

WHAT DOES SANSKRIT AESTHETICS OFFER THE CONTEMPORARY NOVEL?

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Abstract: This paper will concern itself with a close reading of a novel (Sunflowers in the Dark) by one of India's most revered contemporary women writers – Krishna Sobti (1925-). Through a reading of this novel, I will try and understand some of the conditions an affective architecture needs to take into account. Sobti's work is often celebrated for its (sexual) exuberance – I would try and read how exuberance also has its companion in all the other mixed sibling affects of silence, isolation, courage, despair. Indeed the power of the literary might well be the irreducible miscibility of affect. Such a reading of affect as a fundamental axis might also open a new way of re-entering traditional Indian debates on the aesthetics – the background of traditional notions of aesthetics in India will form the initial, necessary background in the first part of the paper, to the reading of this contemporary Sobti novel.

Keywords: sanskritic aesthetic tradition, aesthetics, rasa, dhvani, ataraxy, state of mind, teleology of poetics

The entire past is conserved in itself, but how can we save it for ourselves, how can we penetrate that in-itself without reducing it to the former present that it was, or to the present in relation to which it is past? (Deleuze, 1994: 84)

The dominant discourse in India over inherited Sanskritic aesthetic traditions remains largely trapped in the mode of reverence, and a fair number of the papers in this Conference reproduced this mode and tone. A true respecting of these traditions is, however, inseparable from asking hard and creative questions that disaggregate this tradition and see

the creation of that tradition (be it in the second century with the *Natyasastra*, or the climactic moment between the ninth to eleventh century in Kashmir) as fortuitous and contingent. It has been rightly suggested that the Sanskrit tradition has made a fairly extensive study of affects and the relationship and hierarchising between them, but it would still remain to be demonstrated how much this tradition can speak to contemporary discussions of affect. To speak with regard to the second half of my paper which analyzes a contemporary Hindi novel, I try to see how such traditional notions of relations of affect may be useful today. However, since the picture of traditional univocal aesthetics and its unmediated inheritance is a story that must be resisted, the first half of my paper will use current scholarship to break up the picture of the unified tradition.

Disaggregating the Sanskrit Aesthetic Tradition

Aesthetics, (notwithstanding some classical writers like Aristotle and Longinus), developed as a systematic field in the West only in the late eighteenth century (Kant's third Critique, Baumgarten, Shaftesbury, Lessing, Coleridge among many others), and in a particular historical and economic configuration. While fairly extensive scholarship has probed this configuration, with its interplay of the historical and epistemological that made salient a new aesthetic, in India, the aesthetic tradition (even more remote in time – Anandavardhana for example is of the ninth century), has not been probed with anywhere near the same extended rigor. This is understandable if there was simply the complaint of there being inadequate information about ancient India – but the danger occurs when the dominant argument uses the supposed paucity of sources to argue for an effectively decontextualised (historically and intellectually), and thus transcendent, aesthetic norm. Such an approach does not allow a contemporary reader to enter the text, and we are simply left with repeating the categoriology of the classical canon. The terminology and numbers remain mysterious – why should there be only eight or nine *rasas*, instead of any random number? Surely more has to be done than to perpetuate this mystery, especially if the mystery is veiled in an emphatic notion of “Indian” or “tradition”.

Likewise, the whole paraphernalia of determinants (*vibhavas*, but also the further sub categories of objective and stimulative determinants), consequences (*anubhavas*), temporary or transient states of mind (*vyabhichari*), and so on, are useful to give categorial flesh to pragmatic literary analysis, while at the same time, this over-defined model risks becoming static, as has been the case all too often in a lot of contemporary evocations. It is admitted in the tradition that while *dhvani* itself might be hard to locate, *dhvani* by itself

does not necessarily lead to *rasa*, and perhaps not all *rasa* may be considered as having the highest beauty.

As a sample of contemporary work that tries to excavate the tradition in a manner that gives us a foothold in being able to reorganise it, I use Lawrence McCrea's masterful *The Teleology of Poetics in Medieval Kashmir* (2008). McCrea's work derives from earlier scholars such as Devasthali, S K De, Erich Frauwallner, Raniero Gnoli, Edwin Gerow, Ganganath Jha, Kunjunni Raja, Krishnamoorthy, alongside the older classical Sanskrit commentarial literature. These scholars have brought to light the several factors at play in the contested Sanskritic aesthetic tradition, and I will highlight just a few to give a glimpse of the possibilities of the tradition, which was not always as self-enclosed as it seems to have become today.

McCrea makes several points in his Introduction: one, that though there was a dominant theory of affect (roughly translatable here from *dhvani*, insofar as *dhvani* privileges non-immediate meaning, a meaning that cannot be captured by simple or complex direct propositionality), many scholars immediately contested *dhvani*, including the more traditional scholarship which sought to bring *dhvani* under the rubric of theories of inference – Abhinavagupta insisted on a third dimension of aesthetic meaning beyond the literal and secondary meanings (49). Two, there remained a tension between the more textually grounded tradition of simply attempting to give ever longer and more sophisticated categorising and examples of rhetorical features, as opposed to the *dhvani*-theory privileging of a final unitary affect. Three, though the Kashmiri school revived the interest in drama, the genres of drama and poetry do not coincide in clear fashion – the Kashmiri examples are largely drawn from the short poem with its compacted vicissitudes of meaning, as opposed to drama where different questions of identification arise (there are at least the three elements of 1) the character portrayed, 2) the actor, and 3) the audience member) – here identification is not identical to the subtly graspable meaning of a purely linguistic meaning. Four, the question of religious feeling as a type of affect (is it affect at all, is it the highest type of affect, is it only an analog of worldly affect, how do we specify this analogic nature, is religion a sublation of worldly affect especially of the dominant affect (*sringara*) which comes to dominate Classical poetry etc?). Fifth, how does one make sense of the extra-ordinary debt that the Kashmiri school owes not just to the second century text the *Natyasastra* but, perhaps more crucially, to the *Mimamsaka* tradition (the *Mimamsakas* being essentially philosophers of language who sought to make coherent the heterogeneous corpus of the Vedic archive). The other immediate rival to the Kashmiri school was the logician school of the *Naiyayikas*, many of whom immediately disputed the

Kashmiri school's axiom that aesthetic experience is irreducible to forms of inference. The aestheticians countered with examples where the aesthetic (indirect, or *dhvani*) meaning was not so much implicit, or secondary meaning, but the exact opposite of the explicit meaning – for example, in verses where a lover tells her partner not to come as her husband is away, the intended meaning is precisely an invitation.

If the above paragraph captures part of the external complexity of the text, I would like to spend some time on its internal complexity too. The *Dhvanyaloka* of Anandavardhana has been translated along with the commentary of Anandavardhana's student Abhinavagupta by Daniel Ingalls, Jeffrey Masson, and M. V. Patwardhan (1990). One need not dwell on controversies such as whether Anandavardhana actually wrote all of the text and so on, but it may be useful to just note the point, if only to again destabilise the hagiography that grows so prolix around ancient thinkers. From the Introduction by Ingalls, one notes again that the innovation in the Kashmiri school was to move from more textually grounded (and thus, perhaps modest) readings which highlighted rhetorical features (*alamkara*) but also other modalities such as style (qualities such as sweetness or strength, or in another order, often enough a moralist appropriateness – *auchitya*) toward a more monist model of indirect meaning that was explicitly signified as being of the same cloth as religious transcendence – Abhinavagupta is known as much as a philosopher/mystic in the Saiva tradition as much as he is known for his contribution to aesthetics. Ingalls cites the discomfort of many classical aestheticians with Abhinavagupta – one of them, Manoratha, says that while a critic might say that a verse is full of *dhvani*, she will be unable to point out the specific word/sentence/ tone whereby *dhvani* resides (9). Further, Anandavardhana might have borrowed the idea of suggestion from Prakrit sources, and this has important implications for the relationship of the high Brahminical tradition to the vernacular and the demotic. Other points brought up in the Introduction are: how to make sense of Abhinavagupta, perhaps Sanskrit's most diversely talented intellectual – how does one reconcile his youthful immersion in *Tantra*, with his mid-career embrace of literary criticism, with his final immersion in a complex philosophy of reflection? Instead of simply celebrating Abhinavagupta as a unifier (not of just the questions of his own life, but also of the reconciliations he is believed to have effected between the *Naiyayikas*, the *Mimamsakas* and the grammarians) it may be more productive to read his work as keeping these tensions in play, and then pick up the terms and arrange them differently from what he might have argued. Such would be a truer inheritance, and salvage Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta from being mere historical figures. One must be able to invite them into more contemporary conversations.

It is worthwhile to take a brief look at what is to many people the key text of Sanskrit aesthetics – the *Dhvanyaloka* of Anandavardhana which has a commentary by Abhinavagupta. This large work has been translated by Daniel Ingalls, Jeffrey Masson and M. V. Patwardhan, who have provided a further commentary on the commentary – this last layer of commentary is helpful in providing clarifications and citations to the dense inter-textual world that the *Dhvanyaloka* inhabits). One cannot go into much detail of this dense text, but it is worth thinking, if only in an intuitive, impressionist way, of the kind and style of discourse that is being embodied and enunciated here.

A dense “sastraic” style pervades the *Dhvanyaloka* text with its commentary by Abhinavagupta. Such a book, steeped in an entrenched tradition, full of cross-references, is exceedingly hard to read. Indeed, it is worth dwelling on the phenomenology of reading a classical text, especially in the Sanskrit tradition which often begins with an authoritative, but extremely terse and cryptic aphoristic style (called *sutras*), which are then followed by commentaries, and there are then commentaries on commentaries, or texts where it is sometimes hard to distinguish commentarial readings from pedagogical intentions and so on. Many texts have auto-commentaries, and it is not always easy to distinguish if there are two authors separated by many centuries, or if it is the same author writing the terse *sutra* (in a deliberately archaic style, thereby giving it more authority) as well as then writing the more verbose commentary to appear to be contemporary. Is the writer of the commentary as genuinely faithful to the spirit of the *sutra* as he typically proclaims – for often enough the meaning is fairly stretched – this is clear even in the most revered of commentators in, say, theology, such as Ramanuja and Sankaracharya – both of whom were approximate contemporaries of the Kashmiri school of Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta discussed here.

Let us take one example of the interpenetration of two series in the *Locana* (Abhinavagupta’s commentary). On the one hand you have the traditional Hindu goals of life – *dharma* (duty), *artha* (worldly mastery), *kama* (desire), *moksha* (freedom), and on the other hand you have the series of: 1) the didactic (history), 2) pleasure (literature) and 3) authority (Vedas i.e. scripture). Though all instruct, one (history) instructs in the manner of a friend, the other (the Vedas) instruct in the manner of a master, and poetry instructs in the manner of a wife. Here is a whole passage:

In this matter [of the primary goal being bliss, one may make a distinction]: For the poet, delight is certainly his goal, but it may be achieved also by fame, as the verse proclaims: “for they say that fame has heavenly reward”. For the auditors (or readers), it is true that

both instruction and delight are goals, for it has been said, “The study of good poetry imparts skill in *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, *moksha*, and the arts: it gives both fame and joy” [Bhamaha 12]. Nevertheless, of instruction and joy, joy is the chief goal. Otherwise, what basic difference would there be between one means of instruction, viz., poetry, which instructs after the fashion of a wife, and other means of instruction, such as the Vedas which instruct after the fashion of a master, or history which instructs after the fashion of a friend? That is why bliss is said to be the chief goal. In comparison with [poetry’s] instruction even in all four aims of human life, the bliss which it renders is a far more important goal (71).

An attempt is made to interpenetrate three series which traditionally might not have had much to do with each other – the series of goals of life, the series of genres of text, and the series of the nature of human relationships, which include love, inequality and equality. A synthesis is thus sought over a three-dimensional axis, and it is in such movements that one can understand the semiological cosmos that classical traditions (with their almost infinite self- and cross-referentiality) work with and against.

Below is one more final example, before the paper moves on to the contemporary Hindi novel, of how the Sanskrit tradition (at least in part) allows us a sophisticated canvas of arising, decaying, transient, and interpenetrative affect, all of which might speak to a contemporary literary imagination:

Rasa appears when a stable state of mind (*citta-vrtti*), constantly directed toward a proper object, is aesthetically relished. *Bhava* appears when a transitory state is so relished. The improper variety (*abhasa*) of *rasa* or *bhava* appears when either of them is directed toward an improper object, as when Ravana’s [the evil king] love is directed toward Sita [the virtuous queen]. Bharata’s [writer of the *Natyasastra*, the canonical second century text] dictum that “the erotic leads to the comic,” that stage of realisation overtakes the audience only later. Since the relish one experiences in the stage where one is identifying [the portrayed emotion with one’s own] is of love, the *rasa* will appear to be the erotic *rasa* as long as we overlook the broader context, as we do when hearing: “I merely heard her name/and it acted as a magnet or a maddening charm.” This is therefore a care of the improper or spurious erotic, [not of the comic]. An emotion (*bhava*) which goes to form an improper *rasa* is an “improper emotion” (*bhavabhasa*). The cessation or checking of an advanced emotion is especially delightful to the heart, it is separately mentioned [in the list that we just gave], although it is actually included [in the term *bhava*]. An example is:

”They lay upon the bed each turned aside/and suffering in silence;/ though love still dwelt within their hearts/each feared a loss of pride./But then from out the corner of their eyes/the sidelong glances met/and the quarrel broke in laughter as they turned/and clasped each other’s neck.” Here we have the cessation of a pride which has taken the form of a jealous anger. Now this suggested entity, *rasa* or the like, is not generated with us after the fashion that joy is generated from [the direct force] of the words, “A son is born to you.” Nor does it come from the secondary power of the words. Rather, it makes itself felt (*parispṛuti*) as something the whole life of which consists in the ongoing practice of relishing and which thereby differs from something like joy or grief that is a finished or frozen state (107-108).

The point worth making is that for a contemporary readership and practice, instead of getting fixated on the number of *rasas* or their sub categorisations, what one might need to learn is their differentiated analysis of fleeting affect, whereby sometimes an affect is more powerful for being fleeting, or where the fleeting nature may be powerful because the vacuum it creates is so open to further unexpected affect. Literature is a chain of affective, liquid, mixed intensities, whereby diverse ends of the spectrum (the erotic, the comic, jealous anger etc.) can be evoked in a manner that cannot be captured by simple propositional chains of primary and secondary meanings which are the staple of historical or religious discourse.

Ataraxy as Intimate and Monumental Affect

One of the key innovations of the Kashmiri tradition was that it moved from a more pragmatic reading of texts (for example, the influential seventh century Dandin text which itemised categories like the required element of plot, type of hero, types of moral conflict etc.), and moved it to not just affects (love, laughter, courage etc.), but to the centralisation of one affect. For Abhinavagupta, this was the affect of ataraxy. Here, peace is not just one affect among many, but the final, distilled affect, an affect that does not merely appear in a sequence of other affects, but is a culmination and final consequence. This sense is congenial to some contemporary literature, and I argue that the text discussed below in this section has this one final affect of ataraxy. The ataraxy in this text does have its elements of peace, but it also has undeniable elements of sadness, grieving and isolation – perhaps this might have been something the Kashmiri school would have well understood, for they were obsessed with the *Mahabharatha*, a text that has as many moments of violence and grief, as well as understanding, resilience and peace.

So it is keeping the above spirit in mind that I would like to briefly discuss *Sunflowers of the Dark*, a novel by the prominent Hindi writer Krishna Sobti. As a general statement of Sobti's oeuvre, it may be said that an overall affective tone glides past the (female) body's surfaces, and bird-like, shifts its postures of flight as it negotiates the dense interiors of the Indian family. The tone may not always transcend all surfaces – the walls and doors of the house, the male quarters, and the far and many outsides of the house itself. Even when the voice does seem to sail free, it retains the peculiar stickiness of the body – in Sobti's work, a distinguishing power and rage often emerges from this reciprocity of voice, affect and body, of the insides and outsides of the house. The outside is not a world to be seen as an object (of beauty, or ownership) but, even in the novels where the protagonist is a single, working woman, the claustrophobia of interiors (houses, sexual and aging bodies, mental health, unlit office spaces) mark the world. The world is not a flat landscape that allows freewheeling movement (be it the resistant horizontality of the rural, or the forbidding vertical housing colonies of the metropolitan). Even if a protagonist is alone and economically self sufficient, her mind is teeming with people's voices, of chastisements or blandishments, and so what she wishes for is really a pure respite of silence. It is one of the achievements of Sobti that she can write both intensive, heated, busy patchworks of interweaving dialogue (a small room of competing sisters-in-law), but also can create great monuments of silence in her work – her work is testimony to the monumentalising of the affect of both speech and silence. Though she is most famous for the tumultuous and sexually explicit language of her work *MitroMarjanai* (*To Hell with You Mitro*) in the 1960s, particularly bold as it was in the Indian context, it is to the much less appreciated latter affect of silence that I will turn.

Sunflowers of the Dark, translated superbly by Pamela Manasi (2008) is about isolation, solitude, and loneliness. It ends with an achieved sexual poise, but this too is likely impermanent, and comes after long, arduous years in which the protagonist Ratika, labours in vain for hope and a cathartic touch. Perhaps most strikingly, in comparison with *To Hell with You Mitro*, it is a quiet work, and the very opening with its thick snow underfoot is far from Mitro's crowded, talkative, gossipy *haveli* (the traditional Indian joint family). This novel, much less celebrated than *To Hell with You Mitro*, is of an order of speech that is much more subtle. It begins with the protagonist staying over at a friend's house in Simla. Though she is of unclear age, there is a pervasive anxiety with regard to aging throughout the novel. This age is a biological age (which too is clearly marked when the protagonist at various points dwells on her hours of make-up), but is equally the age of a jaded soul, where everything seems 'a decades-old day. A decades-old evening. The same frosty winter' (7). Time is always distended in the novel, and people are often confused about

how much time has passed – one thinks one has barely shut one’s eyes, but hours have passed, or perhaps it is that hours rush swift as minutes.

Sobti uses the same telegraphic sentences that are characteristic of her oeuvre, but here, instead of the liveliness of a voice and personality, we have a skeletal, abashed self, and a soft voice akin to that of the constant drift of snow. Throughout the novel, time is distended, and it seems that everyone responds to the other only after a long time, as if affect itself slows in the cold air. It is as if much of the action of the novel takes place in the hollow pause after someone has just spoken. As light as voice is the sense of touch – ‘But Keshi [her male friend] wasn’t holding her, his touch was just a luminal presence on her arm’ (9). This sentiment recurs at the end of the novel: ‘Diwakar kissed her closed eyes lightly, as if it weren’t a touch, just a desire to’ (94). Likewise, alcohol also stretches time, and in the last scene Ratika says that she wishes to drink so slowly that the last drop will be drunk at the moment of sunrise, when the sun itself will be that last red ascending drop. There are long descriptions of minute actions, and hushed sounds so atypical of much of Sobti’s oeuvre: of pulling chairs toward a fireplace, of setting trays, of opening cabinets, of the clink of glasses, of feet that do not thud as they are so wrapped in thick socks, of the names not called, of movements that are always quiet so that the children may not wake up, the muffled sound of weeping. Voices seem to take place external to oneself: ‘she was outside this conversation, outside all doors’ (13). Like voices, laughter too has many adjectives – the child’s trill, the muchmarried man’s guilty laugh, the laugh after ‘downing three doubles’, the ‘voice that sieved through instruments [the phone] and touched her eyes’ (88-89). Later, in an almost textbook definition of depression, she says that ‘it is not a question of desiring, Reema [her friend] but of being able to desire’ (18). Reema serves as foil of wifely, and motherly, domesticity: ‘a well-kept kitchen is the pride of a home’ (18). Ratika is not to be merely pathologised however—her qualities of gentleness, stillness, silence, vulnerability suffuse the narrative arc. She watches over the only one more vulnerable than her— Reema’s child Kumu. An ayah (domestic female help) is made to mirror Ratika’s childlessness— the word used, “barren”, recurs through much of the novel (20- 21). In contrast to the strong mother-daughter bonds in *Memory’s Daughter* and *To Hell with You Mitro*, here the protagonist is childless, and even with regard to age has neither the insouciance (Mitro) nor will-to-live of the daughter (Pasho), nor the accomplished grit of the mothers in those novels, though she does seem on her way toward the silent, yet inwardly ferocious despair of Balo, the mother of Mitro. In *Sunflowers of the Dark*, there are few statements on motherhood, only the mockheroic desire to give birth not to daughters but to a five or seven sons – like the earlier reference to tradition and the *Gita*, here also what is being upended is the traditional Sanskrit blessing

“May you be the mother of a hundred sons” (74-75). Childlessness stands in for an aging that is sometimes mature, sometimes accelerated – it is only in the last few pages that Ratika describes herself as a ‘lone working woman’ (105). Perhaps “instead”, or as (failed or successful) substitute, there is a confusing multiplicity in the number of male lovers and friends that populate Ratika’s world. There are many and, except for a few recurring figures, largely interchangeable. Most of them bubble up and disappear in the second section of the novel called Tunnels. But it is not only the men who are interchangeable – the last page has Ratika wryly observing of her lover’s wife: ‘She used to say something like this, to herself about you, and to me about herself’ (107). This second section, unlike the first and last, has noise – the tumult of Ratika’s childhood and girlhood. It also reveals the incident of sexual abuse that surely shapes (though in no deterministic sense) Ratika’s distinctiveness. The ferment and schoolyard violence of Ratika’s girlhood (perhaps the “acting out” of the abuse) is slowly stilled into the quiet that we see of her adult persona. As a girl, she is persecuted by her school friends for being a ‘bad girl’ (38). And in that sense of isolation from her teasing, giggling school-mates, her silence grows.

The time period as she grows is left unclear – the reader is not sure of the chronology, or causation, and there are leaps of years where it is unclear if an incident is in the recent or further past – with reference to the first section, or the chapters within the second section. An early, kind potential mate dies young. Many later men crisscross the narrative voice which seems partly gnarled (if often sensual) in retrospection and partly of a palpable present – they serve the function of revealing how Ratika appears. Despite her quietness, she is fearless, and not coy. But there is also a perceived tinge of bitterness and coldness, of stoniness.

The mood is set strongly, though not through dialogue, but through Ratika’s perception of herself: ‘a desolate return to herself . . . Who is she? Ratti [the common diminutive of her name in the novel]: An endless road. And her own road’s dead end’ (8-9). Later in that first section (called The Bridge) one hears further characterisations of a troubled, populated internal world, ‘everyone has two selves’, and ‘I feel as if it were my own post-mortem’ (30-31). In the second section the narrator remarks that ‘she seemed to discard one persona and wear another, putting the first one on a hanger’ (65). This may be said with a mordant eye on the *Gita* which has a philosophy of rebirths, and wearing new selves as new clothes. In the next page, she feels looked at ‘as if at the negative of a familiar photograph’ (66). To list a few more: ‘the dark snow-covered cave where secret life stirs, serpentlike . . . as many darned patches on her self as there were images in her memory . . . her own corpse looming before her’ (77-78). Like the voice, the face is a common metonym for a

patchwork self: ‘Every door a face. Every face a body. And every body a room’ (81). Further images include: ‘you too have trained your lens on me and are clicking away mercilessly’, and the image of the self as a reflection in the window pane that one passes (90). Sobti even writes of the face as a telephone dial that never seems to break through to the other voice. It is part of Sobti’s continual investigations in her oeuvre: questions of a selfhood that never quite manages to achieve resolution? Where by the integrity of the “I” is never to be taken for granted. In this novel, in the context of abuse, the split, dissociative, doubling self may be taken as an elementary psychological desideratum. Yet somehow, from deep within the stasis, and the tissue of the novel, there is a line of light and affirmation. Mentorship, and many friendships, carve a faith. The last scene, surely one of the most erotic in Indian fiction, is entirely immersive, and full of hard-earned fealty: “Do you know how much this silk has had to endure to become so fine, so soft?” (100). In line with the dominant affect of the novel, there is, as earlier, the same reverence for a silence that leads to ataraxia, the same distension of time, ‘silence of an aeon . . . for one lifelong moment. Like the earth holding her breath’ (98-99).

What in the Sanskritic tradition can help us grasp this twentieth century novel? Perhaps not the many affects and sub (or transient) affects listed in the texts. But maybe something in the desire to catalogue infinitely (so distinctive of the Sanskritic aesthetic and philosophical traditions as a whole) can teach us not so much of the desire for exhaustiveness, but the opposite, the impulse to minutely observe, as well as to generalise (the Kashmiri’s school understanding of peace as the final affect). Hence, it is all the more imperative to read the Sanskritic tradition as incomplete, as textually open, rather than as a fixed list of *rasas*. The minutiae of reading is not merely an example of a pre-formulated theoreticism, but rather the desire to keep open the ever more minute phenomenology of reading (where the experience of reading stands metonymically for the richness of a perceptual world), where one does seek both transcendence and immersion. Thus the silence that may be recorded in the novel discussed above is not to be one more sub or super category to be added to the canon as it pursues a dream of completeness, but should rather be read as another opening, another immersive vista that one has no particular desire to leave. This sense of indefinite inter-subjectivity between the work and the reader is perhaps what the Kashmiri school was also after, rather than the dreams of comprehensiveness or transcendence or to be merely lost in a welter of transitory affects.

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