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INDIAN THEORY AND CRITICISM

The last years of the twentieth century saw a rather sudden and surprising resurrection of an ancient literary-critical methodology as modern drama and postcolonial theory breathed new life into Vedic methods. Tom Stoppard's *Indian Ink* gave new currency in the West to the Indian literary-critical concepts of *rasa* (meaning, essence) and *dhvani* (sense as suggested by the form). Like a learned Indian *muni* (sage), Stoppard discusses the juxtaposition of Indian and Western concepts of aesthetics and, through performance, presents both Indian mimesis (or, as HOMI K. BHABHA would call it, mimicry [85–93]) and the Westerner's search for *rasa* and suggests an ancient literary-critical method as an antidote to DECONSTRUCTION. Stoppard is hardly alone in his interest in *rasa*, however. In the 1950s, John Cage is said to have composed *Sonatas and Interludes* around the nine *rasas*, and several acting schools have begun to teach the interpretation of *rasa*. PLATO and ARISTOTLE are thus supplemented by Indian criticism and theory.

The Western tradition of literary theory and criticism essentially derives from the Greeks, and there is a sense in which Plato, Aristotle, and LONGINUS mark out positions and debates that are still being played out. However, studies of Indian critical theories show that Vedic discourses on criticism and theater may in fact have influenced the Greeks. As Western critical methods seem less certainly sufficient to make sense of the plethora of literatures produced by the world's cultures, it may be useful to remind ourselves that other equally ancient classical critical traditions exist. There is an unbroken line of literary theory and criticism in Indian culture that goes back at least as far as the Western tradition. Indian criticism constitutes an important and largely untapped resource for literary theorists since the Indian tradition in important respects assigns a more central role to literature than does the Greek tradition.

Interesting similarities and contrasts can be identified between ancient Indian and Western attitudes toward literature. While explicit literary theory in India can be traced as far back as the fourth century B.C.E., thus making Indian critical theory roughly contemporaneous with Aristotle and Plato, there is much discussion of poetic and literary prac-

tice in the *Vedas*, which developed over the period 1500–500 B.C.E. In India, unlike among the Greeks, literary theory and criticism was never isolated simply as an area of philosophy; the practice and appreciation of literature was deeply woven into religion and daily life. For example, whereas Plato argued in *The Republic* that the poet was not beneficial to society, according to *Ayurveda*, the science of Indian medicine, a perfectly structured couplet (*sloka*) could literally, by its rhythms, clean the air and heal the sick. We have come to know this perfect couplet in everyday language as the *mantra* (literally “verse”), though *mantra* can also refer to only a part of the couplet, an abbreviation of the healing word. The Vedic Aryans determined that Sanskrit poetry, if it was to speak to the hearer, must be in the precise meter of the *sloka*, comparable to the heroic couplet, and therefore they worshipped Vach, the goddess of speech or holy word (De Bary et al. 5–6). “Shri vach kunda mahadeya” (may my words have power to manifest), with its inclusion of Vach within “vach,” remains a common invocation. In another area of overlap, Indian critics, like the Greeks, developed a formalistic system of rules of grammar and structure that were meant to shape literary works, but they also laid great emphasis on the meaning and essence of words. This became the literary-critical tenet of *rasadhvani* (meaning-essence). Overall, in contrast to Plato's desire to expel poets and poetry from his republic, poetry in India was meant to lead individuals to live their lives according to religious and didactic purposes, creating not just an Aristotelian “purgation of emotions” and liberation for an individual but a wider, political liberation for all of society. Society would then be freed from *ama* (ill will) and feelings that generate bad *karma* (act or action) by a “purgation of harmful emotions.” This would make it possible for individuals to live in greater harmony with one another. Various systems aimed at creating and defining this liberatory purpose in literature through either form or content.

Because the *Vedas*, the basis of the all-Indian Hindu tradition, are written in Sanskrit, all of India's religious, philosophical, literary, and critical literature was written in this language. Sanskrit served as a lingua franca across regional boundaries but predominantly for the learned, upper classes and the Brahmins, who made up the priestly class.

The Brahmins then interpreted the religious, literary, and critical texts for local individuals by using the indigenous languages. Three major critical texts form the basis of Sanskrit critical theory: Bharata's *Natyasastra* [Science of drama], a treatise on drama from the second century C.E.; Bhartrhari's theories and illustrations of *rasas* from about 800 C.E.; and Anandavardhana's *Dhvanyaloka* [Thoughtful word, or The essential word], which dates from the ninth century C.E. and was the foundation of the *dhvani* school of criticism. (Bhartrhari is supposed to have been an influential exponent of the *dhvani* theory, founded by Anandavardhana [Sukla 423].) Bhartrhari's *Satakas*, a treatise in verse demonstrating the evocation of love, life, and enlightenment, comprises three 100-poem cycles, or centums: the *sringara*, *neeti*, and *vairagya satakas*. The first cycle is the evocation or illustration of *sringara* (eroticism), which is the first of the nine sentiments of *rasa* (Brodersen 6). It is associated with the god Vishnu and is the *rasa* of creation and hence also the *rasa* of *natya* (dance), since Indian mythology sees the Vishnu/Shiva dance as the creation story. So the *Satakas* are poems, but they are also commentaries or illustrations of a particular *rasa*; thus, like HORACE'S *Ars Poetica*, they are poems that can also be considered critical texts, in this case because they demonstrate what *rasa* is. For North Indian critics, the *Satakas* lay out a genre. The South Indian version, the *Sumati Satakam*, asks questions such as "Sakyam Ey Erikin?" (should it not have been this way? is it not so?). *Sumati*, in South Indian lore, is the wise woman, and the questioner asks her "life" questions on the nature of existence—reality versus the ideal.

The *Satakas*, the *Natyasastra*, and the *Dhvanyaloka* can be discussed in relation to the genres poetry, drama, and literary criticism, which is the order in which Indian literature and criticism developed. Interestingly, these works ask questions that sound surprisingly contemporary, such as whether "authority" rests with the poet or with the critic, that is, in the text or in the interpretation. In *Dhvanyaloka*, Anandavardhana concludes that "in the infinite world of literature, the poet is the creator, and the world changes itself so as to conform to the standard of his pleasure" (Sarma 6). Anandavardhana equates the *kavirao* (poet) with *Prajapati* (the Creator). The poet creates the world the reader sees or experiences. Thus, Anandavardhana also jostles with such issues as the poet's role and social responsibility, and whether social problems are an appropriate subject for literature. For Anandavardhana, life imitates art; hence the poet functions not just as one of the "unacknowledged legislators of the world," as PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY states in the "Defence of Poetry" (*Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. Donald H. Reiman and Sharon Powers, 1977, 508), and not just as someone who speaks for the world, but also as someone who shapes

social values and morality. The idea of *sahrdaya* (proper critic, one who is in sympathy with the poet's heart) is a concept that Western critics from I. A. Richards through F. R. LEAVIS TO STANLEY FISH have struggled with. In the Indian tradition, a critic is the sympathetic interpreter of the poet's works.

But why interpretation? Why does a community that reads the works of its own writers need interpretation? How does the reader read, and what is the role of criticism? Indian philosophers and priests attempted to answer these questions in terms of the didactic purpose of literature as liberation. *Rasadhvani* approximated closely to the Indian view of life, detachment from emotions that would cause bad *karma* and the subsequent road to *moksha* (liberation). Twentieth-century critics such as K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar (b. 1908) and Kuppaswami Sastriar (1885–1980)—both South Indians, the latter the major Tamil interpreter of Sanskrit literary criticism—have brought about a revival of the *rasadhvani* schools of criticism. Similarly, Bengali writers such as Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) were greatly influenced by the didactic purpose of literature that *rasadhvani* critics advocated.

To understand how these critical theories developed, we need to look briefly at the development of Indian literature. The *Rig Veda* is considered the earliest extant poem in the Indo-European language family and is dated from anywhere between 2500 B.C.E. and 600 B.C.E. It does, however, make reference to *kavya* (stanzaic forms, or poetry) that existed before the *Rig Veda* itself. The word *gatha*, referring to Zoroastrian religious verses that are sung, also occurs frequently in the *Rig Veda*, thus establishing ancient connections among these genres, cultures, and religions. Valmiki, the legendary sage and author of the *Ramayana* (fifth century B.C.E.), is considered the first poet and also the first exponent of poetic form. Tradition has it that Valmiki, wandering in the forest, heard a pair of Kaunca birds mating. When the male of that pair was shot down by a hunter, Valmiki heard the grieving of the female bird, which was metrically so perfect that Valmiki himself expressed her grief in the form of a perfect couplet. Ever since then, Valmiki has been considered the father of Sanskrit poetry, as well as of poetic criticism. The *Ramayana*, one of the two national epics of India, was translated into Hindi by Tulsi Das sometime in the 1500s for common consumption.

Sarvepelli Radhakrishnan, the first president of the post-colonial Republic of India and the most prolific scholar of Indian philosophy and critical theory, labels the period from 600–500 B.C.E. and 200 C.E. as the epic period because it saw the development of the great epics, Valmiki's *Ramayana* and also the *Mahabharata* (Radhakrishnan and Moore xviii). According to Radhakrishnan, the *Bhagavad Gita*, which is a

part of the *Mahabharata*, ranks as the most authoritative text in Indian philosophical literature because it is considered to have been divinely revealed and because it was apparently noted down as it was revealed and therefore was not merely transmitted orally. In the *Gita*, Krishna and Arjuna philosophize about the role of the poet. The responsibility of maintaining order in the world is on the shoulders of the poet-sage, such as Janaka, for ordinary mortals tend to imitate the role model as portrayed by Janaka. Thus, it is the poets who set the standards for the world to follow.

The period of Indian philosophy that spans more than a millennium from the early Christian centuries until the seventeenth century is considered the *sutra* period, or the period of treatises upon religious and literary texts. Radhakrishnan calls this the scholastic period of Indian philosophy since interpretation became important at this time. While Sanskrit remained the language of religion in the south, local versions of the religious literature began to emerge in order to meet the needs of the South Indian people, who spoke predominantly Tamil or Telugu. It was not until the breakup of the Brahminical tradition in about the seventh century (Emree 228-29) that literary religious hymns emerged in Tamil. Enugu Lakshmana Kavi, a Telugu poet of the eighteenth century, translated Bhartrhari's three *Satakas* into Telugu and also helped nativize them in South Indian culture. However, the *Sumati Satakam*, which every schoolchild in Andhra Pradesh (also called Telugu Nadu) grows up learning by heart, was translated by the classical thirteenth-century poet Badenna into Telugu. Some *Sumati* verses, particularly those that question ways of understanding or creating knowledge, are very much like the later didactic and yet questioning poems of the North Indian Hindi poet Kabir (1440-1518), poems referred to as *Kabir ke dohe*, which also imply what rhetoric ought to be and do. Some of these poems have to do with rhetorical traditions or interpretive strategies, and some are simply love poems.

The South Indian-English writer R. K. Narayan's (1906-2001) version of the *Ramayana* is based on the Tamil version by the poet Kampan in the eleventh century. Tamil literary criticism remained rooted in the classical Sanskrit critical tenets, however, as is evidenced by the continuance (even in the 1900s) of *Dhvanyaloka* criticism by Kuppaswami Sastri in Madras. The landmark contribution of these two South Indian literary figures to a tradition usually seen as the provenance of North Indians, to be interpreted accurately only by North Indians, shows that the literary and critical traditions flowing from the *Vedas* are a pan-Indian philosophy.

Early Indian criticism was "ritual interpretation" (*shaukunikam*, interpretation of a *sloka*, or *shoukalampan*, com-

mentary) of the *Vedas*, which were the religious texts. Such ritual interpretation consisted in analyzing philosophical and grammatical categories, such as the use of the simile, which was expounded upon in Yasaka's *Nirutka* (approximately fourth century B.C.E.), or in applying to a text the grammatical categories of Panini's grammar. This critical method, which consisted in the analysis of grammar, style, and stanzaic regularity, was called a *sastra*, or "science." Panini's *Sabdanusasana* [Science of *sabda*, or "words"] and the *Astadhyayi* [Eight chapters of grammatical rules] are perhaps the oldest extant grammars, dated by various scholars to about the beginning of the Christian era (Winternitz 3:422). *Alankara sastra* (critical science) emanated from Panini's grammar and was dogmatic and rule-governed about figures of speech in poetry. The word *alankara* means "ornament" (Dimock 120), and as in Western rhetorical theory, this critical science consisted of rules for figurative speech, for example, for *rupaka* (simile), *utpreksa* (metaphor), *atisya* (hyperbole), and *kavya*. The idea of criticism as a science is rooted in the centuries-old Indian belief that *vyakarana* (grammar) is the basis of all education and science. Rules were to be learned by rote, as were declensions and conjugations, as a means of developing discipline of the mind. As a result of this focus on grammatical rules, as Edwin Gerow notes, "*alankara* criticism passes over almost without comment the entire range of issues that center around the origin of the individual poem, its context, its appreciation, and its authorship. It does not aim at judgement of individual literary works or at a theory of their origin" (Dimock 126).

Patanjali, whose work is ascribed to the second century B.C.E., believed that a child must study grammar for the first twelve years; in fact, before studying any science, one must prepare for it by studying grammar for twelve years (see Winternitz 3:420). Since grammar was the foundation of all other study, a series of rule-governed disciplines arose, each of which had categories and classifications to be learned by heart. These disciplines were *arthasastra*, a grammar of government or political science; *rasa-sastra*, the science of meaning or interpretation specifically for poetry, that is, literary criticism; *natyasastra*, the science of drama, or dramaturgy; and *sangitasastra*, the science of music, or musicology. Each was further broken down; for instance, musicology was divided into *jatiluksana* (theory), *atodya* (study of musical instruments), *susira* (song), *tala* (measure), and *dhruva* (rhythm). Poetry was most governed by the *alankara*, the rules of critical science; but since poetry existed before criticism, it in itself helped to generate those rules. Critics in the last few centuries B.C.E. believed that any association of word and memory having a special quality generated *kavya*. The creation of mnemonic rhymes was

considered essential to poetry. Poetry had two qualities *alankara*, here loosely meaning "formal qualities," and *guna*, or "meaning" and "essence."

According to the *Alankara sastra*, form has as much to do with creating the *sphota*, the feeling evoked by a poem, as the *sphota* has to do with creating meaning. When Valmiki heard the grieving of the female bird whose mate was shot and then expressed her grief in the form of a perfect couplet, the appropriate *vibhav* (cause), in this case grief, gave rise to the *anubhav* (effect), which in turn gave rise to perfect rhythmic expression. Valmiki in his *Ramayana* thus became the first poet to proclaim a critical tenet (Sankaran 5-7).

Drama developed later in India than in Greece. Bharata's *Natyasastra*, written about the second century C.E., not only laid down rules governing the creation of drama but also prepared the way for the development of the theories of *rasa*. Lee Siegel provides the following explanation:

Playing upon the literal meaning of *rasa*, "flavor" or "taste," [Bharata] used the gastronomic metaphor to explain the dynamics of the aesthetic experiences. Just as the basic ingredient in a dish, when seasoned with secondary ingredients and spices, yields a particular flavor which the gourmet can savor with pleasure, so the basic emotion in a play, story, or poem, when seasoned with secondary emotions, rhetorical spices, verbal herbs, and tropological condiments, yields a sentiment which the connoisseur can appreciate in enjoyment. Love yields the amorous sentiment, courage the heroic mode. (7-8)

Thus, Bharata provides formulas for producing the corresponding sentiments in the audience—recipes similar to Aristotle's definition of "tragedy" and "comedy" but corresponding mostly with the means to produce homeostasis, or balance, in an audience by having the audience identify with certain *rasas*. It is the idea in Indian criticism that literature is meant to cause a purgation of emotions and create a homeostasis in the audience that most approximates Aristotle's theory of tragedy. This idea, though, is drawn from Indian philosophy and religious emphasis on liberation and freedom from bad *karma*. All literature is supposed to generate the feeling of *moksha*. Literature, more particularly drama or tragedy, must cause the purgation of the emotions of *satva* (happiness), *rajas* (anger), and *tamas* (ignorance or laziness) so as to free the soul from the body.

Bharata divided the *Natyasastra* into *hasya-rasa* (comedy) and *karuna-rasa* (tragedy). The effect of drama can be obtained through, first, *vibhava*, the conditions provoking a specific emotion in the audience, which are controlled by *alambana-vibhava*, or identification with a person, as in Aristotle's dictum of identification with the fall of a great man, and *uddipana-vibhava*, the circumstances causing the

emotion to be evoked, as in the role of fate, pride, ambition, and so on; second, *anubhava*, or the technicalities of dramaturgy, gesture, expression, and so on; and third, *vyabhicari*, the buildup toward the dominant emotion, or as Aristotle would have put it, the climax and subsequent *katharsis*. S. N. Dasgupta says that the theory of *rasa*

is based on a particular view of psychology which holds that our personality is constituted, both towards its motivation and intellection, of a few primary emotions which lie deep in the subconscious or unconscious strata of our being. These primary emotions are the amorous, the ludicrous, the pathetic, the heroic, the passionate, the fearful, the nauseating, the wondrous. (37)

Each of these, however, can be classified under the three primary emotions: *satva*, *rajas*, *tamas*. In freeing the audiences of these emotions, dramaturgy functions rather like *karma yoga*, or the "yoga of good deeds."

In his *Dramatic Concepts Greek and Indian* (1994) Bharata Gupta brings together Aristotle's *Poetics* and Bharata's *Natyasastra*. Gupta emphasizes the need to study plays as performance and to look at the communal and festive aspects of written plays rather than to treat them as literature. The Indian and Western systems come together to show that theater should provide a great "emotional arousal." Gupta maintains that the *Natyasastra* was in circulation about the fifth century B.C.E., whereas Aristotle's *Poetics* is dated between 355 B.C.E. and 335 B.C.E. He dismisses the theory that the *Poetics* could have arrived in India with Alexander and influenced the *Natyasastra* and in fact believes that the theory of mimesis is directly influenced by Bharata Muni's theory of *anukarana* (imitation or, loosely, mimesis). He also argues that about 450 B.C.E. there lived an individual named Bharata (named because of having to do with actors or drama, which is why northwestern India is called Bharatvarsa, "the land of performance") who either created or drew together strictures regarding performance and thus became considered a *muni*. So Gupta establishes that Bharata Muni was either the compiler or author of this famous tract on performance, which became a tract on literature in general. By showing that the earliest of Greek *muthoi* have elements of Vedic verses, Gupta shows that the Indians influenced Greek theories of literature and drama in terms of *miasma*, *katharsis*, *pathos*, and so on. He details the parallel elements of Greek and Indian dramatic theory, including *muthos*, *ethos*, *dianoia*, *lexis*, and *melopoia*, all of which have their counterparts in *rasa*, *bhavas*, *abhinayas*, and other Indian concepts. He finds an Indian equivalent for mimesis in *anukarana*, although *anukarana* is more literally "copying" than mimesis.

The other major classical Indian dramaturgist is Dandin. His poetics, entitled *Kavyadarsa* [Treatise on poetry], dates from the eighth century C.E. (He also wrote the first prose romance, *Dasa Kumara-carita* [Period of young love].) Dandin emphasized the *gunas*, or emotions generated by the "excellence of arrangement" (Mishra 202). Thus, he attempted to bring *rasas* together with *alankaras*.

Literary criticism in India resulted from the historical developments in poetry and drama. It was Anandavardhana who, in writing the *Dhvanyaloka*, first explicitly developed a systematic literary criticism. This was the beginning of a formal literary criticism as opposed to the critical criteria that were generated alongside poetry and drama by the pronouncements of poets and dramatists. Anandavardhana, poet laureate of the court of Avantivarman (855–85), the king of Kashmir, turned to the centuries-old theory of *dhvani* and for the first time succeeded in establishing *dhvani* as the soul of poetry (Banerji 13). He chose to oppose the *rasa* theorists by going back to the emphasis laid on words by the grammarians, or *Alankarikas*, exponents of the *Alankara* school of criticism. Hari Ram Mishra describes the theory of *dhvani* as follows:

The theory of *Dhvani* was based on the *Sphotavada* of grammarians who held that the *sphota* is the permanent capacity of words to signify their imports and is manifested by the experience of the last sound of a word combined with the impressions of the experiences of the previous ones. The formulation of the doctrine of *sphota* was made in order to determine the significative seat of a word and the *Alankarikas* concerned themselves first with this grammatico-philosophical problem about the relation of a word to its connotation in order to get support, strong and confirmatory, for their theory. (209)

Anandavardhana thus ruled for form over content and felt that the best poetry, especially dramatic poetry, suggested not only meaning but also poetic form.

To the *alankaras* Anandavardhana added *slesa*, "rules that governed the stylistic choices" of homonyms, synonyms, and so on. *Slesa* can be considered roughly equivalent to rules for parsing and metrical analysis. Two types of *slesas* are *sabdāslesa* (wordplay, word sound) and *arthāslesa* (meaning and sense). Perhaps the closest analogy to this in Western terms is Robert Frost's theory of "getting the sound of sense" (*Poetry and Prose*, ed. Edward Connery Lathem and Lawrence Thompson, 1972, 261).

In light of contemporary Western critical theory, there is a very interesting twist to Anandavardhana's theories. For him, *vyāñjana* (revelation) is an important characteristic of poetry. But the revelation rests in the heart of the "hearer," that is, the reader. In other words, readers make meaning.

To make this move to the reader, Anandavardhana turned to the grammarians. According to Mukunda Madhava Sharma, "The grammarians do not recognize any suggestive function of the expressive words but they hold that the syllables that we hear suggest an eternal and complete word within the heart of the hearer, which is called *sphota* and which alone is associated with meaning" (35). Therefore, if a poet follows the correct rules for combining sounds and words, meaning will follow from the *sphota* that exists within the reader.

Rasadhvani, then, became the critical tenet of currency following Abhinavagupta's 41 literary-critical commentaries on the *Dhvanyaloka* and the *Natyasastra*, dated variously between the ninth and eleventh centuries. With Abhinavagupta's commentaries, the emergence of the *rasadhvani* school was finally complete. This school of criticism recognizes the importance of both *rasa* and *dhvani* as critical principles that influence and permeate a creative work. *Rasadhvani* can be summed up simply in Aristotle's language as a theory that believed in "language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in separate parts of the play," in a work that exists "in the form of action, not of narrative," and in emotions (and their role in the aesthetic experience), which "through pity and fear" bring about "the proper purgation of emotions" (61). It is in this sense that Indian criticism is closest to that of the Greeks.

With the *rasadhvani* theory, the reader becomes the central focus of literary criticism. The aim of *kavya* is to give pleasure, but this pleasure must not bind the soul to the body. Thus, the idea of *aucitya* (content) becomes important. According to Anandavardhana, as well as Bharata, "poetry must not propagate deplorable ideas" (Sharma 252), must not cause attachment or bad *karma*, and must aim at liberation as "the highest goal of human life." (While these later critics greatly elaborated on *aucitya*, the word actually occurs first in Anandavardhana's *Dhvanyaloka*, where *aucitya*, the "soul of poetry," is the result of *rasadhvani* [Raghavan and Nagendra 115]; this is the only mention of *rasa* and *dhvani* together. Thus, in Anandavardhana, as in all earlier Indian criticism, the effect literature has on the reader is of prime importance.) Anandavardhana's definition of the *santarasa* is very similar to Aristotle's idea of *katharsis*: "excess of bliss on account of loss of desires." *Aucitya* is properly translated as "propriety" or "appropriateness," which is linked to *vakrokti*, "technical ability with words," with the emphasis on *anumana*, "inference." Ksemendra, a Kashmiri writer who lived around the eleventh century and who helps us date the commentaries of Abhinavagupta, who lived just before him, wrote in his *Aucitya-vicara-carca* that "whatever is improper detracts from

rasa and is to be avoided" (Banerji 417). The usual association of the *rasu* theory as didacticism or moral criticism stems from statements such as this.

What is interesting about the emphasis on readers is that, according to S. K. De, the public was

expected to possess a certain amount of theoretical knowledge [communicated by the Brahmin priests as they taught the religion and interpreted the literature]; for the *rasika* or *Sahridaya* [the "proper critic"] is a man of taste. The true appreciators of poetry must be, according to the conception of the Sanskrit theorists, not only well read and wise and initiated into the intricacies of theoretic requirements, but also possessed of fine instincts of aesthetic enjoyment. The poet naturally liked to produce an impression that he had observed all the rules, traditions, and expectations of such an audience; for the ultimate test of poetry is laid down as consisting in the appreciation of the *Sahridaya*. (De 43)

Rasadhvani is the basic foundation of Indian critical theory. Earlier criticism leads up to it, and later criticism elaborates on it. Later Sanskrit critics include Mammata, who lived near the end of the eleventh century. Visvanatha's *Sahityadarpana*, dating from about the fourteenth century, draws together all the earlier critical tenets emphasizing *lakshana* (the characteristic of a work, essentially an analysis of theme or content), *alankara* (ornament), and *riti* (style). The essentially Sanskrit tenet of *rasadhvani* had a major exponent in the early twentieth-century South Indian Tamil critic Kuppaswami Sastri. In 1919 Sastri presented 20 lectures at Madras University on the methods and materials of literary criticism in Sanskrit, making frequent comparisons between the traditional *sastras* and the criticism of JOHN DRYDEN, SAMUEL JOHNSON, and SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE. His student V. Raghavan did much to promote Sanskrit literary criticism in South India.

In *Laughing Matters* Lee Siegel points out that so many of the ancient critical and theoretical principles have been handed down and kept current that they are absorbed almost by osmosis by contemporary Indian writers and critics, whether working in indigenous Indian languages or in English. Thus, these ancient critical tenets continue to enjoy a curious currency. In fact, Siegel's entire discussion of wordplay and punning draws a line from the ancient *alankarikas* through couplets about Krishna to the work of Narayan and his brother, the cartoonist R. K. Laxman (b. 1910). Siegel's discussion shows the power of a tradition that has been learned, passed around, and handed down for centuries.

Sarvepelli Radhakrishnan notes that "after the sixteenth century India in philosophy and criticism lost its dynamic spirit":

First the Muslims and then the British assumed control of the country, not only physically but also in the realm of thought. The Muslims undermined Aryan culture and thought as far as possible, and the British in their time did as much as they could to belittle the thought of traditional India. For a long time, the English-educated Indians were apparently ashamed of their own philosophical tradition, and it became the mark of intelligence as well as expediency to be as European and as English in thought and life as possible. (Radhakrishnan and Moore xxi)

These historical trends are reflected in post-sixteenth-century Indian literature and critical practice. With Emperor Akbar (1542-1605) on the throne, Persian poetry and Persian and Islamic critical practice became the norm. Persian couplets influenced by Islamic antirepresentational traditions tended toward the abstract. Love for God in the Sufi tradition became the subject of poetry. Yet the *doha*, the poetic rhyming riddle as developed by Kabir, had its roots in the Hindu tradition of the "perfect" *sloka*, the perfectly rhyming heroic couplet. The Muslims also brought with them a tradition of *baed-bazi*, a kind of Shakespearean rhetorical retort—an Indian form of stichomythia (the ancient Greek practice in which single lines of verse or prose are spoken by alternate speakers). Hyperbole and verbosity characterized poetry, while satire was reserved only for the court jester, the *qawal*. Islamic tradition put an end to drama.

In the nineteenth century, verbosity and the florid Persian style merged with European traditions to produce a pseudo-Tennysonian literature in English written by Indians such as Raja Rammohun Roy (1772?-1833) and the sisters Aru Dutt (d. 1874) and Toru Dutt (1856-77). By the beginning of the twentieth century there was a call for a reexamination of the indigenous critical tradition, and an increased production of literature in English by Indians resulted. South Indian critics such as K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar and C. D. Narasimhaiah—both educated at Cambridge, where their teachers included F. R. Leavis—sought to apply European standards to a literature that increasingly defied judgment by those standards. To these critics Indian writing failed to use English "properly"; writers such as Narayan, Raja Rao (b. 1909), and Mulk Raj Anand (b. 1905) did not write in what they considered "good English." And yet these writers were increasingly being read abroad and championed by the E. M. Forsters and Graham Greenes whom these critics held in great esteem.

And so questions as to how new Indian writing in English should be judged or what yardstick should be applied began to arise. Peroza Jussawalia's *Family Quarrels* attempts to grapple with these issues and to bridge the gap between Indian critical traditions and those of "commonwealth" literature and postcolonial theory. Postcolonial theory in

an interesting move away from Western postmodern models seems to approach Indian critical theory, at least in the work of GAYATRI CHAKRAVORTY SPIVAK. In *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (1999) she situates herself as an Indian reader, a Hindu, even one who as a teenager was "profoundly taken" by Hinduism (53), and then brings into the "philosophy" of postmodern/postcolonial theory G. W. F. HEGEL's reading of the *Bhagavad Gita*. She considers the nature (*prakṛti*) of the essences of male and female and also *adhivāna*, the location of subject positions: "If the self-generating subject properly inhabits the female in itself in order to become, the instrument is his own *māya*" (52); that is, if the individual generating his subject position recognizes his androgynous state, he is free from illusion and comes into being. Spivak translates *māya*, which normally means "illusion," as "phenomenality" because she sees it as similar to *Erscheinung*, "phenomenal appearance." For Spivak, the turn to Indian critical theory is important because it "attempts to satisfy the increasing and on occasion somewhat dubious demand that the ethnics speak for themselves" (40). Through her readings of Hegel on the *Gita*, she attempts to define the "subject in India (one stage of the unconscious symbolic)" (58). Indian critical theory is thus at the base of a new frontier in CULTURAL STUDIES.

In his landmark critical assessment, *Indian Writing in English* (1962), Iyengar attempts to turn to HIPPOLYTE TAINÉ's formula of race, moment, and milieu. And yet with the emergence of a literature that is both Western and Indian but is even more permeated with Indianness, the question of a return to the *rasadhvani* criticism is increasingly urgent. Clarifying race, moment, and milieu helps to draw out both meaning and essence, but if, as in much of cultural studies, the focus is only on race and context, the essence of a work is missed. In a reversal of his previous position, which was based on European standards, C. D. Narasimhaiah established at Mysore University in South India a critical school called *Dhvanyaloka*. In response to Marxist and other theoretical approaches to what have come to be called the new literatures in English and have been subsumed under the label "postcolonial," nationalist critics (dismissed sometimes by Spivak as "native informants") ask whether Indians must even import their radicalism from the West. Does it not make more sense, for example, to see a writer such as Salman Rushdie in the Indian tradition of wordplay and the Islamic tradition of a *qawāl* than to see him as a post-Joycean, postmodern Marxist spokesperson for an oppressed other—an "other" that has, ironically, vehemently rejected him? Spivak's work in turning to Indian critical theory seems to address some of these objections, particularly regarding who can speak for whom. What constitutes the Indianness of a writer such as Rushdie or Anita Desai, who

is a mixture of East and West? What Indian critical and theoretical positions have these writers absorbed by osmosis? An Indian literary theory needs to be forged to suit the multicultural Indian context of the newer literatures, whether those of the vernaculars or in English.

Feroza Jussawalla

See also POSTCOLONIAL CULTURAL STUDIES: 2, 1990 AND AFTER.

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IRIGARAY, LUCE

Associated with feminism and psychoanalysis, Luce Irigaray (b. 1930) is a remarkable cultural theorist best known for her work published in France through the 1970s. As a whole, however, Irigaray's theoretical work has benefited from a rich and diverse intellectual career. Irigaray began her intellectual training at Louvain but eventually moved to Paris, where she earned a master's degree in psychology in 1961. During the 1960s, Irigaray studied psychoanalysis and participated in JACQUES LACAN's seminars, where she received training as an analyst. By 1968 Irigaray had completed a doctorate in linguistics, and she eventually became the director of research in philosophy at the Centre national de la recherche scientifique.

Psychoanalyst, linguist, and philosopher, Irigaray is concerned, particularly in *Speculum de l'autre femme* (1974, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 1985) and *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un* (1977, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, 1985), with exposing how Western discourse has effaced woman as the specular image of man. By contrast, Irigaray carefully eschews enclosing her own ideas as "theory" to avoid an essentialism that will support patriarchy. Accordingly, *Speculum*, which caused her expulsion from psychoanalytic and academic circles, has no beginning or end . . . [and] confounds the linearity of an outline, the teleology of discourse, within which there is no possible place for the 'feminine,' except the traditional place of the repressed, the censored" (*This Sex* 68).

This major text of the 1970s—which precedes her critiques of MARTIN HEIDEGGER in *L'Oubli de l'air chez Martin Heidegger* (1983, *The Forgetting of Air in Martin Heidegger*, 1991), FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE in *Amante marine de Friedrich Nietzsche* (1979, *Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 1991), and Baruch Spinoza and EMMANUEL LEVINAS in *Ethique de la différence sexuelle* (1984, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, 1993)—takes its title from the curved mirror of feminine self-examination (a mirror folded back on itself) as opposed to the flat mirror, which privileges the relation of man to other men and excludes the feminine. The book "begins"

with a DECONSTRUCTION OF SIGMUND FREUD'S "Femininity" and "ends" with PLATO, traversing history backwards and ending at the beginning with a decentering of male discourse in Western philosophy and a transformation of Plato's cave into the mother's womb. The substituting of the curved for the flat mirror challenges psychoanalysis's attempt to despoil woman of "all valid, valuable images of her sex/organs, her body," condemning her to psychosis or hysteria for lack "of a valid signifier for her 'first' desire and for her sex/organs" (*Speculum* 55). Irigaray's strategy for exposing woman's effacement within Western discourse, then, is a form of critical mimesis in which she cites and inverts such influential texts, thereby warping the specular image of man and enabling a reading of those texts based on what they exclude and depend on: woman. The strategy of reading Western discourse for what is or must be censored has influenced a number of subsequent feminists, most notably JUDITH BUTLER.

Speculum foregrounds Irigaray's preoccupation with the "sexual indifference that underlies the truth of any science, the logic of every discourse" (*This Sex* 69). Thus conceptualizing female sexuality within masculine parameters, psychoanalysis, for example, cannot say anything about woman and her pleasure and cannot account for woman, for the "dark continent," and enacts a contradiction in relation to her. Psychoanalysis denies the specificity of female sexuality, as in Freud's contention that "the little girl is therefore a little man" who envies the possession of the penis and whose attachment to the mother must end in hate. Irigaray responds to the male conception of woman by becoming a "living mirror" and by replacing the loss of specularization with an "incendiary blaze" while maintaining woman's plurality (*Speculum* 197).

Irigaray returns to Freud repeatedly to reiterate the fact of psychoanalysis's blindness to female sexuality. Haunted by Freud as it elaborates important themes in *Speculum*, *This Sex* presents all the difficulties of breaking with tradition and yet enacts some of the disruptions it considers necessary to create the interstices in which woman's voice can be heard. In this way, Irigaray suggests the reading of literary texts in the manner that she writes them, as a critique of the underlying masculine economy of texts, as a critique of the male underpinning of the very idea of texts. To this end, as a reader Irigaray explores textual representations of female "fluid" mechanics—images and metaphors of plurality, polysemy, malleability, and dynamism—and of male "solid" mechanics—images and representations of unity, monologism, intractability, and fixity. These coordinates in many ways mark off her interests as a reader of texts. The title *This Sex Which Is Not One* even summarizes the thesis that a woman's sex is not one within the psychoanalytic frame-