpaprapāṇca].\(^{122}\) The proliferation of name and form is not, as in non-dual Śaivism, the real and substantial creation of a divinity who pours outwards into duality while still retaining his unity. It is rather an entirely non-existent illusion, based on primordial ignorance. The goal of all life, and the purpose of religious practice, is to remove this ignorance by gaining knowledge of one's true condition as brahman, at which point all illusion and duality will cease and one will be eternally free and blissful; or more accurately, one will realize that one has already been free and blissful from beginningless time. This is accomplished by the teachings of the Vedas, whose purpose, say the non-dual Vedāntins, is not ultimately to enjoin ritual, pace Vedic Ritualism, but to teach the truth. Strictly speaking, the teachings of the Vedas are false, since they are transmitted via language, which is based on conceptual division and duality and thus based on

---

\(^{121}\)Ibid., 92-93

\(^{122}\)This is common all across non-dual Vedānta and is present as well in Maṇḍanamiśra. See for example, Maṇḍanamiśra, Brahmasiddhi, with Commentary Sankhapāṇi, ed. S. Kuppuswami Sastri and M.V. Vagaspati, 2nd edition, Sri Garib Das Oriental Series no. 16 (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1984), 28, where spiritual liberation is described by Maṇḍanamiśra as "the dissolution of name and form" [nāmarūpapravilaya]. Also ibid., 148, where he argues that "the Self appears as the proliferation of name-and-form": ātmano nāmarūpaprapaṇcaraṇena prakāśanam.
illusion, but they are still useful in that they are capable of triggering an awareness of the truth under the right conditions, when heard and reflected upon.\textsuperscript{123} This state of liberation cannot be produced, because it already exists and is only veiled by illusion; it can only be remembered or recognized. It is thus not something that needs to be accomplished or brought about, like a Vedic ritual, but something that already exists, and it cannot be enjoined or commanded like a Vedic ritual, only revealed.\textsuperscript{124}

This is obviously similar in certain ways to Abhinavagupta's theology, but there are important differences, even aside from the (large) differences in scripture and ritual. Unlike in Abhinavagupta's Śaivism, brahman is not active, and he does not have any conscious relationship to himself.\textsuperscript{125} To act or to be self-aware both involve duality and change, neither of which exists within brahman according to the Vedāntins. Brahman's awareness is thus

\begin{flushright}\textsuperscript{123}Maṇḍana's solution to the problem of the "falsity" of Vedic statements is different from Śaṅkara's more well-known solution, and, interestingly, relies on Bhrāthṛi's theory of sphiṣta, though it is not quite clear to me how this works, and so I leave it to others to work out. See Potter, \textit{Advaita Vedānta}, 54-59. Maṇḍanamiśra does hold (ibid., p. 354), in Thrasher's summary: "Hearing, reflection, and meditation based on difference, which is unreal, are also unreal [. . .] granted. But] unreal things may have real effects. Magic is the cause of pleasure and fear. Unreal things may also be the cause of the apprehension of real things, as a drawing of a gayal teaches us about that animal." (The summary is based on \textit{Brahmasiddhi}, 13, which is slightly more complex but makes the same point: \textit{tathā na vidyā aikātmayaśravanādīlakṣaṇā vināvidyāyā, śrotṛśravanādīvibhāgānumbaddhatvā. tatrāvidyayaiva vidyāpratyāsannayā vibhāgadarśanam avidyām tīrtvā vidyālakṣaṇe nitye svarūpe 'vatiśṭhate, pratibimbakalusitam ivodakaṃ tannīvṛttau. syād etat: aikātmye vibhāgasyāsatyavāt, tadadhiśthānaśravanādayo 'pyasatyāḥ . . . [kimtu] nāyam niyamah asatyam na kasmāicitkārīyā bhavaḥ. bhavati hi māyā prīterbhayasya ca nimittam, asatyaṃ ca satyaprātipatteh, yathā rekhāgavayo.)

\textsuperscript{124}See, for example, \textit{Brahmasiddhi}, 115: \textit{svātmasthitih supraśāntā phalam tanna vidheḥ padam // tatsādhanāvabodhe hi vidhātryāprīrmatā / apekṣitopāyataiva vidhiṛiṣto manuṣibhiḥ //} "Resting in the Self [i.e. spiritual liberation] is perfectly placid. It is an end, not the object of an injunction. For the activity of an actor takes place when he cognizes something as a means [to an end], and injunction is understood by the wise to be a means to a desired end." And again on 121: \textit{svarūpāsthitilakṣaṇatvāt mokṣasya na kāryatā, prāgapi svarūpasya bhāvāt. 'Liberation is not an effect, because it is defined by resting in one's own nature, and one's own nature has always existed [and therefore can't be brought about]."

\textsuperscript{125}This distinction was pointed out by Gerow, "Abhinavagupta's Aesthetics," 189, although Gerow compares Abhinavagupta there to Śaṅkara, not to any Advaitin that Abhinavagupta might have known well.
characterized as unchanging bliss without any object, internal or external, unlike Śiva, who blissfully interacts with himself and emanates the universe as a real creation.

Now, among the very sparse pieces of evidence in existence about who Bhaṭṭanāyaka was, the few that Pollock leaves out of his account show strong affiliation with this type of Vedānta philosophy, or at least with a religious devotionalism at odds with strict Vedic Ritualism. The statement analyzed above that rasa is something already existing and not something to be produced is a good first clue, and is explicitly connected by Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, in their translation, to the famous non-dual Vedāntin Śaṅkara's statement that knowledge of Brahman can't be brought about, because it always already exists.\(^{126}\) Kṣemarāja, a close disciple of Abhinavagupta, quotes a religious hymn of Bhaṭṭanāyaka's in his text Spandanirṇaya.\(^{127}\) Abhinavagupta also records a religious hymn of Bhaṭṭanāyaka's, this one praising Śiva in the popular Kaśmīrī form of Svacchandabhairava—not particularly surprising for someone whom we know from historical sources was put in charge of a Śiva temple.\(^{128}\) More surprising, perhaps, for a strict follower of Kumārila.

Bhaṭṭanāyaka's heavy reliance on the term bhāvanā may also be a signal of his Vedānta affinities, rather than Vedic Ritualism. Maṇḍanamiśra and Ādiśeṣa both use the term bhāvanā,

\(^{126}\)Masson, Ingalls, and Patwardhan, Dhvanyāloka, 229 n. 18. Śaṅkara, as we have noted, doesn't seem to have been widely known in Kaśmīr at this time, but the idea isn't unique to him.

\(^{127}\)Vasugupta and Kṣemarāja, Spandakārikas of Vasugupta, with the Nirṇaya of Kṣemarāja, ed. Madhusūdan Kaul Śāstri, Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies no. 42 [Srinagar: Maskmir Pratap Steam Press, 1925], 18). The verse is from a work that Kṣemarāja calls the Bhaṭṭanāyakastotra and seems to be in praise of Śiva. It reads: napuṃsakamidaṃ nātha paraṃ brahma phalet kiyaṭ / tvatpauruṣi niyoktrī cēn na syāttvadbhaktisundarī // This same verse is quoted again in Kṣemarāja's commentary on Stavacintāmaṇīstotra vs. 74 [Bhaṭṭanārāyaṇa, Stavacintāmaṇī of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyana with Commentary by Kṣemarāja, ed. M.R. Śāstri, Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies no. 10 [Srinagar: Kashmir Pratap Steam Press, 1918], 84), with the variant reading śaktisundarī in place of bhaktisundarī. I thank Somadeva Vasudeva (personal communication) for bringing this passage to my attention.

\(^{128}\)Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivrtitivimarśinī, 3:96: yadāha mīṁsaṅkāgraṇirbhaṭṭanāyakah: mahānti pātakēṇ āhur yadājñāvaṣatāḥ surāḥ /pāvanāṁ namastasmai svacchandāya harāya te //
and Maṇḍanamiśra, who was an authority on Vedic Ritualism, of course uses it often in Kumārila's sense. But he just as often uses it in a sense quite different from the Vedic Ritualists and closer to what Bhaṭṭanāyaka is trying to say, and Ādiśeṣa uses it exclusively in this way; that is, they both use it in a sense more closely related to the "relishing of highest Brahman." While in Vedic Ritualism bhāvanā means the force by which language impels us to action, Maṇḍanamiśra and Ādiśeṣa often use it to refer to meditation, which for them is a process of actively developing and refining a state of mind.129 This kind of bhāvanā, bringing a state of awareness to its full fruition, is not only more germane to relishing Brahman, but it is also exactly what Bhaṭṭanāyaka thought literary language does to emotions.130 In any event, the fact that it should lead to

---

129 Maṇḍanamiśra of course also uses the term in the Vedic Ritualist sense in his Bhāvanāviveka, But outside of this work he can often be found using the term in the sense of cultivating a mind-state. His use of the term in this way can be found, for example, in Brahmasiddhi, 74: tisraś ca pratipattayo brahmaṇi. prathamā tāvac chaḥbdāt, anyā śabdāt pratipaddya tatasātavati dhyānabhāvanopāsannādīsādvācayā, anyā tato labdhaniśpattivigalitanikhilavikalpā śākṣātākāraṇapāpā. "There are three stages of apprehending brahman. "There are three [types of] cognitions of brahman. The first is from words. Then, after [the truth] has been pointed out by words, the [cognition] which carries this forward is called meditation [dhyāna], development [bhāvanā], contemplation [upāsanā], or other things. Then comes the arisal of attainment in which all concepts melt away, which brings [brahman] into immediate presence." This is glossed later in the text thus (Brahmasiddhi, 155): dṛṣṭā ca jñānābhāyaśasya samayānānaprasādahetūloke. bhāvanāviśesādī abhūtāmayaṇabhavamādpyadyate, kim punarbhūtām. Thrasher (Potter, Advaita Vedānta, 417) translates this well: "Repeated practice of knowledge may produce greater clarity of knowledge in everyday life. Continuous concentration [bhāvanā] may make even a nonexistent object be experienced, how much more so a real object?" Ādiśeṣa devotes verses 57-59 of the Paramārthaśāra to the topic: "57. Having abandoned the beguiling dualistic imagination, which is Illusion, the very form of delusion, he brings about [bhāvayet] brahman, non-dual, entirely without parts. 58. By means of bhāvanā he identifies entirely with stainless brahman, like water into water, milk into milk, breath into air. 59. When, through bhāvanā, the mass of duality merges with brahman's very being in this way, what delusion or sorrow is there for him, looking as he does on all things as bhāvanā?" (Paramārthaśāra, 28-30): evaṃ dvaitavikalpām bhramasvarūpāṃ vimoḥanīṃ māyāṃ // utṣṛṣya sakalaṇīśkalam advaitaṃ bhāvayet brahma // yadvat salile salilam kṣīre kṣīram samīrane vāyus / tadat brahmaṇi vimale bhāvanayā tanmayatām upayāti // itthām dvaitasamāhi bhāvanayā brahmasvarūpām upayāte kṣaḥkas kṣaḥkas sarvaṃ brahma avalokayatas // For use of the word bhāvanā in the same way among non-dual Śaivas, see Abhinavagupta's Tantrāloka vss. 2.12-13 as well as Yogārāja's commentary on the Paramārthaśāra ad vss 52 and 68. Various examples can also be found in the Purāṇīkāvīvarana. The use of this term in this way is of course not entirely unrelated to the Vedic Ritualist use of the term, but it is not the same usage.

130 This, I believe, is what Bhaṭṭanāyaka means by anyā bhāvanā, "another kind of bhāvanā." Ollett, (Ollet, "Ritual Texts and Literary Texts, 7), thinks that Bhaṭṭanāyaka here can only be distinguishing his theory of bhāvanā from Kumārila's, or else is distinguishing the second step of the process, called bhāvanā, from the whole three-fold process overall, also called bhāvanā. It is, however, quite probable that he is actually contrasting it with the development of mental states in Vedānta, which is also called bhāvanā. It is, in other words, a different kind of
something analogous to mystical experience of Brahman means that even if Bhaṭṭanāyaka began from the Vedic Ritualist theory of bhāvanā, he had clearly annexed it to a larger theological project, just as Maṇḍanamiśra had before him.

Most importantly, at the beginning of his commentary on Nāṭyaśāstra, Abhinavagupta gives the longest quote we currently posses from Sahṛdayadarpaṇa, and it too is very clearly affiliated with non-dual Vedānta. With some very slight editing, it reads:

But according to Bhaṭṭanāyaka: "I will [now] describe drama, which brahman, the supreme soul, promulgated. It is an example [how people] grasp at unreal divisions caused by ignorance. For the gestures of [characters like] Rāma and Rāvaṇa, are unreal. They are performed by an actor who is similar to brahman in that he does not [really] leave his own nature [when he appears in their form]. They are essentially imagination, and so have an unfixed form that can instantly take on one hundred thousand shapes [kalpanā], although [they are] different from such things as dreaming. [They] arise out of a deep rapture [graha] of the heart. Somehow, [they] appear as [this] wondrous activity. In that way, although [merely] appearing, they become the means for human ends. In the [same] way, this universe is just like that and consists in the proliferation of unreal names and forms, and still [atha ca] brings one to the highest human goal [i.e., spiritual liberation] by force of such things as hearing and reflecting [upon the Veda]. Thus, by mentioning the highest transcendent human goal [i.e., in virtue of the fact that Bharata mentions brahman in the text], the aesthetic sentiment of Quiescence is hinted at. This will be [stated in chapter six]: 'Rasas arise from the Quiescent rasa, each having taken on its own [particular] cause.' Therefore, by means of this [statement] the supreme aim

I thank Ben Williams for bringing this passage to my attention, and for making his preliminary translation available to me. I have modified his translation significantly, but it was nevertheless immensely helpful.

This could, of course, also refer to the creator-god Brahmā, expounder of the original Nāṭyaśātra, whose name is the same as the non-dual Vedāntin's brahman except that is inflected in the masculine, rather than neuter gender. But the particular inflection here would be entirely the same in neuter and masculine, making it ambiguous which is being referred to. I have taken it as referring to the Vedāntin brahman because of the clear theological implications of the passage overall, and because Bhaṭṭanāyaka reads Bharata's mention of it as a reference to "the highest transcendent human goal," and because it is used again two lines after this first reference to something which appears in illusory forms without abandoning its own essential form—something Brahmā never does and brahman always does. It is possible that this is an intentional pun on Bhaṭṭanāyaka's part and both meanings are intended. Even if I am wrong here and this refers exclusively to the creator god, it hardly affects the overall arguments I am making.

There are 8, or 9 types of rasa, and the Quiescent, śāntarasa, is here ranked by Bhaṭṭanāyaka as the basis for all the others.
is stated. This explanation is found in the Sahrdyadapana. As it says [there]: "Homage to Śiva, the poet who creates the world, because of whom people at each instant [become] connoisseurs of the dramatic production that is the world."

If ever a non-dual Vedāntin were to write a literary theory, this would be it. The proliferation of "name and form"; a supreme soul who appears in the guise of illusory beings without thereby losing his status as supreme soul; the theater understood as an example of how humans spend their lives grasping at completely false qualifications that are based on ignorance; the quasi-paradox that texts can enter into this false dream world and initiate real and valuable cognitions, even though their appearance is also part of the illusion—all these are hallmarks of non-dual Vedānta philosophy. Linking the controversial ninth rasa, the Quiescent or Peaceful rasa, to spiritual liberation is also a sign of non-dual Vedānta theology, as is treating it as the single basis out of which the proliferation all other rasas arise. Although there are a wide variety of schools and positions within non-dual Vedānta, this much, at least, is widely shared. Of course, as I mentioned above, we will never know completely the details of Bhaṭṭanāyaka's ideas.

It may ultimately prove impossible, for example, even to determine which particular school of

---

134 Abhinavabhārati, vs. 1.5: bhaṭṭanāyakas tu brahmaṇā paramātmanā yad udāhṛtam avidyāvivecitācitaṁśrābhedagrahaḥ yad udāharanīkṛtam nātyaṁ tad vakṣyāmi, yathā hi kalpaṇāmārasāraṁ tata evaṁnavāṣītaṅkarūpam kṣaṇena kalpaṇāśatasaḥrasaḥsam svapnādviśilaṁ āpi suśūṭhitarāṁ hrdayagrahanīdānam atyaktasvālambanabrahma kalpanatoparacatāṁ rāmaravānādicesītāṁ atasya kuto 'py abhūtābhūtvatyā bhāti, tathā bhāṣāmānaṁ āpy ca pumarthopāyaṁ etī, tathā tādṛgeva viśyam idam asaṁnāmarūpaṁ prapañcāmaṁkaṁ atha ca śravaṇāmananāṅđavāsena paramapumarthaprāpaṁkaṁ iti lokottaraparamapurusārthasaḥsanena śaṅtārasopakṣepo 'yam bhaviṣyati / svam śvaṁ nimittam ādāya śaṅtād utpadyate rasaḥ. iti. tadānena pāramārthikam pravojanam uktam. iti vyākhyaṇam saḥṛdayadapane paryagrahīt.

135 Recall Maṇḍanāmiśra's statement that unreal things can have real effects. Bhaṭṭanāyaka, in this passage, seems to be simply including theater in the category of "unreal things." The idea that language specifically can prompt an experience not just of "real" things but of brahma itself was also part of Maṇḍanāmiśra's theology, and was distinguished by him from the Vedic Ritualist idea that language can enjoin action. See Brahmasiddhi, 96: pravedayantu vedānā mānāntaram alaukikam / tattsviṁśidhārthasya punvacovadbhaviṣyati // Thrasher (Potter, Advaita Vedānta, 396), translates: "Indeed, the Vedānta texts do bring us to a prāmāṇa other than themselves, one that is supernatural (alaukika), without the division of knower and object of knowledge, self-luminous." As we have already seen (n. 125), for Maṇḍanāmiśra the texts "bring us" to this experience, but not by injunction. Bhaṭṭanāyaka is borrowing these ideas to show how a literary text can bring us to something similar to this experience, also without injunction.
non-dual Vedānta Bhaṭṭanāyaka belonged to and which texts he based himself on. But that he was a non-dual Vedāntin there can, I think, be no doubt.

Putting all of this together, we wind up with the following sketch: in *Abhinavabhāratī*, Bhaṭṭanāyaka is portrayed as criticizing the idea that *rasa* is apprehended as an object of cognition, either in oneself or in the character, an idea first put forward by a thinker named Lollaṭa, whom Abhinavagupta also summarizes. Bhaṭṭanāyaka thinks he can show that apprehending *rasa* as an object in either location would fall into contradictions. So he proposes an alternative. The alternative is that just as statements in Vedic scriptures, though "false" strictly speaking, can trigger an experience in which subject and object dissolve and the mind simply rests in light and bliss without apprehending anything and without performing any activity, so in the same way literature uses imaginary characters, scenes, and language to trigger an experience in which the particularity of the spectator and the character are dissolved and one rests in pure awareness, free of subject and object, still and blissful, similar to the mystical experience of Brahman. This is the only possible way to account for Bhaṭṭanāyaka's statement that the experience of *rasa* is a "drop" of the bliss of *brahman*: it is structurally analogous to it, cognitively similar to it, and produced in similar ways. And just like the bliss of *brahman*, the aesthetic experience is blissful awareness that doesn't apprehend anything in particular, itself or anything else. The only difference seems to be that *rasa* is not absolute but pertains to our limited minds, and thus is inflected by the ratios of psychological elements that make up our limited minds—*sattva, rajas, and tamas*—which come originally from the Sāṃkhya school but were frequently taken up by non-dual Vedāntins. These ratios account, presumably, for the nine different *rasas*.
This being the case, it does much to explain the main criticism that Abhinavagupta makes of Bhaṭṭanāyaka's philosophy in the Abhinavabhāratī. Right after summarizing Bhaṭṭanāyaka's position, Abhinavagupta asserts, somewhat enigmatically, "Now this position [i.e. Bhaṭṭanāyaka's criticism] is not accepted [by us], precisely because we don't accept the view of Bhaṭṭa Lollaṭa. So this criticism never has the chance to arise. And we are not aware of any form of enjoyment in this world that is different from cognition [pratīti]." In other words, Abhinavagupta responds to Bhaṭṭanāyaka by accepting that Lollaṭa was wrong and that rasa is not a stable object to be apprehended. Nevertheless, he says, it is a cognition that apprehends something. All forms of enjoyment are apprehensions of something. He qualifies this by saying "in this world," but the qualification is unnecessary, because Abhinavagupta also accepts the analogy Bhaṭṭanāyaka makes between religious and aesthetic experience, and in Abhinavagupta's religion God's enjoyment also apprehends something: itself. This self-apprehension, as we will see, is not the same as self-objectification; but it is a form of cognition, and it is itself enjoyment, camatkāra, by definition. It is also, as we will see, how Abhinavagupta explains aesthetic experience. This is the reason that Abhinavagupta insists that rasa is both "a drop of divine relishing" and also a cognition of something, for Śiva's divine self-relishing is a cognition of itself. This idea conforms exactly to the kind of criticism a non-dual Śaiva would make of a non-dual Vedānta literary theory, and it fully explains why we find Abhinavagupta insisting over and over again: "And [rasa] is definitely a cognition, whose essence is tasting, in which joy [rati] alone appears"; Or again: "the unavoidable fact remains that rasa is perceived.

136 Gnoli, Aesthetic Experience, 11: tatra pūrvapako 'yam bhaṭṭalollatapakṣānabhyupagamād eva nābhupalagata iti. taddūṣaṇaṃ anutthānopahatam eva. pratītyādiyavatiriktā ca saṃsāre ko bhoga iti na vidmaḥ.

137 For example he says quite clearly, (Dhvanyālōka, 543): parameśvaraviśrāntyānanda...vipruṇmātrāvahāso hi rasāsvāda... "The relishing of rasa is a small fragment of the bliss of God's repose..." Quoted in Gerow, "Abhinavagupta's Aesthetics," 188.
For if it were not perceived we could have no dealings with it, just as we can have no dealings with a goblin.**138** These statements are only fully explained by the fact that they are directed against a non-dual Vedānta literary theory in which *rasa* is an experience devoid of subject and object, and thus not a really a "cognition" in the ordinary sense.

The theological differences therefore also explain why we find Abhinavagupta insisting, against Bhaṭṭānāyaka, that *rasa* has the form of something that is to be accomplished, not something already accomplished; in other words that *rasa* is a form of action.**139** And they clarify some stray comments Abhinavagupta makes on this subject that are directed at Bhaṭṭānāyaka's theory, and that we might otherwise overlook as insignificant if we are not aware of the background. To see this, we need to recall that for non-dual Vedāntins such as Maṇḍanamīśra, *brahman* is eternal, unchanging blissful awareness—awareness which is not a form of action. So the Vedic sentences that trigger one's experience of this divine state don't trigger a process of dynamic self-interaction, they simply bring one to a state of objectless and blissful awareness, devoid of all activity. But this flies in the face of Vedic Ritualist understandings of Vedic language, in which all Vedic statements prompt some form of action, and so Maṇḍanamīśra is therefore obligated to show that, *pace* Vedic Ritualism, not all language prompts action, and that sometimes language just produces awareness of finished facts, which affects us strongly without requiring any activity on our part. He tells us:

> In the world, it is not the case that sentences refer only to what needs to be accomplished, for when delightful things are communicated, as in: 'Your good fortune grows, a son is born to you!', it is clear that these [sentences] don't enjoin or prohibit any action, but that

---


**139** This, in turn, would explain why Abhinavagupta, unlike Bhaṭṭānāyaka, really does seem to have Kumārila in mind (at least partially) when he discusses literary theory, see David, “Time, Action, and Narration,” and Ollett, “Ritual Texts and Literary Texts.”
they simply produce joy. And there is no [implicit] command here such as 'Be joyful!', for his joy is accomplished just by force of the facts, and without dependence on any particular instruction."¹⁴⁰

Abhinavagupta's God, in contrast to Maṇḍanamiśra, is perpetually engaged in an activity—that of joyfully savoring himself—and Abhinavagupta's understanding of rasa, as we will see, is that it exists as a version of this activity of self-relishing, not as a simple emotional response to a known fact. He tells us: "[Rasa] makes itself felt as something the whole life of which consists in the ongoing process of relishing and which thereby differs from something like joy or grief, which is a finished or frozen state."¹⁴¹ What is even more significant is that the example he gives in this section of a "finished or frozen" emotional state produced by words is: "A son is born to you".¹⁴² This is no coincidence. It was Maṇḍanamiśra who first used this phrase as an example of a sentence which prompts no action, and the example is peculiar to him and found nowhere before him.¹⁴³ When Abhinavagupta distinguishes this particular sentence from sentences that produces rasa we should understand that he is not just making an idle or offhand comment, but is giving a direct response to an aesthetic theory—Bhaṭṭanāyaka's—that is modeled on Maṇḍanamiśra's Vedāntin theology of mind and language.¹⁴⁴ So again, unless we take the

¹⁴⁰ Brahmasiddhi, 23: na ca kāryaniṣṭhāṇy eva loke vacāṃsi; tathā hi—priyākhyānāni 'distyā vardhase, putras te jātaḥ' iti na pravṛttaye nivruttaye vā, drśyante ca sukhotpādanapravojanāni. na ca 'sukhi bhava' iti tatra pravṛtir upadiśyate, vastusāmarthyād eva tatsiddher upadeśasyānapekṣāt.

¹⁴¹ Dhvanyāloka, 80: na cāyaṃ rasādir arthaḥ putras te jātaḥ ity ato yathā harṣo jāyate tathā. nāpi lakṣaṇa-yā. api tu sahrdayasya hrdayasamvādabālād vibhāvānubhāvapraṇītāu tanmayēbhāvenāsvādyamāna eva rasyāmānatai-prāṇāh siddhāsvabhāvasukhādivilākṣaṇāh parisphurati. Translated in Ingalls, Masson, Patwardhan, Dhvanyāloka, 108.

¹⁴² Ingalls, Masson, Patwardhan, Dhvanyāloka, 108.

¹⁴³ Larry McCrea, personal communication.

¹⁴⁴ Here, I think, we finally have an explanation for why Abhinavagupta famously begins his own account of manifestation in Abhinavabhāratī with an explicit reference to Vedic Ritual theories of action and action-prompting language. Since he is arguing against someone who thought that poetry is language that prompts an actionless state
religious background of these ideas seriously, and in particular unless we understand Bhaṭṭanāyaka to be propounding a literary theory that is modeled on Maṇḍanamiśra's theology, or something very similar to it, we will simply fail to fully understand what is being discussed.

If I am correct in my assessment of Bhaṭṭanāyaka and Abhinavagupta's relationship to him, it wouldn't be the only time that Abhinavagupta coopted and rewrote ideas that came from non-dual Vedānta. In fact, he wrote an entire text, Paramārthasāra, which is nothing but a non-dual Śaiva rewrite of Ādiśeṣa's earlier, non-dual Vedānta text of the same name. So taking large parts of Bhaṭṭanāyaka's non-dual Vedānta ideas and fitting them into a non-dual Śaiva worldview is not only something that Abhinavagupta might have thought possible, but an iteration of a project that we know him to have undertaken.

However, the theological structure of Abhinavagupta's aesthetics goes far beyond his disagreement with Bhaṭṭanāyaka. It undergirds the entire alternative he proposes—a heavily revised version of the theory of poetic manifestation—and can help explain why he stuck to that theory despite having to change it so much. To see how this is so we can begin by expanding on the point above: that rasa is a form of vimarśa, of the mind's self-apprehension.

Abhinavagupta's Poetics 2: Bliss, Creativity, Subjectivity

---

of awareness, and since he wants to argue that the awareness thus prompted by language is a form of activity, it makes sense that he would begin his account of his own aesthetic theory by coopting the most famous South Asian theory of action-prompting language available.

145 Bansat-Boudon and Tripathi, Introduction to Tantric Philosophy, "Introduction."
In Abhinavagupta's account of the aesthetic process, a play or a poem presents a certain set of factors to us, the so-called "bhāvas," or poetic elements. These factors have names and classifications, which come from Bharata, and are divided into sub-categories like anubhāvas, uddīpanavibhāvas, sāttvikabhāvas, and so on, but this isn't so important here. What is important is that the factors represent all the familiar elements of an emotional experience: an object for the emotion (a beautiful woman, a terrifying demon), a setting to enhance it (a park in spring, a dark forest), a set of effects produced by the emotion (smiling, tears, trembling, etc.), and a set of more transient states that often occur along with it (anxiety, joy, wonder, excitement, etc.). The factors are all associated in real life, so a spectator with any real life experience will be aware of what emotion the characters are experiencing. Abhinavagupta admits freely that this type of knowledge may have the form of inference, but he also explains that this type of knowledge is only a subordinate moment within an experience of rasa, and thus within the process of manifestation. What is more important than this moment of inference is that being presented with these factors stimulates the spectator's own memories and mental habits. Our emotional experiences, which exist within us in the form of latent memories that we are usually unaware of, get stirred up and brought out in our mind, and we begin to re-experience them.

146 The following summary is based mostly on Gnoli's edition and translation of Abhinavabhāratī in Gnoli, Aesthetic Experience, 25-88, which I have retranslated. Instead of citing all the ideas individually I will just cite particular passages when the need arises, or passages from Dhvanyālokālocana when necessary.

147 see, for example, Masson, Ingalls, and Patwardhan, Dhvanyāloka, 224: "Relishing. . . is distinct from every-day cases of inference, although it depends on inference in the initial stages."

148 Pollock, "Vyakti," 240, claims to be "unable" to find a place where Abhinavagupta says that poetry manifests the spectators' latent emotions, or latent memories (vāsanā). I find this a strange statement, unless Pollock just means to say that manifestation proper only happens when a latent memory is transformed into a rasa, and that the preliminary process of stirring latent emotions in the first place is not itself manifestation but a only prerequisite for it. Certainly there are numerous places where Abhinavagupta refers to the idea of latent memories being stirred and evoked and transformed into rasa. He tells us clearly in Abhinavabhāratī, for example: "Therefore, since all of the audience is fused into one totality, the cognition [they have] goes towards ripening the rasa, because of the concordance of latent memories [vāsanā] of all those whose minds are coloured by beginningless latent memories."
However, the conditions of the theater or poem are very unusual, and unlike ordinary life. The objects that are stirring up memories—the elements of the play or poem—are not real. They are merely artificial. We are constantly reminded of this both by the various artificial conventions of the theater (costumes, stage, stylized gestures, etc.), as well as by the awareness, always in the back of our mind, that we are sharing this experience with other audience members; that it is not specific to us.

These unusual conditions enable an unusual experience. Sitting in the crowd watching a stage, we are freed from all of the requirements that ordinarily accompanied our emotional experiences in the past. We feel no need to acquire or reject anything. We don't need to flee the feared object. We don't need to worry about how to acquire the desired object. This allows us to have a particular kind of relationship to the emotional memories that are stirred up, which Abhinavagupta, following Bhaṭṭanāyaka, calls commonalization [sādhāraṇīkarana]. And although this process of "commonalization" is clearly taken from Bhaṭṭanāyaka, the relationship we have to the emotions thus commonalized is very different from Bhaṭṭanāyaka. Ordinarily,

(Gnoli, Aesthetic Experience, 13-14: ata eva sarvasamājikānām ekaghanatayaiva pratipateḥ sutarāṁ rasaspariposāya sarvesāṁ anādīvāsanāvīcitṛkṛtacetāsam vāsanāsamvādāṁ.) He also tells us later in the same passage that rasa is "memory that doesn't appear in that form." (Ibid.: smṛtir... tathāvenāśphurati astu.) Or again, he tells us: "because of the force of possession [āveśa] by our own latent memories [vāsanā] such as love etc, which are awakened by the force of the commonality of those [literary elements] etc..." (ibid., 21: tadvibhāvāsādhārayavaśasamsprabuddhocitajjāratāyādīvāsanāveśā... Again: "goosebumps and things like that, which many times in the past have caused one to be aware of love, when they are seen there [on the stage] cause one to know a love that is not fixed in time and place, into which even the spectator himsef enters also on account of his having those [same] latent memories [vāsanā]." (ibid., 22: roṣaṃcādayas ca bhuyasā rasapraṣṭākāratāyā drṣṭas tatrāvalokitā desakālānīyamena ratīṃ gamayanti. yasyāṃ svātmāpi tadvāsanāvattāvād anupraviṣṭah.) The idea also appears frequently in Dhvanyālokalocana. See, for example, Masson, Ingalls, and Patwardhan, Dhvanyāloka, 81, 108, 221, and 225. So it is definitely the case that poetry stirs ones latent memories and that this is a crucial step in the process of manifesting rasa. But manifestation in the strict sense is not just the evocation of these memories; it is the transformation of them, via commonalization, into rasa.

149 The significance of this idea has been underestimated in the secondary literature on Abhinavagupta. The shared experience of an audience is deeply related to his theory of group ritual, found in chapter 29 of Tantrāloka. Unfortunately the details of these connections are outside the scope of this chapter, but I hope more attention is devoted to them soon. For the idea of the commonality of the rasa experience among audience members, see the previous note.
emotions present the world to us in a certain way and either require things of us or are a response to our requirements. But eliciting an emotion while cutting off the possibility of personal involvement allows the emotion to be looked at rather than through, so to speak. No longer are we aware of the world in a certain way via an emotion. Rather, we become aware of the mode of apprehending the world. In other words our awareness detaches from the object of the emotion and fixes on the emotion itself, and this awareness is a type of self-apprehension, or vimarśa.  

But this self-apprehension is not an apprehension of ourselves in our particularity. It is an apprehension of those elements of our experience that we share with other sentient beings, and which are beyond our own individual personality. Unlike an ordinary emotion, the content of which usually feels urgently particular to the one feeling it, the features of the rasa experience are common to all people, including those in the audience with us. This experience of an emotion as such, cleaned of the particularities that accompany it in worldly experience and presented as something shared among other beings, is also taken from Bhaṭṭanāyaka's idea of commonalization, although it is significant that Abhinavagupta thinks of it something apprehended, not as an objectless form of awareness as Bhaṭṭanāyaka had. In Abhinavagupta's aesthetics, the spectator no longer sees Rāma's love on stage, or his own love for a woman he once met. But he does see Love as such, in its shared form. As Abhinavagupta puts it, emotions

150 This idea is present here and there throughout Abhinavagupta. For one clear example, see Gnoli, Aesthetic Experience, 13-14: bhayam eva desakālādyāyanāliṅgitam, tata eva bhīto 'ham bhīto 'yam śatru vayasyo madhyastho vetyādipratyayebhvo duḥkhasukhādikṛtahānādibuddhyantaradayanīyamavattayā vighnahabhulebhhyo vilakṣanām nirvighnahpratītigrāhyam sāksād iva hṛdaye nivāsamānaṁ caksusor iva viparivartamānaṁ bhayānako rasah tathāvidhe hi bhaye nātmāyantatiraskṛto na viśeṣataḥ ullikhitah... sā vāvighnā saṃvīc camatkāraḥ. "Therefore [because of being untouched by time and space], the Fearful rasa is different from cognitions like "I am afraid," or "the enemy, or friend, or stranger is afraid," which are full of obscuration because of being regulated by the arising in the mind of the will to acquire something or push it away [hānādi] that is produced by pleasure and pain. It is grasped by a cognition that is free of obscurations. It is, as it were, entering the heart directly, [or] as if it were dancing before the eyes. With respect to this type of fear, the Self is not completely hidden, nor is it inscribed in a particular way. . . And that awareness without obstacles is 'camatkāraḥ.'" Camatkāra, of course, is a synonym for vimarśa, as we have seen many times now.
generalized in this way are "untouched by time and space." But although it is timeless and placeless this shared form of Love is not, as in Bhaṭṭanāyaka, without any location at all. It is located within the spectator's subjectivity, as an aspect of it. It is simply located at a level of the spectator's subjectivity that exists prior to, or outside of, his individuality and his limitation in time and space.

This commonalization further frees us to carry out an activity that during ordinary emotional experience we are not free to do. It allows us savor the emotion, to enjoy it. Under ordinary emotional conditions, ignoring the object of the emotion and taking pleasure in the emotion itself might be foolish, dangerous, self-involved, or even immoral. A generalized emotion, however, is different. "Because it is unconditioned by any other particularities," Abhinavagupta tells us, "it is relishable." 

This savoring is provoked in us by the elements of the play, and this is one sense in which Abhinavagupta understands the theory of manifestation—poetry manifests our latent emotional memories, making them present to us in such a way that they become aesthetically pleasing. In fact, this furnishes the very definition of rasa, in Abhinavagupta's system. "Rasa appears as an object that comes within the scope of a blissful relishing of one's own awareness in the form of mental functions, colored by latent impressions and appropriate to the elements [of the play or poem]." Any latent emotional tendency that is brought into our awareness in this generalized way is a rasa, by definition.

151 Gnoli, Aesthetic Experience, 13: deśakālādyānāliṅgitam. David (David, Time, Narrative, and Action), makes the interesting observation that this idea has roots in Maṇḍanamiśra's Vidhīviveka.

152 Gnoli, Aesthetic Experience, 14: veśesāntarānupahitavāt sā raśāniyā saī. .

153 Dhvanyālōka, 92: tadvibhāvānubhāvocitacittavrtyāvāsanānurāņītvasasāṃvidānandacarvānāgocaro 'rtho raśātmā.
The nature of this act of relishing, and the nature of its object, is important to understand. The act of relishing is specifically described by Abhinavagupta as an awareness whose "obscurations" have been cleansed. "In every case [sarvathā], rasa is an emotion [bhāva] that is grasped by a cognition whose obscurations are cleared, and whose essence is relishing."

Abhinavagupta spends a good deal of time analyzing these obscurations. All of them are, as in Bhaṭṭanāyaka, forms of awareness that might spoil the process of generalization and the spectator's absorption in the generalized object. One might find the actions in the play impossible to believe. One might remain hung up on one's own individuality and particular circumstances (the greatest obstacle, according to Abhinavagupta). Or, interestingly, one might get onanistically self-involved with one's own personal pleasure during the play, distracted by savoring one's own personal bliss rather than the rasa. One might not hear the play properly, or might not understand it. One might be aware of the emotion but experience it as subordinate to something else, perhaps the cleverness of the wording of the play or the moral import of what is being stated. Finally, one might be confused as to the meaning, seeing tears but remaining unsure whether they are tears of joy or pain. When an emotion is presented to an awareness free of these obscurations, the mind becomes absorbed in an awareness of its own functioning, and the beauty of this function commands predominance; our attention is captivated and indulges in rasa without distraction and without turning towards anything else.

The relation of this kind of awareness to theology is worth emphasizing again, at the risk of being repetitive: rasa is an awareness that is free of individuality (individuality appears in this aesthetic theory as kind of distraction), but this doesn't mean that it is free of subjectivity, because in Abhinavagupta's theology awareness free from individuality is not thereby free from

---

subjectivity. What defines subjectivity for Abhinavagupta is just consciousness's ability to be aware of itself. Awareness that is aware of itself beyond individuality, in Abhinavagupta's world, is not non-subjectivity but transpersonal subjectivity. And Śiva himself is the fundamental transpersonal subject. So *rasa*, though impersonal, is a form transpersonal self-apprehension, meaning it is a form of *vimarśa*, and is therefore structurally related to Śiva's being.

Above it was pointed out that Śiva's capacity for self-awareness, his *vimarśa*, is mythologically described as his consort, Śakti, and that Śakti is also Highest Speech. Highest Speech is described as pulsating, or throbbing, which refers to the fact that she is the "murmuring" totality of all possible language (and also possibly refers to the *mise-en-abyme* of a God who is eternally watching himself watch himself watching himself, etc.). *Vimarśa*, then, is a kind of pulsation, and this indeed seems to be another way in which Abhinavagupta understands poetic manifestation, since the alternative term for manifestation, *dhvani*, can literally mean resonance, or humming (recall that *dhvani* for Abhinavagupta refers both to the process, the origin of the process, and the result of the process). "The [manifested] meaning has been called *dhvani,*" he writes, "as it too is often characterized by a reverberation analogous to the pulsation of a bell."155 This image comes, it is true, from Ānandavardhana, who also described certain specific forms of suggestion as resonating like a bell. But Ānandavardhana never used this to characterize poetic manifestation overall. Abhinavagupta does because he thinks of poetic manifestation as a form of *vimarśa*, and he quite explicitly thinks of *vimarśa*, which is Śiva's consort Highest Speech, as vibrating or pulsing or humming. Hence it is a fitting term for poetic manifestation, and for the experience of *rasa*.

155 Masson, Ingalls, and Patwardhan, *Dhvanyāloka*, 170. Original is *Dhvanyāloka*, 139: *evaṃ ghaṇṭādinirhrādasthānīyo 'nuraṇanātmopalakṣito vyāṅgyo 'pyṛtho dhvanir iti vyavahṛtaḥ.*
Since *rasa* is theorized as a form of *vimarśa*, it allows Abhinavagupta to explain convincingly the strange fact that all *rasas* are relishable, i.e., that they are all pleasurable. This is a common and familiar aesthetic puzzle. Why do we enjoy watching sad or frightening plays when feeling emotions of sadness or fright is ordinarily something people avoid? The answer now seems very simple. It is based on the fact that drama triggers an experience of *vimarśa* in the viewers, and *vimarśa* is, for theological reasons, inherently pleasurable. "All [rasas] predominate in pleasure, because the essence of the unified mass of [the] light [of consciousness], whose form is that of tasting its own awareness, is bliss [ānanda]." It is not bliss accidentally, but inherently. Self-awareness, as we saw, is also svātantrya, or independence, because in an idealist system, existence depends upon appearing within awareness, and so something that is self-aware is thereby self-dependent. Abhinavagupta defines pain as a sense of lack, or dependence, which dislodges the mind from a state of rest within itself and causes it to chase after or avoid objects. So independence, which is synonymous both with *vimarśa* and with repose [viśrānti], is therefore pleasurable, by definition, and *rasa*, which is a specifically emotional form of self-apprehension, is therefore also pleasurable, even if the ordinary emotional experience it is based on is one where the mind loses track of this self-relationship and focuses on seemingly outward objects, experiencing them as frightening or tantalizing and trying to chase after them or avoid them. Abhinavagupta continues the quote just given by saying, "*rasa* consists of repose devoid of impediments. And it is the very lack of repose that is pain. . . Thus all *rasas* have the form of bliss." This theory is repeated almost exactly in Abhinavagupta's

---


157 Ibid.
theological text Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivṛtvimārsinī, and in that portion of that text he refers the reader to his commentary on Bharata for more information.\footnote{Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivṛtvimārsinī, 2:178, quoted in Masson and Patwardhan, Śāntarasa, 44-45.}

This kind of transformation doesn't only happen in theater or poems. It can also happen with ordinary emotions. In the theological text Parātrīśikāvivaraṇa, Abhinavagupta writes:

"When, owing to the absence of limitation, the aberration of the modes of the mind caused by the non-recognition of the essential nature ceases, the very states of anger, delusion, etc., appear only as an expression of the consciousness of the perfect, revered Lord Bhairava."\footnote{Parātrīśikāvivaraṇa, 40.} In fact all forms of awareness are, ultimately, Śiva's, and so at the deepest level they are all eternally blissful. But ordinarily we don't notice it, our awareness being carried off to the object and to our perceived sense of lack.\footnote{Ratie, Le soi et l'autre, 360.} Conversely, all forms of worldly pleasure are, to some degree, a reflection of the primordial pleasure of Śiva's self-caress, and because this bliss consists in independence and lack of need for external objects, worldly pleasures are increasingly pure to the degree to which they abandon their objects and focus on the subjective experience of the delight. "One who tastes drinks such as a delicious beverage and discriminates in a manner different from a greedy glutton. . . he reposes in the Knower, his self-caress takes the Knower as predominant [rather than the drink], and he is called a gourmet."\footnote{Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivṛtvimārsinī, 2:178: madhurādau rase audarikābhāvyahāravālakṣaṇayena pravṛtta idam itam iti pramātāri viśramayan pramāṭrībhāgam eva pradhānatayā vimṛṣan bhuñjāna ity ucye.} Theater is simply one of the most refined of these forms of worldly pleasure, and is superior to other forms of pleasure because it is the most removed from the sense-object that provides the pleasure, and thus the most purely self-involved:
"The tasting of a delicious beverage is mediated by contact with the sense-object. Poetry and drama, in comparison to that, are devoid of that [kind of] mediation."

However, *rasa* is not perfect or complete *vimarśa*, and Abhinavagupta is quite clear that relishing *rasa* is not the same as full spiritual insight, and is in fact inferior to it. He does say, in the *Locana*, that "The relishing of *rasa* is a small fragment of the bliss of God's repose..." But it is significant that it is only a fragment, and he says in the same quote that the divine bliss in question, "is superior to the relishing of *rasa*."

The quote given in the last paragraph about the difference between gustatory and theatrical pleasure continues with the qualification that although poetry and drama are comparatively free of sense-contact, they are still "blended with the latent impression of that mediation."

In contrast to this, Abhinavagupta says elsewhere that "The experience of the single mass of bliss that is the Self, which pertains to the highest yogins, is pure, because it is void of the stain of all [external] objects." So *rasa* is not enlightenment. But the structural parallels are deep and important, and not merely analogical. *Rasa*, because it is structurally parallel to Śiva's existence, brings us to a deeper level of our own being. It is pleasurable not so much because we choose to enjoy it, but rather because a reflexive awareness of one's own being, without any need for external objects or dependence on them, is pleasure by definition. *Vimarśa* is svātantrya is *camatkāra*. To say the *rasa* is relished, for Abhinavagupta, is

---

162 Ibid.: madurādirāsāsvāde tu viśayasparśavyavadhānām. tato 'pi kāvyaṁtyādau tadvyavadhānaśūnyatā... For a collection of places where Abhinavagupta discusses the theological import of pleasure in its worldly varieties, including the natural beauty of Kashmir, see Sanderson, *Power and Purity*, 216, n. 132. For a long discussion, in Sanskrit of the issue, see śvāpraṭyabhijñāvīrtivimarśinī, 2:177-179.

163 Dhvanyāloka, 510: sakalapramaṇapariṇāścitaḍṛśtrādṛśtrāsvayaviśeṣajam yat sukham, yad api vā lokottaram rasacarvanāmakam tata ubhayato 'pi paramēśvaraviśrānty ānandaḥ prakṛtyate tad ānandāvipraṇāśprāvabhāso hi rasāsvāda ity uktam prágasmābhīh /

164 śvāpraṭyabhijñāvīrtivimarśinī 2:178: tadvyavadhānasamśkārānuvedha tu.

165 Ibid.: sakalavaiśayikoparāgaśūnyāsuddhaparayogitāsvātīmānandaikaghaṅānubhava...
really the same as saying that an emotion has taken on some (not all) of the characteristics of Śiva's self-awareness.

This theological basis also explains another significant change that Abhinavagupta makes to Ānandavardhana's theory. Ānandavardhana placed the Erotic rasa at the pinnacle of the list of rasas. It is the most important rasa, he says, and the best, because it is the most common and the most beloved.\textsuperscript{166} Abhinavagupta, significantly, passes over this comment in silence; the only time he does so in his entire commentary. In contrast to this, Abhinavagupta says elsewhere that the most important rasa is the controversial ninth rasa, śāntarasa, the Quiescent rasa. The existence of this rasa was famously disputed, yet Abhinavagupta not only accepts this controversial ninth rasa, but says: "[Śāntarasa] is the most predominant of all rasas, since it is based on the highest of human aims and results in spiritual liberation."\textsuperscript{167} This is not an idle preference. It goes to the heart of Abhinavagupta's aesthetic vision.

The importance of śāntarasa to Abhinavagupta's aesthetics was first noted by Masson and Patwardhan in their groundbreaking Śāntarasa and Abhinavagupta's Philosophy of Aesthetics.\textsuperscript{168} But it was Edwin Gerow, in an article written twenty-five years after that book, who succeeded in explaining more clearly why Abhinavagupta placed such emphasis on this

\textsuperscript{166}Dhvanyāloka, 437: śṛṅgaraso hi saṁsārināṃ niyamenānubhavavisayatvāt sarvarasebhyāḥ kamanīyatayā pradhānābhūtaḥ. "The Erotic rasa, is the most pleasing of all rasas, because it is within the realm of experience of all worldly beings without exception and therefore it is the most important [rasa]." Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, Dhvanyāloka, 530, point out that this statement is actually slightly inaccurate, as it treats rasa as the object of ordinary experience, rather than the bhāva on which it is based, but the idea is clear.

\textsuperscript{167}Dhvanyāloka, 434: mokṣaphalatvena cāyaṃ paramapurūṣāṁśatriṇaḥśatvāt sarvarasebhyāḥ pradhānātamaḥ.

\textsuperscript{168}Masson and Patwardhan, Śāntarasa, 1969.
The controversy over the existence of the Quiescent *rasa* concerns the question of what its corresponding worldly emotion might be, and whether it is possible to depict that on a stage. The Erotic *rasa* is a form of savoring the emotion of love. The Fearful *rasa* savors the emotion of fear. What does the Quiescent *rasa* savor? The answer, according to Abhinavagupta, is that the Quiescent *rasa* savors knowledge of the Self, which is the stable basis for other experiences, or, to use his terminology, as the "screen" [*bhitti*] on which other experiences are projected. This is what makes it deeper and more stable than other emotions, and more primary. Other emotions come and go within our experience; the screen on which they are projected remains the same. It is this screen itself which is savored in śāntarasa, and this why śāntarasa can also be explained as an appreciation of the transiency of the world. The world is transient only with respect to a more stable Self that underlies it, and knowledge of the Self involves a knowledge both of its stability as well as the transiency that it underwrites.

Śāntarasa then is important because it is the paradigm experience of *rasa*, where the mind savors not just its various emotional functions, but its very capacity for emotional experience as such. It is the most pure form of *vimarśa* that *rasa* can take. It is enacted and stimulated on stage by presenting the selfless activities of one who has attained such knowledge of the Self, which stimulate in the spectator a memory of his own stable Self, and a blissful

169 Gerow, “Abhinavagupta's Aesthetics.” I do not agree, however, with Gerow’s thesis that Abhinavagupta's "philosophy" (and by this Gerow means his theology) presupposes his aesthetics, and is based on it. The question of which comes first, the aesthetics or the theology, seems fruitless to me.

170 For a fascinating take on the intellectual history of śāntarasa and an explanation for why its depiction on stage was such a puzzle, see Pollock, "Vyakti."

171 Gerow, “Abhinavagupta's Aesthetics,” 188. His translation of the relevant passage is ibid., 199.

172 See, for example, ibid., 195 n. 83, and 201 n. 149.

173 ibid., 190-191.
awareness of the solidity of Śiva's mind that remains underneath the shifting appearances of the
world.\textsuperscript{174}

Abhinavagupta, however, also sees rasa not just as the result of aesthetic experience, but
also as the source of the poet's creativity, and in this respect also he goes far beyond
Ānandavardhana's original theory. This should be no surprise, since theologically Abhinavagupta
sees Śiva's vimarśa as a form of aesthetic creativity as well as a form of being. Śiva blissfully
careses himself, taking form as his own consort Śakti and making love to himself through her,
and Śiva's union with Śakti in this way causes the bliss to overflow and gives rise to a universe.  
Rasa is a miniature version of this, the human individual's way of experiencing a piece of this
dynamic, and so as his mind lets go of its object and its own particularity and caresses itself
blissfully this experience is not only the result of poetry, but can also be the fertile source of
poetry's emanation. And Abhinavagupta sees overflowing, fracturing, transformation, and hiding
as common to both cosmogony and the activity of writing a poem. Just as the universe is created
when a blissfully self-aware unity overflows into divided appearances and hides itself within
them, Abhinavagupta repeatedly describes the act of creating poetry as an overflow of the poet's
experience of rasa into the fixed form of a poem, in which rasa is immanent but no longer
directly apparent.

\textsuperscript{174}The passage of Abhinavabhāratī where Abhinavagupta expounds these ideas has been translated well in Gerow,
"Abhinavagupta's Aesthetics." It is far too long to reproduce here. I will quote only one small part, in which
Abhinavagupta explains what exactly is aestheticized and relished in the experience of śāntarasa. It appears on
pages 199-200 of his article, and reads: "What then is the stable [emotional basis of śāntarasa? It is said: to the
extent that knowledge of the truth is a means to [the accomplishment of] liberation, it is that alone that ought to be
stable where liberation [is concerned]. But "knowledge of the truth" is nothing but knowledge of the Self. . . It
follows then that the Self--possessed of untainted qualities such as knowledge and joy, and untouched by affections
for presumptive objects--is the stable [basis for śāntarasa]. Its "stableness is not to be argued in terms of the
"stablens" [of the other emotive states]. [The other states] such as sexual passion, whose mode of existence [ever]
is to be [either] facilitated or obstructed, in accordance with the appearance or disappearance of various causal
factors, are said to be "stable" relatively, to the extent that they attach themselves for a time to the wall of the Self,
whose nature it is to be "stable." Knowledge of the truth, however, represents the wall itself [on which are
displayed] all the other emotions, and is [thus], among all the stable [emotive states], the most stable." The original
text can be found in Abhinavabhāratī, 1:326ff, and the specific portion quoted here can be found on ibid. 1:330.
The most beautiful excursus on this idea comes when Abhinavagupta has to comment on Ānandavardhana's reference to Valmīki, the mythical author of the famous epic poem the Rāmāyaṇa.\textsuperscript{175} Valmīki is famous in South Asia for being the "first poet," credited with the discovery of what we now call poetry, which he introduced into the world. His story is found at the beginning of the Rāmāyaṇa, which, fascinatingly, begins by giving an account of its own origins as a poem, in the form of a frame story. The frame story is this: Valmīki, a sage living in a forest hermitage, goes to a river one morning for a ritual bath. As he is bathing he sees a pair of curlew birds mating on the bank nearby. While he looks on, a hunter sneaks up and shoots the female of the pair with an arrow, killing her. The male begins to cry out in grief. Valmīki, completely overwhelmed by the sadness of this spectacle, bursts out with a curse on the hunter. To his astonishment, however, the curse spontaneously comes out of his mouth in meter. Valmīki, who like all humans at the time has never heard poetry before, is shocked and perplexed by the form of his own utterance. He spends the rest of the day mulling over it and later the god Brahmā appears before him and explains to him that he has discovered poetry, and that he must use this new discovery to record the story of king Rāma. When he replies that he is unfamiliar with the story, Brahmā relates it to him, and then Valmīki busies himself with casting this story into the new metrical form he has discovered. The product of his effort is the Sanskrit version of Rāma's story, the Rāmāyaṇa.

The story is interesting and important for many reasons, and doubtless supports a huge variety of interpretations and analyses. For one thing, it was taken by ancient literary theorists to be an actual account of how poetry first appeared in the world, not merely an element in a pretty story. It also foreshadows the entire plot of the Rāmāyaṇa, which is about a pair of lovers

\textsuperscript{175} Though probably not the actual author. Much like the Iliad and the Odyssey, the poem seems to have been compiled by various anonymous poets over many years and then attributed in retrospect to a single author.
painfully separated when the woman is kidnapped by a demon. For Ānandavardhana, the story shows that the feeling of grief is the soul of the poetry that Valmīki creates, since it is grief that transforms into—or more properly is manifested by—the poem. Abhinavagupta, however, has a more sophisticated interpretation. It isn't grief that causes Valmīki to create the poem. Grief is an ordinary emotion, not a rasa, and if it were grief that Valmīki felt he would simply have been in pain, and wouldn't have been able to create anything. Even if he had created something, it wouldn't be something whose soul was rasa. What happens instead is that the grief of the curlew birds becomes aestheticized for Valmīki. The sight of the birds' situation stirs Valmīki's mind to a process of emotional relishing, of rasa, and once he is filled with this relishing, the rasa then "attains the form of fixed verse. . . like a jar filled with liquid overflowing, [or] like a cry of lament whose nature is the melting of one's mental functions." This process is not limited to Valmīki. Valmīki is only the archetype for all poets. What happens to him happens to poets in every case.

176 Dhvanyāloka, 88: na tu muneḥ śoka iti mantavyam. evaṁ hi sati tad duḥkhena so 'pi duḥkhita iti kṛtvā rasyāyānatetī niravakāśaṁ bhavet. na ca duḥkhasāntaptasyaiśā daśeti. "We shouldn't think it was grief that the sage felt. If that were the case he would be oppressed by that grief, [and] having created, it wouldn't be something of whose soul was rasa. Nor does something afflicted by grief have this state [of being a poet]."

177 In this particular instance, of course, the rasa experience occurs in ordinary life, outside of the special environment of the theater. Ordinarily this would be impossible, the theater providing the crucial conditions that allow an emotion to become a rasa. But Abhinavagupta is working within the parameters of the myth as it is transferred to him, and within these parameters he constructs an interpretation that fits his literary theory.

178 Dhvanyāloka, 87: rasaparipūrṇakumbhoccalanavac cittavṛttinīhyandasvabhāvavāvानास्यभावनांतर्भलविभ. . . niyantritaślokāpatāṁ prāptah.

179 Notice, interestingly, that although Abhinavagupta's language clearly echoes his emissional cosmogony here, the metaphors he uses for Valmīki's emission are both gross, material metaphors—water and crying. In his theology, by contrast, the emissional metaphors are much more often about vibrations, humming sound, or pulsating or throbbing light (though occasionally they are about ocean waves). Abhinavagupta, always the careful stylist, has both marked a parallel and preserved a distinction. Poetry is not the same as religious experience. It is a 'drop' of religious experience, structurally analogous to it yet occurring at a lower level of reality, and his metaphors reflect this.
If this description recalls the creation of the world in Abhinavagupta's theology, it also recalls his account of the communicative process and the three levels of speech. In all of these cases, a linguistic plenum fractures into division as it takes on appearance in the world. And it can't be any other way. Without becoming a poem, a poet's *rasa* remains inside of him, and couldn't appear in the world any more than a speaker's idea can appear in the world without changing into the form of words. Similarly, Śiva and Śakti could never appear as the universe without overflowing and fracturing into appearances that seem to be something other than them. But in all these cases, the original plenum is immanent within the fractured appearances, and pervades them, although it isn't immediately apparent within them. Furthermore, the process of reaching back to that plenum is the reverse of the process that creates the appearances, and both are governed by *pratibhā*, the instinct that guides the arrangement and decoding of meaningful wholes.

All this applies equally to a sentence, a poem, and the universe. The world is made of Highest Speech, though only a yogin, after long practice, can recognize it. The individual actions and words of a poem or play have *rasa* as their essence, though only a trained connoisseur can taste it. The scope might be different, but the faculty is the same, and if there is any doubt about this, Abhinavagupta assures us that *pratibhā*, which, remember, is also literally Highest Speech for him, is absolutely essential to the poetic process: "The assistance of the spectator's *pratibhā* is posited by us as the very life-breath of poetic manifestation."\(^{180}\)

All this becomes even more explicit in a quote from the beginning of *Abhinavabhāratī*, translated by Masson and Patwardhan: "The poet is like Prajāpati, from whose will this world arises. For the poet is endowed with a power to create wondrous and unheard of things. This

\[^{180}\textit{Dhvanyālōka, 68: pratipattrpratibhāsahakāritvam hy asmābhir dyotanasya prānatvenoktam.}\]
power arises from the grace of Parā Vāk ("Highest Speech"), which is just another name for poetic imagination (pratibhā), which has its seat in the poet's own heart, and which is perpetually in motion (udita).\textsuperscript{181} Prajāpati refers here to Śiva in his mode as creator of the universe. "Poetic imagination", in their translation, translates pratibhā, a translation that we can now correct a bit. It is not wrong to say that pratibhā here refers to poetic imagination, but there is no reason to limit it to specifically poetic imagination. Just as a poet is analogous to the creator god, the faculty that allows him to create his poem is the same as the power that creates the universe or that guides the composition of sentences, and it is the same as the faculty that reverses this process.\textsuperscript{182}

These equations are found in his strictly theological texts as well. In Tantrāloka, Abhinavagupta tells us that it is in virtue of immersion in Highest Speech that one becomes an eloquent speaker or a great poet. "Situated in the primordially arising greatness that is essentially pratibhā, they definitely firmly become poets and skilled speakers."\textsuperscript{183} In Parātrīśikavivarana, he equates the creation, maintenance, and withdrawal of the universe with three stages that he

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{181} Masson and Patwardhan, Śāntarasa, 13. The original is found in Abhinavabhāratī, 1:4, and reads: kaver api svahṛdayāyatanasatatodiapratibhābhidhānapara\{sic\}vāgevātāntugrahottavicitrāpūrārthanirmānasaktiśālinah prajāpater iva kāmajanitajagataḥ.

\textsuperscript{182} This, incidentally, is why Gerald Larson (Gerald Larson, "The Aesthetic (Rasāsvāda) and the Religious (Brahmāsvāda) in Abhinavagupta's Kashmir Śaivism," Philosophy East and West. 26.4 [Oct., 1976]: 371-387, 378) was incorrect when he wrote, in an otherwise very good article, that the relishing of rasa is different from the relishing of God for Abhinavagupta because the relishing of rasa is linguistic and therefore conceptual, whereas the relishing of God is non-conceptual and therefore non-linguistic. The misunderstanding is based on a confusion of the Buddhist definition of conceptuality for Abhinavagupta's. As we saw above (n. 58), only the Buddhists define conceptuality as linguistic. Abhinavagupta, for whom Highest Speech/pratibhā is part of God's very being, thinks that language can exist at a level beyond concept. Since this is the case, it can't be the presence of language that distinguishes rasa from an experience of the divine. Abhinavagupta has other ways of distinguishing these.

\textsuperscript{183} Tantrāloka vss. 11.78b-11.79a: ādyodrekamahattve 'pi pratibhātmani niṣṭhitāḥ / dhruvaṃ kavitvavakṛtvaśālītāṃ yānti sarvataḥ //
\end{footnotesize}
The translator of the text takes these as referring to the "spiritual plane," presumably meaning that Śiva creates the universe and the spiritual adept, recognizing himself in it, relishes it. But the three stages could just as easily refer to the realm of art, where a poem is created with effort, exists and appears to the spectator, and then is relished. I can't say certainly that Abhinavagupta intended a reference to poetics here, but surely the ambiguity is not a coincidence. It exists because in Abhinavagupta's theory, the creation and appreciation of a poem parallels the creation and spiritual mastery of a universe.

This carries significant implications that need to be elaborated a bit. Just as Highest Speech is immanently present at every level of the universe, and just as someone who hears a sentence realizes within themselves the same meaning that motivated the speaker, and which pervades each word of the sentence, so the connoisseur of a poem has the same experience of rasa that the poet did, and the words of the poem literally are this rasa in fractured, divided form. This is another reason that Abhinavagupta takes the term manifestation to refer not only to the process of eliciting the rasa, but also to the words of the poem and to the rasa itself. From poet to poem to spectator's experience, the rasa is the same at each of these stages. It changes in form, but not substance (in the same sense in which Catholics distinguish transubstantiation from transformation). So it makes sense that the word for one could also refer to the other. Thus Abhinavagupta explains: "Pratibhā is not inferred by the audience, but rather shines forth [in their experience] due to it entering into them [tadāveśena]." When they become absorbed in

---

184 Parātrīśikāvivarana, 17. The original text is found on in the same volume, in the second, Sanskrit portion of the book, which has its own page numbering. Ibid., 6.

185 Ibid., 17

186 Dhvanyāloka, 93: pratipattīn prati sā pratibhā nānunīyamānā, api tu tadāveśena bhāsamāṇeyarthaḥ.
the poem, the poet's *pratibhā*, which for Abhinavagupta is the same as the poet's experience of *rasa*, is not something hidden or separate from the poem, which the spectators infer from clues left in the poem. It is immanent within the poem itself and appears directly to them; and not simply to them, but *within* them. The word used here for "entering into" [āveśa] is, after all, the same as the word used in tantric ritual for spirit-possession by the deity. Abhinavagupta continues immediately after this by quoting, as a further explanation of this idea, his teacher Bhaṭṭatauta: "Character, poet, and audience all have the same experience."

Those familiar with Sanskrit philosophy will recognize here the old idea of *satkāryavāda*, a theory of causality that holds that effects are always present implicitly within their causes. On this theory, nothing new can ever really come into being, since it is impossible that being could come from non-being. Instead, everything exists as a modification of previous forms of its existence. What we call causation is really just the movement of something from a state of latency to a state of manifestation, not the creation of a new thing, and what we call causes are just the things that serve to make the potentialities manifest. *Satkāryavāda* was a position held by a number of different schools and philosophers, and there are various versions of it. The Sāṃkhya school used it to prove all material reality in the universe is nothing but a modification of a primordial, basic material, which assumes various forms and whose potentialities are made manifest. Abhinavagupta also held this theory of causality, except that as an idealist he uses it to prove not that all things come from a single material substance, but that all things are just a

---


188 *Dhvanyāloka*, 93.: *yad uktam asmad upādhyāya bhāṭṭatautenā nāyakasya kaveḥ śrotuḥ samāno 'nubhāvastataḥ*. 

188
manifestation and modification of Śiva’s mind. The theory, however, is not just a theory about Śiva. It is a global metaphysical theory about the way causation works, which applies to everything in the universe, including Śiva. As such, we can expect that it would apply to poems as well. So the words of the poem are a manifestation. They are a concretization, or an appearance, of an ideal essence that was previously inaccessible, the same way the universe is a manifestation of Śiva's mind, or the way spoken language is a "manifestation" of semantic meaning for Bhartṛhari. And there is no gap between the two. No new thing comes into being. The original thing only changes forms, and various aspects of it become manifest.

Most expressions of this idea in Abhinavagupta's work seem to imply only that the rasa transforms but doesn't transubstantiate as it moves from the mind of the poet, into the poem, and then into the mind of the spectator. In at least one instance, however, Abhinavagupta seems to hint at a further, deeper idea. Not just that a single rasa pervades all these levels, but that the rasa actually divides itself up into all of them, creating all of them together. The very first verse of his commentary on Dhvanyāloka says, "May Sarasvatī's nature, which is called "poet" and

---

189 Isabelle Ratié, "A Śāiva Interpretation of the Satkāryavāda: The Sāṃkhya Notion of Abhivyakti and Its Transformation in the Pratyabhijñā Treatise," in Journal of Indian Philosophy, published online December, 2013. This article contains a much more extensive and very good explanation of how Abhinavagupta and Utpaladeva interpreted this theory.

190 Abhinavagupta does, at one point, briefly deny the relevancy of this and many other metaphysical ideas to the realm of poetics. [Masson and Patwardhan, Śāntarasa, 52 n. 5: "[After a sentence referring to other theorists who discuss things like vijñānavāda, satkāryavāda, sphotatattvam, etc., Abhinavagupta says:] But we have not been taught to take the fruitless trouble of parading bits of wisdom which are not useful to the matter in hand. And so let it rest at that." The original text, found in ibid., reads: atracavicīvēnavādo, dvidhāmidhānam, sphotatattvam, satkāryavādah, ekatvadarśanamītyādi cā draṣṭāvayamīityādi kecit. vayaṃ tu prákṛtānapayogisrutalavasāndarśanamīthyāprāyasāṃśrayamāśīkṣānapūrviṇa ityāstām] But it seems from context that all he is really saying here is that these genres should remain separate, and one needn't go to such great length to spell out their connections explicitly. When we are talking about aesthetics we should talk about aesthetics, and not go into long digressions on metaphysics if they are not needed to prove the point at hand. This doesn't mean, however, that the aesthetics are not founded on a metaphysics. In fact, it would be quite surprising if Abhinavagupta was an adherent of satkāryavāda but felt that in the single instance of poetry, an effect was suddenly somehow different fundamentally from its cause.
"connoisseur," be victorious!" Sarasvatī, the goddess of poetry and learning is almost certainly an epithet here for Highest Speech, since Abhinavagupta takes pains in his *Dhvanyālokalocana* to make the benedictory verses to each of the four chapters line up with each of the four levels of speech, and this is the first chapter, thus the highest level. Praising a goddess here is praising the goddess, Śakti. To say that this goddess is both poet and connoisseur should bring to mind Abhinavagupta's explanation, from the beginning of *Parātrīśikavivarana*, of how God divides himself up into Śiva and Śakti in order to ask himself questions and rediscover his own nature. In the same way, Abhinavagupta seems to say, the existence of poetry is the result of a transcendent unity that divides itself up into poet, poem, and spectator in order to hide itself within a poem and have the joy of finding itself again. If this is the case, the theory would hold that not only does the unified vimarśa that is rasa fracture into separate words, phrases, and characters as it moves from the poet's mind into outward appearance, but this division would be based on a more fundamental division of an aesthetic plenum into poets, poems, and connoisseurs in the first place. In both cases, the fractured appearances are composed, substantially, of the transcendent unity that gives rise to them.

---

191 *Dhvanyāloka*, 1: *sarasvatyāstattvam kavisahṛdayākhyam vijayate.*

192 I thank Ben Williams for this insight.

193 see above, p. 123.

194 This is also how Jayaratha, a Śaiva in Abhinavagupta's lineage writing almost 200 years later, understands it. Jayaratha wrote two works that we know of, one a commentary on Abhinavagupta's *Tantrāloka*, and the other a commentary Ruyyaka's *Alamkārasarvasva*, a compendium and typology of rhetorical figures. Ruyyaka's work on rhetorical figures begins with a short praise of the goddess Highest Speech. In his commentary on this, Jayaratha mimicks the opening portion of Abhinavagupta's *Parātrīśikāvivarana*, the text most clearly associated with the idea that a linguistic plenum divides itself up into the universe, and takes the opportunity to give an extensive etymology of the Sanskrit word for goddess, explaining, at one point: "Highest Speech, called 'manifestation', the soul of poetry... 'plays' [one meaning of the etymological root of the word for goddess], in the sense that, because of the way talented poets and connoisseurs are, she rises up of her own free will." Ruyyaka, *The Alamkārasarvasva of Rājānaka Ruyyaka with the Commentary of Jayaratha*, ed. Girijāprasād Dvivedi, Kāvyamālā no. 35 (Bombay: Nirmaya Sagar Press, 1939), 2: *śaktimatāṃ kavīnāṃ śrotṛṇāṃ ca svabhāvāt svecchayā samucchaliṣṭāṃ kriḍantiṃ.*
In any case, even without this further step Abhinavagupta's theory seems now to have led him into a problem. His emphasis on pratibhā and Bhartṛhari's communicative model threatens to collapse a distinction that had originally been fundamental to Ānandavardhana's theory of manifestation: the difference between manifestation and other kinds of sentence meaning. Recall that Ānandavardhana's original claim is that poetry is enlivened and made beautiful by a unique, indirect mode of communication. This mode of communication is named and described by analogy to Bhartṛhari's description of the way that the sounds of language "manifest" or communicate the ideal structure of a language, prior to any semantic relationship. But there is a problem lurking here, and Ānandavardhana, as we saw, is cautious, even ambiguous, about how he wants the analogy to Bhartṛhari's dhvani to be taken. The analogy to Bhartṛhari's phonetic ideas is helpful, but a complete analogy to Bhartṛhari's model of linguistic communication would undermine his theory by making poetic manifestation essentially the same as all other types of sentence meaning. So he avoids taking things this far.

Abhinavagupta, however, has pushed the analogy to just this point; in fact it isn't even an analogy anymore, for him. With his theologically based ideas about unities that fragment into parts in order to manifest, and which are then understood using the same imaginative capacity that produced them in reverse, Abhinavagupta has quite explicitly extended the theory of poetic manifestation to include Bhartṛhari's levels of speech. So wouldn't this leave him open to the accusation that what he calls manifestation applies to all sentences in general? If pratibhā is both how we create and understand sentences and also how we create and understand poetic moods, what is the difference between rasa as the meaning of a poetic statement and any other kind of meaning?
Abhinavagupta has anticipated this question, and the responses to it are built into his theory, and scattered throughout it. The first response, which is to say the first way in which Abhinavagupta differentiates poetic manifestation and sentence meaning, is to continue Ānandavardhana's argument, detailed in the last chapter, that the final meaning is not the only significant moment in sentence cognition. Sentences really do have stages of meaning, and these can't be dismissed or reduced to the final meaning, so that even if rasa is, in some sense, the meaning of the sentence just like any other meaning, it matters how that meaning is mediated and communicated, whether by denotation, figurative speech, or manifestation. Abhinavagupta, however, bolsters this argument with a brilliant allusion to his theology of monistic idealism and his theory that all appearances are real (the famous ābhāsavāda). If to exist is to be known, he reminds us, than anything that is known exists as it is known. Even in cases of cognitive error, like seeing silver where there is only mother-of-pearl, the illusory silver must exist, in the sense that there really is an illusion taking place. The illusory silver's existence can't be entirely negated by reducing it just to the mother-of-pearl. This goes for all cognitions. The simple fact is that in a universe in which to be known is to exist, nothing that appears in our experience can be entirely reduced to anything else. So this means that if we cognize two different meanings, a literal one and a manifested one, it is impossible to reduce one to the other, simply because it is impossible to reduce any cognition to any other. Both exist because both are known. This,

---

195 This forces Abhinavagupta to draw a very unusual distinction between "illusions" and "reality." Reality is simply defined as what is more "stable", in the sense that it isn't negated at a future point, and also possibly that it is shared. The illusory cognition of silver where there is mother-of-pearl is illusory only in the sense that might disappear at any moment when we realize it is just mother-of-pearl we are seeing, whereas the cognition of mother-of-pearl is more stable in this sense. See John Nemec, “Two Pratyabhijña Theories of Error," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 40.2 (2011): 225-257 for a discussion of this.
philosophically, should prevent anyone from assuming that the manifested meaning is just a type of literal meaning.  

Furthermore, Abhinavagupta differentiates between manifestation and sentence meaning by restricting the definition of "sentence meaning" to syntactic construal and positing it as a distinct stage of sentence cognition on the way to the final meaning.  

Whereas the opponent considers "sentence meaning" to be whatever the final meaning of the sentence is, and claims that the manifested meaning is therefore a type of sentence meaning, Abhinavagupta claims that "sentence meaning" is only a cognition of the syntactic relations of the words, and that there can be a final meaning over and above this. This means that Abhinavagupta actually posits four different types of sentence cognition, rather than Ānandavardhana's three. The first is denotation, which is based on conventional, one-to-one correspondence between words and abstract objects. The second stage is where Abhinavagupta locates sentence meaning, calling it "purport" [tātparyaśakti]. It is the syntactic construal at this second stage that allows the whole sentence to refer to a particular fact or situation in the world, rather than to isolated concepts. If something

_Dhvanyāloka, 48: yad evaṃvidham asti tad bhāti. anena sattvaprayuktaṃ tāvad bhānam iti bhānāt sattvam avagamyate. tena yad bhāti tad asti tathety uktam bhavati. "The thing that exists in this or that way is what appears to us. For it doesn't make any sense that a completely non-existent thing should appear. Even things like silver [which is erroneously perceived where there is mother-of-pearl] are not completely non-existent. Appearances are therefore yolked to reality, and therefore, when something appears, we understand it to exist. Therefore, it is said: whatever appears, that exists in that way." The sentence about silver is not present in the edition of the Dvanyaāloka, which I have been referring to, but is present in the Kāvyamālā edition (Ānandavardhana, The Dvanyāloka of Ānandavardhanāchārya, with the Commentary of Abhinavaguptāchārya, ed. Paṇḍit Durgāprasāda and Wāsudev Laxman Śastrī Panṣikar, Kāvyamālā no. 25 [Bombay: Nīnaya Sagar Press, 1928], 14.)

_Dhvanyāloka, 49: tāatśakti. anena sattvaprayuktaṃ tāvad bhānam iti bhānāt sattvam avagamyate. tena yad bhāti tad asti tathety uktam bhavati. "The thing that exists in this or that way is what appears to us. For it doesn't make any sense that a completely non-existent thing should appear. Even things like silver [which is erroneously perceived where there is mother-of-pearl] are not completely non-existent. Appearances are therefore yolked to reality, and therefore, when something appears, we understand it to exist. Therefore, it is said: whatever appears, that exists in that way." The sentence about silver is not present in the edition of the Dvanyaāloka, which I have been referring to, but is present in the Kāvyamālā edition (Ānandavardhana, The Dvanyāloka of Ānandavardhanāchārya, with the Commentary of Abhinavaguptāchārya, ed. Paṇḍit Durgāprasāda and Wāsudev Laxman Śastrī Panṣikar, Kāvyamālā no. 25 [Bombay: Nīnaya Sagar Press, 1928], 14.)

This and the following summary are based on the very useful analysis of McCrea, Teleology, 366-370, and references are furnished there.

Take a sentence like "The boy is too young to understand." We have a number of different individual concepts here: "boy", "understanding", "youth", etc. Denotation connects each word to these concepts, and syntactic construal allows us to know that the boy is being characterized as young, and that this is causing a lack of understanding, etc, and so this sentence is understood to refer not just to the individual concepts, but to some real boy who doesn't understand something on account of his youth. This is obviously borrowed from the Bhāṭṭa theory of sentence meaning, but it has been subordinated to a larger Bhartṛharian communicative model.
goes wrong at this stage, that is, if there is a blockage in our syntactic construal that doesn't allow it to refer directly to the world, either because of impossibility or non-logicality or something like that, the third stage comes into play: figuration [lakṣanā]. Manifestation as a linguistic process is a fourth stage that transcends these three, and is not reducible to any of them. Ānandavardhana knows nothing of the second stage, and Abhinavagupta seems to introduce it into the theory precisely to ward off the danger of conflating his theory of poetic manifestation with sentence meaning. In some ways this is a cheap move. It just equivocates on what "sentence meaning" is and tries to reduce a philosophical disagreement to a semantic one. To the extent that the move works, however, it does so because it posits a stage of syntactic construal that is different from what we understand to be manifestation, and works with the point outlined above to say that although all sentences wind up communicating a "meaning," some communicate it by syntactic construal and some in other ways, and the difference is not negligible.

However there is a deeper distinction between sentence meaning and poetic manifestation that we can find in Abhinavagupta's philosophy, and it is a difference that serves to distinguish manifestation from all other cognitive processes as well, including metaphor, inference, and perception. It is a distinction that is connected to the idea, first posited by Ānandavardhana but embraced by Abhinavagupta for different reasons, that while plot facts and figures of speech can either be stated or manifested, rasa can only be manifested, and can never be stated directly, not even "in a dream," as Abhinavagupta puts it. The deeper distinction is that while ordinary

---

199 If we say, "The boy is a pig", then denotation gives us all the concepts, but we can't construe them properly: the properties of being a boy and being a pig can't inhere in the same substrate. So we need to interpret one of the words metaphorically, rather than denotatively, in order to construe the sentence.

200 Dhvanyāloka, 50: yastu svapne 'pi na svaśabdavācyo na laukikavyavahārapatitāh. . . rasaḥ, sa. . . rasadhvanir iti. "But rasa, which even in dreams is not directly expressible by words and does not come from ordinary expressions, is called 'manifestation of rasa'."
sentence meaning conveys information, which we become aware of as an object of our cognition, manifestation of *rasa* is an experience of our own subjectivity that needs somehow to be provoked inside us. In fact, Abhinavagupta thinks that it is not only impossible for *rasa* to be presented directly, but that it is impossible that *rasa* could be apprehended as an object at all. In response to a Vedic Ritualist who is trying to reduce manifestation to inference, Abhinavagupta says,

Do you think that the cognition of *rasa* is merely the cognition of another's mental state? Don't get confused about this. If that were the case—if it were just the inference of a mental state like we find in the world—what would make it a *rasa*? The tasting of a *rasa*, which is the relishing of the elements of a poem, is a delight unlike those found in the world, and shouldn't be equated with memory of inference or anything like that. A connoisseur... who encounters the elements of a poem doesn't encounter them in an aloof manner.\(^{201}\)

We see clearly here the *rasa* is absolutely not the acquisition of information. That might characterize inferential awareness, or cognition of a sentence meaning, but *rasa* is a subjective experience that takes place within the spectator (or begins within him, even if it transcends his limited personality). Mere awareness of another person's mental state, Abhinavagupta argues here, is characterized by aloofness and distance, and so it can't involve the kind of savoring and tasting that characterizes *rasa*.

But why should this be the case? The answer is not actually all that clear. It is perfectly possible to be emotionally affected by inferences we make, especially if they are inferences about the moods and experiences of people (or characters) we care about. And certainly we might see someone having an experience and feel sympathetically towards them, or repulsed by them. Why isn't this an experience we might savor? Perhaps in the ordinary world we might feel

\(^{201}\) *Dhanyāloka*, 162: *kim atra paracittavṛttimātre pratipattir eva rasapratipattir abhimatā bhavataḥ? na caivaṃ bhramitavyam. evaṃ hi lokagatavicārvitvyanumānaṃ tātra iti kā rasatā? yas tv alaukikacamatkārātā rasāsvādāḥ kāvyagatavicārvitvācārvanāpṛāṇo nāśau smaranānumānasāmyena khyātikārāpātrikartavyaḥ. kim tu laukikanakāryakāraṇānumānādīnaṃ samśkrtaḥrdayo vibhāvādikamāṃ pratipadyamāna eva na tājaśthyena pratipadyate.
odd savoring someone else's pain, and so this would prevent us from aestheticizing it. But in literature or the theater, ordinary moral considerations have already been obviated by commonalization. We know, in the back of our minds, that the emotion pertains to a fictional character and not a real person. So this can't really explain Abhinavagupta's statement. And actually, the reality or fictionality of the emotion isn't even the main issue in his statement. It is not just the reality but specifically the *objectivity* of the mental state that Abhinavagupta says prevents our savoring it. And the more carefully one thinks about this, the less obvious is the reason why. Does Abhinavagupta just whimsically or arbitrarily assert that inferential knowledge of a mental state is "aloof" and devoid of aesthetic savoring, or is there actually a logic behind it?

In fact there is actually a good reason for this argument, but as with many other issues, it only becomes clear against the background of Abhinavagupta's theology. This is the last major area of confluence that we will explore. Simply put, the reason is that it is a deep and important part of Abhinavagupta's theology that subjectivity can't be objectified without losing its character as subjectivity.

This idea shows up in various ways, mostly in his commentaries on the *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā*. In the aesthetics, it shows up as the notion that *rasa*, which is a form of *vimarśa* and thus, in Abhinavagupta's world, a form of subjectivity, would lost its nature as a form of subjective awareness if it were encountered as belonging to someone else. Hence Abhinavagupta's question above: "What would make such an object a *rasa*?" The question might be paraphrased as: "What would make it *vimarśa*?" This notion of subjectivity also explains why Abhinavagupta "follows" Bhaṭṭanāyaka in locating the *rasa* within the spectator rather than on the stage. He doesn't do this just because Bhaṭṭanāyaka was famous, or because he thought the idea was interesting in a vague way. Abhinavagupta adopts this aspect of Bhaṭṭanāyaka's theory
because of his own theological conclusions about the nature of subjectivity and experience, which are woven into his literary theory and his theology in general.

In the Īśvarapratyabhijñārikā the idea first shows up early on in the first book, where the author, Utpaladeva, has been arguing with Buddhists, specifically Buddhists belonging to the philosophical school founded by Dharmakīrti. These Buddhists (and many other Buddhists as well) famously disputed the idea that there is any stable or persistent self that underlies the succession of experiences. Experience, they argue, is nothing but a rapid passage of individual moments of awareness, each of which is unique and completely unconnected to the others by anything other than genealogy: each moment of awareness disappears in an instant, but before it does it gives rise to a subsequent moment of awareness, like a seed producing a tree which produces a seed which produces the next tree and so on. Each tree lasts only for an instant, and each tree inherits the momentum, which is to say the karma, of all the previous trees' experiences and actions. The feeling we all have that there is a stable self, or indeed anything persistent at all, underlying this succession of awareness-moments is an illusion produced by their rapid succession and by a deep, mistaken perceptual habit built into them that each has received from the previous moment.  

Śaivas of Utpaladeva's school disputed this theory, claiming by a kind of transcendental argument that many facets of experience would be impossible to explain without positing some kind of stable self that underlies experience and ties it all together. The self in question is of course Śiva, and the experience from which Utpaladeva begins his argument is memory. Our capacity for memory, Utpaladeva argues, would be impossible to explain if there were no self. The argument is long and multi-faceted, and recapitulating the entire thing would take up too

---

202 This succession extends back infinitely into the past, and Buddhists generally avoid the question of how it all started by writing it off as pointless, or unanswerable.
much space. What is important for our purposes is the particular argument that Utpaladeva makes at 1.3.3. This verse is part of a larger argument in which Utpaladeva explores how memory takes place. The first possibility, which the Buddhists put forward, is that memory takes place when a current state of awareness apprehends the same object as the original awareness. To "remember" the cup one saw yesterday is just to see it again. Utpaladeva points out that this can't be the case, because this wouldn't be a memory, just a re-experience of a remembered object. There would be no difference, phenomenologically speaking, between seeing a cup now and remembering the cup one saw yesterday. So the Buddhists then try to argue that a memory is not an awareness of the remembered object, but an awareness of the former cognition of that object, which persists latently in the stream of experiences as part of the karmic inheritance discussed above. When this latent tendency is re-awakened in the mind, due to an external stimulus or something else, it gives rise to a moment of awareness in which the mind takes as its object a previous moment of awareness, the way it might ordinarily cognize an external or internal object, like a cup or a mood. No stable self is required for this to happen. Memory is simply a moment of awareness that cognizes a previous moment of awareness, which has persisted within it latently and has been reawakened. Behind these individual moments of awareness interacting with each other, there is nothing.

However, Utpaladeva also thinks this is impossible, and for a very important reason. At 1.3.3 he says: "A cognition is only self-revealing. It cannot be known by another (cognition), just as the cognition of a taste [cannot be known] through the cognition of form."\textsuperscript{203} Utpaladeva explains what he means in his auto-commentary, but in order to see that Abhinavagupta also holds this position we should look at his commentary on this verse, from

\textsuperscript{203}\textit{Iśvarapratyabhijñākārikā} vs. 1.3.2: \textit{drksvābhāsaiva nānyena vedyā rūpadṛśevā drk. rase} . . .
īśvarapratyabhijñāvimārinī. There, Abhinavagupta explains an idea we have already seen: that self-awareness is the *sine qua non* of sentience, or subjectivity. "Cognition means awareness, and that is distinguished from something insentient by its self-illuminating form."²⁰⁴ It is only self-awareness, *vimāraśa*, that separates sentient from insentient objects, and not just the capacity to contain facsimiles of external objects. Both mirrors and sentient beings reproduce external objects within themselves. But only a sentient being is aware of itself reflecting objects, meaning that only the sentient being is a subject; the mirror is simply an object in which other objects appear. Since this is the case, a cognition only *is* a cognition insofar as it illuminates itself. "If one cognition appears to another, then it is not self-manifest, for this [i.e., to appear to itself] is the very definition of self-illumination. And if it appears to itself, then it is unconnected to another, and so how does it make sense to say it appears 'in' another cognition, since 'appearing in' is a kind of connection?"²⁰⁵ If one cognition is illuminated by another cognition it thereby loses the characteristic that makes it a cognition, which is to say it becomes something entirely different from what it originally was.

Our memories are cognitions, and as such they marked by subjectivity; it is essential, not accidental, to what they are. This is what makes them memories, rather than just the random appearance of a previously cognized object in our mind stream. If they were to become the object of a subsequent cognition they would cease to be moments of cognition, and become simply insentient objects of which one is aware. But memories are clearly cognitions. Therefore Utpaladeva concludes, and Abhinavagupta agrees, that memory is only fully intelligible as the self-awareness of a stable subject; a self which underlies the present and the previous cognitions

²⁰⁴ Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimārinī, 1:94: *drk jñānam, tac ca jaḍāt vibhidyate svaprakāśaikarūpatayā.*

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 1:95-96: *paratra yadi drk bhāṣeta tarhi na sā svābhāsā, idam eva hī svaprakāśasya lakṣāṇam. svayaṃ hī yadi prakāśeta tadā parena saha asambhandhāt sambandhaprāṇā katham paratra.*
both, and unifies them within its own self-awareness [vimarśa], as aspects of its own subjectivity. "Indeed, that free one, the perceiver of the previously experienced object even though he exists at a later time, reflects upon [vimrśan] something as 'that.' This is called 'remembering' n206 To remember is to be aware of yourself as the stable, enduring subject underlying both the original experience and the current memory of the experience.

This theory, incidentally, is why vimarśa is different from ordinary kinds of self-awareness or self-reflection, and can't be understood as a form of the mind's self-objectification. It isn't the mind turning its own experiences into an object of cognition that counts as vimarśa. That would just be an awareness of something that has been abstracted out of your subjectivity and is no longer part of it.207 Vimarśa, on the other hand, is a subjective self-relationship that remains clinging to the mind's back, so to speak, whenever it tries to step around and look at itself. Or to put it another way: you can look at yourself in the mirror and in a certain sense it's correct to say it's yourself you see. But the mirror image, whatever it is, isn't a being endowed with subjectivity as you are; it's something fundamentally different. The mirror image isn't aware that it's a reflected image. You, however, are, and it is this more intimate self-awareness of yourself as a being currently looking at itself in the mirror that is the scope of vimarśa.

This issue doesn't only pertain within a single mind-stream. It also extends to the relationship between people: the contents of someone else's mind can't become present to me as

206 Iśvarapratyabhijñākārikā, vs. 1.4.1: sa hi pūrvānubhūtarthopalabdhā parato 'pi san / vimrśan sa iti svairī smaratīty apadiśyate //

207 This is precisely the argument that bolster's the Śaiva theory of memory that we just saw. If we objectify our own memories they can no longer be called "memories," that is, they are no longer cognitions. Trying to remember something by taking a former cognition as the object of our current cognition casts the former cognition outside of our subjectivity and thus turns it into a dead object, devoid of subjectivity, and thus undeserving of the name "memory." Trying to remember in this way would be like trying to "remember" a cup by simply looking at a picture of a cup. The picture might jog your memory, but the picture itself is not your memory. It is an object. Your memory is a part of your subjectivity, i.e. it is a cognition, and thus indelibly self-aware.
cognitions if I encounter them as objects. This compels Abhinavagupta, as it compelled Utpaladeva before him, to offer an unusual answer to an old question: how do we know that other minds exist? Abhinavagupta's answer to this question is at the heart why he locates rasa in the spectator.

Many philosophers in ancient South Asia asked this question, and there were a variety of answers. One common answer, put forward by Buddhists, is that we can infer the existence of other minds. We are aware, within ourselves, of a correlation between subjectivity and certain kinds of physical behavior, and so when we see that kind of physical behavior outside of us, we are obligated to infer that it originates in a subjectivity. This answer, however, is unavailable to Abhinavagupta, for the reasons we have just discussed. If we were to try to infer the presence of subjectivity behind others' actions, whatever it is that appeared to us as the object of our inference wouldn't be a subjectivity, precisely because it appears to us as an object.

So how is it that we don't fall into solipsism, surrounded as we are by subjectivities to which we have no access as subjectivities? Abhinavagupta's answer, and it is Utpaladeva's as well, is that we are aware of other subjectivities by means of a special kind of awareness called āha, which is a Sanskrit term that translates roughly as guess, supposition, or assumption. Āha, for Abhinavagupta, is distinguished from inference and direct perception in that it has elements of both, and yet doesn't make the subjectivity of the other present to us as an object. In fact, it is not a form of knowledge for him, but a form of recognition. That is, it isn't the introduction of a

---

208 This aspect of Abhinavagupta's philosophy was described very well in Ratié /Isabelle Ratié, "Otherness in the Pratyabhijñā Philosophy," Journal of Indian Philosophy 35.4 (2007): 313-370.), and the following summary is based on her article. The issue is enormously complex, more so than my brief summary can allow, and Ratié offers a much more complete analysis.

new piece of information, but a reinterpretation of information already present. In this case the
information present is the awareness that another being is engaging in willful actions, and their
subjectivity becomes available to us not as the objectified product of an inference based on this
behavior, but as the recognition that this action, which we have already apprehended, is a
manifestation of subjectivity. This is because subjectivity is *vimarśa*, and Abhinavagupta, as we
have already seen, thinks of *vimarśa* is a kind of action. *Vimarśa* is simply an extremely rarified
form of action, whereas the physical action that is available to our senses is a sort of congealed,
gross form of it. But both are the same. So when we encounter conscious action we only have to
*recognize* what we are perceiving is an outward manifestation of a subjectivity that is not directly
available to us.

The precise nature of how this works, and the complex philosophical arguments
Abhinavagupta uses to distinguish it from ordinary inference, is not as important right now as the
fact that *ūha* is distinct, for Abhinavagupta, from objective forms of knowledge. Also important
is the obvious parallels this bears to the aesthetic experience, in which a *rasa*, which is a form of
*vimarśa*, is manifested in a congealed, external form and then *recognized*, that is, transformed
back into the *vimarśa* of which it is a manifestation, without being objectified and thus losing its
character as subjectivity. In other words, what we have here is the deep philosophical reasoning
that grounds Abhinavagupta's conclusion that *rasa* can't be the apprehension, inferential or
verbal or otherwise, of the mood of a character.

Lest one think this account of subjectivity is "merely" a philosophical problem and not a
theological one, it is important to point out that these considerations apply most of all to the
ultimate subject, Śiva, who, because he is the ultimate subject, is also ultimate example of
something which cannot be objectified. At *Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā* 2.3.15-16, for example,
Utpaladeva concludes a discussion of the various "means of knowledge" [pramāṇa], by pointing out that although these means of knowledge grasp objects, they are inapplicable to Śiva, who is the recipient and precondition of all knowledge, not its object. "What means of knowledge could there be for the Highest Lord... the original knowing subject, always already manifest, who receives all knowledge [and] is like the smooth wall on which the variegated universe is painted?" Abhinavagupta, commenting on this verse, gives a lovely verse of his own, expressing the same idea: "Everyone feels shame in himself upon realizing he is the object of [others'] cognition. How then could the Great Lord put up with this?"

In fact, the entire project of the Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā is framed with this problem in mind, and the parallels between aesthetics and theology thus also help us understand how that text was supposed to be therapeutically useful. The second verse of the entire text, which we have already looked at above, but which we will now be able to understand more fully, sets the limits for what the text will accomplish, asking rhetorically, "What intelligent being could (ever) establish a proof or refutation regarding the agent and knower, the Self — the Lord, established from the beginning?" Abhinavagupta, in his Vimarśinī commentary, gives a long comment on this verse, arguing by reductio that a self-luminous subjectivity can't establish the existence of anything other than itself, which is already the Lord, and which is already known.

---

210 Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā vss. 2.3.15-16: viśvavaicitryacitrasya samabhittitalopame / viruddhābhāvasaṃsparśa paramārthhasatīśvare // pramātari purāṇe tu sarvadā bhātavigrahe / kim pramāṇaṃ navābāsaḥ sarvapramitībhāgini //

211 Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivrtimimarśinī, 1:162: yatprameyākṛto 'smīti sarvo 'pyātmanī lajjate / kathām prameyikaranāṃ sahataṃ tanmaheśvarah // I'm not quite certain of the meaning of sahataṃ in the lasta pada, and follow Torella (Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā, 86 n. 9) in my translation.

212 Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā vs. 1.1.2: kartari jñātari svātmāny ādisiddhe maheśvare / ajadātmā nisēdhāṃ vā siddhim vā vidadhīta kah //

213 Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī 1:29-35. The commentary is too long to reproduce here.
explains in the next verse that, since the Lord can't be objectified but is already part of one's own subjectivity, the text he is writing won't provide new, objective knowledge about the Lord, but will serve rather to remind the reader of what he already implicitly knows, to help him recognize himself for what he truly is. "However, even when this [truth about the nature of oneself as the Lord] is seen, it is not discerned, due to the force of delusion. Recognition [of this] is pointed out by means of bringing to light [his] powers." Abhinavagupta gives another long comment on this verse, explaining at one point that this recognition "is not the operation of a causal agent on the Lord, nor is it the operation of something that gives knowledge. Rather, it is nothing but the removal of delusion." In addition to the impossibility of objectifying subjectivity, what is also at issue here is the idea that while a means of knowledge makes a certain fact known for the first time, Śiva is always already known, and so can't be "discovered" in this way. He can only be recognized. And this recognition is brought about by removing what stands in the way of that recognition.

What is important to see is that all these considerations show up similarly in Abhinavagupta's literary theory, and the solutions are the same in both cases. Compare the passages we have just seen on the recognition of Śiva to the discussion Abhinavagupta has with a doubting Vedic Ritualist in Dhvanyālokalocana. Abhinavagupta, explaining his position, tells the Vedic Ritualist, "The relishing [of rasa] is a manifestation. It doesn't inform us of anything,

---

214 Iśvarapratyabhijñākārikā vs. 1.1.3: kiṃ tu mohavaśād asmin dṛṣṭe 'py anupalakṣite / śaktyāvīśkaraṇeyena prayābhijñopadarṣyate //

215 Iśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśini, 1:38: na kārakavyāpāro bhagavatī, nāpi jñāpakavyāpāro 'yam, api tu mohāpasaraṇamātram etat.

216 Recall that this is part of the definition, shared across Sanskrit philosophy, of a valid means of knowledge. Novelty is a requirement.
like objective knowledge [pramāṇa] does, nor is it produced, like the functioning of a cause.\(^{217}\)

When the Vedic Ritualist, puzzled, asks what the poetic elements do if they don't inform us of anything and don't produce the rasa, Abhinavagupta answers that they merely "assist" the relishing of the rasa,\(^{218}\) which is another way of saying they clear the obstacles to rasa, just like theology clears the obstacles to recognition of the Lord. When the Vedic Ritualist retorts that he knows of nothing else like this in the world, Abhinavagupta replies that this is why he calls it "otherworldly."\(^{219}\) When the Vedic Ritualist retorts that what Abhinavagupta is saying means that there is no way to prove that rasa exists, Abhinavagupta replies, "No, for it is established by our own self-awareness."\(^{220}\)

This parallels almost perfectly the description Abhinavagupta gives of the purpose of the Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā. This is because both Abhinavagupta's theology and his aesthetics are concerned with how one can evoke the experience of self-aware subjectivity without objectifying it. In addition, since rasa is nothing but a particular kind of awareness of one's own latent emotional tendencies, it is, just like Śiva's being, always implicit within our mind. So it can't be produced, properly speaking, or made known for the first time. It can only be manifested, meaning that it can only be brought from a state of hidden latency to a state of conscious recognition. The fact that this experience has no other parallels in the world is true. We have no access to anything like this outside of our own subjectivity; by definition we can't objectively

\(^{217}\) Dhvanyālōka, 164: carvaṇātrābhivyāñjanam eva, na tu jñāpanam, pramāṇavyāpāravat. nāpy utpādānam, hetuvyāpāravat.

\(^{218}\) Ibid.: nanu vibhāvādir atra kiṃ jñāpako hetuḥ, uta kārakah? na jñāpako na kārakah, api tu carvaṇopayogī.

\(^{219}\) Ibid.: nanu kvaitad dṛṣṭam anyatra. yata eva dṛṣṭam tata evālaukikam ity uktam.

\(^{220}\) Ibid.: nanv apramāṇakam etat; na, svasaṃvedanasiddhatvāt.
encounter any parallels to this. We can only find it in a variety of forms and to differing degrees in various aspects of our experiences.

One small problem, however, still remains. In literature, even if the result is an experience of blissful subjectivity, we still begin from an awareness of objective actions and characters, presented to us as characters on stage or on the page. Once our own emotional memories have been stirred, the special context of the theater and the artificial nature of the literary elements helps dissolve the obstacles to rasa, allowing us to apprehend a blissful, transpersonal subjectivity. But how do they get stirred in the first place? How does it happen that the rasa passes between the poem, an object, and the spectator, a subject, without falling into the contradictions of objectified subjectivity? Ūha, on its own, does not answer this question. Ūha explains how we know that other beings have subjectivity. It doesn't explain how we come to experience the specific content of that subjectivity.

The explanation for this, which we are now ready to make proper sense of, lies in Abhinavagupta's periodic use of a concept that seems to be original to him, and which he either calls a "concordance of the heart" [hrdayasamvāda], "identification" [tanmayībhāva], "transference" [saṃkramana], or a few other terms, or else describes using the metaphor of the spectator's heart as a polished mirror. The idea is an extension of the notion of pratibhā, the faculty by which we understand sentences. It involves a process of assimilating the information of a sentence such that it appears within you, as your own thought.

This is why, in a crucially important section of his commentary on the Nāṭyaśāstra, Abhinavagupta begins his description of the manifestation of rasa with a description of a similar process in the cognition of certain Vedic sentences.221 When, in the Vedas, one reads accounts of

---

221 For a compelling argument that Abhinavagupta may in fact have gotten the idea of saṃkramana, as well as his particular examples of Vedic sentences, from Kumārila, see Ollett, "Ritual Texts and Literary Texts." David, "Time,
famous persons performing difficult sacrifices far in the past, the information, which begins as a set of objective facts pertaining to distant characters, doesn't remain objective. Reading praise of famous sacrificers, a proper reader doesn't merely have a cognition of their deeds, but comes to feel a compulsion to imitate them. This happens, says Abhinavagupta, by means of suppression and transforming of the tense and grammatical person of the verbs in the sentence, such that "They sacrificed" becomes "I should sacrifice." This is what the faculty of pratiḥcā is capable of doing, and the description, placed where it is, implies that a similar process occurs in aesthetics. "Concordance of the heart" is the term used in aesthetics for just this kind of process of transformation and assimilation. It was concordance of the heart that allowed Vālmīki to "identify" with the suffering of the curlew bird and transform it into relishing in his heart.²²² Concordance of the heart "helps" [upakṛ] the elements of the poem attain an otherworldly nature.²²³ By means of the concordance of the heart, the words of the poem instantly pervade the spectator "like fire through dry wood, or water through a clean cloth."²²⁴ Or, another way of saying this is that the spectator's heart is like a mirror that reflects the elements of the poem.

²²² See above, pp. 183-184.

²²³ Dhvanyāloka, 197: hrdayasamvādādyupakṛtāyā vibhāvādīsāmagryā lokottararūpatvāt.

²²⁴ Dhvanyāloka, 224: samarpakatvam samyag arpakatvam hrdayasamvādena pratipattraṇ prati svātmāveśena vyāpārakatvam jhāṭit śuṣkakāśṭhāniddṛṣṭāntena akalusodakadṛṣṭāntena ca. The daṇḍa has been moved from its original place based on the correction by Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, Dhvanyāloka, 260.
within it; an image Abhinavagupta uses a few times.²²⁵ Through experience in the world and experience reading poetry, a spectator can even "polish" the mirror of their heart, improving their sympathetic response and intensifying their capacity to recognize rasa.²²⁶ Mirror imagery is pervasive in Abhinavagupta's writings, and the topic is broad enough for a chapter of its own.²²⁷ The significance of the image here is that heart-as-mirror explains how one can experience a form of subjective awareness begins with an apprehension of objective poetic elements but doesn't remain objective. For theological reasons, Abhinavagupta felt sure that in order to be apprehended as rasa, the vimarśa of the poet must first be manifested as a poem and must then be reflected in the heart of the spectator, where he can gaze inwards at it and taste his own manifested awareness, beyond the limits of his individuality.

Conclusion: Ethics and Abhinavagupta's Aesthetics

Abhinavagupta's aesthetics follows Bhaṭṭanāyaka's in various ways: generalization, rasa as a form of the spectator's experience, a poem as a factor that elicits that experience. Most significantly, Abhinavagupta shares with Bhaṭṭanāyaka the idea that aesthetic experience is a variant of religious experience. He does not seem to have taken this idea solely from

²²⁵ See, for example, Dhvanyāloka, 40: kāvyānuśilābhhyāsvaśād viśadībhūte manomukure . . . "in the mirror of the heart, polished by the practice and habit of poetry . . ."; and Dhvanyāloka, 91: sahrdayaḥḥṛdayadaranpanamadhyāḥ . . . "In the midst of the connoisseur's heart-mirrors . . ."; and Gnoli, Aesthetic Experience, 89-90: vimalamukurakalpibhutanijāḥṛdayaḥ . . . sāmājīko . . . "The spectator, whose own heart has become like a stainless mirror . . ." Masson, Ingalls, and Patwardhan, Dhvanyāloka, 72 n. 9.

²²⁶ See previous note.

²²⁷ Mirror imagery and reflections, for example, underly the entire structure of the Parātrīśikāvivaraṇa, which describes the external universe as a mirrored inversion of principles internal to Śiva, describing the divine principles for the first half of the text and then flipping them around to describe them in reverse as the universe is described. For a discussion of this see the introduction to the edition by Singh (Parātrīśikāvivaraṇa, introduction).
Bhaṭṭanāyaka; it is present in many Śaiva religious texts that preceded both of them. What Abhinavagupta seems to have done is given this idea a thick philosophical description, using terms and concepts borrowed from Bhaṭṭanāyaka. Though this idea is the deepest similarity between the two thinkers, it is also the most fundamental division between them, because of how differently they understand the "divine relishing" that grounds their theories. Without understanding this, it seems very puzzling that Abhinavagupta would borrow so much from Bhaṭṭanāyaka and yet ultimately abandon him, using the borrowed ideas as a way to "fix" the theory of poetic manifestation, which is thereby completely changed. But the theological background makes it clear why Abhinavagupta didn't sign on fully to Bhaṭṭanāyaka's theory. Bhaṭṭanāyaka's aesthetics were based on a form of non-dual Vedānta theology, in which false or illusory linguistic statements trigger within the hearer a blissful experience where both subject and object disappear and the mind rests in its own joyful clarity. The mind, in this state, does not apprehend anything; not an object and not even itself. This is because its experience in this state is a small taste of its own deepest nature, which is blissful and actionless awareness without subject or object.

Abhinavagupta's criticism of this aesthetic theory is exactly parallel to the kind of theological criticisms that a non-dual Śaiva would make of a non-dual Vedāntin. Where a non-dual Vedāntin sees illusory statements that nevertheless have some positive effect on the listener,

\[228\] The process of the aestheticization of Tantric ritual that preceded Abhinavagupta has been extensively treated by Sanderson, mostly in Sanderson, "Purity and Power," and also in Alexis Sanderson, "The Śaiva Exegesis of Kashmir," in Tantric Studies in Memory of Hélène Brunner, ed. Dominic Goodall and André Padoux, (Pondicherry: Institut Français d'Indologie / École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2007): 231-443.
Abhinavagupta sees statements that are real manifestations of a more fundamental unity.\textsuperscript{229}

Where non-dual Vedāntins see blissful awareness that has no subject or object, Abhinavagupta sees blissful awareness that is blissful precisely because it is a deeper form of subjective self-apprehension. And the deepest form of this subjectivity, for Abhinavagupta, is Śiva, who actively apprehends himself, whereas the God of the non-dual Vedāntins simply rests in static bliss without any relationship to himself.

On the other hand, theology also explains the reason that Abhinavagupta sticks with the theory of poetic manifestation despite its many problems. The changes he introduces—not all of them, but most of them—are fully intelligible only in light of a theological project. Both Abhinavagupta's aesthetic theory and his theology are premised on a notion of blissful self-apprehension that is subjectivity itself, and so can't be objectified. Subjectivity, for Abhinavagupta, is only accessible to us as our own subjectivity. Any other subjectivity appears to us as objectified to a certain degree unless recognized through the "guess" of īha or the reflection in the heart's mirror. In specifically aesthetic terms, poetic manifestation is Abhinavagupta's way of explaining how we experience another subjectivity without objectifying it, by having it elicited and evoked within us by means of a indirect process of sympathetic identification (hrdayasamvāda) and mirroring. The subjectivity that we so experience belonged first to the poet, but the aesthetically significant moment is when we recognize the unity of these elements and experience the rasa for ourselves; or perhaps, more properly speaking, when we lose ourselves in it. Manifestation describes a poetic process that elicits this experience without

\textsuperscript{229}See for example Īśvarapratyabhijñāvimarśinī, 2:180, where Abhinavagupta critiques the incoherence between Vedāntins' claims that scripture is a valid means of knowledge and their claim that anything dualistic is entirely illusory and hence entirely false: bhāsanam avadhīryāgamāikapramāṇako 'yaṁ abheda iti ced āgamo 'pi bhedātmaka evāvastubhūtaḥ pramāṇapramāṇaprāmeyavibhāgaś ceti na kinćid etat. Cited and translated in Ratié, Le soi et l'autre, 679.
presenting the *rasa* to us directly, where it would become objectified and lose its special character.

The aesthetic experience of subjectivity that Abhinavagupta calls *rasa* is also "manifested" in the sense that it is a latent tendency in the spectator's mind that is made manifest, but not produced there. This is related to the theological notion that subjectivity can never be produced or made known for the first time. Just like Śiva's subjectivity, which he calls Śakti, or Highest Speech, and which pervades the universe, *rasa* is always present in one form or another within us. An experience of it is not knowledge of a new thing, it is simply a new way of seeing or understanding, of *recognizing*, the full meaning of something that we ordinarily overlook. This experience is our own, but only in a very peculiar sense. The special conditions of the theater or the poetic recital, which preclude any personal involvement or action on the connoisseur's part, ensure that the subjectivity that one recognizes in the experience of *rasa* is not an individual subjectivity, tied to a personality and a particular time and place, but a transpersonal subjectivity, which brings us closer Śiva's state of being.

Such an experience is blissful because in a universe formed out of Śiva's mind all experiences like this are blissful. That is to say, bliss is the natural state of the subjectivity at the foundation of the universe. When this subjectivity hides itself within appearances, this experience of bliss is temporarily lost, and the mind begins to feel itself lacking in things. It then chases after appearances and experiences, and this restless searching for satisfaction is the very definition of pain. But the bliss is always there, waiting to be recovered, and it is experienced just to the extent that the mind rests in its own subjectivity without needing anything outside itself, whether this be the comparatively weak experience of a good meal, the stronger experience of *rasa*, or the final and perfect experience of divine recognition of oneself as Śiva.
Abhinavagupta also uses the idea of poetic manifestation to refer to the way in which a poem is the congealed, outward appearance of the poet's experience. The poem itself is a manifestation: a visible form of something that otherwise could not enter the realm of appearances. The theological corollary to this idea is the religious vision of a universe that is created when a fundamental and primordial experience of blissful self-apprehension dynamically stimulates itself and overflows outwards into manifestation. While it exists in this state of outward manifestation its true nature is "hidden," but it is still substantially the same. No other, second thing has covered it over, and no ontological break or gap exists between Śiva and the world, just as there is no ontological gap between the words of the poem and the poet's experience. In both cases the form has changed, become fragmented and divided and unrecognizable to the untrained eye, but the substance, which is transcendent, blissful subjectivity, has remained the same.

So a poet is like Śiva, a poem is like the universe, and the literary connoisseur is a religious adept. The religious adept's experience is deeper and more permanent, but the connoisseur's experience is much easier to achieve. Both require trained skill, either ritual and meditation, or "polishing" the mirror of one's heart by reading a lot of poetry. And once the spectator recognizes the rasa and experiences it within himself, his experience is the same as the poet's, just as the religious adept comes to recognize his primordial identity as Śiva and experiences what Śiva experiences. Poet and connoisseur are united together in their experience of the essence of the poem, and the movement back and forth between them is a dialectic grounded in the more fundamental, theological dialectic of Śiva dividing himself into Śiva and Śakti, manifesting a universe, and then blissfully remembering his own identity.
This theological grounding for the aesthetic experience also allows us to say, in our terms, that it is an ethical experience. It should be obvious at this point that the bliss of transpersonal subjectivity is valuable in itself. The reason I want to call it an "ethical" experience is that it is an experience of something beyond which there is nothing more important, valuable, or good; the more one is immersed in it the more one can be said to be living a good life, and one's life should, ideally, be geared entirely towards cultivating this experience. In his own hymn, which he quotes at the beginning of his Īśvaraprtyabhijñāvimarśini, Abhinavagupta writes: "Lord, identification with you is the telos of all action, all injunction. Those who strive further for [another] result here stay dumb forever without end."230 This "identification" is nothing other than an experience of blissful, inward-turned vimarśa, and this vimarśa is not an instrument towards some other end and doesn't lead towards anything else. Rasa, as a "drop" of this divine experience, participates in the value of this experience, and cultivating a capacity for it is a "good" thing to do, in the full ethical sense of the term. So even though the conditions of the theater or poem mean that the ordinary requirements of action are suspended, the experience of rasa is still deeply ethical.

What is more difficult to see, and recent scholarship has begun to reveal, is that this highest moral good is also the basis for action that is ethical in the more ordinary sense, although it still takes precedence and isn't reduced to an instrument for producing that action. In a recent article,231 Isabelle Ratié has shown that in Abhinavagupta's Śaivism, compassionate action isn't thought to originate from an awareness of others' suffering, as it does in Buddhism, but rather it

---

230 Īśvaraprtyabhijñāvimarśini, 1:24: phalam kriyānāṃ athavā vidhīnāṃ paryantatas tvanmayataiva deva / phalepsavo ye punar atra teṣāṃ mūḍhā sthitih syād anavasthayai //

originates from an awareness of one's own bliss, which, remember, is the same as one's own experience of transpersonal subjectivity. Experiencing one's own bliss more deeply enables one to act compassionately and ethically towards others. Thus, it makes sense that immersing oneself in this kind of experience by means of literature should result, down in the line, in a greater capacity for ethical action. Complementary to this idea is Abhinavagupta's assertion that literature removes various kinds of pain and exhaustion. For if compassionate action is based on bliss, then pain and exhaustion would naturally interfere with compassionate action, and their removal would be conducive to it. In Masson and Patwardhan's translation, Abhinavagupta tells us:

Drama, thus described, 'creates mental repose' [vīśrāntijanana], that is, it destroys the flow of pain for all spectators who are overcome either with pain such as comes from illness, who are afflicted with tiredness which comes from the inconveniences caused by a long journey etc., or are suffering from sorrow when one's relations, etc., die. . .

He then goes on to say, "When their sufferings are overcome, drama becomes the cause of dhṛti [perseverance]. . . thus dhṛti etc., having delight for their essence, apply in their proper order to the spectators. . ." Dhṛti here is also an ethical quality, in the broad sense that it is a quality required in order to live a good life.

This final comment of Abhinavagupta's points us in an interesting direction. For Abhinavagupta does list moral instruction [vyutpatti] as one of literature's purposes, and he thinks that the delight afforded by rasa is somehow closely connected to this instruction. He tells us in the Locana, "Princes who are not educated in scripture. . . can be given instruction in the four [ethical] goals of man [sic] only by entering into their hearts. And what enters in to the heart

---

232 Masson and Patwardhan, Śāntarasa, 56-57.
233 ibid. 57.
is the relish of *rasa*." This was a common idea in ancient South Asia: that literature is a form of moral instruction that is more enticing, and thus more effective, than religious commands. However, Abhinavagupta clearly subordinates this kind of instruction to pleasure, saying, for example, "Of instruction and joy, joy is the chief goal."

The key to reconciling these two statements is to see that Abhinavagupta doesn't really think of the pleasure of poetry and the moral instruction it affords as two separate goals, because he has a theology in which appearance and essence—the words and actions of a scene and the ethical, pleasurable *rasa* underlying them—are not two ontologically distinct things. "Pleasure and moral instruction don't have separate forms, because they both occupy the same realm."

---

234 Masson, Ingalls, and Patwardhan, *Dhvanyāloka*, 437. The original is *Dhvanyāloka*, 368-369: *iha prabhunaṁmitēbhyaḥ śrutismṛtprabhṛtiḥbhyaḥ kartavyam idam ity ājñāmātraparamārthebhyaḥ śāstrebhyaḥ ye na vyutpannāḥ, na cāpyasyedam vr̥ttam amuṣmāt karmaṇa ity evaṁ yuktiyuktakarmaphalasambandhaprakatanakāriḥbhyaḥ mitrasammitēbhyaḥ itiḥāsaśāstrebhya labdhavyutpattayaḥ, atha cāvaśyaṁ vyutpādyāḥ prajārthasampādanayogatākṛtāt rājaṇtraprāyāś teśām hṛdayānupraveṣāṃkṣena caturvargopāvayaṃvypattitr ādheyā. hṛdayānupraveṣaś ca rasāsvādamaya eva.


236 Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, *Dhvanyāloka*, 71

237 Ibid., 369: *na caite prītiḥvyutpatī bhinnarūpe eva, dvayarapyekāvishayatvāt*. Masson and Patwardhan (Masson and Patwardhan, *Śāntarasa*, 55 n. 3) interpret this to mean that moral instruction and pleasure are *caused* by the same thing, saying "Since both are the outcome of a single cause, they are not different from each other." Presumably the "cause" in this case would be the literary depiction itself. But this is not a philosophically plausible way to make sense of what Abhinavagupta is actually saying. He says that pleasure and moral instruction occupy the same realm and have the same form. Lots of things share causes without sharing the same form and without entirely overlapping in their "realm". The sugar in a fruit and the carbon dioxide expired by leaves are both caused by the same tree, and the heat and light of a lamp are both caused by the burning wick; but no one would argue these things really overlap in the way Abhinavagupta is describing. So this can't, I think, be what Abhinavagupta means. Ingalls, in his notes, (Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, *Dhvanyāloka*, 440 n. 1) interprets Abhinavagupta's statement just to mean that "Both are found wherever *rasa* is present," but again, this seems to explain only the "same realm" part of Abhinavagupta's statement, not the "same form" part. The real reason that pleasure and moral training can be said to have the same form in aesthetic experience has to be just that both of them are accomplished by finding the blissful subjectivity hidden in the appearances of the poem or play. From the point of view of this blissful subjectivity it doesn't even make sense to ask whether one is being pleased or ethically shaped. How could there be a difference? Pleasure, in the deep sense that Abhinavagupta intends it, is the most basic ethical fact about our existence as humans.
Enjoying the appearance of a scene in a properly refined way is the same as finding the ethically valuable subjective self-apprehension unifying all of them; doing the one is the same as doing the other. This has already been well described by Daniele Cuneo, who argues that, for Abhinavagupta, "the real instruction [vyutpatti] is not only the capacity to discriminate between different courses of action, but also, and maybe especially, the capacity to choose between the various emotions one might, or better one should, feel in a specific situation." In other words, literature gives us what Cuneo calls "affective knowledge": the ability to know the right way to feel in different situations.

I think this assessment is entirely correct, but I want to expand it by showing how it is grounded in Abhinavagupta’s theology, and how this nuances our picture of the literary ethics he is describing. For it is not simply that literature trains us to have the right emotional responses to given situations; it does, but the connection between ethics and pleasure runs deeper than this. The reason pleasure and moral instruction can overlap, for Abhinavagupta, is that his theology describes a universe in which appearances and essences are essentially the same. The elements of the scene, the vibhāvas and the characters' actions and so forth, and are not really separate from the rasa, they only seem to be, just like the elements of the universe and Śiva's mind are the same in essence. This means, if we take it seriously, that the ethical pleasure of vimarśa is not just the rasa underlying the scene, but also comprises the elements [vibhāvādi] of the scene itself, which are an outward manifestation of that ethical rasa. The elements of the (well-written) scene are ethical because they are a form of the rasa, and the rasa in turn can only appear to us in the form of certain kinds of actions—actions that are "appropriate" to the rasa

---

238 Cuneo, “Rasa,” 80.

239 Ibid.

216
being portrayed. Into this concept of propriety is encoded an entire socio-ethics, albeit one which is based on caste distinctions, and not on a concept of universal human nature.\textsuperscript{240} The heroic and virile characters act bravely and honestly, and should never experience genuine fear; women feel love and fickleness, but shouldn't display bravery; cowardice and greed is appropriate only to characters of the lower social stations; and passionate love is appropriate only between two characters of the proper castes.\textsuperscript{241} The conservative details of this socio-ethics shouldn't blind us to the more important fact that these actions are deemed "appropriate" only insofar as they participate in an ethically aesthetic pleasure and are an outward manifestation of it.

On the other hand, sometimes what is being manifested is not a \textit{rasa} but a "false appearance of \textit{rasa}" [\textit{rasābhāsa}]. In this case the scene is the manifestation of something that is essentially unethical, meaning that it doesn't grow out of \textit{vimarśa} and doesn't lead to it. The "false appearance" here means that the spectator is tricked temporarily into feeling a \textit{rasa} before realizing that this is a mistake and that what is manifested can't be a \textit{rasa} because the actions aren't correct. The demon Rāvaṇa can move us with his declarations of love for queen Sīta, and we will seem to engage in relishing the \textit{rasa} of Love, but we will realize retrospectively that this was a mistake (that is, if we are properly trained in the socio-ethics of the Sanskrit theater, which was naturalized for these thinkers, and not recognized as historical contingent).\textsuperscript{242} But even in

\begin{footnote}{240}Guy Leavitt (Leavitt, "The Social in Kashmiri Aesthetics") convincingly argues that the concepts of "propriety" [\textit{aucitya}] and "false rasa" [\textit{rasābhāsa}] are the way in which Abhinavagupta retheorizes Bharata's older socio-ethical norms on the basis of the new idea of rasa as a form of spectator's experience, and the following analysis is based on his work. See, for example, ibid., 280: "Thus, while the new Kashmiri interest in the psychology of \textit{rasa} experience led to a significant revaluation of \textit{rasābhāsa} in terms of the audience's emotive response, it nevertheless does not seem to have prevented Abhinava from presupposing and fully rearticulating the older analytic concern with the social impropriety that is constitute of all literature."
\end{footnote}

\begin{footnote}{241}The details of these rules were codified by the famous dramaturge Bharata, and are described with citations in ibid.
\end{footnote}

\begin{footnote}{242}For an analysis of this dynamic, and a convincing argument that Abhinavagupta thinks of it in terms of philosophical theories of error, see ibid.
\end{footnote}
this case, the result is to underline and enforce socio-ethical guidelines; except it is done not by positive but negative reinforcement, by forcing the audience to acknowledge the disjunction of certain types of actions with aesthetic pleasure.

So not only do the actions of the characters, if they are appropriate, lead us to an experience that is ethical, but the ethical experience underlying those actions also makes those actions ethical—their propriety with respect to the *rasa* is the same as their social propriety, and their failure to match a *rasa*, or their success in matching a "false *rasa"*, makes them unethical. In other words the ethics of actions is defined aesthetically. This is difficult to grasp but it is an important point, so I'll try to explain it another way. The pleasure one feels in literature, an ethical pleasure, is really the *taking* pleasure in certain scenes, actions, and situations—finding the blissful *vimarśa* that comprises their appearance. In poetry, these elements involve the interaction of human characters with recognizable social characteristics. So recognition of the *rasa* that their actions manifest also has socio-ethical import because it involves taking pleasure in the propriety and meaning of different kinds of actions by different kinds of people. A love story between two appropriate characters colors the connoisseur's *vimarśa* with the flavor of Love; a story of their final separation colors his self-caress with Grief. And each of these experiences is indexed, in a properly formed individual, to the social dynamics being portrayed. So to be pleased by poetry in the right way is at the same time to be pleased by the propriety of their actions; not so much to approve of them *per se*, but to recognize their connection to an ethical pleasure. This is precisely why Abhinavagupta thinks that pleasure and moral instruction can be the same:

. . . the subjection of a man to the relishing of the *rasas* by a literary construction of the *vibhāvas* etc. [i.e. the literary elements] appropriate to *rasa* serves at the same time for the instruction (*vyutpatti*) that naturally results. . . It is the appropriateness of the *vibhāvas* and their related factors that is the basic cause of literary delight. . . Our inner
understanding of the nature of the *vibhāvas*, etc.—that they are appropriate to this or that *rasa*—may be called our instruction insofar as it ends in [that delight].

All this is the conceptual and theological underpinning for what Cuneo calls an "affective education." It is not just that ethical actions have to be motivated by the proper emotions in order to take place; having the proper or improper emotional response is itself already a kind of ethical or unethical act. To taste the *rasa* of Love during the sad part of the story would be simultaneously ethically and aesthetically inappropriate. The rules for this sort of propriety are governed by all the conservative social ethics to which Sanskrit literature was bound. Tasting the *rasa* of Love when what is being portrayed is a love story between two characters who are not fit for each other socio-ethically, like a brāhmin woman and an untouchable man, for example, is an ethical and aesthetic mistake. The same goes for tasting the *rasa* of Grief when a wicked or low-caste character is justly punished or killed. So not only must the connoisseur respond strongly to the poem, but his response must appropriately match the situations presented to him. Similarly, to be temporarily fooled into thinking one is watching a love story and then to realize that it is an inappropriate love story is also an ethical education, because it involves recognizing the inappropriateness of certain kinds of actions and coming to terms with our prior mistake in thinking they were appropriate.

I want to re-emphasize: the fact that "appropriateness" here is defined in terms of a socio-ethics that modern readers don't share is a moot point. We could replace the details with our own social expectations and the basic ethical mechanisms being described will be the same. A modern reader will probably find caste considerations irrelevant to romance, but will doubtless have other socio-ethical expectations that can be expressed as aesthetic responses. A modern

243 Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan, *Dhvanyāloka*, 437.
reader might find it more appropriate, for example, to feel moved by compassion and joy when a homosexual character, who is terrified of coming out to his parents, finds that they accept him and love him anyway. But even in this case, Abhinavagupta's point holds good: the emotional reaction of the spectator is ethically correlated to the details of this situation. A reader who felt disgusted by such a scene would be not just aesthetically but ethically suspect in certain circles, even if they knew it wasn't "real life." And so would a reader who felt joy in a literary scene describing the brutal execution of the homosexual character. This much, I think is surprisingly recognizable. But Abhinavagupta goes further. For him, it is not just that literature expresses ethical ideas, or that ethics involves emotion, but that both ethical actions and emotions draw their force from being manifestations of the deepest essence of the universe, and of our own minds, and this could perhaps give us a new way to think about why we might approve or disapprove of different aesthetic responses to different works of art.

Now, as we saw, the ethical-emotional experience of pleasure being described by Abhinavagupta might lead, at a future time, to actual moral action. A spectator might leave the theater and out in the real world decide to help or harm someone for various reasons. The action itself—showing compassion to someone in needs, for example—wouldn't itself be an aesthetic issue, in the sense that it wouldn't be a "literary element" in any scene, and it wouldn't produce rasa for any onlooker. But still, this moral action has to be, according to Ratie, an overflow of one's own bliss. And as Cuneo argues, to be "ethical" in the world is to feel and be motivated by the right kinds of emotions, for Abhinavagupta. And the training that inculcates the capacity for this sort of action is, in the case of literature, the same as pleasure the literature affords. It is a

244 Cuneo, "Rasa." There are good philosophical reason to think that being an ethical person involves having the right affective responses to situations not just in the theater, but in the world. See Mark Johnston, "The Authority of Affect," Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 63.1 (2001): 181-214.
deep feeling that the details of certain situations are tied ontologically to certain inflections of the bliss that is one's deepest self, to which has become attuned by practice. This powerful taste for ethical bliss is driven deep into the spectator's heart by the play or poem, where it has a greater effect on his future action than an ordinary moral injunction. Thus Abhinavagupta's description, in the *Abhinavabhāratī*, of how this works. In Gnoli's translation, it reads:

This impression. . . gives birth, within [the spectator], to a kind of injunction suitable to be expressed in the optative mode, that is: 'Such-and-such a thing (must happen) to those who do such-and-such a thing'. This injunction is free of every spatial and temporal specification. . . by virtue of the Rasa-experience, [it] remains deeply fixed in the heart, like an arrow, in such a way that by no possible effect can it be eased, let alone extracted. Thanks to it, the desires of attaining the good and abandoning the bad are constantly present in the mind of the spectator, who accordingly does the good and avoids the bad.\(^{245}\)

Aesthetic pleasure is indispensible in order for this kind of worldly ethical training and practice to be effective. And ordinary action, for Abhinavagupta, would be ethically inert unless it was either an expression of aesthetic or theological pleasure, or else intended to cultivate it. This is why "pleasure is primary" and moral formation is subordinate, although both are actually indivisible.

We can summarize all this as follows: although the pleasure of *rasa* is itself an ethical good, the connoisseur is not free to realize any *rasa* in any instance in the course of a poem or play. Only the *rasa* that the poet experienced—which is the *rasa* that the scene is made of—is the *rasa* he should feel, and only if this *rasa* is manifested and inflected in socio-ethically appropriate ways. And the poet cannot express this *rasa* with any words or elements he chooses, any more than I can express my own ideas by ignoring the language community I inhabit and making up my own words by a pure act of whim. The poet expresses, and the connoisseur

\(^{245}\) Gnoli, *Aesthetic Experience*, 97-98.
encounters, the bliss of a transpersonal subjectivity that has taken the form of particular scenes involving particular characters engaged in particular actions, whose particularity is governed by repeatable rules. A character who steals is to be punished. A young woman who loves must love the right kind of person. To immerse oneself in the *rasa* presented in such scenes is for the connoisseur to recognize what is already present within these actions, and by extension, what is already present within his own mind. The bliss he feels is inextricably tied to the details of the scene; in fact they are ultimately the same thing, ontologically speaking. And his moral training consists not just in feeling pleasure, or just in understanding the moral aspects of actions, but of recognizing, under very particular conditions, the profound, theological pleasure that certain actions are made of, which, later, will result in an increased capacity for moral action. And this is precisely why the literary experience of a properly trained connoisseur is an experience that is both pleasurable and moral. And all of this is deeply interwoven with Abhinavagupta's theology, in which fragmented appearance and meaningful, unified essence, are, ultimately, the same thing. The appearance of the poem is in a continuum with its essence, and the experience of a trained spectator is in the same continuum. It is an experience of this essence, and is both pleasurable and ethical, for more than accidental reasons. There is one stream of ethical subjectivity flowing from poet to poem to spectator, and it is this stream that the spectator bathes in.

Mahimabhaṭṭa, operating on a very different religious basis, breaks this continuum. Though he also thinks that the essence of poetry is ethical training, the Dharmakīrtian Buddhist philosophy on which he relies for his arguments disallows an overlap between appearance and essence in this way. So the experience of the spectator is related, but is not the same as, the ethical element in the poem.
Nor does the Dharmakīrtian theology allow the self-apprehension that Abhinavagupta describes to have the kind of ethical import that he wants it to in the first place. In fact, Mahimabhaṭṭa's arguments against the theory of poetic manifestation can in large part be read as an attack by someone who has a radically different theology than Abhinavagupta, and thus a radically different interpretation of vimarśa. An attack on the conditions for Abhinavagupta's theory of vimarśa is then an important part of Mahimabhaṭṭa's argument, though this only becomes apparent when we take his references to religious ideas seriously and read them closely. Ultimately, the point will be that this attack, based as it is on a very different understanding of the relationship of appearance and essence, results in a different explanation of the ethical importance of literature. But we are still a ways away from being able to see this. The next step we need to take at this point is to look at Mahimabhaṭṭa's arguments against the theory of poetic manifestation, and look closely and carefully at his references to Dharmakīrti and other religious ideas, which is the subject of the next chapter.
Part Two: Emotion Inferred
Chapter Three: Mahimabhaṭṭa on Literary Knowing

Some time in the mid-eleventh century in Kaśmīr, probably within fifty years of Abhinavagupta's death, Mahimabhaṭṭa, or Mahima, as we will call him, wrote an extensive critique of the theory of poetic manifestation. His text is called Vyaktiviveka, or "Analysis of Manifestation," and he states its purpose explicitly in the opening verse: it was composed in order to show that what is called "poetic manifestation" is really just inference.¹ The claim takes Mahima three long chapters to substantiate. The first chapter is a philosophical explanation of his position. The second, the longest in the text, is an elaborate analysis of poetic flaws, that is, mistakes a poet can make that will mar the beauty of his work. The third chapter is a case-by-case examination of all the purported examples of poetic manifestation given by Ānandavardhana in Dhvanyāloka, showing that, in every case, it is inference, rather than manifestation, that allows the reader to apprehend the meaning or mood of the poem. As we have seen, this idea that manifestation is reducible to inference was already known to Ānandavardhana, and both he and Abhinavagupta take care to refute it. Mahima's text, in the simplest terms, is a revival of this position, although a very elaborate one; one that gives the position much thicker philosophical support than anyone previously had anticipated.²

The text is published along with the only existing commentary we know of, written by Ruuyaka, another Kaśmīri literary theorist who lived about one hundred years after Mahima, in

¹Mahimabhaṭṭa, The Vyaktiviveka of Śrī Rājānaka Mahimabhaṭṭa, edited with a Sanskrit Commentary of Rājānaka [sic] Ruuyaka and Hindi Commentary and notes, ed Rewāprasāda Dwivedi, Kashi Sanskrit Series 12 [Varanasi: Chaukambha Sanskrit Series Office, 1964]. 1: anumāne 'ntarbhāvaṃ sarvasyaiva dhvaneḥ prakāśayitum / vyaktiviveko 'yam kurute pranāmya mahimā parāṃ vācāṃ // "Having bowed to the highest speech, Mahima composes this Vyaktiviveka / To show that all poetic suggestion [dhvani] is included within inference."

²Mahima's most important predecessor is probably Śaṅkuka, a theorist whose views were summarized in the "rasapaksa" section of Abhinavagupta's Nātyaśāstra commentary, described in Chapter Two. From what Abhinavagupta tells us, Śaṅkuka also thought that rasa was inferred in the character. Mahima, however, nowhere mentions him, and Abhinavagupta's description of his views is not enough to form a detailed picture. So the connections, if there are any, between Mahima and Śaṅkuka are unfortunately too obscure to explore.
the mid-eleventh century. Ruyyaka's commentary, while not entirely hostile to the text, defends the theory of poetic manifestation and tries to undermine Mahima's arguments. This commentary marks the end of the debates over poetic manifestation, historically speaking. After this, poetic manifestation becomes widely accepted within Kaśmīr and across South Asia.³ Mahima's text then represents the last major challenge to the theory, and it was thus a failure in historical terms, though not necessarily in philosophical terms. And Ruuyaka's commentary was the last major defense.

The version of theory of poetic manifestation that Ruuyaka defends is Abhinavagupta's, though he modifies it slightly, as all good commentators do. It is a theory that describes the blissful and depersonalized self-apprehension of a mind whose memory-traces have been stimulated by the elements of a poem or play, and it is no coincidence that Ruuyaka displays clear evidence of non-dual Śaiva leanings in all of his major texts.⁴

This is the version of the theory that went on to become authoritative for the rest of South Asian history. It is also, as I hope to show, the version of the theory that Mahima's text is also partially, perhaps even primarily, aimed at. Showing this, however, will require a methodology slightly different from that of Part One. This is because of the difference in the archive available for Abhinavagupta and Mahima, as well as because of the difference in their projects. For Abhinavagupta, we have a great deal of existing texts on a variety of subjects. Many of them are explicitly theological, and the texts that are literary theoretical at times refer directly to the

³McCrea, Teleology, 441.

⁴There are various pieces of evidence for this. The most compelling is in his commentary on Mammaṭa's Kāvyapraṅgā, in the seventh chapter, in his comments on the verse that begins "śaḍadhīkadaśanā..." (Mohan, Vol. 5, p. 2064 - 2066). Here, Ruuyaka suddenly takes the opportunity to digress and give extensive quotations from various non-dual Śaiva tantras, including an obscure text called the Nandiśikhā, which has been lost and of which only a few quotations survive. There seems to be no point at all to the long quotations other than to show off his knowledge of these texts.
theological texts, and *vice versa*. Mahima, on the other hand, only wrote one text that survives, and this text refers only once, and very briefly, to another theological text that Mahima wrote.\(^5\)

So showing how Mahima's ideas tie in to his larger worldview, and showing how Abhinavagupta's ideas figure in that, will involve not so much finding places in which Mahima explains himself, as collecting together the various assertions Mahima makes and asking ourselves under what conditions would they all make sense together. To say that they make sense together as a polemic against a famous intellectual living in the same small north Indian valley and writing on the same subject as Mahima fifty years earlier is not much of a stretch. The fact that much of the other evidence also matches this assertion in its particulars is even more compelling. Although he never names Ānandavardhana or Abhinavagupta, preferring to refer to his opponent by the generic term *dhvanikāra*, "the manifestation theorist," Mahima was certainly aware of Abhinavagupta's writings. He refers to his ideas directly, at one point even parodying his writing style.\(^6\) More importantly, we will see over the next three chapters that his rejection of the theory of manifestation involves rejecting many of the specific philosophical positions that Abhinavagupta used to tie aesthetics to non-dual Śaivism: the seamless ontological continuity between poet, poem, and reader; the centrality of *rasa* to the literary experience; the status of *rasa* as an ethical telos in itself rather than a useful instrument for ethical training; the reality and non-erroneousness of the *rasa* experience; the simultaneity of poetic cognitions; and most

\(^5\)Discussed more below.

\(^6\) *Vyaktiviveka*, 96. The section (actually it is a single sentence) is too long to cite here in full. But it describes an unnamed commentator's attempt to justify one of the grammatical peculiarities of Ānandavardhana's definition of *dhvani*. The position described is clearly Abhinavagupta's, and Mahima insults him by saying that he "fancies himself learned," and then parodies his style by creating an extremely long, overly clausal sentence, complete with tortuously long compounds. It begins this: *atra kecid vidvanmānīno dvivacakanaśamarthanāmanorathāksiptacittatayā vācyavācakatayor vismrtaśuprasiddhapratikramabāhavās tayor ekakālikatām śabdasyoktanayanirastām api vyātijakatām paśyantas tannibandhanām dhvanibhedayor avivakṣitavivākṣitānyaparavācyayor dhvananavyāpāram prati paryāyenānyonyasahakāritām...*
importantly, the possibility of Abhinavagupta's notion of vimarśa, which underwrites the simultaneity of cognitions and which is rejected in a section of Vyaktiviveka we will consider in Chapter Four. All this will be clarified in what follows, but the point I want to make now is that in rejecting these positions, Mahima is not only rejecting Ānandavardhana's theory of poetic manifestation but also Abhinavagupta's interpretation of it. And although in proportional terms he doesn't spend a great deal of the text debating explicitly with Abhinavagupta's ideas, and although he seems to be greatly interested in things Abhinavagupta was not as interested in, such as manifestation of rhetorical figures and plot facts, his rejection of Abhinavagupta is clear, and is in part what justifies his spending so much time on other subjects in the first place.

The assertion that Mahima is directing his arguments against Abhinavagupta, then, is not an assumption so much as a hypothesis. It is, I believe, the most reasonable explanation for the various choices that Mahima made in arguing against the theory of manifestation, and it is one for which I intend the next few chapters to serve as evidence. This hypothesis of a polemic against Abhinavagupta is even more compelling when we see that it also helps explain Mahima's choices in arguing for an alternative literary theory. For in place of the Abhinavaguptan and Bhartṛharian ideas that he rejects, Mahima uses philosophical ideas drawn from Buddhism, a religious school opposed to and competing with Abhinavagupta's, and one which was strongly represented in Kaśmīr at the time. Abhinavagupta and Utpaladeva before him both respected Buddhism, but were anxious to supersede it, alternately co-opting and refuting its ideas. But these ideas, drawn from the famous Buddhist philosopher Dharmakīrti, are everywhere apparent

---

7 This is widely known, and has been pointed out by many. Some examples include McCrea, "Desecularization"; Nemec, Ubiquitous Śiva; Raffaele Torella, "The Pratyabhijñā and the Logical-epistemological School of Buddhism." in Ritual and Speculation in Early Tantrism: Studies in Honor of Andre Padoux, ed. T. Goudriaan, SUNY Series in Tantric Studies (New York: SUNY Press, 1992): 327–345.

8 Probably ca. 600-650, though possibly a century earlier.
in Mahima's work, both conceptually and in the form of direct quotes from a variety of Dharmakīrti's texts. The depth of their role in Mahima's text is in part what this chapter will intend to show. The question we have to ask is why. Why favor Dharmakīrti so much in one's theories? Why bother to ground your theories not just in your own assertions and ideas, but in the ideas of a famous religious philosopher from a non-Hindu school? One might wonder whether Mahima did this purely for rhetorical reasons; whether it was simply because Dharmakīrti was famous and well-respected and useful to Mahima in creating a literary theory. But the fact is that Dharmakīrti himself nowhere addressed aesthetics or poetics, and he is not at all an obvious choice for someone looking to do literary theory. And although Dharmakīrti was well-respected by Abhinavagupta and Utpaladeva, he was also used only cautiously and in a circumscribed manner. Mahima, on the other hand, treats him as an authority in every respect and nowhere gives any indication that his ideas are not fully correct.

This preference for Buddhist ideas and an aesthetic theory backed by them might be easily explained if Mahima was himself a Buddhist. But the strange fact is that although Mahima was a Dharmakīrtian, he does not seem to have been a Buddhist. Actually, all the evidence seems to indicate that he was a non-dual Śaiva, just like Abhinavagupta and Ruyyaka. He makes this quite clear in Vyaktiviveka. He begins his text, first of all, with an homage to Highest Speech, a central deity in Abhinavagupta's theology, as we saw in the last chapter. Granted, the theology of this deity plays no role in any of his arguments in the text, and the grammar of the verse makes it possible that he's only making a sarcastic reference to Her, paying homage simply to speech and saying that it is something supreme, but doing so in the guise of an homage to Highest Speech, as

---

9 McCrea points this out in McCrea, Teleology, 399-400, and helpfully lists the quotations on ibid., 399 n. 6.

10 Some small pieces of evidence for this have already been noted by Pandey in K.C. Pandey, "Kashmir Śaiva Tendencies of Mahimabhaṭṭa," Bharatiya Vidya 10 (1950): 187-194.
if to say that it is speech, and not Speech, who is worthy of respect. This seems unlikely, but it's possible; anyone familiar with Kaśmīri writers from this time period has witnessed their frequent sarcasm. Slightly more compelling is the fact that he also, in at least one part of the text, glosses the idea of insentience in markedly Śaiva terms, saying that insentience means being "devoid of consciousness's aesthetic delight." He also refers to the Vedas as authoritative (that is, as one of the pramāṇas), and says that this category includes purāṇa, itihāsa, and dharmaśāstra. This doesn't prove that he is Śaiva, but it seems to be clear evidence that he was not a Buddhist. But the most important and clear evidence of his Śaiva leanings are two. The first is that Mahima goes on a long digression towards the beginning of the text about the will-power of inert objects, which he ultimately justifies by asserting that everything is the "emanation of the Lord" and so is possessed of sentience. The second is that Mahima makes a reference, in the second chapter, to another text he has written, called Tattvokitikośa. This text has unfortunately been lost, but Mahima tells us it included a section explaining that the poet's imaginative faculty, pratibhā, is the third eye of Śiva. Śaivas of this time period do frequently make reference to Buddhist ideas. Buddhists, as far as I'm aware, nowhere allow that Śiva or his third eye plays any sort of

11 Vyaktiviveka, 491: nāsyā cetanacamatkārakaṇikā samasti.

12 Vyaktiviveka, 52-53: loko vedas tathādhyātmaḥ pramāṇaḥ trividhaṁ smṛtam iti... vedagrahaṇam ithiśapurāṇadharmaśāstrādyupalakṣaṇam teśāṁ tanmāḥvatvopagamāt.

13 Vyaktiviveka, 38: ghataṇaṃca tadātmavāpattirūpā kriyā matā / mūlaṃca tasyāścitrārthābhāsāvisṛṣṭirīṣituh // "And being a pot is an activity that has the form of attaining a pot's essence. [This activity's] basis is the Lord's emanation of variegated appearances."

14 Vyaktiviveka, 452-453: rasāṅuguṇaśabdādārthācintastimitacetasāḥ / kṣaṇaṁ svarūpasparśoththā prajñaiva pratibhā kaveh // sā hi caṣur bhagavatas trītyam iti gīyate/ yena sāksātkaroty esa bhāvams traikālvartināḥ // ityādi pratibhāttvatvam asmābhir upapāditam / śāstre tattvokitikosākhyā iti neha prapañcitam // "The imaginative faculty of a poet, whose mind is fixed on words and meanings conducive to rasa, is a wisdom that arises instantly from touching the true nature of reality. For it is said to be the third eye of the Lord, by which he makes all beings of the past present and future immediately present. Thus has the element of imagination been explained by me in [my] Tattvokitikośa, so I won't elaborate on it here."
important role in human life. Nor do they refer to him as "The Noble One" [bhagavata] or "The Lord" [īśitṛ], as Mahima has in both these places. The first point, about his long digression, is complex, and will be the subject of the fourth chapter of this dissertation, where its significance will be more fully explored. But here we can at least say that taken together with the second point, it decisively settles that Mahima must have been a Śaiva of some sort. The question now is what sort of Śaiva he was, and what that had to do with his literary theory, his proclivities towards Dharmakīrti, and his relationship with Abhinavagupta and Abhinavagupta's particular strand of Śaivism.

These questions will be gradually answered over the next three chapters, which comprise Part Two and are all devoted to Mahima's text and its relationship with Buddhism. The argument that these three chapters will build towards is that Mahima's use of Dharmakīrtian Buddhism is not a random choice, but a choice that is carefully and specifically directed against Abhinavagupta's Bhartṛharian-influenced Śaiva literary theory. Within that argument, each chapter will have its own specific topic, and its own argument. Chapter Five will examine the ontology and ethical implications of Mahima's literary theory, while Chapter Four will examine Mahima's sectarian identity and how his version of Śaivism might have related to Abhinavagupta's. This chapter, Chapter Three, will show the extent of Mahima's reliance on Buddhism, which is not cosmetic but a deep and principled part of his literary theory. It will also show how these Buddhist principles are related to his foundational argument that language is a very practical tool used for provoking understanding in the listener and that it has a rigidly teleological function. It will then go on to show how Mahima uses these Buddhist principles to develop his theory of what I call literary epistemology: the manner in which we come to know
the mood of the text or play. But before we begin this chapter I want to foreshadow some of these arguments a bit more.

This account of literary experience, taking all of Part Two to fully describe, will begin with this chapter on literary epistemology because it is in his account of how we apprehend aesthetic emotions that we first begin to see Mahima making his argument about the place and nature of literary experience. Lawrence McCrea, the contemporary scholar who has most thoroughly studied Mahima's work, has suggested that Mahima's attack on the theory of manifestation might best be understood as an attack on the idea that poetic language is somehow different from ordinary language and therefore requires a distinct linguistic theory to explain it, separate from the theoretical explanations of ordinary speech. This is essentially what Ānandavardhana had argued for when he argued that although certain meanings are clearly understood in poetry, none of the standard theories of linguistic function can explain this, and so we must posit a new theory called manifestation. McCrea calls this idea "poetic exceptionalism," and tells us that Mahima was essentially a poetic anti-exceptionalist, arguing in Vyaktiviveka that poetic language is not exceptional in this way. This is an astute assessment, but I would go further. McCrea, who came to Mahima via a project that looked at how Vedic Ritualism influenced literary theory, was most interested in language, and so his assessment is phrased in terms of language. But what I want to show in the next three chapters is that when we take Abhinavagupta and the religious context into account, we see that it is not only poetic language, but poetic experience in general that is at issue. Not only does Mahima argue that poetic language is just like worldly language, he also thinks that poetic experience is just like worldly experience. Not, of course, in the sense that it is indistinguishable from worldly experience, but

---

in the sense that no unusual epistemology or metaphysics or theology is required to explain it. So Mahima's attack on the theory of manifestation can be seen as an argument that literature doesn't provide us with a quasi-religious experience that transcends our ordinary mode of being. It rather provides us with something that, because of the way we interact with the world, is just exceptionally pleasing or pretty—an ordinary experience of extraordinary beauty.

The reason Buddhist ideas are so useful for this project is tied to the fact that Dharmakīrti's Buddhist ideas articulate an entirely different theory of the relationship between how things are and how they appear from Śaivism. This relationship is one that breaks the continuity between appearances and essences or meanings, which Abhinavagupta had used to establish an ontological unity between the mood of the work and the elements that we encounter in reading or hearing or watching. Rather than a smooth continuity of transformation, where a primordial unity breaks into illusory fragments, appears phenomenologically, and is then reunified into the whole that it originally was, Dharmakīrti presents a universe composed of discrete, unique, atomic entities, each of which flashes into and out of existence instantaneously, leaving behind another discrete, unique entity in its place. These unique entities bear no real relationship to each other except for causal relationships and relationships of identity—any other ostensible relationship is explained as nothing but a concept imposed onto reality. One consequence of this view is that perception is the only real contact we can have with reality. Inference, in Dharmakīrti's universe, is useful in practical terms, but it is not a direct contact with reality. It is a conceptual process that creates an object and projects it outwards beyond the inferential sign that gave rise to the inference. If I see smoke on a mountain, for example, I infer fire there. But the fire that I infer is my own conceptual construct, and I whatever I imagine to be there on the mountain is distinct, ontologically, from the fire that is actually there. This process is
useful to us *not* because it puts our minds in direct contact with the actual fire that is on the mountain, but only because it is based on certain reliable regularities in our universe and therefore consistently allows us to act successfully and accomplish our goals.

This view is complex and will be further clarified in this chapter. What I want to point out here is that while *Vyaktiviveka* is a text designed to show, at least in part, that literature is not analogous to religious experience and so does not have direct ethical value, the text does establish that literature has an indirect, instrumental value. That is, while Abhinavagupta held that the experience literature provokes in the reader is, ultimately, the same as the experience the poet had, and that both of these are experiences of a deep reality that is, in itself, ethical, Mahima presents a universe in which the experience of the reader *can't* be the same as the experience of the poet, and *can't* be an ethical experience *in itself*. Instead, it has value only because of certain practical goals that it enables, namely, moral training, which is a separate thing from the literary experience that inculcates it. Therefore, when we get to Mahima's ethical conclusions in Chapter Five, we will see that literature has an indirect, instrumental ethical value precisely because Mahima has, for complex religious reasons that we will explore, theorized it within a universe in which appearance and essence are separate.

All this means that like Part One, the general argument of Part Two overall will be that we can't fully comprehend Mahima's text without understanding the religious ideas at play within it and around it. Unlike Part One, however, Part Two will depict a different relationship between religion and literary theory. For I do not intend to argue that Mahima was imputing a religious value to literature or that he was necessarily giving religious arguments to support his literary theory. Mahima was rather reacting *against* a religious literary theory, and his use of Buddhist philosophy might best be interpreted as a way to take literature down out of the realm of divine
experience and place it squarely alongside other, daily sorts of activities. In other words, if Abhinavagupta's Śaivism used Bhartṛhari and other religious ideas to blend theology and literary theory, then Mahima used an inverse religious system (Dharmakīrti's Buddhism) to force them apart again. The fact that Mahima did not himself subscribe to this system, or rather that he did not fully subscribe to all its religious implications, does not mean the religious context is irrelevant to understanding his text. Even a completely anti-religious polemic is still conceptually tied to religion. Imagine, for example, a civilization from the far future uncovering a copy of Richard Dawkins' *The God Delusion* and trying to understand it without knowing anything about Christianity. This is an extreme case, and I do not mean to imply that Mahima's text is as thoroughly anti-religious as Dawkins'. But I do believe that Mahima had a sophisticated and thoughtful relationship to the religious context around him—a context in which ideas from different religions interacted and blended and were put to use in unusual ways—and that in order to understand him properly we will have to understand this relationship. The fact that Mahima's more explicitly theological work, *Tattvoktikōśa*, has been lost may make this relationship ultimately impossible to completely reconstruct. But we can surmise that it was there, and we can make the most of the available evidence and see how far it gets us.

In order to fully understand the contours of this shared set of issues and their different applications in Mahima's work, we will begin first by looking at his arguments for inference as the real explanation for literary knowing. This will begin with examining his insistence on the functional teleology of all language, which, I will argue, is based on Dharmakīrti's ideas, and gives us our first taste of just how deeply embedded Buddhist ideas are in his text.

**Subordination and Functionality**
Mahima builds his critique of poetic manifestation as a word-by-word criticism of Ānandavardhana's definition of it. That is to say, Mahima uses Ānandavardhana's stated definition of poetic manifestation as a sort of index or table of contents for the first chapter of his work, going through each part of it methodically. The criticisms are interrelated, and together they form a comprehensive, coherent view, but, in classic Sanskrit scholastic manner, they are presented as separate criticisms of each segment of the definition. Mahima begins his critique after a series of prefatory verses, opening the substantive part of his text by declaring: "Now then, the definition of poetic manifestation must be stated. What is this thing we call poetic manifestation? That has been stated by the Dhvanikāra himself. To wit:" He then quotes the definition of manifestation given by Ānandavardhana in Dhvanyāloka 1.13: “The wise say that manifestation is a particular kind of poetry in which a word or a meaning, subordinating itself to some other meaning, makes that other meaning manifest.”

Here Ānandavardhana is using "poetic manifestation" to refer to a particular type of poetry, rather than simply a poetic process, a slippage Mahima will critique later in the chapter. But the first topic Mahima takes up centers around Ānandavardhana's use of the word "subordination," and his assertion that in manifestation, words or meanings subordinate themselves to some further meaning, which then becomes the predominant meaning of a verse of poetry. This idea is treated first not because "subordination" is the first word in the Sanskrit sentence. It is not. Other words precede it for which Mahima has specific criticisms. Rather, the issue of subordination is taken up first because Mahima's response to it lays the groundwork for

---

16 Vyaktiviveka, 7: tatār dhvaner eva tāval lakṣanam vaktavyam. ko 'yaṃ dhvanir nāmeti. tac ca dhvanikāreṇaiva voktam.

17 Dhvanyāloka, 102: atrārthaḥ śabdo vā tam artham upasarjanikṛtasvārthau / vyaṅktāḥ kāvyaviśeṣaḥ sa dhvanir iti süribhiḥ kathitāḥ //
his literary theory as a whole. Therefore, it is important to understand the substance of this criticism, even though it is presented in a scholastic style that might seem a bit strange to modern ways of thinking.

According to Mahima, the word "subordination" shouldn't be included in the definition at all—it is a philosophical mistake to put it there. But his reason for this is strange and surprising. Mahima thinks this word is a mistake in the definition not because language never subordinates itself, but because it always does. Why would this make it a mistake to include it in the definition? The explanation is as follows. Definitions serve a certain purpose. Their job is to clarify what something is and what it is not, and they do this by providing information that the reader doesn't already know and couldn't know—information that isn't logically necessary, but happens to be the case. It is nonsensical to provide information in a definition that would already be assumed, or that could be analytically derived from something already stated. Doing so would be tautologous, like defining "lunch" as "A meal that is eaten, composed of food that is consumed." Food is always consumed, so it is useless to include the word "consume" in this definition.

The basis of Mahima's argument here is the assumption that language is always primarily a tool for producing an awareness of a meaning.¹⁸ It has a functional purpose, only and always, and it never departs from this. Mahima clarifies this by comparing it to a pot that carries water. When you need to carry water and you use a pot for the job, it is never proper to say that using

---

¹⁸The one exception he makes to this is quotations, that is, speech being quoted or repeated second hand, which he calls anukarana. In a quotation the words take precedence over the meaning, so much so that I can even quote meaningless syllables and my own statement is still sensible. If I say, "twip twip," I am uttering nonsense. If I say, "a bird goes 'twip twip'," I am saying something sensible. This is similar to the issue described in Western philosophical parlance by saying that the truth-conditions of an utterance are different that the truth-conditions of a quotation. If I say, "Mars is a star," I am making a false statement. But if I say "John said, 'Mars is a star'," I am making a true one. Similarly, with animal noises, for example, Mahima's small digression on this topic, though interesting, is irrelevant to the argument here. See Vyaktiviveka, 16.
the pot is the point of what you are doing and the water is subordinate to that. Carrying the water is the point, and the instrument is always subordinate to the point of the task it is used for. This is why, during such an activity, the pot can be replaced by some other tool if necessary—a plastic bag, a bucket, cupped hands—but the water can't be replaced by anything else without switching activities entirely. Like a pot used for carrying water, language always has some ultimate purpose, which is a meaning it is try to prompt the listener to think of, and its use is always subordinated to this, never the other way around.

This subordination can apply both to the words themselves, which are subordinated to meanings, and it can also apply to meanings that are intended to imply other, further meanings. That is, when we use speech to imply things we don't say directly, this final, implied meaning is the telos of our speech, and our literal meaning is subordinate to it just like the words are subordinate to the literal meaning. If I tell you that I'm tired, and if what I mean is, "No, thank you, I won't go to the bar with you, I'd rather go home," then this latter meaning is the point of what I am saying, and the literal meaning of words like "tired" is just a means to convey that. So the meaning of "tired" in this case is subordinate to "don't want to go."

"Subordination" is thus wrongly included in the definition because Mahima thinks it necessarily true that language subordinates itself, and therefore it is unreasonable to state that in "some" cases a word subordinates itself or its own meaning. And the point of this critique is not that Ānandavardhana's definition breaks some sort of pedantic rule for how definitions must be

---

19 Vyaktiveka, 17: . . . yo hi yadartham upādiyate, nāsau tam evopasarjanikarotiḥ yuktaṁ vaktum. yathodakādy upādānārtham upāṭṭah ghaṭādis tadvedakādi. . . ata eva ghaṭādir eva pratinidhiyate nodakādi. Ruuyaka connects this point to extensive discussions in grammatical literature of the replacement of ritual items—which can be replaced, and with what, and when, and why. He quotes, in this regard, Vākyapadiya vs. 3.1.78, and reconciles it with an idea from Kāśikārītī on Pāṇini's sūtra 2.3.11. Interestingly, he doesn't bring up Vedic Ritualist considerations of the same issue, perhaps because although Mahima himself quotes Vākyapadiya and other grammatical texts multiple times and seems to find them reconcilable with his Dharmaśīr ṇa leanings, he doesn't refer directly to Vedic Ritualist material, and Ruuyaka, who was a faithful if adversarial commentator, therefore may have found it irrelevant to refer to Vedic Ritualist discussions.
written. The point is that because of how definitions work, including this word "subordinates" implies that language could, logically, be otherwise; that the one-way, functional hierarchy of language is sometimes inverted; that language could sometimes be predominant over its meaning, or that an intermediate stage in comprehension could predominate over the real "point" of a statement. Mahima wants to say that this is impossible, and the way he chooses to make this point is to call the word "subordinates" tautologous as a way of saying it has no possible alternatives, that there is no language that is not subordinate. There are, of course, some obvious objections to this position, but I ask the reader to bear with me for the time being.

Ānandavardhana, for his part, didn't use this word by mistake. He clearly thought the use of the word "subordinates" wasn't tautologous, that there were instances of speech that were not strictly teleological, and he recognized that he needed to prove this as part of his argument. So we find him arguing in Dhvanyāloka that there are many cases in which the literal meaning of a verse takes precedence over the implied meaning—where the functional hierarchy is reversed and the stated meaning is not subordinate to what it implies, but predominant over it. The examples he gives of this, though they do have a second, "manifested" meaning, do not count as examples of poetic manifestation, because they don't fit the definition, which states that poetic manifestation is when the literal meaning subordinates itself to the implied meaning. One famous example of poetry in which the implied meaning is itself subordinated is the following, charming verse, given by Ānandavardhana at 1.13. The verse is punning, and the secondary meanings are included here in brackets.

The face of the night, with trembling stars [pupils], was grasped by the reddish [lustful] moon in such a way
That she never noticed that her garment of darkness had melted away from the rising color in the east [she never noticed, due to passion, that her garment of darkness had fallen open in front].

According to Ānandavardhana, even though the image of two lovers is not stated directly but instead conveyed by manifestation, it is not what the verse is about. The verse is really about the moon rising, and the manifestation here only serves to make that meaning more beautiful; the manifested meaning is thus subordinated, because it serves the stated meaning, and the stated meaning is thus predominant. If the stated meaning had subordinated itself to the manifested meaning, as it does in the verse "Wander freely, gentle monk," then this would really count as poetic manifestation. But that is not the case here. This is Ānandavardhana's argument for the possibility of subordinated implied meanings.

Mahima counters that this interpretation of "The face of the night. . ." is misleading. True, the night and the moon are the subject of the verse and are therefore what the verse is "about," and in that sense one might say they are predominant and their implied meaning subordinate. But, Mahima says, this is merely "contextual" [prākaraṇika] predominance, not "cognitive" [pratīyamāṇa] predominance. Though the night and the moon are the subject of the verse they are still a means for understanding some further meaning, the image of the lovers. Their existence in the verse is characterized by the fact that we understand something else by means of them. So they have a functional existence, and for this reason they are cognitively subordinate; because they are superseded by some other meaning, which they convey.

---

20 Vyaktiviveka, 11: apodharāgeṇa vilolatārakaṁ tathā grhītaṁ śaśinā niśāmukham / yathā samastāṁ timirāṁśukaṁ tayā puro 'pi rāgād galitaṁ na lakṣitāṁ //

21 Discussed in Chapter One.

22 Vyaktiviveka, 11: yat punar asya samāsoktyādau prādhānyam ucyate tat prākaraṇikatvāpakeṣayaiva. na pratīyamāṇāpekṣayā . . atra [apodharāgeneti udāhareṇe] hi pratīyamāṇenānugataṁ vācyam eva prādhānyena pratīyate . . niśāśaśinor eva vākyārthatvāt iti. tadapeṣayā ca tasya līṅgatvād upasarjanībhāvāvyabhicāra eva.
This insistence on the purely functional quality of language goes along with an excision from language of anything that might interfere with this functional purpose, and this is a central aspect of Mahima's vision of literary texts. It underlies many of the arguments in *Vyaktiviveka*. Incidentally, it is this very same attitude that underlies Mahima's decision to frame the criticism we have just read as a criticism of definitional wording. Mahima can make this criticism in this way precisely because he thinks that the point of stating a definition is only to produce an awareness of the defined object. So any word that doesn't serve this purpose of producing knowledge is therefore out of place in the definition and precisely because of this, the implication in the definition that language can do something other than act as a tool is improper.

This attitude also underlies Mahima's criticism, in his third chapter, of various individual verses of poetry, as well as his discussion of poetic flaws in the long second chapter, where he defines poetic flaws as anything that impedes the smooth transition of the reader's awareness from the words of the poem to the experience of *rasa* they are meant to produce. In the third chapter, Mahima goes through all of Ānandavardhana's examples of manifestation and explains how inference, and not manifestation, accounts for their meaning. He also, however, criticizes the poets at various points for making the inferences more difficult to follow than they need to be, and at times even suggests rewrites to the original verses to make their impact more forceful.

---

23 McCrea, *Teleology*, 412: "For Mahimabhaṭṭa, a flaw in a poetic composition is any element which obstructs in any way the development of *rasa*." McCrea then goes on to quote *Vyaktiviveka*, 182: "etasya ca vivakṣṭarasādipratīṭīvighnahādyitvam nāma sāmānyalakṣaṇam." In McCrea's translation, this reads: "The common characteristic of these [flaws] is that they produce some obstacle to the understanding of the intended *rasa*..." For a complete summary of Mahimabhaṭṭa's theory of poetic flaws, see McCrea, "Mahimabhaṭṭa's Theory."

24 See, for example, *Vyaktiviveka*, 466, where Mahima, after a length example of the famous verse "Wander freely, gentle monk...", suggests that the poet should have used a bear, rather than a lion, as the fearsome animal, as lions are already famous for certain activities, and killing dogs is not one of them.
This idea that language is functional and teleological is therefore central to many aspects of Mahima's text. But where did Mahima get this idea, and what does it say about him? Larry McCrea has argued extensively and convincingly that a focus on linguistic teleology was already an important part of Ānandavardhana's work, although it was not yet as strict as Mahima makes it. He also shows in detail that Ānandavardhana drew inspiration for this idea directly from philosophy of Vedic Ritualism \( [mīmāṃsā] \). So in this respect Mahima's notion is not inconsistent with Ānandavardhana's, nor with Vedic Ritualism. But does this mean that Mahima's idea also comes from Vedic Ritualism? To answer this question we first have to know a bit about the structure of Vedic Ritualism and how it compares to Ānandavardhana's and Mahima's theories.

Vedic Ritualism, which was discussed in Chapters One and Two, was a school of scriptural hermeneutics, and its insistence on linguistic teleology is a deep part of its philosophical structure. Vedic Ritualism was essentially premised on the idea that the texts of the Veda are absolutely authoritative, and the idea that the ritual sacrifices that they enjoin, along with the instructions for these, are their predominant subject. Their ideas about linguistic teleology follow from these premises. In order to uphold the authority of the Vedas, Vedic Ritualists developed a philosophical system that argued that all cognitions are intrinsically authoritative, and should be assumed correct unless contradicted by some external piece of evidence that shows they are erroneous. With regard to language, the only sorts of evidence

---

25 McCrea, Teleology.

26 To the extent that this question has been raised at all in the secondary literature, the answer given implies that Mahima's ideas about the pragmatic functionality of language are entirely based on Vedic Ritualism. See Amiya Kumar Chakravorty, Studies in Mahimabhaṭṭa (Calcutta: Calcutta University, 1975), 10. This is wrong, as I will show, and is based on an insufficient examination of Mahima's ideas.

that can falsify the cognition of a sentence's meaning are either other cognitions, like perception, for example, which would prove that the speaker is mistaken or lying, or doubts about whether the speaker has flaws and might be either mistaken or lying, in which case we can't trust them and can't know for sure that they are correct. When the subject of the sentence is something that is necessarily beyond ordinary human experience, like heaven or the results of sacrifice, it is only doubts about the validity of the speaker that can falsify our cognitions. The Vedic Ritualists, therefore, give a series of arguments (which we will not go into) intended to show that the Vedas are without author and eternal, and therefore that there is no basis on which to doubt the cognitions we obtain from their linguistic statements.  

Given that the Vedas are authoritative for these reasons, the Vedic Ritualists need to keep this in mind when they develop interpretive principles to extract and apply coherent sets of ritual instructions from the scriptures. There are a surprising number of interpretive and practical

---

28 This is not actually as foreign to modern Western ways of thinking as it sounds. Imagine a situation in which a scientist performs an experiment and obtains a piece of evidence that seems to indicate some scientific fact—a particular gas-trail in a supercollider, let's say, that indicates the existence of some particle at the subatomic level, to which we have no perceptual access and really no access at all other than this sort of experiment. Under the conditions of the experiment, assuming they are sound, the piece of evidence simply appears naturally out of the structure of the universe. Nobody in particular put it there, and so there is no reason to think it is "lying" about anything. It signifies something, and it does so infallibly. We might disagree on how to interpret it and how to determine what it signifies, but there will be no doubt that if we figure this part out, then whatever the evidence "tells" us will be true, precisely because there is no reason to think it might be lying. Lying is something that people, and perhaps animals, do. The natural structure of the universe doesn't lie. Thus far, the Vedic Ritual theory of meaning is perfectly compatible with modern Western ways of thinking. The only thing that might seem bizarre about it would be the idea that a complete text composed in a seemingly human language could possibly emerge naturally out of the structure of the universe on its own the same way traces in the gas of a supercollider do. Vedic Ritualist arguments for this are complex, but probably unlikely to convince anyone in the modern West (For a good summary, see Lawrence McCrea,"Just Like Us, Just Like Now: The Tactical Implications of the Mīmāṃsaka Rejection of Yogic Perception," in Yogic Perception, Meditation, and Altered States of Consciousness, ed Eli Franco and Dagmar Eigner [Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2009]). Modern Westerners might also try to reduce our scientific knowledge of subatomic particles to a form of inference, rather than some form of linguistic "meaning." Here there is probably a more live philosophical argument to be had, and some of the Vedic Ritualist arguments might indeed be relevant. This discussion would take us too far afield, but it would probably come down to an argument about whether inference requires that the inferred object be at some time observable, in order that we can ascertain a necessary concomitance between this inferred object and the inferential sign, or whether we can infer the presence of something that is essentially unobservable, perhaps by means of a series of inferences beginning with inferences about something that is observable.
problems involving the precise details of the sacrifices, and these could lead to doubt about the validity of the sacrifices if not properly resolved. The interpretive principles used to resolve these problems need to preserve the ultimate authority of each statement of the Veda, which means that none of the details enjoined, no matter how small, can be left out or modified without the authority of some other Vedic statement. And this needs to be done without appealing to the intentions of any author. The Vedic Ritualists do this primarily by assuming that any given sentence has a single, coherent function, whose goal is ultimately to contribute to producing action (the sacrifice), and whose parts all work towards this goal. Parts of speech and types of statements are then elaborately interpreted in a nested, hierarchical way so that, without disrupting each statement's singular function, they can all be understood to work towards the goal they participate in. Often contextual factors are taken into account, and these interpretations are done with respect to other sentences, groups of sentences, or entire texts, all of which have their own, overriding goals, to which the function of other statements and goals are subordinated.

It is also worth noting that individual words, in this scheme, point only and always to their own given meanings (for the Bhāṭṭa school of Vedic Ritualism, at least). Because the language of the Vedas is eternal, these meanings are themselves eternal, as is the connection between the word and the meaning. This requires that individual words denote universals, such as cowness, which are eternal and unchanging, and never particulars, like individual cows, which are subject to birth and death. When, however, these words are placed into a sentence which requires that some action be done, then by implication the sentence refers to particular items in the world, because only they can fulfill the activity the sentence is requiring. In other words, if the Vedas say "Bring a cow," this sentence, semantically speaking, refers only to the universal *cowness*, and to the bare action of bringing. But because a universal on its own can't be *brought*
anywhere, we are forced to understand that what is to be brought is some particular individual in
which that universal inheres."\(^{29}\)

The details of all this are of course extremely complicated, and this is only a brief sketch,
but the point is that because of McCrea's work we know that, both in overall spirit and in
particular details, it is Vedic Ritualist theory that is the source for Ānandavardhana's teleological
view of literary texts.\(^{30}\) With *rasa* as the overriding goal, each part of a verse or a text is
understood to be working towards this goal in a hierarchically organized structure that is
consistent with Vedic Ritualist interpretive strategies.\(^{31}\) This strategy functions in multiple ways.
At certain points, for example, seeming contradictions between *rasas* in a given verse are
resolved in the same way that Vedic Ritualists resolve seeming contradictions among Vedic
statements.\(^{32}\) And even when difficulties arise in this theory, for example when the manifested
meaning is found not to be the *telos* of a verse but only a subordinated element in it, as it is in the
verse above about the moon and the night sky, or when, for example, the idea that a sentence has
both an expressed and manifested meaning seems to contradict the Vedic Ritualists' idea that a
sentence has one single, coherent function, Ānandavardhana still smooths over these very
discrepancies using Vedic Ritualist interpretive strategies.\(^{33}\)

---

\(^{29}\) The ideas discussed here are widely known and uncontroversial. Some of the best summaries of this material can be found in Rāja, *Indian Theories of Meaning*; Jha, *Pūrva-Mīmāṁsā In Its Sources*; and Devasthali, *Mimamsa*.

\(^{30}\) Although McCrea is obviously correct about this, it is far from obvious why Vedic Ritualist ideas were so popular in Kaśmīr at this time, given that there is little evidence for the actual performance of Vedic Rituals there. Just what exactly this theoretical system meant to intellectuals in Kaśmīr, for whom it was merely a philosophical system on not a full religion, is therefore an interesting question that has not yet been addressed or even properly formulated.


\(^{32}\) For example, ibid., 123-132.

\(^{33}\) Ibid., 182-188.
Now, these considerations of teleology are, strictly speaking, separate from the theory of manifestation. Even if that theory turns out to be wrong, it could still be the case that literary texts are (or should be) hierarchically organized towards the production of rasa, and the case that this hierarchy is the basis for understanding and judging the various subsidiary elements of the text. This probably explains why Ānandavardhana refers to the theory of manifestation to grammarians and not Vedic Ritualists, as we saw in Chapter One. It also explains why, even though the theory of manifestation was controversial, there seems to have been no disagreement at all about the teleological orientation of texts towards the production of rasa, as McCrea clearly shows. Later theorists, Mahima included, can be seen as pushing this aspect of his theory forward, even as they disagree with the theory of manifestation itself.34

So when he insists on the teleology of literary language, Mahima is at least not in contradiction with Ānandavardhana's Vedic Ritualist literary theory. And certainly, in intellectual historical terms, when Mahima argues this way he is participating in a literary-theoretical tradition that Ānandavardhana initiated by using Vedic Ritualist theory. But although his conclusions are similar to Ānandavardhana's, it is clear when we look closely at Mahima's text that he doesn't come to these conclusions for the same reasons and doesn't he justify them in the same way.

In saying this I don't mean to suggest that Mahima's text is entirely devoid of Vedic Ritualist ideas. Mahima's text, like many others in this time period, does show some influence of

---

34 McCrea, "Mahimabhaṭṭa's Theory," 80 n. 10. See also McCrea, Teleology, 446: "Ānandavardhana's rasa-centered poetic teleology is not only generally accepted by later Ālāṃkārikas: its implications are carried much farther than Ānandarvardhana himself was prepared to take them." Interestingly, McCrea also notes that despite the fact that after Ānandavardhana rasa is accepted as a telos by all theorists, Ānandavardhana's most radical suggestion, that this teleology applies not only to verses but to entire texts, seems to have fallen by the wayside, as theorists returned to analyzing individual verses in isolation, rather than analyzing the dominant rasa of an entire poem. McCrea, Teleology, 441.
Vedic Ritualism. McCrea points out multiple instances of this. Mahima, for example, repeatedly refers to the end-point of linguistic cognitions with the Sanskrit verb *paryavaso*, a verb meaning "to result or end in, amount to," a verb which Vedic Ritualists typically use for this purpose as well. He uses certain Vedic Ritualist ideas about the relation of subjects and predicates, particularly in his thinking about some of the poetic flaws. He argues that words only have one function—to denote their conventional meanings—and that any further information we get from them is the result of a cognitive process other than denotation. In at least one instance, he argues that a particular punning verse is flawed because in order to interpret its double meaning one has to sacrifice the singular functionality of the sentence and see it has having two different functions—a mistake which Mahima describes in this section using terms that are strongly reminiscent of Vedic Ritualism.

On the other hand, not all of these ideas are exclusive to Vedic Ritualism, even if they may have originated there. The analysis of sentences in terms of subjects and predicates is sometimes found in Buddhist texts as well, for example in Dharmottara's *Nyāyabindūṭīkā*, which was popular in Kaśmīr at this time and uses the same wording that Mahima uses. And the requirement that a sentence be comprised of a single action towards which its various parts are

---


36 McCrea, *Teleology*, 90; see, for example, *Vyaktiviveka*, 26, 119.


38 Ibid., 438-439.

39 McCrea, "Mahimabhaṭṭa's Theory," 88-89. The original discussion is found in *Vyaktiviveka*, 406ff.

40 *Nyāyabindu*, 41, 100, 164-165 *et passim*. 
hierarchically subordinated—even if Mahima discussed it at times in Vedic Ritualist terms—is grounded by Mahima not in any authoritative Vedic Ritualist text, which Mahima nowhere quotes, but rather in the grammarian Bhartṛhari, in a quote from *Vākyapadīya* where it clearly takes a provisional and subordinate role to other linguistic models.\(^{41}\)

Mahima also at times contradicts central tenets of Vedic Ritualism. Although he does argue that words only denote, and that any further information they give when combined into sentences is the result of a further cognitive process, he nowhere says that the denoted object is eternal, or a universal. In fact, as we will soon see, it seems that it isn't a universal for him at all. More importantly, Mahima says quite clearly that the "further cognitive process" involved in deriving meanings from sentences is inference.\(^{42}\) This flies in the face of Vedic Ritualism's careful and extensive attempts to differentiate this exact process from inference, and to give it another name, *arthāpatti*, which translates as something like "presumption." Where Vedic

---

\(^{41}\) Mahima refers on p. 46 to *Vākyapadīya* vs. 2.4: sākāṅksāvavayavaṃ bhede parānākāṅkṣaśabdakam / karmapradhānam guṇavad ekārtham vākyam ucyate // "A collection of words with a single meaning, which is semantically complete [lit. "has no semantic expectation for anything else"], whose parts are semantically incomplete if pulled apart, and whose main thing is an action with subsidiary qualifications, that is called a sentence." It is true that Bhartṛhari seems to intend this to be a statement of the Vedic Ritualist position, and it echoes *Mimāṃsāśāstra* 2.1.46: arthaikatvād ekaṃ vākyam sākāṅkṣam ced viभāge syāt. "Because of having singularity of meaning, a sentence would be semantically incomplete if separated [ie, if part were missing]." So by quoting it Mahima is essentially giving a Vedic Ritualist position. But it is also true that in the original context Bhartṛhari clearly subordinates this idea to the very non-Vedic Ritualist idea that sentences are, in reality, holistic and partless, not composed of mutually expectant parts. Bhartṛhari performs this subordination by arguing, in *Vākyapadīya* vs. 2.88-89 and elsewhere, that although a sentence meaning is, in reality, partless, it can be conceptually imagined to have parts [*bhedena parikalpanā*] for practical reasons. That is, for the purpose of grammar or hermeneutics we can usefully pretend that Vedic Ritualists are correct, and that a sentence's meaning is composed of individual, mutually expectant word-meanings, but in reality it's not this way. Vedic Ritualism is, thus, just a useful fiction for Bhartṛhari; not really true. Mahima clearly subscribes to this overriding theory as well, not only by implication but explicitly. We find him, in a different portion of his text, also describing the existence of the parts of a sentence as due only to conceptual division, and describing this conceptual division using the same Sanskrit word that Bhartṛhari uses for it: *parikalpanā*. See Vyaktiviveka, 49: vāyārthastu vācyasyārthasyāṃśa parikalpanāyāṃśaṃśāṃ svādhvāvābhāvāvasthiteḥ... "When there is the imaginary division of expressed meanings into parts, the parts stand in a relationship of subject and predicate, and because of this, a sentence meaning..."

\(^{42}\) Vyaktiviveka, 83: na ca vācyād arthād arthāntarapraṇāīd avābhāvāsambandhasmaraṇām antaraṇaīvā sambhavati, sarvasyāpi tatpratītiprasangāt.
Ritualists use presumption to explain our movement from word-meanings to sentence meanings, and emphatically state that presumption is not simply a sub-category of inference, Mahima explicitly claims that presumption is a type of inference, and reduces sentential cognition to inference. The precise nature of presumption, as well as how and why Vedic Ritualists differentiate it from inference, is not as important here as the fact that Mahima is starkly and obviously departing from one of their hallmark ideas.

So it seems that Vedic Ritualism, though it clearly holds a place in Mahima's system, holds an ambivalent one. Again, this is not to contradict McCrea's claim that Vedic Ritualist ideas changed South Asian literary theory permanently and drastically, beginning with Ānandavardhana's Dhvanyāloka, nor, of course, his claim that these ideas can be found in later texts as well, including Mahima's. But as McCrea himself argues, Vedic Ritualist ideas really fit in to Mahima's text as part of his attempt to show that poetic language isn't unique or different from ordinary discourse, and can be submitted to the same interpretive considerations as ordinary discourse. In service of this goal, Vedic Ritualism is only one of a few different philosophical systems used, along with philosophical grammar and Buddhist philosophy, and of these it is not at all the most important.

In fact, among these systems it is Buddhist philosophy that is most pervasive in Mahima's work, and unlike Vedic Ritualism, its role is not ambivalent or subtle. The works of the Buddhist philosopher Dharmakīrti are quoted over and over again, and they are always, as McCrea notes,

---

43 For Mahima's position see Vyaktiviveka, 118: arthāpatter anumānāntarbhāvābhuyupagamād. . . For a summary of the Vedic Ritualist alternatives, see Raja, Indian Theories of Meaning, Chapter Five.

44 McCrea, "Mahimabhaṭṭa's Theory."

45 McCrea, "Mahimabhaṭṭa's Theory," 94.
treated as "absolutely authoritative."[46] This influence extends to many aspects of his literary theory, particularly, as we will see, the issues surrounding inference. Could it also form the basis for Mahima's insistence on the functional teleology of language?

The strongest clue that it does comes in the third chapter of the work, where Mahima is discussing the issue of "spoilt" words [apaśabda].[47] The issue arises because Mahima is discussing a particular punning verse in which a word contains two meanings. Inquiring into the source of the second meaning, Mahima broadens the discussion out and asks what it is that determines a word's meaning in the first place? Having rejected the Vedic Ritualist idea that a word is naturally (and thus eternally) connected to its meaning, Mahima says that it is the listener who determines a word to be connected to a certain meaning,[48] and that his determination of further meanings is based on considering the linguistic context.[49] The context is the sentence or series of sentences in which a word appears. When the sentence is conducive to a certain meaning due to considerations that are presumably practical and social, the listener will interpret the word to be connected to that meaning. Because of this, Mahima says, any word can carry any meaning if the context is correct, and any word can fail to give rise to its proper meaning if the


[47]Vyaktiviveka, 478-484.

[48]Ibid., 479. vācyavācakabhāvavisayah. . . pratipatt[r]parāmarśāpeksāparatantro 'rthādhyavasādopajano na svabhairvika. "The relation of expression and expressed is a dependent relation, being in expectation of the considered reflection of a cognizer. It is generated by [that cognizer's] determination of the object, not naturally."

[49]Ibid., 480: kim ca na svabhaivata eva šabdānām arthapratitiyakrama iti niyamasaṁbhavaḥ, kīn tarhi? sāmāgrīvāst. sā hi yadarthānugunā upalabhya tameva tasyārthaṁ kalpaayitī sarvaḥ sarvārthāvīṣayāh sarvaḥ cārthāḥ sarvaṁabdashīṣaya bhavitum arhati. "Moreover, there is no law that the sequence of cognitions that a word [gives, i.e. from literal to figurative] is based just on its nature. What is it [based on] then? On the power of the collection [of words]. For whatever meaning that [collection] is conducive to, that is imagined to be [the word's] meaning. Thus any word can express any meaning, and any meaning can be expressed by any word."
context is not correct. It is only this, its failure to convey the intended meaning, that makes a word "spoilt," not its conformity to grammatical rules.50

This idea is a rebuke to Vedic Ritualism, which requires that words (for the Bhāṭṭas) or at least sentences (for the Prābhākaras) be connected to their meanings naturally and eternally, and not subject to changing human conventions and contexts. This Vedic Ritualist idea implies, of course, that there is a "correct" language, a perfect language that takes the "natural" form that language primordially has, and this language, Sanskrit, is the language found in the eternal and authorless Vedas. The Vedic Ritualist theory further implies that people who don't speak this language are speaking "incorrectly." The complex grammatical rules of the Sanskrit language exist in order to preserve these ideal linguistic forms and keep people from falling into the confusion of speaking "incorrectly." This dichotomy between correct and incorrect languages grows out of an orthodox Hindu [vaidika] cultural sphere in which Sanskrit, the language of the Vedas, is privileged, epistemologically and ontologically, over other languages.51

Mahima makes it clear that even if we provisionally accepted such a dichotomy between "correct" and "incorrect" words, his theory would still hold that any word can convey any

---

50Ibid.: sādhuśabasyāpi sāmagrīvaigunyenācakatvād apaśabdavam upapannam bhavati. tataś ca \[vācakatvācakatvamātranihandhane śabdāpaśabdavavyavahare vyavasthitē sati. . . ]"A word, even if it is proper, becomes spoilt if the collection is deficient and thereby it does not express [what it is intended to]. And therefore, since the cause of calling a word proper or spoilt comes down simply to whether it expresses or doesn't express. . . " This might sound similar to the Prābhākara theory of anvītābhidhāna, discussed in Chapter One, but it is different in crucial ways, the most important being that Mahima still considers words here to have an atomic meaning, not a syntactically construed meaning. The context affects how we interpret these individual words, but the word meaning is not itself constituted by the sentence meaning. These sentences meanings, in addition, are entirely conventional, not natural and permanent like they are for the Prābhākaras. Moreover, word-use is never connected by Mahima to action. Finally, Mahima's theory is essentially concerned with decided how and when a word can misfire, so to speak, and fail to indicate its proper meaning. Prābhākaras are not interested in this question because they are interested primarily in Vedic language, which they think can never misfire. (Except of course insofar as we misunderstand it, but this is not a "misfire" properly speaking.)

51"Orthodox Hindu" is of course an anachronism that I hope specialist readers will excuse. It is widely known the Hinduism, both the word and the concept, didn't exist at this early time period. I am using it here only to refer to those who accept the validity of the Vedas and the importance of Vedic sacrifice and other cultural, social, and moral practices growing out of śruti and smṛti literature.
meaning through context.\textsuperscript{52} Even if, Mahima says, there is an ideal language that is known to be proper and correct, then grammatically incorrect words [\textit{asādhusabda}] can still function to convey meanings by reminding a listener of the correct words, and so they will communicate their meaning indirectly. To support this he quotes \textit{Vākyapādiya} 3.3.30, in which Bhartṛhari, an orthodox Hindu, considers this as one way to explain the fact that non-Sanskrit words still seem to "work" in terms of ordinary discourse.\textsuperscript{53} The idea seems to be something like this: if you, the reader, were to find me writing "Mahima's theory is a rejection of poetic manifestation," then the word "rejection" wouldn't itself signify the idea of rejection. It rather would allow you, the reader, to infer that I really meant to write "rejection," and it would be this inferred word that would do the work of signifying the concept. The idea applies, \textit{mutatis mutandis}, to spoken colloquial languages, which Vedic Brahmans generally considered to be nothing but various gigantic, complex typos in the Sanskrit language.

But, Mahima continues, to the extant that they do this, to the extant that they do provoke an awareness in the listener of the proper meaning, than they are still not really "spoilt" at all, because they work to carry out their function. They might be grammatically incorrect with regard to the rules of the Sanskrit language, but as long as they convey their meaning, which even Bhartṛhari admits that they do, then there is really no problem with grammatically incorrect words. On the other hand words that fail to convey their meaning, due to a confusing context or

\textsuperscript{52}\textit{Vyaktiviveka}, 480: \textit{āstām vā anyaśabdaḥ, yah sādhutvena prasiddhaḥ}. "Or, [for the sake of argument] let it be the case that there is some other word that is known to be correct." The wording of the Sanskrit makes it clear that this is provisional acceptance for the sake of argument, even if this doesn't come through in the translation.

\textsuperscript{53}\textit{Ibid.}, 480: \textit{asādhur anumānena vācakāh kaiś cid iṣyate / vācakatvāviśeṣe vā niyamah punyapāpayoh // "Some consider an improper word to be expressive by means of inference. / Even though there is no distinction in their expressiveness, there is the regulation of sin and merit".}
something like that, are "improper" even if they are grammatically correct, because they fail to accomplish their purpose.

The Vākyapadīya verse that Mahima quotes further explains that even if incorrect words do convey their meaning, there is still special merit involved in speaking correctly, and special demerit in speaking incorrectly—a quasi-magical idea that some sort of auspiciousness inheres in "proper" words that is separate from their functional use to convey meanings. Mahima, however, goes on to reject this idea as well, saying that as long as the meaning is meritorious, any demerit that is incurred by using an incorrect word will be undone when one reaches that meaning, just like someone who gets dirty digging a well can wash themselves in the water it gives when its finished. In other words, the merit or demerit of language has to do with what it conveys, not how it conveys it, and the idea that there is a "correct" way to speak is really just a superstition, unless speaking "correctly" is understood to just mean getting your point across.\(^\text{54}\)

---

\(^{54}\)Vyaktiviveka, 483: yady api ca kecid ācakṣate samānārthāyām arthagatau sabdenāpaśahdena ca sāstreṇa dharmaniyamaḥ kriyate sādhubhir eva bhāṣitavyaṃ nāsādhubhir iti, tatra kāpakhānakavadvṛttir bhaviṣyatīty ādinā taireva pratiḥitām. Rajendran (A Study of Mahimabhaṭṭa, 505), notes that the particular example of digging a well and washing yourself with the resulting water seems to originate with Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya (see Patañjali, The Vyākaraṇa-Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali, ed. F. Kielhorn, 3rd revised edition by K.V. Abhyankar, vol 1 [Poona: R.N. Dandekar at the Bandharkar Oriental Institute, 1962], 11 line 6. It is also referred to, interestingly, in the famous Kaśmir collection of stories Kāthāśārītsāgara. See Kāthāśārītsāgara vs. 10.10.134 in Somadevabhaṭṭa, The Kāthāśārītsāgara of Somadevabhaṭṭa, Paṇḍit Durgāprasād and Kāśīnātha Pandurang Parab eds, 4th edition, revised by Wāsudev Laxmaṇ Śāstrī Panṣikar [Bombay: Nirṇaya Sāgar Press, 1930], 350). What Rajendran fails to point out, however, is that in the Mahābhāṣya the example is used to illustrate a very different point. There, Patañjali uses the example in a section explaining how exactly the Sanskrit language leads to spiritual merit. A question is raised as to whether it is knowledge of correct words that leads to merit, or usage of correct words. Patañjali eventually answers that it is some combination of the two, but not before pointing out potential problems with either answer. The problem with saying that knowledge of correct words leads to merit is that knowledge of correct words automatically presupposes knowledge of incorrect words. If I know that the plural of "mouse" is "mice," then I also thereby know that "mouses" is incorrect. And if knowledge of the correct words leads to merit, then the knowledge of incorrect words must lead to demerit, and not only that, but much greater demerit, since there are many more incorrect words than correct ones. We could read this as an overly literal and superstitious understanding of the language, or we could read it a little more deeply as a proto-structuralist recognition that the predicate "correct" only makes sense within a web of associations that includes "incorrect" and can't be isolated or simple. In any event Patañjali gives various responses to this idea, and one of them is to raise the possibility that knowledge of incorrect words is like digging a well and the result—knowledge of correct words—counteracts any demerit incurred. This is entirely different from the point Mahimabhaṭṭa is making with the same example. Patañjali is trying to preserve the idea that grammatically correct Sanskrit is better in some deep way than other languages, and he is explaining the relationship between knowledge of correct Sanskrit and the knowledge of its opposite that is automatically implied. Mahimabhaṭṭa, on the other hand, is using the point to undermine the privileged status of correct Sanskrit. In his
If this attack on grammatical formality is at odds with an orthodox Hindu world-view, it should come as no surprise that it has its grounding in an important work of Buddhist philosophy, *Vādanyāya* of Dharmakīrti. Though the work itself is not quoted by Mahima in this section, the parallel is extremely close, and the fact that Mahima quotes it elsewhere in his text means that he certainly was familiar with it.\textsuperscript{55}

*Vādanyāya* is a short manual on debate. It lays out rules for the formal, inter-religious debates sponsored in ancient South Asia by kings and other wealthy patrons, and it lists the situations, called "clinchers" [*nigrahasthāna*], in which one opponent or the other should be judged to have decisively won or lost. It is a response to the treatment of the same topic in the *Nyāyasūtras*, a traditional and non-Buddhist work on logic and epistemology that became the corner-stone of a school of philosophy called Nyāya. In *Vādanyāya*, Dharmakīrti greatly reduces and aggregates the number of clinchers given in the *Nyāyasūtras* to two main categories, and as he does this he also takes opportunities to go on quasi-digressions and give examples of what he's talking about by refuting the ideas of different Hindu philosophical systems, Nyāya as well as others.

\textsuperscript{55} The quotes come at *Vyākrtiveka*, 333, 443. Not coincidentally, the two times the work is quoted have to do with the same issues of functionality and efficiency that characterizes the section on *apāśabda*. 

---

Example the water at the bottom of the well represents not grammatical knowledge, but communication of a meritorious idea, and the dirt is not knowledge of hypothetically ungrammaticalities but the actual usage of non-Sanskrit words. In other words, while Patañjali uses the example to privilege correct grammatical knowledge over the hypothetical incorrect grammars that it implies, Mahimabhaṭṭa is using it to privilege communication over correct grammar. Mahimabhaṭṭa is therefore not so much referring to Vaidika grammatical ideas here as he is appropriating them for purposes they were never intended for. (Of course, it is also possible that Patañjali himself was attempting to appropriate and rewrite the well example from an earlier source, possibly Buddhist, but that's beyond the boundaries of this project.)
In one section of the text, Dharmakīrti responds to the Nyāya claim that a debater will lose if he states his argument in the improper order. The Nyāyasūtras hold that a proper inferential argument must have five steps, and that these must be stated in a particular order to be valid. If one debater mixes up the order of the statements, his loss is clinched. The details of the steps are not important here; they involve stating one's conclusion and laying out the evidence that compels that conclusion. The point is that the Nyāyasūtras feel the formal order of the steps is important, whereas Dharmakīrti, on the other hand, argues that as long as the interlocutor can understand the point of the argument being made, the order in which it is stated doesn't matter. In other words, Dharmakīrti judges the argument by whether it produces the right cognition in the interlocutor, not whether it is formally correct.

He only reaches this conclusion, however, after a long digression on language occasioned by a commentator on the Nyāyasūtra, whom Dharmakīrti quotes at length. This commentator, who represents a philosopher named Uddyotakara, attempts to bolster the Nyāyasūtra's position by comparing an argument whose steps have been mixed up to a non-grammatical sentence. "One might think that even [a mixed up argument] accomplishes its goal, but [we say] no,

---


57 For a very good description of these five steps and how they are used in the context of a particular inference, see Parimal Patil, Against a Hindu God: Buddhist Philosophy of Religion in India (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 31-99, and specifically 59-62,

58 Vādanyāva, 48: avayavaviparyaye ‘pi yadi teśāṁ vacānānāṁ pratīti, na viparyayo nāpyarthāpratītiḥ sāmarthyāt. "Even if the order of the statements is mixed up, if there is cognition of the [logical connection] among the sentences, then [the argument] is capable [as it stands], and so there is no [real] mix up, nor is the meaning missed.

59 Dharmakīrti doesn't name him but he quotes an extensive passage of his Nyāyavārttika ad 5.2.11, which matches the published edition almost exactly. Cf. Vādanyāya, 44-45 and Nyāyadarśanam, 1182-1183.
because it is the same as language that departs from proper usage.\textsuperscript{60} He then goes on to discuss the example of a word that still puts the right idea in the listener's head despite being incorrect, and says, like the \textit{Vākyapadiya} quote above, that in that case it is actually the correct word that is doing the work, and that the listener has to perform the mental action of substituting the correct word in his head before he can understand the speaker. The same would go \textit{mutatis mutandis}, for an improperly phrased argument. Only the proper phrasing \textit{works}. If we understand an argument that is improperly phrased it is only because we have fixed it ourself mentally first and then "reread" it again.

Dharmakīrti responds to this by excoriating the idea that there is a "proper" way of speaking apart from practical considerations—the grammatical support given here to Udyotakara's philosophical position is, Dharmakīrti says, "like an insane person being endorsed by another insane person."\textsuperscript{61} He excoriates along with it the incredibly complex tradition of Sanskrit grammar designed to protect that proper way of speaking. Dharmakīrti calls this grammatical tradition pointless,\textsuperscript{62} and he ridicules the idea that we only understand incorrect words by substituting the correct ones, i.e. the Sanskrit words. Plenty of people, he says, understand meaning from incorrect words without knowing Sanskrit all. Moreover, even if we hold that the incorrect word first allows us to infer the correct one and then, once we substitute it, the correct one does the semantic work, then how do we make this inference? An incorrect word can only produce knowledge of the "correct" word if we understand the intended meaning in the first place. When I wrote "rejection" above, you \textit{first} assumed what I meant, and \textit{then} inferred I

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{60}\textit{Vādanyāya}, 44: \textit{evam api siddher iti cet. na. prayogāpetaśabdutulyatvāt.}
\item \textsuperscript{61}Ibid., 44: \textit{tad etat unnattasya unnattasamśv armour nam iva.}
\item \textsuperscript{62}Ibid., 45.
\end{itemize}
must have intended to write "rejection." If you thought I had meant something else, you would have been more confused, or even unable to make the substitution. And, Dharmakīrti says, if a word can give you a sense of the meaning like this, then why not just say it denotes that meaning?

Dharmakīrti also discusses, and dismisses, the idea that there is any special merit in using correct words; merit lies only in the meaning of the words. "They [Sanskrit words] are not the means to merit, because demerit will arise from religious injunctions urging false behavior, even if they are worded in Sanskrit. Other [non-Sanskrit] words, [urging] the contrary, do produce merit."63 The only thing that matters, when it comes to words, is whether they perform the function we need, and they produce merit if that function is meritorious, regardless of their grammatical form. This function can be carried out, according to Dharmakīrti, when a group of people shares the same conventions and can understand each other. Apart from this, there is no basis at all for claiming that some words are more correct than others.64 Dharmakīrti even uses this principle as the basis for proposing an alternative definition of what constitutes the unity of a sentence, different from the classic Vedic Ritualist understanding. Dharmakīrti says: "However many words are required to accomplish the meaning, that is a single sentence."65

63 Ibid., 46: na dharmasādhanaṁ mithyāvṛtti cādedbhyaḥ sanskṛtebhyaḥ 'pyadharmopatpateḥ, anyabhyaḥ 'pi viparyaye dharmopatpateḥ.

64 Of course, not all Buddhists would agree with this. Dharmakīrti's philosophy was enormously popular and influential, but it didn't represent a Buddhist consensus. Most notably, Dharmakīrti was in contradiction with later, Tantric schools of Buddhism, who had formal ritual practices that involved the use of mantras. See Vincent Eltschinger, Penser l'autorité des Écritures: la polémique de Dharmakīrti contre la notion brahmanique orthodoxe d'un Veda sans auteur; autour de Pramāṇavārttika I.213-268 et Svavṛtti (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2007), 63.

65 Ibid., 48: yāvadbhiḥ padair arthaparismāptih tadaikām vākyam. . . Vedic Ritualists, on the other hand, understand sentential unity to be a more formal, grammatical unity, rather than a practical unity. For them, a sentence is one unified entity when there would be grammatical incompleteness if one of the parts were missing. See n. 41 above, which discusses, among other things, Mīmāṃsāśāstra 2.1.46: arthaikatvād ekam vākyam sākāṅksam ced vibhāge syāt. "Because of having singularity of meaning, a sentence would be semantically incomplete if separated
This focus on practicality and functionality, and the concomitant dismissal of the "pointless" formal practices of followers of the Vedas, is typical of Dharmakīrti. The idea that a particular Sanskrit word only produces meaning because of a particular linguistic context, and not because of some innate capacity in the words, is what allowed Dharmakīrti to famously quip that when the Vedas say "One who desires heaven should sacrifice," nothing other than human convention prevents the words from meaning that one should eat dog meat. More specifically, the idea that the purpose of language is only to produce awareness of meanings, and that apart from its success or failure at this there is no way to judge it, is an attitude that is characteristic of Vādanyāya as a whole. Much of Dharmakīrti's work in this text in fact has to do with streamlining the rules of debate with this sort of teleology in mind. The Nyāyasūtra thinks of the purpose of debate as the protection of one's own conclusions about the truth. Because of this, all sorts of tricks are allowed in order to win a debate and protect the truth, which are the subject of the fourth chapter of the Nyāyasūtras. Dharmakīrti, on the other hand, disallows such tricks in a debate, because the purpose of a debate as he sees it is not just to win, but to use words and arguments to produce knowledge of the truth in the opponent, either by supporting your own

[ie, if a part were missing]." Though similar, the crucial difference is that Dharmakīrti's definition allows for run-on sentences and incomplete sentences to be considered unified sentences as long as they get their point across, whereas the Vedic Ritualists cannot consider these to be unified sentences, and have to either understand them as more than one single sentence, or less than one, respectively.

66 *Pramāṇavārttika* vs. 3.318 (Dharmakīrti, *The Pramāṇavārttikam of Dharmakīrti: The First Chapter With the Autocommentary*, Serie Orientale Roma v. 23 [Rome: Instituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1960], 167: *tenāgniḥ otaram jhūiyāt svargakāma iti śrutam / khadec chvaṁśam ity[sic] nārtha ity atra kā pramā //* (From here forward, this will be the primary edition referred to, unless otherwise noted. The other main edition used will be Dharmakīrti, *Pramāṇavārttika-kārikā: Sanskrit and Tibetan*. Ed. Yûsho Miyasaka. *Acta Indologica* 2 [1971/1972]).


68 *Nyāyasūtra* 4.2.50 [Nyāyarāśanam, 1099]: *tattvādhyavasāyasamrakṣanārtham jalpavitāṇde. . . "The purpose of jalpa and vītaṇḍa [two forms of debate] is to protect the ascertainment of the truth. . ."*
truthful claims or by pointing out why his claims are false. "Someone putting forth a position wins the debate by pointing out the truth for the benefit of their opponent, and someone attempting to refute a position wins by pointing out real faults and thus warding off false ideas." This, essentially, means that debate is no longer about adherence to a formalized set of rules that determine whether a position has been saved from criticism, but a mutual practice of attaining awareness of the truth (ideally, at least). The production of this awareness of the truth is the real purpose of the debate, and thus Dharmakīrti is willing to throw out any rules that don't directly contribute to this purpose. Much of his prescriptions can be understood in this way. So, for example, where the Nyāyasūtras require that the fifth step of an argument be a recapitulation of the original thesis that has already been proven by the other four steps, Dharmakīrti considers this to be pointless and repetitious. If the argument has been stated well the opponent should already understand it, and since their understanding of the argument has already been produced, there is no need to produce it again with a recapitulation.

This way of thinking about the functionality and teleology of language is much closer in spirit to Mahima's text than Vedic Ritualism is. Vedic Ritualism gives us a way to interpret and reconcile presumably authorless and infallible statements by hierarchically subordinating them to some particular action, which the statements bring about or enjoin. These statements are thought to be eternal, and so their grammar embodies a structure that is part of the nature of the universe, which means that the grammar of the Sanskrit language is privileged and unalterable, just like the structure of the sacrifice itself. Dharmakīrti's view of language, on the other hand, sees

---

69 Vādanyāya, 43: tasmāt parānugrahāya tattvakhyaśpanaḥ vādino vijayaḥ, bhūtadosadarśanena mithyāpratipattinivartanaṃ pratīvādinaḥ.

70 Ibid., 52: pratijñāyā eva gamyamārthāya vacanaṃ punarvacanaṃ kīṃ punar asyāḥ punarvacanaṃ ity ayuktāṃ nigamanam. "Stating the thesis is already repetitious, because it is implied [by the argument], not to mention its restatement [at the end of the argument]. Therefore [the fifth step, called] Recapitulation is not proper."
language simply as a means for producing an awareness of a certain meaning. In service of this any language is fine, as long as it works, since all language is just a matter of human social convention anyway. But anything that interferes with this goal of producing awareness of the meaning is a waste of time and should be trimmed out.

Mahima's use of this principle in poetry is best understood as the influence of Dharmakīrti, even if it doesn't contradict Ānandavardhana's very similar claims, because, as we have seen, Mahima clearly favors certain ideas that come from Dharmakīrti and contradict Vedic Ritualism. Similarly, Mahima's rejection of anything that gets in the way of producing meaning is also Dharmakīrttian. This is especially the case for his principled reduction of poetic flaws in the second chapter, mentioned above. Early theorists, such as Bhāmaha, simply gave lists of poetic flaws that included a variety of ways that words or ideas could spoil or a poem, or make it ugly, or hard to read. Mahima's reduction of these lists to just five types on the basis of his strict principles of functionality and teleology, arguably the most influential aspect of his work in later times, bears a strong resemblance to Dharmakīrti's similarly principled reduction of the various mistakes that cause one to lose a debate. Both take a plethora of discursive flaws and reduce them to a short list based on the idea that language is nothing but a tool used to produce

71 Actually the five types are only the so-called "external" [bahiraṅga] flaws. These flaws comprise the actual wording and grammar of the poem. His use of the term "external" is not entirely clear to me, but presumably they are called external because they occur before the actual moods and emotional elements have been understood. They are opposed to the "internal" [antaraṅga] flaws, which have to do with portraying the emotional cues proper to the various rasas, and are presumably internal in the sense that they take place within the moods portrayed, not within the linguistic tools used to portray them. This latter type of mistake also fits the pattern of strict insistence on functionality, but Mahima defers to Ānandavardhana in this matter, saying he has already satisfactorily described them. *Vyākrtiviveka*, 179: iha khalu dvividham anaucityam uktam arthaviṣayam śabdaviṣayam ceti. tatra vibhāvānubhāvavabhicārināmaayathāyatham raseṣu yo vinīyogas tanmātrealakṣaṇanam ekam antaraṅgam ādyair evoktam iti neha pratyayate. "Now, [poetic] impropriety is of two types: meaning-based and linguistic. The first among those, the internal one, is defined simply as the arrangement of aesthetic elements in a way that is unsuitable for the *rasa*. It has been stated by previous [scholars], so we won't elaborate on it here."

certain types of awareness (in fact, in both cases, Dhammakīrtian debates and Mahimabhaṭṭaṇ poetry, the specific awareness in question is inference). The fact that Mahima quotes Vādanyāya twice in his discussion of poetic flaws supports this conclusion, or at the very least shows that he knew the text well.

What also supports the conclusion is that when Mahima's commentator, Ruyyaka, tries to refute Mahima's ideas about subordination and defend Ānandavardhana's, he does it by undermining this kind of practical, cognitive teleology and reasserting a view that combines the Vedic Ritualist view of predominance and subordination with terms from Abhinavagupta's Śaivism. Responding to the distinction between "contextual" and "cognitive" predominance that Mahima made in interpreting the verse about the moon and the dawn described above, Ruyyaka argues that even though the manifested meaning is always the final stage in the cognition of a verse, and so is always cognitively predominant, it can still be subordinate to the stated meaning of the verse, because in this case the manifested meaning, once understood, "turns around" around and "assists" the stated meaning, which becomes the place of "repose," and thus predominant.73 The notion of "repose" is a reference to Abhinavagupta's theology, and refers to a state of mind (either an individual's or God's) in which the mind is not dependent on external objects and rests in is own independence.74 The notion of "assistance" [upakāra], on the other hand, is an idea commonly used to interpret Vedic ritual, both by Vedic Ritualist and also by

73 Vyaktiviveka 14: atra vyaktivādino 'yam abhiprāyah. . . pratiyamāno 'rtho vācyārthaupayiko 'pi na svātmanī viśrāntiḥ bhajate, pratyāvṛttya vācyārtho 'paskārāya pravṛttatvāt. . . guṇībhūtavyaṅgye vācyasya svaviśrāntatvenārthāntaropakaryatvam. "The manifestation theorist has the following in mind. . . the understood meaning [i.e. the manifested meaning], although it is the end towards which the expressed meaning as a means, doesn't partake of repose in itself, because it turns around and performs assistance to the expressed meaning. . . In poetry of subordinated manifestation, the expressed meaning, because it reposes in itself, is assisted by other meanings."

74 For the notion of "repose in the Self," see Chapter Two
Bhartṛhari. It describes the relationship among steps various steps in a ritual sacrifice so that we can know which steps are subordinate and can be replaced if necessary, and which cannot. Since a Vedic ritual is an elaborate endeavor, and since it is not always obvious why certain things are being done, we can't simply assume, as Dharmakīrti can about language, that the endpoint of the process is the only thing that matters and any step that brings it about can be changed as long as it still brings about this endpoint. The sacrifice is more formal than this—that is, the form might matter more than what we understand to be the result, because the exact workings of the ritual and the results they produce are not always within the scope of our perception. We need to rely on scripture for them, and we need to have an interpretive strategy that preserves the authority of that scripture. Sometimes, even though it would appear that something is just a means to an end and is therefore subordinate, Vedic Ritualist interpretive strategies might discover, for various reasons, that the particular activity in question is not the assistant but rather the thing being assisted. One clear example of this is explained by Kataoka, who analyzes Śabara's comments on Mīmāṃsāsūtra 3.6.11-13.75 In the pavamāneṣṭi sacrifice, which is a fire sacrifice, five (or three) ritual fires need to be constructed. Since one constructs the fires in order to carry out the sacrifice, one might think that the pavamāneṣṭi is the predominant activity and the fires are subordinate to it. However, for various complicated reasons that Kataoka lays out, this is not the case. The pavamāneṣṭi sacrifice actually produces an unseen effect in the fires, which makes them suitable for other, further sacrifices, and therefore in the pavamāneṣṭi sacrifice the fires are predominant and the sacrifice itself subordinate. So even though we construct the fires and then carry out a sacrifice with them, the sacrifice "turns around" as it were, and assists the fires by

---

lending an invisible capacity to them that they carry into further sacrifices. This means that the fires are predominant.

This is exactly the structure Ruuyaka uses in his defense of manifestation. Ruuyaka says, with regard to the verse "The face of the night. . .," that although the final cognitive result might be the manifested image of the lovers, the real point of the verse is the stated meaning, because this is the thing that is being "assisted" by the image of the lovers. Therefore it is predominant, and the end-point of the cognitive process, the image of the lovers, "turns around" after being understood and becomes subordinate to the predominant meaning. So, just like a Vedic sacrifice, a verse of poetry for Ruuyaka is teleological. But, just like Vedic sacrifice, it is not an ordinary, practical teleology, but one in which, depending on how we understand the relationships of assistance among the factors, can sometimes favor what seems to be a means over what seems to be an end.

Ruuyaka makes these arguments because they are opposed to Mahima's understanding of subordination and teleology, and they are opposed because Mahima, in drawing on Dharmakīrti, he is drawing on a system of philosophy, Buddhist philosophy, that deliberately undermines the kinds of Vedic philosophies on which Ruuyaka here relies. This is the only context in which Ruuyaka's discussion makes sense as a counter-argument to Mahima. As if to accentuate the point, Ruuyaka summarizes this section with a verse that contains a small pun. The verse states that what makes something subordinate in language is not that it is a means to some final stage of cognition, but that it is not something "assisted by other meanings"; it is, rather, an assister. Read differently, however, the verse says that the self-subordination of a meaning is not something
that is helped by "Buddhist meanings" [bauddhārtha]. The word vācyā, "expressed," would fit the meter, and would be expected here instead of the more unusual bauddha, which means "mental" or "understood," and must refer here to the expressed meaning. The choice of this word bauddha, while not unprecedented, is therefore strange enough to make me think that it's much more obvious meaning, as "Buddhist," is intended as a pun.

So, to sum up this whole section: Mahima begins his text with an argument about the teleology of language that is drawn, for the most part, from Dharmakīrti. Language, for Mahima, is a one-way street. It is a system of tools—spoken sounds—which are intended to give rise to an awareness of meanings in the listener. Whatever meaning results, whether denoted or "manifested," the language is subordinate to that meaning, because it was never anything but the means used to make one aware of that meaning. Anything else that produced the meaning would have worked equally well. He makes this argument in a roundabout way, by taking issue with Ānandavardhana's use of the term "subordinates" in the definition of manifestation. By including the term "subordinates" in the definition, Mahima says, Ānandavardhana implies that it could be otherwise, that language isn't always subordinate in this way. And Ānandavardhana does in fact believe this. He doesn't just imply it with a definition, he gives ostensible examples of it, like the example of "The face of the night. . . " It is this idea that is the target of Mahima's definitional critique, and Mahima's alternative is present throughout Vyaktiviveka. In fact, it is the first argument he makes because, as we will see, it is in various ways the prolegomenon to his further arguments. In looking at the various statements he makes about it we find that Dharmakīrti, and

---

76 Vyaktiviveka, 14: guṇikṛtmatārthasya. . . arthaṁ bauddhaṁ anupakarayatā. "The meaning's self-subordination [referred to in the definition of manifestation], consists in the fact that it is not assisted by other, understood meanings [or, not helped by Buddhist meanings]."

77 It is also a word used by Dharmakīrti to describe the referent of a word, and this could have been in Ruyyaka's mind as well. See Pramāṇavārttika vs. 1.208c, cited in Elschinger, Penser l'autorité, 135.
particularly Dharmakīrti's text *Vādanyāya*, is the major influence on this idea. Mahima's arguments about grammatically correct and incorrect words are taken directly from *Vādanyāya*, and many of his other arguments imply a connection to this text.

But if we accept Mahima's idea that language is just a conventional tool used to produce awareness of meanings, then the question necessarily arises: *how* does it produce awareness of these meanings? How is it that when I say a word or a sentence, you know what I'm talking about? What are the mechanisms by which the word does this? Couldn't it sometimes produce these meanings by the process that Ānandavardhana calls manifestation?

The short answer to this is that Mahima believes it can't, because language always and only produces awareness of its meanings by means of inference. I understand the words of someone speaking English because I can infer, based on my experience with English and taking context into consideration, what ideas would be causing a speaker of English to say this or that particular word. And this happens with all language, poetic and non-poetic. As a short answer, however, this leaves many questions open.

The longer version of this answer involves looking at Mahima's further arguments against the theory of manifestation. And if the preliminary argument about subordination and teleology is influenced by Dharmakīrti, his further arguments against manifestation are even more so. Whereas careful scrutiny is required to discern the Dharmakīrtian influence on the preliminary arguments, the Dharmakīrtian influence on his later arguments is bold and explicit, and impossible to miss. Because of this, we can't full appreciate Mahima's arguments against manifestation until we have a general understanding of Dharmakīrti's philosophical system. Once

---

78 It is this consideration of the context that allows us to draw correct inferences about things like homophones, which sound the same in isolation but which are disambiguated in context.
we have this background, we can look at Mahima's specific arguments and understand more clearly what he means.

It is this background that I would like to fill in now. As with Abhinavagupta's theology in Chapter Two, this background will have to be only a sketch. Much will be missing, and for a philosophically trained reader it might raise more questions than it answers. This is unavoidable, unfortunately. Since we are interested in intellectual history and with the influence of one thinker's ideas on another, the sketch will, overall, be more concerned with the conclusions Dharmakīrti reaches than with the elaborate arguments he uses to justify them. As with Abhinavagupta, we will have to content ourselves with getting a general idea of what Dharmakīrti thought, and the questions of whether or not we should also think this way will be left aside.

Dharmakīrti's Philosophy

The fundamental fact about all of existence, as Dharmakīrti sees it, is that all real things are unique and atomic. No two things are alike in any way, and nothing exists in more than one place, not even across any length of space. If something were extended across a length of space, it could be divided into at least two parts, and once that is possible, then we have to accept that we are actually dealing with at least two things, not one.\(^79\) This is because the only possible way they could be united into one thing is if there were some third thing, a whole, separate from the two, which united them, or perhaps if there were some other relation between them, such as

---

\(^79\) The basis for this idea precedes Dharmakīrti and comes from the Abhidharma system, where its *locus classicus* is *Abhidharmakośa* 6.4: *yatra bhinne na tadbaḍḍhir anyāpohe dhiyā ca tat / ghaṭārthavat saṁvyrtisat paramārthasad anyathā //*. This is cited in Dunne, *Foundations of Dharmakīrti*, 41, where he translates: “That of which one does not have a cognition when it has been broken [into parts] is conventionally real; an example is a water-jug. And that of which one does not have a cognition when other [elemental qualities] have been excluded from it by the mind is also conventionally real; an example is water. that which is otherwise is ultimately real.”
inherence or contact; but Dharmakīrti claims to disprove the possibility of all such relations.

There are no real composite wholes, in Dharmakīrti's system, except conventionally, and the only relations that are accepted to exist are relations of identity and causality, which couldn't account for spatially extended entities.\(^{80}\) This refutation of wholes and inherence relations is also held to be the reason why atoms can't be at all similar and must be completely unique: similarity would require something—a form, a property, an element—that they share, and that is responsible for the similarity, and this kind of entity would have to exist in more than one place, or across extended lengths of time or space, and this entity would then fall prey to the same arguments just mentioned. So such a thing can't exist, and therefore similarity between two things can't exist.

This uniqueness holds temporally within individuals as well as spatially across individuals. That is to say, while each entity is different from every other entity, each entity is also completely different from itself at each new moment. Everything, according to Dharmakīrti, exists only for a brief instant before disappearing, leaving in its place another entity as its result. This is established by Dharmakīrti using an elaborate set of inferential arguments, which,

\(^{80}\) See, for example, *Nyāyabindu*, 111-116 (vss 2.21-23): *sa ca pratibandhaḥ sādhya 'rthe liṅgasya. vastutas tādāmyāt tadutpattē ca. atatvabhāvāvastutātupattē ca tatrāpratibaddhasvabhāvatvāt.* "And that relation is of an inferential sign with an object that is to be established, because in reality it is identical with it or caused by it. Because what is not connected by identity or causality is not connected at all." Relations other than causality and identity are dispensed with using *reductio* arguments, in Dharmakīrti's system, specifically in *Sambandhaparīkṣā* verse 4 and its commentaries. If two things are related they are either the same as their relation or different from it. If they are the same, then there is only one thing, not two things that are related. If, on the other hand, they are different from the relation, then they need to be related to the relation somehow, and related to the relation that relates them to the relation, and so on *ad infinitum*. This summary is from, Dunne, *Foundations of Dharmakīrti*, 43, where the relevant passages of the *Sambandhaparīkṣā* are cited and translated. The argument against wholes is similar, and comes primarily from *Pramāṇavārttika* vss. 2.84-86. It is helpfully summarized in George Dreyfus, *Recognizing Reality: Dharmakīrti's Philosophy and Its Tibetan Interpretations* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), 54-59.
unfortunately, are too far outside the scope of this project to warrant analysis here. Consequently, we shall not pursue them further in this treatment. Suffice it to say that Dharmakīrti and his successors take it to be proven philosophically. This means that what the universe really is, according to Dharmakīrti, is a collection of entirely unique atomic particles, each of which only exists for one single, indivisible instant.

These entities are called svalakṣaṇa, meaning something like "self-defined." We will translate them as "particulars." Particulars, in Dharmakīrti's system, are the only things that are real. The reason particulars are the only things that are real is because Dharmakīrti defines reality as causal efficacy, meaning that something exists within a chain of causes and effects and has the ability to produce some result, under the right conditions. Only particulars can do this. In fact, their ability to do this is grounded in the fact that they change at each moment. Only entities that change moment by moment can produce effects and thus be causally effective. Enduring entities cannot. There are various arguments for why enduring entities can't do this, which we don't go into. Some of them involve arguments about what is required to produce an effect, and why only momentary objects have it. In any event, because only momentary particulars can be...


82 Whether these particulars are external, physical entities or whether they are mental events—that is to say, whether Dharmakīrti is a realist or an idealist—is a famously vexed question, and I won't attempt to address it here. For more information about the issue of Dharmakīrti's changing ontological commitments, see Dreyfus, Recognizing Reality, 48-51, 86, 99. Also discussed by Dreyfus (ibid., Chapter Five) is the fact that Dharmakīrti is not consistent about whether spatially extended entities are to be admitted into the category of the real. Although Dharmakīrti is commonly interpreted as only allowing atoms as real, there are passages, Dreyfus notes, where he seems to propose other views. This is due to the fact, Dreyfus surmises, that the epistemology was the important part for him, and his ontology was ad hoc, intended only to solve problems. See ibid., 105. The whole problem is interesting, but unfortunately it won't be discussed here because it has no significant bearing on Mahima's literary theory.

83 Briefly: since any real thing must be indivisible, as we saw above, divisions among its parts, or divisions among its qualities, have no real basis. There can be no intelligible distinction between an entity and its properties (except for a fictitious, provisional distinction). This means that if something changes in any respect, in changes entirely. Hence, something that is "eternal" can never change in any way, even partially, and by a further set of arguments that we can't go into, anything that changes must change at each instant. So, since to produce an effect is to change, only things that are momentary can produce effects. See Dreyfus, Recognizing Reality, 66 and Mark Siderits,
causally efficacious, they are the only things that are real. There are things other than particulars that exist, for Dharmakīrti, namely, concepts, as we will see. But concepts, although existent in some sense of the term, are not entirely real, in the full sense. They are fictitious, a product of convention only. They exist as fictions.

Now, obviously, these assertions would seem insane to any ordinary person. We all quite clearly spend our days dealing with spatially extended entities, and these entities seem relatively stable over time, even if they don't last forever. And these entities certainly don't seem unique. Yes, if I look closely enough, at the microscopic level, the coffee mugs I have in my cupboard are not each exactly like the others in every respect. But to say they are all utterly unique seems a radical exaggeration. They do seem to share some things in common. More than this, each mug seems to have something about it that exists in lots of different places, everywhere, in fact, that a mug can be found. I drink out of my mug at home and become familiar with it (the same mug each day, I think), but when it breaks I go to the store to buy a new one, and something about the object I see in the store allows me to recognize it as the same as the old mug in some relevant respect. This is why I buy it and can replace the old mug with it. In fact, whatever this thing is it seems to be what I'm talking about when I say "mug." When I say I need a new mug, I don't mean there is some particular mug that I need. I mean there is some thing that I need that any given number of individual objects will contain, or have, or be connected with. This is what philosophers call a universal, and it is often referred to by some kind of neologism like "mug-ness" or "mug-hood." These suffixes match the way Sanskrit philosophers use the abstract suffixes -tva or -tā to talk about the same type of entity. This type of entity is what Vedic

Ritualists assume a word refers to primarily, and the Nyāya philosophical school, which we have just seen Dharmakīrti arguing with, spent a lot of time defending the idea that universals exist and are real.\(^8^4\)

Dharmakīrti can't deny that we have interactions with things that seem to behave like universals, and that we have words, like "mug," that apply to multiple individuals. What he can deny is that the world is as it seems, or that there is any real thing in the world that corresponds to the language and concepts we use. What seem to be real spatially and temporally extended entities, or multiply instantiated abstract properties and universals, are what Dharmakīrti calls sāmānyalakṣana, which means something like "generally characterized," or "characterized by being general." We will translate these as "universals," although the "concepts" mentioned above are the same sort of thing. Universals do not change and are not limited temporally or spatially. They are also, for this reason, incapable of creating effects, and therefore not real. Dreyfus translates Dharmakīrti, who tells us: "Contrary to effective things, which disappear, universals do not cease and do not perform any function. Therefore, they are not [real] objects despite [the fact that] they exist."\(^8^5\) They would also, were they real, be unintelligible, being subject to all the reductionist arguments about extended entities above, as well as the arguments against relations, which would prevent them from being related in any way to the particulars they are supposed to qualify. Since they are only conventionally real, i.e. imaginary, they aren't subject to the kind of limitations that real things are subject too.

These entities are conceptually constructed by us, for our own purposes. They serve as a kind of guide to the world in which we live, but they don't actually pick out any real parts of the

\(^8^4\)Universals are not the only kinds of things that Nyāya and Vedic Ritualism think are multiply instantiated. Qualities, like redness, also fit this description and for various reasons are not counted as universals.

\(^8^5\)Dreyfus, Recognizing Reality, 74.
world. We construct these entities, Dharmakīrti thinks, and then we project them outward onto entities. And in most cases we do this habitually and reflexively, no longer aware that we are doing it, perpetually confusing our own conceptual constructs for things in the world in front of us. We construct these entities on the basis of the causal capabilities of objects. Two things that fulfill the same purpose fall under the relevant concept or term, although there is no single "thing" in all of them that is responsible for this ability. What is responsible for it is that they have a restriction in their causal capabilities, which is due to a restriction in the causes that themselves gave rise to the object. A seed is what it is because of the collection of causes that produced it, and for this reason it can have certain effects, like producing oil or growing into a tree, and not other effects, like growing into a boat. These effects are regular and predictable because they themselves are regulated causally, and Dharmakīrti claims to be able to account for this without positing any single real thing that these objects share. The fact that other people also construct the same concepts and use the same words and successfully communicate with each other—the fact that we all seem to be having the same experience in the first place—this is the result, says Dharmakīrti, of the fact that because of various causal factors extending into the infinite past, we all have the same needs and propensities, and thus things appear to us in similar ways.

---

86 Whether Dharmakīrti does this successfully is open to debate, and it is quite tricky to say what precisely he thinks accounts for the "nature" of objects such that their causal capacities are restricted. Scholars have been arguing for years over this. For a useful discussion of the problem and a partial solution, complete with citations to other scholarship on the same problem, see Dunne, Foundations of Dharmakīrti, 174-202.

87 Dunne also discusses this (Foundations of Dharmakīrti, 174-202), and points out that once an entity is conceptually determined in a particular way, i.e., as smoke, or a seed, or fire, it is then logically necessary to hold that it arose from certain causes and certain effects. But the potential set of causes and effects as a whole, before determination, is nearly infinite. Determining the object as a particular thing to begin with is done with respect to the practical needs and conceptual framework of the observer.
The clearest analogy Dharmakīrti uses for the way a concept can be constructed and used without referring to a real thing is that of herbs that cure fever. Two completely different types of herbs (for modern purposes we can substitute chemical medicines, the point is the same) might both cure fever, and they might do so on the basis of completely different properties. But we call them both "antipyretics," and the term is useful to us though it has no real referent except our own purposes. All concepts are like this, for Dharmakīrti, and this includes our "concept" that any given object we are using is the same through all the moments we are using it.

The notion that there is a stable self within us that lasts unchanged throughout our lives is another example of such a construction, for we also are part of reality, and subject to all of the strictures mentioned above. What we really are, in Dharmakīrti's philosophy, is a constantly changing stream [saṃtāna] of mental and volitional instants and physical atoms, each disappearing instantaneously and producing further instants, each instant collecting and adding to the stream's overall causal complex, and producing an accumulation of tendencies, habits, currents, and propensities. And the whole time, the stream projects onto itself an imaginary selfhood that makes it seem stable and enduring and cohesive, just like it projects stable and enduring essences outwards onto the objects it interacts with.

The stream, therefore, is capable of experience. Cognitions are mental events (in fact they are particulars) that are intentional, directed towards objects, and they are causally affected by those objects so that they take a particular shape. It is by being aware of the shape taken by its own cognitive moments that the stream becomes aware of outer objects. This is the process of

---

88 Pramāṇavārttika vs. 3.73. Translated in Siderits, Buddhism As Philosophy, 221.

89 This idea has a long history in Buddhism, of course. For an example of it in Dharmakīrti's philosophy, see Pramāṇavārttika vs. 1.222ab, where it is described as the cause of moral faults: sarvāsāṃ dosajātīnām jātiḥ satkāyadarśanāt. Dunne (Foundations of Dharmakīrti, 371), translates: "All types of flaws are born from the belief that the evanescent components of body and mind are the locus of an essential Self [satkāyadarśana]."
perception. It is one of two ways for a mind to acquire valid knowledge, where validity is defined as a property of cognitions that don't mislead, or which produce expectations that can be successfully fulfilled. Perception necessarily involves apperception. This moment of self-awareness is not, however, separate from the moment of apprehending the object. Cognitions rather grasp their own form precisely at the same time that they grasp an outer object, grasping their own form is grasping the outer object. As Dharmakīrti says, in Dreyfus's translation: "... when one considers the nature of [self-cognition] it is identical with cognition of an object."91

The process of perception thus involves apperception, or reflexive awareness. But it is not the kind of self-awareness Abhinavagupta means by vimarśa, which was analyzed in Chapter Two. For Dharmakīrti, individual mental episodes are aware of themselves while cognizing their object. But this self-cognition applies only to each instant of cognition. It is not the active and dynamic self-interaction of a stable mind that endures through various mental episodes and therefore can contain various episodes within itself.92 And for Dharmakīrti there is nothing fundamental, primary, blissful, or independent about self-cognition, the way there is for Abhinavagupta's concept of vimarśa. Dharmakīrti does use terms like vimarśa or āmarśa. But he

---

90 Dharmakīrti's notion of validity will be examined much more thoroughly in Chapter Five, and the details are not so important for the purposes of this chapter. For a helpful discussion of the issue of validity in Dharmakīrti's thought, see Shoryu Katsura, "Dharmakīrti's Theory of Truth," Journal of Indian Philosophy 12.3 (1984): 215-235.

91 Dreyfus, Recognizing Reality, 339. Dreyfus attributes this quote to Pramāṇaviniścaya vs. 1.42b-d and gives it as: svasaṃvedanam phalam / uktam svabhāvacintāyāṃ tādāmyād arthasaṃvidāh // In Steinkellner's new critical edition (Dharmakīrti, Dharmakīrti's Pramāṇaviniścaya Chapters 1 and 2, Ernst Steinkellner ed., Sanskrit Texts From the Tibetan Autonomous Region no. 2 [Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2007], 37) it appears to be in the commentary on Pramāṇaviniścaya vs. 1.41, and reads: svabhāvacintāyāṃ tādāmyād arthasaṃvidāḥ svasaṃvit phalam ucyate.

92 This is why, as we discussed in Chapter Two, Abhinavagupta criticizes the Buddhists for their inability to explain the phenomenon of memory. Because cognition is momentary, for Buddhists, and because there is no Self to contain the momentary episodes, a memory can only be explained as a current cognition taking another, previous cognition as its object—a previous cognition which now persists as memory-traces within the current complex that gives rise to the current memory-cognition. This means that memory apprehends the remembered cognitions objectively, as something other, which would fail to explain why we seem to remember cognitions as our cognitions.
uses them in a very different way from Abhinavagupta. He uses them to mean objective and rational consideration of a perceived object.\textsuperscript{93}

Perception therefore takes a particular as its object, because only particulars have the causal efficacy that could produce the change in cognition needed for it to register as a perception. This means that perception apprehends objects in their uniqueness, not under any description that could be shared with another object. This, in turn, means that the object of perception is ineffable, since words always pick things out via qualities that they share with other objects.\textsuperscript{94} To perceive something, for Dharmakīrti, is to have a non-conceptual and thus non-linguistic relationship to it. In a subsequent moment consciousness identifies its object as something, it "determines" it [adhyavasāya], in Buddhist terminology, meaning that it matches it with a concept.\textsuperscript{95} It does this based on the causal complex from which the object arises and the object's set of potential effects, and once this happens, the object can be named. The shiny flickering red patch becomes, once I determine it conceptually, "fire," which produces smoke and can cook food, the same as other fires I have seen before.\textsuperscript{96} This determination happens so

\textsuperscript{93}There are many examples of this. One good one is Pramāṇavarttika, 40 (vs. 1.73): ekapratyavamarśārbhaijñānādy-ekaarthasādhane / bhide api niyatāḥ kecit svabhāvena indriyādīvat //

\textsuperscript{94}One possible exception to this is demonstratives. For an interesting discussion of this in Dharmakīrti and his predecessor Dignāga see Radhika Herzberger, Bhartṛhari and the Buddhists: An Essay in the Development of Fifth and Sixth Century Indian Thought (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1986), Chapter Three.

\textsuperscript{95}Ordinarily this is thought of as a superimposition. Cognition overlays its own form onto the object. However, there is some recent evidence that Dharmottara at least didn't think of adhyavasāya this way, and thought of it rather as a form of fabrication, meaning presumably that cognition somehow builds the concept out of bits of experience and imagines them there. See Kei Kataoka, "Dharmottara's Notion of Āropita: Superimposed or Fabricated?" in Proceedings of the Apeha Workshop, Vienna, 2012 (forthcoming.) The evidence is intriguing, and Dharmottara was a major figure in Kaśmīrī philosophy, but as far as I can determine this distinction is not relevant to Mahima in any way.

\textsuperscript{96}This obviously gives rise to certain problems. One is that perception itself, without determination, gives no useful information. It only apprehends objects in their absolute particularity, and since Dharmakīrti defines validity as "leading to successful action," it seems perception, on its own, can never be fully valid. Moreover, since objects are momentary, the object that perception apprehends is not the object of the subject's subsequent action. Another
quickly that in most cases we assume that we are actually seeing a real thing called "fire" that is the same as other fires we have seen. But this is an illusion, and the only reason we manage to live with this illusion without running up against its contradictions is that it is successful in practical terms.

In this also, Dharmakīrti differs from Abhinavagupta, who thought that concepts and language were not an imposition onto a reality that is actually devoid of them, but rather a manifestation, in outward, fractured form, of what is already implicit in reality and in our experience. Abhinavagupta, as we saw, follows Bhartṛhari in this respect, for whom all experience is already shot through with language, albeit a form of language that is still inward and implicit, rather than articulated and pronounced. These two views on language, Dharmakīrti's and Abhinavagupta's, are thus inversions of each other. No surprise then that, as we will see, they match literary theories that are also mutually inverted.

The other kind of valid knowledge in Dharmakīrti's system, inference, grows out of perception. Perception takes a particular as its object, a particular which is phenomenologically available to a subject's sense perception. It is clear, however, that perceptible things are not the only things we know. We are also capable of inferring things from those perceived objects. If I see a tree I know there was once a seed. If I see smoke on a distant mountain, I know there must be fire there. Much of our daily activity is predicated on this ability. More importantly, for Dharmakīrti, the truths of Buddhism are only inferable, at least at first. Ordinary beings like us can infer, for example, that all things are impermanent and momentary, even if they don't seem

---

problems is that perception supposedly delivers information to us about the external world, but since Dharmakīrti explains this as a form of apperception, it seems that he thinks cognition only apprehends itself, and moreover does so in a "mistaken" manner, confusing its own shape for an external object.

97 See Chapter Two for details on this.
that way. At a certain point in spiritual development, one becomes capable of seeing momentariness for oneself, but one can't get to this point unless one's faith and determination has first been strengthened by valid inferences.

The key, for Dharmakīrti, is to formulate a theory of inference that will allow it to count as valid knowledge; that will allow it, in other words, to be certain and reliable, and not just *ad hoc* and fallible. He also wants to formulate a theory of inference that will exclude inferences that sanction alternative religious practices—-inferences that the world was created by a demiurge, for example, or that the Vedas are eternal and thus infallible. He does this by positing that to infer something other than what is perceived there needs to be some kind of connection between what is perceived and what you want to infer. The connection, moreover, has to be "invariable," that is, never absent. Since the only kinds of connection actually possible between objects are identity and causation, these form the basis for inference. One can infer from effect to cause, like from smoke to fire, for example, and one can infer from identity to identity, so that if you know something is an "oak" you also know that it's a "tree." You can do this because smoke is invariably connected to fire, and certain concepts are invariably connected among themselves.

There is a third kind of inference that Dharmakīrti sanctions that doesn't establish the existence of something and so isn't based on a connection between particulars: an inference of absence. This is how I know, for example, that there is not a cow in the room with me as I'm typing. If there were a cow here, it would be perceivable. Since I don't perceive it, I can infer it isn't here. However, to infer a positive entity, to infer that something is present, can only be done via an identity relation or causal relation. Other than this, we can never really know anything. Thus, Dharmakīrti says, in a passage Mahima himself quotes and which is translated by McCrea:

> When one thing is seen, the conception [*kalpanā*] of another is [generally] not appropriate, because overextension would result. But this will be possible if there is an
invariable connection of this [other thing with the thing perceived]. For this [perceived thing], its nature being invariably connected in this way, will make one aware of another which is established to be thus [invariably connected]. And the cognition of a thing by means of a general concept connected with it is inference—thus there are only two means of knowledge.  

The perceived object, in this theory of inference, is called the *hetu*, the *liṅga*, or the *sādhana*. We will call it the inferential sign or the inferential mark. This is the smoke on the distant mountain. The object we infer from it, the fire, is called the *sādhyā*, the *liṅgin*, or the *anumeya*. We will call it the inferred object. When the inferred object and the inferential sign are the same entity, this is an inference by the relation of identity, or an "identity inference." I can infer that the mug on my table is impermanent. The impermanence is what I infer, i.e. it is the inferred object, and the inferential sign that allows me to infer it is the mug's existence. I can infer it is impermanent *because* it exists. Here, its existence and its impermanence are the same thing, and so this is an identity inference. There is an invariable connection of identity, as Dharmakīrti attempts to show, between existence and impermanence. The two things are identical *by nature*.

When, on the other hand, the inferred object and the inferential sign are different, this is a causal inference. I can infer that the chair I am sitting on was made by someone (directly or via machine), because there is an invariable *causal* connection, in Dharmakīrti's world, between chairs and conscious makers. Every one of the former is an effect of the work of the latter.

---

98 *Vyaktiviveka*, 81: *na cānyadārśane 'nyakalpanā yukti-trasaṅgāt. tasya nāntarīyakatāyām syāt. na hi yathāvidhisiddhah tathāvidhhasannidhānam sūcayati. sāmānyena ca sambandhinārthāpratipattir anumānam iti dve eva pramāṇe.* McCrea (*Teleology*, 404) notes that there is a corruption in this quote in the printed edition of *Vyaktiviveka*. The word *pratipattisvabhāva* is left out, and *sa hi* is changed to *na hi*. He refers the reader to Ernst Steinkellner, "New Sanskrit Fragments of Pramāṇaviniścaya, First Chapter," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 26 (1972): 201 for the source of the quote.

99 The status of the causal relations themselves is obscure. Tillemans, "Dharmakīrti," n. 12, claims that causal relations are not real entities for Dharmakīrti the way that particulars are. Dunne, *Foundations of Dharmakīrti*, 174-192, argues that they are a form of analytic truth; that if something is smoke in the first place, then its very nature is to have been produced by fire, and fire is by nature something that, at least potentially, produces smoke. So the
Notice, incidentally, that this obviates Vedic Ritualist arguments about the eternality of the Vedas. If they exist, they are impermanent. If they are products, like other products we know of, they were authored.

An inferential sign does not, on its own, produce knowledge of the inferred object. Smoke doesn't automatically and naturally produce my awareness of fire the way a seed naturally produces a sprout. Nor does it produce my awareness simply by coming within the realm of my senses, the way that a lamp makes me aware of a pot. What is required for inference is that I determine my perceptual experience as an experience of something that is invariably connected with fire, or, as Dharmakīrti says, something that doesn't "deviate" [avyabhicārin] from fire. This requires memory. I recall, in other experiences, that I have seen smoke where there has been fire, and I have not seen smoke where there hasn't been fire. Recalling this set of observations and non-observations leads me to conclude that there is an invariable connection between the two. These two facts, of positive and negative regulation between them is almost analytic. Dunne here also translates a long passage from Dharmakīrti's Hetubindu that elaborates on this. See also Shoryu Katsura, "Dharmakīrti's Theory of Truth," Journal of Indian Philosophy 12.3 (1984): 215-235.

100 This argument, along with the dis-analogy to the sprout and the seed, is made by Dharmottara, the eighth century commentator who brought Dharmakīrti's ideas to Kāśmīr. See Nyāyabinduṭī, 91-92: na yogyatayā līṅgaṃ parokṣajñānasya nimittaṃ. yathā bijāṅkurasya. adṛṣṭād dhūmād agner apratīpateḥ. nāpi svavīṣayajñānāpekṣam parokṣārthapraṇakṣānaṃ [sic]. yathā pradīpo ghaṭādeḥ. dṛṣṭād apy aniścitasambandhāḥ apratīpateh. tasmāt parokṣārthāntarīyaṇakatayā niścayanam eva līṅgasya parokṣārthapratiṇādanyāpāraḥ. "It is not by inherent capacity that the inferential sign causes knowledge of an unseen object, the way a seed produces a sprout, because smoke doesn't cause knowledge of fire if we don't see it. Nor does illumination of the [inferred] object depend [merely] on awareness of what's in front of you, like a lamp and a pot. Even if the [inferential sign] is seen, knowledge doesn't arise if we don't determine its connection. Therefore, the inferential sign only points out an unseen object insofar as it is determined to be invariably concomitant with that object."

101 Dunne, Foundations of Dharmakīrti, 191-192, elaborates, with references, how exactly this invariable concomitance is determined. The fact that there is an "invariable concomitance" is supposed to circumvent the problem of induction. It is not simply that I have seen smoke and fire together before that I assume they are together now. My previous experiences of them lead to the conclusion that there is an invariable connection between them, and this underwrites my inference. Notice, however, that this doesn't really "solve" the problem of induction, it just pushes it back a step, to the determination of invariable concomitance.
concomitance, combined with the fact that the inferential sign is present in the site of the inference, is what is called the "triple mark." Consideration of the triple mark on the part of the observer is what produces the inference. When I recall the invariable concomitance that it underwrites and apply it to the smoke I see, then and only then do I infer that there is fire.

Notice, however, that when I "recall" an invariable connection in the past, I am conflating numerous distinct instances of smoke and fire, or at the very least treating one past instance as the same as this the current instance in some relevant respect. In other words, the connection I recall, if it holds in general, is between universals, not between particulars, since particulars are always unique. This means that when I infer that there is fire on the mountain, the fire I am inferring is a generalized, universal fire—one that can be in many places at once, the same fire which I have seen in the past. In inferring this fire I am projecting a universal onto the world, projecting it out behind the particular that I am actually perceiving. This means two things. The first is that inference and perception have different objects. The fire I infer is a universal, but if I climb the mountain, the fire I perceive will be a particular. It also means that the inference is "mistaken" in some sense. It makes me aware of something that doesn't actually exist—a universal to which is attached the name "fire." Furthermore, inference delivers awareness of a universal, something which, by definition, can have no effects in the real world, since only particulars can have effects. So inference delivers awareness to me of something that is practically useless.

This leads to numerous problems for Dharmakīrti. Some of them were addressed by him and some were addressed and debated throughout the later tradition. Unfortunately to go into all them of would take us too far afield. But I should point out that Dharmakīrti's holds inference to be a valid means of knowledge despite the fact that it is quasi-illusory and delivers knowledge of
something that, strictly speaking, doesn't exist. How this is so, and how this is related to Mahima's literary theory, will be discussed in Chapter Five.

When an inference takes place internally, it is called and "inference for self." An inference for self is a purely cognitive event. But the pieces of an inference can also be stated in words so that they can prompt another person to the same inference. This is called and "inference for another." It differs from the first kind of inference only in that it is stated externally, in language, as was certainly done in the formal debates described by the Vādaṇyāya. Validating and defending the steps of the inference—that pervasion actually obtains, that seeming counter-example are fallacious—can be an enormously complex affair. But the basic steps of the inference don't change.

All other proposed means of knowledge are dismissed, or reduced to perception or inference. This goes for language as well. While Naiyāyikas, Vedic Ritualists, and others all hold language to be a sui generis means of knowledge, Dharmakīrti and those in his tradition reduce it to inference. Like other inferences, language's object is a concept, and one becomes aware of it because of a perceptual experience: hearing spoken sounds. More specifically, it is a causal inference, from a person's speech (the effect), to the idea they have in mind (the cause). Ānandavardhana, as we saw in Chapter One, allows that inference is part of the linguistic process, but only in the sense that once we understand the meaning of the words we can infer

---

102 Patil, Against a Hindu God is ample evidence of this. The book describes Ratnakirti's treatment of a single proposed inference that the world was created by a demiurge.

103 See Pramāṇavārttika-svavṛtti ad vs. 1.227: arthaviveṣasamīhāpreritā vāg ata idam iti viduṣaḥ svamidānābhāsīnam arthām śācayatātītī buddhirūpavāgvijñāptyor janyajajanakabhāva sambandhah. In Dunne's translation (Foundations of Dharmakīrti, 146 n. 5), this reads, "A statement is prompted by the speaker's intention [ṣamīḥā] to communicate a specific meaning/object [artha]; for a person who knows, 'This statement is coming from that intention,' that statement indicates the meaning/object [artha] that is the mental appearance [namely, the intention,] which is the statement's cause. There is thus a relation of producer and produced pertaining between a mental entity [namely, the intention] and the speech-act [vāgvijñāpti]."
that the speaker intended to utter them. The meaning of the words is delivered via a different process. Dharmakīrti effaces this difference. In any situation in which a speaker accords with linguistic convention and conveys his meaning there is no difference, for Dharmakīrti, between the meaning of the words and the intention of the speaker. The language delivers no real information about the world to us, other than what the speaker is trying to say within the confines of the historical conventions of a speech community. If we choose to trust this speaker, that is our decision, but we always have to keep in mind that speakers can lie or be mistaken.  

It should be clear by now that this philosophical system, which expresses a religious view of the universe and bolsters particular religious convictions at the expense of others, is radically different from Abhinavagupta's. As we mentioned, at times they are almost perfect inversions of each other. Before seeing how Mahima takes these ideas up in his literary theory, there is one more important difference we need to be aware of, and that is Dharmakīrti's model of how one mind has access to another. We can see this model at play even in the theory of language given above. In Dharmakīrti's theory of language, where language is an inferential process, the listener has access to the speaker's idea as an object of his awareness, external to his own subjectivity. And he gets there via artificial signs—spoken words—that are ontologically distinct from that idea. This is already opposed to Abhinavagupta's communicative model, discussed in Chapter Two. In Abhinavagupta's communicative model, following Bhartṛhari, the linguistic signs are a divided, outward manifestation of the idea, not ontologically distinct impositions onto it. And the speaker understands the meaning not by inference, but by a kind of imagination—after encountering the signs as external objects he imaginatively reconstructs their meaning within his

---

104 This means that Dharmakīrti has a complex relationship to scripture, and has a sophisticated proposal for how to vet, validate, and follow Buddhist scriptural assertions. See Eltschinger, Penser l'autorité, Chapter Two. Eltschinger points out in this chapter that one consequence of Dharmakīrti's reduction of language to an inference of speaker's intentions is that it renders authorless speech, i.e. the Vedas, meaningless by definition.
own mind, recognizing their meaning and re-experiencing for himself the thought that gave rise
to them. As we saw in Chapter Two, this model is grounded in an even more fundamental aspect
of Abhinavagupta's theology, which is that awareness, for Abhinavagupta, is an irreducibly
subjective experience, rooted as it is in Śiva's own conscious subjectivity. It can never be
apprehended as an object without losing the quality that makes it awareness to begin with. This
means that when it comes to warding off solipsism and establishing that other minds exist,
Abhinavagupta relies on āha, a sort of assumption that is structurally the same, in his system, as
recognition. Āha works because subjectivity is defined as the fact of consciousness having a
relationship to itself, interacting with itself. Awareness is therefore fundamentally active and
willful, and when I encounter this kind of willful activity in the world I don't infer another mind,
which would yield to me only the awareness of an inert, static object whose subjectivity was still
hidden to me. Rather I assume or recognize, that I am dealing with another subjectivity, that is I
recognize that what I am seeing—activity—is a gross, outward manifestation of the very nature
of subjectivity itself: action.

The communicative model is therefore not accidental for Abhinavagupta, but goes to the
heart of his theology. And Dharmakīrti's alternative communicative model is similarly non-
accidental, and it follows Abhinavagupta down the thread of correlations. For Dharmakīrti did in
fact write a short text on how to ward off solipsism and prove the existence of other minds,
Samtanāntarasiddhi, and in this text it is precisely inference that establishes the existence of
other minds. Having established within one's own experience that action and speech are preceded
by awareness as their cause, one can then infer, upon encountering this externally in another
being, that they are the effects of a similar cause. And this will guarantee that even an Idealist
can't come to solipsistic conclusions. "Having seen that action is based on awareness in one's
own body, one comes to know there is a mind in another place based on encountering that
[action]. If [this is true], the principle will be the same even if you are an Idealist." Inference is
not just one way to have access to minds external to your own, for Dharmakīrti. It is the only
way. No coincidence then that, in the wake of Abhinavagupta, a Dharmakīrtian literary theory
treats rasa as the inference of an emotion in a character, and not as a moment of recognition. But
the background is now filled in, and it is to Mahima's literary theory that we know turn.

**Inferring Rasa**

Before the detour into Dharmakīrti's philosophical system, we had just seen that Mahima
has a Dharmakīrtian understanding of linguistic practicality. Language is a tool to prompt an
awareness of meaning in the listener (or reader), and its "correctness" is the strictly practical
matter of its effectiveness. If we grant this, then it raises the question of how language prompts
awareness. If language is a tool, how does the tool work? We are now in a position to see the
significance of Mahima's answer, which is of course that language works by means of inference.

Mahima states this quite clearly at the beginning of his discussion of language: "All
verbal discourse is to be understood chiefly as inferential, since it has at its core the relationship
of inferential sign and inferred object [sādhyasādhanabhāva]." The inferred object is the

---

105 The only surviving copies of this text are in Tibetan, which in the published edition (Dharmakīrti,
Santānāntarasiddhi [Vārāṇasī: Kendrīya Uccha Tibbaī Śikṣha Samstštāna, 1997], 37) reads: rang lus blo snson 'gro
ba yi / bya ba mthong nas gzhān la de // 'dzin phyir gal te blo shas 'gyur / sens tsom la yang tshul 'di mtshungs //
The reconstructed Sanskrit is (ibid., 1) buddhipūrvāṃ kriyāṃ drṣṭvā svadehe 'nyatra tadgraḥāt / jñāyate yadi dhīś
cittamātre 'py eṣa nayaḥ samāḥ //

106 Although, as we will see more in Chapter Five, its scope is limited. Inference takes the universal as its object, we
never have access to the particularity of other minds, only the general facts of their consciousness, which are
somewhat illusory but also practically useful. For a useful discussion of this issue, see Ratié, Le soi et l'autre, 325-
326 n. 26.

107 Vyaktiviveka, 26-27: sarva eva hi śābdo vyavahāraḥ sādhyasādhanabhāvagarbhatayā praṇeṇānumānarūpo
'bhyupagantavyah.
information you learn from the sentence, and the inferential sign is the words that help you learn this, and Mahima tells us later in the chapter that what makes our awareness move from one to the other is "determining invariable concomitance" between the two.\textsuperscript{108}

There are important distinctions, however, in how this works, and the distinctions seem at first to be so deep that they might contradict the idea that all language is inferential. Mahima does say at one point later in the chapter that inference only characterizes sentences, not individual words, as these convey their meaning by a process of what he calls "expression."\textsuperscript{109} He tells us that expression is what we call the literal meaning, and he quotes a verse from \textit{Vākyapādiya} saying that the literal meaning is what arises just from hearing the word, whereas non-literal meanings take a moment of effort to discern.\textsuperscript{110}

However, as the chapter goes on it becomes clear that Mahima also thinks of expression as a form of inference as well. He explains later on that when we understand the meaning of the word "cow" it is because the word has awakened the memory of something that doesn't deviate from the use of this word, something previously experienced which has, since then, existed as a memory-trace within our mind. This is exactly Dharmakīrti's theory of word-meaning. What he means is that we know from experience that someone intending to talk about cows uses the word "cow," and we have that experience stored up inside us as a memory. When we encounter the word "cow" being spoken, that memory is awakened and applied to the speech, and the meaning is understood. Mahima says explicitly, in the very same passage, that this is exactly the same as the way that we infer fire from smoke, and he goes on to say that this entire category, the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[108] Ibid., 52
\item[109] Ibid., 48
\item[110] Ibid. \textit{The Vākyapādiya} verse is 2.278.
\end{footnotes}
category of things that awaken memory-traces "fits only with inference. . . For it is said [in Dharmakīrti's Nyāyabindu 2.3]: 'Awareness of an object that comes from the triple mark, that is inference'. And that is only inference because there is no cognition of one object from another object without inference."\(^{111}\)

This idea that a word "awakens" memory traces gives the word quite a bit of causal agency in the linguistic process. The word seems here to produce an awareness of its meaning. This is true, in a manner of speaking. But Mahima explains later, in his third chapter, that a word doesn't do this naturally and independently, the way a sprout is produced out of the ground. It only does it in dependence on the determination of a cognizing subject, who is considering the word's meaning.\(^{112}\) Since the word's meaning is inferred, and isn't natural, like a seed and sprout, the word only means something when it is determined by a cognizing subject to be something that is invariably concomitant with that meaning. Here Mahima is using the Buddhist argument, seen above, about the role of determination in the inferential process. This is how all this can be

---

\(^{111}\)Ibid., 80-81. tasyaivānubhūtapūrṇasya sanskrātmanāntarviparivartinaḥ kutaś cid avyabhicāriṇo 'ṛthāntarāt tatpratipādākād vā sanskrātraprabodhamātraṃ trīyā, yathā dhimād agneḥ, yathā cālekhyapustakapratibimbānukaranādibhyah, śabdāca gavādeḥ. . . trīyasyāstū yal lakṣanaṃ tad anumānasyaiva saṅgacchate, na vaṭkeḥ, yad uktam trirūpāi lingād yad anumeyene jānām tad anumānam iti. taccāṇumānameva. nahyarthādārthāntarapratītiṃnāmantarenārthāntaramupapadyat. "The third [type] is the simple awakening of the memory-traces of an entity that was previously experienced and then existed inwardly in the form of a memory-trace, from some entity invariably associated with that, or from something that points out. For example fire from smoke, or like from imitations or mimicry or paintings etc., or of a cow from the word 'cow'. . . the definition of this third kind fits only with inference, not with manifestation. For it is said [in Nyāyabindu vs. 2.3]: Awareness of an object that comes from the triple mark, that is inference." And that is only inference. For there is no cognition of one object from another object without inference."

\(^{112}\)Ibid., 479: nacabhāyam apy anyonyānugrāhita-pajananasāmarthyaḥ avanipavanādikam ivānkarārthāntarapratibhām upajanayati, yo jādapi-dārthahāsya evāyamupapannah kramaḥ, yatra svābhāvika evāyam janyajanakabhāvah, na vācyavācakabhāvāvāsyaḥ, tatra hi pratipattipraśānyrpekṣāparatantro 'ṛdhādhavasāyopajano na svābhāvikaḥ. "Nor is it the case that both of those [word and the qualities of the object] have a capacity to give rise to [the meaning] based on mutual assistance between each other, like the soil and water in the arising of a sprout, [and thus] give rise to the realization [pratibhā] of another object. The sequence that exists for insentient objects is the relationship of producer and produced, which is completely natural [svābhāvikā]. This does not exist for things with the relation of expressor and expressed, because that is a dependent relation, being in expectation of the considered reflection [parāmarśa] of a cognizing subject. It is generated by [that cognizing subject's] determination [adhyāvasāya] of the object, not naturally."
reconciled with Mahima's claim that a word's meaning is based on its context. Cognition of a word's meaning is one of the word's effects. And just like any other causal process, a word gives rise to its effects only when a whole collection of causal factors is in place, not just one. An axe cuts wood only when it is sharp. A seed produces a sprout, but only when there is soil and water around. In the same way, a word produces awareness of its meaning, but only when the context is correct. The difference between a word and a seed, then, is not the fact that one is a cause and one is not. The difference is whether the set of causal factors required includes the determinative awareness of a subject, or whether it is purely natural.

So denotation is clearly inferential, for Mahima. The reason he seems to say otherwise, I believe, is because he's really only interested in a second kind of inference: the inference that carries the implications of an entire sentence. The first kind of inference, which is normally called "denotation," is not the kind of inference that could explain the cognition of literary moods. In denotation, the word is indexed to particular meanings, which are affected by context but can be tracked by a dictionary; that is, they are very limited in scope. This is very different from what is described as manifestation, which goes far beyond these kinds of conventions, and so this kind of inference couldn't explain it. Thus Mahima is not as interested in it, and downplays its importance, sometimes referring only to the wider, sentential kind of inference as inference. This doesn't mean, however, that denotation isn't also a form of inference. It just means that there is a different form of inference more relevant to his purposes.

Unlike the denotation of a word, a sentence can yield awareness of meanings far beyond what are considered its semantics. In other words, it stimulates memories within us far beyond our memories about the use and meaning of individual words. Think of Hemmingway's famous...
short story: "For sale: baby shoes, never worn." What we know from this sentence is far more than just what the words mean. When we cognize further meanings, Mahima thinks it is not the words that deliver these to us. The words just deliver their conventional meanings and stop there.\(^{114}\) What happens next is an inference based on the meanings the words have given us. This lines up with the inference-for-another/inference-for-self dichotomy developed by Dharmakīrti.

The inference of the meaning of a word is an inference for self. We encounter an inferential sign, remember its connections, and make the inference. Sentences, however, are inference for another, for Mahima. Another person is laying out for us, in words, the information we need to make an inference. They are prompting this inference, a sort of second-order inference, by means of information that is itself communicated to us via first-order inference. Mahima tells us:

\[
\ldots \text{the stated and understood meanings are established as having a relation of inferential mark and inferential object.} \ldots \text{And the [type of inference in question] is inference for another, because it has the property of being preceded by verbal functions. Inference for another is the statement of the triple mark}.\]

\(^{115}\) Down in the details, Mahima does seem to depart a bit from a strict Dharmakīrtian linguistic theory, or at least he elaborates a bit and says things that are not, as far as I'm aware, held in Dharmakīrti's philosophical lineage. The inferred object doesn't always have to be inferred. Sometimes, Mahima says, a sentence can lay out the inference for you and simply state the conclusion, in which case the inferred object that the inference is aimed at is "expressed." An inference can also establish something everyone already knows, or it can establish something

\(^{114}\) Someone might object and say that it is the word, via a chain of cause and effect, that leads to this new meaning. A Vedic Ritualist of the Prābhākara school might say this, for example [see Chapter One]. Mahima's response is to say this isn't really accurate. Mahima argues that if this were really the case, we could say that a potter make flowers blossom, because he makes the pot that carries the water to them. Or, he adds, we could say that anything a son does is the activity of his father. But this is misleading. The potter is only a cause of blossoming flowers as a manner of speaking, not literally. Vyaktiviveka, 140.

\(^{115}\) Vyaktiviveka, 67: tadeva vācyapratīyāyamāṇayor vaksyaṃpanāṇakrameṇa liṅgaliṅgībhāvasya. . . tac ca vacanavyāpārapūrvaṅkavatvā parārtham ity avagontaṃ. trirūpaliṅgākhyātena parārthamanumānaṃ iti.
that is not in need of proof. When Kālidāsa states, at the beginning of his famous poem

*Kumārasamabhava*: "There is, in the north, a divine mountain king named Himālaya," he leads people to an awareness that the mountain is there, but he doesn't need to prove or justify this. Everyone already knows it. ¹¹⁶ He also says, *pace* Dharmakīrti, that how you "know" something like this can include having read about it in the Vedas or the Purāṇas (a different class of Hindu scripture) or in the great epics like the Mahābhārata or Rāmāyaṇa [itihāsa]. ¹¹⁷

Often, however, what happens in poetry is that the poet leaves it up to us to connect the dots and infer the proper meaning. Like Ānandavardhana, Mahima thinks that this inferred meaning can be a plot element, a literary figure, or a rasa. *Rasa*, for Mahima, is just what we get when a poem presents us with information that causes us to infer an emotion in the character. This is possible because emotions are known to have cause-effect relationships with various sorts of activity. Sadness causes tears. It is itself caused by certain circumstances, like losing a loved one. With loss as the cause, and tears as the effect, and various other co-efficient causes and co-efficient effects going along with it, like trembling and worry and reminiscence, we can easily infer in a poem, just as we do in the world, that a character is experiencing an emotion. ¹¹⁸ The inference is an inference from cause. Here is an example of this in a verse, from

*Kumārasamabhava* 7.19:

> While painting her toes, her friend said laughingly:
> 'You should touch the moon in your husband's [i.e. Śiva's] hair with this!'
> Her hope thus sparked,

¹¹⁶Ibid., 48-49

¹¹⁷Ibid., 52.

¹¹⁸Mahima says this clearly many times. One clear example is *Vyaktiviveka*, 534: *arthaśaktimūlaḥ punar upapadyata eva dhūmād ivāgneḥ sambandhāvadhūranāpaurassarīkaśreṇa tato 'rthāntarapratītēr upapāditatvād...
"[So-called manifestation] rooted in the power of the meaning also arises by means of a cause that is preceded by determination of a [causal] relation, like fire from smoke, because the cognition of the other meaning arises from it."*
She wordlessly hit this friend with a flower-garland.

The verse describes the goddess Pārvatī's wedding preparations. Mahima explains it this way:

Here, the wordless hitting by the goddess, whose hope had been sparked by the friend who was laughingly painting her nails, is an emotional effect, and it causes us to infer that the goddess has a collection of minor emotions like curiosity, longing, joy, and shame. And once we infer that, it causes us to further infer [her] love for her [future] husband, Lord Śiva.¹¹⁹

Mahima gives extensive examples and explanations for the different ways this can work. All of the third chapter of his text is essentially given over to this, as well as large parts of the first. The chain of inferences can be quite long. Sometimes we infer just from the meaning of the words. Sometimes we infer from something we have already inferred from something we have already inferred from the meaning of the words. Such verses usually require a great deal of reflection on the reader's part:

While making love on top, Lakṣmī
Sees Brahma sitting on the lotus that grows out of Viṣṇu's navel,
So she kisses Viṣṇu's right eye, her heart agitated.

Viṣṇu, in Hindu mythology, has the sun and the moon for his right and left eyes, and he has a lotus in his navel, on which the god Brahma sits. And lotuses are known to open in the day and close again at night. So, Mahima explains:

Here, what we infer is the cessation of Lakṣmī's modesty. The inferential sign for that inference is that she kisses Viṣṇu's right eye, which is the sun. That causes us to infer the setting of the sun, because it becomes concealed. And that, in turn, makes us infer the closing of the navel lotus, because of companionship [between the sun and lotuses]. And that causes us to infer the obstruction of Brahma's sight. [And therefore Lakṣmī is free to make love unselfconsciously.] Thus we have here an inferred meaning with three intermediate inferences.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Vyākrtiveka, 58: *atra hi nakharāṇjanānantaraṃ pariḥasapūrvaṃ sakhyā kṛtāśiṣo devyā yadetad avacanaṃ mālyena hananāṃ tattadanubhāvabhūtaṃ tasyāḥ kautukamucchārṣaḥsakhyābhicārisampadāṃ anumāpayanti. ūṣ ca anumāpayamā sat bhagavatih kuye brhatratiṃ anumāpayanti.*

¹²⁰ Vyākrtiveka, 91-92: *vivarīsaṃsamaṃ bhavmaḥ dadhūṇa nāhikamalammi / harinodāhīnaṃcūmbāśilaūdī lacchī // [Dwivedi's chāyā: vibhīnasuratasamaye brahmaṇam drṣṭvā nābāhikamale / harerdaṃśinayanōm cumbatī hriyākula laṃkṣāmīḥ/] *atra hi lakṣmīlaṃjīvniṃttis sādhyaḥ. tatra ca bhagavatih harer daṃśinasyākṣṭaḥ*
This understanding of how inference works in poetry is clearly Dharmakīrttian, both in principle and explicitly. Mahima quotes Dharmakīrti at every major point in this argument to support his understanding of how inference works, how it is stated for others, and what the relationships are between the factors of the inference. But Mahima doesn't just put forward a Dharmakīrttian theory of poetic knowledge. He also uses Dharmakīrti to prove that what Ānandavardhana means by "manifestation" is impossible in its literal sense.

The crux of his argument against the theory of manifestation takes place around the middle of the chapter. Once Mahima has established that language is a tool that is used to create awareness of meanings, and that it does this by means of a sequence of cognitions that all involve inference, he then emphasizes the sequential nature of these cognitions. He says:

The expressed and implied meanings are cognized sequentially, not at the same time, and their relation is the relation between knowledge and what prompts that knowledge. Even the manifestation theorist himself explains them this way. And that's just what we, who are trying to set things straight, think is the most important point.  

Just why this is the "most important point" becomes clear a few pages later, when Mahima inquires into what exactly "manifestation" can mean. According to Mahima, "manifestation" can refer to a few different things. Either it refers to the manifestation of something illusory, like a rainbow, or else of something real. The manifestation of something illusory is dismissed out of hand, but the reason will become clear later on. In the manifestation

\[
sūryātmāno lakṣmīparicumbanam hetub. tad dhi tasya tirodhaṇalakṣaṇam astam ayam anumāpayati. so 'pi ca sāhacaryān nābhānalinasya sāṅkocam. so 'pi brahmaṇo darśanavyadhānam iti trayāntaritānmuḥārthopratipattiḥ.\]

121 Ibid., 68: vācyapratiṣṭhēnayor arthayor yathā kramenaiva pratītīr na samakālaṃ yathā cānayor ganyagamakabhāvah tathā teneiva vyaktivādinā tayoḥ svarāpaṃ nirūpayitukāmenāpy uktam, tad evāsamābhīḥ samādhīsubhir iha likhyate param.

122 Ibid., 80. This section is too long to quote in full.
of something real, there are only three different things that are called manifestation. The first is a
process of transformation, whereby a something that exists only as a potential is transformed into
something available to the senses. The example he gives is milk turning into curds. Poetic
manifestation can't be this, he says, because the manifested meaning is never directly available. It
always has to be understood indirectly. The second type is an epistemological process. It is what
we might call manifestation proper. Mahima defines this type of manifestation as follows:
"When an object that exists but is unknown due to some impediment is illuminated along with an
illuminator that is essentially subordinated to it, like a pot [in the dark room] and a lamp." In
order to support this assertion, he gives a quote from Dharmakīrti: "A manifestor is the cause of
knowing another thing just by being known itself, like a lamp. If it were otherwise, how could it
be different from a producer [i.e., why wouldn't we assume it's just creating the object, rather
than manifesting it]?"123 This type of manifestation, however, can't account for poetry, because it
requires that the manifestor and the manifested object co-exist at the same time, and Mahima has
already established language is sequential. Since even Ānandavardhana himself admits that there
is a sequence of cognitions in poetry, Mahima concludes that what Ānandavardhana is describing
in poetry can't possibly be this kind of manifestation.124

This is really the heart of Mahima's argument against the theory of poetic manifestation,
and it is worth pausing for a moment to see what is actually going on here. First of all, it should

123 Ibid., 80: tasyaivāvirbhūtasya kutaś cit pratibandhād aprakāśamānasya prakāśakenopasarjanīkṛtātmā sahaiva
prakāśo dvitiyā, yathā pratipādinā ghaṭādēk. taduktam: svajñānenānyadhitēhup Siddhe 'rthe vyaṅjako mataḥ /
yathā dīpō 'nyathābhāve ko višeṣo 'syā kārakāt //

124 The argument against the first type of manifestation and against the second type of manifestation are given in the
same sentence, after all the examples are listed, with only the connective particle ca between them. It might seem,
therefore, that both of these arguments apply to both examples. This is not the case. We know this for philosophical
reasons, as we will soon see, but also because Mahima himself disambiguates the arguments in a summary verse on
page 112: vācyapratyeyayor nāsti vyāngavānajakatārthayoh / tayoḥ pradipaghaṭavat sāhityenāprakāsanāt //
"Between the expressed and understood meanings, there is no relationship of suggestor and suggested as there is
with a lamp and a pot, because the two do not occur simultaneously."
be clear at this point that this definition of manifestation is really the one given by
Abhinavagupta, not Ānandavardhana. Although Ānandavardhana did mention the example of a
lamp and a pot, we saw in chapter one that he only uses that analogy in a limited way. He only
uses it to show that there are cases in which one thing can prompt our knowledge of another
while still remaining separate from that other thing, without constituting it or having a causal
relationship with it. It is Abhinavagupta who thinks that the manifested meaning, which is
primarily rasa, already exists and is only blocked by impediments that need to be removed for it
to be experience. It exists for him in the form of latent karmic traces, and the impediments that
block it include the fact that one's attention is distracted and isn't focused on the karmic traces,
but also that one is identified with one's own individual personality, with its wants and needs and
compulsions, so that even if these karmic traces are stirred they appear as personal emotions, and
not as the depersonalized experience of subjectivity that he calls rasa.125

It is also Abhinavagupta for whom simultaneity is an important issue. Ānandavardhana
does allude to simultaneity once using the example of a lamp, and Mahima quotes it here, but
this is a one-off comment, and Ānandavardhana isn't very committed to it. It clearly is not an
important part of his text, and it contradicts other parts of his text where he uses the lamp
example differently, and where he freely admits that cognizing a rasa involves a set of sequential
steps, and that there is always a gap, however brief, between cognition of the poetic elements and

---

125 As we saw in Chapter Two, Abhinavagupta's literary theory also includes elements of the first type of
manifestation, that of milk and curds, insofar as Abhinavagupta adheres to the satkāryavāda (the theory that all
effect pre-exist in a latent state in their causes) and believes that the rasa remains substantially the same as it moves
from poet to poem to reader. But this resemblance is merely superficial. This is so for various reasons, the main one
being that Abhinavagupta is a monist idealist, and so his satkāryavāda is distinctively different from others, and
especially from the physical example being given here. I won't go into all the details here (more information can be
found in Isabelle Ratié, "A Śaiva Interpretation of the Satkāryavāda: The Sāṃkhya notion of Abhivyakti and Its
Transformation in the Pratyabhijñā Treatise," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* published online [December 2013]). I
will only point out that Ruuyaka, who accords strictly and explicitly with Abhinavagupta's version of the theory,
also sees it as analogous to a lamp and a pot, and not to milk and curds, and I think in this he is correct and faithful
to Abhinavagupta's original intention.
cognition of the rasa.\textsuperscript{126} Abhinavagupta's revised version of the manifestation theory, however, more heavily relies on the simultaneity of all the cognitions. This is because, as we saw in Chapter Two, he theorizes aesthetic delight as a form of repose in the Self, and repose, which is also vimarśa, is a situation in which multiple cognitions all exist at once and are known simultaneously by the self-awareness of the subject. The cognitive simultaneity that vimarśa enables and trades in can be seen most clearly in Abhinavagupta's theory of memory, which is based on rejecting the idea that a cognition can directly know another previous cognition, and replaces it instead with a theory in which both the present and the past cognition are held together simultaneously in a third, self-aware substratum, which for Abhinavagupta is the Self.

Therefore, simultaneity is the focal point of Mahima's critique here because he is refuting not just Ānandavardhana, but also Abhinavagupta's interpretation of him. Mahima's argument is essentially that the non-simultaneity of aesthetic cognitions makes manifestation impossible in the literal sense. When he quotes Ānandavardhana admitting that the cognitions are not all simultaneous, this bolsters his argument by splitting Abhinavagupta away from Ānandavardhana, showing that his theory of simultaneity is not the correct interpretation of Ānandavardhana. So Ānandavardhana has to admit that manifestation is inference because he already accepts that it involves a sequence of cognitions. Abhinavagupta has to accept it because he is posing as an exegete of Ānandavardhana's, and is therefore stuck with certain points of theory that, because of the rules of Sanskrit commentarial practice, are difficult for him to openly abandon. As we will

\textsuperscript{126} The quote is from Dhvanyāloka, 465: vyañjakatvamärge tu yadartho 'rthāntaram dyotayati tadā svarūpa prakāśayann evāsāv anyasya prakāśakah pratiyāte pradīpavat. Masson, Ingalls, and Patwardhan (p. 563) translate: "...in the process of suggestion the meaning that suggests a second meaning is apprehended to reveal that second meaning only be revealing itself at the same time. It acts in this respect like a lamp..." Ānanda also alludes to simultaneity at Dhvanyāloka, 481: svarūpaṃ prakāśayann eva parāvabhāṣako vyañjaka ity ucayate. (Masson, Ingalls, and Patwardhan, Dhvanyāloka, 570.) But here Ānandavardhana puts the idea in the mouth of an objector, leaving it ambiguous whether he even endorses it.
see in Chapter Four this is not the only basis for Mahima's refutation of Abhinavagupta, but it is the one he chooses to emphasize and make explicit. The others require more discernment to tease out.

This emphasis on simultaneity is so important for Mahima's argument that it is actually somewhat forced of him to read it as the main point of the quote from the Pramāṇavārttika. In its original context this quote has a different emphasis, although it is still part of Dharmakīrti's general attack on the idea of manifestation. The quote actually occurs in an extensive section of the text in which Dharmakīrti is arguing with a Vedic Ritualist. The Vedic Ritualist, who is defending the thesis that the Vedas are eternal and infallible, is at a point in the argument where he is trying to defend the idea that language is eternal. For this Vedic Ritualist, for reasons we don't need to go into, this means that the syllables of language are eternal. When we hear someone pronounce a syllable, we recognize it, and we get the impression that we are coming into contact again with the same syllable we have heard before, not a new syllable, so the conclusion is that each syllable is singular and eternal. They are always the same, and always exist, although under ordinary conditions they are imperceptible. When humans speak, what they do is "manifest" these singular, eternal syllables. Their speech is like a lamp in a dark room, illuminating the pot that is always there. This is how one single, eternal syllable can appear in

---

127 Eltschinger, Penser l'autorite, 158, points out that Dharmakīrti links this Vedic Ritualist closely with a Grammarian who argues that sphota is the bearer of meaning, the foundational theory for Ānandavardhana's use of the term "manifestation" (see Chapter One). Eltschinger finds this shift puzzling, although these aesthetic arguments might well begin to shed light on this, and on other aspects of Dharmakīrti's text.

128 See ibid., Chapter Six, for a summary of this.

129 The possibility that the syllables are particulars in which some syllable-universal inheres is, for various reasons, rejected by this Vedic Ritualist, who is trying to show not just that each instance of a spoken syllable instantiates a universal, but that every time we hear, say, the syllable "ka" pronounced, it is literally the same syllable "ka" we have heard previously, and not just a new particular with the same universal inhering in it. See ibid., 183-184.
different places, and can be pronounced with slight variations like accent and tone and so forth.
The variations pertain to the manifesting sounds, not the syllables themselves.\textsuperscript{130}

Dharmakīrti's response to this is complex, but the point being made in the verse that Mahima quotes is essentially this: when something is manifested, how do we know that it's being "manifested" and not simply created in that moment? We can only establish that it is being manifested if we are aware of it in other contexts, and if we know that it pre-existed the moment of manifestation. Otherwise we assume that it is being created in that moment, not manifested.

Ordinarily, in the world, if we only encounter \(x\) when \(y\) is present, and never encounter \(x\) when \(y\) is absent, then we determine that \(x\) is \textit{caused} by \(y\), not that it is manifested by it. This is precisely the procedure Dharmakīrti proposes for determining when a causal relation is in place.\textsuperscript{131} This is why we don't say that fire \textit{manifests} smoke, we say that fire \textit{causes} smoke. A lamp and a pot, however, are different, because we have lots of experience of pots outside of the context of lamps. We have seen them produced by potters, we have used them in lots of different situations, and thus when the lamp illuminates the pot in a dark room, we don't assume that the lamp is causing the pot, we assume that it is manifesting it. This argument works against the Vedic Ritualists here because we only encounter syllables when they are "manifested" by human speech sounds, and never in any other context. Therefore, says Dharmakīrti, we have to assume that syllables are merely an effect of human effort, and not eternal entities that are merely "manifested" by it.\textsuperscript{132}

\textsuperscript{130}Ibid., 183-184.

\textsuperscript{131}see above.

\textsuperscript{132}Pramāṇavārttikasvavṛtti ad vs. 1.261 (Pramāṇavārttika, 136): \textit{yat khalu rūpaṃ yata evopalabhyate tasya tadupalabdhiṃantarśīyakām upalabdhih evaśīrya lokah kāryatām prajñāpayati}. Eltschinger translates (Penser l'autorite, 363): "Le monde ordinaire, lorsqu'il désigne [tel x] comme un effet [de y,] se fonde sur une perception de la nature x [telle que cette perception est] en relation strictement nécessaire avec la perception du y grâce auquel
The main point of the original verse, then, is not simultaneity, but pre-existence. If the manifested object can't be determined to pre-exist the manifestation, then the object must be an effect, not a manifestation. And this argument is further grounded in a larger argument of Dharmakīrti's, extending throughout the whole section, that even "manifestation" is also a type of effect. This is because in Dharmakīrti's ontology, which holds that all things are momentary, nothing can really "pre-exist." The pot, strictly speaking, is unique at each instant of its existence, and when the lamp "manifests" it, what happens is that the lamp forms part of a causal complex that contributes to a new pot, this one with the capacity to be known perceptually. That is, while at one moment the pot is invisible because it is in the dark, the lamp helps create, in the next moment and with the help of the lamp, a pot that is visible. We speak of "manifestation" in this case because our fictional concept of "pot" picks out an object that seems to have pre-existed the function of the lamp, but strictly speaking, the lamp too is part of the cause, and the visible pot is its effect. This fits into an argument against the Vedic Ritualists because it means that the pot has changed, and thus it is not permanent or eternal. It has new qualities at each moment, and since, in Dharmakīrti's nominalist ontology, qualities are not actually separate from their substrates, a quality can't change without the entire object changing. And this means that no permanent entity can be "manifested" at all, because no permanent entity can change states from imperceptible to perceptible and still be permanent in any real sense. Because the Vedic

seul on perçoit [x]." And again Pramāṇavārttika, 137, from the svavṛtti ad vs. 1.262: svapratipattidvārena anyapratipattihe tur loke vyañjakaḥ siddhaḥ dīpādivat sa cet prāk siddhaḥ syāt. Eltschinger, Pensee l'autorite, 367) translates: "Il est [communément] établi dans le monde [qu']à l'exemple de [choSES] tels qu'une lampe, u révélateur [est ce qui], par li biais de la connaissance [qu'on a] de lui, est la cause de la connaissance [qu'on a d'un autre, sous réserve que cet [autre] soit établi avant l'opération due révélateur]" And finally, Pramāṇavārttika, 138 (vs. 1.263): karaṇānāṃ samagrānāṃ vyāpārād upalabdhitaḥ / niyamena ca kāryatvam vyañjake tadasambhavāt // Eltschinger, Penser L'autorite, 367) translates: "et puisque l'on perçoit immanquablement [la parole] grâce à l'opération des organes phonatoires associés, [il résulte que la parole] est un effet, car la [perception d'un révélable] n'a pas immanquablement lieu dans le cas d'une [cause] révélatrice."
Ritualists hold that the phonemes are permanent, they are, Dharmakīrti argues, unable to hold that they can be manifested.133

Mahima also thinks that manifestation is, in reality, just an effect. So far we have only looked at the first two definitions of manifestation, both of which Mahima has rejected. But the third definition he accepts. The third type of manifestation, for Mahima, is just inference. We have already seen his description of this process above, but it is worth repeating: "The third [type of manifestation] is the simple awakening of the memory traces [samskāra] of an entity that previously was experienced and then existed inwardly in the form of a memory trace, from some entity invariably associated with that, or from something that points out. For example fire from smoke, or... a cow from the word 'cow'."134 This also sounds a bit like Abhinavagupta's theory, but we know that Mahima means something very different by it because a page later he says explicitly that this process is just inference.135 In other words, what Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta call "manifestation" is actually an inference, and as with all inference the inferential sign, for example seeing a woman weeping onstage, stirs memories, for example of our own moments of weeping as caused by sadness, and this causes us to determine the tears as something connected with sadness by a relation of causality. This produces, in the next moment, awareness of the inferential property—that the woman is sad. The perception of tears and my own determination based on memory are therefore both part of a causal complex that produce a new awareness: that the woman is sad.

133 This argument is summarized in Eltschinger, Penser L'autorite, 190-195.

134 Vyaktiviveka, 80: tasyaiyānubhūtapūrvasya samskāraṁantarvīparivartinaṁ kutaś cid avyabhicārino 'ṛthāntarāt tatpratīpādakād va samskāraprabodhamātraṁ tṛtiyā, yathā dhūmādagnē. . . śabdāc ca gavādeḥ.

135 Vyaktiviveka, 81: tṛtiyāṣyaṁ tu yal lakṣāṇaṁ tad anumānasyaiva saṅgacchate, na vyakteḥ.
So Mahima here is offering an alternative to Abhinavagupta's theory, which, in a move that should be familiar by now, co-opts and changes some of the terms and ideas of Abhinavagupta's theory. When he says that inference is based on stirring memories he means memories of invariable concomitance, not memories of one's own previous emotional experience, and what these memories produce is not a transpersonal self-relishing, but a second moment of awareness in which ones projects these generic connections onto the site of the inference and becomes aware of an object there. So it is not really the rasa that is produced by inference. It is the awareness of rasa that is produced by inference. This is precisely why Mahima rules out the rainbow as a possible analogy for poetic manifestation and limits his discussion of manifestation to the manifestation of real things. Even though, as we will see Chapter Five, the rasa itself is an illusion—it isn't really there in the character, since the character doesn't exist—the awareness of the rasa is real. It is a real moment of awareness, and it is produced by encountering the inferential signs in the proper way. In this respect an awareness of rasa is no different from any other inference. All inferences produce illusions, in the sense that they make one aware of an object that doesn't exist, strictly speaking. But the awareness of this object is a real moment of awareness, and as a real moment of awareness it has effects. The precise effects that rasa has will be discussed in Chapter Five, but for now it is important to note that all of this means that Mahima is in agreement with Abhinavagupta that rasa is a form of the spectator's experience. True, he describes the rasa as an object projected onto the character. But in reality it is not there in the character. It is part of the spectator's awareness, misapprehended by him as external, but still internal to him. The fact that the object seems to be located in the character, and that it is a form of illusion, makes Mahima's theory different from Abhinavagupta's. But it is even more different from Ānandavardhana's original, character-
centered theory, where the *rasa* really is located behind the page, so to speak, and the character, along with the words of the poem, are the fragmented outward manifestation of that *rasa*, which never itself appears.\(^{136}\)

The centrality of simultaneity to Abhinavagupta's theory, and the threat of Mahima's argument against simultaneity, is well-recognized by Mahima's commentator Ruyyaka who defends the theory of manifestation precisely by re-asserting the role of simultaneity in the aesthetic process. He admits that there is a sequence between awareness of tears and awareness of sadness. But, he says, this sequence is only a sequence of discovery. Once we are aware of the sadness, the awareness of the tears doesn't go away; they remain together in the mind of the connoisseur. In other words they rest together in the place of repose, where all the different elements are present in the self-awareness of the subject.\(^ {137}\) Mahima isn't able to respond to this, because Ruyyaka's commentary was written almost on hundred years after his life, and because no one after him took up his inferential theory and defended it. However, we can assume he would have rejected it, and we can even surmise the reasons he might have given. This is

---

\(^{136}\) Abhinavagupta, of course, also thinks the *rasa* is located behind the page and that the words are an outward manifestation of it (see Chapter Two). But the spectator's experience of the *rasa* is internal to his awareness, just as with Mahima. The difference between them is a question of how the *rasa* got to be inside the spectator. Not whether or not it is actually located there.

\(^{137}\) *Vyaktiviveka*, 62-63: na caitad asmābhīr apanāhyate ghaṭapradīpādau vyaktiṣaye tathā darśanāti. kim tu vyaṅgyābhimatasya rasāder yadā pratipattit jāyate, tadā vyaṅjakasya vibhāvādeḥ pratipattitān na nivarttate tattahabhāvena rasādeḥ pratiṣṭeḥ. . . vyaṅjakapraṭītikāle hi niyamena vyaṅgyapraṭītīti iti nāśmākam āsayaḥ vyaṅgyapraṭītikāle tu niyamena vyaṅjakapraṭītībhavaty etevy āsayaṇākramatvam vyaktiḥ ca samarthītā (emending the latter to samarthite following T. Gaṇapati Śāstri *[The Vyaktiviveka of Rājānaka Mahimabhāțṭa and Its Commentary of Rājānaka Ruyyaka*, ed. T. Gaṇapati Śāstri, Trivandrum Sanskrit Series no. 5 [Travancore: Travancor Government Press], appendix (Ruyyaka's commentary), p. 10]. This is the only divergence between the two texts that I consider significant for my arguments, although there are other small divergences that don't affect the meaning). I translate this as: "Now, we don't deny this [existence of sequentiality]; the same thing is even seen in [cases of literal] manifestation, like pots and lamps and so forth. However, when the cognition of rasas etc, which are hypothesized to be manifested, arises, the cognition of the vibhāvas and so forth, which are manifestors, doesn't cease, because rasa etc. is cognized as co-occurrent with that. . . For we don't hold that at the time of the cognition of the manifestor there is necessarily the cognition of the manifested [meaning]. But at the time of the cognition of the manifested [meaning], there is necessarily the cognition of the manifestors. And it is according to this thought that non-sequentiality and suggestion are established.
because there is ample evidence, more even than I have presented here, that Mahima rejected the philosophical basis on which this theory of simultaneous repose depended: Abhinavagupta's concept of vimarśa. So Ruyyaka's response is not so much a new argument Mahima hadn't thought of as it is the reiteration of a philosophy of mind that he rejected. This will be the subject of Chapter Four, so it won't be expanded on here.

Mahima is willing to admit that these kinds of inferences sometimes take place extremely quickly—so quickly in fact that they seem to us to be examples of manifestation. So he accepts the use of the word manifestation in discussions of poetry, as long as it is clear that it is being used metaphorically. We call poetic inferences "poetic manifestation" only because we want to metaphorically convey a sense of how quickly and subconsciously they can sometimes take place:

...when Love and so forth are inferred there is an inferential relation in which the sequence [between cognitions] is not noticed. Thus, other [scholars'] idea that it is a case of manifestation is based on a simple mistake about them co-occurring. And calling it 'manifestation' is based on this, but it is employed only figuratively, not literally.\(^\text{138}\)

This theory raises two final problems for Mahima, which need to be addressed before his theory can be plausible. The first is that if, as we have seen, Mahima holds that poetic inferences are inference-for-another—that is, if they are essentially a statement of logical reasoning intended to lead the listener to form a certain inference for himself—then Mahima needs to explain why they don't have the form of inferences, with all of their official steps. Specifically, he needs to explain why poetic inferences are all missing a step that is usually included in philosophical inferences: giving an example of a similar case. In most debate situations, as we have seen, proper arguments were considered to contain a fixed number of steps. One school of

\(^{\text{138}}\text{Vyaktiviveka, 59: kevalaṃ rasādiṣv anumeyeṣv ayam asaṃlaksyaakraṃ gamyaagamakabhaḥ vyaḥ sahahāvabhrāntimātraktaḥ tatāntyeṣaṃ vyangvavyāṇjakabhaḥvabhyupagamaḥ, taṃ nibandhanaś ca dhvanīvyapadesah. sa tu tatraupacārika eva prayukto na mukhyāḥ.}\)
logic, Nyāya, holds that there are five steps. Dharmakīrti and Buddhists who follow him hold, to the contrary, that only three are needed. These three are: 1) a statement of pervasion between \( x \) and \( y \), either by identity or causality—e.g., every \( x \) is a \( y \); 2) statement of an example; 3) statement that \( x \) is present at the site of the inference. So the way this looks in practice is: "wherever there is smoke, there is fire, like, for example, in a kitchen. There is smoke on this mountain." The conclusion, "therefore. . ." is left for the interlocutor to infer for himself.\(^\text{139}\)

Mahima is aware that poetic inferences don't look like this, and right after he says that poetic inferences are inference-for-another, he allows an imagined interlocutor to raise this problem:

If all sentence meanings are based on inferential relations, then just as there needs to be mention of the [pervasion between] the inferential sign and the inferred object, so there must also be mention of the example, because that also needs to be depended upon, since that is how one establishes pervasion.\(^\text{140}\)

The interlocutor here is saying that if you want to prompt another to make an inference, it's not enough to say "wherever there is \( x \) there is \( y \)," because this merely states, but doesn't establish, that there is pervasion between \( x \) and \( y \). In order to establish pervasion, one needs to point to an example where the two are seen together, so that the person you are speaking to can trust that there is indeed pervasion. Even though inferential signs are stated in poetry ("She wept loudly. . .

\(^{139}\) See, for example, Nyāyabindu 3.21 (Nyāyabindu, 164): yatra dhūmas tatrāgniḥ. yathā mahānasādau. asti ceha dhūma iti. "Wherever there is smoke, there is fire, as in a kitchen etc. And here there is smoke." On which Dharmottara comments (ibid.): vyāptisādhanaṃpramāṇaviśayāṃ darśayitum āha—yathā mahānasādāv iti mahānasādau hi pratyaśāntaṃalamśāhābhyaṃ kāryakāraṇabhāvātmāvahāvo niścitah. "[Dharmakīrti] says 'as in a kitchen, etc.' in order to show the object of the awareness that establishes pervasion. For in a kitchen, the necessary relation of cause and effect [between smoke and fire] is determined by means of perception and non-perception [of smoke and fire, in stages]."

\(^{140}\) Vyaktiviveka, 69: atha yadi sarva eva vākyārthaḥ sādhyasādhanabhāvagarbha ity ucyate; tad yathā sādhyaśādhanayos tatra niyamenopādānāṃ tathā drśṭantaśyāpi syāt, tasyāpi vyāptiṣādhanaṃprāṇaviśayatavyāvaśāpekṣāniyāvataḥ.
there is no example given ("as, for example, when this other woman wept, and she was sad. . "). and pervasion isn't established.

Mahima, however, has already implicitly solved this problem, and only needs to make the solution explicit. The Dharmakīrtian principles he uses in the section on linguistic subordination, and again in the section on spoilt words, give a theory of inference and debate that fits Mahima's purpose perfectly, and provides an easy answer to this problem. Recall that Dharmakīrti's theory of inference was strictly practical, and not at all formal. An inference-for-another "works" insofar as it prompts the proper inference, and if it does this there is no reason to object to the form in which it was stated.\textsuperscript{141} Mahima, therefore, simply responds to the objector by saying that, for intelligent people, only the statement of a well-known inferential mark is required in an inference-for-another. If I want to prompt someone else to an awareness that there is fire on the mountain, all I really need to do is say, "There is smoke on the mountain." I only need to say more if they are too thick to see my point. He then quotes Dharmakīrti's \textit{Pramāṇavārttika} 1.129 to support this position: "In [inferences based on] identity and causality, the mention of examples is for those who don't know. But for the wise, just the inferential sign is stated."\textsuperscript{142} This conclusion falls out easily from the very fact that Mahima has adopted a Dharmakīrtian stance on language, inference, and grammar. In fact, Dharmakīrti's is the only type of philosophy that would work here. His is the only system of logic in ancient South Asia that would allow Mahima to claim that poetry is inference despite the fact that no examples are given.

\textsuperscript{141}This is the same principle at play in the section on subordination: language is just a tool, and as such it is always subordinated to the product towards which it works.

\textsuperscript{142}Vyaktiviveka, 69: \textit{prasiddhasāmarthyasya śādhanasyopādānād eva tadapekṣayā pratikṣepāt. Taduktam tadbhāvahetubhāvau hi drṣṭānte tadavedināḥ / khyāpyete viduṣāṁ vācyo hetur eva ca kevalāḥ //}
The last thing left to explain, then, in establishing that manifestation is a type of inference, is why poetic inferences should be pleasurable. We make inferences all the time. They don't usually afford us any particular pleasure, certainly not any aesthetic pleasure. This is especially the case for inferences of other people's emotions. It is often the case in poetry that sad scenes are aesthetically pleasing. It is rarely the case that the equivalent scenes in ordinary life are pleasing. If we say that both are cases of inference, what accounts for the difference? Abhinavagupta, as we saw in Chapter Two, has an elaborate theory to explain the difference, and Mahima is aware that it is incumbent on him as well to explain it.

The answer that Mahima gives is brief. It is that the conditions for the two types of inferences are different. The object of the real-world inference is real causes with real effects. But the object of a literary inference is not real causes or effects, but artificial ones. These effects are not part of the world—they have been artistically depicted and are known to be the activity of a poet, and the causes they point to are rasa (among other things). "Thus," Mahima says, "the vibhāvas, etc. have a distinction both of nature and object from causes, etc., since their objects are respectively poetry and the world, and their [natures] are respectively artificial or real." Mahima also explains that this is precisely why Bharata has given odd technical names like vibhāva and anubhāva to causes and effects when they are portrayed in literature—this indicates that they are not the same as their real-world counterparts.

Mahima doesn't elaborate on what it is that the artificiality enables. Possibly its function is similar to Abhinavagupta's generalization, allowing us to apprehend an emotion without the burden of identifying it as a part of our personal world, and thus without the need to make any

---

143 Vyaktiviveka, 74: tadevaṁ vibhāvādīnāṁ hetvādīnāṁ ca kṛtrimākṛtrimatayā kāvyalokavīṣayatayā c svarūpabhede viṣayabhede cāvasthite saty...
particular decisions about what to do about it, whether to help, or to ignore, etc. But we can only speculate.

So much for Mahima's explanation of why poetic inferences don't provoke the same reactions ordinary inferences do. As for why poetic inferences should afford any particular *pleasure*, Mahima is even more terse, saying simply:

> And the very same thing does not please [connoisseurs] the way it does when they are lead to infer it. This is just the nature of things—it can't be brought into question. So it is said: 'Something inferred by causes doesn't please like something inferred by *vibhāvas* And the expressed meaning doesn't cause happiness the way the same thing does when it is implied/understood.'

It is simply a blunt fact about the world that art becomes more beautiful when its meaning is half hidden. There is no *why* about it. Mahima is not so much explaining anything here as he is dismissing the question. Everyone already knows what is the case. This is all the explanation that is possible, and all that is needed. And this argumentative move may in fact be one more thing Mahima learned from Dharmakīrti, as Dharmakīrti makes the same move in his *Pramāṇavārttika* when addressing the question of what might account for causal relations. In Dunne's translation, Dharmakīrti tells us: "Indeed, it is not correct to question the nature of things, as in 'Why does fire burn? Why is it hot, and water is not?' One should ask just this much, 'From what cause does a thing with this nature come?'" This proposition is not unique to Dharmakīrti; many other philosophers writing in Sanskrit also took this position. But given Mahima's documented affinity for Dharmakīrti, it is at least worth noting that in this sentiment as well, he is not

---

144 Vyaktiviveka, 75: so 'pi ca teṣāṁ na tathā svadate, yathā tair evānumeyatāṁ nīta iti svabhāva evāyaṁ na paryanuyogam arhati.

145 Dunne, *Foundations*, 125 n. 114. From Dharmakīrti's *svavṛti ad Pramāṇavārttika*, 84 (vs. 1.167ab): *na hi svabhāvā bhāvānāṁ pramanuyogam arhanti kim agnir dahaty uṣṇo vā nodakamiti. etāvattat tu syāt kuto 'yam svabhāva iti*.

146 Larry McCrea, personal communication.
contradicting Dharmakīrti but following along with him. The issues are different but the attitude is the same—explanations only go so far. At a certain point they reach the end of their leash, and beyond that we just have to accept the regularity of appearances.

This, finally, is why Mahima thought that rasa could only be inferred, never stated. A rasa simply is an ordinary emotion, depicted artistically in such a way that it has to be inferred. It is an ordinary emotion rendered artificial and beautiful by the poetic process: "the things called Stable Emotions like Love etc., which don't [really] exist and are similar to a reflection, are called rasa [when they are] being lead to the path of a cognizer's cognition by a poet by means of those very artificial causes called vibhāva etc."  

Conclusion

When Ānandavardhana devised his new literary theory he based it, at least in part, on Bhartṛhari. This made questions of meaning in literature depend on metaphysical questions of being and appearance that were entirely new to the subject of literary theory. The questions were not new, however, to religion, and the tacit connection between theory and religion was made explicit by Abhinavagupta, who furthered the dependence on Bhartṛhari and rewrote Ānandavardhana's theory in harmony with a theology deeply concerned with the nature and essence of all the appearances of the universe. As we saw, he rejected Bhaṭṭanāyaka's alternative to the theory of manifestation even though he agreed with large parts of it, and this choice is only intelligible if we see that Bhaṭṭanāyaka's theory was connected to a theology incompatible with

\[\text{Vyaktiviveka, 83: yatas tair eva kāraṇādibhiḥ kṛtrimair vibhāvādy abhidhānair asanta eva ratyādayaḥ pratiśimbakalpaḥ sthāyibhāvavyapadeśabhājaḥ kavibhiḥ pratipatpratitipatham upaniyamānā hṛdayasāṁvādād āśvādyatvam upayantaḥ santo rasā ity ucyante.}\]
Abhinavagupta's own. Ānandavardhana's theory, on the other hand, though not Śaiva, was at least amenable to it, not least because the Śaivism Abhinavagupta inherited and developed was itself in the midst of absorbing and co-opting Bhartṛhari.

Under these conditions, it is no surprise that Mahima's rejection of the theory of manifestation is grounded in Buddhism, a religious philosophy that was not only incompatible with Abhinavagupta's theology, but an inverse of it in many ways. If anything is strange about this it is that Mahima himself was, by all evidence, also a Śaiva, and not actually a Buddhist. His adoption of Dharmakīrti's theories is a partial adoption of Dharmakīrti's worldview, but it is not an adoption of his entire religion. Mahima seems to be using these Dharmakīrtian positions because they are useful against Abhinavagupta, and they are useful against Abhinavagupta for religious reasons. But to the extent that Mahima accepts them, he is cutting them off from their Buddhist vortex and annexing them to a different religious vortex, one that orbits a different, and for Mahima largely unspoken, center. We will have occasion to think about the meaning of this in the next chapter, but I will point out here that Mahima's theory is thus "religious" for complicated reasons, and for different reasons than Abhinavagupta's theory was religious. For one thing, Mahima is locating literary experience much farther out in his religious vortex than Abhinavagupta. *Rasa* is not a "drop" of religious experience for him. It is an ordinary inference used under conditions that are, if anything, even more confused than usual. Moving *rasa* outwards in this way, away from the realm of religious experience, is itself a religious move, just as much as if a Protestant were to say that incense and the Latin language had no particular relationship to the divine and gave no privileged access to it. This makes it important to understand the religious context of Mahima's theories, because his work is in conversation with

---

148 Or at least, that he felt it was so connected and represented it as such, which for the purposes of my argument amounts to the same thing.
them, and understanding that religious conversation is an important part of understanding what Mahima was saying and why he was using Dharmakīrti to say it. But this does not mean that Mahima was offering us a religious literary theory, much less a Buddhist one.

In any event, to sum up what we have seen in this chapter: Mahima's Dharmakīrtian rejection of the theory of manifestation begins with a highly practical, anti-formal understanding of language. Language, for Mahima, is a tool. Its sole raison d'être is to produce an awareness of meanings, and apart from this it has no function and we have no basis for judging its effectiveness or correctness. It is clear that this anti-formal stance comes from Dharmakīrti because Mahima borrows his anti-formal linguistic arguments from Dharmakīrti's manual on debate, Vādanyāya. More specifically, he borrows from those sections of the text in which an opponent of Dharmakīrti's has connected formalism in philosophical debates to formalism in grammar, tying the theory of debate into a religious vortex that includes the Vedas and their ostensibly perfect language: Sanskrit. The religious valences of this formalism become even more clear when Ruyyaka defends the theory of manifestation using notions drawn from theories of Vedic ritual. Significantly, these theories of Vedic ritual are based around the simple fact that Vedic rituals produce effects which are not apparent to us, and whose existence is only known through the sacred texts that give us the ritual instructions. This means that how one theorizes primacy and subordination in the ritual has to be connected to how one interprets the ritual instructions, which discuss things beyond human experience in a perfect and unchanging language. Sometimes these texts tell us to do things for reasons that are not apparent, and which we cannot doubt and which, in fact, we can only understand from looking at other, equally authoritative, ritual instructions. For this reason the statements of the Vedas sometimes undermine what our senses and our rationality tell us about the purpose and teleology of ritual
actions. In other words, the interpretive theories we use to understand the Vedas not only have to explain the ritual, they also have to explain, justify, and preserve, to the greatest degree possible, the sacred authority of each and every ritual instruction, and this sometimes involves assuming counter-intuitive means-end relationships.

Mahima's theory, in contrast to this, treats language as a tool whose product is immediately evident to all involved. It is always clear exactly which way its means-end relationship is pointing, and so it is always clear to us, simply from practical considerations and empirical experience, when it has failed and when it has succeeded. We are therefore free to change it however we want and to judge the modifications, as long as the proper effect is produced—something a Vedic Ritualist absolutely cannot do with the Vedas. Though Dharmakīrti does not talk about Vedic ritual per se in the sections we looked at, he does refute Vedic ideas of the sanctity and formality of the Sanskrit language, and he refutes them on practical and empirical grounds. It should also go without saying that a Buddhist philosopher such as Dharmakīrti would have no affection for elaborate Vedic rituals, and he certainly, avowedly, had no affection for the authority of the Vedas themselves, or for theories that supported them.

This argument about the functionality of language is thus rooted in which parts of the means-end relationship are thought to be available to us and which are unavailable, and how that affects our understanding of the purpose and meaning of the steps in processes such as language or ritual. It is therefore tied closely to the issues of appearance and essence that are our running theme. But this argument is only Mahima's basis for a more broad attack on the theory of manifestation, which is even more extensively and thoroughly based on Dharmakīrti's
philosophy. This is because, while language is a tool that produces an awareness of meanings, it
does this not by means of a *sui generis* linguistic process, but always by means of inference.

The process of inference as Mahima understands it is Dharmakīrti's version of inference. For Dharmakīrti, inference explains how we operate in a universe in which the realities that appear to us—unique, momentary, atomic particles—are different from the quasi-illusory things we experience, and speak about, and think about. Inference, in Dharmakīrti's universe, is the only way to know something that hasn't directly appeared to us, and it is necessary for many of our daily activities, which depend on having expectations of regularity in a universe where everything is, actually, unique. This description of the universe was religious because it was developed to undermine religious alternatives to Buddhism, as well as to explain and stabilize one's faith in the basic tenets of Buddhist religion—that there is no self, that all things are impermanent, that liberation is a direct, non-conceptual encounter with reality, etc. Once one's faith is stabilized by inference in this way one can begin striving for a direct experience of all this for oneself. One cannot do this, however, if one doubts whether all things are momentary, or whether the Vedas might not be eternal and infallible after all.

Since, in Dharmakīrti's religious philosophy, inference is the only way to know something other than what appears directly to us, it is also the only way to know about the existence of other minds. This is the case both in general—we have to infer, based on the appearance of conscious activity, that the people we encounter have their own awareness—and also for the particular contents of others' minds—we infer, based on certain auditory experiences, what ideas the other person is trying to communicate. Therefore Mahima, who held these ideas, could do with his literary theory what Abhinavagupta tried hard to avoid—he could explain *rasa* as the objective apprehension of a character's state of mind. The inference used for this is not
exactly the same as a real-world inference. In a real-world inference we simply encounter an
effect and, due to memory and determination, understand the cause that is behind it. In literature,
we don't encounter real effects. We rather encounter the depiction of effects by a poet, and the
artificiality of these effects is something we are aware of, and something that gives us a different
experience than ordinary inference does. The fact that it is half-hidden and requires our effort to
infer is what makes it so pleasing to us, for Mahima.

The issues involved in the validity of the inference and its difference from ordinary
inferences are tricky. What exactly does the artificiality of the depiction do that makes things
more pleasurable for us? When we infer the meaning of a suggestive statement in poetry are we
inferring the intention of the character or the intention of the poet, or some combination of both,
or does it depend on the particular statement? And what is it, exactly, that we infer? Mahima is
not clear on most of this. What he does seem to be clear about is that our inference is an illusion,
in the sense that although it is a real moment of awareness, and is just as real, within the stream
of our cognition, as any other moment of awareness, its object is something is not actually there
where it seems to be. Cognizing rasa is a real experience of an illusion.

This is not so strange, in Dharmakīrtian terms. The unreality of the object of an inference
was already a part of Dharmakīrti's theory of inference. Every inference yields an unreal object,
precisely because it yields a concept, and concepts are merely useful fictions, not realities.
Mahima's theory, however, seems to imply that poetry is subject to a double illusion. Not only is
the inferred emotion a concept, but it isn't even a concept that applies to a real object. When I
infer that my mother is happy, the unreal concept of "happiness" that I infer in her is at least
causally and usefully related to whatever unique, particular thing my mother is feeling at that
moment. But when I infer that Harry Potter is happy, the concept of happiness is illusory in a
stronger sense than with the inference about my mother. We won't elaborate on these issues here. We will only mark them. Exactly what the status of a *rasa* is, for Mahima, and how it relates to practical activity in the real world, will be the subject of Chapter Five.

We also saw that Mahima didn't just assert that poetry is inferential. He also gave good reasons to doubt whether manifestation is possible in poetry in any literal sense. These arguments again draw on Dharmakīrti, excerpting a verse from a complicated argument about the conditions of our awareness and changing its emphasis. Dharmakīrti discusses manifestation in order to argue that an entity can't be considered manifested unless we have a way of knowing that it pre-existed the event of manifestation. And he adds that since all things are momentary and there isn't really any such thing as pre-existence anyway, manifestation is really just a sort of indirect causation of a new, perceptible object, and that this can only happen to non-eternal things, and never to eternal, unchanging things like the eternal syllables that the Vedic Ritualists imagine to exist.

Mahima appropriates Dharmakīrti's argument and emphasizes an aspect of it that is there, but which does not do much work in Dharmakīrti's argument: the notion of simultaneity. Whatever Ānandavardhana thought manifestation was he didn't seem to think it required multiple simultaneous moments of awareness, and he freely admits it. Abhinavagupta's reinterpretation of the theory of manifestation, however, which theorized it as a form of reflexive-awareness, had come to depend heavily on the idea of multiple cognitions coalescing simultaneously in the self-apprehension of a conscious being. The cognitions in question are the cognitions of the so-called "*bhāvas,*" the various factors of the scene that are phenomenologically available to us, and the *rasa,* the aesthetic mood behind them which doesn't appear directly. Abhinavagupta's literary theory depends upon us bringing all of this together
simultaneously in the mirror of our hearts and "recognizing" the essence that unites them all and runs through them all, giving each of them their meaning. This, I believe, explains why Mahima goes so far to change the emphasis of Dharmakīrti's quote to be about the possibility of simultaneity. Mahima was trying to show that, pace Abhinavagupta's interpretation, simultaneity was not part of the process of manifestation as Ānandavardhana envisioned it. Since it is not, we must then understand that process of manifestation to be just inference, since the lack of simultaneity compels this conclusion, philosophically. The argument is not directed solely against Abhinavagupta. It would have worked against Ānandavardhana on his own even had there been no Abhinavagupta, since it would have been a way of pointing out an inconsistency in Ānandavardhana's text, or an inevitable compatibility between that text's assertions and Dharmakīrti's theory of inference. But Mahima, who was demonstrably aware of Abhinavagupta’s commentary as well as Abhinavagupta's theology, had to have known that the argument against simultaneity would have been an even stronger retort to Abhinavagupta.

This argument, however, if it really is directed at Abhinavagupta, is directed at Abhinavagupta the exegete, not Abhinavagupta the philosopher. It does not prove that literary cognitions can't exist simultaneously. It only says that Ānandavardhana didn't think they did, and so whatever he was trying to describe has to be understood as inference. But there are no explicit arguments against Abhinavagupta's theory here. Mahima's Dharmakīrtian (and decidedly non-Bhartṛharian) theory of language does imply arguments against Abhinavagupta, since it portrays the use of language as a step-wise series of cognitions that culminates, ideally, in the awareness of the final meaning. And this theory is more explicitly established in the work of Dharmakīrti, who argues extensively against all alternative theories of language, including Bhartṛhari’s. Mahima may therefore have been content to leave the heavy language philosophical work to
Dharmakīrti, and to assume that if his audience had a problem with it they could refer their problem to the source and argue with it there. He may have even been writing for an audience that he expected already knew and accepted Dharmakīrti’s theories, and was just trying to articulate for them what the literary theoretical implications of their views were. Unfortunately, we probably will never know.

What we do know, however, is that Mahima was not content with attacking Abhinavagupta only as an exegete. We know this because in *Vyaktiviveka* Mahima clearly and definitively pushes back against Abhinavagupta's notion of *vimarśa*, which was the basis for Abhinavagupta's theory of simultaneous cognitions and indeed for his entire literary theory. Evidence for this can be found in various parts of the text, but especially in the long and puzzling digression at the beginning of the text on the use of gerunds in poetry, which becomes much more intelligible when we understand it in the context of intra-Śaiva arguments about the possibility of *vimarśa*. Understood this way, this section can be seen both to bolster Mahima's literary theoretical arguments as well as give us some small insight into the nature of his Śaivism. It also serves as further evidence that Mahima did indeed have Abhinavagupta in mind as a target when he composed his *Vyaktiviveka*. So it is to this subject that the next chapter will be devoted.
Chapter Four: The Will of Objects

This chapter is a digression about a digression. Rather than continuing to analyze Mahima's polemic against the theory of poetic manifestation, which we will pick up again in Chapter Five, we will instead pause here to inquire into some of his possible motivations, or at least some of the factors that may have influenced him. We will do this by looking at a long section near the beginning of the first chapter of Vyaktiviveka that seems, at first glance, totally unrelated to the arguments of the rest of the work. In this section, Mahima discusses the use of gerunds in poetry, and he solves some long-standing problems of poetic exegesis in the Sanskrit tradition that involve the use of gerunds. The section is puzzling for a variety of reasons. One of them is the sheer amount of space he spends on such an arcane subject with no apparent connection to his stated goals, a decision that is both difficult to understand and difficult to dismiss given the space it takes up. In addition to this is the fact that, in sharp contrast to his heavy use of Buddhist philosophy elsewhere, Mahima ends his long digression with what seems to be a commitment to some form of non-dual Śaivism, grounding all the theories he has just given in the assertion that all entities, sentient and insentient, are possessed of willpower and agency. Perhaps most strangely, Mahima uses this digression as an opportunity to introduce a bizarre view that all nouns actually denote actions, a view which is unique in the long Sanskrit tradition of linguistic philosophy.

However, although puzzling, this digression is not unintelligible, and this chapter will make sense of it by looking at some of the theological issues at stake. Modern readers might be inclined to ignore such theological issues when studying an aesthetic text because in our own context they are seen as separate from issues of aesthetic theory. But as I will show, the fields were not so separated in medieval Kaśmīr, and Mahima's long digression only begins to make
sense when seen within its theological context. In fact, it can even be interpreted as an intervention of sorts in some of the important religious debates going on around him, and specifically in certain debates that were central to the work of Mahima's predecessor Abhinavagupta. Placing this long aesthetic digression in its religious context will therefore give us further reason to believe that Mahima is directing his aesthetic polemic at Abhinavagupta in addition to Ānandavardhana, and will reveal some of the structure of Mahima's project that our own intellectual context might obscure. It will also put us in a position to speculate a bit about Mahima's personal theological commitments. To see all this, however, we first have to pull together some strands of thought from earlier chapters and recall what exactly the issues are that this digression relates to and why they are important.

In the last chapter we saw that Mahima relies heavily on Dharmakīrti's Buddhist philosophy to refute the theory of poetic manifestation, and this forces aesthetics apart from the non-dual Śaivism to which Abhinavagupta had fused it. Mahima proposes that what others call "manifestation" can be entirely explained as a form of inference, and this is the basic position his whole work is intended to prove. When the words of a poem or play make us indirectly aware of ideas or moods, what is actually happening, he says, is that we are drawing inferences based on our worldly experience—infere

ces which are made extremely quickly, and thus not always noticed. The appearance of the poem—the words and plot elements and the characters' gestures and so on—is not an outward manifestation of a unified idea, the way it is in Ānandavardhana, or the fragmented and fertile appearance of a poets' blissful reflexive awareness, the way it is in Abhinavagupta. Instead, it is an artificial sign—a literary representation of things like tears, which are known in ordinary life to be causally connected to other things that are distinct from them, like the mood of sadness. (Remember that all entities are discrete, atomic, and unique, in
Dharmakīrti's philosophy). The tears appear to us, and by apprehending them as signs and recalling the regularity of their connection to sadness they make us know about the existence of this sadness, which is an entity that is ontologically distinct from the tears. So unlike in Abhinavagupta's theory, where the poem is ontologically continuous with the poet's mood, and which triggers a deep experience of one's own emotions that is also an extension of that mood, Mahima claims that the appearance of a poem (words, characters, gestures, scenes) does not produce anything in us other than a pleasing moment of knowledge regarding something separate from the appearance of that poem. This form of knowledge, like all forms of knowledge in Dharmakīrti's philosophy that are not perception, is inference.

Mahima's argument is not simply that poetic knowledge seems like inference, or even that it bears all the characteristics of inference. It does, but this is only because of a more fundamental fact, which is that it is produced by language, and all language is inferential, for Mahima. Spoken language, for Dharmakīrti, and thus for Mahima, is only a tool used to stimulate the listeners' memories of a causal connection and thus produce an awareness of meanings. In the case of ordinary denotation, the causal connection is between certain words and certain ideas, so that when a speaker makes the sound "c-o-w," we know that the speaker is thinking about a particular horned animal and trying to express that, because we know that the pronunciation of the word is always caused by the thought of the animal and the desire to communicate it. So from hearing the utterance we can infer the intention to express the concept. The information we get from sentences, however, is itself capable of stimulating further inferences. If we come to know, through the words of a sentence, that a certain person is pregnant, we are also thereby entitled to some other assumptions: that the person is a woman, that she is older than 5 years old, that she is fertile, that she has been sexually active, etc. These
other bits of knowledge, for Mahima, are acquired by inference, just as the individual word-meanings were, but they weren't part of the denotative meaning of the sentence. Any information furnished by a sentence that goes beyond the conventional, denotative meaning of the words is produced by this kind of second-order inference, and it is in this way that literary emotions are communicated to an audience, since these literary emotions don't have to be named to be communicated, and in fact shouldn't be, aesthetically speaking.

As we also saw in the last chapter, it is important to Mahima to establish that this is a sequential process, and not a simultaneous one. First comes awareness that the character is crying, then comes the awareness that she is sad—two separate cognitions, two separate moments. The most explicit reason for this is that the definition of manifestation that he takes from Dharmakīrti holds that in order for something to be considered manifestation, the manifested object must be known simultaneously along with the manifestor. For Dharmakīrti, a lamp can be properly said to "manifest" a pot in a dark room because when it illuminates it, it is visible simultaneously along with it. Mahima argues that if we want to call poetic knowledge "manifestation," it has to fit this definition. But since the moment of apprehending the poetic sign is temporally distinct from the moment in which we have knowledge of the poetic meaning, and doesn't appear simultaneously with it the way that the light of the lamp appears simultaneously with the pot it is illuminating, we can't call this "poetic manifestation." It has to be inference.

This is as far as Mahima takes the argument here but this, on its own, doesn't really prove that literary cognitions are sequential. Even less does it prove the impossibility of their being simultaneous. It only asserts it. Mahima does show with a quotation that Ānandavarādhana also thought that poetic cognitions were sequential, and so this proves that whatever Ānandavarādhana
was trying to describe doesn't fit with Dharmakīrti's definition of manifestation. But he doesn't actually give any reasons why it can't be the case that, for example, our knowledge of a character's tears and our knowledge of their sadness might co-exist.

This is a problem for Mahima because the simultaneous co-existence of literary cognitions is central to Abhinavagupta's reworked version of the theory. Simultaneity, in the form of *vimarśa*, was in fact so important to Abhinavagupta that we might say it is the *sine qua non* of aesthetic experience for him, such that he is perfectly willing accept other forms of awareness as part of the aesthetic experience as long as they are understood to be instrumental to this kind of awareness and lead to it. Abhinavagupta is perfectly willing to accept, for example, that inferential knowledge might be a preliminary part of the aesthetic process; it does not, however, encompasses the result, because the result is a state of mind in which multiple cognitions (including the inferential cognition) coalesce simultaneously. This was all discussed in Chapter Two.

So the dialectic here seems to be at an impasse: Mahima asserts the poetic cognitions are sequential, and Abhinavagupta holds that they are simultaneous. To move past this, we have to see that Mahima's rejection of simultaneity is actually just one aspect of a much deeper and broader attack on the conceptual bases and presuppositions of Abhinavagupta's literary theory. Logically speaking this attack begins as soon as Mahima makes the decision to treat aesthetic experience as a *pramāṇa*, that is, as a formal means of acquiring knowledge. As mentioned in previous chapters, South Asian epistemology was largely a matter of arguing over the nature and categorization of these means of knowledge, but one thing that was commonly held was that a *pramāṇa* must deliver new knowledge.\(^1\) Memory and recognition, for example, were ruled out by

\(^1\)The reason for this has to do with the fact that *pramāṇas* were always defined, by all schools, as practical instruments. Something is therefore a legitimate *pramāṇa* only insofar as it helps fulfill some human purpose.
definition, because they don't produce new knowledge, only different perspectives on knowledge already acquired. Reducing aesthetics to a pramāṇa therefore necessarily rules out simultaneity as a facet of aesthetic experience, because it makes it irrelevant—once the tears have done their job, once they are cognized and lead us to an awareness of sadness, any further awareness of them as co-existing with the sadness would not count as pramāṇa, because no new knowledge is thereby acquired. So even if they could co-exist with the cognition of sadness, their existence would be epistemically and aesthetically irrelevant.

This is a deliberate and clever reversal of Abhinavagupta's theory. Abhinavagupta had intentionally excluded aesthetic experience from the kind of objective knowledge that characterizes the pramāṇas, and he did this by theorizing rasa as a moment of recognition, by definition excluded from the realm of pramāṇas. Moreover, Abhinavagupta's theory of poetic recognition is grounded by him in the mind's capacity for reflexive awareness, or vimarśa, which gives it the ability to hold multiple cognitions together simultaneously. For Abhinavagupta held that the recognition that constitutes aesthetic experience is actually a recognition of the proper relation among all the elements of a scene, which involves holding them all together simultaneously and reassembling and re-experiencing, that is, recognizing, their true meaning, which is an aesthetic emotion. This aesthetic emotion was originally the poet's, and when he created the poem he took his aesthetic emotion and fractured it into words and characters and actions, all of which are expressions of this emotion, but none of which appear to be so on first glance. On first glance they just appear to be words and actions. But if they can be held together simultaneously, and if the emotion of which they are all expressions can be recognized, they can all suddenly be fused back into the original emotion that gave rise to them, which the spectator

Cognizing something for a second time doesn't do this. It is only the initial acquisition of knowledge that is instrumental in this way; hence the restriction to novel information. See Dunne, Foundations of Dharmakīrti, 45-49.
now experiences. However, it is an important part of Abhinavagupta's philosophy and theology that in order to all be exist simultaneously, these cognitions need to be part of a larger subjectivity in which they all take place and which can cognize itself cognizing them.² In other words, the multiple elements of a scene can only be unified by being held within the subjectivity of a spectator who is aware of himself as being aware of all these elements, and who can then recognize the mood of which all the elements are an expression. This recognition, and the reflexive awareness it requires, is not the acquisition of new knowledge. It is only a shift in one's relationship to words and characters and actions that have already been understood, and which now need to be thought about and savored more to unlock their mood. Hence, aesthetic experience is entirely different from the objective knowledge delivered by a pramāṇa. But it does require the simultaneous cognition of all the elements of a scene, and this, in turn, requires the ability to be reflexively aware.

The reflexive awareness in question, vimarśa, is closely tied to Abhinavagupta's Śaiva theology, and is markedly different from similar Buddhist theories. For Buddhists of Dharmakīrti's school, reflexivity applies to each cognition individually—each cognition knows its object and itself simultaneously. But this doesn't apply to multiple cognitions. In fact it can't. This is because Buddhists don't think there is a Self beyond those multiple cognitions in which those multiple cognitions could all simultaneously take place and by which they could all simultaneously be seen.³ Abhinavagupta, however, does. In Abhinavagupta's theory, rasa is not the apperception of one individual moment of cognition, but the reflexive awareness of a Self in

²The reasons for this are unfortunately too complicated to summarize here, but they are explained in detail in Chapter Two. For the argument of this chapter it is only important to know that Abhinavagupta's aesthetic theory requires the existence of a Self that can cognize itself.

³In any given instant, the self just is the cognition, and as soon as that cognition ends that "self" ends and a new one begins—this is the Buddhist theory of no-self.
whom all the various factors and words of the poem have come together simultaneously. This possibility requires a certain theory of the Self, and this theory was theological, in Abhinavagupta's world.

The reason this experience is pleasurable and desirable is also grounded theologically, for Abhinavagupta, and also requires a special theory of reflexive awareness. Aesthetic experience is pleasurable for Abhinavagupta because in aesthetic experience the reflexive awareness in question transcends the limited personality and relishes a transpersonal subjectivity. The mind knows itself, but not as an individual. This closely and structurally related to Śiva's own reflexive awareness, his own relationship to himself. Since Śiva's self-awareness is characterized primarily by bliss, aesthetic experience, which partially mimics Śiva's awareness, participates to some extent in this bliss.

So all elements of Abhinavagupta's aesthetic theory—the simultaneity of the cognitions of the different elements of a poem, the recognition of their aesthetic meaning, and the bliss this gives rise to—is grounded by Abhinavagupta in a particularly Śaiva theory of vimarśa. It is a central concept in Abhinavagupta's theology, and one whose role in aesthetic theory can only be fully understood in tandem with Abhinavagupta's wider ideas about theology and cosmogony.

The theory of vimarśa that Abhinavagupta uses, however, was at this point historically new in Abhinavagupta's tradition of Śaivism. It didn't originate there, but rather in Bhartṛhari's Vākyapadīya, and was imported into the tradition only two generations before Abhinavagupta by Utpaladeva, Abhinavagupta's teacher's teacher and the author of the seminal text Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā. While Utpaladeva made use of the idea of vimarśa, Utpaladeva's

---

4 The locus classicus for this idea is Vākyapadīya vs. 1.124, where it is closely connected to the power of speech. For a background of the term's history in Śaivism, where it is rarely used, see Mark Dyczkowski, The Stanzas on Vibration: The Spandakārikā With Four Commentaries (Albany: SUNY Press, 1992), 327 n. 67.
teacher, Somānanda, who founded the "recognition" school of Śaiva theology, made no use of it at all, and in fact he even devoted an entire chapter of his Śivadrṣṭī to refuting Bhartṛhari's ideas. This meant that the introduction of the concept of vimarśa into the Śaiva tradition involved rearranging Somānanda's theology a bit in ways that the tradition never fully acknowledged, and which will be discussed in this chapter.

Mahima, however, seems clearly to have rejected this theory of vimarśa. This is evident, first of all, in the way he uses the term in his text. He does use it (as well as its synonym parāmarśa), but he insists on using it in the more common, non-theological sense of a careful consideration of any given object or topic, with no necessary implication of reflexivity, which is how it was widely used outside of recognition theology. This is the way it is often used, for example, in texts on logic, both Buddhist and Nyāya, where it refers to the way in which one considers the a sign so that it yields knowledge of signified. This could just be an uninteresting continuation of the pre-Abhinavagupta use of the term, except for the strange fact that Mahima chose to name each chapter of his work a "Vimarśa" (First Vimarśa, Second Vimarśa, Third Vimarśa). This is a very unusual choice of term for chapters in Sanskrit philosophy. In fact, I'm not aware of any other extant work whose chapters are called "vimarśas," although terms for chapters were sometimes markers of religious or philosophical proclivities. Writing against the theory of poetic manifestation one generation or so after an extremely famous theologian in a similar religious tradition propounded that same theory and made it heavily dependent on a new notion of the term vimarśa, it does not seem a coincidence that Mahima uses this term as the names for his chapters. It seems to be his way of emphasizing or driving home the point that

---

5 For example, Mammaṭa's Kāvyapraṅkāsa (Kaśmīr, twelfth century), which consolidates and reasserts the theory of manifestation at the end of its period of contention. Mammaṭa titled each chapter of this work an ullaśa, a "wave of bliss," a term with heavily non-dual Śaiva connotations, appropriate for someone defending a theory which was, at this time, a non-dual Śaiva theory.
vimarśa is really just a conceptual reflection on an intellectual issue outside of oneself, rather than any kind of reflexive awareness immanent within one's own subjectivity.

What I hope to make clear in this chapter is that Mahima's suggestive use of the term vimarśa in this way is not an isolated incident. It is precisely his antipathy to the Śaiva theory of vimarśa that is at play in the long digression at the beginning of Vyaktiviveka, and which helps us make sense of it. To put it succinctly, this digression is an extended polemic concerning exactly the kinds of theological changes necessary in order for Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta to incorporate their notion of vimarśa into Somānanda's tradition. The digression essentially presses on a weak spot in Abhinavagupta's theology, and implies that certain problems in literary criticism can only be solved by abandoning Utpaladeva's and Abhinavagupta's (unacknowledged) theological innovations and returning to Somānanda's original vision, one without any notion of vimarśa. This, in the end, potentially adds to our understanding of what kind of Śaiva Mahima might have been, and why he might have chosen to rely so heavily on Buddhist philosophy. The wider point this fits into is that it is not so much the rejection of cognitive simultaneity, but the rejection of the Śaiva theory of vimarśa as such underlies Mahima's aesthetic project, and which causes him to construct an alternative that is inverse to this theory in many ways. Understanding this digression properly, then, will help us understand Mahima's text overall. But to do this, we first have to understand how the Śaiva theological tradition changed with the importation of the concept of vimarśa. It is to this subject that we now turn.

Stripping Objects of Their Will
Somānanda was a Kaśmīrī scholar who lived roughly between 900 and 950 AD. His famous text, Śivadrṣṭi, "The Vision of Śiva," is generally credited as being the first text of the Recognition School of Śaivism, a speculative theological school that was outlined in Chapter Two, and of which Abhinavagupta was an adherent and proponent. Śivadrṣṭi is in close conversation with various tantric Śaiva scriptures and seems to have been directed towards an audience of tantric initiates, although unlike other texts of this sort it is generally more concerned with philosophical than with mystical questions. Nemec calls it "a sort of philosophical theology that is based on what is, overall, an admittedly indeterminate body of scriptures." Essentially, this text was the first to take the teachings of the non-dual Śaiva scriptures and explicate them philosophically, arguing that the whole universe is nothing but Śiva, that Śiva's nature is dynamic and active conscious awareness, and that the individual need only recognize his true nature as Śiva to be liberated. Śivadrṣṭi was commented upon by Utpaladeva as well as Abhinavagupta (although the latter's commentary has been lost), and Utpaladeva's more well-known Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā takes itself to be an elaboration on the philosophical concepts that Somānanda originally laid down.
However, between Somānanda's ideas and Utpaladeva's interpretation of them there are various significant differences. The first, noted by Nemec, is that while Somānanda's text is directed to initiates with philosophical tendencies, Utpaladeva's Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā was directed to a much wider audience, probably a court audience in which Buddhists and various other non-Śaivas would have been present. Nemec observes that where Somānanda quotes many different scriptures and focuses on small internecine disputes among tantric Śaiva schools, Utpaladeva generally shies away from quoting scripture, sticking closely to a more widely shared philosophical register. More significantly, his main interlocutors are not other Śaivas, but rather non-Śaivas, particularly Buddhists, perhaps precisely because he is speaking to a wider audience that included them.\(^\text{10}\)

Even more significant than this, however, is the fact that Utpaladeva, as Abhinavagupta after him, makes extensive use of concepts that are nowhere to be found in Somānanda's work, neither in name nor spirit. In chapter two we saw that a central aspect of Abhinavagupta's theology, which comes from Utpaladeva, is the polarity of prakāśa and vimaṛśa, awareness and the reflexivity of that awareness. While all things are part of Śiva's mind, and thus of the nature of awareness, or prakāśa, only certain things partake in vimaṛśa, the pleasurable self-caress of that mind. These latter are what we call subjects, or sentient beings, and they are opposed to objects: inert, insentient beings which are not self-aware, although they are still part of awareness, since nothing exists outside of awareness. This maps on to a distinction that Abhinavagupta and Utpaladeva are quite fond of drawing, and which is also absent from Somānanda, between the I-ness [ahamظر] of Śiva and sentient subjects and the this-ness [idamظر]

\(^{10}\)Nemec, Ubiquitous Śiva, 35.
of the (seemingly) material reality of the universe.\textsuperscript{11} It is also important to point out that the self-
caress of awareness is closely connected, by Utpaladeva, and especially by Abhinavagupta, with
language, as we have seen, as the human capacity for language grows out of this primordial
ability to reflect back on oneself.

This theological concept of \textit{vimarśa} is widely known to have been borrowed from
Bhartṛhari, particularly from verses 132-133 of the first chapter of \textit{Vākyapadīya}.\textsuperscript{12} These verses
repeat the idea that consciousness only exists as a perpetual self-relationship, that it is
inseparable from and impossible without this self-relationship, and also that this relationship is
linguistic: "There is no such thing as a cognition independent of language. All knowledge
appears as if blended with language. If speech as such, the ground of all knowing, were to cease,
awareness would not shine at all, for [speech] is the one that self-reflects \textit{[pratyavamarśini]}."\textsuperscript{13}
The adoption of this idea, central as it is, is indicative of a broader attitude towards Bhartṛhari,
initiated by Utpaladeva and furthered by Abhinavagupta. Bhartṛhari's ideas get taken up in all
sorts of ways by Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta, who often refer to him with honorifics like
\textit{tatrabhavant} or \textit{vidvad}. For examples of this one need only recall from Chapter Two how central
the three levels of speech and the concept of \textit{pratibhā} were to Abhinavagupta's cosmogony,
soteriology, and literary theory. Utpaladeva's English translator, Raffaele Torella, goes as far as
to call Bhartṛhari the "main ally" in Utpaladeva's \textit{Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā}, in which the

\textsuperscript{11}Dyczkowski, \textit{Stanzas on Vibration}, 42-43. See also, Nemec, \textit{Ubiquitous Śiva}, 34.

\textsuperscript{12}See, for example, Torella, \textit{Īśvarapratyabhijñākārika}, XXIII-XXV and p. 125 n. 41; Nemec, \textit{Ubiquitous Śiva}, 33.

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{Vākyapadīya} vss. 1.132-133: na so 'sti pratayo loke yah śabdānugamād ṛte / anuviddham iva jñānaṁ sarvaṁ
śabdena bhāsate // vāgrūpatā ced utkrāmed avabodhasya śāśvaṁ / na prakāśah prakāśeta sā hi pratyavamarśinī //
Buddhists are the "main opponents," and further suggests that Bhartṛhari was enlisted in such a battle precisely because the view he presents is one that is diametrically opposed to the philosophy of the Buddhists. Where Buddhists see artificial linguistic concepts imposed onto an ineffable reality, Bhartṛhari sees language as an externalization of what is already implicit within reality. So the use of Bhartṛhari is therefore related to the fact that Utpaladeva had widened the audience of his polemic beyond Śaiva initiates, and took himself to be speaking to people who might potentially be swayed by Buddhism, or already were.

Somānanda, however, far from finding a "main ally" in Bhartṛhari, actually devoted an entire chapter of his seven-chapter Śivadrṣṭi to refuting Bhartṛhari's views, often with quite a bit of scorn. Nor, I might emphasize again, do any of the terms or concepts that Abhinavagupta and Utpaladeva draw from Bhartṛhari show up in Somānanda's theology. The polarity of prakāśa/vimarśa, or pratibhā, the three levels of speech—all of these are foreign to Somānanda. In place of all this, Somānanda has a theological system based on a different set of concepts, a set that Utpaladeva had shifted and downplayed in his own work.

Like Utpaladeva, Somānanda in Śivadrṣṭi is a monistic idealist, believing that the entire universe is nothing but Śiva's mind. But he is primarily concerned with the cycle of powers by which Śiva takes on the appearance of the universe itself and acts in its guise. These powers are,

---
15 Ibid., 519ff, and also Torella, Īśvarapratyabhijñākārika, XXV.
16 For a full translation of this attack, see Nemec, Ubiquitous Śiva, 304-349.
17 Nemec, Ubiquitous Śiva, 34, 42. On page 42, Nemec gives a more extensive list of concepts used by Utpaladeva that are not found in Somānanda. In John Nemec, "The Evidence for Somānanda's Pantheism," Journal of Indian Philosophy 4.1 (2014): 110, Nemec notes that Somānanda does "sporadically" use the terms prakāśa and vimarśa, but never in the way that Utpaladeva used them, as a set of paired opposites.
in Nemec's translation, delight [nivṛti], eagerness [aunmukhya], will [icchā], knowledge [jñāna], and action [kriyā]. Beginning from Śiva's primordial delight, the energy of his being has a sort of forward momentum that is shaped first into an incipient form of will called eagerness, and then into an actual delimited act of will, and then into directed knowledge, and finally into action.¹⁸ This sequence would seem to move increasingly further away from the ground of Śiva's being, but in the gaps between cognitions and actions the primordial delight can still be glimpsed.¹⁹ What appears to us as the universe is just Śiva's will unfolding and taking on various activities and appearances, and this idea of will and agency is much more strongly emphasized in Somānanda than in Utpaladeva or Abhinavagupta.²⁰ Where Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta see will as part of the initiation of the play of the universe, they don't see it as thoroughly pervading that universe in all its details the way Somānanda does.²¹

Furthermore, although Utpaladeva also believes in the identity of the universe with Śiva's mind, Somānanda seems to be more strict about it. Nemec has argued that while Utpaladeva is a monistic pantheist—believing that the universe is identical with Śiva but also that Śiva transcends and exists beyond the universe—Somānanda would be more properly called a panentheist—believing in the total, symmetrical identity between Śiva and the universe. When we combine this with the emphasis on Śiva's will-power and the absence of any prakāśa/vimarśa

¹⁸Nemec, Ubiquitous Śiva, 25-27.

¹⁹Śivadrṣṭi vss. 1.5 - 1.6ab: na param tad avasthāyām vyavasthaśa vyavasthitā / yāvat samagrājñānagraiñātrsparśadaśaśv api // sthitāya laksyate sā ca tad viśrāntyā tathā phale / (From here forward, unless otherwise noted, all references to Śivadrṣṭi are to Somānanda, The Śivadrṣṭi of Somānanda with the Vṛti by Utpaladeva, Madhusudan Kaul Shāstrī ed, Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies no. 54 [Srinagar: Government of Jammu and Kashmir, 1934]) The translation used above is from Nemec, Ubiquitous Śiva, 110.

²⁰Nemec, Ubiquitous Śiva, 32.

²¹Ibid., 32.
dialectic which could distinguish subjects from objects, we wind up with a theology in which every item in the universe is an active expression of Śiva's agency, to exactly the same extent. This is what Nemec calls Somānanda's theology of "radical agency." Not only the actions of sentient beings, but any action or phenomenon at all, anywhere in the universe, is necessarily an expression of conscious will-power. Thus we find Somānanda, in the fifth chapter of Śivadṛṣṭi, arguing:

[Only] a pot that knows itself to be an agent could perform its own activity. If its own agency were not known, the pot would not arise. With respect to its own activity [it thinks] "this is mine." If this were not known, it would not budge. The river-bank wants to collapse, the cow's activity is accomplished [in the same way].

The mention of a river-bank collapsing is a reference to a famous example used in both Kumārila's Tantravārttika, a famous Vedic Ritualist text, as well as in Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya, a foundational text of Sanskrit grammar. In both cases it is used as an example of figurative speech. Kumārila and Patañjali both argue that the desiderative suffix, which in Sanskrit transforms a verb's meaning from "to do x" to "to want to or desire to do x," can be used with respect to inanimate objects, but in such cases, they say, we are speaking figuratively, not literally, since these objects can't literally have will-power or desire. Patañjali says this use of the desiderative suffix can have the sense of "is about to x." Kumārila uses is as a possible

---

22 Ibid., 27.

23 Śivadṛṣṭi 5.16-17: jānan kartāram ātmānam ghaṭaḥ kuryāt svakāṃ kriyām / ajñāte svātmakartaḥve na ghaṭaḥ sampravartate // svakarmaṇī mamaitattadityajñānānānaṃ cēṣṭanam / kūlam pipatishaḥ goryavahārah prasiddhyati // The translation is mine but is based closely on Nemec's forthcoming translation, which I thank him for sharing with me.

24 See Tantravārttika ad Mīṃśāsāstra 3.1.13 and Mahābhāṣya ad Aṣṭadhyāyī 3.1.7. The examples are analyzed in more detail in John Nemec, "Realism and the Pratyabhijñā," (forthcoming); Lawrence McCrea, "The Hierarchical Organization of Language in Mīṃśāsā Interpretive Theory," Journal of Indian Philosophy 28 (2000): 436 n. 61; and Kiyotaka Yoshimizu, "The Intention of Expression (vivakṣā), the Expounding (vyākhya) of a Text, and the Authorlessness of the Veda," Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft 158 (2008): 53-58. I am grateful to John Nemec to pointing out these examples to me and sharing a copy of his forthcoming paper with me.
explanation for what we mean when we say "The Veda wants or intends to say x." But both philosophers are explicit in ruling out the literal sense of this suffix with reference to inanimate objects. Somānanda's use of this example, however, is clearly meant literally, and moreover is clearly meant as a repudiation of these two philosophers. Somānanda says this suffix is used literally with reference to the river-bank because the river-bank, like all things in the universe according to him, is possessed of agency. It literally wants to fall.

Somānanda's idea here is essentially as follows. Any time a pot holds water inside itself, this takes place only because the pot is possessed of the will to do this. Its holding of the water is itself already an expression of will and agency. The "knowing itself" that Somānanda refers to in the quote above shouldn't be understood as vimarśa. It is not a reflexivity built into awareness itself. It is just the pot's knowledge that it is a pot and needs to do the work of carrying water. The suggestive phrase "self knowledge" arises here in this verse just from the fact that knowledge [jñāna] precedes action [kriyā] in Somānanda's system, and so in order for the pot to do something it first has to know something. What it knows is what it is and what its duties are, and this is what Somānanda means when he says "the pot knows itself to be an agent." The reason the pot's agency is limited to these pot-activities and that it is incapable of performing any other activities is simply that Śiva's will is such that the pot be so limited. In fact, Śiva's process of creating the universe is one of fragmenting his will up and limiting it in various ways so that he appears as the various limited entities of the universe. When this happens, it is Śiva himself

---

25 Nemec, "Realism and the Pratyabhijñā."

26 For the difference between vimarśa and simple self-knowledge, see Chapter Two.

27 Note that this is different from the idea that Śiva creates the universe by projecting himself onto the screen [bhitti] of his Self, a common idea in Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta that is found nowhere in Śivadṛṣṭi.
who limits himself, and, as in Abhinavagupta and Utpaladeva, Somānanda says he does this purely in "play," without any purpose other than enjoyment. Somānanda's analogy for this is a king who plays at being a foot-soldier in his own army.

In contrast this theology of willpower, Utpaladeva actually explicitly insists in more than one place that insentient objects have no willpower, as we will soon see, and this is one more significant change that Utpaladeva makes to Somānanda's theology. All these significant changes—the adoption of Bhartṛhari, the use of the prakāśa/vimarśa dialectic, and the insistence that insentient objects have no will-power—have all been noticed before by modern scholars, as has the puzzling fact that Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta are silent about these changes, acting as if they never took place.

Nemec, in addition, has pointed out that the adoption of Bhartṛhari's ideas is related to other changes that Utpaladeva makes in Somānanda's system, specifically his adoption of Vaiśeṣika ontological categories [padārtha]. What I would like to do is extend these observations and point out that in Utpaladeva's philosophy, and also in Abhinavagupta's, the adoption of Bhartṛhari's ideas about vimarśa is coincidentally accompanied by the denial of agency to insentient objects. Rather, the two are closely philosophically connected. That is, denying that insentient objects have agency is part of Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta argue philosophically for the concept of vimarśa, and both of these are part of a larger project of synthesizing Śaiva philosophy with Bhartṛhari, who Somānanda had formerly considered a

---

28See Nemec, Ubiquitous Śiva, 30-31. For Śiva limiting himself by means of himself, see Śivadṛṣṭi vs. 1.1: asmadrūpasamāviṣṭah svātmanātmanāvāraṇe, translated on Nemec, Ubiquitous Śiva, 100: "...Śiva, who has penetrated my form by warding himself off by means of his own Self."

29Nemec, Ubiquitous Śiva, 26.

30Torella, "From Adversary to Main Ally."

31Nemec, "Realism and the Pratyabhijñā," 27.
philosophical enemy. The reason this particular observation is important for our purposes is that it is exactly the idea Mahima exploits in the digression that we will explore in the second half of this chapter.

The close connection between vimarśa and insentience is most clear in the theory of relations, giving in the second chapter of the Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā, and specifically in its second and fourth sections. In the second section, Utpaladeva argues that relations between entities in the universe—and by this he means all metaphysical relations, including inherence, causality, directionality, ownership, priority and posteriority, intentionality etc.—that all these relations exist only insofar as they exist within the mind of a sentient subject capable of vimarśa that can contain and link the individual entities so related, whether that subject be an individual being or Śiva himself. The example Somānanda gives is the sentence "the servant of the king," an example that is perfectly chosen in that it is a relation that is clearly mental—it is only by consensus that someone is a servant of this or that king—but which is taken as a paradigm for all relations. The point is that even relations that are seemingly extra-mental, like the relation of gravity between stone and earth, are, from the point of view of Śiva, as consensual as "the servant of the king." The reason this must be so, the reason that relations can only exist as an aspect of subjective awareness, is because insentient objects, as inert individuals, are isolated within themselves, and cannot themselves be the source of their interrelations. When Śiva divides himself up into individual objects, those individual objects are defined by their distinction from each other, and their distinction is itself a function of Śiva's subjectivity. Śiva's subjectivity, being predominant over its creations, can then unify these individuals again in various ways or relate them in different ways, but in each case it is the subjectivity that does the work of division and relation, not the objects so divided, which are only the result of this process,
not its cause. As the objective pole of the dialectic they are incapable of doing this work.

Utpaladeva tells us in verse 2.2.4, "Entities, appearing as differentiated within a single knowing subject, are self-contained. Those, linked in unity, have the form of a mutual connection. This," he goes on, "is the basis of the notion of relation." This statement is a bit obscure, but it is filled out more in the third section of his chapter. In the third section, Utpaladeva describes and explains how the unified mass of consciousness that is Śiva appears as the universe only when it splits itself up into various appearances. When it does this, however, the divisions are always relative, and provisional, linked to certain expectations or needs, and linked to other divisions that have already been made. They are not inherent in the objects so divided and delimited, and don't exist apart from the subjectivity dividing them. This, in turn, means that the divisions can always be revised, but only by the subjectivity that created the divisions to begin with.

This is quite distinct from Somānanda's vision. Somānanda, despite being a monist idealist, was actually a kind of a realist, in a way. That is, he seems to have taken appearances at face value and assumed that a pot is simply a pot and a tree is simply a tree. The concept exhausts the entity, insofar as the entity is an individual. Though they are all really God, Somānanda seemed to take it for granted that when God appears in the form of a pot, potness is all there is to that particular aspect of God's existence. Utpaladeva, however had a more complex view. He realized that how we perceive and interpret things depends on how we distinguish among appearances, and that even one single entity can be divided in different ways depending on the perspective sentient subject doing the dividing. In short, a pot is not just a pot, for him. It is only a pot from a certain perspective, and could be something else from another perspective. In the commentary to verse 2.3.5 he tells us, in Torella's translation:

What appears of a man may only be his 'being erected' if the subject is only looking for a reference point, or a shelter, or shade. 'Man' as such, however, appears to those who
regard him entirely, seeking the services that are peculiar to him. To some, [smoke] appears as merely smoke, in its general form; on the contrary, those who are familiar with it grasp its specific aspect, for example that it is the smoke from burning leaves, just as an expert is able to grasp the particular features of stones, silver, etc.\(^{32}\)

The reason appearances can fluctuate in this way depending on one's perspective is that the converse of the subject's power to divide is his power to unify, unification being an extremely close kind of relation which is also a function of *vimarśa* because it requires the ability to hold multiple phenomena together simultaneously as a single object. It is both our power of division and our power of cognitive unification [*anusaṃdāna*] together that yield the coherent objects of our universe. The different phenomenological appearances of red clay, weight, roundness etc., which exist because of being differentiated from their background and surroundings, are unified with each other by awareness into a "pot" the same way a collection of trees might be unified into a grove, and the same way that that grove might then be split up and taken as individual trees if we so chose. All this is the power of *vimarśa*. It exists to some extent for us, in that we are able to shape and rearrange and reinterpret our experience, and it exists absolutely for Śiva, for whom the entire universe is subject to this creative rearrangement. And the point is that all exists only within subjectivity, not in objectivity.\(^{33}\)

All this might be easier to see in the simple example of the Necker cube:

---

\(^{32}\)Īśvarapratyabhijñākārika, 49 (commentary on vs. 2.3.5): *cihnayavadhānachāyāmātrārthitāyāṃ puruṣa evordhvatāmātraṃ pratibhāti, tatkārārthitāyāṃ tu nayaksenaṃsamānaṇasya puruṣāh. dhūmamātraṃ eva kasya cid ābhāṣate, tadvidas tu tārṇatādi maṅirūpyadiviśeṣa iva*. The translation is from Torella, ibid., 164-164.

\(^{33}\)See for example vs. 2.3.7: *prthagdīpaprapāṣānāṃ srotasāṃ sāgare yathā / aviruddhāvabhāṣānāṃ ekakāryā tathāiḥ kātyadhit. "Just like currents in the ocean or the light of different lamps, the cognition of unity is a single effect belonging to compatible appearances."
With images like this it is possible to push or pull the points with our eyes so that (a) is in front and (b) behind, and then to reverse it, so that (b) is in front and (a) behind. In both these cases the spatial relationship between (a) and (b)—which one is on which side of the other—clearly resides within our own cognitive apprehension of the image. Notice that this is separate from our own spatial relationship to the image. This is where the X comes in. Which point is closer or further to us depends on where we are standing, but the relevant aspect of the example is that even the relationships *within* the diagram depend on our subjectivity, so that by pushing or pulling we can make either point "a" or point "b" contiguous with the side of the cube labeled "x," even if "x" remains on the far wall from us. This is quite distinct from the question of which of the points is closer to us. The relevant aspect of the example, in other words, is that even the points' relationship to each other depends on how we cognitively arrange the image, and that the points themselves cannot determine the relation on their own independently of an observing subjectivity.

Now imagine that this Necker cube has been envisioned entirely within your own consciousness and is composed entirely of your awareness, without any actual two-dimensional piece of paper on which it is drawn. Imagine furthermore that your "imagination" of this object is indistinguishable from any other facet of your experience, and imagine in fact that nothing exists
outside of your own awareness. This is the universe Utpaladeva is describing. His argument about relations is essentially that all facets of the phenomenal universe are like the points on this cube; for Śiva entirely so, and to some degree for us as well.

In the fourth section of the second chapter of Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā, Utpaladeva extends this argument explicitly to causal relations between insentient objects. Objects can't have a causal relationship to each other on their own because, again, they are self-contained and have no intentionality. Creation, even the creation of a relation, requires agency, and agency is just what insentient objects are lacking. So insentient objects, like fire, are seen to produce smoke only because they exist within the awareness of a subject who does have intentionality, who can unify them with a single causal relation, and who understands them to be in causal relation. In the case of fire, this agent must be Śiva, since as limited individuals we are incapable of changing the causal relationship between smoke and fire simply by changing our perspective, the way we are with the Necker cube. Utpaladeva tells in 2.4.2: "But the power by which an unreal thing becomes real is not possessed by an insentient entity [i.e., insentient entities like fire cannot "produce" smoke on their own]. Therefore, the cause and effect relation is essentially an agent and patient [relation]." The agent, needless to say, is not the fire, but Śiva. He is the one who causes things to take on outward appearance, meaning that he causes them to be distinguished out of the blended unity of pure awareness. And it is his subjectivity in which the causal relation between objects has its existence, because his subjectivity, with its power of cognitive unification born of its vimarśa, is what holds the objects together. Utpaladeva tells us this in the commentary on verse 2.4.8, where he explains:

34 jādasya tu na sā śaktiḥ sattā yad asataḥ sataḥ / kartr̥karmavatattvaiva kāryakāraṇatā tataḥ //
Production is just the attainment of external appearance [i.e., all things already exist as potentials within Śiva's mind, and their "production" is only their moving from internal potential to external appearance]. Only something whose form is consciousness can be an instrument. Therefore, in the case of sprouts [coming from seeds] and so forth, the Lord is posited as the efficient cause, and seeds and so forth, which are insentient, devoid of the power of [cognitive] unification, cannot be the cause.

And again, at 2.4.13, he repeats the point: "The cause-effect relationship, [which is defined as] "when that exists, this arises," is not possible for insentient things devoid of intentionality [apekṣā]. And he completes the idea in 2.4.16ab: "For this very reason, the meaning of the case endings [which express relation] has its basis in the knowing subject."

So in the case of a man and his servant, it is individual beings who make the divisions and contain the relation between the two people. In the case of the causal relation between smoke and fire it is Śiva. But in either case it is only within the vimarśa of a sentient subject that relations between objects exist. It is only within vimarśa that the objects have been distinguished and unified to begin with. This implies, furthermore, as in the analogy, that the subject is actually outside of and apart from the "objects" he observes, at least phenomenologically, and this is distinct from Somānanda's vision, in which Śiva, in the analogy, would himself be the cube entirely, there being no outside vantage point, no subjectivity apart from objects that he could inhabit. The points themselves would distinguish and relate themselves—Nemec's pantheism again.

---

35 On this see Chapter Two.

36 bāhyābhāsatāpādanam utpādanam iti cidrūpasyaiva kāraṇatā tato 'nikurādaunimittakāraṇatvēśvarah kaiś cid iṣṭo, na cāpi bijāder jādasya kāraṇatā nirmanusamādhānasya yuktā.

37 asmin satīdam astīti kāryakāraṇatāpī yā / sāpy apekṣāvihīnānāṃ jādānāṃ nopapadyate //

38 ata eva vibhaktyarthāḥ pramārekasamāśrayah /
Somānanda's position on all this, it should be clear, is not just that individual objects have their own agency and intentionality, but that this is precisely what accounts for their relations with each other, causal relations included. Production is an intentional act on the part of insentient objects. This even extends to perception. When we become aware of a pot, Somānanda says, this is a pot *producing* awareness in us, and the pot could not produce this if it were insentient: "[A pot] produces awareness, which is light. How could it be the agent of this production if it were insentient? Consciousness, which is essentially sentience, is not made manifest by something that is insentient." He goes on to make it clear that he does not mean this rhetorically, and that a pot actually, literally has agency, and indeed the rest of the chapter is devoted to the idea that different forms of knowledge, such as perception and inference, would not be possible without the agency of objects that produces the proper relations.

Now, granted, this is not entirely incompatible with Utpaladeva's position. The reason insentient things have agency, for Somānanda, is because they are all part of the same conscious reality: Śiva's mind. When we say they have agency, it is really Śiva's agency we are talking about; it's just that Śiva has chosen, playfully, to appear in the form of limited objects like pots. And similarly, for Utpaladeva, it is Śiva who is responsible for the relations between things, and who upholds them.

However, even though one might imagine how Utpaladeva could retroactively reconcile his views with Somānanda's, it is clear that he has changed them, and changed them in a

---

39 Śivadṛṣṭi 5.13: prakāśajñānajanānajānajān hy cartā jade katham / jādēna vyajyate nāpi caitanyam ajadātmakam // [My translation is based here on reading janaḥ as a genitive form of the root jan.]

40 This is also the reason that their agency can be directed towards each other. Much of the fifth chapter of Śivadṛṣṭi is given to arguing philosophically that objects (even if they have agency) can't interact with each other or affect each other at all unless they are part of the same conscious unity. Even if a pot did have agency it would be unable to interact with the water it carries, according to Somānanda, unless the water and the pot were both mental.
significant way. For the difference is not simply about whether insentient objects have willpower, but about what is or isn't required to explain our universe. When Utpaladeva takes willpower away from objects, this is part of a transcendental argument about the need to posit vimarśa. That is, for Utpaladeva certain aspects of the universe and of our experience (e.g. relations between insentient objects), cannot be explained unless we hold that there is some sort of divine and primordial subject possessed of reflexive awareness and the power of unification, for this is the only way that intentionality, and thus relations, could enter into an otherwise static world full of "self-contained" objects. In order to argue this, however, he needs to eliminate other possible explanations for this, and Somānanda's view that insentient objects have their own agency is one such explanation. For Somānanda, relations between insentient objects are easily explained, because his theology holds that there are no insentient objects, only forms of Śiva's will that are limited to various degrees. The difference, as Nemec points out, comes down Somānanda's pantheism and Utpaladeva's panentheism. For Somānanda, the universe and Śiva are entirely the same thing. For Utpaladeva, the universe is an external manifestation of Śiva, but Śiva retains a subjective internality that is not exhausted by the universe itself, and which transcends it. Vimarśa, the defining feature of this internality, allows us to distinguish between subjects, who participate in this divine subjectivity, and external objects, which occupy the other pole of the dialectic. Hence the theory of vimarśa is inextricably tied to the denial of agency to insentient objects.⁴¹

⁴¹Nemec, Ubiquitous Śiva, 31-34. Much of what has been summarized in this chapter has already been pointed out by Nemec in these pages. However, what Nemec leaves out, and what I take myself to have added to the discussion, is the degree to which the adoption of vimarśa is related to the denial of the agency to objects. Nemec sees the the denial of agency as just a consequence of Utpaladeva's (Bhartṛhari) division of the universe into internal and external, which contrasts with Somānanda's "radical notion of singularity" (p. 34). Dividing the universe in this way leaves Utpaladeva with no intelligible way to attribute willpower to objects except insofar as they exist for Śiva. So the will of objects becomes a kind of philosophical casualty of Utpaladeva's desire to incorporate certain notions from Bhartṛhari. This fails to explain, however, Utpaladeva's (and Abhinavagupta's) repeated and emphatic insistence that objects do not have willpower, and therefore cannot be part of the explanation for certain aspects of
Abhinavagupta, whatever other differences he may have with Utpaladeva, follows Utpaladeva in these changes, repeating, in both his commentaries on Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā, that insentient objects have no willpower of their own. The idea comes up multiple times and there is no ambiguity about it. For just one example, we can look at Abhinavagupta's introduction to the first chapter, where he explains the outline of the chapter point by point:

"Having [first] summed up his position with one verse, the next three verses demonstrate that insentient objects have no instrumentality, and the six after that show that only sentient things have that [instrumentality], and that, for them, it is essentially agency." Summing up the ideas at the end of the chapter, he follows Utpaladeva in explaining that objects have no agency because they have no independence [svātantrya], and that we attribute agency to them only metaphorically [upacāra]. These are just two examples out of many, and the idea is not limited only to the commentaries on the Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā.

More importantly for our purposes, however, is the fact that Abhinavagupta explicitly connects this idea to literary theory in at least two places in his corpus. The first instance occurs in his commentary on Dhvanyāloka, in his comments on verse 1.4. Here, he is dealing with an objector to the theory of manifestation who claims that what he is describing as manifestation can be found even in examples of cheap or dead metaphors, and so, if we accept the theory of manifestation, there would be the unwanted consequence that we would have to treat all this as our experience. The reason they are so insistent is that the connection between vimarśa and the will of objects runs deeper than it might seem at first. The addition of vimarśa and the denial of agency to objects are two sides of the same philosophical coin, and, because Utpaladeva is making transcendental arguments, these two positions mutually require each other. This is important to see because once we see it, it will make Mahima's digression, discussed later in the chapter, seem as poignant as it must have seemed to educated readers in that century.

---

42 Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivrtivimārśinī, 284: tatra... svamate ślokena upaksipya trayena jaḍasya kāraṇatā nirākriyate, śaṭkena cetanasyaiva sā kartṛtāmeti prasādhyate.

43 Ibid., 252.
poetry in the full sense. The passage is a bit tricky, but Ingalls, Masson, and Patwardhan's translation is as follows:

To [this] we answer, no; one might as readily say that a clay pot is alive, because, as the soul is omnipresent, it must be in the pot as well. Should you try to reply to this answer by saying that it is only when the soul is present in a body that serves as basis for particular [sense entities and the like], and not when the soul is present in any other sort of locus, that we speak of life, very well, we will employ the title "poetry" only when [poetic manifestation] is embodied in a composition containing [poetic qualities], figures of speech, propriety, and beautiful words and meanings. But in neither case does the soul [or poetic manifestation], lose its precious nature.\footnote{Masson, Ingalls, and Patwardhan, Dhvanyāloka, 86. The original is Dhvanyāloka, 58: nanv evaṃ 'simha vātuḥ' ity atrāpi kāyjarūpataḥ syāt; dhvananālakṣaṇasyātmano 'tṛāpi samanantaram vaksyamāṇatayaḥ bhāvāt. nanu ghaṭe 'pi jīvavyavahārah syāt; ātmano vibhūtvena tatrāpi bhāvāt; śaṅkara ṛṣya khalu viśīśṭādhiśīthiḥnayuktasya satyātmano jīvavyavahārah; na yasya kasya cid iti cet—gunālākāraucaītyasundaraśudārthasaṅkara ṛṣya sati dhvananākhyātmano kāvyaarūpataḥvyavahāraḥ. na cātmano 'śāraṭā kā cid iti ca samāṇam. I strongly suspect that the second "nanu," in the second line, is actually a typo for "na tu." "Nanu" is the reading found in the printed edition, and it is clearly the reading that Masson, Ingalls, and Patwardhan have tried to make sense of, and I don't feel comfortable emending the text in the absence of any manuscript evidence, which I haven't been able to obtain. But to have "nanu" twice in a row like this seems highly unlikely, and not very intelligible. The difference doesn't affect the point I am making here, it only affects our understanding of who the objector is, but I feel it worth pointing out. If I am correct about the typo, this would make the entire passage up to "ced" one long objection. The objection would then involve the assertion that although the soul is omnipresent, not everything is "alive," which would probably make this objector a Naiyāyika. Abhinavagupta's response, however, would still be to accept this premise and work with it, rather than challenge the idea, effectively asserting as well that not everything is sentient.}

The analogy used here, we can now see, is a heavily loaded analogy. Somānanda's response, had he been involved in literary theory, would probably have been to challenge the interlocutor's assumption and argue that everything is alive. Abhinavagupta, however, doesn't do this, for reasons we can now understand. Abhinavagupta and Utpaladeva, like Somānanda, do think that Śiva is omnipresent, and that everything is part of his awareness. But unlike Somānanda, Abhinavagupta and Utpaladeva think there is an important distinction between sentient beings and insentient beings, and Abhinavagupta uses this distinction here as the basis for drawing a distinction between poetry proper and cheap metaphors that simply contain some degree of poetic manifestation.
The second example is even more intimately connected to literary theory, and to the particular issue that Mahima will discuss. It comes in Abhinavagupta's commentary on the very same section of the Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā we have been looking at: the fourth section of the second chapter. Here, Abhinavagupta has an objector respond to the arguments that insentient things are devoid of willpower by making a reference to the famous first line of Kālidāsa's poem Kumārasambhava, about Mt. Himālaya. "But," says the objector, "we do find that insentient things have agency. For example, [Kālidāsa's verse] 'There is, in the north, a divine king of mountains, named Himālaya.'" The implication here is that Kālidāsa writes of the mountain as a person, and this shows that insentient beings like mountains actually do have agency.

Abhinavagupta's response is brief and to the point. "No, this is not the case," he says, and then he repeats the idea that insentient things have no agency and that only "knowers" [pramātā] have agency. He then adds, in an interesting little note: "This is exactly what the poet has in mind when he specifies that the mountain is 'divine'.' This particular mountain is not just an ordinary lump of rock, but a divine being. The poet, he says, takes care to mention this precisely because it is the only way to explain why the mountain would be treated in the poem as an agent and not just an insentient object like a pot.45

45Īśvarapratyabhijñāvivṛtivimarśinī, 248: nanu drṣṭam jaḍasya kartṛtvam 'astyuttarasayāṃ diśi devatāmā himālayo nāma nagādhirājāh'. naitadity āha 'jaḍasya' iti akartṛtvam iti sambandhaḥ. 'tam' iti jaḍam. 'sa' iti pramātā. etad abhimatam eva sārasvataṣya devatāmeti veśeṣayataḥ. The small quoted words here are lemmae from Utpaladeva's lost vivṛti commentary, on which Abhinavagupta is commenting. The quote from Kumārasambhava is certainly occasioned by Utpaladeva's reference to Mt. Himācala, another name for Mt. Himālaya, which we find even in his shorter vivṛti commentary. However, there, Utpaladeva simply says tena pramātāiva tam bhāvyati tena vā himācalādīnā rupeṇa sa bhavati. . . "Therefore, the knower makes those appear, or it appears in the form of Mt. Himācala, etc." This wording is very close to what Abhinavagupta is quoting in his Vivṛtivimarśinī. It is also perhaps a nod to Somānanda, since it allows for an alternative explanation whereby Śiva himself actually appears as the universe. But it doesn't seem there is any reference to Kumārasambhava; this seems to be Abhinavagupta's own addition. It is interesting that Abhinavagupta deliberately chose to relate this issue to poetry even though it was not necessary, although for the purposes of my argument here it doesn't matter much if he is only following Utpaladeva in this respect. The point here is really just that the philosophy of insentient objects and their apparent willpower was explicitly connected, either by Abhinavagupta himself or by Utpaladeva before him, to poetic usage.
These arguments about insentient and sentient objects in poetry are part of a larger shift in the theology of Śaivism taking place during these centuries. The issue of whether insentient objects have willpower is philosophically inseparable from the theory of vimarśa, and both of them are thus closely connected to the adoption of Bhartṛhari, in whose work this particular idea of vimarśa originates. The adoption of Bhartṛhari as a philosophical forbearer is itself a sharp change from Somānanda, who derided Bhartṛhari extensively, and it could even be considered one of the central changes, with respect to which many of the other changes can be understood.

Such a radical change in a tradition in so brief a time, in a place as intellectually conservative as medieval Kaśmīr, is surprising. What is even more surprising, as Raffaele Torella points out, is that this change was passed over almost entirely in silence. No explanation was given for the change, and in fact the change itself was barely acknowledged. The explanation that Torella comes up with, which we have already noted and which seems plausible, is that Bhartṛhari was embraced because the audience had shifted. Whereas Somānanda took himself to be speaking to a circle of Śaiva initiates, Utpaladeva was talking to a much wider audience, in which Buddhists and Buddhist ideas were popular. Bhartṛhari is embraced then probably because he represents an alternative communicative model to Buddhism.

It should be no surprise then to find Mahima, who was after all a vociferous critic of Abhinavagupta's aesthetics, pressing exactly on the adoption of a major Bhartṛharian idea by Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta. What is a bit more surprising is that to do this he leans, as we

---

46 Torella, "From Adversary to Main Ally," 513-515. Nemec, however, finds evidence that Utpaladeva does, indirectly, attempt to reconcile his views with those of Somānanda's in his commentary on Śivadṛṣṭi. See Nemec, Ubiquitous Śiva, 38.

47 Torella, Īśvarapratyabhijñākārika, 125 n. 41, where he notes the inverse relationship of Bhartṛhari and Dharmakīrti's models; see also Nemec, Ubiquitous Śiva, 13-14. We should not rule out, however, the possibility that Bhartṛhari was embraced precisely because of the theologico-aesthetic theories that he enabled.
will see, on ideas that seem to come specifically from the pre-Bhartṛharian Śaiva theology of Somānanda, and not from the Buddhist philosophy on which he bases the rest of his literary theory, and which he seems to find compatible with Somānanda's ideas. This offers some tantalizing, though vague, hints about what his own theology may have looked like. At the very least, I believe it hints at the possible existence of schools of non-dual Śaivism in Kaśmīr in these centuries that accepted Somānanda's teachings but did not accept Utpaladeva's adoption of Bhartṛhari as a philosophical ally. To see this, however, we need to turn to the digression in Mahima's text where he raises these issues.

Poetic Usage and The Will of Objects: Mahima's Case

The first chapter—the first "vimarṣa"—of Mahima Vyaktiviveka is, as we have already seen, devoted to philosophically refuting the theory of manifestation and replacing it with an inferential theory of aesthetic awareness. But towards the beginning there is a curious—and curiously long—digression from this topic. The digression lasts for thirteen pages of text in the printed edition\(^48\) and is occasioned by Mahima's inquiry into the nature of nouns, which is itself part of an inquiry into the typology of words. Words, Mahima tells us, are of five sorts: nouns, verbs, prefixes, indeclinables, and prepositions. "Among those," he continues, "nouns have existence as their predominant thing." This means that nouns refer to things that already exist. The types of things that exist include universals, qualities, actions, or substances. The differences between all these are unimportant here.\(^49\) Verbs, on the other hand, refer to things that will exist

\(^48\) Vyaktiviveka, 30-43.

\(^49\) Vyaktiviveka, 29-30: dividho hi śabdah padavākyabhedāt. tatra padam anekapraṇāram ākhyaṭopasarganīpatakarmapracanīya bhedāt. tatra sattvapradhānāni nāmaṇi. tāny api bahupraṇārāṇi sambhavati. jātigunakriyādravyāṇāṁ tatpravṛttinimittāṁ bahutvāt.
or are coming into existence, and so they are based around action, rather than existence. So far, all this is standard Sanskrit grammatical theory.

Next, however, comes something odd. Mahima suddenly gives an alternative theory of nouns: "Some, however, accept that action alone is the usage-basis for all words, and so all nouns are actually action words." What Mahima means by "usage-basis" here is that element of an object that justifies the use of the word to refer to it. Someone might argue that we call a particular animal a "cow" because a particular universal, cow-ness, inheres in it; anything in which cow-ness inheres is properly called a "cow," and anything else is not. Cow-ness would then be the "usage-basis" for the word "cow." What Mahima is saying here is that any time we use a noun, the reason we use it is not because of a universal or a quality that inheres in the object we are referring to, but because that object is performing some sort of action. He explains what this means with reference to the word "pot." The reason we call something a pot, he says, is because it "performs the activity of potting." To be a pot, in other words, is not a static state but an active one. It is to carry out the activity of existing as a pot. This activity is not, Mahima tells us, a universal; or at least, it is not what is usually meant by a universal, not the standard idea of a

50 The fact that Mahima prefaces this section with the phrase "some" is a bit strange. This is a word often used by Sanskrit writers to mark opinions that are not their own, either to list alternative opinions or to mark an opposing opinion. This leaves it a bit ambiguous therefore, exactly how closely Mahima wanted to be associated with this position. However, the length of this digression, combined with the fact that Mahimabhatta seems to take it so seriously and apply it to real exegetical problems, plus the fact that he nowhere marks the end of this "hypothetical" opinion and a return to the "real" opinion, leads me to conclude that this is not simply a hypothetical theory he is proposing, and that something else is going on here. My best guess is that Mahima wanted his literary theory to be based on Buddhism, since he wanted to include literature at a lower order of reality than religious experience, as I discussed in the last chapter, and that he is therefore a bit shy or hesitant about tying part of it so directly to Śaivism, but that he cannot entirely resist. This means that he is being slightly sarcastic or facetious here, something like: "However, if we were to accept this position, which contradicts Abhinavagupta, it would solve a lot of problems. . ." Another possibility is to take the verb that construes with "some" more strongly. The verb in Sanskrit is upagam, a verb that can mean that some people hold this position, or could, more strongly, mean that some people accept or admit this position, in other words admit that this is really the case. In any event, whether Mahima fully agrees with this theory or not, it is clearly intended as an attack on Abhinavagupta, and were it to be proven that Mahima himself did not accept this theory the only part of my argument that would really be affected is the final section, where I speculate on what kind of Śaiva Mahima might have been. But then, that section is speculative anyway.
universal from the Nyāya school of philosophy. Even if these kinds of universals existed, says Mahima (and his skepticism is clear), they would be inactive, or inert, and wouldn't be involved with the activities that a pot carries out—carrying water, for example. So if it is universals that we refer to with nouns like "pot," Mahima says, we could call anything a pot, even a piece of cloth, since the cloth and the universal potness are equally unrelated to the activity of the pot. On the other hand, we only call someone a "cook" when they are cooking. Similarly, Mahima says, we only call something a pot when it is "potting." As strange as it sounds, this is the theory Mahima puts forward.51

As far as I'm aware, no other Sanskrit philosopher ever held this odd theory. However, there was a very common theory that was similar to it, which was the basis for Sanskrit discussions of etymology, or nirukta.52 Sanskrit etymologists are sometimes grouped into a school basing itself on an eponymous text called Nirukta, by Yāska, but the practice of etymology was widespread and found across traditions, Vedic and non-Vedic. The general premise of these practices is that all nouns are ultimately derived from verbs—the verbal root is prioritized semantically—and that by discovering what verb a noun is derived from and how, we can learn something about what it means. An equivalent in English might be something like: the noun "building" is derived from the verb "to build," and it is called a building because it is *something that it has been built*; a "fly" is called so because it comes from the root "to fly" and it

---

51 Ibid., 30: kecid punar eṣaṁ kriyāvaikā pravṛttinimmattam iti kriyāśabdatvameva sarveṣām nāmapadānām upagacchanti. tathā hi—ghaṭādiśabdaḥ svarthe pravartamānā ghaṭanādikriyām evānvyavatirekābhyām pravṛttinimmattabhāvenāvalambamānā drṣṭaye. na ghaṭatvadīsaṁmānām. sā ca iṣā ghaṭanādikriyā ghaṭatvasāṁyayogādanyathā vāstu. naītāvātā tasyāḥ pravṛttinimmattavyāgyāḥ. na ca satyapi ghaṭatvasāṁyane svayam aghaṭan ghaṭāmatām anāpadyamānā evāsau ghaṭavapadeśāviṣayo bhavītum arhati. evam hi paṭo 'pi ghaṭavapadeśāviṣayaḥ syāt. ghaṭanākriyākartrtvābhāvāvīvesāt. na hi śuklatvam anāpadyamānā evārthaḥ śukla iti vyapadeśatvāṃ śakye, apacann eva pācaka iti. tasmād ghaṭanākriyākartrtvālaksanam eva ghaṭatvam ghaṭaśabdasya pravṛttau nimitto avaseyam. na ghaṭatvamāttram. tadeva cahe ghaṭanamāniyuktam.

is a small insect *that flies*. Though it may seem artificial, it was commonly thought in South Asia that all Sanskrit nouns are verbally derivable in this way.

Mahima is careful, however, to distinguish what he is trying to say from this practice. This is definitely not what he is talking about. He even allows an etymologist to object to his theory, calling it a useless and mistaken modification of an idea that etymologists have already had:

We [etymologists] already accept that *ghaṭa*'-ing is the usage-basis for the noun 'pot' [*ghaṭa*]. This is because [the root *ghat*] has the meaning of "effortful activity," in the sense of 'exerts effort' [*ghaṭate*], and the noun 'pot' is formed by adding the suffix -a to the verb [i.e., *ghaṭ + a = ghaṭa*, pot.]. So this new theory is pointless.

The etymologist agrees that all nouns encode verbs, but he claims this is already well-worn territory, and that etymologists who study it have come to different conclusions about words like "pot" than Mahima has. A pot isn't called a pot because it performs the activity of "potting." There isn't even any known verb in Sanskrit for "potting." It is called a pot because it comes from another verb entirely, the verb for exerting effort. What the relationship is between pots and effort is unclear—perhaps it is because pots are lifted effortfully—but in any event the etymologist is confusing his own practice with what Mahima is trying to do.

Mahima clarifies his point immediately after this. What the etymologists are describing, he says, is the derivational basis of a word [*vyutpattinimittam*], that is, what verb root the word comes from. But they are not describing the usage-basis [*pravṛttinimittam*], that is, those features on the basis of which we apply a noun. These are two different things, says Mahima, and his point should be familiar to English speakers, for whom etymologies are usually interesting but semantically useless. When English speakers try to buy pants they don't need something whose

---

Vyaktiviveka, 33: *nanu ceṣṭādyarthāḥ ghaṭatva[yāder dhātor ajādau ghaṭata ityādyarthe ghaṭanādiṣākriyaiva sarveṣāṃ ghaṭādiṣābadānāṃ pravṛttinimittabhāvenāṃśāhhi rapiṣyata eveti vyarthāh paksāntaropanyāsah.*
name is derived from "pantaloons," an older item of clothing which is so named because of a stock character in medieval Italian comedies named Pantaleone who always wore tights, so named because his name was a common male name in Venice, whose patron saint was San Pantaleone, a Christian martyr, whose name in Greek originally meant either All-Compassionate or All-Lion (etymologists disagree).\textsuperscript{54} This might be where the word "pants" comes from historically, but it doesn't describe what an English speaker is looking for when they want to buy them, nor does it describe anything they need to know to talk about and recognize them. The English speaker only needs a garment that fulfills a specific purpose—covering both legs all the way down and cinching at the waist—and they only use the word "pants" to refer to this garment.

Mahima, for his part, makes a similar point by borrowing an argument from the Buddhist philosopher Dharmottara.\textsuperscript{55} Etymologists say that the word "cow" [in Sanskrit, \textit{ga}], comes from the word "going" [the verb is \textit{gama}]. But this can't be the usage-basis for the word "cow," simply because cows aren't always moving—they are correctly called cows even when standing still. If you confuse the etymology with the usage-basis here, you can't explain how the noun really works.\textsuperscript{56} Instead of etymology then, Mahima insists that the usage-basis for a noun is the activity of accomplishing the existence of that noun.


\textsuperscript{55} The argument, which also involves the same etymology of the word "cow," comes from \textit{Nyāyabinduṭīkā}, 39, where Dharmottara is explaining that even though the Sanskrit word for "perception" is derived from the word for sense-organs, the dependance on sense-organs is not the \textit{usage-basis} for the word perception, which is why it can be used even for mental perception, which Buddhists hold is a type of perception (it allows one to know one's own feelings) even though it doesn't take place through any of the five-sense. I thank Larry McCrea for bringing this passage to my attention.

\textsuperscript{56} \textit{Vyaktiviveka}, 33: \textit{satyamisyate eva bhavadbhiḥ. kintu sā śabdasya vyuttattinimittam, na pravṛttinimittam. anyaddhi vyuttattinimittam, anyacca pravṛttinimittam . yathāikeśām mate gamanādikriyā gavādiśabdānām vyuttattinimittam, ekārthasamavāyāt gotvādi pravṛttinimitti karoti. ata eva gacchatyagacchati ca gavi gosābdaḥ siddho bhavati.}
Mahima next makes clear that this is not merely a theoretical point. The idea that nouns refer to actions can be used, he shows, to solve a vexed problem in Sanskrit literary criticism. The problem, essentially, is that famous and revered poets in the Sanskrit tradition sometimes broke small rules of Sanskrit grammar. Most likely they did this either because they were not rigidly concerned with grammatical rules, or else because they were using grammatical systems that were not exactly the same as the one that came to be the accepted standard: Pāṇini’s Aṣṭādhyāyī. Whatever the case, this was perplexing to later commentators, who believed both that Pāṇini’s Aṣṭādhyāyī was a semi-divine and incontrovertible grammatical text, and that the great poets of the Sanskrit tradition would never transgress it or make mistakes. So scholastic commentators spent a fair amount of time and ingenuity interpreting away minor solecisms. Though these interpretations might seem arcane or even trivial to us, the fact is that we can't afford to overlook arcana when trying to understand the intellectual history of South Asia, for it is often precisely in arcana that important issues get played out.

In this particular case, the solecism in question concerns the use of the gerund, which signifies "having done x" when applied to the verb X.\(^{57}\) In other words, "x-gerund, he does y" means "having done x, he does y," and this signifies a relationship between two verbal actions, one of them being prior to the other; having shaved, the man put on clothes and started his car. Pāṇini further specifies that when you use the gerund, the agent of the two verbs must be the same all the way through.\(^ {58}\) In other words, it is incorrect to say, "Having bathed, the car won't start," if what we are talking about is a man bathing and then a car starting.

---

\(^{57}\) By "gerund" I am referring to what Sanskrit grammarians call the \textit{kīvānta} and \textit{lyabanta}.

\(^{58}\) \textit{Aṣṭādhyāyī} 3.4.21: \textit{samānakartṛkayoh pūrvakāle}.
This rule, however, that a gerund signifies a relationship between two verbs that must have the same agent, causes some theoretical problems. The first concerns the temporal relationship of two verbs, for there are many Sanskrit sentences of the following form: "Having baked [i.e. hardened] in the oven, [there is] a [clay] pot." In this case the Sanskrit verb "exists" is actually elided due to ordinary Sanskrit conventions, and is only implied. So the sentence literally reads, "Having baked, a pot." The theoretical problem confronting grammarians is to find the two verbs in this sentence that have the required temporal relationship of priority and posteriority. The first verb is clearly baking. So we might assume that the second verb, the temporally later verb, is the implied verb "to be," which signifies the activity of existing. In other words, we might think that if we say "having baked, a pot," what we mean is, "after having baked in the oven, a pot exists," and that the verb "to bake" is being set in temporal priority to the verb "to exist." This would be a simple solution to the problem. It is, however, impossible, according to Mahima. Firstly, he tells us, nothing can have a temporal relationship to its own existence. Existence is necessarily taking place before, during, and after the baking, or the sentence would make no sense. We can't interpret the sentence to mean "first the pot bakes, and then it exists." On the other hand, if we try to solve this problem by positing that the pot is only the agent of the second activity, the activity of existence and not the earlier activity of baking, which takes place before the pot even comes into being, then we run into another problem. This second problem is that Pāṇini's rule stipulates that when a gerund is used the agent must be the same for both verbs in the sentence. It is a little difficult to follow what Mahima is saying here; he is quite terse. But I think the most plausible explanation is the following: If we mistakenly think of "existence" as the second verb, then the agent of this existence has to be the pot. The pot is doing the existing. But if this is so then we have to interpret the sentence to mean something
like, "a lump of clay, having baked, a pot exists." This is a contravention of grammatical rules, and it is nonsensical to boot.

But, says Mahima, all these problems can be solved if we accept his strange thesis about verbs and understand that the noun "pot" actually conceals a verbal activity—performing the activities of a pot. In this case the second verb in the sentence would be the noun "pot" itself, and the sentence would be just like an example with a more obviously verbal noun like "a cook."

When we say, "When he places something on the fire, he is a cook," we don't mean that first he places something on the fire and then a cook exists. We mean he places something on the fire and then he therefore is performing the activity of cooking. If we take this back to the pot example and assume, like Mahima does, that "pot" means "the activity of potting," we can then paraphrase the sentence as "[Some thing] first bakes, and then it performs the activity of being a pot." The first verb is baking and the second verb is potting. We have the same agent all the way through, and no temporal impossibilities. This, says Mahima, has to be the meaning of the sentence. For our current purposes, we need not be convinced of the philosophical soundness of this position—there is a great deal of further dialectic and clarification possible, and if we wanted to decide whether this was really how gerunds worked, we would need to go through it all. But this is not necessary here. It is enough to understand that Mahima argued this, and that it was important to him to do so.

The reason we run into all the earlier problems, Mahima says, is that in this sentence the verbal action of being a pot is hidden inside of a noun, and so we don't realize that the agent of all the activities is not a pot performing the activity of existing, but rather something else.

59 Vyaktivėka, 33-34: tadapeṣam eva ca vipacya ghaśo bhavaity ādau vipākādikriyāyāḥ pauṇvakālyām kvāpratayasya viśayo veditavyaḥ, yathādhiśritya pācako bhavaity ādau pākādyapeṣam adhiśrayanader na bhavanakriyapeṣam. sā hi nāvasyaṃ prayuṣyate, pratīyate tu padārthānāṃ sattā 'vyābhicārāt, na tu tāvatā tadapeṣam tad iti mantavyaṃ, tasyā bahiraṅgatvād arthasyaṅgatipraṇaṅgāc ca.
performing the *activity* of a being a pot. But the verbality of the noun pot, and the implication that there is another, separate agent, is right there in the noun, according to Mahima. It is signified by a suffix (-a) on the end of the verb *ghaṭ* in the Sanskrit word for pot, *ghaṭa*.

According to Mahima this suffix signifies that the word doesn't mean "the pot" but something more like "the agent of the activity of potting." As far as I know Mahima is the only one to take this strange interpretation of the suffix -a (called *ac* by Pāṇini), but his argument is supported by the analogy he has already given to the cook and the fire. When we say, "Having placed something on the fire, he is a cook," it is quite clear that the noun "cook" here signifies a *person who performs cooking*. Mahima's innovation is just to widen this out and say that because *all* nouns signify activities, they all indirectly imply some agent performing the activity. So the full sentence can now be understood as "there is a thing that bakes in an oven and then, subsequently, once it has baked, it performs the activity of being a pot." We are only fooled into thinking this is not the case because the agent who performs the potting is not signified directly by a verb, but indirectly by a suffix referring to an activity *that requires an agent*. This might seem strange to us, but Mahima points out that this use of a suffix to signify an agent actually *already* takes place in the sentence: with the gerund itself. The gerund also uses a suffix to signify that some *thing* is performing some *activity*. It works even in English. "Having baked," we say, (in the intransitive sense of "to bake") and what we mean by adding the -ed to the verb is that there is some *thing* that has performed the activity of baking. It is the same with the word pot, which uses a suffix in Sanskrit to signify that some *thing* is performing the *activity* of being a pot. It is only because we don't understand how suffixes work, says Mahima, that we think otherwise. As for the identity of this "thing," which Mahima never specifies, we will return to this further on.

---

60Ibid., 35: *atra ca vipacanaghaṭanahavanarūpā bahīyah kriyā ity atrāpi ghaṭanāpeksam vipacanasya tadbhavitum arhatyeva, ubhayatrāpi kartṛpratyayanidēśāviśēṣāt. kevalaṃ kṛdācyatayā kartur*
With all this clarified, Mahima finally gets back to poetics, raising the issue that certain famous poems use the gerund in a way that has to be seen as a mistake, unless we understand this use of suffixes to signify that something is performing the activity of the noun. The first example comes from Māgha's famous poem Śiśupālavāda, which retells the famous story of Kṛṣṇa killing Śiśupāla in the royal assembly of the Pāṇḍavas, a famous anecdote from the Mahābhārata. In verse 64 of the sixth canto of the poem, Māgha writes:

"Having set aside the cold season, what is the value of our breast-warmth, thief of the cold?" Thinking thus, having given up their anger, the damsels tightly clasped their lovers, who were bowing.\(^6\)

On a first pass this verse seems normal enough. The women in this fanciful verse are angry at their lovers for romantic slights, and their lovers are bent in apology. The women don't want to forgive, but they worry that if they hold onto their anger and push their lovers away for too long they will lose them entirely, because their charms will soon lose their power as spring approaches and the weather warms up. The phrase "having set aside" is a gerund (the Sanskrit is apāsyā). Māgha probably intended it in just in the sense of "excluding, except for," so that the women would be saying, "Other than warming up our lovers in the cold season, what use is the warmth of our breasts?" However, the gerund here presents a problem for the commentarial tradition, which takes grammar extremely strictly. The gerund has to have an agent, and the agent has to be performing some second activity that takes place after the activity of the gerund has occurred. But earlier commentators held that activities can be only expressed by verbs (or verbal derivatives like participles), and there are only two other verbs in this verse. One is "is," which applies to the value of the breasts. But this is not a sensible option, for exactly the reasons

upādhibhāvagamite ti bhinnakarttrkatvabhramaḥ.

\(^6\)Ibid., 35: śiśirakālamapāsyā guṇo 'syā naḥ ka iva śitaharasya kucoṣṣaḥ / iti dhiyāstaruṣaḥ parīrebhīre ghanamato namato anumatān priyāḥ //
mentioned above. The value of the warm breasts sets aside the cold season and then exists: this is obviously unintelligible, not to mention ugly. The other option is the verb "thinking," but this is being performed by the women, and the women are clearly not the agents of setting aside the cold, so this would violate the rule that gerunds have to have a single agent both before and after the activity the activity they name.

Some commentators, says Mahima, attempt to interpret away the problem by arguing that "having set aside" is not a gerund at all, but an interjection that just "looks like" a gerund. But this is implausible; the word is clearly a gerund. Mahima's solution is, according to him, preferable. His solution is that it is the breast-warmth that performs the activity of dispelling the cold, and then it performs the activity of being warm, signified by the noun "breast-warmth."

And this activity of performing warmth is unwanted once the weather changes. The women are basically worrying, "once our breasts warm these men up, their activity of warming will no longer be valued," and so they clasp their lovers tightly, not letting them go. 62 This solution was overlooked by earlier commentators because the activity of warming is not expressed by a verb in the sentence, but by a noun, "breast-warmth," making it hard to see. This actually seems to be a plausible solution, and it is the way many people, on a first pass, might read the sentence. For Mahima, however, this solution requires that nouns express not just a static state of being but a state of action, and not just this, but a state of conscious agency, comprised of the willpower to perform the activity signified by the noun, as Mahima has already explained.

One might think that one could attribute action to nouns without attributing conscious action to them. Certainly we can say that a bridge supports cars without saying that a bridge wants or intends or wills to perform the support of cars. Mahima, however, treats all action as the

---

62Ibid., 35: atra kucoṣmaṇaḥ karturhaṇaṇakriyā. ata eva kecad [sic] apāsyety ayaṃ lyabantapratirūpako nipāta iti vyākhyātavantaḥ.
same way. To him it is all conscious action. This is clear from the long set-up he gives before discussing this verse. It is almost as if he is assuming from the outset that nothing can take place unless it is by an act of will. After this verse, he goes on to give a few more examples of the uses and misuses of the gerund, including verses from Kirātārjunīya, by Bhāravi, and Kumārasambhava, by Kālidāsa, and most of the examples involve nouns that refer to agents that we would already consider sentient, such as "the mind," or "the world of men." But the significant thing to notice here is that Mahima treats these all as examples of the same thing, and they are examples that he has prefaced by a long description of pots as, in his terms, knowing themselves to be the agents of the activity of potting. The solution to this poetic problem seems to him only to work if we think it is possible for all nouns in the same way: by assuming that even insentient entities perform activities.

If this seems a stretch, or if the connection to theology is not clear enough, Mahima makes it all explicit when summarizing the whole section: "It 'pots', thus it is known as a pot. . . And 'potting' is an activity that has the form of becoming [āpatti] the essence of [a pot]. Its basis is the Lord's emanation [viṣkṛti] of variegated appearances."63 The language here unambiguously refers to non-dual Śaivism. Mahima has just finished describing a theory in which a pot is not a static entity but the performance of the activity of being a pot. How is this possible? How can a pot perform activities? It is based, he tells us, on the fact that all appearances are actually emanations of Śiva. Therefore all things have agency, even seemingly insentient things.

I believe it reasonable to conclude that we have here identified the mysterious, anonymous agent described above in the example: "Having baked, a pot exists." We, following Mahima, had come to the conclusion that the sentence really means "[Some thing] first bakes,

---

63Ibid., 38 ghaṭatūti ghaṭo jñeyo nāghaṭan ghaṭatāmiyāt / aghaṭatvāviśeṣena paṭo pi syād ghaṭo 'nyathā // ghaṭanaṇcā tadātmavāpattiṛūpā kriyā matā / mūlaṇcā tasyāścitrārthābhāsaviṣkṛtiśiṣṭuḥ //
and then performs the activity of being a pot." What could this "thing" possibly be? None other than Śiva himself, who emanates the form of all things in the universe and animates them with his will. Thus, since Śiva has agency and willpower, and since Śiva is appearing here in the form of the pot, it is only logical to conclude that the pot has also agency and willpower. This is exactly what Abhinavagupta and Utpaladeva denied, and they did so in order to justify a the concept of vimarśa that is at the heart of Abhinavagupta's literary theory. Mahima counters this by reviving Somānanda's theory of radical agency. The only thing he has done is extend the idea to a theory of word-meaning and apply it to poetics.

Conclusion

Kaśmīr was a small kingdom. In this kingdom, Abhinavagupta was a prolific intellectual, writing theology in a religious tradition to which Mahima also belonged, broadly speaking. This theology revolved around a theory of vimarśa that was new to the theological tradition Abhinavagupta was writing in. Bringing this idea of vimarśa into that tradition was part of a larger project of rehabilitating the grammarian Bhartṛhari, possibly because he served as a useful alternative to Buddhist philosophical theories. Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta used this theory of vimarśa as a way to explain the metaphysics of relations, and they justified this by pointing out that relations would be impossible otherwise, since insentient objects are devoid of agency and so can't relate themselves to each other on their own. The theology of vimarśa thus goes hand in hand with a theology that strips objects of their willpower. This idea, furthermore, is one that Abhinavagupta explicitly marks at least twice in his work as a point of connection between theology and literary theory.
The problem with all this is that Somānanda, the founder of this particular theological tradition and the guru of Utpaladeva, had quite clearly held that sentient objects do have willpower, obviating the need for any theory of vimarśa, and moreover he had denigrated Bhartṛhari's ideas in general. And these positions were not offhand comments buried in his text but central pillars of his theology. The change then, is stark, and we shouldn't underestimate how stark it must have seemed in a small kingdom where these ideas were widely circulated and carefully studied. In the traditional world of Sanskrit scholasticism, where innovation was frowned upon and traditionalism was authoritative, philosophers were often forced to feign traditionalism even when they innovated. In such a context, it must have seemed strange, perhaps even scandalous, to see a theologian rebelling so clearly against their own guru's ideas, claiming his authority and his inheritance while at the same time undermining him.

With these circumstances in mind, and only with these circumstances in mind, we can make sense of the strange digression at the beginning of Mahima's Vyaktiviveka. Mahima, whose text is designed to refute Abhinavagupta's Bhartṛharian-influenced literary theory from the standpoint of a Buddhist philosopher who was seen as an inverse to Bhartṛhari, and who seems in general to have actively resisted Abhinavagupta's theorization of the term vimarśa, takes the time to carefully point out near the beginning of his text that we can only explain and justify various famous poetic usages—which had traditionally been problems for commentators—if we accept the idea that insentient objects have agency; in other words if we accept the very idea that Abhinavagupta had to scandalously deny as part of his justification for introducing vimarśa into Śaiva theology.

As an intervention in a particular theological debate it is an almost obvious affront to Abhinavagupta. Mahima essentially picks out an unacknowledged weakness in Abhinavagupta's
theological tradition and presses on it. The fact that by doing this he undermines the philosophical basis for Abhinavagupta's use of the term *vimarśa* brings us back, finally to the issue of simultaneous cognitions with which we began this chapter. For the possibility of simultaneous cognitions, as we saw, was both an important part of Abhinavagupta's literary theory and grounded in the theory of *vimarśa*. What Mahima is doing in the section we have looked at is indirectly attacking the theory of *vimarśa* by problematizing the conditions around accepting it. This fits into a critique of the possibility of simultaneous cognitions, to which he was opposed. This connection might seem tenuous and surprisingly indirect. But we shouldn't underestimate how familiar these ideas would have been to an educated Kaśmīri audience in this particular time (especially as they take place in the most exoteric of Abhinavagupta's philosophical texts) and how sensitive these readers would have been to contradictions between ideas. Mahima's "digression" therefore isn't a digression at all. It makes sense within a religious polemical context, and it points equally towards literary theory and religion, bridging the gap between them.

It is unsurprising that Mahima, who bases his literary theory so much on Dharmakīrti, attacks a constellation of ideas drawn from Bhartṛhari, a philosopher who was almost a perfect inversion of Dharmakīrti's Buddhism. What is surprising is that he does this by using ideas from Somānanda, a Śaiva philosopher, and not from Dharmakīrti himself. As we noted in the previous chapter, this is part of our evidence for assuming that Mahima was, ultimately, a Śaiva of some sort. Just what sort he was is difficult to tell, but this chapter perhaps provides some small clues. Nemec notes that Somānanda's philosophical rivals in Śivadrṣṭi are often alternative schools of non-dual Śaivism, particularly Śākta schools, who use Bhartṛhari's philosophy to place Śiva's
consort Śakti in the primary theological position.\textsuperscript{64} Indeed it is well-known and even obvious that non-dual Śaivism in these centuries was by no means a single unified religious system. It was diverse, and variations of it were contentious and debated. There is no reason at all to assume that the changes Utpaladeva made to Somānanda's system were universally accepted. It is probably quite likely that Somānanda had other students and lineages coming down from him that didn't accept these changes, and who didn't see Bhartṛhari as a philosophical ally. It is even possible that Utpaladeva represents an attempt to fuse the ideas of Somānanda with the rival Śākta school mentioned above, a move which would doubtless be rejected by at least some of the players involved.\textsuperscript{65} Although the tradition coming down to us through Abhinavagupta represents Abhinavagupta and his interpretation as uniquely authoritative, there is no reason to believe that his authority was unanimously respected, or that there weren't alternative theologies available during and after his lifetime. Mahima seems most likely to fit into one of these alternative schools. Though we know very little about him, the little we know points strongly to the conclusion that he was a Śaiva who rejected the adoption of Bhartṛhari into Śaiva theology.\textsuperscript{66} He therefore rejected a literary theory that used Bhartṛharian ideas to fuse aesthetic experience with Śaiva theology, and preferred instead to explain literary theory using Dharmakīrti, a Buddhist philosopher who could be accepted and respected to some degree, but who would not have been accepted as authoritative on the most important matters of religion and theology. Whether

\textsuperscript{64}Nemec, \textit{Ubiquitous Śiva}, 9, 68ff.

\textsuperscript{65}In fact, I personally consider this probable, although proving this is outside of the scope of this chapter. One piece of compelling evidence in this respect is noted by Nemec, \textit{Ubiquitous Śiva}, 68, where he says that whereas Somānanda refers disparagingly to a school of Śākta Śāivas who have adopted Bhartṛhari's ideas, Utpaladeva, in his commentary, goes out of his way to complement them as "good" or "true" Śaivas.

\textsuperscript{66}He does actually quote Bhartṛhari on multiple occasions, but always on strictly grammatical issues. He nowhere adopts or accepts any of Bhartṛhari's more theological or philosophical ideas.
Mahima was a maverick in this respect or whether he represents a school of thought is impossible to say at the moment, and will probably remain so. Nor is it possible to say for sure why he left his Śaivism so far in the background of his text and foregrounded the Buddhist philosopher Dharmakīrti. But we can at least say something about his view of theology in his century, and this can help us make better sense of the text that he wrote.

In the next chapter, the final chapter, we will return to examining Mahima's reliance on Dharmakīrti. The final piece of this connection has to do with the ontology of rasa and the ethical considerations this leads to. This will allow us to complete the contrast to Abhinavagupta, as Mahima offers an alternative, and radically different, interpretation of these issues.
Chapter Five: Mahimabhaṭṭa on Literary Being

The last two chapters examined Mahima's literary epistemology. Chapter Three showed that for Mahima it is inference that explains our ability to know what emotions a poem or play is expressing. Chapter Three also showed that he based this claim on the Buddhist philosopher Dharmakīrti, and that it is framed as a refutation of the famous theory of poetic manifestation. Chapter Four showed that underneath this refutation and counter-theory was a deep antipathy to Abhinavagupta's Śaiva version of the concept of vimarśa, and a rejection of the idea that we can have multiple cognitions simultaneously. This chapter returns to Mahima's use of Dharmakīrti and shows how it is relevant to Mahima's literary ontology. In other words, while Chapters Three and Four were about how we come to be aware of rasa, this chapter examines Mahima's ideas about what rasa actually is.

The epistemology of rasa and the ontology of rasa are not, strictly speaking, separate questions. In fact, for Abhinavagupta they were deliberately overlapping—both are explained for him by his theory of manifestation. For Abhinavagupta, rasa begins as a form of reflexive awareness within a poet—the poet relishes his own depersonalized emotions. The poem, which is an outward manifestation of the poet's own experience of rasa, then enters into the "mirror" of the connoisseur's heart, where its true origin or meaning is "recognized," giving rise, in the spectator, to the same experience that the poet had originally transformed into the poem. "Recognizing" here means "manifesting," according to Abhinavagupta, in the sense that the elements of the poem make manifest the connoisseur's latent karmic memories, but do so in a way that strips them of their personal associations and trigger the same relishing of his own
depersonalized emotions that the poet had. In other words it makes manifest a level of our being that is usually hidden: the transpersonal subjectivity underlying all experience, which Abhinavagupta calls Śiva. So rasa is communicated by manifestation, but it is also itself a manifestation: an ordinarily hidden level of our being made accessible. And at every point in this process, rasa remains real. It changes form and becomes hard to recognize, but at no point does anything enter into the process which is separate from rasa and which conceals it, or which can be considered an illusion. The poet's experience is a real experience of real elements within his own mind, the elements of the poem are real objects to be encountered in the world and real outward manifestations of the poet's mind, what the spectator recognizes in them is a real experience, and the rasa he experiences as a result is real.

Mahima's theory is very different, particularly in this last respect. Making the apprehension of rasa into a Dharmakirtitian inference breaks the continuity between the experience of the poet and the experience of the reader. The poem is no longer an outward manifestation of the poet's experience but an artificial object constructed by the poet to have a certain effect, which is the production of a certain type of awareness. It causes an inference in the mind of the spectator, who now has a moment of awareness in which he apprehends the rasa objectively, existing outside of him and in the poem and the character, not as part of his own subjectivity. Of course, this is just an illusion, since the character doesn't exist and the poem is only a collection of words. So the rasa, which is the "meaning" of the poem, is not only ontologically distinct from the words of the poem, which are just a constructed sign and not an outward manifestation of anything real. It is also a cognitive mistake; a mental trompe l'oeil.¹

¹ Some of the issues raised in this chapter have been noticed and discussed in Rajendran, Chettiarthodi, “Is Rasa an Illusion? A Study in Mahimabhatta's Aesthetics” Adyar Library Bulletin (2004-2006): 221-237. (Accessed online at https://www.academia.edu/11996635/Is_Rasa_an_Illusion_A_Study_in_Mahimabhattas_Aesthetics). Unfortunately,
All this necessarily changes the ethical value imputed to literature. Since Mahima is unwilling to throw out the premise that literature has some sort of important value, it forces him to confront a basic question: what good can come from misunderstanding something? For a misunderstanding is exactly what the *rasa* experience is now understood to be, and it doesn't matter that the reader is only suspending his disbelief and really knows the whole time that he is looking at an artificial construction, because this doesn't explain why this temporary suspension of disbelief leads to something not only pleasurable, but *valuable*. It might be pleasurable to see a mirage, but can we attach any real ethical value to it? Can we impute value to an experience that would cease to exist if we were more fully aware of what was going on?

Mahima's answer to this is that we can, and his explanation for how is to say that the value we attach to such an experience can only be an instrumental one, not an intrinsic one. In explaining this he relies again on Dharmakīrti, and the reason he can rely on Dharmakīrti is that Dharmakīrti, as we will see, already himself had to face questions about the value of illusions, simply in virtue of the philosophical system he developed, which trades in language and concepts while simultaneously holding that these don't match up with what is ultimately real. In fact, this is an important part of what makes his philosophical system "Buddhist."

This chapter will therefore examine what Mahima thinks about the ontological status of literary emotions and what they are good for, and what this has to do with similar problems in Buddhist philosophy. The conclusion this will lead up to is that, just as with Abhinavagupta, what Mahima makes of the ethical value of literature is deeply intertwined with how he understands the relationship between appearances and essences, and therefore, with how he

---

I only discovered this article at the very last stage of editing, and haven’t had time to properly incorporate it into this chapter.
comes down on certain central questions in the history of Sanskrit religious philosophy. In twelfth century Kaśmīr, and by implication perhaps even today, to take a stand on the ethical value of literature was to take a stand on questions that are connected, in various ways, to the things one holds most valuable. In other words, the question of the ethical value of literature is religious, the sense outlined in the introduction to this dissertation of networks of force centering around a relationship to something considered ultimate. And conversely, to answer certain questions about what that ultimacy is inevitably implies a literary theory. The presence of Dharmakīrti in Mahima's text can be understood as a recognition of this fact, if only in the negative sense that he is using Dharmakīrti to move literary experience farther out in the religious vortex, making it indirectly connected, rather than directly connected, to an ethical telos.

The Ghost in the Mirror

To understand Mahima's literary ethics, we first have to understand some of the ethical ideas of the Buddhist philosopher he draws on: Dharmakīrti. To recount some of Chapter Three: in Dharmakīrti's universe there are real, unique, atomic particulars, and there are fictional concepts that turn these particulars into a recognizable and navigable world. These are the only two things that exist. Atomic particulars are the objects of our senses, but this raw sense data on its own is not enough to account for our experience. For we experience things existing across extensions of time and space, which particulars do not, and we also recognize things as similar in relevant ways and ground all our activities in this similarity, which particulars cannot be, since they are all unique. The appearance of similarity comes from our creation of a generalized concept—what philosophers call a "universal"—from the particulars of our experience, which
we then superimposing onto our experience and take for real. This is what allows us to apply the same noun to more than one object: a cup here, a cup there, a cup at home, a cup at the office, a cup at the store. But all these objects are unique, and "cup" is just a heuristic concept. It allows us to expect the same results of things we think we have seen before and therefore to act: this cup will hold water because those other ones did, so I can pick it up and use it in familiar ways.\(^2\)

Not only are we capable of doing this, but we are also capable of knowing about the existence of things we don't encounter sensually by means of inference. This is because the fictional concepts we impose onto particulars include relations like causality and identity, and these allow us to draw inferences. You see a smudge of dark, billowing stuff in the air over a mountain, and your mind transmutes these colored atoms, which are entirely unique and thus unprecedented, into something it has seen before: smoke. Part of the concept of smoke is that it is something that has been caused by fire, a fact you have determined in previous experience, where you have always encountered smoke-like things in connection with fire-like things.\(^3\) From this experience you are able to infer that the smoke you are now seeing was caused by fire, and so you know there is fire on the mountain even though you haven't seen it and may never see it. We do this all the time, in all sorts of ways. It is also the basis for all sorts of assumptions and predictions that we make, and are justified in making, even with respect to language. A round, red sign with the word "stop" written on it, placed in the road, is only a round, multi-colored object. But it allows us to infer that someone (the government) wants you to stop there. And

\(^2\)These ideas are more fully described in Chapter Three.

\(^3\) How exactly one is supposed to transmute the perception of unique atoms into the correct concept, the concept that is reliably connected with correct cause and not with something else, is of course a difficult question that Dharmakirti addresses at length, but it would be too long of a digression to go into this here, since the goal in this chapter is to show a correspondence between Dharmakirti and Mahima, not to prove the validity of Dharmakirti's system.
although you may never have met me you know, reading this dissertation, that the words were written by a conscious being, and didn't just fall out of the sky. Importantly, inference is the cognitive process by which Dharmakīrti claims to rationally prove some of the important religious claims of Buddhism, such as the fact that all things are momentary, or that compassion can become infinite. And this rational proof is essential to the path to enlightenment. The possibility of directly experiencing the truths of Buddhism is held as a future possibility given a great deal of meditative practice. But before one can meditate on those truths with any stability one needs to gain a provisional certainty of their truth, and this happens through inference. Once one meditates long enough one experiences them directly for oneself, but prior to that inference is indispensable.

The tricky part about this explanation of inference, in this system, apprehends universals, not particulars, and universals aren't real. They are fictional superimpositions onto reality. So this means that inference must be a form of error, and this seems to conflict with its role as a

4Keep in mind that although we often make Dharmakīrtian inferences in every day life, we also constantly make, and rely on, inferences that are not warranted by his system, and don't completely count as "knowledge," although they might seem to us to be solid instances of it. These include predictions and expectations of regularity in our experience: when I turn the key, I believe my car would start, and if I didn't I wouldn't bother paying for one; the expectation that since the sun has set it will rise again within a few hours, etc etc. These inferences are not warranted by Dharmakīrti's system, or not warranted strongly enough to count as certain knowledge. The philosophical school known as Nyāya made it its business to justify these common-sense inferences and Buddhists, ever suspicious of widely held, common-sense assumptions, which included, of course, things like caste and the efficacy of Vedic rituals, cast doubt on them.


6Patil, Against a Hindu God, 322ff.

7This is because, as we saw in Chapter Three, Dharmakīrti defines reality as the ability to produce effects. For elaborate philosophical reasons, Dharmakīrti takes himself to have proven that only something that is changing in each instant is capable of producing effects. Universals, however, are temporally static. They aren't momentary, and don't change. Hence they can't produce effects. Hence they aren't "real," although they do exist as fictions.
valuable and authoritative part of the Buddhist path, which after all is about moving closer to the truth of reality. You might infer from the smoke that there is fire on the mountain, but the fire you infer is not a real, particular fire, but the fictional universal "fire-ness." It has to be this way, because a universal is the only kind of thing that can have a regular connection with something else (in this case, with smoke-ness). But on the other hand the concept "fire-ness" can't do anything for you. In fact it can't do anything at all, because it is a universal, not a particular, and therefore has no causal efficacy. You can't boil water with it; it won't warm you up. Only a particular could do these things. So the object of your inference, strictly speaking, is not real.

However it doesn't seem this way to you. It seems to you, making the inference, that you are inferring not some general concept, but an actual, particular fire, and this is why you walk towards the smoke if you are cold. You wouldn't do this if you thought that the object of your inference was just a concept, because you know it wouldn't serve your needs. As Dharmakīrti puts it, "A lustful woman doesn't bother to check if the eunuch is handsome." So you walk to the mountain under the influence of an illusion: you think you are moving towards something that can warm you up, but you actually moving towards a concept. You are mistaken about what you are doing. You are chasing a ghost. And yet this mistake is somehow not only incidental to what you are doing, but crucial to it, and moreover Dharmakīrti holds that this mistaken cognition is a valid and reliable form of knowledge. How can this be?

Dharmakīrti's solution is to point that if you have performed the inference correctly, you will actually reach a particular that will be able to warm you up or boil your water or whatever,

---

8Pramāṇavārttika vs. 3.211 (in Miyasaka's edition [op. cit.] this is on page 146): śaṅhasya rūpavairūpye kāminyāh kim parīśayā. Cited as vs. 1.211 and translated in Dunne, Foundations of Dharmakīrti, 310-311.

9This problem is addressed very well by Dunne, Foundations of Dharmakīrti, 310-315, and Dreyfuss, Recognizing Reality, 316-321.
and he defines the "validity" of the inference in these practical terms. Non-erroneousness [abhrānta] is a criteria only of the first pramāṇa, perception, but not of pramāṇa as such. In inference you start out cognizing a fiction and thinking it exists, but you wind up getting what you want, and this is what makes the cognition valid and authoritative. In fact, Dunne goes so far as to translate Dharmakīrti's word for "validity" [prāmāṇya], as "instrumentality," and not as "truth," "validity," or "correspondence," because he claims that these words give a misleading picture of what Dharmakīrti is trying to do, which is only to explain the practical and useful effects of certain types of cognitions and not others. Cognitions that are practically useful in a regular or reliable way are "valid," for Dharmakīrti, whether or not they present an erroneous or non-erroneous picture of reality.

So for Dharmakīrti, the practical results mark a significant difference between cognitions that are mistaken, and cognitions that are merely mistaken, so to speak. If you see a mirage and walk towards because you're thirsty, you won't get water, because the mirage is a complete illusion. Hence that cognition was mistaken. If, on the other hand, you cognize the universal "fire-ness" up on the mountain and walk towards it thinking your concept is a real thing, locatable in the world, you are still operating under an illusion, but you will get what you want. So this particular illusion, unlike the other, has something about it that makes it "work." Dharmakīrti calls this property "avisamvādaṅkatva," which means something like, "not

---

10Pramāṇaavarttika vs. 2.1, the first verse of the pramāṇasiddhi chapter, begins: "Pramāṇa is non-contradictory knowledge [avisamvādi jñānam]. Non-contradictoriness [here] means the existence of the fulfillment of a human purpose [arthakriyā-sthiti]. The original is given as vs. 1.1 by Miyasaka, 2: pramāṇaṃ avisamvādi jñānam arthakriyāsthitam. The translation here is from Shoryu Katsura, "Dharmakīrti's Theory of Truth," Journal of Indian Philosophy 12.3 (1984): 220. In this article Katsura proposes that Dharmakīrti has two different criteria for validity, one of them epistemological, and one of them practical.

disagreeing," or even, "in conversation with." A valid inference might not completely free of illusion [bhrānta], but it is at least in conversation with reality.

In order to explain this "conversation" and show that it is more than just luck or a coincidence that some cognitions are conversant and some are not, Dharmakīrti uses the famous example of lamp-light and a jewel. In Chapter Two, verse 57 of his Pramāṇavārttika he writes: "Someone running towards the light of a jewel and someone running towards the light of a lamp, both thinking they will reach a jewel: Although there is no difference in terms of their cognitions being illusory, there is a difference in terms of the practical result." Dreyfus points out that there are a number of different ways that commentators have tried to understand this verse, and that it's not really clear what image Dharmakīrti is trying present. What is clear, however, leaving aside other interpretive details, Dharmakīrti attributes the practical efficacy of a "correct" cognition to a causal relationship that it has with reality. The cognition of a gem that is practically efficacious is the one that has been caused, indirectly, by the light of a jewel, whereas the one that is entirely illusory is based on a misrecognition of something else entirely: lamplight.

And in fact, although Dharmakīrti is talking specifically about inference in this verse the basic principle actually applies to all concepts, even concepts that seem to be "perceptual." That is, although perception is in direct contact with reality, that perception yields no practical

12 The translation "in conversation with" takes into account Dharmakīrti's apoha-based phrasing of the term in the double negative, "not not in conversation with." For an explanation of apoha see Patil, Against A Hindu God, Chapter Four. Dunne translates avisamvāda as "trustworthiness" (Dunne, Foundations of Dharmakīrti, 142 and passim), a translation that I think is fine except that it obscures the deeper connotations of the word. Literally, the word avisamvāda comes from the word for conversation, samvāda, "speaking together," and shows that, as with many South Asian intellectuals, Dharmakīrti has a deep-seated penchant for thinking through metaphysical and ontological questions using metaphors borrowed not from geometry and optics, as in Greco-Roman philosophy, but from language and grammar.

13 Miyasaka, 48: manipradipaprabhayor manibuddhyābhidhāvatoḥ / mithyājñānāvīśeṣe 'pi viśeṣorthakriyāṃ prati // For a discussion of this verse, see Dreyfuss, Recognizing Reality, Chapter Eighteen.
information to us, since it puts us in contact only with unique atoms in their individuality, and unique atoms are not recognizable to us as anything we have seen before.\(^\text{14}\) So if this were all we encountered, we would be paralyzed and bewildered (or perhaps enlightened). But this perception also causes the arisal of a concept in our minds, a process Dharmakīrti calls "determination" [\textit{adhyavasāya}]. We see a collection of atoms and they cause us to interpret them under our concept "cup." We then project this concept back out onto the atoms.\(^\text{15}\) This concept, which we mistakenly take to be a part of what we are seeing, is what we act on and towards. Again, it is a quasi-illusion, but one that enables our activity in an essential way because it has a legitimate causal connection with reality. True, these kinds of perceptual concepts don't actually have the status of \textit{pramāṇa} for Dharmakīrti, but this is not because they aren't practically useful or not in "conversation" [\textit{avisamvādaka}]. They are, and Dharmakīrti actually discusses them using the same analogy of the lamp-light and the gem that we saw above.\(^\text{16}\) This kind of perceptual determination is excluded from the category of \textit{pramāṇa} only because it produces no new information, a \textit{sine qua non} of \textit{pramāṇa}, for Dharmakīrti. In contrast to something like inference, which produces an awareness of an object not previously known, perceptual constructs only rearrange our understanding of information we have already cognized, and so aren't considered \textit{pramāṇa}.\(^\text{17}\) So, just as Dunne rightly observes with respect to inference, in perception

\footnote{\textsuperscript{14}\emph{Dreyfus, Recognizing Reality}, Chapters 19 and 20.}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Dharmakīrti} calls this \textit{āropa}, or \textit{samāropa}, a term that is usually interpreted as "superimposition," although perhaps not unanimously (see Kei Kataoka, "Dharmottara's Notion of \textit{āropita}: Superimposed or Fabricated?" in \textit{Proceedings of the Apoha Workshop, Vienna, 2012} [forthcoming]). This term \textit{āropa} does eventually become quite important in Sanskrit discussions of rhetorical figures, but is not yet so in these centuries.}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Dharmakīrti} discusses this explicitly in his auto-commentary on \textit{Pramāṇavārttika} vs. 1.75d, which is translated in Dunne, \textit{Foundations of Dharmakīrti}, 141-142. The original is too long to cite in full but can be found in Miyasaki, 42-43.}

\footnote{\textsuperscript{17}\textit{For a discussion of this, see Katsura, "Dharmakīrti's Theory," 226.}}
too, mutatis mutandis, error is not just part of practical action, but a necessary factor in what makes it possible.

There is potentially one more error lurking even deeper in both perception and inference for Dharmakīrti, although it hinges on something that he is deliberately coy about: the existence of external objects. Dharmakīrti's predecessor, Diṅnāga, was clearly a proponent of Yogācāra Buddhist idealism, which holds that all of our experience is actually just an external projection of our own minds.\footnote{The \textit{locus classicus} for this idea is the first verse of Vasubandhu's famous \textit{Viṃśatikā Vijñātipatratāśiddhiḥ}, or \textit{Thirty Verses Establishing the Existence of Mind Only}: "All of this [world] is nothing but mind, because the objects that appear to us are unreal, like someone with eye disease seeing hairs [in his field of vision], or a double moon, etc."}\footnote{See Vincent Eltschinger, "Latest News From a Kashmirian 'Second Dharmakīrti: On the Life, Works, and Confessional Identity of Śaṅkaranandana According to New Manuscript Resources," in \textit{Cultural Flows Across the Western Himalayas}, Patrick McAllister, Christina Scherrer-Schaub, and Helmut Krasser, eds., Beiträge Zur Kultur- Und Geistesgeschichte Asiens (Book 856) (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, 2015), 340; see also Lawrence McCrea, "Abhinavagupta As Intellectual Historian of Buddhism," in (forthcoming).} Other Buddhist schools, notably Sautrāntika and also sometimes Madhyamaka, insisted that objects really existed externally to our minds, and affect our experience. The issue was debated among followers of Dharmakīrti for centuries. For example the Buddhist commentator Dharmottara, who spent part of his career in Kaśmīr, believed in external objects. On the other hand, his Kaśmīrī colleague Śaṅkaranandana was an idealist.\footnote{This has given modern scholars much to puzzle over. For different ways of understanding this ambiguity and its purpose in Dharmakīrti's philosophy, see Dunne, \textit{Foundations of Dharmakīrti}, 53-79;} McCrea has recently showed that not only is Dharmakīrti ambiguous about this issue, at times seeming to give one view, and at times another.\footnote{Lawrence McCrea has recently showed that not only is Dharmakīrti ambiguous about this issue, at times seeming to give one view, and at times another.}\footnote{This has given modern scholars much to puzzle over. For different ways of understanding this ambiguity and its purpose in Dharmakīrti's philosophy, see Dunne, \textit{Foundations of Dharmakīrti}, 53-79;}
it was well known in Kaśmir in these centuries that Dharmakīrti's texts could be and were quoted to support both idealism and realism.\textsuperscript{21}

On the idealist view, the error at the root of all the other errors we have been discussing is simply to misperceive the contents of your own mind as external objects. This doesn't reduce to solipsism, for as we saw in Chapter Three, Dharmakīrti argues that the existence of other minds can be inferred. But it does mean that the world we share with other beings is entirely an illusion. This is the root mistake underneath all others. Dharmakīrti does, of course, recognize the difference between cognitions that are mistaken only in this deep sense and cognitions that are mistaken even in the ordinary, daily sense, such as mistaking a mirage for a pool of water.\textsuperscript{22} But this also means that even when one is "correct" in the ordinary sense, it is a qualified kind of correctness.\textsuperscript{23} Buddhahood, on this idealist view, involves realizing that everything one thought was real, objective, external objects, is really just part of one's own mind.\textsuperscript{24}

It's far from clear whether Dharmakīrti himself held such a view. I certainly don't wish to take a position on this issue. All that matters for my purposes is that it seems to have been up for debate, even in the centuries in which Abhinavagupta and Mahima encountered Dharmakīrti's

\textsuperscript{21}McCrea, "Abhinavagupta As Intellectual Historian."

\textsuperscript{22}See, for example, Dharmakīrti's explanation of the difference between types of mistaken cognition in Pramāṇaviniścaya vs. 1.59, translated by Dunne, Foundations of Dharmakīrti, 315-316.

\textsuperscript{23}One of the obvious objections to this idea is the simple fact that if we live in a world with other, real people (and Dharmakīrti does accept that other people are real), the very fact that we can communicate with them and seem to be having the same experience with them must mean that there is some kind of objectivity that we share. Dharmakīrti's explanation for this is that the only reason we can co-exist with others and communicate with them and act together with them is because our projects and hallucinations are all similar enough to allow this to take place with reasonable regularity, and that this is due to the similar karmic background that we share. In other words our mistakes and hallucinations are based on our karmic imprints, and these are similar enough to other people to allow our hallucinations to overlap, making those hallucinations seem even more plausible than they would otherwise be.

\textsuperscript{24}For a good summary of Yogācāra idealism and soteriology, see Mark Siderits, Buddhism as Philosophy: An Introduction (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2007), 146-179.
works. It is also unclear whether Mahima held this view, although this is something that I will consider as a possibility further below, when we go on to look at Mahima's literary theory. But the arguments I am making in this chapter don't depend on way or another on whether Mahima was an idealist.

In any event, the question of the erroneousness and validity of these pramāṇas was not incidental to Dharmakīrti, but was actually central to his religious project, and to what he thought of as the ultimate purpose of human life. This is because he uses it to explain the relationship between Buddhist teachings that are recorded and passed on in words and concepts, and the Buddhist goal of spiritual liberation, which is a state free of conceptuality and language. Dunne sums this paradox up nicely: "...while the Buddha's teachings are true to his followers, they are not true to him." For Dharmakīrti, it is only through inferences that one first grasps the essential truth and trustworthiness of the Buddha's teaching, and only on the basis of these inferences can one engage in the practices that will lead to a first-hand, non-conceptual realization of the meaning of those teachings. The inferences are "false" because they misrepresent reality, strictly speaking, just like all inferences do. They cause one to be aware of universals like "momentariness" and "impermanence" and to assume that these universals are real and are an objective part of reality, when in fact they are neither. However, the inferences are "trustworthy" in the sense that they successfully lead one to the accomplishment of one's goals: Buddhahood.

Not only are the inferences trustworthy in this respect, but they are necessary, at least for beings

---

25 Dharmakīrti himself doesn't single out inference, but refers in general to Buddhist logic and epistemology. However according to Patil, *Against a Hindu God*, 324-327, the commentarial tradition on Dharmakīrti makes it clear that he is referring specifically to inferences. And it is through such a commentarial tradition that Mahima would have encountered Dharmakīrti's ideas.

26 See ibid., 322-323, as well as Katsura, "Dharmakīrti's Theory of Truth," 215-216 for the idea that conventionally valid awareness, ie inference, is mistaken, and can't directly grasp ultimate truth, although it leads indirectly to an awareness of ultimate truth.
who are susceptible to the philosophical arguments of other religions. These inferences are the only way, according to Dharmakīrti, for these kinds of beings to embrace and ultimately engage in the practices and actions which lead to Buddhahood without their resolve being weakened by the appeal of other religious systems. This means that training beings religiously and morally, for Dharmakīrti, sometimes requires inducing certain sorts of misconceptions in them.²⁷

Of course, this is just a philosophical transposition of the famous Buddhist principle of "skillful means," the methods by which Buddhas and Bodhisattvas train beings in the path to Buddhahood.²⁸ The paradoxical ways in which a Buddha trains beings for an experience which, however conceived, is a fundamental break with that training is a running theme of many

²⁷ This is the case for particular inferences, such as the inference that all things are momentary. As for the general soteriological import of the science of Buddhist logic and epistemology, and the texts expounding it, such as the works of Dharmakīrti themselves, things are a bit more complicated. The soteriological significance of logic and epistemology was not universally accepted. And when it was, the details tended to differ. Even Dignāga's vision of the significance of this science differed from Dharmakīrti's, though generally speaking the idea seems to be that this branch of Buddhist science was directed towards non-Buddhists, and was intended to refute their wrong ideas so that they would stop leading beings astray and be more amenable to Buddhist truths. See, for example, Patil, Against a Hindu God, 315-328; Katsura, "Dharmakīrti's Theory of Truth," 223; and also Helmut Krasser,"Are Buddhist Pramāṇavādins non-Buddhistic?" Dignāga and Dharmakīrti on the Impact of Logic and Epistemology on Emancipation," Hōrin 11:129-146 (2004), 145-146, which gives an examination of Dignāga's view as well as a sketch of the later history of the debate over the soteriological significance of Buddhist pramāṇavāda. Dharmottara, who was very close in time and place to Mahima and who influenced him, as we have seen, also held that ordinary inference is not ultimately true but that it helps to stabilize the meditative practices by which beings can eventually realize the ultimate truth. He tells us, in a particular clear passage, "Even ultimately valid awareness [i.e., enlightenment] does not arise without a cause—and there is no cause other than mental cultivation/meditation. Moreover, mental cultivation/meditation takes as its object what has been ascertained by conventionally valid awareness. And so the conventionally valid sources of knowledge have been analyzed completely. They become the cause of ultimately valid awareness. . . Those things that have been made into objects through invalid awareness—imagined as mental images of eternal things, etc.—are not a prerequisite for ultimately valid awareness. But things imagined as momentary mental images are a prerequisite. Therefore, a person who has excluded error will set out on the way to ultimate truth, since this error takes as its object a gross form. Reaching ultimate truth is preceded by ending this error." Pramāṇaviniścayaṭīkā ad Pramāṇaviniścaya vs. 1.59: pāramārthikam api pramāṇam na nirhetukam. na ca bhāvanāvyayatirikto hetuḥ. bhāvanā ca sāṃvyavahārikapramāṇaṇaparicchinnārthavāsāya. tatas ca tat sāṃvyavahārikam pramāṇam samayaṁ nirūpītam pāramārthikajñānaheṭuṁ sampadyate. (tatas tadvisayo yathā paramārthavāsāya eva.) mithyājñānena hi visayikṛṇaḥ bhāvaḥ nityādibhir ākāraṁ bhāvyamānāḥ na pāramārthikajñānaṁ nibhandhanam bhavanti. anityādibhir ākāraṁ bhāvyamānāṁ nibhandhanam bhavanty eva. tasmād ato vyāmoham vyāvartya paramārthhanayā 'vatāra-vyayayo janaṁ, sthūlavāsatvāṁ asya vyāmohasya. etadvyāmohanavyātirikā ca paramārthapruptih. The Sanskrit text given here is from Krasser, "Are Buddhist Pramāṇavādins Non-Buddhistic." 144-145 n. 44, which he takes as a quotation from Dravyālaṁkāraṭīkā. The translation is Patil, Against a Hindu God, 323-324, n. 23.

²⁸ Dunne, Foundations of Dharmakīrti, 55, also makes this point.
Buddhist sūtras of many different schools, and a great deal of Buddhist philosophy. This applies to the difference between the way things appear to us as ordinary beings and the way they really are, and also to the difference between the forms and concepts of religious practice and their real value and purpose. The gap is the same in both cases. And one would be justified, I think, in going so far as to say that this gap between words, appearances, concepts, and experiences, and their real meaning, truth, or value, is one of the fundamental issues in Buddhism across most schools and times, which nearly all Buddhist thinkers grappled with in one form or another.

Dharmakīrti handled this gap by bridging it with a theory of the practical usefulness of semi-erroneous inferences. And it is this aspect of his thought which, I believe, appealed to Mahima. For Mahima found himself facing a literary theory which, as we have seen, used a Bhartrḥarīan-influenced Śaiva theology to describe a seamless unity between appearances and essences. This unity obtained both in the world and in literature, and it allowed aesthetic pleasure to be both free of error and intrinsically morally good. Mahima, objecting perhaps to the Bhartrḥarīan basis for this theory, undermined it by wedging this unity apart and thus making aesthetic pleasure into a form of cognitive error and, consequently, into something that could

---

29The theme shows up across Buddhist literature and there are are far too many examples to cite in full. For just a few examples see the Prajñāparamitāratnagunasamuccayagāthā, a famous verse summary of the Aṣṭasāhasrikaprajñāparamitāsūtra, which teaches all about the "perfection of wisdom" and the goals of a bodhisattva (a being striving for enlightenment), tells us right at the beginning of this teaching: "No wisdom can we get hold of, no highest perfection, no Bodhisattva, no thought of enlightenment either. When told of this, if not bewildered and in now wauy anxious, a Bodhisattva courses in the Well-gone's wisdom" (Edward Conze trans, The Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Lines and Its Verse Summary [Bolinas: Four Seasons Foundation, 1973], 9); the Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra, which famously spends an entire chapter discussing the disjunction between Vimalakīrti's outward appearance and his real being, and the sūtra begins when Vimalakīrti "out of his skill in liberative technique. . . manifests himself as sick," implying that he is not actually sick but only appears to be [Robert Thurman trans, The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti: A Mahāyāna Scripture [University Park: Penn State University Press, 1990], 21; and various parts of the Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra, which spends more than one chapter describing how the Buddha gives teachings to students that aren't actually true but are intended to lead them in the right direction.

30See Chapter Two.
only be instrumentally good, not intrinsically good. The gap that he opens up, in other words, is both explained and bridged in Dharmakīrtian terms in his text, probably because Dharmakīrti was the great anti-Bhartṛharian theorist of Mahima's time. But to see how he uses Dharmakīrti to accomplish these aims, we need to look at how Mahima handles the implications of his assertion that *rasa* is inferred.

Mahima's Theory

We have already seen in Chapter Three how Mahima explains and justifies his position that *rasa* is something we infer. To briefly recapitulate: in ordinary life, others' emotions are not directly visible to us. But we do see various effects and causes that go along with those emotions, and we know their connection to the emotions from our own experience. It is possible to hide the fact that you are sad; it is more difficult to hide the fact that you are crying, and once someone sees you crying, it is only a short step for them to infer the mood you previously could have hidden. When we are presented with literary depictions of these effects and causes in a poem or play, we do the same thing we do in ordinary life, which is infer the presence of an emotion based on what we know of the signs we see. Encountering the signs produces in us, at a second moment not simultaneous with the first, a moment of cognition in which we are aware of the presence of an emotion, and this cognition is an inference.

As we also saw in Chapter Three, this process is pleasurable for us, even if the real-world correlate of the experience would not be pleasurable. This is partly because we know, deep down, that the signs and emotions being depicted are artificial, and so we don't have the same involvement with them as we would if we saw a real person crying. It is also because, as Mahima
tells us curtly, things are simply more pleasing to us when they are half-hidden. That is just the way things are.

However, although Mahima feels that the causes of the pleasure can't be identified, he does have a bit to say on the structure of that pleasure. First of all, he agrees with Abhinavagupta that the rasa is something "relished," by which Mahima means that the inferential cognition that apprehends the rasa itself becomes an object of another cognition that takes pleasure in it. He uses the term parāmarśa, to describe this: "The relishing of rasa is nothing but reflecting on [parāmarśa] that cognition, which is natural [i.e., which takes place naturally]." And he quotes a strange verse a few pages later, which I have been unable to identify, but which conveys the same idea: "Then, when the rasa is completely full from a dhruvā song or a recitation, one who is turned inward and fully focused on tasting it instantly rejoices. Then, when he leaves behind all outer objects and rests in his own nature, there is manifested the flow of bliss by which even yogis are satisfied."

This verse actually bears a resemblance to a verse quoted by Abhinavagupta at Abhinavabhāratī 29.13, and both of these quotes look as if Mahima is capitulating to Abhinavagupta's theory of vimarśa, but I think this conclusion would be a mistake. First of all, although the verse in the Abhinavabhāratī is very similar it is not the same, and it may have been

31 Vyaktiviveka, 74: tatpratītparāmarśa eva ca rasāsvādāḥ svābhāvika ity uktam.

32 Vyaktiviveka, 100: pāhyād atha dhruvāgānā ṭataḥ sampūrite rase / tadāśvādabharāīkāgro hṛṣayat antarmukhaḥ kṣaṇam // tato nirviṣayāsyaśya svarūpāvasthitaḥ nījah / vyājyate hādaniśyando yena trpyanti yoganiḥ // I am indebted to Guy Leavitt (personal communication) for his crucial help in clearing up some tricky aspects of the grammar of this verse.

33 Abhinavabhāratī, 4:72 (in the commentary on Nātyaśāstra vs. 29.13): dhruvāgānān nījāveśe tyakte niṣkaladhiyusāṃ / sāmājikāṃḥ hrdaye sanākramet prastuto rasaḥ // "When self-absorption is abandoned due to dhruvā songs and recitations, the chief rasa crosses into the hearts of the audience, which is enjoying an undivided mind." I thank Guy Leavitt (personally communication) for bringing this parallel to my attention.
intentional that Mahima chose not to quote it and instead to quote the verse he does. Secondly, as I have already explained in Chapter Four, Mahima is opposed to Abhinavagupta's theory of vimarśa, and this is not just whimsically. His entire literary theory is justified by a rejection of the kind of simultaneous coalescence of cognitions that Abhinavagupta's theory of vimarśa requires. And in fact, if read closely, the first of the two quotes above, about the inferential cognition being the object of a cognition that takes pleasure in it, clearly does not have the structure of Abhinavagupta's vimarśa, but rather the structure of the Buddhist alternative that Abhinavagupta had attempted to refute with his theory of vimarśa: one cognition taking another cognition as its object, which Abhinavagupta felt is impossible.

What is actually happening in these sections, I think, is that Mahima is co-opting and using the terms of Abhinavagupta's literary theory for his own purposes, much like Abhinavagupta had co-opted Bhaṭṭanāyaka's earlier terms. Yes, he says, one can relish one's cognition of rasa by reflecting on it, and one can even be absorbed in it. But what one is relishing in this case is a prior moment of cognition, and this cognition was directed towards an inferred object, not one's own emotions. It thus matches more closely the Buddhist theory of memory given in Īśvarapratyabhijñākārikā then it does the Śaiva view of memory given in that text, which requires vimarśa.\(^{34}\)

As for this moment of inferential cognition itself, we can also look more closely at what Mahima thinks its structure is. As we saw, it is directed outwards towards an inferred object that seems to be present in the site of the inference, which in this case is the character or the poem. But just like Dharmaṅkīrti, Mahima acknowledges this inference to be a mistake. This is because, Mahima's idea may perhaps correlate with mānaspratyakṣa, a form of perception in Dharmaṅkīrti's system that follows immediately upon sense perception and takes that previous cognition as its object. The role of mānaspratyakṣa in Dharmaṅkīrti's system is ambiguous and fraught with problems, and I haven't been able to determine the extent to which it matches Mahima's ideas.
of course, the emotion doesn't really exist in the site of the inference. It can't. The character is "artificial," in Mahima's words, as is the poem. The character isn't really feeling anything at all. He only seems to be. So the inference is actually delivering us information that is not, strictly speaking, accurate to the situation. Unlike in Abhinavagupta's theory, where the spectator suddenly "recognizes" the original mood that gave rise to the poem and of which the poem is an outward manifestation, here the spectator mistakenly infers an emotion where it cannot be.

This inference is an effect constructed by a poet, but it is not necessarily what the poet himself felt—Mahima nowhere says, as Abhinavagupta does, that the poet needs to feel *rasa* or overflow with it himself. The poet simply "fixes" or "joins together" [arpita] the elements of a poem, and makes you see what he wants you to see.\(^{35}\) Mahima calls the *rasa* thus conjured an "imitation of a stable emotion," using the Sanskrit term *anukarana*,\(^{36}\) which connotes the action of mimicry or simulation, but which also connotes, for Mahima, a certain distance from what one is imitating. Earlier in the text, Mahima uses the word *anukarana* to describe the act of quoting someone else's words without committing oneself to them. Use this term, he argues that even if the words you quote are senseless, the quote itself doesn't partake of this senselessness, and can still be meaningful insofar as you are reporting sensibly on someone else's senselessness.\(^{37}\)

Where Abhinavagupta's poet is a charismatic shaman, luring others to participate in what he

---

\(^{35}\) For example *Vyaktiviveka*, 75: kaviśaktyarpitā bhāvās tanmayībhāvavayuktītah / yathā sphuranty amī kāvyān na tathādhyaksatah kīlā // "These bhāvas, fixed [arpita] by the power of a poet, make [the spectator] entirely one with [themselves] and due to this they shine forth from poems in a way that they don't at all when [simply] perceived directly."

\(^{36}\) *Vyaktiviveka*, 83: sthāyyanukaranāntamaḥ hi rasā iṣyante.

\(^{37}\) *Vyaktiviveka*, 16: tasya svārthābhidhānam antareṇa vyāpārāntarāṇupapattār upapādayisyamāṇatvāt. na ca tasyānukarāṇavatirekenopasarjanikṛtārthatvāṁ sambhavati. "...it is impossible for [a word] to have any function other than expressing its own meaning. And it is not possible that [for this to be otherwise], except in cases of quoted words." See also Chapter Three of this dissertation.
himself sees, Mahima's poet is a master craftsman, arranging elements that will create certain cognitions to which he himself need not be subject.

But again, the cognitions that are produced are mistaken; they are cognitions of something that doesn't exist. In a more telling metaphor, Mahima actually refers to the rasa that the spectator perceives as a reflection [pratibimba], and unreal: "The things called Stable Emotions, such as Love etc., don't exist, and are similar to a reflection. They are called 'rasa' when they are being lead to the path of a cognizer's cognition by a poet by means of those very artificial causes called [the poetic elements, such as tears, shivering, depictions of spring, etc.]." What exactly he means by "reflection" here, and what image he is trying to convey, is a little unclear. The simplest interpretation would be that the poet creates a mirror that reflects real life. The world is full of emotions, and if I create a poem in the right way, it will reflect those emotions and make spectators apprehend them where they are not. They are unreal in the sense that they are only reflections, not the real thing.

There is, however, another possible way to interpret this image, and this is to think of the mirror as pointed at the spectator himself, reflecting the spectator's own emotions back at him and presenting them as if they were something external. If this is the image that Mahima intends, it probably means he was be basing his literary theory on the idealist Buddhist philosophy outlined above, in which we consistently misperceive the contents of our own mind as external objects. As mentioned earlier, while Diṅnāga was clearly an idealist, Dharmakīrti was ambiguous about it, and Kaśmīr in Mahima's centuries was home to a debate among Buddhists as to which was the proper interpretation of Dharmakīrti: idealism or realism. Mahima does seem

38 Vyaktiviveka, 83: yatāb tair eva kāroṇādibhiḥ kṛtrimaś vibhāvādy abhidhānaś asanta eva ratiyādayaḥ pratibimbakalpaḥ sthāvibhāvavadyapadaśabhallāḥ kavibhiḥ pratipattvāpatīpatham upānyamānā hṛdayasamvādād āsvādyatvam upayantaḥ santo rasaḥ ity ucyante.
to base his ideas on the Buddhist commentator Dharmottara, who fell clearly on the realist side of the debate. But on the other hand, not enough is known yet about Kaśmīri Buddhism in this century to say whether he wasn't also influenced by Śaṅkaranandana, the famous proponent of Buddhist idealism, many of whose texts have been lost or else are notoriously difficult to read.\footnote{See Helmut Krasser, "On Dharmakīrti's Understanding of Pramāṇa-bhūta and His Definition of Pramāṇa," \textit{Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens} 45 (2001): 173-199; and Eltschinger, "Latest News."}

The argument Mahima makes at the beginning of his text that all objects have will-power because all are the external manifestation of God, which we examined in the fourth chapter, also urges the conclusion that he was an idealist. Even if he was not an idealist in the full sense, it does seem as if this particular passage, interpreted in this way, is at least influenced by Buddhist arguments that what one thinks are external objects are actually the contents of one's own mind projected outward. In Mahima's theory, however, it would be the emotions of the fictional character that seem external and objective, but which are really only the internal emotions of the spectator projected outward and reflected back to him.

The evidence for this interpretation, however, is admittedly thin, and we are venturing here into the speculative. But it is not entirely baseless, and the possibility is worth exploring, because if this is what Mahima meant, it would be a perfect inversion of Abhinavagupta's heart-mirror metaphor. Recall that Abhinavagupta thinks of the spectator's heart as like a mirror. The elements of the poem begin as external, and are then reflected in the mirror, coalescing together on the mirror's surface and appearing as a part of it, which really means that the poem brings the spectator's own emotional memories out from obscurity and makes them apparent to him a way that makes them part of his subjectivity but strips them of their particular association. The spectator gazes inwards at them, feeling the bliss of vimarśa as he relishes his own transpersonal subjectivity. Mahima's use of the reflection metaphor flips this around, presenting the poem as
the mirror, and the spectator gazing outward into it and seeing his own subjective emotions as if they were external to him. Given that so much of Mahima's text presents ideas that are almost perfectly inverted from Abhinavagupta's, and given that Mahima is deliberately basing himself on a philosophical tradition that was, in many ways, as we have seen, an inversion of Bhārtṛhari, the philosopher on whom Abhinavagupta bases much of his literary theory, the possibility that Mahima is presenting an exact inversion of Abhinavagupta's central aesthetic metaphor of the heart-mirror has to at least be seriously considered.

Nor would this idea, that literary depictions allow us to encounter our own emotions to us as if they were external, be an anomaly in Sanskrit literary theory. In fact, we find a beautiful iteration of this same idea in a treatise on dramaturgy written about 50-100 years before Mahima, the Daśarūpaka. The Daśarūpaka was written by one Dhananjaya some time around 975 A.D. at the court of King Muṇja of the Paramāra dynasty in South India, and its author was well aware of, and refuted, Ānandavardhana's theory of manifestation. In Chapter Four of that text, verse 41c-42b, Dhananjaya writes: "When children play with clay elephants, it is their own efforts that they savor; this is just how it is with spectators and [characters] like Ārjuna." The verse describes a mixing of character and spectator in the unfolding of the play or poem. Because of the spectator's personal involvement and investment in the characters, his imagination projects itself onto them, just like children taking clay elephants and bringing them to life with imagination. In both cases it is the vivifying involvement of the imagination that makes the game

---


enjoyable; even more, it is actually this imaginative process itself that one apprehends as pleasurable in the process of viewing a work of art.

Whether Mahima knew the Daśarūpaka is impossible to say. It can't be ruled out, as we know that ideas and texts circulated quite widely and quite quickly in premodern South Asia—this, for example, is exactly how Dhanamjaya came to know of and respond to Ānandavardhana's text scarcely one hundred years after it was written. But even if Mahima wasn't directly influenced by Dhanamjaya's text, it is important simply to know that the idea in question was a live option in South Asian literary theory, and that if indeed Mahima thought that poetry worked by allowing one to project one's emotions outwards and encounter them as external, he wouldn't have been alone.

Even if we bar that interpretation and assume that Mahima only means to say that poetic emotions are a sort of shadow or imitation of the ordinary world, that still leaves the fact that he calls them "unreal," and that, on his account, being aware of them can only be some form of cognitive error. Just like Dharmakīrtian inferences, they are a cognition of something unreal, mistakenly attributed to a location in which they don't (couldn't) exist, which is possibly only an outward projection of one's mind to begin with.

However, just as with Dharmakīrtian inferences, Mahima tells us there is something valuable about literary inferences even though they are mistaken—perhaps even because they are mistaken—and in order to explain what this is, he draws again on Dharmakīrti. Immediately after mentioning that the poetic elements are all unreal and artificial, Mahima goes on to say that cognizing them is nevertheless the most important thing in poetry, because "it is only to that extent that students can be instructed in what to do and what not to do." So the illusion is helpful. This of course raises a problem for him; the same problem Dharmakīrti had grappled with.
Someone might justifiably ask how anything useful or practical can come from a mistaken cognition. One might think that only an accurate cognition can help us, and that if we are under an illusion we can only be mislead. Mahima, however, says not only that the illusion is helpful, but that it is necessary. How can this be? The answer, Mahima tells us, can be found in Dharmakīrti's philosophy. First, he quotes a passage from Pramāṇaviniścaya: "Even error, by means of having a connection [to a real thing], can be a cause of knowledge."42 He then continues on to quote the famous passage from Pramāṇavārttika that we discussed above, about the light of the lamp and the light of the jewel—that two people can have equally mistaken cognitions while one of them, due to the connection of his mistaken cognition with reality, obtains a useful practical result.

Translated into the terms of literature, Mahima is saying here that while cognizing rasa is an illusion just like other illusions, the fact that this illusion is connected to reality means that we can achieve something valuable with it. It is actually an open question what exactly Mahima thinks this "connection" consists in, as he himself doesn't say. The question is a vexed one even within Dharmakīrti, and the philosophical details of how Dharmakīrti validates inference are quite complex, and were debated among Buddhists in South Asia for centuries. So how we interpret Mahima depends in the first place on how we interpret Dharmakīrti, and this itself is far from clear. In addition to this, Mahima is not forthcoming about his own interpretation of Dharmakīrti's idea. Perhaps Mahima means that because the poetry has been arranged as an imitation of reality and has a connection of similarity with that reality, the inferences we derive from it can tell us something valuable about reality—that we can learn about the world from poetry to the extent that poetry imitates the world. This seems likely, but it is speculative. The

42 Vyaktiviveka, 76: bhrāntir api sambandhataḥ pramā. The original is Pramāṇaviniścaya vs. 2.1cd.
only thing that remains certain, and what I am trying to point out here, is that although Mahima
thinks the cognition of *rasa* is a cognitive mistake (a particularly pleasing one), he thinks he can
redeem and validate this kind of mistake by importing Dharmakīrti's own solution to a similar
problem. How exactly that solution works is beyond the scope of both this chapter and what
Mahima felt he needed to address. Suffice it to say here that whatever interpretations were
successfully worked out with regard to Dharmakīrti's idea, Mahima would probably have held
that the same interpretations would apply to his idea.

For Mahima to make this connection to Dharmakīrti's philosophy depends upon him
holding that although the *rasa* is illusory, the moment of cognition that takes this illusion as its
object is real, just as Dharmakīrti can hold that an inference can have effects even if its object is
conceptual and the inference is not entirely free of error. That is, the words of poetry lead us to
have a real mental event, and this mental event is a particular and thus real. So like any real thing
in Dharmakīrti's system this real mental event can have effects, even if it is mistaken or directed
towards an unreal concept. This is precisely why, as we saw in Chapter Three, Mahima rules out
the rainbow as a possible example of the manifestation of *rasa*. A rainbow is an example of
something whose manifestation is entirely illusory. But for Mahima, to say that *rasa* is
"manifested" means just that a certain (mistaken but real) cognition of it is produced via
inference. The reason poetic manifestation is not like a rainbow is because we don't just *seem* to
have a cognition of *rasa*, we really *do* have a cognition of *rasa*. And its reality is the source of its
causal efficacy.

It is important to see that the connection Mahima is drawing to Dharmakīrti's work is not
only metaphysical, but also pedagogical. The mistaken cognition doesn't just yield some
practical result in general; it is specifically said to yield moral instruction. Moreover, this is a
moral instruction that Mahima, like Dharmakīrti, says *can't be achieved any other way*. And just like with Dharmakīrti, the impossibility of alternative methods is a purely practical impossibility, not a logical one. It is impossible only because of the situation in which the spectator finds himself. The moral training has to be achieved this way because of the spectator's flaws, just as the Buddhist path has to begin with inference because the student is incapable of seeing the truth directly for themselves. In the case of literature the flaws in question would be the reader's inability to pay attention to or care about more straightforward instruction. But there could easily be more straightforward instruction if the reader had more developed capacities. So, just as with Dharmakīrti, illusion is treated here as an indispensable method for bringing about real moral transformation in people at a particular stage of moral or intellectual development.

Mahima elaborates further on all this in the text using the term "vyutpatti," a term which literally means any kind of training, habituation, or cultivation, but which Mahima is clearly using in the very common sense of cultivating one's capacity to act in proper ways and avoid the improper:

And so royal princes and so forth, who chase after pleasures and have weak intellects, who turn away from studying śāstras, are the intended audience for poetry, and those who are excessively stupid to the extent that they are unable to be trained at all, attached to women and song and dance, are the intended audience for both [poetry and plays]. Both of those two [types], by first giving them a taste of the bliss of rasa by means of placing a desirable thing in front of them, are to be impelled towards it like bitter medicine hidden inside of sugar. Otherwise they wouldn't even begin any activities, let alone cultivate themselves.44

43That is, texts comprised of explicit analyses of moral, religious, philosophical, or practical matters.

44Vyaktiviveka, 102: evañ ca ye sukumāramatayaḥ śāstraśravaṇādivimukhāḥ sukhhino rājaputraprabhṛtayaḥ, pūryatradhikṛtāḥ, ye cātyantato 'pi jaḍamatayas tāvatā vyutpādayitum aśakyaḥ śrīnṛṣṭyātodyādiprasaktā ubhaye 'pi te 'bhimatavastupuraskāreṇa guḍajihvikayā rasāśvādasukham mukhe dattvā tatra kaṭukausadhapānādāv iva pravartayitavyāḥ. anyathā pravṛttir evaisāṁ na syāt, kimūta vyutpattāḥ.
Elsewhere Mahima says explicitly that poetry, plays, and śāstras all have exactly the same goal of imparting moral training, and that they simply approach that goal using different methods geared towards the capacities of the audience:

Both [poetry and plays] are the same in that, like śāstra, their fruit is moral cultivation, whose scope is injunctions and prohibitions. It's just that, because of the varying degrees of intelligence or stupidity of those to be trained, there is a mere division of methods into poetry, plays, or śāstra. But there is not a difference in the fruit.45

Given the fact that these ideas are grounded by Mahima himself in Dharmakīrti's philosophy, it makes sense to treat them in line with that philosophy, as we have here. However these ideas are widespread across Buddhist literature. In general, Buddhist scriptures and literature are filled with references to the idea that the Buddha gave different teachings to different beings based on their individual capacities, and that although the sumnum bonum is uniform, what is spiritually helpful or harmful to various beings on the way to that goal is indexed to their particular circumstances. This, as discussed above, is the doctrine of skillful means, upāya, and Mahima is quite clearly drawing on this idea when he writes about literature in this way.

The image of literature as the sugar-coating on bitter medicine also has Buddhist roots. It was given as a justification for literature by the influential Kaśmīri literary theorist Bhāmaha (probably not a Buddhist himself but clearly influenced by Buddhism) in the seventh century,46 and it goes back at least to Aśvaghoṣa's famous second century poem Saundarananda, translated

---

45 Vyākrtiveka, 101: sāmānyenobhayam api ca tad śāstravat vidhiniṣedhaviṣayavyutpattpitahalam. kevalam vyutparaṇajāyāyādayatāratamāpekṣayā kavyanāyaśāstrarūpo 'yam upāyamārābheda na phalabhedaḥ.

46 The metaphor in question can be found in Bhāmaha, Kāvyālaṃkāra of Bhāmaha, P.V. Naganatha Sastry ed, 2nd ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass), vs 5.3: svādukāvyaarasyaṇiśram śāstram apy upayāujate / prathamādiḥhamadadhavah pibanti katu bheṣajam // For a thorough discussion of Bhāmaha's dates and his chronological relation to Daṇḍin, as well as his likely Vaiṣṇavism, see Yigal Bronner, "A Question of Priority: Revisiting the Bhāmaha-Daṇḍin Debate," Journal of Indian Philosophy 40.1 (2012): 67-118. I say that Bhāmaha was clearly influenced by Buddhism because the fourth chapter of his text is an adaptation of the Buddhist Dignāga's logical apparatus and an application of it to literature.
in the Clay Sanskrit Series as *Handsome Nanda*. This poem tells the story of the Buddha's ordination of his cousin Nanda, and Nanda's eventual enlightenment. The poem ends with Aśvaghoṣa breaking off the story and speaking directly of himself as an author, saying:

This composition on the subject of liberation is for calming the reader, not for his pleasure. It is fashioned out of the medicine of poetry with the intention of capturing an audience whose minds are on other things. Thinking how it could be made pleasant, I have handled in it things other than liberation, things introduced due to the character of poetry, as bitter medicine is mixed with honey.\(^{47}\)

The parallels here are obviously strong, even more so as the entire poem itself is about the spiritual value that aesthetics can have for certain beings in certain situations. In the story, Nanda is a young prince who is addicted to sense pleasures, is suddenly and involuntarily ordained as a monk by the Buddha, and is predictably miserable in his new life. When a harsh lecture from an older monk on the drawbacks of sense-pleasures fails to make Nanda feel any better about being a monk, the Buddha brings him to heaven and conjures up visions of heavenly bliss for him, telling him that if he meditates enough he will be reborn in these realms and will be able to make love to all the beautiful nymphs he sees. Unlike the harsh sermon, this works, and Nanda meditates so hard that he actually winds up obtaining enlightenment and no longer has any desire for the heavenly realms that he now has access to. Nanda, in other words, was tricked into gaining enlightenment by means of his desire for beauty, making the poem essentially an extended apology for the idea expressed in the final statement. This is an idea remarkably similar to Mahima's, reminiscent of it not just in language and imagery but in spirit, and although Mahima may not have known Aśvaghoṣa's work directly, Buddhist poems and plays were in wide circulation in Kaśmīr in his life, and he certainly knew something like it.

---

Abhinavagupta is not opposed to this idea. In fact he also refers to the image of sugar-coating on bitter medicine at Abhinavabhāratī ad 1.12. But he casts this idea into the mouth of an anonymous interlocutor representing an alternative interpretation of the verse, and anyway this idea isn't central to his aesthetics. As we have seen in Chapter Two, he has an elaborate explanation for why pleasure, not moral instruction, is the most important thing in literature. Moral instruction, for Abhinavagupta, was something that was included in literary experience, but it was at best a healthy side-effect of reaching the true moral telos that is blissful vimarśa. 

*Attendant* upon this view, as we saw, was the idea that literary language and figures of speech are not just baubles dangled in front of a reader to elicit their interest, but are part of a subtle set of conditions that dilates the reader and dissolves the blockages that prevent them from experiencing rasa, enabling a unique experience. In contrast to this, what Mahima says about princes with tender minds implies that, under ideal conditions, a poem would be written without any figures of speech or literary qualities at all, in the style of a śāstra, and that literary figures and beautiful language are at best a concession to the weaknesses of the reader, who would otherwise be distracted. Their purpose is not to enable an experience that couldn't be obtained any other way, but to enable an experience that should have been obtained in other ways, had the readers been more intelligent and disciplined.

**Conclusion**

Mahima's arguments about literary inference and his arguments about the instrumental moral value of literature are two sides of the same coin. Both of them follow from the Dharmakīrtian philosophy in which Mahima grounds his work. When Mahima makes the

---

48 Abhinavabhāratī, 1:11: yena sarva janaḥ sarasasukumārānurajyad āśayaḥ tad upabhoganāntarīyakatayaiva kāryākāryajñānam apy upayuṅkte kṣīramadhyāvasthiuṣadhopayogavat.
argument that our knowledge of literary emotions is a form of Dharmakīrtian inference, he is forcing something apart that Abhinavagupta had joined. Abhinavagupta saw the language of a poem as part of an ontological continuum that starts with the poet's experience, transforms into the poem, and then becomes the spectator's experience. Mahima breaks this continuum by showing that what we encounter as the words of a poem and what we infer as its emotional content are separate things, that we cognize them in separate stages, and that what the spectator feels and understands might be a result of the poet's activity, but is not a continuation of the poet's experience.

Once this break is introduced it means that the cognition of rasa is a form of illusion. So unless Mahima is willing to say that poetry is just useless hallucination—which it seems he is not—the natural next step is to further borrow the theory of pragmatically useful illusion that went along with Dharmakīrti's theory of inference. Dharmakīrti also thought that inferences were a form of illusion, and that there was a gap between the information that inferences delivered to us and how the world really is. But, like Mahima, he was unwilling to say that inferences are simply useless or wrong. Dharmakīrti redeemed and validated inference with a theory of pragmatic usefulness that made them a helpful and even necessary part of an ordinary being's path to enlightenment—the ultimate moral telos. And this is precisely the theory Mahima borrows in order to redeem the value of literature and bridge the gap that he opened up by grounding his literary theory in Dharmakīrti's theory of inference. Just as with Dharmakīrti and his inferences, the illusion of literary emotions is said to be useful not just for every day purposes but for teaching and inculcating moral values as well; in fact for this it is actually indispensable in many cases.
Mahima's idea of literature as pragmatically useful illusion is thus grounded in an entirely different metaphysics from Abhinavagupta's, one in which there is an ontological gap between the appearance of the world and the way it actually is, and between the words of the poem and what it means. How we know what a character is feeling is inextricably tied, for these thinkers, to the question of what that feeling is, and this leads back again to the question of the status of the cognition—recognition of reality or useful mistake. This chapter has tried to demonstrate that Mahima was aware of this, and that his theory of literature tracks these questions closely along the contours of Dharmakīrti's Buddhist philosophy.

This chapter has also tried to show that this difference doesn't end there but winds up leading Mahima and Abhinavagupta to entirely different ethical conclusions. And there is an issue of logical priority here, the ethics following inevitably from other assumptions. One can't claim that literature has the capability of creating a pleasure that is morally valuable in itself, or conversely that literature is only instrumentally useful to ethical cultivation, without assuming some important things about the ontology and epistemology of both literature and of the world. On the other hand one could very well entertain the idea that the world or our minds are a certain way and thus literature must be that way as well without fully realizing the ethical implications of that claim—that it will make you unable to claim that literature is valuable except insofar as it entices one to moral cultivation, or that it will imply that the pleasure we get from literature is itself a moral telos. So, in a manner of speaking, when Mahima shifts the grounding of literary theory from Bhartṛhari to Dharmakīrti his shift "leads," in a manner of speaking, to a change in literary ethics as well, even if this doesn't describe the biographical process by which he came to this conclusion. In other words, logically speaking, what I am calling the ontological and epistemological "break" leads to an additional ethical "break," a break between the experience of
literature and what makes it ethically valuable. For Abhinavagupta these two are the same thing: the experience of pleasure in literature is an end in itself, at least for the ideal reader. In Mahima, on the other hand, as I have tried to show in this chapter, the pleasure can only be ethical justifiable if it is instrumentalized towards an ethical training that separable from it, and could have taken place without it if the audience members only had less "tender" minds. And once the move to Bhartṛharian Śaivism or Dharmakīrtian Buddhism is made, this difference is sure to follow.
Conclusion

We have now completed our review of the diametrically opposed literary theories of Abhinavagupta and Mahima. We have seen how the central issue driving the development of both their theories is a metaphysical issue, really a group of closely related metaphysical issues, that is closely connected to the religious philosophies of the time. The issues all concern the distinction between how things appear and how they really are: what they look like and what their essence is, what we encounter and what it means. This distinction applies to language (words/meanings), to objects in the world (multiple particulars/pervasive universals), to the human self (actions and experiences/a stable, underlying self), and to epistemology (perception/determination, sign/inference, misapprehension/recognition). It also applies to poetry, where we encounter words and characters and scenes and then apprehend a mood underneath or behind or within them. Poetry is not the same as these other areas, just as these other areas are not the same as each other. There are distinct genres and distinct philosophical arguments in each area. But there is a common theme, even if it is inflected differently, and this common theme connects the realms closely enough that one's understanding of literary theory was related to how one come down on a host of connected questions.

This theme was first introduced into literary theory by Ānandavardhana, when he borrowed terms and ideas from Bhartṛhari for his work Dhvanyāloka. I have called it "religious" because, for educated Kaśmīris in these centuries, it was part of a complicated arrangement of ideas and questions that were all directly related to matters that were considered of ultimate significance, and were not separable from them. The concept of religion has only been a way to track the relationships among all these sorts of ideas. Whether this relationship is made explicit or whether it is only implicit is of no consequence for whether these ideas can fruitfully be
considered religious. And my contention in this dissertation has been that although Ānandavardhana may not have intended his literary theory to be religious, his choices made it so, and that later theorists recognized this and made the connection explicit in various ways. Ānandavardhana, intending to create a radically new theory of literature, set the terms of the debate in a way that deeply implicated religious ideas. Once he did this, it is really no surprise that the debate played out in the way that it did. It was just a development of what Ānandavardhana had already said, whether he knew that he said it or not.

Seeing all of this at once makes sense of the presence of religious ideas, terms, and quotations in the works of Abhinavagupta and Mahima. It also reveals the hidden part of the iceberg of their theories, so to speak; the body of assumptions and connected concepts that makes their positions on literary theoretical issues stand up. Once the religious background is understood, the arguments and positions they take become more intelligible. This background explains why Abhinavagupta takes up the theory of poetic manifestation and defends it in the particular way that he does. It also reveals the reasoning behind many of his positions, such as why the reflexive awareness of one's emotions should be pleasurable or why rasa cannot be objectified as the mood of a character. If we gloss over these positions quickly it might seem plausible or intriguing to say that the aesthete "savors" his own emotions. But for Abhinavagupta it was not simply a plausible or interesting position, and it was not a position he held simply because it seemed correct to him for vague or whimsical reasons. It was one facet of a complex understanding of the universe and the purpose of human life. Abstracted from this structure, the position does not fully make sense.

With respect to Mahima, on the other hand, attending to the religious background makes it more clear why he chooses to respond to Abhinavagupta's theory by turning to Buddhist
philosophy, and what work that philosophy does for him in describing an alternative theory. Although he spends a great deal of time on other issues, the Dharmakīrtian ideas are the heart of his argument against the theory of poetic manifestation, and it is this argument that frees up him to discuss other things, and undergirds many of his other statements. In terms of page count the quotations and discussion of Dharmakīrti might not look like a central issue in his text, but this is only to say that page count is not necessarily a good way to gauge the philosophical importance of an idea within a theoretical framework. The reason Dharmakīrti's Buddhism plays such a role in his text is, in short, that it depicted a universe that was almost the exact inverse of the universe depicted by Abhinavagupta and his major philosophical influence, Bhartṛhari. As Abhinavagupta had used Bhartṛhari to theorize literary experience as a small instance or corollary of religious experience, so Mahima uses Buddhist philosophy to argue that literary experience is actually only a form of mistaken cognition, and has an indirect, rather than direct relationship to issues of ethical teleology. The structural inversion of these two literary theories, I have tried to argue, is not an accident. It represents an application to literature of structurally inverse religious philosophies, religious philosophies that were subscribed to wholeheartedly by Abhinavagupta, and were used instrumentally and in a limited way by Mahima. Although their theories are "religious" in quite different ways, even according to my definition of the term, in both cases it is knowledge of the wider religious context in which they are operating that helps us make sense of their decision to rely on Bhartṛhari and Dharmakīrti respectively. Even more than this, the religious context can help us make sense of some of the religious reasoning and internecine Śaiva polemics that may have led Mahima to turn to this Buddhist philosophy in the first place, despite the fact that he was himself a Śaiva, like Abhinavagupta.
This latter point, in turn, reveals something important and unusual about the intellectual environment of Kaśmīr in these centuries. For Mahima's blurring of the boundaries between ideas borrowed from Buddhism and his own Śaiva devotions is just as characteristic of his time and place as the blending of religion and literary theory. As I mentioned in the introduction, many examples of this can be found in Kaśmīr in these centuries: Abhinavagupta's open admiration for Dharmakīrti; Ānandavardhana's commentary on Dharmottara's Pramāṇaviniścayaṭīkā; the Kapphinābhyudaya, a long poem by Śivasvāmin, a Śaiva poet, about a traditional Buddhist story that showcases the Buddha's glory; Kṣemendra's Avadānakalpalatā, a verse summary of the Buddha's past lives written by a Vaiṣṇava. It may even be the case that the ambiguity of the philosopher Śaṅkaranandana's religious identity, the source of much confusion and debate in modern scholarship, is related in some way to this syncretic climate. The fact that Mahima's debt to Buddhism has scarcely been noticed by modern scholars is most likely because of the gap between our intellectual context and his. In our intellectual world, the assumption is that a Hindu will use Hindu ideas and a Buddhist will use Buddhist ideas, and any departure from this tends to be understood as slightly puzzling and most likely superficial; as some sort of strange grab at comprehensiveness or legitimization (whatever that would mean in this context). Mahima, on the other hand, seems to take it for granted that his readers will accept his annexation of Buddhist ideas to a larger Śaiva framework just as they will accept his quotations of a religious philosopher in a text about literature. He carries all of this out without remarking

---

1 It now seems clear that Śaṅkaranandana was, in fact, a Buddhist. But determining this has required the collective and careful effort of a number of scholars and the discovery of new manuscript material. The question was vexed at least in part because Śaṅkaranandana is referred to so favorably in Śaiva works. See Eltschinger, “Latest News From a Kashmirian ‘Second Dharmakīrti’”. This observation on the syncretic nature of Kaśmīr intellectual life was already noticed in Toru Funayama, "Remarks on Religious Predominance in Kashmir: Hindu or Buddhist?", in A Study of the Nīlamata – Aspects of Hinduism in Ancient Kashmir. Ed. Yasuke Ikari, 367-375 (Kyoto: Institute for Research in the Humanities, Kyoto, 1994) but was only mentioned in passing, and in my opinion the significance and extent of this fact still has not been fully appreciated.
on it explicitly or making a point of it, and if we attend to his text carefully using religion as a heuristic, we can see that he didn't need to. It is all clear enough.

Although Mahima relies more on Buddhist ideas than Abhinavagupta, and although he uses it to ground an alternative metaphysics and epistemology, Abhinavagupta shared with Mahima the assumption that Buddhism had something to offer and was admirable and respectable, even if it wasn't the ultimate truth. He shared this with Mahima just as much as he shared the assumption that arguing about literature and arguing about religion were not two separate things. What was also shared, remarkably so, is the interpretation of individual verses. Mahima almost always goes along with Ānandavardhana's interpretation of original verses. When the young woman tells the monk to wonder freely, Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta, and Mahima can all agree that she is telling him to stay away from the river, and for prurient reasons. Their disagreement was not over what the verses say, suggest, or manifest. Their disagreement was entirely about how we understand this and what it means about us. This is one more way, in addition to what Larry McCrea has pointed out, that these debates are influenced by, or is similar to, debates among Vedic Ritualists, who all agree on the details of how a sacrifice is to be performed, but disagree vociferously on how it is we know that for certain, and how it is that the Vedas authorize it.

This disagreement over the way in which we understand the meaning of the verse also leads to a normative disagreement, in addition to the ethical disagreement I have traced in Chapters Two and Five. In the third chapter of his work, where he goes through individual verses of poetry and shows how the inference works in each case, Mahima suggests numerous emendations to the verses to make them more "effective" on his terms. Often these emendations are bizarre. He argues, for example, that the famous verse "Wander freely. . ." be emended to
have the young woman refer to a fierce bear that has killed the little dog, rather than a lion, because within the world of poetry everyone knows that lions kill young deer, not dogs.² Regardless of whether we agree with such emendations, it should be clear that Mahima has here derived a literary criticism from his literary theory. Because poetic experience happens by means of inference, a good verse of poetry will not impede that inference in any way. If it does, it is flawed. So although he has no disagreements about what the meaning of the verse actually is, his ideas about how that meaning is achieved give us a basis on which to judge the quality of a verse, and to articulate our judgment about it in specific terms, which are non-arbitrary because of being grounded in a deeper description of the universe. Why these judgments so often conflict with actual verses of poetry where Abhinavagupta's do not, and whether this is because the verses themselves were written with a different metaphysical grounding in mind, is an open and important question, but one I will leave for future research.

The normative disagreement is not only about the verses themselves either, but about the connoisseur who appreciates them. For it should be clear by now that although Mahima and Abhinavagupta agree on the meaning of the verse, they do not at all agree on the experience that this meaning provokes, or should provoke, and this means that their literary theories actually imply the cultivation of different sorts of capacities, attitudes, and experiences within the audience. They are not starting with a shared assumption of the ideal aesthetic experience and then explaining it in different ways. They are starting with a shared assumption of what a verse means and then describing radically different aesthetic experiences that understanding such a meaning should provoke in the reader. For Abhinavagupta, someone who reads poetry and looks only to understand, inferentially and objectively, what mood the characters are experiencing, is

²Vyaktiviveka, 465-466.
gliding along the surface of the verse, settling for a cheap and simplistic piece of knowledge when they should be allowing that verse to seep inside them and change their awareness. For a Mahimabhaṭṭan, on the other hand, someone who reads a verse of poetry and tries to experience the bliss of savoring their own awareness is fooling themselves, misusing poetry to engage in something gratuitous, useless, and perhaps even metaphysically impossible. Their differences also extend to their understanding of poetic creativity. Whereas Abhinavagupta describes an ecstatic poet spontaneously emitting verses of poetry that flow from the depths of his being, Mahima describes a craftsmen who carefully and patiently constructs a machine that will produce the proper illusions when set in motion, and both of them, needless to say, are attempting to provoke different sorts of experiences in the reader, even if, on the informational level, what they are trying to say is the same. The implications their ideas have for how a poet is to cultivate and engage in his craft could hardly be more different. And again, to repeat the point, it is the broader set of ideas about the nature of the universe and human life, ideas that can properly be called religious, and which of course may themselves have been shaped or influenced by engagement with aesthetics, that authorizes one or the other view, and allows us to say that this experience is misleading or that experience is shallow, or that this or that is the proper way to write poetry. Religious beliefs allow us to determine not only what is good literature, but who is a good connoisseur and who a good author.

South Asia is of course not the only place where beliefs about literature and beliefs about religion overlapped. Similar stories can and have been told about Europe. Auerbach's famous thesis on the biblical origins of European writing practices is one obvious example, as is the ethically and religiously oriented literary criticism of Matthew Arnold. More recently, Nicholas Royle's discussion of the theological roots of the notion of the omniscient narrator has been
widely read. A more detailed analysis of the similarities and differences between the European and South Asian contexts, and some careful thought about what, if anything, might be gained from such a comparison, is beyond the scope of this project. But it remains an intriguing area for future research and scholarly collaboration, and I hope that this dissertation will be provide a valuable resource if such a project is some day undertaken.

What is also beyond the scope of this dissertation, and also intriguingly related to the issues discussed in, is the views expressed in the literature itself. I have already briefly mentioned above that Mahima's literary criticism leads him to emend a great deal of Sanskrit poetry, and that this may indicate that the poetry was written with a different literary theory in mind than Mahima's. But very often in Sanskrit poetry, and particularly in the longer so-called "Great Poems" [mahākāvyā], and also in plays, we don't have to guess at all, because the poetry is already explicitly and elaborately engaged in both religious and literary theoretical issues. It should be almost banal to point out that Sanskrit literature is concerned with issues of aesthetics and the nature of rasa. Many of the plays are filled with characters reflecting on their own emotional experiences in the terms of Sanskrit literary theory, and the poems use the language of literary theory freely and frequently. Neither should it be controversial to point out that religious themes are central to a great deal of this poetry. If the poems are not already about the exploits and adventures of gods, then the allegorical relationship to religious themes is not hard to find. Kālidāsa's play Pratyabhijñāśākuntalā is a fine example of this: although on the surface it is concerned only with a king and his relationship to a lover he has met on a trip, the elaborate themes of forgetting, losing oneself in aesthetic experiences, remembering oneself, hiding, recognition, and reflection are hard not to read as allegories for Śaiva theology, especially as the

---

play itself begins with an elaborate invocation of Śiva, the form of which sets the structure for the play as a whole.\textsuperscript{4}

But these two observations, that the literature is often concerned with aesthetic issues and that it is often concerned with religious issues, are not often combined, and there is a great deal more research to be done on how Sanskrit poets themselves conceive of the relationship between aesthetic and religious experience.\textsuperscript{5} In fact, this relationship itself seems to constitute a major theme for them, and examples are not hard to find. We have already seen in Chapter Five how Aśvaghoṣa's poem Saundarananda is a meditation on the use of beauty and longing in the Buddhist path. Likewise Bhavabhūti's play Uttararāmacarita, which is about King Rāma, an incarnation of Viṣṇu on earth, makes frequent use of the language of rasas, literary compositions, and plotlines, and often mixes this with language borrowed from non-dual Vedānta. Kālidāsa mixes eroticism and asceticism in Kumārasambhava, Harṣa depicts the self-sacrificing Bodhisattva using a mixture of pathos and heroism in Nāgānanda, and Jayadeva famously mixes eroticism, devotion, the intoxication with beauty, and the sending of messages in his poem Gītāgovinda. Nor is the overlap of religious and aesthetic themes limited to reflection on emotions. Rhetorical figures, another major area of theoretical concern, which have not been discusses in this dissertation, also have a major role to play. Jinaratna's long Jain poem Līlāvatisāra, for example, makes frequent use of a rhetorical figure called dīpaka, in which a long string of seemingly random clauses is suddenly tied together and made meaningful by a

\textsuperscript{4}For the latter observation I am greatful to Guy Leavitt.

\textsuperscript{5}Anne Monius's work is one of the most important exceptions to this (See Monius, \textit{Imagining a Place for Buddhism}; Monius, "Love, Violence, and the Aesthetics of Disgust"; and Monius "Literary Theory and Moral Vision"), as are some of David Shulman's essays. Bronner and McCrea also write on a theme very close to this (Yigal Bronner and Lawrence J. McCrea, "The Poetics of Distortive Talk: Plot and Character in Ratnākara's 'Fifty Verbal Perversions (Vakroktipañcāśikā),' Journal of Indian Philosophy 29.4 [2001]: 435-464.), but they are more interested in the political and gendered aspects of Śiva and Pārvatī's language games than in the theology.
verb at the end, and as the poem goes on it becomes clear that Jinaratna intends this rhetorical figure to be a model for the Jain path to enlightenment itself, where enlightenment is the event that ties together and gives meaning to long strings of reincarnations that are otherwise painful, confusing, and chaotic. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, nor is it intended to be irrefutable. It is only to suggest that Sanskrit poetry was not merely the object of the religiously inflected literary theory described in this dissertation. It also participated in it in ways that deserve much greater attention.

Leaving aside these tangents, however, and focusing again on the literary theorists we have looked at so closely, one obvious and compelling question remains: who is right? Is it the case that, under ideal conditions, poetry stimulates our latent memories and triggers an experience of transpersonal subjectivity that is inherently pleasurable and inherently ethical? Or is it the case that poetry harnesses our natural curiosity and urge to investigate in order to trick us into imbibing moral lessons, presenting us with artificial signs that lead us to draw partially false but instrumentally useful conclusions? And, perhaps more importantly: does reading these theoretical works provide us with a key that can explain our own responses to literature, and our own appraisal of its value? Can we learn something about ourselves from Abhinavagupta and Mahima? Could we actually become Abhinavaguptan or Mahiman literary theorists and critics in the twenty-first century?

These questions are important, but I will leave them up to the reader to grapple with. The point of this dissertation has not been to answer such questions. It has rather been to show what was riding on such questions and how they were understood by a small group of extremely intelligent and highly trained people. We may choose to adopt the conclusions that Abhinavagupta and Mahima reached, and we may try to apply them in modern life. But even if
we don't or can't do this, I still believe that studying Abhinavagupta and Mahima is valuable, and can help us understand ourselves more deeply. If nothing else, it can help us think more imaginatively and carefully about what we are actually asking when we ask such questions, and what we are saying when we answer them.
Bibliography

Primary Sources:
[Note: where necessary, a * indicates the primary edition cited.]


----- *Vākyapadīya of Bhartṛhari, with the Vṛtti and the Paddhati of Vṛṣabhadeva*


**Secondary Sources:**


Chakrabarti, Arindam. “The Heart of Repose, the Repose of the Heart: A Phenomenological Analysis of the Concept of Viṣrānti.” *In Sāmarasya: Studies in Indian Arts, Philosophy, and...*


-----"Remarks on Abhinavagupta's Use of the Analogy of Reflection." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 33.5/6 (2005): 583-599.


-----"Desecularization in Indian Intellectual Culture, 900-1300 AD." forthcoming.

-----"Abhinavagupta As Intellectual Historian of Buddhism." forthcoming.


"Realism and the Pratyabhijñā." forthcoming.


Ollett, Andrew. "What is Bhāvanā?" Journal of Indian Philosophy 41.3 (2013): 221-262.
"Ritual Texts and Literary Texts in Abhinavagupta’s Aesthetics: Notes on the Beginning of the ‘Critical Reconstruction’" Journal of Indian Philosophy. published online April 2015.


Rājendran, C. A Study of Mahimabhaṭṭa's Vyaktiviveka. published by Dr. C. Rajendran, Feroke, 1991.


-----"A Śaiva Interpretation of the Satkāryavāda: The Sāṃkhya notion of Abhivyakti and Its Transformation in the Pratyabhijñā Treatise." *Journal of Indian Philosophy,* published online 19 December 2013.


-----"Devī uvāca, or the Theology of the Perfect Tense." Journal of Indian Philosophy 27.1/2 (1999): 129-138.


Watson, Alex. "Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha’s Elaboration of Self-Awareness (svasaṃvedana), and How it Differs from Dharmakīrti’s Exposition of the Concept." Journal of Indian Philosophy 38.3 (2010): 297-321.


