Chapter Two

REVIVAL AND REINTERPRETATION OF SANSKRIT POETICS

I

The history of modern Indian criticism shows that rather than being obliterated during the colonial period Sanskrit poetics has passed through cycles of renovation and reinterpretation. This phenomenon can be explained sociologically with the theory of social change forwarded by Milton Singer. He argues that India traditionalises modernity rather than modernise tradition.[1] However such theoretical constructs used in social science may not explain the complexities in literary criticism. It can be seen that in India, repeated attempts have been made to synthesise or combine critical concepts from the East and the West. But no attempt has ever been made at Sanskritisation of Western canons or concepts. Therefore the tendency of revival and reinterpretation of Sanskrit poetics, which forms a major trend in Indian literary criticism, calls for a critical examination. The trend has been 'pan Indian' in nature and the critics are not confined to just one single language or literature.

The major critics belonging to the revivalistic

trend who write in English are Ananda Kentish Coomaraswamy (1877-1947), M. Hiriyanna (1871-1950), Krishna Rayan (b.1928), and Bimal Krishna Matilal (1935-1991).[2] This chapter is devoted to the discussion of some of their significant works, and the general contribution they have made to Indian literary criticism.

II

The beginning of the fresh interest in Sanskrit literature and criticism in the colonial period can be traced back to the Royal Asiatic Society founded by Sir William Jones.[3] He, and his contemporary European Indologists applied themselves to a systematic study of Sanskrit. The Royal Asiatic Society encouraged their research and published the results of their efforts in English. In due course the study of Sanskrit in English gained respectability. Thus the convention of writing about Sanskrit texts in informative, elementary, and simplifying style for not necessarily well informed Western readers, originates in the Early writings of the Royal Asiatic Society. The following passage from Jones illustrates the point :

> The first Indian Poet was VALMICI, author of the Ramayana, a complete Epic Poem on one continued, interesting, and heroic action; and the next in celebrity, if it be not superior in reputation for holiness, was the Mahabharata of VYASA; to him are ascribed the sacred Puranas .....[4]

As obvious sequels, the traditions of translation and transliteration and the system of equivalence between Sanskrit and English began, sometime in the nineteenth century.

Despite the dominant position of the English language, Sanskrit occupied a significant cultural position almost till the independence of India. At the higher levels in education, English and Sanskrit as languages, were given equal importance.[5] It was therefore possible for the educated Indian critic to live in both Indian and English traditions simultaneously. Nonetheless, In response to the Christian missionaries' activities, the Hindu religious fervour revived, and the study of liturgical and secular texts in Sanskrit caught up.[6] The colonisation of India did not disrupt the literary traditions in vernacular languages totally. Many forms of literature remained intact and convention-bound. Hence appropriate critical terminology became a requirement, and the practice of using an admixture of English and Sanskrit critical concepts and terms gained currency.

After 1857, and particularly after the emergence of the Indian National Congress, nationalism became the zeitgeist. Nationalism was a social phenomenon and did not just mean the national struggle for liberation. For cultural leaders like Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo,

it also meant conservation and revival of Indian culture. There was a surge of pride in the national past, as one manifestation of which, the revivalistic trend in Sanskrit Poetics stands out.

The twentieth century India has witnessed vital social transformations, as the society gradually moved from the feudalistic to the democratic mode. This major transition has created problems of cultural identity. The effect of this crisis of identity in the literary sphere has been the ongoing debate about the relevant paradigms of criticism. The dilemma of choice between the Western and the native paradigms has been an essential feature of the modern Indian literary criticism. That is the reason why the Sanskrit and the Western critical canons have been regarded as alternative and interchangeable sets. The fresh interest in the Sanskrit critical tenets as seen in the writings of M. Hiriyanna, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Krishna Rayan and B.K. Matilal is of academic nature. It is initiated by the interinsic strength, logicality, tersensess of idiom, and flexibility of the theories concerned. The interest in Sanskrit poetics is revived and is sustained during this century on account of the features discussed.

III

Ananda Coomaraswamy occupies a place of prominance among the Indian critics who pioneered reinterpretation of Sanskrit poetics. A scholar and a staunch nationalist, Coomaraswamy had more than academic interest in ancient principles of art and literature. Though his scholarship was versatile, he had a unique reputation in the West as an Oriental art critic; and in India he has been regarded with reverance on account of his profound involvement in India's cultural nationalism.[7]

Coomaraswamy has a biography which is similar in some ways to that of two other renaissance stalwarts, Tagore and Sri Aurobindo. He was nominally an Indian, or was one in a wider sense. He spent his early childhood in Ceylon and grew up in England. He returned to Ceylon as a geologist in British service and embarked upon a career as a scientific explorer. In the course of his scientific investigations Coomaraswamy was exposed to the rural life in the sub-continent and he intuitively felt that the binding force behind the indigenous cultures was a set of aesthetic principles. In the forward to Medieval Simhalese Art[8] he says :

> This book is a record of the work and the life of the craftsman in a feudal society not unlike that of Early Medieval Europe. It deals, not with a period of great attainment in fine art, but with

> a beautiful and dignified scheme of peasand decoration, based upon the traditions of Indian art and craft ..... Mediaeval Sinhalese Art was the art of a people for whom husbandry was the most honourable of all occupations, amongst whom the landless man was a nobody, and whose ploughmen spoke as elegantly as courtiers. It was a religious art, and so a popular art. It was also essentially a national art; the craftsmen, forming an integral part of the Civil Service, were rewarded with grants of State land, no less than soldiers or husbandmen. It was the art of a people whose kings were "one with the religion and the people".[9]

Coomaraswamy devoted his energy to the exploration of the unifying aesthetic principles of Indian culture. Presenting the aesthetic integration of Indian society was the mission of his life. Apart from collecting objects of Indian art, he undertook an exhaustive survey of the philosophical literature on beauty. His interest in Indian aesthetics was a by-product of this larger project.

Coomaraswamy shared a spirit of cultural crusade with Tagore who was an important contemporary of his. Both saw the presentation and the rejuvenation of Indian art and aesthetic sensibility as being of pivotal importance in creating a national consciousness. Coomaraswamy was thus one of the founders of the modern Indian nationalism. He may not have been a citizen of India in the strict legal sense. But as a pioneer nationalist, and as a commentator on ancient Indian wisdom, he deserves to be an honoured Indian. Coomaraswamy's

recognition as a scholar in India has legitimised this status. Therefore, the question of his national identity is generally not raised.

If Coomaraswamy is known in India mainly on account of his Dance of Shiva,[10] it is because of the peculiar history of his publications. His writings, not being available in book form in India, were not a part of any academic curriculum till recently. Tagore and Sri Aurobindo both being reputed leaders and writers, their writings were relatively better known. A glance at the list of publications by Coomaraswamy[11] reveals that most of them were published in the West. At the turn of the present century, Indian literary theories were not academically respectable either in India or in the West. Coomaraswamy was mainly thought of as an art critic and only marginally as a literary critic. However Coomaraswamy published copiously on cultural nationalism, aesthetics, philosophy of criticism, actual works of art and critical texts of antiquity. The earliest of his articles on arts was published in 1906.[12] In the next few years the frequency with which Coomaraswamy turned to art and art criticism was remarkable. In 1908 alone he published three books related to Indian art. Interestingly, his concern with nationalism and art coincided with Sri Aurobindo's. He published his Dance of Shiva in 1920, immediately after Sri Aurobindo's

The Future Poetry was published in the book form in 1918, though it appeared as a series of essays earlier. From this point onwards Coomaraswamy's interest took two distinct paths. One was his professional work on paintings and arts and the other was his increasing interest in philosophy.

The corpus of Coomaraswamy's publications reveals his range of learning, and also the consistency with which he continued writing throughout his active years. If on the one hand he knew European and Indian classical languages, and was totally familiar with various forms of art, on the other, he was capable of subtle philosophical thinking.

In his discussions of literary principles, aesthetics, or fine arts, Coomaraswamy reveals his preference for antiquity. In discussing ancient art, he concentrates on the actual art objects, the attitudes to art, and the symbolism behind the art forms. While this methodical approach in itself contributes to creating a style of approaching Indian art, it is also a reaction to the condescending European attitude to Indian art. The Indian arts, were generally deemed to be primitive and were unacceptable in comparison to the Greek arts by the Western critics. An obvious example of such gross lack of understanding is found in James Mill's description of the arts and literature of India. For Mill the Ramayana and the

Mahabharata are 'miscellanies', the style of architecture in India, is 'rude' and the temples are 'pagodas' which have no beauty in comparison to the Greek monuments.[13]

Avoiding the other extreme of praising everything Indian reverentially, Coomaraswamy developed a 'transcendental' style of approaching Indian arts. Rather than developing a theoretical and chronological framework to relate one style with another, he prefers to make aesthetic evaluations. The following passage from his article 'Indian Images with Many Arms' is a clear indication of his style and approach :

> In these figures we cannot speak of the many arms as 'additional members' because in a human being they might appear to be such. We have here a work of art which is, or is not a unity. If the work is a unity we can no more speak of added elements, than we can speak of ornament in a work of art as something added to an expression that would not otherwise be beautiful. It is not by addition or removal that we create. Before these works we can only ask, are these, or are they not, clear and impassioned expressions of their subject matter.[14]

In any given culture critical canons issue from an ideology which maintains its prescriptive nature. For instance, in either the Marxist or Psycho-analytic method of criticism, a literary text or a work of art is judged against a pre-formulated rationale. Another method of criticism follows empiricism (the touchstone method). Accordingly a critic defines his taste in terms

of a group of works, or a trend or a period subsequently either accepting or rejecting the works which may or may not cohere to the formulated canons. Coomaraswamy avoids both practices and pursues art with considerable openness of mind. He seems to believe that each work of art may be judged on its own merit, which leads one to term his method 'phenomenological'.

Coomaraswamy is able to realise that Oriental art is essentially symbolic. But he wants to articulate the central organising principle behind it. He believes that the Indian tradition of knowledge is at once metaphysical and empirical. Distinguishing the empirical and the metaphysical perceptions of the minds he states :

> ..... the empirical science is only concerned with the man himself in search of a soul, the metaphysical science is concerned with this self's immortal self, the Soul of the soul. This self or Person is not a personality, and can never become an object of knowledge, but is always its substance; it is the living spirant principle ..... in all transmigrations and evolutions.[15]

In his understanding Indian knowledge assumes holistic dimensions. He perceives certain unity or correspondence between knowledge and life as lived. It is therefore possible for him to appreciate the place of art in the context of the ends of life. For him, that which synthesises the abstract and the real, is art, and though belonging to neither entirely, it transcends both. Such a

view of art is possible because he thinks of it as being symbolic in the ultimate analysis.

In an essay titled 'Samvega'[16] Coomaraswamy discusses the nature of art experience. 'Samvega' means the moment of experiencing art, or the moment during which the art experience crystalises into a cognitive perception. It is thus an epistimological event, the event of cognition being perceived. For Coomaraswamy, 'Samvega' turns into a significant psychological archetype, thus the concept proper is infested with a capacity which may not have been associated with it originally. For him :

> ..... Samvega is a state of shock, agitation, fear, awe, wonder, or delight induced by some physically or mentally poignant experience. It is a state of feeling, but always more than a merely physical reaction. The "shock" is essentially one of the realization of the implications of what are strictly speaking only the aesthetic surfaces of phenomena that may be liked or disliked as such. The complete experience transcends this condition of "irritability".[17]

To add to what he has stated, an object of beauty provides 'stimulus' for 'reflection'. It is not the object of beauty, but its 'perception' which causes 'recollection', and the resulting 'shock' may be one of 'super sensual delight'. Coomaraswamy's interpretation of Samvega has a Behaviouristic orientation. Yet strict adherence to that line of psychology would render the concept of Samvega unacceptable. So he adds that after

'contemplation' of the subject of beauty and after the 'shock' of delight, the dominant mood is of 'equanimity'. The very realisation of art as a transcendant phenomenon leads to Samvega. It is a profound experience, (almost) a spiritual shock, or a moment of enlightenment. Though Samvega occurs on account of visual-sensory perceptions of the highest intensity, for Coomaraswamy, what happens to the consciousness through it is of importance. It is possible to draw a parallel between what Abhinavagupta found to be of importance in art experience, art experience leads to sublimation of consciousness (cheto-vistara), which Coomaraswamy finds significant in Samvega. He says :

> Samvega, then, refers to the experience that may be felt in the presence of a work of art when we are struck by it, as a horse may be struck by a whip. It is however, assumed that, like the good horse, we are more or less trained, and hence that more than a merely physical shock is involved; the blow has a meaning for us, and the realization of that meaning, in which nothing of the physical sensation survives, is still a part of the shock. These two phases of the shock are, indeed normally felt together as parts of an instant experience; but they can be logically distinguished, and since there is nothing peculiarly artistic in the mere sensibility that all men and animals share, it is with latter aspect of the shock that we are chiefly concerned. In either phase, the external signs of the experience may be emotional, but while the signs may be alike, the conditions they express are unlike. In the first phase, there is really a disturbance, in the second there is the experience, of a peace that cannot be described as an emotion in the sense that fear and love or hate are emotions. It is for this reason that Indian rhetoricians have always hesitated to reckon "Peace" (santi) as a "flavour" (rasa) in one category with the other "flavours".

> In the deepest experience that can be induced by a work of art (or other reminder), our very being is shaken (samvijita) to its roots. The "Tasting of the flavour" that is no longer any one flavour is, as the Sahitya Darpana puts it, "the very twin brother of the tasting of God"; it involves, as the word "distinterested" implies, a self-naughting - a semetipsa liquescere .....[18]

He has thus accepted the basic idea of the consciousness undergoing a change while experiencing art. But in his conception it gets 'dissolved' and not extended. The state of consciousness is thus of cheto laya and not of cheto-vistara while experiencing art. Bringing this concept to light is a proof of Coomaraswamy's commitment to erudition.

Coomaraswamy's other essays titled 'Hindu View of Art : Historical,' 'Hindu view of Art: Theory of Beauty', 'That Beauty is a State'and 'The Dance ofShiva' included in The Dance of Shiva[19] occupy a central place in the modern interpretation of Indian aesthetics. The essays make a succint comment on the Hindu conception of art, and they project an entire tradition in a comprehensive form. The essays are programmatic. The first among them presents, a historical sketch of the subject, the second one presents the implicit theoretical position, and the third presents Coomaraswamy's philosophical response to the theories he discusses. The essays show a modern sensibility at work. They are marked by lucidity of

expression. In writing them Coomaraswamy had a pan-Indian vision, and hence he starts the first essay with an apology for not including Dravidian culture. With the distinction between the pragmatic and the practical art in mind, he states that 'Vedic art was essentially practical'.[20] 'Pragmatic' for him probably meant that which serves a utilitarian, purpose for the user, and 'practical' meant that which satisfies or delightes a maker. He very rightly points out that 'Vedic Aesthetic consisted essentially in the appreciation of skill'.[21] Coomaraswamy sees a definite connection between the 'Vedic art' and the art of the Upanishadic period, in which the emphasis shifts from the making to the maker. He tries to explain the nature of poetic image by referring to Shruti [22] which as a revelation occurs to only a few, it does not dawn upon everyone as a divine inspiration. He argues that the Indian conception of imagination is different from the Romantic conception of imagination. He says :

> This is not a theory of 'revelation in the ordinary sense, since the audition depends on the qualification of the hearer, not on the will and active manifestation of a God. But it is on all fours with the later Hindu view which treats the practice of art as a form of Yoga, and identifies aesthetic emotion with that felt when the self perceives the self.[23]

He thus establishes the status of Yoga in Indian literature and legitimises the poetics of the Upanishads. After

commenting upon the poetry of the Vedas and the Upanishads, he moves to the poetry in Pali and the classical Sanskrit. Despite his sympathy for Pali literature on account of his Ceylonese roots, he finds the early Buddhist aesthetics 'hedonistic', which as it developed moved towards the exploration of "the deepest problems of life".[24] He sees a kinship between Buddhist poetry and the Upanishadic poetry, and both together represent his ideal of poetry. He says :

> We can scarcely exaggerate the sense of triumph with which the doctrines of the Atman or self and the Gospel of Buddha permeated Indian society. The immediate result of the acceptance of these views appeared in an organized and deliberate endeavour to create a form of society adapted for the fulfilment of the purposes of life as seen in the light of the new philosophies.[25]

In his discussion of ancient Indian poetry, Coomaraswamy finds the principle'Art as Yoga'[26] to be the central motivating force, and in his discussion of Aesthetics he includes the aesthetics of crafts too. He states :

> The manner in which even the lesser crafts constitute a practice (acharya) analogues to that of (Sampragnata) yoga is indicated incidently by Shankaracharya in the commentary on the Brahma Sutra, 3, 2, 10. The subject of discussion is the distinction of swoon from waking; in swoon the senses no longer perceive their objects.[27]

Since beauty is a function not only of the arts but also of the crafts and yoga, Coomaraswamy aptly equates the English term 'artist' with sadhaka, mantrin, and yogin in Sanskrit. According to him the purpose of Hindu art is neither the realisation of beauty alone, nor self-expression but a divine adoration of beauty itself. He comments :

> Let us observe here that the purpose of the imager was neither self-expression nor the realisation of beauty. He did not choose his own problems, but like the gothic sculptor, obeyed a hieratic concern. He did not regard his own or his fellow's work from the standpoint of connoisseurship or aestheticism - not, that is to say, from the standpoint of the philosopher, or aesthete, but from that of a pious artisan.[28]

Coomaraswamy upholds the traditional ideal of art and insists that such an attitude to art is evident in 'every epoch of great and creative art'.[29] Here he seems to offer, as he usually does elsewhere, a psychological and sociological analysis of the artist - society relationship. It is thus an attempt to show Indian aesthetics as a sub-system of Indian culture, rather than an abstract and autonomous school of thought. The historical outline in 'Hindu view of Art : Historical' is brought upto the ninth century A.D. after which he perceives a decline :

> After the ninth or tenth century there is a general, though certainly not universal, decline in orthodox art, of which the formulae were rapidly stereotyped in their main outlines, and rendered florid in their detail.[30]

However in his discussion of theories of literature Coomaraswamy does observe a continuity beyond that point in history. In the 'Hindu View of Art : Theory of Beauty', he refers to Bharata (Natyashastra), Dandi, Dhananjaya (Dashrupaka), Mammata (Kavyaprakash), Vishvanatha (Sahityadarpana), Sankaracharya, the Agni Purana, Tagore, etc. Of these Mammata and Vishvanathaare important post-classical theoreticians. In the very beginning of the essay he poses the question 'What is the essential element in poetry?' In answering the same he immediately dismisses three important schools of Sanskrit poetics, namely, Riti, Alamkara, and Dhvani, and emphatically states that Rasa is the soul of poetry. He states :

> According to some authors this consists in style or figures, or in suggestion (vyanjana, to which we shall recur in discussing the varieties of poetry). But the greater writers refute these views and are agreed that the one essential element in poetry is what they term Rasa, or Flavour. With this term, whichis the equivalent of Beauty or Aesthetic emotion in the strict sense of the philosopher, must be considered the derivative adjective rasavant 'having rasa' applied to a work of art, and the derivative substantive rasika, one who enjoys rasa, a connoisseur or lover, and finally resasvadana, the tasting of rasa, i.e., aesthetic contemplation.[31]

The rest of the essay is devoted to defination of Rasa, and manifestation of Rasa theory in various critics. For Coomaraswamy Rasa or aesthetic emotion is significant on account of its capacity to transcend morality, He says :

> Of course, a work of art may and often does afford us at the same time pleasure in a sensuous moral way, but this sort of pleasure is derived directly from its material qualities, such as tone or texture, assonance, etc., or the ethical peculiarity of its theme, and not from its aesthetic qualities : the aesthetic experience is independent of this, and may even, as Dhananjaya says, be derived in spite of sensuous or moral displeasure.[32]

He considers this very capacity to transcend morality, as the implicit aesthetic criterion and tries to subsume the Dhvani theory into the Rasa theory :

> The degrees of excellence in poetry are discussed in the Kavya Prakasha and the Sahitya Darpana. The best is where these is a deeper significance than that of the literate sense. In minor poetry the sense overpowers the suggestion. In inferior poetry, significantly described as 'Variegated' or 'romantic' (chitra), the only artistic quality consists in the ornamentation of the literal sense, which conveys no suggestion beyond its face meaning. Thus narrative and descriptive verse takes a low place, just as portraiture does in plastic art : and, indeed, the Sahitya Darpana excludes the last kind of poetry altogether. It is to be observed that the kind of suggestion meant is something more than implication or double entendre : in the first case we have to do with mere abbreviation, comparable with the use of the words et cetera, in the second we have a mere play on words. What is understood to be suggested is one of the nine rasas.[33]

This reflects Coomaraswamy's profound understanding of the tradition of Indian critical canons. Yet his interpretation of them is shadowed by his personal preference for 'perennial philosophy'. He remarks :

> Religion and art thus names for one and the same experience - an intuition of reality and of identity. This is not, of course, exclusively

> a Hindu view : it has been expounded by many others, such as the Neo-platonists, Hseih Ho, Goethe, Blake, Schopenhauer and Schiller. Nor is it refuted by Croce.[34]

Thus in his rendering of Hindu view of art, of Rasa and Dhvani theory, there is a perennial theory of art which is of value.

IV

If Coomaraswamy is both a major and a well-known critic, such is not the case for M. Hiriyanna, who was Coomaraswamy's contemporary. The persistence with which Coomaraswamy wrote owed itself to a wide and growing readership. On the other hand, Hiriyanna wrote for the sake of his students making complexities clear for them. Though, Hiriyanna lived during the heyday of modernism, and received due recognition, at least at the national level, he did not become a cult figure. He is remembered mainly for his conceptual clarity.

Hiriyanna's frequently mentioned works are : Art Experience and Popular Essays in Indian Philosophy.[35] The title of his book seems enigmatic. One begins to wonder why Hiriyanna calls it 'art experience' and not 'literary experience'. It may even seem that he is oblivious of the fact that the literary aesthetics differs from the aesthetics of the performing arts. But, in fact, Hiriyanna

wants to project the rasa theory as pertaining to theatre and not as pertaining to drama.

Hiriyanna's strength is his philosophical orientation. Obviously enough, he tends to consider literary criticism as a subsidiary branch of philosophy. He is very clear about the scope of both Western and Indian philosophy. The originality of his mind is felt in his interrogation of the hollowness of Indology. He charts out a fresh course in aesthetic philosophy. He is able to draw a distinction between 'transcendental' and 'supernatural', and shows that Hindu philosophy enfolds both, with an 'eschatological' purpose. Referring to the Atman doctrine of the Upanishadic school, (which believes that essence is manifest in the 'inner' rather than in the external world of man), he says :

> The explicit meaning, no less than the words in which it is clothed, constitutes, ... the mere vesture of poetry. They together are its outward embodiment - the necessary conditions under which a poetic mood manifests itself. These external and accidental features alone appealed to the earlier school. But the critic of the new school concentrated his attention on the implicit meaning which forms the real essence of poetry.[36]

His interest, however, is not theorising about poetry but describing poetic language and structure :

> ..... a thought or a feeling experienced with poetic intensity is sure to find expression. The expression is also likely to be more or less imperfect, but the question is not whether it is perfect, but whether it is adequate to convey the thought or emotion to others. If it is adequate it is good poetry, otherwise it is not.[37]

Hiriyanna's discussion of 'poetic merit' or ''essence' clearly shows his preference for one school of Indian poetics, namely the rasa school. In a very succinct discussion of the 'form' and 'content' of poetry, he is able to discriminate between various schools of Sanskrit poetics, and select the one which engaged even the later day critics. He says :

> True art is no doubt a compound of feeling and imagination but in any particular case the one or the other may predominate and the two-fold classification should be regarded as having reference to the predominant factor. In this view art represents the almost spontaneous expression of a responsive mind when it comes under the spell of an imaginative or an emotional mood. It was this expression - the outward element of poetry and not its inner springs which the older school of critics analysed. The later school ..... occupied itself with what this expression signifies. The expression was important to them only as a means of suggesting or pointing to the implicit significance. Here we find a theory of art which exactly corresponds to the doctrine of atman.[38]

This is illustrative of his style and of his dispassionate involvement in Sanskrit poetics. His discussion of Indian aesthetics takes into account the following aspects : (1) nature and function of poetry, (2) outline of ancient Indian approaches to poetics and art experience (3) reception of poetry, (4) transcendance through art, (5) style, and the order of rasas.

For Hiriyanna the rasa concept is a dynamic one. He has sensitively followed the developments within the tradition

of rasa theory from the Vedic to the medieval times. Every time he uses the term, he qualifies it by specifying the proper historical context. For instance he mentions 'Vedantic rasa' and 'Sankhya rasa',[39] as two distinct categories. He is aware of the exact philosophical context of the rasa theory, and hence he avoids making vehement claims for the same.

In the essay 'Art Experience', he identifies the essential features of aesthetic experience, which according to him, are (1) a heightened consciousness, and (2) self forgetfulness. He reminds one that an aesthetic experience is comparable to a spiritual one, both being above the ordinary experiences :

> It is for this reason that Indian philosophers, especially the Vedantis among them, compare the experience of art with that of the ideal state which they describe as moksa. But the two experiences are only of the same order and not identical.....[40]

The distinction that he makes between the two kinds of experiences is validated by him on the following grounds : (1) Art Experience is transient, the spiritual one is not, (2) the joy of art, though of higher kind is self-centered, the spiritual one is selfless, (3) Art experience is induced from outside, the spiritual one springs from within.[41] This reasoning lends his writing an analytical thrust not so much of a revivalistic fervour.

Hiriyanna seems to be contradicting Bharata, according

to whom the art experience is the twin-brother of the spiritual one.[42] But in fact he only points out the semblence between the two kinds of experiences. He does not reject Bharata's classification of the bhavas, or the other preconditions necessary for an art experience to occur. He therefore states that an 'art experience' is alike and yet different from a spiritual one. Offering fresh insights into Bharata's theory, he stresses the reality in art being a different one. He maintains that the art experience 'results from the contemplation not of a real, but of an imaginative or a fictious situation', and its joy depends on 'the perfect unity of the situation depicted'.[43] He accentuates the distinctiveness of art experience in the following statements.

> The experience of art, like that of the ideal condition, is an ultimate value, in the sense that it is sought for its own sake and not as a means to anything else. Like the ideal condition again art experience is characterised by a unique kind of delight; and in this, it is superior to common experience.[44]

Hiriyanna's discussion is marked by clarity and is totally free of padantic polemics and obtuse terminology. In 'Art Experience-2'[45], he turns his attention to poetry, again introducing a fresh category. He says : 'There are two points of view from which the aim of poetry may be considered - one, of the poet, and the other, of the reader of poetry'.[46] He proceeds with the common premise that

poetry gives pleasure, not forgetting to qualify his premise carefully :

> But pleasure here is not to be taken in the abstract; rather, to judge from the explanation given of its nature in Indian works, it stands for a state of the self or a mode of experience of which it is a constant and conspicuous feature. Hence pleasure, by itself, does not constitute the whole of what is experienced at the time of poetic appreciation, but it is only an aspect of it. The immediate value of poetry for the reader then is the attainment of this enjoyable experience and not mere pleasure. That is its primary use, and any other use it may have for him is a further good which poetry brings.[47]

He endorses the view that pratibhana (the creative fancy) is the Kavita-bija (the seed of poetry).[48] Thus the creative imagination is the primary condition of art. This 'creativity' of imagination structures the objects of art that give pleasure.

Hiriyanna stresses the fact that a reader's interest is not in the object depicted, but in the way it is depicted or structured. The reader's mind is in control of this interest, and is in a state of contemplation, from which it is not lead astray. He describes the delight resulting from such a contemplation as follows :

> This transcendence of the egoistic self in the contemplation of art profoundly alters the nature of the pleasure derived from it. Being altogether divorced from reference to personal interests, one's own or that of others', art experience is free from all the limitations of common pleasure, due to the prejudices of everyday life such as

> narrow attachment and envy. In a word, the contemplation being disinterested, the pleasure which it yields will be absolutely pure. This is the significance of its description by Indian writers as "higher pleasure" (para-nirvrti)'. And art will yield such pleasure, it should be observed, not only when its subject matter is pleasant, but even when it is not as in a tragedy with its representation of unusual suffering and irremediable disaster. The facts poetised may, as parts of the actual world, be the source of pain as well as pleasure; but, when they are contemplated in their idealised form, they should necessarily give rise only to the latter. It is for this reason that pleasure is represented in Indian works as the sole aim of all art. It means that the spectator, in appreciating art, rises above the duality of pain and pleasure as commonly known, and experiences pure joy. Here we see the differentia of poetic pleasure, or, more generally, aesthetic delight.[49]

Hiriyanna supports the rasa view that 'anything' could be the subject matter for poetry. But he points out that the materiality of a subject of poetry has no significance for the reader. He insists that what is (laukika), is not significant in poetry, but what is 'transfigured' (alaukika),[50] is significant in it. He obviously elucidates 'transfiguration' or 'idealisation' in art as perceived in the rasa theory.

Hiriyanna accepts the rasa theory with its conventional scope and the terminology. He translates the term rasa as 'taste',[51] and very perceptively points out that for 'taste' to be generated 'an affinity of nature between the poet and the reader of poetry'.[52] is necessary. Rasa thrives on the evocative power of art and literature. A work of

literature usually portrays a state of mind, emotional or otherwise, and it evokes a similar state in the reader, that is when the rasanubhav[53] occurs. Thus in Hiriyanna's discussion, art and literature are highly connotative, and the response to them rests solely on the 'associative' abilities of the reader.

Hiriyanna's understanding of rasa is perceptive without being vociferous or prescriptive in any way. He has a dynamic concept of rasa, and his response to the susequent development in the rasa debate in the Indian tradition is interesting. In an essay titled 'The Number of Rasas' (which is the foreward to a book with the same title by V. Raghavan),[54] he presents his views on Santa rasa. Bharata lists only eight rasas. Whether Santa rasa is the ninth rasa or not has been a debatable issue. Hiriyanna's foreward appreciates the 'comprehensive' analysis, and the 'historical and aesthetics sides'[55] of the book. In this brief foreward be makes cogent statements of his views. He quotes : "Shringar, hasya, karuna, raudra, vira, bhayanaka, bibhatsa, adbhuta and Santa are the rasas, illustrated by the ancient".[56] He immediately proceeds to express the doubt prevalent about the ninth rasa. He says :

> Owing to the uncertainty of our knowledge of the early phases of Indian classical literature, it is not possible to say when poets began to portray

> this rasa. The ascetic and mystic elements, however, which form its distinctive basis, are very old features of Indian life; and they were highly valued by those who followed the teaching of the Veda as well as by those who did not. So we may assume that santa attitude found expression in literature quite early; and this is corroborated by the works of Asvaghosa even if, on account of its chronological indefiniteness, we leave out of consideration Mahabharata, the usual example given of Santa rasa. As regards writers on poetics, the earliest to recognise it definitely ..... was Udbhata ..... Bharata's view in the matter is somewhat doubtful.[57]

He is evidently aware not only of the historical progression of the theory of rasas, but also of the debate surrounding it. After pointing out the historical fluidity, he turns to evaluation of the aesthetic side of the issue. From an epistimological perspective, he wishes to tackle the issue of aesthetic sentiment/state from the reader's (or the spectator's) point of view, because the aesthetic state is induced/evoked in a reader or a spectator through an idealised presentation. He argues that the Santa rasa pervades a given work of art, and cites the works of Ashvaghosha and Mahabharata as befitting examples. He also counterposes the argument by denying [the stand] that the santa could be a rasa at all. He says :

> This argument is that the attitude of mind for which santa stands is altogether a rare one, and that its representation in art cannot therefore appeal to more than a very few.[58]

This juxtaposition of the two sides of the debate establishes the fact that Hiriyanna's reading of Sanskrit poetics was

far from being biased. He does not seem to be reading Sanskrit poetics to suit a pre-meditated philosophy. His response to it shows an alert philosophical mind and a lively aesthetic sensibility.

Like Coomaraswamy's criticism, Hiriyanna's criticism has a comparative basis; but unlike him, Hiriyanna is aware of the differences as well as the common grounds. For instance, he repeatedly mentions the relationship between philosophy and aesthetics as postulated in the West, and points out that such a distinction was not made in the Indian tradition. He acknowledges aesthetics to be a branch of philosophy, and is able to see the disadvantages of separating aesthetics from philosophy. In the West, as he puts it, there are 'as many theories of art as there are theories of reality'.[59] As against such multiplicity or fragmentariness, Indian theories of art are not conditioned by a multitude of perceptions of reality, but by a single theory of meaning.

> ..... the postulation by Indian aestheticians of what is called Vyangyartha, which is not only not recognised by any school of philosophy but is definitely opposed, shows the freedom with which aesthetic investigation, has been carried on in India. They have succeeded in this in evolving a theory of meaning which ..... certainly sheds new light on the nature of art.[60]

In his discussion on 'Nature And Art', Hiriyanna refers to G.E. Moore's contention that 'other things being

the same, beauty in actual objects is better than that in imaginary objects'.[61] Hiriyanna defends art by raising an argument based on Indian aesthetics. He argues that (1) art affects consciousness, (2) art is selective while nature is not, and (3) "art is a device for the provisional attainment of the final ideal of life".[62]

Hiriyanna has his own philosophy of art, according to which art is only a means to making life perfect. He comments :

> Both art and morality spring from a sense of deficiency in the existing state of things. Morality represents an attempt to rectify that deficiency by actually changing the state, while art affords an escape from it by providing a world of ideal construction. If man were a perfect being placed in the midst of a perfect environment social as well as natural - there would be little need for either art or morality.

Art is thus not granted a sacrosanct status in the Indian scheme of life but remains a means or a dynamic aspect of life. To this end, he says :

> Generally we lead a life of continuous tension, bent as we are upon securing aims more or less personal in character. In Samkara's words life is characterised by avidya-kama-karma i.e., desire and strife, arising out of the ignorance of the ultimate truth. When we are not actively engaged we may feel this tension relaxed; but that feeling of relaxation is deceptive for even then self-interest persists as may be within the experience of us all. Delight means the transcending of even this inner strain. The absence of desire may be due to any cause whatever - to a particular desire having been gratified or to there being, for the time, nothing to desire. The chief thing is that

> the selfish altitude of the mind - the 'ego centric predicament' - must be transcended at least temporarily, and a point of detachment has to be reached before we can enjoy happiness.64

That art is meaningful only when it is viewed in the context of life in its entirity, becomes a holistic philosophical construct. Hiriyanna cannot be described as a 'romantic' because poetry does not have excessive prominence in his view. He cannot be described as a revivalist, because the nature of his enquiry is not confined to the canonical texts of Sanskrit poetics, but philosophic issues in Sanskrit poetics. It would be difficult to categorise his work as an Indological exercise with a merely bibliographical and explorative purpose. The kind of openness he displays towards [the] Western philosophy automatically refutes any fiercely nationalistic fervour in his writings. He remains one of the first aestheticians of modern India, whose interest and purpose were philosophy of art rather than literature, past or present.

V

Among the contemporary scholars of Sanskrit poetics, Krishna Rayan enjoys considerable reputation. After his education at Madras and London, he had a distinguished career teaching English in various institutions in India till 1966. From then till 1981, he taught at the university

of Zambia, and then at Bayero University in Nigeria. He has published extensively in critical journals abroad and in India. He has been interested in developing a comprehensive theory of literary suggestion, which in his view is of significance for use in practical criticism.

'Dhvani' or suggestion has been very succinctly explained through the analogy of a beautiful damsel by Anandavardhana.* Just as there may be beauty or charm in each part of a girl's body, one is struck by her total personality, which transcends the individual features. The form, the content and all other elements in a given literary work, though essential, are not ends in themselves, they are only the means to the final realisation of suggestions, Dhvani is thus an aesthetic experience extending between the poet and the reader.

Krishna Rayan's Suggestion and Statement in Poetry, (1972),[65] published by the reputed Athalone Press, is a curious book. It can form a highly complex text for analysis by students of modern Indian culture. It is as if written and unwritten at the same time, asserting a view and also refuting it. The position asserted is that the theory of suggestion is universally valid and applicable. This very assertion is effaced by Krishna Rayan in the following words :

> I have constantly brought in concepts from Sanskrit poetics, but invariably as points of departure for

discussion of poetic practice and critical ideas in English. If at certain points the book sounds like special pleading for Sanskrit theory, I can only say that that, at any rate was not my intention.[66]

Suggestion and Statement in Poetry, is a book about English poetry and also about Sanskrit criticism, but it is not certain whether it is about 'modern' English poetry or about 'ancient' Sanskrit criticism. In that sense it writes as well as cancels what it writes, and to that extent it is ambivalent.

The critical apparatus in the book can be traced back to Sanskrit poetics, yet the introduction to the concepts comes through illustrations from Herbert Read, Swinburne, Dylan Thomas, Chaucer, Wordsworth, Alun Lewis, T.S. Eliot and R.S. Thomas.The word 'Today' in the title of the book, read with the word 'suggestion' gives a distinct impression that the very idea of suggestion is related to modern poetry. The idea is supported by parallels from the contemporary critics. There is of course a meticulous design of equivalence between the theories. Krishna Rayan writes the West into the East, the East into the West, and the past into the present. This is what makes it a unique text, complex enough for analysis. This critical enterprise is not free from limitations. To begin with, the work becomes ahistorical in nature. In terms of major literary ruptures the historicity is lost and is replaced by a simplified version of the history of the theory.

For Krishna Rayan, suggestion is poetry, but by

suggestion he does not seem to mean a polysemy of words, it means the total 'way' in which language operates. The polysemic words do operate more effectively, yet the statements too have a capacity to suggest. He states :

> 'It is an obvious truth of romantic poetry', says John Bayley in The Romantic Survival, 'that exact words usually "suggest" far more powerfully than vague ones'. To be fair to Mr. Bayley, he makes this observation while examining certain words in Dylan Thomas's poetry, which do manage to be both exact and suggestive; and Dylan Thomas is clearly a neoromantic. Yet if I were generalising, I would be inclined to say the very opposite: that it is an obvious truth of Romantic poetry that vague words usually suggest far more powerfully than exact ones. It is the strength of much romantic poetry that, to borrow Wimsatt's words, the 'shadowy suggestion of abstractive categorising' forbids us to descend to 'the substantive level'. Shelley's Champak odours', the nineteenth century Thomson's 'Wine of love' and Swinburne's 'Grief with a glass that ran' are typical Romantic words; light in referential content, they float high above the specifically qualitative plane. They are merely centres of semantic radiation.[67]

For Krishna Rayan suggestion is 'semantic radiation'.[68] Going by the Structuralist and the New Critical ideas of poetic language, he argues that 'even the diction of statement', can become a 'suggestor of emotion'.[69] From this perspective he attacks L.C. Knights.

> ..... The reaction against Bradley, inaugurated by L.C. Knights's broadside, 'How Many Children Had Lady Macbeth?', in 1933, seems to have run its course. We notice now-a-days that the character-monger and the theme-pedlar are elaborately polite about each other's trades, and it is generally agreed that while characters are a part of the total design of the play, the design is not validated unless the characters are convincing 'persons'.[70]

This is an attack from a typical structuralist point of view. In fact, the range of critics mentioned in the book, reveals Krishna Rayan's preference for Structuralism, Formalism, and New Criticism. It is because of his interest in these that he is as if drawn to studying the Dhvani theory, which in his version is 'suggestion'.

A close reading of Suggestion and Statement in Poetry, shows that Krishna Rayan tries to modernise the Dhvani theory of Sanskrit Poetics and traditionalise Western Structuralism, Formalism, and New Criticism. The peculiarity of this work is marked by the presence of a Sanskrit parallel for every Western concept, and that of a Western one for every Sanskrit one. An interesting example of this tendency is found in his emphasis on the concept of (Sthayi) bhava.

It is commonly known that the term bhava, vibhava and anubhava,[71] are the essential ingredients of Bharata's rasa theory. The essence of rasa theory is empathetic identification between rasa and rasika, and a collective transcendance of the materiality of experience, they key terms being tadatmya, and rasaswadana. Krishna Rayan juxtaposes Eliot's objective correlative with the concept of bhava. The focal point of the concept of objective correlative is the separation between the artist and the creation. Rasa seeks a tadatmya or equivalence. Thus both Eliot and rasa are taken out of their contexts.

Rayan provides the following table of the basic emotions, and the rasas they generate.[72]

Sthayins	rasa
Rati (the sexual emotion)	Srangara (love)
Hasa (laughter/amusement)	Hasya (the comic)
Soka (grief/distress)	Karuna (pathos)
Krodha (anger)	Rudra (anger)
Utsaha (masterfulness/energy)	Vira (the heroic)
Bhaya (fear)	Bhayanaka (fear)
Jugupsa (disgust)	Bhibhatsa (disgust)
Vismaya (wonder)	Adbhuta (wonder)
Sama (subsidence)	Santa (serenity)

He explains the theory of objective correlative thus :

> Objective correlatives are primarily representations in art of the actual causes (laukika-karanas) and the actual consequences or manifestations (laukika karyas) of an emotion in life. Representations of causes are called vibhavas and the representations of manifestations are called anubhavas. The actual factors of an emotion in life are transformed thus into the conventional associates of the same emotion in art. They have a purely aesthetic existence - they are.... idealized; they are not personal ..... but universalized ..... Then the sensous objects of an emotion, thus universalised in art, impinge upon an emotional set latent in the reader's consciousness, the two coalesce and give rise to the state of utter aesthetic satisfaction known as rasa.73

It is possible to argue that Krishna Rayan has good reasons for this kind of comparatism. Through his interpretation, both objective correlative and rasa lend

themselves to a close comparison. It is possible to discern a method in his pre-occupation with 'concepts' rather than with 'theories'. Any theory as a construct or ideas is likely to have interrelationships with its historical, political and semantic contexts, while concepts sometimes stand on their own, though uneasily, when driven into alien contexts. Krishna Rayan does not seem to be interested in the 'theory' of objective correlative, which would involve a whole lot of considerations like, T.S. Eliot's relationship with himself, the tradition of European classics, the Anglo-American society, and the Western religious tradition. In all these T.S. Eliot's life was divided between sentiments and knowledge, which prepared the ground for his theory of objective correlative, and enabled him to dissociate T.S. Eliot the subject, from his poetry the object.

It is also possible to argue that rasa theory is the proverbial tip of the cultural iceberg, constituted by polytheism, the Indian society with its tradition of performance, the temple architecture, art practices, and symbolic gestures. Krishna Rayan takes up the objective correlative as an abstract philosophical construct and tries to establish parallels with the nyaya background of the concept of sthayibhava in terms of karya-karana or causal relationship. His argument is almost irrefutable because it is incomplete. Any further probing of either

rasa or objective correlative, would make the connections inappropriate.

Krishna Rayan's method can be described as one of valorisation. When a critic tries to compare a concept from one time and culture, with another one in another time and culture, the attempt is to prove its universality and the ability to transcend historicity. Krishna Rayan not only valorises the East in terms of the West but also dhvani in terms of rasa. His explication of dhvani subsumes the entire tradition of Sanskrit poetics. He sees a clear continuation between Bharata of the second century and Anandavardhana of the ninth century, and in the process defines both in terms of T.S. Eliot's theory.

According to Krishna Rayan "Conjunction of the correlates of emotion give rise to the rasa".[74] About Abhinavagupta's concept of vyangyartha, he says :

> Emotion emerges from its descriptively presented correlates exactly as the suggested meaning (vyangyartha) emerges from the stated meaning - by the operation of the function of suggestion (vyanjana) which is inherent in language. Emotion is suggested meaning.[75]

About Anandavardhana's contribution he has the following to state :

> When the realization of rasa was thus explained in terms of dhvani (suggestion of meaning), the whole phenomenon swung into focus. It became clear that the emotion is the image's resonance - and not

> reference, nor inference. Reference is denotation - a given word standing simply, precisely and invariably for a given referent. Suggested emotion, on the other hand, is in the nature of connotational meaning - complex, rich, relatively imprecise, variable.[76]

Krishna Rayan comments perceptively on the intertextuality of the *rasa* and *dhvani* theories.

> *Dhvani* thus explains *rasa*; in fact the two together (*rasa-dhvani*) are the supreme mode of poetic expression. Perhaps no other case exists of one major critical tenet lighting up another so much, of two independant critical traditions enriching each other so much and eventually coalescing. Its affirmation that all emotion in poetry is suggested and its version of how this is done are, I think, Sanskrit's most valuable contribution to the theory of poetry.[77]

In Anandavardhana, *dhvani* is not an evaluatory concept, but a critical description. It accounts for various shades of suggestive power in different kinds of poetry. In Krishna Rayan's presentation the metaphoric potential of poetry becomes a criterion of value judgement. He states :

> Where what is suggested is also stated, the suggested meaning ..... loses its paramountcy and what we then have is not suggestive poetry but 'the poetry of subordinate suggestion' (*gunibhutavyangya*). Whether the tenor is expounded before presenting the vehicle or after, the effect is to debilitate the image.[78]

Another way in which the concept of suggestion is used by Krishna Rayan is for the purpose of describing *sahitya* and not *kavya* alone. Anandavardhana used *dhvani* to

cover poetry alone, but Krishna Rayan employs it to evaluate short stories, and novels in his later works, Text and Sub-text, 1987, and The Burning Bush, Suggestion in Indian literature.[79] It would be useful to examine the merits and demerits of the application of 'suggestion theory' to modern prose works.

Applied to poetry, Krishna Rayan's concept of suggestion works admirably. His analysis of Keats's 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' and of some short poems by W.B. Yeats, is full of insights.[80] Quoting George Steiner, he sets out to show suggestion at work in imaginative language. In the process he shows how Alan Tate, Ian Jack, Kenneth Muir, and other critics of Keats missed the essential spirit of the Ode, and now it can read as an 'unmistakable build up' of images 'operating through the resources of the imagination',[81] and the power of suggestion. 'An Ode to Suggestion', can be treated as an important contribution to Keats' criticism.[82]

In his comments on the short lyrics of W.B. Yeats, he points out the micro-level suggestion of style and language. The short and intense lyric of Yeats is seen by him as the most eloquent instance of suggestion in poetry. He says :

> In a poem that is not too short the symbols can be multiple, and then its suggested meaning will be the complex product of their interaction, of their

> reinforcing, enriching, balancing, defining each other. The meaning of 'A Prayer for my Daughter', to give a familiar instance, grows out of the interplay of the wind, the Laurel tree, the linnet and the horn of plenty. In a micro-suggestive poem too, although the image is single, it can reach out across the boundaries of the poem and establish wider connections ..... the single image can thus develop an enlarged import beyond the text, yet within the poem itself it has to operate singly without the activity of any fellow images. This sets micro-suggestion apart from the method possible in a relatively long poem.[83]

The structural organicity of an intense lyric is what he seems to describe as micro-suggestion. This intensity arises in a short poem because the images stand by themselves 'without the activity' of other images.

According to Krishna Rayan one more "demarcation between normal suggestion and micro-suggestion arises from its relation to statement".[85] Incidently, he seems to be interested in the same poets as the New Critics were interested in. As a result his theory compares with William Empson's Seven types of ambiguity.[86] He also extends his theory to analyse the Movement poets, the Review school poets, contemporary African poets, and some Indian poets writing in English.

Krishna Rayan's theory starts showing signs of stress when applied to literary forms other than poetry or poetic drama. The Burning Bush, is a volume of critical essays on modern works in seventeen Indian languages. The book has experimental value, as it has emerged from a seminar called

'Towards a common critical framework'[87] held at Mysore in which the possibilities of evolving a common Indian poetics were discussed. In this volume Krishna Rayan offers a framework of criticism which results from his life-long preoccupation with Sanskrit poetics. The book has a simple conceptual structure. It tries to define literature in terms of suggestion and literary classics in terms of the amplitude of suggestion. It is pertinent to ask here whether suggestion is the essential quality of literature or whether it is just an attribute of literary language. If suggestion is an organic quality of literature, it is impossible to speak of literature in terms of suggestion when translations of literary works are being discussed. Most of the works discussed in the book happen to be translations in English. But Krishna Rayan answers this possible criticism by stating :

> It is clear that where the workshop examined a text not just in terms of the translation values but comprehensively as a literary work, the reactions expressed tended to be concerned with the devices which generate the suggestive force of the work. Although texts in only three languages were involved, the fact that in all the cases attention was directed to these devices does signify that the kind of critical response which would be assumed in a Dhvani - based poetic is indeed a normal and natural one.[88]

A more important issue/however/is whether the dhvani of a poem has any relation with the tradition of language, linguistics, and culture of a specific text. In carrying

out an exercise in comparative literature, Krishna Rayan has extended the application of the dhvani theory so as to include literature in a variety of forms. For instance, in discussing Madhu Rye's short story, he says that the statements in the story are not really statements but symbols.[89] He refers to Susanne Langer to support the view, but while Langer speaks of poetry, Krishna Rayan speaks of the short story form :

> Thus in Rye's story the statement of what the cracks stand for is not really statement. As Susanne Langer says of poetry, even when we have what "looks like a statement of opinions, philosophical or political or aesthetic", "it is not a proposition, but the entertainment of one, which necessarily involves vital tensions, feelings, the imminence of other thoughts, and the echoes of past thinking".90

In connection it can be said that Krishna Rayan has the distinction among the twentieth century Indian critics, of having followed a single critical concept persistently. He has tried to amalgamate his preference for New Criticism and Formalism, with his interest in dhvani theory. He has tried to modernise and to modulate the concept of dhvani, and to use it for the purposes of practical criticism. In his criticism there is a wide range and eclectic erudition But it lacks philosophical discipline and literary rootedness in comparison to Hiriyanna and B.K. Matilal. His criticism is the best in the trend of literary modernisation set in motion by the colonial experience. However his attempt at modernising Indian critical idiom cannot be seen properly

without placing it in the context of the revivalistic tendency quickened by the colonial experience.

VI

During the last decade Professor Bimal Krishna Matilal has emerged as a significant commentator on philosophical and critical trends in ancient India. His Indological project seems to be closer to that of Ananda Coomaraswamy than that of M. Hiriyanna. He spent almost three decades abroad, initially studying, and then teaching in the U.S., Canada, and the U.K. where he was the Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford, and Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, till his death in 1991. His attempt is to reinterpret Indian tradition within the Western framework of ideas.

Matilal is not primarily interested in literary criticism, or linguistics, or a particular philosophy. He is interested in the Indian 'method' of philosophy, or to be precise, in the nature of logic at the back of the ancient Indian philosophy. The area of his special interest is Mimansa school and the vaisesikas, and the Buddhist thinkers. He has a sustained interest in the method of perception of reality. His work is a probing, vigorous attempt at decoding the epistemic realism in India. It is in this context that he offers comments on language,

imagination, creativity, and associated critical concepts. It is necessary to add that he does not have specific concerns with either a period in Indian history, or a philosopher, or a school of philosophy. His concerns lies in ascertaining the style of perception of reality.

The emphasis on perception becomes a structuring principle in Matilal's approach to Indian philosophy. It seems to have originated in the Western Indological vision of Indian philosophy as purely an inductive thought. Another strand of Indology gathered in Matilal's work, is the interest in Indian semantics. He has elaborately discussed the work of Bhartrhari and Nagarjuna. In fact he is the only modern commentator to have discussed the Buddhist contribution to Indian aesthetics.

In comparison to M. Hiriyanna, and Krishna Rayan, Matilal displays an amazingly sophisticated scholarship, which has won him considerable acceptability in the West. He has the distinction of following a scientific method of aesthetic inquiry. It is only in the works of Matilal and R.B. Patankar, after M. Hiriyanna, among the Indian critics, that one finds Aesthetics being treated as an allied branch of philosophy. However Matilal is not concerned even remotely with creative literature, past or present.

Matilal's Perception : An Essay on classical Indian Theories of Knowledge, 1986,[91] takes up a vast span of 1300

years (i.e., A.D. 100 to 1400). It discusses the Pramana epistimology, the nyaya philosophy and the Vaisesika view of reality. It covers concepts such as realism, scepticism, perception, conception, and knowledge. The range of philosophers and philosophical concepts covered by the work is impressive and far more systematic than in Ananda Coomaraswamy's work.

In the modern thought the idea of knowledge is indissolubly linked with the idea of language. Hence Matilal discusses language and imagination in association with perception for presenting the nature of cognition in the Buddhist thought. The concept linking reality and knowledge is termed prapanch :

> ..... the so called experience of pain is regarded by the Naiyayikas as equivalent to awareness of pain or what would be called in Indian terminology perception (Pratyaksa) of pain (or pleasure). However, such an awareness of pain (or pleasure) is to be distinguished (according to Nyaya) not only from our sensory experience (awareness) of the sensibilia but also from our awareness of such sensory awareness. For although we need not always be aware of each awareness that may arise in us, pain - (or pleasure) awareness is actually too intense ..... to be missed ..... it is a contingent character of pain or pleasure that its occurance cannot remain 'unsensed' or unperceived.92

Since verbalisation is also essentially conceptualisation, through the prapancha, language and reality come together. But sabda prapancha, verbal proliferation, also distorts reality, because language substitutes perception for knowledge.

> In the Buddhist canonical discription of perception ..... it is explicitly claimed that at the final and crucial stage of sense-perception the concepts are, as it were, invested with an objective character. This phenomenon is brought about mainly by the inherent nature of our linguistic medium. Vague and fleeting percepts become fully crystallized into stable and objectified concepts as they pass through the linguistic medium. Fleeting percepts unfairly acquire some stability due to the nature of our sensory and mental apparatus. But a more substantial stability is wrongfully bestowed upon them by language, which has a public character that necessitates a standardization of symbols and a pattern to their arrangement.[93]

The distortion of reality by linguistic proliferation, is rectified by a mental faculty termed Kalpana or Vikalpa translated as 'imagination.' It transcends language and perception and also corrects them in relation to reality. Logically therefore Vikalpa or Kalpana is pre-linguistic perception. He says :

> In ordinary Sanskrit, Kalpana or Vikalpa means imagination ..... just as the English word 'imagination' (or its German equivalent) has been used in the writings of ..... Hume and Kant in a philosophically technical sense different from its ordinary meaning, the Sanskrit term 'Vikalpa' or 'Kalpana' had a comparable fate ..... the Sanskrit word has a role to play in the classical Sanskrit philosopher's discussion of perceptual knowledge.[94]

The idea of pre-linguistic perception is central to Matilal's theory of perception. Citing various Buddhist philosophers, he discusses immediate and mediate perception and the dichotomy between percepts and concepts. The attempt is to defend linguistic intuition :

> ..... the following philosophical justification exists for our ordinary linguistic intuition. We can describe a construction as 'perceptual' only if it is casually ..... connected with an appropriate sensory experience. If such a causal connection does not exist, we can describe a construction as non-perceptual.95

In sum, Matilal tries to establish a grand continuum of pre-linguistic imagination, linguistic intuition, perception, conception, reality and knowledge and shows the limits of linguistic proliferation in all of them. His refutation of the subject/object separation logically brings him to the apoha theory of Dinnanga.[96]

Apoha, means the universals as exclusions of contrary possibilities. Matilal explicates the concept in detail in relation to the subject/object dichotomy and the percept - concept antithesis. But the purpose here his comments on Pleasure and Pain are more useful. By referring to the most fundamental assumption in philosophy, about the difference between the cognition of an object and the object itself, he states that this distinction separates realism from idealism. The objects exist objectively and their description amounts to realism. The cognition exists subjectively and its description amounts to idealism. Matilal states :

> The picture changes completely when we shift from (perceptual) awareness of what may be called the 'outer' objects to that of what are called the 'inner' episodes or states, such as pleasure and plain, desire or inclination, and even the

> awareness itself. Desire is probably less problematic than pain and pleasure. It is possible for me to have a desire for, or to desire, something without instantaneously being aware of the fact that I have such a desire. The point is arguable. But when we come to the inner episodes such as pain and pleasure (happiness), such a distinction between awareness and what we are aware of seems impossible to maintain.[97]

In relation to this problematic of cognition, Matilal raises the issue of the unfelt pain or the unsensed pleasure, and elaborates the nyaya and Buddhist views related to it. The term 'inner episodes'[98] is used to describe the pre-sensory sensation. According to Matilal such 'episodes' do not exist outside the self, though they are real, and cannot be perceived except by the self. He asserts that the pre-sensory sensation, cognition and object experience form a continuum. The logical culmination of this position is that there is no difference of category between the experience of pleasure and the experience of pain. He says :

> It is a part of the Nyaya psychological view that (out) pain or pleasure, i.e., mental episodes that can be designated either as pain or pleasure, should not be conflated with our 'perceptions', i.e., our awareness of such pain or pleasure. Pain or pleasure is not a kind of awareness, but we become aware of such pain or pleasure.[99]

In other words, pain and pleasure belong to a category of perception which is gnana more than bhana. He further indicates that there is no causal relationship between

objects and the perceptions of pain and pleasure. An object of pleasure for one may become an object of pain for another. On the other hand, there is an organic link between bhana and gnana. He comments :

> ..... if pleasure belongs to the category of awareness because both are caused by the same set of conditions, then by the same token awareness could belong to the category of pleasure. One may add that by parity of reasoning awareness should also belong to the category of pain. The way out of this anomaly is to say that the set of causal conditions giving rise to awareness is shared also by what gives rise to pleasure, but what is peculiar to the conditioning of pleasure is not shared by what generally gives rise to awareness. Therefore, one can say that pleasure (or pain) is a special kind of awareness, but not the other way around.[100]

The issue of perception of pleasure is linked with the experience of beauty in art. By arguing that the perception of 'inner episodes' is different in nature from the perception of reality, it is suggested that art experience is unique. The awareness of pleasure or pain, brought about by a work of art 'reveal(s) itself in further awareness',[101] thus leading to what Sanskrit poetics had described as cheto-vistara.

Matilal is the first Indian commentator on Buddhist thinkers and the Nyaya school of philosophy, whose discussion draws valuable insights together from epistimology, psychology, linguistics, philosophy and aesthetics. His commentary is distinguished by its originality. He does not offer just a modern rendering of ancient philosophers. His

attempt is to make their knowledge useful. The discussion of pleasure and pain is of considerable significance in theorising about the aesthetic delight. Since a summary of such an erudite exposition could be difficult, some of his own ideas have already been quoted.

Matilal's recent book The Word and the World, India's contribution to the study of Language,[102] is an impressive intellectual achievement. It is an original commentary on Indian semantics. It deals with general grammar and linguistic issues, some important aspects of meaning, and literary criticism in Sanskrit. The sphota theory, discussed in three chapters of the book, figures in three important literary critics, i.e., Bhamah, Anandavardhana, and Kuntaka. It is also present in the philosophy of Shankara. Its origin is in Bhartrhari's linguistics. Matilal's treatment of Bhartrhari's concept of sphota, is extremely systematic. He first refers to the other Indologists who have worked on Bhartrhari, and then offers a translation of the nine key Karikas. Since they are of crucial importance in his discussion, they are reproduced here.

(1) Linguists (sabdavidah) comprehand two types of sabda among linguistic sabda. One is the nimitta of the sound and the other designates the object or meaning.

(2) Just as light/fire (jyotih) resides in the arani stick and (being manifested) becomes the cause for manifesting other objects, sabda resides likewise in the MIND (inner faculty, buddhi) and (being manifested) becomes separately the cause for manifesting the meaning.

(3) Since nada (sound) arises in sequence, sphota, which has neither a former nor a latter stage and which is sequenceless (akarma) is apprehended (through nada) and appears to be having a sequence as well as parts.

(4) (Thus, properties of nada are transferred to the sphota). The reflected image (of the moon, for example) although it resides in a separate location; sphota being manifested in nada shares the properties of nada in the same way.

(5) A figure being grasped by a single awareness is painted on a canvas (part by part) into another complete, unitary figure (for the viewer to grasp it in one sweep). Similarly in sabda, too, all these three stages are found.

(6) The speaker apprehends beforehand the entire sabda, with regard to which the hearer's awareness also arises.

(7) Just as fire has both powers - the power to be the object of manifestation and the agent of manifestation - all sabdas individually have both powers likewise.

(8) (For this reason) sabda do not convey meaning without themselves being the objects of our awareness. They cannot manifest or reveal the meaning simply by their existence, if they (themselves) remain unapprehended.

(9) Hence, when from indistinct utterance, the form of the sabda is not apprehended, one asks 'what did he say?' But when the senses reveal objects, those senses do not need to be apprehended themselves.[103]

All these Karikas are from the first samasa of the Vakyapadiya[104] of Bhartrhari. Matilal desists from translation of the vrittis, in place of which he offers his own commentaries. Through his analysis of the Vakyapadiya, he tries to probe into the concept of language in Bhartrhari. His discussion of sphota-nada relationship begins with the idea of perception-cognition relationship. The first stage

of language according to Bhartrhari, is the pasyanti stage, where there is complete identity between language and thought, where nada and sphota are inseparable. He raises the question as to how a hearer comprehends sphota. It becomes necessary therefore to introduce a distinction between nada and the perception of nada. He compares the views of Patanjali and Bhartrhari on this issue :

> ..... We know that when we cognize an object, say a pot, through visual perception, we do so through the instrumentality of the faculty of vision, the eye, and it is an established fact that we do not need to know the properties or features of the eye organ itself ..... Similarly we comprehend the sphota through the instrumentality of nada, sounds. Patanjali ..... has contended that sound is the attribute of the sphota ..... in this view the cognition of sounds themselves is not needed prior to our cognition of the sphota. Bhartrhari has criticized this view saying that ..... as the sounds are uttered they are also directly perceived by our sense of hearing. Hence it is impossible to comprehend the sphota without comprehending the sounds.[105]

Between the two, Matilal seems to have affinity for Patanjali's view, rather than for Bhartrhari's view. Invoking the idea of sabda - brahman (eternal verbum),[106] he interprets Bhartrhari to mean that a person with divine enlightenment can grasp the sphota with minimum aid of nada. When the concept of a pre-sphota state of meaning is accepted, it becomes possible to postulate that sphota exists in the consciousness.

Matilal minutely examines the subtlties of Bhartrhari's linguistic terminology, the complexisties of his philosophical

assumptions, his debt to his predecessors, and various objections and counter arguments by other thinkers. Matilal then employs his understanding of Bhartrhari to look into the concept of translation and the distinction between ordinary language and the language of poetry. This examination helps Matilal to formulate a comprehensive definition of translation :

> ..... To put it blandly, 'translation' in a non-trivial sense is involved even when a philosopher tries, with whatever motivation, to read the writings of another philosopher, ancient or modern. The same material can have different readings, and thereby inevitably different meanings, different interpretations. The rather platitudinous air of this statement can be dispelled if we do neither of these two things: take 'meanings' or 'interpretations' too literally and presume there to be an essential difference between 'meanings' and 'readings'. Each reading is a creative formulation, and hence a translation based upon such a reading is a creative transformation.[107]

According to Matilal, Bhartrhari's holistic conception of language, rules out the possibility of translation. Translation is possible only to the extent of the transfer of situational meaning or vachyartha. Taking the vachaka, vachya relationship in Bhartrhari's linguistics into account, Matilal evolves the criterion for judging the merits of translation.

> ..... The goodness or badness of a translation, the distortion, falsity or correctness of it, would not be determined simply by the interlinguistic or intra-linguistic semantic rules, but by the entire situation of each translation with all its uniqueness,

> that is, by the kind of total reactions, effects, motivations, and preferences it generates on that occasion. It is a matter of common knowledge that a translator may deliberately or unconsciously choose the translational forms or expressions, in order to create the intended result, and within certain limits this choice may become tolerable. If it is intolerable the translation is bad. We can decide that the translation is bad or distorted to the extent it becomes intolerable.108

The discussion about the formulation of aesthetics of multilingual literary pactice in India, is a pioneering one.

Matilal begins his analysis of Vakrokti and dhvani, by making a distinction between kavya and alamkara. Kavya school regards the 'soul' of poetry to be the important aspect of it. On the other hand, alamkara school regards the 'body' of poetry to be important. According to Matilal Anandhavardhana, and Abhinavagupta try to connect the soul and the body of poetry by conceptualising the 'stated' meaning and the 'expressed' meaning. It is difficult to say, however, why he does not take Krishna Rayan's work into account while discussing dhvani; the theory of suggestion in poetry.

According to Anandavardhana, poetry consists of more than what it seems to say. This 'excess' of meaning is suggestion, which in modern terms is the emotive meaning of poetry. Matilal states :

> Ananda was more concerned with the emotive meaning of poetry - poetry being evocative of aesthetic pleasure in the sensitive reader. When emotions are

> suggested (i.e., evoked obliquely) the beauty is all the more enhanced, the aesthetic rapture excels. Alamkaras etc., can only be subservient to this evocation of aesthetic enjoyment, called rasa. Thus, the first theory, we can say, was concerned with the depths of meaning and ambiguity of the literary composition.[109]

Though not explicated fully, Matilal's concern seems to be the source of suggestion in consistency with his theory of perception. One may claim that suggestion is a matter more of perception than of objective attributes of language. At this stage he turns towards a discussion of Kuntata's theory. However the treatment of Vakrokti is neither elaborate nor as original as other parts of Matilal's work. This discussion serves to show the all pervasive influence of Bhartrhari on Indian poetics.

In conclusion Matilal argues that the holistic poetics in ancient India is a product of holistic linguistics of Bhartrhari. This is a properly argued, consistent and novel interpretation of the tradition of poetics in India. He distributes Indian theories of Indian poetry in keeping with his theory of perception into three types :

> We can think of three main ways of approaching the study of poetry. One is by concentrating upon the beauty in the external appearance of poetry. The second is by concentrating upon the poet's power or activity. The third is by concentrating upon the pleasure in the aesthetic judgement, the enjoyment that a sensitive reader derives from poetry. The first route was taken by the old ..... Alamkarikas. The second was taken by Kuntaka and the third by Bhatta Nayaka. Anandavardhana ..... followed the

> third route but created a new dimension in it. As ..... sensitive readers, are suggestible, it is the power of suggestion of rasa or aesthetic pleasure ..... that became the focus of attention of Ananda.[110]

Matilal further argues that there has been a coalescence of the three schools in the Indian tradition. According to him the most significant contribution of Indian theories is not the dhvani theory, but the linguistics of Bhartrhari.

In conclusion it may be observed that Matilal is unlike his predecessors in the field of scholarship in poetics. He approaches poetics as a part of the humanities, or as he calls sastras, as a branch of perceptional philosophy. He cites various Buddhist philosophers, Bharata, Anandavardhana, Abhinavagupta, and Kuntaka, without building upon their theories with philosophic precision, and yet he has been able to use them to illustrate a philosophy of perception, which is his own. He is primarily interested in the perception of the 'inner episodes'. Art experience for the rasika is an inner episode. His theory therefore throws new light on the experience of aesthetic delights. His originality lies in the fact that he is able to record the critical and linguistic concepts from the Indian tradition to form a new structure of thought. In this sense Matilal's is a creative re-reading of the past, which renders that past usable. What he has presented is not so much an interpretation, as in Coomaraswamy or M. Hiriyanna, or an assertion

as in Krishna Rayan, but an argument which is well conceived and executed with scholarly and philosophic rigor.

VI

During this century innumerable attempts have been made to reinterpret Sanskrit poetics. Works of this nature abound in regional languages as well as in English. In Gujarati the important critics who have offered fresh interpretation of Sanskrit poetics are for instance. Nagindas Parekh, and Dolarray Mankad.[111] In English they are, S.K. De, P.V. Kane, K. Krishnamoorthy, G.S. Amur, V. Raghavan, and Krishna Chaitanya,[112] apart from the ones already discussed. Though P.V. Kane has given a systematic repository of information of bibliographical and biographical details, related to critics from Bharata to Jagannatha, it is an important beginning for the twentieth century reinterpretation of Sanskrit poetics in India, and cannot be ignored. S.K. De combines history with criticism and presents critical concepts in a chronological order. However both Kane and De have no specific preference for any particular school or theory as such. That is the reason why one feels that their involvement in contemporary literature and criticism is negligible. G.S. Amur stands out as the only critic to have paid attention to the comic in his essay 'Laughter in Sanskrit poetics'.[113] But his work

is sketchy and not consistent with his other critical interests, which are Indo-English literature, Kannada literature, American literature, and British literature. The essay falls short of a systematic and elaborate theory. In comparison, K. Krishnamoorthy is a more formidable critic and scholar. His edition of and commentary on Anandavardhana's Dhvanyaloka is a splendid scholarly achievement. So are his other works of comparative nature on Indian and Western criticism. As a translator of Sanskrit he has an undisputed reputation. It would have been desirable to include him in the present study but in orientation he does not seem to be much different from M. Hiriyanna. Most observations made about M. Hiriyanna, would be applicable to K. Krishnamoorthy too. Therefore, he is not included. On the other hand, Krishna Chaitanya whose Sanskrit Poetics : A Critical and Comparative Study makes an impressive first reading, appears to wear out, when one attempts a summary of his arguments. One feels that Krishna Chaitanya is important for what he knows but not for what he says, for he tends to yoke together, quite nonchalently Anandavardhana and Mallarme, or Kuntaka and William Empson. He does not achieve a synthesis of ideas which Matilal does. When one views the entire gamut of twentieth century interpretation of Sanskrit poetics, it becomes clear that the tendency is pervasive and is still very far from abatement.

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