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Ritual Texts and Literary Texts in Abhinavagupta's Aesthetics: Notes on the Beginning of the 'Critical Reconstruction'

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Abstract In a recent paper in this *Journal* Hugo David discussed the possible sources for the comparison that Abhinavagupta draws between ritual and literary discourse at the beginning of his "critical reconstruction" of the theory of *rasa* in the sixth chapter of his *New Dramatic Art*. The question of Abhinavagupta's sources raises more general questions about Abhinavagupta's use of the concepts and analytical procedures of Mīmāṃsā in his literary-theoretical works. What, if anything, does Mīmāṃsā really have to do with the analysis of literary texts? How, if at all, can we construct parallels between ritual and literary texts such that the hermeneutics of one can illuminate the hermeneutics of the other? And more specifically, what are the examples that might convince us that there are such parallels? With these questions I attempt, modestly, to reach a somewhat better understanding of the beginning of Abhinavagupta's "critical reconstruction," which has already received a disproportionate amount of scholarly attention. I also hope, however, that this passage might serve as an example for how to think of the "borrowing" of concepts typically associated with Mīmāṃsā into the realm of literary theory.

Keywords Aesthetics · Mīmāṃsā · Abhinavagupta · Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka · Kumārila Bhaṭṭa

Introduction

The aim of this paper is simply to revise, in small particulars, our understanding of a passage in Abhinavagupta's *New Dramatic Art* (*Abhinavabhāratī*): the beginning of his "critical reconstruction" (*pariśuddhatattvam*) of the theory of *rasa* in the sixth

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chapter of the text (vol. I pp. 272*ff.*). This passage has been discussed many times before, for two reasons: first, it is of crucial importance for Abhinavagupta's aesthetics, and thus it is important to get it right; second, it's not easy to see exactly what Abhinavagupta means (the poor transmission of the text doesn't help), and thus a completely convincing interpretation has not yet emerged.

Although I do not expect that my interpretation will convince all parties, I do think that any interpretation must address the analogy between ritual and literary texts that this passage turns on, and in particular, the relationship between the established hermeneutic model for ritual texts offered by Mīmāṃsā, and the proposed hermeneutic model for literary texts. What, in other words, does Mīmāṃsā have to do with literature?

This is not, of course, a new question. At least since the time of Kumārila, Mīmāṃsā engaged with questions of language and text in general, and it quickly came to be recognized as a theory of sentential language (*vākyaśāstra-*), although whether and how we should speak of the "disembedding" of this theory from its Vedic ritual context remains an open question. Lawrence McCrea has explored in detail the role of Mīmāṃsā's terminology, concepts, and paradigms in "revolutionizing" the discourse of literary theory (*alaṅkāraśāstra-*) in ninth- and tenth-century Kashmir, and recent work from Yigal Bronner indicates that the flow of ideas from Mīmāṃsā into literary theory had already begun in the eighth century.[1]

My immediate concern in this paper is with two arguments about the beginning of Abhinavagupta's "critical reconstruction." Both address the evidence that this passage provides regarding the appropriation of the concept of actualization (*bhāvanā*) from Mīmāṃsā into literary theory.[2] Sheldon Pollock argued that the passage is adapted from, or at least inspired by, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, who single-handedly transformed aesthetics from a theory of *rasa* "in the text" to a theory of *rasa* "in the reader." He further argued that this transformation specifically presupposes the model of "linguistic actualization" sketched by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa. In a recent paper in this journal, Hugo David argued on the one hand that Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's "actualization" has nothing to do with the Mīmāṃsakas' "actualization," and on the other hand that Abhinavagupta's presentation of the analogy between ritual and literary texts has nothing to do with Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, but rather borrows and adapts from a "wider, more complex network of sources … in which Kumārila's 'effectuation' [*bhāvanā*, AO] with its three correlates plays no evident role."[3] It will be clear that I am convinced by Pollock's argument. I am, moreover, puzzled by the suggestion that we can explain Abhinavagupta's aesthetic theory by reference to a network of sources that links Abhinavagupta to Śabara, Maṇḍana Miśra, and Jayanta Bhaṭṭa, but erases the most influential Mīmāṃsaka of all time, Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, and isolates the thinker who perhaps influenced Abhinavagupta most, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka.

Rather than recapitulating these arguments, however, I want to recontextualize them and offer a slightly revised reading of the passage in question. In addition to

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[1] McCrea (2008), Bronner (forthcoming). See also Rajendran (2001).

[2] Pollock (2010), David (2014). Since I cite the latter from an online-first version without page numbers, I will refer to the pages of the PDF document.

[3] David (2014, p. 8).

thinking about Abhinavagupta's sources, we must think about the overall project in which those sources are mobilized. Why must "doing literary theory" for Abhinavagupta be different from "doing Mīmāṃsā with literary texts"? If Abhinavagupta is "using" the works of other authors, what exactly is he recovering from them? What, in other words, are his textual sources "sources" of: technical terminology, concepts, analytical tools, or entire paradigms? Pollock argued that it is the latter, that we cannot understand Abhinavagupta's aesthetics apart from Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's interventions, which in turn take over the hermeneutical paradigm of Mīmāṃsā, and specifically Bhāṭṭa Mīmāṃsā, for literary theory.

I argue that Abhinavagupta's analogy does in fact depend on the model that Kumārila offered for moving from text to action. I bring into consideration a number parallel texts that clarify Abhinavagupta's choice of words, the strange selection of examples that in my view confirms Kumārila's indirect influence on the *New Dramatic Art*, and the systematic correspondences between the understanding of ritual texts and the understanding of literary texts. On these bases I claim to make a few advances in the interpretation of this important passage.

"This Mīmāṃsaka, Who Knows so much about 'Understanding' …"

Abhinavagupta confronts Mīmāṃsakas throughout his two major works on literature, the *New Dramatic Art* and the *Eye* on Ānandavardhana's *Light on Suggestion*. Some of these opponents are imaginary; their role is to say what a Mīmāṃsaka of the Bhāṭṭa or Prābhākara stripe would say, and among these opponents are the *abhihitānvayavādin* and *anvitābhidhānavādin* in Abhinava's commentary to *Light* 1.4b. At least one of these opponents, however, was real. Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka was the author of the lost *Heart's Mirror* (*Hṛdayadarpaṇa*) and Abhinavagupta's rival in literary studies. Scholars have long noted that Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's technical terminology, so far as it can be made out from the surviving fragments of the *Heart's Mirror*, is indebted to Mīmāṃsā. In particular, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, appears to have been the first to apply the theory of "actualization" to literature.[4] This was a theory that linked meaning, as a property of the text, to action, as a property of human beings operating in the real world. Whether or not Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka presented himself as a Mīmāṃsaka, Abhinavagupta clearly thought of him as one.[5]

Abhinavagupta's responses to Mīmāṃsakas, real and imagined, trade on the common perception that the latter, however sophisticated their analysis of Vedic

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[4] McCrea (2008, p. 389); Pollock (2010). For *bhāvanā* in Kumārila see Frauwallner (1938) and Ollett (2013). As noted above, David (2014) doubts that Nāyaka's *bhāvanā* has any relation to the Mīmāṃsakas' *bhāvanā*.

[5] I do not share the doubts of David (2014, p. 20 and n. 67, with reference to Chintamani 1927, p. 268, Kane 1971, p. 224, and Pollock 2010, p. 149). David perhaps meant that we have no evidence for Bhaṭṭa Nayaka writing a work that was specifically and exclusively about Mīmāṃsā, which would presumably have made him a "card-carrying Mīmāṃsaka" rather than just a sympathizer or admirer. The passages in question include Abhinava's response to Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's interpretation on *The Light on Suggestion* 2.1 (Kāvyamālā ed. p. 63): "This kind of thing might be appropriate in Jaimini's *sūtras*, but not in literature" (*jaiminīyasūtre hy evaṃ yojyate, na kavye 'pi*).

discourse is, are insensitive dolts when it comes to literature. One example comes from a long passage of the *Eye* in which an imagined opponent suggests that understanding *rasa* is simply a matter of inferring the mental state of the character represented by the actor on stage. Abhinava accuses this opponent of being oblivious to the distinction between ordinary inference and aesthetic experience: "Here's something we can ask this Mīmāṃsaka, who knows so much about 'understanding': Do you really think that the understanding we have of *rasa* is the same as the understanding we have of other people's mental states?"[6] In Abhinavagupta's view, Mīmāṃsakas cannot adequately explain literary texts with the theories they have devised for explaining ritual texts, because there is a qualitative difference between the two that Mīmāṃsakas themselves—at least according to Abhinavagupta's tendentious representation—do not recognize.

What exactly is the difference between the two types of texts? Later on in the same passage, Abhinavagupta draws a parallel between them, just as he would do in the beginning of his "critical reconstruction" in *The New Dramatic Art*. In this section, another Mīmāṃsaka contends that suggestion in its most fundamental form —in which a text 'really' means something different from what it 'means' in a conventional sense—would result in a "split sentence" (*vākyabheda-*) that conveys two irreconcilable meanings. Abhinavagupta counters by contrasting the injunctions of the Veda with poetry, and the cognitions that we obtain from hearing Vedic sentences with the cognitions that we obtain from listening to poetry:

> In poetry, the aesthetic factors (*vibhāvādi*) are oriented toward savoring them as soon as they come into play (*pratipādyamānaṃ*). They thus have no need of the conventions (*samayādi-*) on which Vedic sentences depend for their interpretation, nor are they similar to the cognitions which arise from Vedic sentences, such as 'I am enjoined,' 'I will do it,' 'I have accomplished my goal,' since Vedic sentences are oriented toward something to be performed in the future and thus pertain to the real world (*laukikatvāt*). In poetry, however, the savoring of the aesthetic factors appears like a magic flower—its whole sum and substance exists in that very moment—and it has no association either with the past or with the future. That is why the enjoyment of *rasa* is completely different from the enjoyment that happens in the real world, as well as from the enjoyment experienced by Yogins.[7]

The relevant difference between the two types of discourse is their "orientation," broadly what effects they produce, and their orientation depends upon their relationship to activity in the "real world" that exists outside of discourse. Abhinavagupta thus defends Ānandavardhana's claim that literary language is

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[6] *Eye* on 1.18 (p. 74 in Krishamoorthy's ed.): *idaṃ tāvad ayaṃ pratītisvarūpajño mīmāṃsakaḥ praṣṭavyaḥ—kim atra paracittavṛttimātre pratipattir eva rasapratipattir abhimatā bhavataḥ?* See McCrea (2008, p. 393).

[7] *Eye* on 1.18 (Krishamoorthy ed. p. 77); Ingalls et al. (1990, p. 194): *iha tu vibhāvādy eva pratipādyamānaṃ carvaṇāviṣayatonmukham iti samayādyupayogābhāvaḥ, na ca niyukto 'ham atra karavāṇi kṛtārtho 'ham iti śāstrīyapratītisadṛśam adaḥ, tatrottarakartavyaunmukhyena laukikatvāt, iha tu vibhāvādicarvaṇādbhutapuṣpavat tatkālasāraivoditā na tu pūrvāparakālānubandhinīti laukikād āsvādād yogiviṣayād vānya evāyaṃ rasāsvādaḥ.* The same passage is discussed in McCrea (2008, p. 395).

categorically distinct from other kinds of language with a very different kind of argument than those that Ānandavardhana himself marshalled: the cognitions brought about by literary language have a distinctive temporality.

These arguments, however, are based on the distinctiveness not of suggestion (*dhvani-*), but the aesthetic experience (*rasāsvāda-*) in the service of which suggestion operates. Unsurprisingly, then, several themes of this passage recur in the *New Dramatic Art*, when Abhinavagupta argues for the distinctive and supramundane character of *rasa*:

> *Rasa* is not something that already exists, but comes into existence at the very moment of experiencing it. It does not endure any longer than the experience of it, and hence it is distinct from the stable emotion from which it arises.[8]

Taken together, these passages put a major qualification on what appears to be Abhinavagupta's reliance on Mīmāṃsā in the beginning of his "critical reconstruction." Abhinavagupta clearly admits his debt to Mīmāṃsakas for the very idea of the "surplus cognition" above and beyond the cognition of the meaning of a sentence—Mīmāṃsakas, after all, "know so much about 'understanding'"—but disagrees strongly with Mīmāṃsakas about the nature of this "surplus cognition" that arises when one hears a literary text.

What "Actualization" Meant to Abhinavagupta

Abhinavagupta's final position is, of course, very close to that of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, who claimed that "poetic words are of an altogether different nature from ordinary words," and that literature makes us experience something, rather than know something (as *śāstra*s do) or feel some kind of obligation (as the Veda does).[9] One of the sticking points between them was whether and how the Mīmāṃsakas' concept of actualization (*bhāvanā*) should apply to literature.

I take it as beyond all doubt that actualization was, for Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka and Abhinavagupta, "the Mīmāṃsakas' concept," and that it was specifically associated with the theory articulated by Kumārila Bhaṭṭa. But in order to trace these connections more clearly, it will help to distinguish between four levels of specificity in the use of the vocabulary of actualization.

First, there is a general ontological model according to which one thing (*bhāvaka*) "brings into being," or "actualizes," another thing (*bhāvya*). This is evident throughout Dhanañjaya's and Dhanika's summary of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's theory: literary language is the cause (*bhāvaka*), and *rasa* is the effect (*bhāvya*); conversely the "savoring" of *rasa* consists in the actualization within the listener of

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[8] *New Dramatic Art* vol. I p. 278: *na tu siddhasvabhāvaḥ, tātkālika eva, na tu carvaṇātiriktakālāvalambī, sthāyivilakṣaṇa eva rasaḥ.*

[9] *Eye* on 2.4 (Kāvyamālā ed. p. 68): *kiṃ tv anyaśabdavailakṣaṇyaṃ, kāvyātmanaḥ śabdasya tryaṃśatāprasādāt.* The translation is that of Ingalls et al. (1990, p. 221). Cf. also Chintamani (1927, p. 270): *kāvye rasayitā sarvo na boddhā na niyogabhāk.*

the meaning of the literary text (*kāvyārthabhāvanāsvādaḥ*).[10] As Nāyaka himself put it, "what is to be 'actualized' in 'actualization' are the *rasa*s."[11]

The second level is an elaboration of this general sense of "actualization" into a tripartite model, according to which actualization always requires a goal (*bhāvya*-), a means (*karaṇa*-), and a procedure (*itikartavyatā*-). When authors speak of "tripartite actualization" (*tryaṃśā bhāvanā*), they are referring to this model, which was first sketched by Śabara and elaborated by Kumārila in the *bhāvārthādhikaraṇa* of the *Mīmāṃsā Sūtras* (2.1.1). This is a theory of verbal meaning—not, it is important to note, of injunctions in particular. It posits that verbs contribute a primary meaning of "actualization" to which all of the other meanings of the sentence, and often of the surrounding discursive unit, must be subordinated. And it yields an action-oriented understanding of the sentence, in which the structure of sentential meaning is projected onto the structure of action: on hearing the sentence "one who desires heaven should sacrifice," I understand that I am to bring heaven into being by means of sacrifice.

Abhinavagupta occasionally uses this tripartite analytic. He does so most obviously in a passage of the *Eye*: if *rasa* is what is ultimately actualized (*bhāvya*-), then suggestion is the means (*karaṇa*-) and the features of literary language are the procedure (*itikartavyatā*-) by which it is actualized.[12] But here Abhinavagupta is merely turning the tables on his opponent, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka, who had denied that suggestion had any important role to play in the "actualization" of *rasa*. Abhinavagupta seems to be arguing as follows. To speak of the "actualization" of *rasa* is necessarily to speak of the "tripartite actualization" that Kumārila had laid out. But Ānandavardhana had already accounted for the "actualization" of *rasa* by means of suggestion. (Abhinava is, of course, stretch the truth, since Ānandavardhana himself nowhere uses the language of tripartite actualization.) By removing suggestion, Nāyaka would be forced to say that the language of literature itself—either its words or its non-suggestive meanings—can actualize *rasa*. And this position, Abhinava says, would be tantamount to the disproven and passé theory that *rasa* is physically produced (*utpattivāda*-).

Thus Abhinavagupta offered this particular model of the "actualization" of *rasa* just in order to counter Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's own model of "actualization." But Abhinavagupta evidently found it useful, as he sometimes refers to the "procedure" (*itikartavyatā*-) by which *rasa*s are actualized in the *New Dramatic Art*.[13]

Yet there is uncertainty—and there has been for about a millennium—about what Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's model actually was, and in particular, what it has to do with

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[10] *The Ten Forms* 4.42 (p. 220): *kāvyārthabhāvanāsvādaḥ*. See also Dhanika's comment at 4.37 (p. 212): *kāvyaṃ hi bhāvakam, bhāvyās tu rasādayaḥ*.

[11] Pollock (2010), fragment 11 (n. 86): *bhāvanābhāvya eṣo 'pi śṛṅgārādigaṇo mataḥ*.

[12] *Eye* on 2.4 (Kāvyamālā ed. p. 70): *tasmād vyañjakatvākhyena vyāpāreṇa guṇālaṃkārauci-tyādikayetikartavyatā kāvyaṃ bhāvakaṃ rasān bhāvayati, iti tryaṃśāyām api bhāvanāyāṃ karaṇāṃśe* [ed. *kāraṇāṃśe*] *dhvananam eva nipatati*. See Ingalls et al. (1990, p. 225), Pollock (2010, n. 51) and David (2014, n. 76). I confess, however, that I do not follow David's interpretation and conclusion.

[13] Ingalls et al. (1990, p. 35) already noted how deeply Abhinavagupta was influenced by his opponent. Regarding the "procedure," see the beginning of chapter 7 (pp. 338–340), and in the commentary to 1.44 (p. 22).

Kumārila's "tripartite actualization." Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka proposed that aesthetic experience unfolds in three stages, or more precisely, "processes" (*vyāpāra-*): expression (*abhidhā-*), actualization (*bhāvanā-* or *bhāvakatva-*), and experientalization (*bhogīkṛttva-*).[14] Pollock argued that, for Nāyaka, *bhāvanā* "designates on the one hand the aesthetic process over all and on the other the second component of the process," and he understood the process overall as tripartite, like Kumārila's "actualization," comprising the three subsidiary processes as its goal (experientalization), means (actualization), and procedure (expression). Against this view, David argued that "there is little evidence (if any) in favour of a direct link between Kumārila's and Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's concepts of *bhāvanā*."[15]

The dispute turns, in part, on a fragment of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka in which he characterizes the second process as "special kind of actualization" (*anyā bhāvanā*).[16] David does not speculate about what makes Nāyaka's actualization "special." But I think we have two options. Either it is contrasted with Kumārila's actualization—in which case there is a direct link, albeit a negative one—or, as Pollock suggests, it is contrasted with the overall process of "actualization" in which it is embedded.

This embedding of one process of actualization within another brings us to the third level of specificity. So far we have seen actualization as a general ontological model on the one hand and as tripartite model of verbal meaning specific to Mīmāṃsā authors on the other. It was Kumārila, however, who first told us to think of "a special kind of 'linguistic actualization'" that specifically characterized injunctions (*vidhi-*) against verbs in general (*ākhyāta-*).[17] And it was in terms of this process, variously called *śabdātmikā bhāvanā*, *śābdī bhāvanā*, *śabdabhāvanā*, and *abhidhābhāvanā*, that Kumārila's followers thought of injunction. Whenever an injunction is characterized as *bhāvanā*, it is precisely this "linguistic actualization," as it was defined by Kumārila and his followers, that is meant. And a key feature of this "linguistic actualization" is that it, too, comprises three parts, and its goal is none other than the "actualization"—now called *arthātmikā bhāvanā*, *ārthī bhāvanā*, or *arthabhāvanā* by way of contrast—that Kumārila had posited as the meaning of the verbal ending as such.

"Actualization" in the specific sense of the process by which the seemingly dead letters of a Vedic injunction produce real-world effects is Kumārila's theory. Abhinavagupta certainly knew it—who didn't? He mentions *vidhi-* and *bhāvanā*-literally side-by-side, together with the odd term *udyoga-*, at the beginning of his "critical reconstruction."[18] And as David noted, in the first chapter of his *Light on the Tantras* (*Tantrāloka*) he offers actualization (*bhāvanā-*) and obligation (*niyoga-*)

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[14] I adopt the terminology of Pollock (2010), substituting "actualization" for "production."

[15] Pollock (2010, pp. 151, 157); David (2014, p. 22).

[16] *abhidhā bhāvanā cānyā tadbhogīkṛtam eva ca* (Chintamani 1927, p. 271 and Pollock 2010, p. 278 n. 86).

[17] *Explanation of the System*, p. 378.

[18] I strongly suspect that the correct reading is *niyoga-*.

as synonyms for injunction (*vidhi*-), obviously referring to the established conclusions of the Bhāṭṭa and Prābhākara systems of Mīmāṃsā.[19]

Yet Abhinavagupta was also influenced by a contrasting notion of "actualization," which is the fourth and final sense I will discuss. This notion comes from Bhartṛhari rather than Kumārila, and it refers to the natural predispositions that account for "intuition" (*pratibhā*). For Bhartṛhari, these predispositions are defined in contrast to the scriptural traditions (*āgama*-) that also contribute to intuition. Raffaele Torella has shown that Abhinavagupta contrasts an inclusive principle of popular acceptance (*prasiddhi*-), which he draws upon Bhartṛhari's notion of intuition to formulate, with Kumārila's position that scriptural traditions, however popular they may be, are only valid if they are grounded in the Vedas.[20] In his *Vimarśinī*, Abhinavagupta even glosses intuition (*pratibhāna*-) as "identical to scriptural tradition (*āgama*-), namely, what is called *śabdabhāvanā*."[21] Torella translates the last word as "the subliminal impulse toward language," on the basis of Bhartṛhari's usage, but I suspect that Abhinava might also have in mind "Kumārila's" *śabdabhāvanā*, the process by which people intuitively follow the commands of their respective scriptural traditions.

We have thus concluded that Abhinavagupta was quite familiar with Kumārila's concept of actualization. He knew of the model of "tripartite actualization" and used it against Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka. And he knew that Mīmāṃsakas understood the Vedic scriptures generally as a body of injunctions (*vidhi*-), which the Bhāṭṭas understood as actualization of a specific kind ([*śābdī*] *bhāvanā*-), and which the Prābhākaras understood as a transcendent obligation (*niyoga*-). Apparently following Utpaladeva, who was himself following Bhartṛhari, Abhinava preferred to understand the Vedic scriptures as productive of a kind of intuition (*pratibhā*-). These are all of the "technical terms" that Abhinavagupta refers to in the passage in question (assuming, as I do, that *udyoga*- is a mistake for *niyoga*-), and they represent the principal possibilities open in 11th-century Kashmir for thinking of an action-oriented understanding derived from a scriptural text.

But now let us return to the question of what, if anything, Kumārila's specific idea of "linguistic actualization" has to do with the aesthetic theory of Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka and Abhinavagupta after him. In most sources, Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's actualization—the second of the three processes—is defined as the "commonalization" (*sādharaṇīkaraṇa*-) of the aesthetic factors, whereby they are shorn of their particular spatio-temporal reference: Rāma's wife Sītā becomes "woman in general" (*strīmātra*-), which is, in contrast to the historical Sītā, an appropriate object of aesthetic experience.[22] Pollock identified the passage in question, the opening of Abhinavagupta's "critical reconstruction," as the missing link between Kumārila

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[19] *Light on the Tantras* 1.127 (cited in David 2014, p. 9).

[20] Torella (2013).

[21] Torella (2013, p. 464), referring to his *Vimarśinī*, vol. III, p. 93: *pratibhāsaṃjñā iti pratibhānalakṣaṇā iyaṃ śabdabhāvanākhya āgama eveti yāvat.*

[22] See *New Dramatic Art* vol. I p. 271 (*vibhāvādisādharaṇīkaraṇātmanābhidhāto dvitīyenāṃśena bhāvakatvavyāpāreṇa bhāvyamāno rasaḥ*) and *Eye* p. 68 (*taccaitad bhāvakatvaṃ nāma yat kāvyasya tadvibhāvādīnāṃ sādharaṇatvāpādanaṃ nāma*), and the summaries of Mammaṭa, Ruyyaka, Jayaratha, Samudrabandha, and Mallinātha translated by Pollock (2010, p. 164*ff*.).

and Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka.[23] The ritual side of the analogy presents very close parallels with Kumārila's theory of "linguistic actualization." And the literary side of the analogy presents similarly close parallels with Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's theory of "commonalization." On the one side, the sacrificer "actualizes" the meanings of the ritual text by performing the rituals described therein; on the other, the reader "actualizes" the meanings of the literary text—the *rasa*s—by directly experiencing them. Now it is true that we may never know the extent to which Abhinava is drawing upon Nāyaka in this passage. And it is also true that with his reference to "technical terms such as 'intuition,' 'actualization,' 'injunction,' 'obligation' and so on," Abhinavagupta minimizes his debts, direct or indirect, to Kumārila Bhaṭṭa in particular. Nevertheless, I believe that Pollock's equation is largely correct, and can be supported with additional arguments.

Stranger than Fiction

The examples of Vedic sentences that Abhinavagupta selects for his analogy in the *New Dramatic Art* are not injunctions (*vidhi-*), but supplementary passages (*arthavāda-*). One is "they sat for a night," the other is "he cast it into the fire." His selection is motivated by his goal of demonstrating that literary language, which does not obviously consist of injunctions and prohibitions, can nevertheless lead to a certain kind of activity on the part of the person who hears it.

Strictly speaking, however, the "surplus cognition" that Abhinavagupta refers to arises only in connection with injunctions. Injunctions engender such a cognition by their very form—specifically by their verbal endings (*liṅādi-*)—whereas supplementary passages need to be construed with an injunction in order to be meaningful. Supplementary passages do not prompt the listener to postulate a new injunction, as Abhinavagupta suggests. Rather, they serve to convince the listener that an actually-existing injunction is worth following by generating interest in it (*prarocana-*).[24]

Of the two examples that Abhinavagupta cites, the first is probably a mistake for "they conducted a sacrificial session" (*sattraṃ āsata*), which is one of the first examples of supplementary passages we encounter in Śabara's *Commentary*.[25] When commenting on *Mīmāṃsā Sūtra* 1.1.32, Śabara puts forward the objection that the Vedas are meaningless nonsense because they contain passages like "the trees conducted a sacrificial session" and "the snakes conducted a sacrificial session." Śabara explains these sentences as supplementary passages whose purpose is to commend a ritual: if trees and serpents conducted sacrificial sessions, how

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[23] Pollock (2010, p. 158*ff.*).

[24] See Kumārila's discussion in *Explanation of the System* p. 120 (on 1.2.7)

[25] Like all previous scholars who examined this passage, I could find no passage either in the Vedic corpus or in Mīmāṃsā literature that corresponds exactly to the sentence cited by Abhinavagupta. David (2014, n. 10), following Daniele Cuneo following Madhusūdhana Śāstrī, tentatively identifies the passage with *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 7.3.10.5 (*yá evám vidvā́ṃsa ekaviṃśatirātrám ā́sate rócanta evá*), but for reasons outlined below, I think the reference is to *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 7.5.1.1. David (2014, n. 39) says that Śabara's explanation at 1.1.32 "has no evident connection with the topics discussed in the *Abhinavabhāratī*."

much more should Brāhmaṇas do it! The second ("he cast it into the fire") is a standard example of a supplementary passage that "describes a quality" (*guṇavāda-*). The context is a passage in the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* in which Prajāpati cut out his own innards and threw them into the fire.[26] The injunction with which it is connected is "one who desires offspring or livestock should sacrifice a hornless goat sacred to Prajāpati." The connection, as Kumārila observes, is that Prajāpati went to the extreme of cutting out his own innards, and all the injunction requires of us mortals is relinquishing some external wealth.

The two passages cited by Abhinavagupta co-occur, as far as I am aware, in only one other context. That is Kumārila's critique of the independent authority of ritual handbooks (*kalpasūtrādhikaraṇa*, 1.3.11–14). Here Kumārila continues his earlier argument to the effect that the Veda proclaims its independence from human beings through its very form.[27] The Veda, he says, contains certain passages which are so difficult to make sense of that it seems almost impossible that a rational human being could have composed them, and completely impossible that such a person could have convinced others to go on memorizing and reciting them. His examples include "Bṛhaspati sang before the gods" (*Pañcaviṃśabrāhmaṇa* 6.7.1), "Indra slew the dragon" (*Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 2.1.4.5 and *passim*), "Prajāpati cut out his own innards" (*Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 2.1.1.4–5), and "the cows held this sacrificial session and hence in ten months they grow horns" (*Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 7.5.1.1). The Vedas are known to have independent authority in part from of these "discursive remainders" (*vākyaśeṣa-*): if they are so difficult to construe with an injunction on the assumption of their eternality, the alternative hypothesis that they are authored by humans is even more difficult, since their putative author would have to explain them to his students—and on either failing to do so, or refusing to do so, his students would rightly consider him a fool, and the text would never have been transmitted beyond him. Ritual handbooks don't have these "discursive remainders." They are not half as strange, and thus they betray their human origins and secondary authority.[28]

Additionally, Kumārila briefly notes that the present-tense endings we commonly encounter in ritual handbooks can be construed as injunctions, but only under certain conditions. The sentence in question needs to be "commended by a supplementary passage" (*arthavādaprarocitaḥ*) but ritual handbooks lack such passages and therefore do not actually enjoin the performance of rituals.[29] The underlying principle is that Vedic injunctions cannot be postulated at will, and

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[26] *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* 2.1.1.4–5 (part 4, p. 992), *yáḥ prajā́kāmo paśúkāmaḥ syā́t sá etáṃ prājāpatyám ajáṃ tūparám ā́ labheta*. See Śabara and Kumārila on *Mīmāṃsā Sūtra* 1.2.10.

[27] *tena vedasvatantratvaṃ rūpād evāvagamyate* (p. 238).

[28] p. 240: *bahavo vākyaśeṣo hi yeṣāṃ lokeṣv asaṃbhavaḥ / abuddhipūrvatāsiddhis tena vedasya tair api // bṛhaspatir vai devānām udagāyad, indro vṛtram ahanat, prajāpatir vapām ātmana udakhidat, gāvo vā etat satram āsata, daśasu māssu śṛṅgāṇy ajāyantety ādayaḥ katham iva buddhipūrvakāriṇā 'rthavādāḥ praṇīyeran? nityatve sati yeṣāṃ hi kleśena vidhiyojanā / tān kṛtvā 'dhyāpayan kartā susamatvaṃ vyajej jaḍaiḥ //*. The passage in the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* (7.5.1.1, p. 2699) is *gā́vo vā́ etát sattrám āsatāśṛṅgā́ḥ satī́ḥ*.

[29] *Explanation of the System*, pp. 240–241: *vidhiśūnyatayā caiṣāṃ vihitākhyātarūpatā / gamyate na tv apūrvārthapratipādanaśaktatā // vartamānāpadeśo 'py arthavādaprarocitaḥ / vidhitvaṃ labhate 'nyatra kalpasūtreṣu nāsti saḥ //*.

narrative sentences can only be interpreted as injunctive sentences when there is independent evidence that the action narrated, or some quality thereof, is commended (*praśasta-*).

Abhinavagupta's two examples thus seem to be taken directly out of Kumārila's list of supplementary passages in the Veda that are "stranger than fiction," and in any case they would have been well-known as passages whose only intelligible purpose is to "praise" or "commend" the injunctions with which they are connected. They are thus, on Kumārila's understanding, "a component of the 'linguistic actualization,'" because the fact that the injunctions are commended in this way serves as the "procedure" by which a person is induced to follow them.[30] If we want to understand the ritual side of Abhinavagupta's analogy, Kumārila's "linguistic actualization" is not just the most likely source, but among the other concepts mentioned by Abhinavagupta—intuition and obligation—Kumārila's is the only one that even remotely makes sense of the examples. With respect to "obligation," which Abhinavagupta seems to mention *pro forma*, it is noteworthy that Prabhākara's relatively sparse remarks in the *arthavādādhikaraṇa* are almost entirely devoted to proving that supplementary passages and injunctions form a single discursive unit.[31]

Fine-Tuning the Analogy

The parallel between the actualization of *rasa* and Kumārila's "linguistic actualization" should raise a few red flags. Abhinavagupta was no Mīmāṃsaka, and as we saw, he was sometimes openly hostile to a "Mīmāṃsaka's perspective" in literary criticism. Why, then, does he begin his "critical reconstruction" by immediately delving into some of Mīmāṃsā's finer points? The most straightforward answer is that he adapted the analogy itself from Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka. It is unclear whether David thinks this to be the case. Hemacandra, in his adaptation of Abhinava's "critical reconstruction," replaced this passage with a few verses of his own: on cognizing that Śāmba once cured himself of an illness by praising the sun, a person arrives at a "surplus cognition" that he himself should praise the sun. The motivation for the replacement is clear: Hemacandra's Jain readers would have had no use for Vedic injunctions or the supplementary passages that commend them in the slightest, but their literature is full of examples of people who cured various diseases by means of *mantra*s.[32]

Since I believe the significance of "linguistic actualization" for Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's, and hence Abhinavagupta's, aesthetic theory was convincingly demonstrated by Pollock, I will focus on some of the obscurities that remain in Abhinavagupta's text.

The first problem in understanding this passage is the "bare cognition" (*pratipattimātrād*) that "happens first" (*prathamapravṛttād*). What is it a cognition

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[30] *Explanation of the System*, p. 125: *śabdabhāvanānāṅgaṁ vārthavādaḥ*; see pp. 114*ff.* for Kumārila's general exposition of *śābdī bhāvanā*.

[31] Contrast David's contention (2010: p. 22) that "this concept (viz. Kumārila's concept of *śabdabhāvanā*, AO) plays no significant role in his (Abhinavagupta's, AO) analogy."

[32] *Teaching on Literature* p. 98 (the editors tentatively, but in my view incorrectly, ascribe the verses to Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka).

of? And what does it mean that it "incites [the qualified person] to act by reason of [the passage's] historical eventfulness" (Pollock, reading *itivṛttaprarocitāt*), or that in it "a powerful inclination was awakened" (David, following Filliozat and Gnoli, reading *atitīvraprarocitāt*). Both interpretations are grammatically and logically suspect. What would Kumārila's theory lead us to expect?

We start with a cognition of a Vedic injunction, which by itself is inert, in that it does not inspire us to act.[33] This is a cognition of the form "one should sacrifice a goat" or "one should conduct a sacrificial session," and this is the "bare cognition" to which Abhinavagupta refers. It is only when we have a cognition of a supplementary passage that our original cognition of the injunction is "enhanced." And it is enhanced because the action enjoined is "commended" (*prarocita-*) by a "factual report" (*itivṛtta-*), or what in any case presents itself as a factual report. On Kumārila's model, the quality of being commended (*prāśastyam*) is the procedure (*itikartavyatā*) of "linguistic actualization." And it is surely with this parallel in view that the 12th-century *Analysis* of the lost *Wish-Granting Vine of Literature* (*Kāvyakalpalatāviveka*) glosses *itivṛtta-* as *itikartavyatā-*.[34] Hence I translate: "[upon hearing a supplementary passage] such as 'they conducted a night-long sacrifice' or 'he cast it into the fire,' the bare cognition [of an injunction] that first occurred to the qualified individual who is characterized by desiring [the result with which the injunction is construed], is commended by what is described as having happened [in the supplementary passage], and as a result a surplus cognition arises immediately afterwards…"

So much for the procedure. The "goal," on Kumārila's understanding, is the qualified individual's initiation of the enjoined action (*puruṣapravṛtti-*). This I take to be the "surplus cognition" itself, since it represents a determination to undertake the action.

In his account of "linguistic actualization," Kumārila identified the "means" with the "cognition of the injunction" (*vidhijñāna-*). In our analogy, this would be the "bare cognition" that "occurred first." When it is enhanced by the supplementary passages, this cognition, which is itself the "means," is transformed into a surplus cognition, which is the "goal."

One of the most interesting aspects of this analogy is the way that this transformation is said to occur. Abhinavagupta says that "through the occlusion of the temporal reference that is explicitly taken up in the text (*upāttakālatiraskāreṇa*), there arises a surplus cognition in the form '*I* should conduct a sacrificial session,' '*I* should offer,' and so on, which has the nature of a transference (*āsai pradadāni ityādirūpā saṃkramaṇāsvabhāvā*)." The "temporal reference" is clearly that of the supplementary passages, which Abhinavagupta quotes in the perfect tense (*liṬ*). But the terms "occlusion" and "transference" belong to the model of secondary signification (*lakṣaṇā*) that Abhinavagupta had discussed when commenting upon Ānandavardhana's *Light on Suggestion*. In a passage from the *Eye* that sets out the three modalities (*vyāpāratrayam*) of language, Abhinavagupta noted that secondary

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[33] Cf. Filliozat (1963, p. xi): "L'appréhension du sens de l'injonction ne suffit pas en elle-même pour que l'acte prescrit soit."

[34] *Analysis of the 'Wish-Granting Vine of Literature,'* p. 308: *itivṛttam itikartavyatety arthaḥ.*

signification is characterized either by the "complete occlusion" (*atyantatiraskṛtat-vam*) of the primary meaning or the "transference of another meaning" (*anyasaṃkramaṇā*). These features correspond, in Ānandavardhana's system, to two subtypes of suggestion in which the primary meaning is not intended (*avivakṣitavācya*) and which are therefore based on secondary signification (*lakṣaṇāmūla-*). David may be right in suggesting that underlying this idea is a model of injunctive temporality similar to Maṇḍana Miśra's, according to whom a verb incites a person to action "by default" unless it is blocked by an explicit reference to past, present, or future time. As Pollock notes, however, Mīmāṃsakas themselves did not invoke secondary signification in their account of "linguistic actualization."[35]

The role of secondary signification in producing the "surplus cognition" resonates strongly with one of the brief and curious characterizations of actualization in Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's theory: "there is a second process, called 'the actualization of *rasa*' (*rasabhāvanā*), by virtue of which even 'primary significa-tion' is nothing but 'secondary signification.'"[36] Through the actualization of *rasa*, the network of meanings that operate on the plane of the text are projected onto the plane of aesthetic experience, and corresponding to these two planes are an intellectual awareness of the particularized meaning and an experiential awareness of the commonalized meaning. Since Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka rejected Ānandavardhana's theory of *dhvani*, it was important that the various types of meaning can be generated from the expressive power of words themselves (*abhidhā*) without any additional theoretical baggage—a maneuver which, as we saw above, earned him harsh criticism from Abhinavagupta.

Once we understand the primary meaning of a passage such as "the cows conducted a collective sacrifice," the knowledge that the ritual enjoined by a contextually-connected injunction is commended assists us to understand a secondary meaning by neutralizing its reference to a particular time and place. We are able to experience the meanings of a literary text in exactly the same way. In both cases, the "secondary meaning" is the production of something quite new and distinct from the primary meaning: the resolve to undertake a sacrifice in the first instance, and the experience of the aesthetic factors as if they were immediately present in the second.

Abhinavagupta was generally forthcoming about his sources, but his competitive and antagonistic relationship to Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka means that we can't always take him at his word. And it might mean that, for certain key concepts and arguments, "Abhinavagupta's sources" are really "Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's sources." My contention here is that we simply cannot understand Abhinavagupta's analogy between ritual

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[35] *Eye* on 1.4b (Krishamoorthy ed. p. 26); Ingalls et al. (1990, p. 88); *Light on Suggestion* and *Eye* 2.1a-c (Ingalls et al. 1990, pp. 201–211); David (2014, p. 18); Pollock (2010, n. 71).

[36] *Eye* on 2.4 (Kāvyamālā ed. p. 68): *tena rasabhāvanākhyo dvitīyo vyāpāraḥ, yadvaśād abhidhāpi lakṣaṇaiva*. Pollock (2010 , 172 n. 33), however, reads *abhidhā vilakṣaṇaiva* (based on Pattabhirama Sastry's ed. of the *Eye*); the *Analysis of the 'Wish-Granting Vine of Literature'* reads (p. 307) *abhidhāpi vilakṣaṇā*. In the context, I cannot make sense of the reading *vilakṣaṇā*. If Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka operated with a broader notion of *abhidhā* to begin with (which is "completely different" from the current sense of "primary meaning"), why is it *rasabhāvanā* that makes *abhidhā* "completely different"?

and literary texts without Kumārila's "linguistic actualization," a concept which Abhinavagupta certainly knew. If we didn't have this concept, we would have to invent it. For it alone, and not Bhartṛhari's "intuition" or Prabhākara's "obligation," systematically accounts for the generation of an action-oriented understanding on the basis of narrative sentences such as we find in the supplemental passages of the Vedas. The examples of such sentences appear to come from Kumārila as well. The lineaments of "tripartite actualization" and the theory of "supplemental passages" are of course found in Śabara's *Commentary*, as David notes; Kumārila's theories are also summarized and put into a wider intellectual context by Jayanta Bhaṭṭa, as David notes. But: *arke cen madhu vindeta kimarthaṃ parvataṃ vrajet*? The intellectual-historical consequences of making Kumārila a central node in Abhinavagupta's "complex network of sources" on this particular issue have already been elicited by Pollock: Kumārila's "linguistic actualization" provided the template for Bhaṭṭa Nāyaka's revolutionary theory of aesthetic response, in which *rasa* is "actualized" within the reader, which in turn forms the basis for Abhinavagupta's own theory.[37]

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