

World Literature and Comparative Poetics: Cultural Equality, Relativism, or Incommensurability?

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ABSTRACT

In the 20th century the term “world literature” was expanded to include literatures outside of the Western world. This fact bears upon literary theory as well. Literary studies have tried to develop a universal approach to literature. Their presuppositions, however, are rooted in the modern Western notion of literature (e.g. mimesis, literariness). The theoretical work done in comparative poetics offers an important perspective on the problem of world literature. In the West, it was Earl Miner in particular who opened the debate on the commensurability of the world’s literary cultures. The paper points to the existence of literary critical discourses outside of the Western world and argues for the emergence of an intercultural theory of literature. In China, Japan, the Arab world and especially in India the production of literature has been accompanied by a rich critical output. In India, for example, an indigenous literary theory independent of Western scholarship is still alive. The so-called *rasa* theory, first formulated in Bharata’s *Natya Shastra* and later developed into *rasadhvani* by Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, seems, as Patrick Hogan and Keith Oatley argue, particularly interesting because it corresponds with the recent advancements in the study of cognition and emotion. The paper discusses possibilities and implications of the project of comparative poetics for understanding world literature.

Comparative Literature. Literary Theory. Sanskrit Poetics. Cognitive Literary Studies.

The terms “world literature” and “comparative literary studies” are often used to designate a similar course of study. The history of the terms is interconnected. World literature studies or comparative literary studies are, as the terms themselves suggest, literary studies. And although there may not be an exact definition that would find a general agreement among the scholars associated with the discipline, it may be said that they refer to the study of literature beyond national boundaries.

Literary studies are traditionally divided into literary theory, literary history and literary criticism. Whereas literary history has exerted a strong hold over comparative literature, calls for comparative literary theory or poetics have always existed. René Étiemble demanded such a poetics. Ulrich Weisstein, in the introduction to

Einführung in die Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft (1968), which later appeared in English translation as *Comparative Literature and Literary Theory: Survey and Introduction* (1974), claims that his handbook deals with the problems of comparative literary history and comparative literary theory without diminishing comparative literary criticism. In his own handbook of comparative literature, Zoran Konstantinović also discusses the issue of the relation of the three traditional branches of literary studies to comparative literary studies. His view is more sober. According to Konstantinović, the relation of literary history to comparative literature is most evident, whereas the relation with literary criticism and literary theory is more or less unclear (159–62).

In *Comparative Poetics* (1990) Earl Miner tried to bring some clarity to the relationship between literary theory and comparative literary studies. He admits his indebtedness to James Liu, who endorsed the idea of the comparative study of literary theories of historically unrelated critical traditions, such as the Chinese and the Western (5–6). We, in the Western world, are used to thinking that discourse on the nature of literature began with Plato and Aristotle, and continued through Longinus, the neo-Classical thinkers, the Romantics, and so on. However, there have been traditions of thinking about literature in India, China and the Arab world even before European colonization. The basic work of Chinese literary criticism is *Wenxin Diaolong* (*The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons*) by Liu Hsieh (approx. A.D. 465–522). The early Chinese literary critics discussed the problems of the ethical function of literature; they identified and described literary genres and styles, and analyzed the language of literature. In Japan, critical thinking about literature began in the 10th century. Significant speculations can be found in the psychological novel *Genji Monogatari* (*The Tale of Genji*) by Murasaki Shikibu (A.D. 973–approx. A.D. 1014 or 1025). Well-known are also the contemplations of the *Noh* playwright Zeami Motokiya (approx. A.D. 1363–1443) and of the haiku poet Matsuo Basho (1644–1694). Arabic literary studies evolved mostly from the analysis of Aristotle's *Poetics*. However, they went their own way in many respects. Al Farabi (A.D. 870–950), Ibn Sina (most commonly known in English by his Latinized name Avicenna) (A.D. 980–1037), and Ibn Rushd (Averroes) (A.D. 1126–1198) are among the most important Arabic literary critics. *Takhyl*, or imagination, is one of the fundamental concepts of Arabic literary criticism, by which they tried to understand the essence of poetry. They also discussed the issue of the ethical function of literature. The most ancient and systematic thinking about literature, however, can be found in India. Bharata's *Natya Shastra* (*The Treatise on Drama*), which was composed sometime between the 3rd century BC and the 5th century AD, also includes parts about literature (*kavya*). Indian literary theoretical thinking culminated in the works of Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta in the 10th and the 11th century. Post-colonial discourse undermines the Western monopoly on knowledge and takes other perspectives as seriously as those of the West. Considering non-Western literary critical traditions on such question as the problematic of world literature seems therefore natural yet, unfortunately, still not common even from the post-colonial viewpoint. Furthermore, with the increased self-awareness of contemporary Indian poets, the problems of the indigenous poetics become relevant, as Shrawan K. Sharma remarks, even for literature written

in English: “It is remarkable to note that contemporary Indian English poetry echoes the characteristics of poetry as defined by the Sanskrit *acharyas*” (12).

In the West, Earl Miner’s *Comparative Poetics. An Intercultural Essay on Theories of Literature* (1990) is probably the best known work in the field of comparative literary studies that has brought attention to non-Western literary critical traditions. In the present paper I focus only on Sanskrit literary studies and argue that they are of particular interest to Western scholars of literature, especially in relation to the advancements recently made in cognitive science and emotion research, which have started to influence literary studies as well. Although Miner’s attempt at a theoretical foundation of comparative poetics is no doubt the best thought out and the most interesting one, he is not the pioneer of comparative poetics. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy wrote about comparative poetics/aesthetics as early as the first half of the 20th century. His book, *Transformation of Nature in Art*, published in 1934 and still in print today, is considered seminal for the field. Indian scholars headed by K. C. Pandey, K. Krishnamurthy, V. K. Chari, Krishna Chaitanya, Krishna Rayan and C. Rajendran have written extensively on comparative poetics for the past fifty years.

A notable feature of Miner’s take on comparative poetics is his use of genres. He argues that there is an “originative” poetics in every culture. The “originative” poetics emerges “when a gifted critic defines a conception of literature from the genre thought most prestigious” (24). Aristotle’s *Poetics* occupies such a position in the Western world, for example. It is founded on drama, and hence it is a mimetic one. Mimesis is no doubt a category that has shaped Western literary criticism either by way of acceptance or by endeavours to overcome it. From Miner’s studies it surprisingly follows that the Western view of literature is a minority view among literary theories in the world. The rest of the literary systems are founded on lyric and he designates their poetics as “affective-expressive”.

Miner tried to develop a lapidary general map of literary systems organized according to the types of poetics. He can distinguish which poetics is fundamental (Western and Asian), which is explicit (Western and Indian) or implicit (East-Asian, Arabic and Persian) and on which genre they are based (the Western on drama, the eastern on lyric). The traditional genres thus acquire a different meaning; they are elevated to an even a higher level from which they form literary production. They offer an even more abstract generalization than the ultimate organizing principle of classification of texts that it should originally represent.

In Western literary studies, the problem of genres is one of the oldest and nowadays still hotly discussed. Although the modern genre theorists are well aware of the limitations of the traditional genre terms, the triad of lyric, narrative and drama constitutes one of the essential terms of Western poetics. They emerged from the poetological debate that took place from the Renaissance to the late 18th century and tried to classify the exemplary ancient Greek literature into three genres. Although the triad appears in Germany later than in Italy and England, German scholars shaped the debate considerably in the 19th and 20th centuries. Johann Wolfgang Goethe expressed the idea of the triad of literary genres in *Noten und Abhandlungen zu besserem Verständnis des West-östlichen Divans* (Notes and Essays for the Better Understanding

of the West-Eastern Divan): “Es gibt nur drei echte Naturformen der Poesie: die klar erzählende, die enthusiastisch aufgeregte und die persönlich handelnde: Epos, Lyrik und Drama.” (“There are only three truly natural forms of poetry: the clear narrative, the enthusiastically excited, and the personally acting: epic, lyric, and drama.”)

The strongest rejection of genres as mere labels without any solid philosophical justification and epistemic value comes, as is well-known, from Benedetto Croce. Klaus Müller-Dyess sees the post-structuralist endeavour to distinguish between ‘genre theory’ and “the semiotics of écriture” as a mild form of Croce’s critique. He places the discourse about genres into the context of the dispute between the nominalists and the realists, and maintains that a misunderstanding underlies this extreme form of conflict, which stems from the confusion of the ontological issue (pre-existence of ideas) with logic (formulation of general notions) and ignores that a scholarly knowledge cannot avoid generalization (324).

German genre theory distinguishes between two concepts of genres. The first one is a classificatory conception, focusing on the formation of a systematic, logically structured, and ahistorical categorization of genres. One speaks of “genre concepts” (*Gattungsbegriffe*) in this case. The other concept relates to genres as historical “institutions”. These groups of texts are simply called “genres” (*Gattungen*). In what follows I will concentrate on genre concepts only.

The German discourse on genre manifests itself clearly in Miner’s approach. He himself mentions Goethe’s “Naturformen der Poesie” and describes Emil Staiger’s book *Grundbegriffe der Poetik* (1946) as “useful” (7–8). In addition, he says about Wolfgang Kayser’s popular introduction to literary studies, *Das sprachliche Kunstwerk* (1948), which elaborated on Staiger’s genre theory, that it “has much to teach, and it is a pity that it has not been translated into English”. The triad of lyric, narrative, and drama are indeed similar to Goethe’s *Naturformen* or Staiger’s *Gattungsideen*.

In the post-war period, Staiger was considered one of the leading German scholars, but already in the late 1980s he stood for “everything literary studies should not be”: “selective metaphysics, style criticism, impenetrable hermetism, or naïve conservatism” (Breithaupt 6). He fell into disgrace in the 1960s as a result of his attack on modern literature and art during his thanksgiving address while receiving the literary award of the city of Zurich. His academic works in general and his *Grundbegriffe der Poetik* in particular have been as much admired as they have been criticized. And although many may believe nowadays that he belongs to the history of literary studies, his ideas have indeed deeply penetrated into the consciousness of German literary scholars.

Staiger assumes that the number of text types is uncountable in modern times. No genre poetics can account for all isolated cases. Staiger therefore separates the adjectival use of genre names from the substantive use and speaks of *das Lyrische*, *das Epische*, and *das Dramatische* instead of *Lyrik*, *Epik*, and *Drama*. They are a kind of style qualities, which he traces back to anthropological conditions. The newly coined terms are literary critical names for fundamental possibilities of human being in general (“literaturwissenschaftliche Namen für fundamentale Möglichkeiten des menschlichen Daseins überhaupt”). They exist only because there are the areas of the

emotional, of the imaginary, and of the logical, which constitute the nature of human beings (Staiger 209).

In *Grundbegriffe's* later afterword, which was originally a lecture in spring 1948 at Oxford University, Staiger asks the important question, whether his genre theory can be applied to literatures from all over the world. He answers rather modestly: "Ich gebe die Möglichkeit zu, daß alles nur in deutscher Perspektive von Interesse sei. Die Möglichkeit einer weltliterarischen Geltung scheint aber auch offen zu bleiben" (245). Although he says that his genre theory may be interesting only from the German perspective and that the possibility of its application to world literature is questionable, it is difficult to believe he intended only such a limited application of his *Fundamentalpoetik*, because he includes also other European literatures in his analyses. Earl Miner pursued Staiger's questions in his own original way.

Miner's book was received very positively, although the reviewers were aware that some of his conclusions could provoke criticism. Makoto Ueda (1993) ascribes it to the amount of discussed material as well as Miner's courage in making big generalizations. The book has always been praised for its inclusion and understanding of non-Western literatures. It is an undeniable fact that it has to offer many thought-provoking impulses and deep insights. It discusses many problems that a serious survey of the topic has to consider. It is, however, surprising that Miner's essay, as he himself calls his book, has attracted only little attention regarding his employment of genre concepts as a means to identify the fundamental poetics. Though Caroline Eckhardt (1993) states in her book review that relying on genres as a structural principle reflects Western notions, and thus makes the author a target of potential criticism, she sweeps the criticism under the carpet, saying that some organization of the material is necessary and genres serve as an operative, if not indispensable, taxonomy. It is equally bewildering that Anders Petterson, who discussed the issue of genre in the intercultural context for the project *Literary History: Towards a Global Perspective*, contents himself with the statement that Miner uses the traditional genres as a fundamental grid for his comparative discussion (303).

Antony Tatlow (1993), who published an elaborate analysis of Miner's book, sees two sets of problems in Miner's theses. He criticizes Miner's assumption that all Western drama is linked with only mimetic expectations governing Western poetics. Tatlow considers it flawed and states that this flaw occurs on such a basic level that its consequences spread through the whole book. Tatlow, himself a scholar of German literature, who won his name as an expert on Bertold Brecht, criticizes Miner's understanding of Brecht's epic theatre. Miner introduces Brecht's *Verfremdungseffekt* as an instance of estrangement that represents an indispensable consequence of the fictionality of drama, because its representation pretends to be something it is not, i.e. reality itself. After a detailed analysis Tatlow comes to the very opposite conclusion: Brecht's theatre is not governed by mimetic credibility, but, as Miner would put it, by affective-expressive criteria. Tatlow comments on further authors such as Beckett and Shakespeare and also analyses a Japanese play in order to make clear the flaw in Miner's argumentation. Tatlow's main interest, however, seems to be Miner's philosophical realism. Miner namely assumes that literature can be best explained

by means of formal, conscious, clarified poetics on the basis of the obviously universal principle of philosophical realism. Tatlow's slating review of Miner's book brings several important critical observations. His problematization of the thesis about mimesis as an omnipresent principle of Western drama draws attention to the problem of genre. Nevertheless, it avoids the issue of genre concepts, which play a central role in Miner's work.

To my knowledge, the problem of genres in Miner's work has so far been most fully addressed by César Domínguez (2007). Miner's book *Comparative Poetics* is often studied as an independent work. Domínguez remarks, however, that it should be read together with other works Miner published from 1978 to 1993. At the same time, he points to some problems and inconsistencies in Miner's argumentation. Domínguez concludes that Miner's application of genre theory in the intercultural approach to literature ultimately leads to cultural incommensurability. Similarities between Western and Eastern critics are stressed in the intracultural and differences in the intercultural context. Domínguez considers it just another version of the logic of Orientalism and Occidentalism. Thus, understanding between the West and the east is impossible according to Miner. Their poetics are incommensurable: the Western one is mimetic and the Eastern one affective-expressive. Domínguez argues against such binary oppositions (including genres) and for a common ground of communication. However, he is not ready to give up Miner's thesis completely. Genres represent a pivotal point of communication strategies; they contribute to the cultural transfer in the process of which they themselves change. The transfer of genres between the two cultures thus creates the desired common ground.

Domínguez's critique of Miner is partly based on Miner's views about Indian poetics, which does not fit well in Miner's scheme (Domínguez 8-9). Miner calls it affective-expressive. However, he considers its development unusually complicated, because it is bound up with drama. According to Miner, Sanskrit literature has many explicit poetics, but no foundational poetics. The reason lies in the fact that the idea of the autonomy of literature has not developed in India (Miner, "Genesis and Development II", 150).

Indian poetics represented a complicated case for Miner, even a possible falsification of his hypothesis. Miner mentions Indian poetics several times in his book (see pages 8, 24, 82, 88, 141-142, 176-177, 215, 220, 225, and 231). His remarks about it are often insecure. Miner often says that it is very "complex". He was obviously bewildered by the relation of the foundational work of Sanskrit poetics, the *Natya Shastra*, with drama. The foundational poetics is always based on the most respected genre. Sanskrit poetics was for the first time formulated in the context of drama. Miner argues in a paper from the late 1970s:

Indian criticism began when the drama was flourishing – once again reminding us of the generic sequence of Greece. Yet Indian poetics did not produce an imitative system, and for two important reasons. One involves the central Indian critical concept, *rasa*, which refers to a codified emotional complex presumed to be inherent in the poetic quality and its effect on the reader. In other words, an affective presumption underlies the emergent poetics, probably betokening – as many people have suggested – a fundamental lyricism

in the narrative and drama alike. The second, related factor derives from critical practice. Critics tended to examine single lines of drama for their *rasa*, in effect treating what came from drama or narrative as lyric passages. In a word, it was a lyric poetics that evolved. In spite of the encounter with drama after a great narrative achievement, Indian poetics produced an essentially lyric system, one affective and expressive like Tsurayuki's. ("Genesis and Development I", 351–352)

Several years later, in "Some Theoretical and Methodological Topics for Comparative Literature" he speculated that Indian poetics was "a very different, special case" (128). An earlier version of his book contained a short account of Indian poetics. Some reviewers for the Princeton University Press did not consider it readable enough. Miner therefore promised to publish a revised version elsewhere (8). He did it a year later in *Revue de Littérature Comparée* and corrected some of his views from the late 1970s. He published the paper as a sequel to his series of articles "On the Genesis and Development of Literary Systems". His conclusion, as already mentioned, was that neither Bharata's *Natya Shastra* – the oldest known work of Sanskrit poetics, which has had a comparable influence on Indian tradition as Aristotle's *Poetics* has had on the West – nor any other work of Indian poetics represents a foundational poetics. Indian poetics rather shows that "in the absence of other powerful factors, a systematic poetics will conform to the matrix of lyric-based affective-expressive poetics. The centrality of codified affect or mood to even the Indian *Treatise on Drama* offers testimony to that" (150).

According to Miner, the right to drama as a foundational poetics is reserved to Western poetics only. He namely assumes that Aristotle based his *Poetics* on drama. Drama is related to mimesis. In 1987 he wrote: "Only with Aristotle's *Poetics* do we have a properly *literary* conception, and as we all know, he brought his powerful mind into play by defining literature in terms of drama. [...] Out of Aristotle's encounter with one genre, drama (and chiefly tragedy), came the Western understanding of literature in terms of a systematic mimesis." (126)

Miner assumes that Indian poetics also developed in the context of drama. However, he notes, drawing on the indologist Edwin Gerow:

Indian poetics end up being affective-expressive by a most complex route, and it is otherwise interesting for being the sole such tradition to entertain seriously thoughts of imitation in the mimetic sense. Indian critics of drama held that imitation had to be rejected on at least two grounds. One is that it misplaces what is real, which is not the fiction that drama employs but its effect. It is also "psychologically untenable". This is precisely the response that readers of the first and second chapters here would expect from a poetics where affect (in *rasa*) is so central, and precisely in the area that such a reader would expect the issue to arise, drama. (*Comparative Poetics*, 215)

The *Natya Shastra* undoubtedly contains the first known systematic poetological treatise in India. However, in my opinion, the foundations of Indian poetics are to be looked for rather in the *krauncha* episode of the *Ramayana* (*Bala Kanda*, chapter two), which is probably older than the treatise on drama, or at least the parts devoted to *kavya* (in case the first and the seventh canto of the *Ramayana* are not younger than the rest of the work). Valmiki, the traditionally accepted author of Rama's story,

is glorified as *adikavi*, the first poet, in the Indian tradition. The above mentioned episode relates a story about the genesis of the whole work. Valmiki was a seer. Once he went with one of his disciples to take a bath in a river. After completing his bath, Valmiki saw a pair of mating cranes. A fowler shot the male crane with an arrow and the bird fell from the tree. Seeing the weeping female crane, he got angry and immediately cursed the fowler with the verse (1.2.15):

*ma nishada pratishtham tvam agamah shashvatih samah
yat kraunchamithunad ekam avadhim kamamohitam*

“May you not have peace of mind for endless years, O fowler, since you killed one of the pairs of cranes, infatuated with passion.” Valmiki wondered about the words he had just uttered and said (1.2.18):

*padabaddho 'ksharasamas tantrilayasamanvitam
shokartasya pravritto me shloko bhavatu nanyatha*

“Let this utterance made by me while I was stricken with grief, (nay) set in four metrical feet, each containing an equal number of letters (*viz.* eight) and possessing the rhythm of a song that can be sung by a lute, be accepted as (real) poetry and not otherwise.” His words uttered in grief (*shoka*) should be known as *shloka*. The word *shloka* designates a special kind of meter containing eight syllables in a quarter verse (*pada*). But in a wider sense the word can also refer to poetry in general. The episode thus depicts the birth hour of poetry and of the poetological reflection as is also evidenced by Anandavardhana’s and Abhinavagupta’s analyses in the *Dhvanyaloka* (Ingalls et al. 115–119). The god Brahma comes later to Valmiki’s hermitage, tells him that what happened was his will, and encourages him to use the verse as a basis for writing down Rama’s story.

In the episode several fundamental terms of the later *rasa* theory appear. The seer Valmiki is overwhelmed by compassion (*karuna-veditvat*, 1.2.14) on seeing the crane’s distress (*shokartenasya shakuneh*, 1.2.16). The word *karuna* used in the text is namely one of the traditional *rasa*, that are systematically explained in the *Natya Shastra*, and *shoka* is the corresponding permanent emotion (*sthayibhava*), on which the *rasa* is based. The *Ramayana* apparently presupposes the *rasa* theory not only in this episode. Valmiki seems to be familiar with it. He knows the term *rasa* and its traditional eightfold division (1.4.9). Besides the researchers assume that Bharata had predecessors and that the present version of the *Natya Shastra* is the result of a longer development. For example, in the *Kavya Mimamsa*, Rajashekhara (circa 10th century), if one is to believe him, states that the originator of the *rasa* theory was Nandikeshvara. However, no work of his has survived (Kane 1–2).

If one assumes that the *krauncha* episode represents the first poetological reflection in India or that the *Ramayana* is based on the *rasa* theory, Miner’s thesis about the lyric character of the fundamental poetics of Indian literature is apparently strengthened. Although the episode cannot claim any historicity and one has to interpret it as a mythological representation of an idea, it does support his thesis about the development of genres. Valmiki’s poetic adaptation of the sorrow over the fate of the crane couple represents the lyric stage and the *Ramayana* the narrative one.

Consequently, drama is the last genre that arises only after the appearance of lyric and narrative. However, Indian narrative and drama is, as that of other Asian cultures, affective-expressive. Indian poetics has thus also a fundamental poetics that acquired a more elaborate form later in the *Natya Shastra* and the *Dhvanyaloka*.

Another piece of evidence for the thesis that Indian poetics may not be derived from drama, although its first systematic treatment is associated with a text on drama, is furnished by the now almost forgotten debate about the origination of Sanskrit drama from the New Attic Comedy. The idea was suggested in the second half of the 19th century by two German indologists, Albrecht Weber (1852[1882]) and Ernst Windisch (1882). By the mid-20th century it had disappeared from the critical discourse. Steven F. Walker (2004) has recently tried to revive this debate with new arguments, although he is well-aware that the evidence is inconclusive. Nowadays it is believed that drama developed independently in Greece, India, China, and Japan. Walker points out to the accepted chronology of the origin of theatre in these countries – Greece (6th century BC), India (approx. 2nd century BC), China (7th century CE) – and rejects the proposition that theatre could have originated from, for example, ritual performance. He rather argues that the theatre, similarly to the wheel, was invented only once, and the idea of theatre – but not the particular form of theatre – spread to other countries. This idea could have reached India in the 3rd to the 1st centuries BC, i.e. in the time of Greco-Indian and Indo-Greek kingdoms in North-West and North India. If so, it may mean that the *rasa* theory could have originated independently of drama. This suggestion seems plausible because drama is not indispensable for it. It is however impossible to back it up by any historical arguments.

Indian poetics seemingly fits Miner's scheme better than he himself thought although much remains open and uncertain on account of the gaps in early Indian history of literature and poetics. Indian poetics represented only one problem for Miner's thesis. However, his critics such as Antony Tatlow and César Domínguez have discovered important problem areas in Miner's argumentation. In my opinion, his thesis is problematic because it takes genre terms as its point of departure that are problematic in themselves: be it the number of genres (for example, he subsumes the didactic genre to the lyric), their definitions (the main part of his book is devoted to the definition of the three genres), or the problem of philosophical realism.

Miner presents the world's literary systems, as pointed out by Domínguez, as essentially incommensurable. In contrast, the work recently done in cognitive literary studies by Patrick Hogan suggests that one may also approach them from the same perspective. In his introductory *Cognitive Science, Literature, and the Arts* (2003), Hogan devotes considerable attention to emotion and proposes a description of how literature makes us feel. He relies on Sanskrit poetics in relating emotion to literature. He writes:

The sources of literary emotion have been examined by a number of European thinkers, beginning with Plato. But the accounts most closely related to cognitive science are probably those that derive from the ancient and Medieval Sanskrit theorists. It is worth considering the ideas of these writers before going to a full-fledged cognitive account – in particular because some recent cognitive treatments of literary emotion (including those by

Oatley) have drawn heavily on the Sanskrit tradition. (155–156)

Hogan's other book *The Mind and Its Stories* (2003) is a deep and extensive treatise on narrative universals and human emotion. He makes use of a vast body of literary texts from different cultures in order to show that emotions are not specific to culture but are universal. He argues that the stories people admire in different cultures follow, to a great extent, a limited number of patterns which are bound up with emotions. He uses the *dhvani*-theory of Indians Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta to explain how one experiences literature emotionally. Hogan especially appreciates Abhinavagupta's idea about the role of memory in the emotional response to literature. He expounds and develops his theory in line with contemporary cognitive science. The Indian *dhvani*-theorists explain that *dhvani* is a meaning bound up with feeling. *Dhvani* may be, though imprecisely, likened to connotation. Hogan himself explains *dhvani* in terms of priming, a psychological term describing a form of human memory process that does not rely on the direct retrieval of information but on perceptual experience.

Similarly, Keith Oatley, inspired by Patrick Hogan's employment of Sanskrit poetics, writes:

For the future, I suggest that two further aspects of narrative need to be considered. One is what I call the suggestion structure that depends on the resonances a piece of literature has for each reader personally. The association structure corresponds to the suggestiveness (*dhvani*) that the medieval Indian literary theorists argued would prompt specific literary emotions (*rasa*). ("Writingandreading" 170)

Rasa is a specific emotional experience that comes about under specific conditions. Bharata explains in the *Natya Shastra* that *rasa* is the result of the combination of emotional stimuli (*vibhava*), expressions of emotions (*anubhava*) and accompanying emotions (*vyabhicharibhava*).

Sanskrit terms such as *rasa*, *bhava*, *vibhava*, *anubhava* etc. seem to create a good basis for affective criticism. They show that emotive concepts do not necessarily have to be passive and involuntary, but are based on specific features of the literary text. Bharata's explanation of the "birth of *rasa*" shows precisely how they are guided and managed by the literary text. The current research in analytical philosophy and cognitive psychology gives confirmation of Bharata's analysis of the constituents of *rasa*. Ronald de Sousa (1980) speaks of "the evoking situation" and "paradigm scenarios", which are similar to the concept of *vibhava*; his notion of effect corresponds to *anubhava*. Similarly, Keith Oatley (*Best Laid Schemes* 19–21) recognizes "eliciting conditions of emotions" and their "expressions" or "action consequences". Paul Ekman (2004) speaks about "triggers" of emotions and their "expressions". Jenefer Robinson argues that formal devices manage our emotional response to literature. She lists, among others, character and setting as such formal devices. They correspond to supporting (*alambana*) and excitive (*uddipana*) stimuli (*vibhavas*) respectively.

Earl Miner relies on Aristotle's *Poetics* to define the Western literary system, but fails to recognize that Aristotle himself proposed an affective theory. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1105b) he spoke of eleven emotions (*pathe*): appetite (*epithumia*),

anger (*orge*), fear (*phobos*), confidence (*thrasos*), envy (*phthonos*), joy (*chara*), love (*philia*), hate (*misos*), yearning (*pothos*), desire to emulate (*zelos*), and pity (*eleos*). Furthermore, Aristotle's *Rhetorics* offers a detailed explanation of these emotions except for appetite. And most importantly, in the *Poetics* itself he says that the aim of tragedy is to evoke pity (*eleos*) and fear (*phobos*).

The problem of emotion was dealt with in detail, for example, also in René Descartes's *Passions de l'âme* (1649, *Passions of the Soul*). He recognized six primitive emotions (*passions primitives*): admiration, love, hatred, desire, joy, and sadness. The period after WWII witnessed a wave of interest in the classification of emotions. In particular, the ones proposed by Paul Ekman or Keith Oatley and Philip Johnson-Laird have become very popular. Hogan (*The Mind*, 76–77) was the first to note the remarkable similarity between modern scientific lists of basic emotions and ancient Sanskrit literary theory. The *Natya Shastra* lists eight permanent emotions: mirth (*hasa*), sorrow (*shoka*), fear (*bhaya*), anger (*krodha*), disgust (*jugupsa*), wonder (*vismaya*), enthusiasm (*utsaha*) and love (*rati*). The first five overlap with the five basic emotions of Oatley/Johnson-Laird. However, Hogan notices rightly that “the Sanskrit theory does not require that the emotions specified in the theory be basic. It requires only that they have some sort of special place in aesthetic feeling” (80–81).

The similarity between the theorization of emotional engagement with literature by Sanskrit theorists and contemporary emotion research implies similarity or equality of literary systems in India and in the West and thus contradicts the existence of fundamental differences between these literary cultures as formulated by Miner. However, despite these similarities it would be a mistake to ignore the results of some of the less theoretical but equally meticulous comparative studies. Kanti Chandra Pandey, for example, sees the following difference between Sanskrit and Western dramatists:

[T]here is a fundamental difference between the Western and the Indian dramatists, for the simple reason that the experiences which they intend to arouse are [...] essentially different. Accordingly, while the Western dramatists, Shakespeare etc., for instance, present the character, manifesting itself in action; the Indian dramatist presents a basic mental state at the highest relishable pitch in an ideal situation. (387)

Similarly, Daniel H. H. Ingalls speaks of

the basic difference of movement in Sanskrit works of literature from that in European works. This difference, between a tortuous or cyclical movement, a periodic distancing from and return to the predominant theme, as against the climatic achievement of a final result, is found, I believe, in all the traditional Indian arts. The Indian style is found only rarely in the West, as in the music of César Franck or in Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. (37–38)

Sanskrit poetics has already to some degree informed the contemporary discourse on emotion in literature which is a good sign of open-mindedness and willingness to transcend the Eurocentric point of view in literary theory. And although language studies, as is well-known, have benefited from the views of Sanskrit grammarians in many areas, the knowledge of advanced literary studies in pre-colonial India has, unfortunately, remained the domain of specialists in Indic studies. The current emotion

research shows that the observations of Sanskrit theorists were insightful and may have a more general significance outside of the literature on which they are based. The descriptions of various mental states and processes may prove culture-specific: some of the principles of literary response, however, are likely to be universal.

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