Rethinking Representation: Politics and Aesthetics

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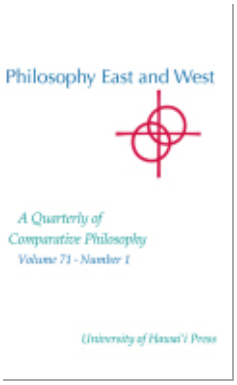

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Rethinking Representation: Politics and Aesthetics

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> Sovereignty cannot be represented. . . . [T]he peoples' deputies are not, and could not be its representatives: they are merely its agents, and they cannot decide anything finally. . . .
>
> Rousseau
>
> All power originates in representation.
>
> Sieyès
>
> *Rasa* is not inferred, produced, or manifested.[1]
>
> Bhaṭṭanāyaka

I. Introduction

Representation is an idea of great significance in two utterly different philosophical fields: theories of political life and theories of artistic production. Occasionally, scholars have placed these two senses of representation side by side. The present essay seeks to follow this uncommon enterprise a step further. It studies Western engagements with the idea of representation in order to generate some questions. It then turns not to Western theories of art but to the long and elaborate Kashmiri tradition of philosophical aesthetics—the theory of *rasa*—to consider if those reflections can bring some clarity to these questions.

Western political theorists have been fascinated by the problem of representation at least since Machiavelli, because the problem of political representation has remained a central practical question in the history of the modern state. But what representation has meant has changed substantially in successive stages of the evolution of modern politics. In premodern political regimes as well, processes of representation did exist. Monarchs, in mediating conflicts, tried to discuss problems with representatives of different social groups. Imperial states sought to negotiate with representatives of conquered peoples. However, it was with institutional devices like parliaments—for example in England and France—that the question of group

representation became decisively significant for statecraft. Correspondingly, numerous modern political thinkers have given serious attention to its complexities. Early modern political theory focused on two intellectual *problems* regarding representation. First, why is representation important in the functioning of the modern state? Second, when is representation 'good' in the sense of being real and effective, and under what circumstances does it achieve what it was meant to—when it does not become a deception or distortion, an inferior and misleading substitute? Answering these questions depends crucially on a prior work of clarification: asking the question of representation properly, that is, finding out what was the right question to ask.

In parallel, theorists in many traditions of philosophical aesthetics—ancient Indian, ancient Greek, modern Western[2]—have been endlessly engaged in making the process of representation in artistic creation intelligible. As a concept, theorists often note that, at first approach, the concept appears obvious, but upon closer inspection it tends to reveal itself as unexpectedly difficult, complex, and layered. Consequently, philosophy of art has explored these questions with great persistence. The present essay does not attend to the history of Western philosophical reflection on aesthetics.[3] Rather, it attempts to bring about two transversal movements: first, connecting thinking about representation in political and artistic theory and, second, dealing with artistic representation, instead of Western theories, using arguments from Kashmiri philosophy on the nature of aesthetic rapture.[4]

An initial objection to this enterprise could be that we are probably turning a mere quirk of some natural languages into a conceptual and philosophic problem. In English and French, a body of work links these two fields, simply because both these Latinate languages accidentally have a word-cluster around representation/representative that are applied to questions of politics and aesthetics. Other languages might not have this feature. German has two different words for designating the two English meanings of the term representation: *Vertretung* and *Darstellung*—the first with the meaning 'speaking for' and the second 'represent' in the artistic sense.[5] But this does not appear to be a matter of linguistic contingency. In Sanskrit and derivative Indian languages, there are linguistic affinities between terms designating the two functions. Pictures are termed *pratikṛti*, representatives *pratinidhi*, reflection *pratibimba*.[6] Etymologically, the connection is worked by the prefix '*prati*'—which is closer to meaning opposition or parallel in a logical sense. Apart from linguistic evidence, since the role of a modern politician is similar to the role of a stage actor in many ways,[7] and staging has come to acquire an important role in modern politics, could explorations in the field of aesthetics offer something of value in thinking through problems in political life?[8]

II. Representation as a Problem of Sameness and Difference

Hobbes

The idea of a ruler being a representative of society occupies a central place in the thought of Thomas Hobbes, who was one of the early thinkers to confront the question of representation directly.[9] Before contractarian thinking, divine right theories, too, thought of the ruler as a *representative* of God.[10] In many premodern theories of monarchical power, the ruler's acts carry a generic sanction acting in the background, without saying that every single act of a ruler—like beheading a rival—is God acting through him.[11] Interestingly, this already shows that the idea of representation has internal room for driving a wedge between acts and responsibility. A general rather than a specific sanction works better as a legitimation of monarchy, because God is not directly besmirched by the usual brutalities of political power. Most religious theories hold a view of this kind, which considers God a vague, general authorizer of the ruler's acts in order to give the latter legitimacy, yet allows for the ruler to have sufficient agency so that he can undertake unjustifiable action, for which he will be judged by God. God cannot rationally subject his own automaton to judgment.

In a radical rejection of divine-right doctrine, Hobbes' sovereign is created by a contract. A most astonishing feature of Hobbes' theory is its starting point—rendered almost invisible because it is not stated, but taken as an assumption. Hobbes uses this as a premise, an assumption without which even the first step of the argument will be untenable, but which is put, in the act of writing, in a strange state of erasure. In the *Leviathan*'s first part, "Of Man," this fundamental picture is set up, and subsequently elaborated. This determines, and makes possible, not merely all that follows in Hobbes' *Leviathan*; it is the dominant strand of liberal individualist political theory.[12] In fact, it changes the meaning of what it means to advance an individualist argument. Hobbes is not the first to speak about 'Man' in the abstract, but there is a well-known difficulty with the use of such abstractions. Human beings are evidently marked by diversity, both in their individual uniqueness and in their group-sociological divergence. This brute fact of diversity constantly gets in the way of this abstraction.

Earlier political theory, therefore, worked its arguments in two distinct registers. Aristotle makes statements regarding common attributes of human beings, for instance when he surmises that the basis of the state is a form of sociality that is similar in character to the sociality of the family, only scaled up.[13] Yet, when he analyzes constitutions and their transformations—for example in the section on revolutions in *Politics*—he acknowledges the primary truth that real human beings always bear group-sociological attributes. Revolutions, or other forms of political activity, can be seriously analyzed only when we recognize that 'man' is a logical fiction; real agents

of political life are humans of different *sociological* kinds. Political activity in the real world involves conflicts between the rich and the poor, patricians and plebeians, and alliances between states, aristocratic groups, and rebellious armies. In the real world, there is no 'man', only infinitely differential individuals, and collectivities with different experiences of their 'common' history.[14] A rupture with this sociological assumption is what makes Hobbes revolutionary, and his theory the inaugural argument of modern individualism.

This is because Hobbes does not begin with an evocation of the abstract 'man' and then relinquish that figure in the actual analytical work of theory. Hobbes' formidably rigorous reasoning never deviates from this abstraction. Against all odds, he continues to use it as the basic language of the *Leviathan*'s vast theoretical architecture. It is like a quality of the yarn present in every twist of the weave. Differences among human beings cannot be entirely subtracted like individuals' natural inequalities in physical strength or intelligence. But Hobbes overturns this with the famous argument which claims that despite the differences in physical strength, there is no individual who cannot be destroyed by a combination of his fellows.[15] Despite commonly observed unequal endowments, this yields, by a rational argument, an *equal* insecurity for all. The 'war of all against all' results in an equality of all in vulnerability and the fear of death. This can then become the premise for the further argument that instead of this state of affairs—of *natural* liberty—rational humans would prefer the circumscribed liberty enjoyed under a sovereign. The feature to note here is the logical establishment of equality of a condition of insecurity, and equality here does not mean any refined or complex value. It simply and emphatically means *sameness*. It is because of this equality of danger that all inhabitants of the state of nature are driven to establish a sovereign. The famous subsequent discussion on the contract leads to two separate *authorizations*.[16] When each person alienates his 'natural' power to govern himself, these are discrete and un-collective acts of single individuals.

But collectively, too, they establish the sovereign as a representative for themselves as a collective body of people. The famously single Hobbesian contract is nevertheless really a double act of discrete individuals and of the collective that is produced simply by the isotemporal simultaneity of performing these two distinct actions. After this initial act of installation, the sovereign can act as the representative of the collective body now constituted into a state. What does his "being their representative" really mean? As Hanna Pitkin has shown, the idea of representation in this particular instance means authorization.[17] Just as individuals are endowed with the ability to act—that is, to be the 'authors' of their own acts—the Hobbesian contract authorizes the sovereign to act on behalf of the collective body. After this authorization, the contracting collective becomes the secondary author of the acts of the sovereign, and the sovereign is

authorized to act on their behalf. Acts of the sovereign are now acts of the constituting subjects. Note that in all these steps of the argument, all subjects remain equal in the sense of sameness. Representation is obviously a relation between two sides: on one side the person or body that does the representing (the representor) and on the other the person or body of persons who are represented (the representee). Usually, representation requires some axis of sameness between the representee and the representer. In Hobbes' case, any ambiguity or contestability on this score is avoided because of the clarity of the structure of the relation in his assemblage. Authorization of the sovereign creates a situation of clear difference between the two sides.

Indeed, this kind of authorization cannot work without that emphatic difference. The sovereign does represent the subjects, but in doing this he is radically unlike them, and he can do what is wanted of him *only* if he is unlike, unsame. In Hobbes the sovereign can be the representative precisely because of his radical difference: in scale, capacity, and nature he is entirely unlike the disparate, unrelated individuals he represents. He alone can do what they cannot. That is why they require him. Hobbes' theory is striking and useful precisely because it stands apart from the common theories of representation based on a relation of sameness, which then begs the question: sameness of what, or in terms of what?[18] On the other hand, he avoids the obverse problem of how the diversity of representees can be represented by a single representer, because he has reduced them to sameness.

Locke

By the time of John Locke's intervention in political theory, two arguments became widely circulated in political theory. A sovereign who can override any internal opposition is a required condition in a society that promotes 'commodious living',[19] that is, a modern society with a sovereign state in place of the feudal system of parceling off sovereignty among numerous centers of power. However, a sovereign so unrestrained was also a problem, as this could pose a threat to the liberty of any individual subject or group. Thus, restraints are required on this indispensable but irresistible sovereign and this is reflected in Locke's constitutionalist argument.[20] Technically, Locke's distinctive device in the altered fable of social contract—from a single comprehensive contract to two separate ones—is clearly meant to impose juridical restraints on the powers of the sovereign. A sovereign is acknowledged to have the representative quality given to him by Hobbes' construction, but the second, *political*, contract allows for the imposition of serious constraints on his ruling powers.[21] Locke's theory separates the first, properly *social*, contract among inhabitants of the state of nature, which produces the social collective, from the second contract between the body of the people and the sovereign, and this clearly makes it possible for the constituents to impose on the sovereign the rules of constitutional good

behavior built into the second covenant. If the sovereign fails to rule according to these constitutional rules, the constitutive power of the state would revert to the people, and they would have the right to revolution.[22] Already in this altered paradigm of sovereignty, in the search for restraint on the state's power there is a delicate introduction of similarity between the sovereign and his subjects, a subtle introduction of the idea of rule by consent.[23] At least Locke's construction abolishes the radical difference required by Hobbes.

Rousseau

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's reflections on representation in the *Social Contract* further pushed this concern for sameness and connection between sovereign and subjects. Clearly for Rousseau, the political system is evolving toward a discernibly representative form,[24] and the representatives he is thinking about are not like a monarch from whom the constituent powers of the people are alienated, but an assembly of representatives.[25] This assumed institutional design allows Rousseau to begin reflection on the typically modern conception of representation and its discontents. On one side, Rousseau's concern remains that of devising mechanisms of restraint and control over the ruling body—an assembly of representatives and their leaders. But already the notions of restraint and control are being separated in the course of the detailed argument. *Restraint* on the sovereign is content with laying down some outer boundaries marked in red lines that the sovereign should not be able to transgress; these are rules to safeguard values like personal freedom and the integrity of person and property.

But at the stage of political theory signaled by Rousseau, the value that the process of representation is meant to ensure has already shifted to a more substantive idea of rule by *consent*. Consent does not merely mean the initial constitution of sovereign authority by the contractual 'consent', that is, the authorization of the people. It now means something closer to an institutional mechanism for a regular consultation by the body of rulers of the 'will' of the constituent people. For Rousseau, truly representative government is rule by the people in this full sense: the making of crucial decisions by rulers through direct elicitation of the will of their constituent subjects. Not surprisingly, for Rousseau, this can be accomplished only by direct democratic procedures of decision-making, with a further implicit precondition of states of small size.[26] The vast scale of modern European nation-states makes this form of governing impossible—leading to the central paradox of his political theory. For supporters of *indirect* democracy, representation is necessary in large modern states precisely because direct participation of the people is impossible and impractical. For Rousseau, on the contrary, indirectness of representation actually constitutes the alienation of real, substantive power, which, in a system that is truly democratic, must reside with the people. True democracy cannot exist through representation.

Remarkably prescient about paradoxes of democratic power, Rousseau with uncompromising clarity formulates the central problems of representation in later theory and practice. His analysis draws us squarely into the vortex of the relations between similarity and dissimilarity that plagues the concept of representation. Democratic government, for Rousseau, must be based on similarity between the rulers and the ruled—their constituents—assuming that rulers are selected by elective mechanisms. For him, the purpose of democratic institutions must be to communicate the views and the will of the people (a notoriously difficult concept, which generates a lot of trouble by its central role in the representational process), undistorted and unobstructed, into the decision-making process of the state. Popular government means literally what it says: active government—decision-taking on serious matters—by the people. In this view, representation—others *standing in* for the people themselves—is a vicious form of alienation, taking the power of decision away from the constituents' direct control.

Western theory, however, saw some forceful counter-arguments—which considered the value of representation to be the opposite of direct popular rule. Again, representation was valuable for literally what it implied: the power or decision of the people had to be presented again, a second time, in a modified form. The arguments of Madisonian democracy, which painstakingly construct institutional mechanisms to refine, rethink, and delay direct decisions of the people, are meant, by contrast, to tame this process of unmediated popular government.[27] As Bernard Manin shows, early modern political theorists regarded 'representative' government as clearly distinct from Rousseauvian democratic government, and decidedly superior to it, because it curbed the proclivity toward mob rule and anarchy.[28] Rousseauvian democrats would strive to construct institutional devices in a way that funnels the will of the people directly into government; Madisonians, by contrast, would seek to fashion them in a way that places sluices to redirect it, and change its nature, destination, and course.[29]

Related controversies continued in the course of democratic theory in subsequent periods, for instance in the major discussion about representatives and delegates.[30] As representative governmental forms went through greater institutional elaboration, and the circle of suffrage expanded, a major controversy erupted about the exact nature and limits of the representative's function: what did the act of representing really consist in? One view is that it meant something still redolent of the Rousseauvian idea—direct funneling of opinion, judgment, and will from the constituents he represented to the legislature, to be taken into account in the legislative decisional process. Often this was called a 'delegate' theory, in opposition to the entirely different idea of an 'independent' representative. An independent representative is a person chosen by the constituent body—usually from among themselves—on the basis of a collective verdict that he is a person of excellent judgment who would 'represent' his constituents 'independently'

for a specific term. During this term, he is free from the constraint of ascertaining and funneling into the legislative process the contingent opinions of his electors on particular issues. He is independent in forming his own considered judgment and presenting it to the legislature. Theoretically, his decision on an issue could be entirely at variance with the decision of his constituents. Constituents, if dissatisfied, are free to dislodge him at the next election; so, the fixity of his term puts pressure on the electors to judge seriously at the time of the choice of the candidate, as they know they cannot change him mid-term. Understandably, in some systems, this is accompanied by a mechanism of recall—in case the representative's decision differs flagrantly from that of his constituency.

In the history of Western democracies, trends in political thinking and consequently institutional mechanisms moved predominantly in the direction of an independent rather than a delegate theory, thus moving the underlying conception of representation away from the Rousseauvian line of thinking. To restate this argument in the language of art theory, the task of the representative is not to *imitate* his constituents in their opinions, modes of thinking, eventual decision, and will formation for political activity.

Not surprisingly, the entrenchment of this conception of 'independent' representatives at the heart of democratic institutions gave rise to further considerations about representativeness. The rise of proletarian politics and social democratic parties put these issues into sharp relief. Who was the proper representative of a working-class community? Was it someone unusual—an assertive, articulate member who would not be overpowered by the cultural dominance of elites inside a legislature? Or was it a more ordinary, 'average' member of the community—sharing its cultural and social attributes? In contexts of electoral and legislative representation, or even in cases of mobilization, the extraordinary individual is likely to be most effective. Yet, normally, this raises a familiar difficulty. Habitually working in the company of elites, inside governmental institutions and corridors of power, sometimes these representatives 'reverse' their representative function: they lose their similarity with their original constituency altogether, and in practical terms become members of the political elite—the well-known Leninist criticism of labor aristocracy.[31] It is by a claim to common or shared experience that an individual is selected and then dissociated from the group, to go out and represent them in affairs of the state. But that movement itself produces a distantiation from the experience that was the basis of that claim. What was immediate experience before has now become, through distantiation, a subject of memory.[32]

From a Two-part to a Three-part Structure of the Problem

Political representation deals with the claims of similarity and difference, and the multiple senses in which these two notions are used. But it goes through several distinct historical phases. In the early stages of the evolution

of modern politics, considerations of similarity or its absence concerned the relation between what we have called the represented and the representors in the legislative process. This is a two-part structure. As modern states assume a more democratic form, a second phase, representation involves other concerns. The rise of clamorous interest disputation among political parties and the emergence of a 'public sphere' for the presentation and deliberation of ideas alters the problem of representation. Political figures in democratic settings increasingly face a stadial[33] public sphere in which presenting something in front of two types of 'publics' becomes crucially important. The first is a public of the politician's constituents, the second a public of more unrelated spectators/observers. With the rise of modern media—television and now digital social media—unprecedented centrality is acquired by this aspect of political activity.[34]

Concepts and techniques from classical political theory do not always address these new questions with clarity and accuracy. The process called representation has moved from a bipartite structure to a tripartite one. Aesthetic reflections on representation have a long history of close examination of this third dimension, for example in texts, works of art, and theater. Bringing in reflections from artistic theory might help analyze the new tripartite logical figure of the problem. The main inadequacy of the bipartite theory is that by focusing exclusively on the relation between the represented and the representor it ignores the fact that there is an unstated, unapprehended third side that is critical to democratic politics, because the representative represents the represented to an implied audience, a body of observers who perform significant functions in the political process as a totality. They are 'the people'—the ever-present audience, the ever-present judge, the ever-present maker of the collective political will. In these times of twenty-four-hour news this has become ever-present in a literal sense. The process of representation is always in principle—implicitly if not openly—a *spectacle*,[35] and the spectacle always needs, implies, an audience. Standard analyses of representation in political theory do not give adequate attention to this third dimension.[36]

III. Analytics of Aesthetic Representation: Sameness, Difference, Commonness

To explore this third dimension, we now turn to artistic theory. Not surprisingly, numerous accounts of modern politics have noted its mediated character, and have drawn on resources from media studies, not to classical Western aesthetic theories from ancient Greece, or Kant,[37] or Burke. I shall, however, turn to an examination of a different tradition—ancient Kashmiri philosophical aesthetics—because dramatic representation was the central object of their philosophic reflection for two centuries.[38] Kashmiri philosophers produced some of the most sophisticated analytics around this cluster

of questions. From that long and complex philosophical history, I select only two argumentative steps, simply because they seem the most relevant for clarifying what happens in the process of representation. I shall explore three separate concepts sequentially—identity, *anukaraṇa* (imitation), and *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* (generalization/universalization/commonization). I rely on a single text, the *Abhinavabhāratī*—Abhinavagupta's classic commentary on Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. That text contains a presentation of the *anukaraṇa* theory of Sri Śaṅkuka—although in Abhinavagupta's reporting language—and Abhinavagupta's own theory of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*, with which he seeks to displace Śaṅkuka's theoretical doctrine of theatrical representation.

Abjuring a focus on authorial intentionalities, the theory concentrates on the nature of what is happening on the stage, or in the pages of the text—also in a tripartite structure. This is conceived as the setting up of a sentimental/affective exchange [*hṛdayasamvāda*] between the character, the actor (the second element in our model), and the audience (the third). In that sense, exploring this theory would help elaborate precisely the aspect that is less developed in standard analyses of representation.

Sri Śaṅkuka's Theory of Representation as Imitation

An underlying idea in Kashmiri aesthetics is that there is no point in trying to compete with the real in being real. Representational realism in artistic enterprises is doomed to failure. Trying to be "more than real"[39] in some sense is a better, logically more promising move. At the heart of this increasingly complex debate lies the question: what is the relation between what an actor presents on stage and the dramatic figure (fictional character), and then, further, its relation to the audience in the theater.[40] In the long line of theorists, Sri Śaṅkuka answers the first question by suggesting that what happens on stage is an *anukaraṇa*[41] by the *naṭa* (actor or *anukartā* = imitator) of a character like Rāma who is called the *anukārya* (the imitatee/imitated, one who is imitated). Further, since *anukaraṇa* is not taken to be an obviously intelligible process, the central problem turns into that of the relation between *anukaraṇa*/imitation and similarity/dissimilarity. It is this tapestry or grid of similarity/dissimilarity that makes the attempted answer possible, and precise.

What happens on the stage is that the actor (*naṭa*), through his effortfully acquired skills (*abhyāsa*)[42] of dramatic acting, presents an *imitation* of the affective state of a principal character[43] like Rāma.[44] Of course, when the actor dramatizes grief, he is not really in grief; he is not expressing externally what he feels. Crucially for *rasa* theory, observing the acting produces an identifiable affect in the spectators, but not a similar irruption of actual grief in their minds. For, if the portrayal of grief evoked or incited grief in the audience, they would never return to watch drama. So, what happens is not the irruption (*utpādana*)[45] of grief either in the actor or the spectator—the only two corporeally present subjects in the theatrical world. Although no

drama would have been possible without Rāma, he is an artistically imagined fictional figure. A crucial part of the argument is its emphasis on the central function of credible acting[46]—not just any actor. An actor who is not highly skilled cannot produce this effect in imitation. Why? Because he would not be able to produce a *real illusion of similarity*. Drama consists in the production of elaborate simulacra of a 'real' world (what a real part of the real would *look like*—note that this verb takes away the positing of the real). Śaṅkuka concedes that readers can get an appreciation of an affective state like grief lingually, from *words* like 'love' or 'grief'.[47] Artistic appreciation is imaginative, but this is limited to a *linguistic* (*vācika*) apprehension. He offers examples in which there is poetic (as opposed to dramatic) depiction of grief, but points out that in these cases of verbal evocation the affect—*śoka* (grief)—is understandable/intelligible, but it is not experienceable, that is, conveyed in experience.

Drama/acting has the power to produce a perception in the receptor that is qualitatively different from the evocative power of words. I think Śaṅkuka is presenting a profoundly significant point here about the different ways in which *discursive* signs and *visual* signals produce their effects on audiences. Evidently this is a theme rich in possibilities in an age in which discursive messaging is being increasingly replaced by the visual.[48]

Drama consists of simulacra of the world. That is why actual love (*rati*) is not called *śṛṅgāra* (erotics): *śṛṅgāra* is a real imitation of *rati* (in two senses: it is really an imitation, but it is also an imitation that makes it look not like an imitation, but real). So, the underlying argument is that in trying to grasp what representation is we must place side by side two figures—the fictive figure of Rāma and the real dramatic figure of the actor. What goes on in Rāma's mind is *rati*; what happens on the stage is the actor's imitation of Rāma's *rati*—which is not real *rati*—but to show this critical distinction it must be given a separate conceptual name, *śṛṅgāra*. Although Śaṅkuka endorses the mimetic view/theory (that what happens on stage is an imitation of the real experience of some putative subject), a most interesting part of his argument consists of some finer distinctions in order to capture with precision what this unreal-real signifies.

To grasp with exactness what imitation in the real sense achieves it is essential, Śaṅkuka stresses, to rule out the confusion between true artistic imitation (*anukaraṇa*) with four other states of mind. Technically he calls them *satya* (truth/veridicality), *mithyā* (falsehood), *sandeha* (doubt/uncertainty), and *sādṛśya* (similarity/verisimilitude/likeness).[49] When the spectator views *the* Rāma on the stage in the specific rendition of the character on that particular occasion with all its adventitious attributes—that actor, that stage, that audience, that performance: every conjunctive contingency—enacted by the skilled and schooled actor, he does not feel any of these four mental states. He does not think that this is indeed the real Rāma who has somehow found his way onto this stage. Neither does he think of the actor

as an ordinary impersonator—someone on stage claiming to be Rāma, who obviously is not. He is not 'standing in' in the sense in which a cheat appears as a principal. While watching the play a spectator is also not assailed by doubt—that he cannot really make up his mind between reality and falsehood—uncertain whether this is really Rāma (the first case) or not (the second).

Interestingly, the third is not an entirely different perception, but one in which the spectator's mind oscillates between the earlier two. He is also not subject to the impression that this actor bears a likeness to, or appears to be, Rāma: likeness, in the Sanskrit word used—*sādṛśya*—actually means 'looks like' or 'appears like'.[50] A virtuosic argument in Śaṅkuka's theory occurs here: that artistic imitation cannot be any of these. It is a condition that is entirely distinct from these four. Actually, what happens on the stage is representation as imitation. What 'happened' to Rāma is re-presented; we can parse this through Śaṅkuka's theory to claim it is presented again, a second time—the first time it was real, the second time as unreality. It is not something that is happening in reality, but being presented through artifice, in a second sense of presentation. Contortions of emotion on a real human face are reality, but the similar-looking expressions on an actor's face are presentations. It is a repetition that is emphatically not a repetition; creating the appearance of a repetition, this is an occurrence of a distinctly different fact, which is also real, but as the reality of art. The imitation theory therefore drives a conceptual wedge, a distinction, a distance between the two states that are being brought into connection by art—real emotional states, *bhāva*s, and artistically recreated, imitated emotional states, which are termed *rasa*. The imitation is not, of course, the real state, but it bears a real relation to the real state in making it representable. An important aspect of Śaṅkuka's logic is an emphatic denial that because it is not real it is therefore unreal. That is to make a category mistake. That applies a distinction that is wholly appropriate in cognition, inappropriately in the case of art. The task of artistic theory or aesthetics is to grasp and render clear precisely that relation, and to differentiate the truth of art clearly from the truths of cognition.[51]

Abhinavagupta on Commonization

Later, Śaṅkuka's highly sophisticated doctrine of mimesis was challenged and refuted in the works of the most famous theorist of that tradition, Abhinavagupta, through an alternative doctrine of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*—'universalization/generalization'[52]. We shall not go into the seven distinct objections Abhinava raises to the theory of imitation.[53] First of all, imitation theory leaves the locus of *rasa* indeterminate: when we speak of the 'happening' of *rasa*, are we referring to the actor's performance, or to the aesthetic enjoyment of the audience, or to the even more mediated aesthetic perception in the discursive discussions of theorists, or to the authorial

intention of Bharata, the writer of the text?[54] Also, because, no one has actually known what Rāma was like—in the case of a mythical or past historical character—it is misleading to think that the actor is doing an imitation.

There is no original to imitate. Drawing on techniques from an entirely different branch of philosophical reasoning, Vedic hermeneutics,[55] Abhinava argues that the central process of artistic realization (making real) is captured accurately by the concept of *bhāvanā*[56] (realization; in the case of drama this could even be called materialization). Enjoyment of *rasa* must be distinct from two obvious possibilities, two ways in which the spectator can think about what is happening on the stage. To explain what *rasa* is, Abhinava offers a prior distinction between two ways the audience can conatively approach the play-event. The affect could be regarded as either *svagata* or *paragata*—realized-in-the self or realized-in-some-other. If it is felt as *svagata*, that is, if the grief is realized in the self, then the spectator would become sad or fearful himself, which would stop him from going to the theater or, in their language, bar a true theatrical experience. He would simply confuse Rāma's grief with his own. Alternatively, if the reader's sense is that the grief is someone else's, he would simply be left unmoved: what does it matter to him that someone else is enjoying the raptures of love? The affective state that *rasa* represents is therefore different from both identification/over-identification and indifference/over-distantiation. Emotions realized on the stage must therefore be different from these two types of conative response. Desiring the Sītā on the stage would be highly inappropriate (*anucita*) on the part of the *sāmājika* (social-feature-bearing individual). The spectator will start to desire the figure on the stage as his own lover. Other-related emotion will mean that he will be left entirely unaffected, since this is someone else's emotion of affection—having nothing to do with him. A true relation of theatrical art must avoid both affective outcomes.

It follows, then, that what really happens on stage must produce in the spectator an affective condition, but distinct from these two states. Abhinava calls this *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*—literally, 'making something common or general'.[57] The theatrical emotion is, in their technical language, *sādhāraṇīkṛta*—generalized, or generally or commonly realized. All spectators, on viewing a tragic scene, feel an artistically mediated and realized sadness—which must be entirely distinct from their own real grief—which leaves only one residue, aesthetic pleasure.[58] Leaving aside the fascinating logical intricacies of this theory, it is the idea of generalization/commonization/universalization that is of relevance to us.

I shall use a rather external, physical aspect of the idea of commonization to illustrate the main argument. A fictional text of the drama tells us that its major protagonist, Rāma, is a handsome young man. If Rāma is an entirely fictive, mythical, or ancient historical character, no one would have seen him, and therefore known the exact features of his face and form. Thus,

the idea of Rāma's handsomeness itself is an abstract poetic suggestion. To cast a handsome actor to play his role, however, should not be designated as an imitation, as there is no original to imitate.[59] What does the connection between the handsome actor and the beauteous Rāma mean, then? The beauty of the actor—which is acknowledged to be quite distinct and therefore not meant to recapture a memory or mimicry of the original figure—is meant to trigger a very different process—that of generalization or, using Sheldon Pollock's term, commonization. It is a suggestive process in which, although no one knows how Rāma looked, every reader of the poem, or spectator of the drama, finds something entirely intelligible, and in the case of the theater, concrete to internal *visualization*. Rāma's portrait is not painted externally, but by the 'internal means' (*antaḥkaraṇa*) of their mind/imagination.[60] Using English terminology, we could open up a distinction between visuality and visualization in order to make this argument clear. Visuality is a physical, material fact—our capacity to see the visual materiality of the scenery of the forest on the stage, and the figure of Tom Cruise as Rāma. Visualization is an entirely different process that is happening concurrently, but this is inside our mind: this is our internal, mental visualization of the real fictional-artistic (i.e., the really art-created) Rāma weeping and looking for Sītā.

Resolving a Contradiction: Commonness and Individuation

Yet, the startling originality of this argument is that its logical direction goes in a route exactly the reverse of the common meanings of commonness or generality.[61] Usually, the meaning of 'generalization' is the making of a feature that subsists in one particular object, the shared common or general feature of all objects of a particular class. The semantics of 'commonness' terms are similar. When we say that a crowd is moved by a common emotion of anger or grief, we suggest that it is an identical emotion that grips every member of that group. Abhinava's argument runs up to a distance with this familiar mode of thinking, but then moves much farther and away, capturing with rare precision the elusive nature of the common in the theatrical/literary process. If we read in a poetic/fictive text that 'she appeared in a red dress', that would certainly trigger a 'common image' in the minds of all readers. But if each reader is asked to choose, from a computer palette of all shades of red, the particular one that she imagined, there is likely to be considerable difference, although no one would choose a shade of blue. It would be misleading to aver that Abhinava's theory is claiming that all cases of generalization are of this kind. Certainly, in large numbers of cases, generalization means the existence of a common property—that is, invariant among instances. Kashmiri theorists maintain that the precise type of commonness in the common perception or apprehension in the case of art is different; and here the term *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* needs to go further in its semantic connotation.

The combination of two facts—the piece of textual/diegetic/dramaturgic information that 'Rāma was handsome' together with the factual presence of the handsome actor—triggers a common process of imagination, or the internal visualization of a dark, handsome male figure in the mind of each member of the audience or reader of the text. Each internally visualized image is compelling because formed by each person's unique taste and conception of beauty. Thus, the content of the commonization process is not a common (i.e., identical) visual object—except in an empty sense: an empty place where each enshrines his picture of ultimate beauty in a dark, handsome form. Every spectator is utterly charmed, precisely because what charms them is their own aesthetic creation. Such uses of the idea of 'common' or 'universal' are not entirely unknown. The universality of the structure of the human skeleton is an invariant form of the universal; the universality of the human language is an instance of a universal that is not invariant. But Abhinava's *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* argument pushes much farther in this direction by positing *a process of universalization that also produces an extreme individuation*, and yet makes the two compatible. In understanding the nature of the aesthetic process—the way in which human beings receive the impression of aesthetic artifacts like poetic or dramatic texts with characters—this argument is a profound innovation. Although unique, it is totally persuasive.[62] Do we get any illumination about the process of political representation from this Indian debate between a theory of mimesis and a competing theory of universalization? Let us return to work on the question of representation with these additional tools.

IV. On the Nature of Representation: Identity, Similarity, Generality

Identity

After the Rousseauvian concern was introduced into political theory, a question of representation-as-similarity has become indelible in all discussions of democratic politics. Acts of representation are meant to funnel ideas from constituents into the deliberative process of legislation. If ideas presented by a representative are mainly dissimilar to those of his constituents, there occurs a failure in the process. The success of representation then turns crucially on a notion of similarity. In what does the similarity of the leader to his constituents consist? There can be a simple theory of similarity that suggests that, unlike the artistic relation between the character and the actor, in politics there is no distinctiveness/difference between the two that the actor has to overcome by his acting. A politician who is a Hindu or Dalit is already and indivisibly similar to all other Hindus or Dalits. Since they all have a single universal experience, the politician simply has to bring that experience, or its view of a particular problem, to expression. The Dalit politician does not imitate a Dalit: he *is* a Dalit. It is only the common identity which prevails as a preexisting fact—shared between himself and all other members of the community—that he has to articulate.

Although this picture of representation is widely shared and works as a background assumption in much of political life, especially in today's India, it has evident faults. Its primary weakness is that it assumes—by removing this out of the range of discussion and analysis—that dalitness, which is a caste feature, or Hinduness, a religious feature, is a singular attribute of all relevant agents. It does not think critically about this singleness. In fact, caste or religion constitutes a single one out of a range of other attributes of social individuals.[63] Or it assumes that although individuals always carry other attributes as well, a singular attribute—like caste or religion—can be politically absolutized. Clearly, the effectiveness of the representative depends on how far he is able to persuade his constituents to absolutize one singular element of their own identity, and then to present this as his own singularly significant identity as well. Once the demands of other aspects of their identity start making claims on agents' political acts, this claim to an indissoluble bond of identity between the representative and his constituents can begin to dissipate. Interestingly, a simple theory of identity of identities between the representative and constituents is shown, on examination, to fall into one of Śaṅkuka's four *śaṅka*s (logical fears): a case of truth,[64] deception, doubt, or just an apparent similarity. That leaves us to search for a more complex relation.

Imitation

Arguments from identity start from a denial of significant distinction between the representative and his constituents. Strictly speaking, the Śaṅkuka theory of imitation presupposes, to the contrary, that there is *always* a difference between the representer and what or whom he represents. There is some *work* for a representative to do. He cannot be a representative simply because of who he is. Indeed, the very first bar in his technical analysis is against *satya* (veridicality), the belief that the principal is indeed present on the stage, in which case representation is redundant. In politics, the process is complicated because the represented are nearly always a collectivity—all the Hindus, or Muslims, or Dalits, or all members of a particular caste, or the working class (to simply enumerate the different types of identities that seek expression and representative action in Indian democratic politics). Indeed, the very fundamental structures of representative democracy are premised on this relationship. In this sense, a political leader who purports to represent a social group undertakes implicitly to bring to presence in the public sphere of political discussion and action the true, not the factual, characteristics of the group's perceptions, expectations, and collective intentionalities. By severing the connection between *satya* (veridicality/identity), and barring the mere appearance of *sādṛśya* (looking alike), *anukaraṇa* theory forces us to think more closely about the precise nature of this connection. On reflection, the relation between the politician and his collective constituents must be similar to what Śaṅkuka suggests. Since

politics is also always a *stage*—but a stage of a different kind, a stage that never goes dark, a theater from which the audience never leaves, an activity that produces a strange intermixture of the staged and the quotidian—political representatives' activity consists in bringing to presence a credible *imaginative*[65] 'imitation' of their perceptions of the world.

On the theatrical stage, this imitation is a reproduction of the *bhāva*s turned to *rasa*s, and is therefore primarily affective; on the political stage, it is first discursive and deliberative before it also becomes affective. A representative brings to the discourses and actions of political life a 'true' imitation of the group's social perceptions and demands. But this 'true' representation is not raw, it is cooked,[66] that is, it requires some work. After all, the group is a dispersed mass of individuals accidentally connected by political contacts: their unity is *imaginatively* produced by the politician's acts. Interestingly, by Śaṅkuka's theory, a shared social identity is not a necessary requirement; since what is required is not direct communication of experience, but an imaginative capture and discursive construction of the experience in the political public sphere. In this view, a middle-class university professor can be a 'good' representative of a working-class electoral constituency, because what is essential is a perfect communication of the 'image' of their perception and projective action, just as what is demanded on stage is a perfect image of Rāma's grief, not a raw sympathetic feeling of the grief itself. In addition, this conception of mimesis can also explicate another significant feature of political representation. Social experience is irreducibly *individual*: the experience of poverty is irreducibly singular for individual poor persons; the experience of humiliation for Dalits is similarly irreducibly episodic (that is, each time it is a separate, individual experience). Because of this ontological discreteness of experience-episodes, there is a danger of their becoming diffuse—indelibly etched on every individual consciousness, but lacking a collective form—which cannot be a copy of any one of these singular acts of ignominy but an abstract conception of a *collective* experience. It is everybody's experience only on the condition that it is not an instantiation of anybody's experience.

Collective experience in such cases is not immediately spontaneous, or real. From its raw state it has to be cooked. To *become real for the collective*, these dispersed capillary experiences need a focus. This focus emerges through language, through constant mutual communication of singular instances of stigmatizing experience or poverty, and the production of a public discourse about it as collective experience. Leaders and representatives often play a critical role in this curious process in which the group comes to see its own experience more vividly, and as collectively real, precisely through the portrayal of themselves *by their representative*. It is not the group that produces its representative; as often, it is the representative who produces the group.[67] In this sense, there exists a reverse of imitation of the 'image' created by the representative by those people

whose lives were 'imitated' in the leader's creation of its abstract, collective, and—in Śaṅkuka's sense—staged image. The imitation conception also brings attention back to the process of signification and deliberation at the heart of the representation process.

We come to notice that even in cases of political leaders whose claim to represent is based on the sharing of a common identity, the act of representation can take effect only if the contingent features of their personal identity are rendered oblivious. Actual personal identities are constituted by a cluster of adventitious, variant features. Representation requires a prior process by which the figure can become, and act as, a *sign* when it is not itself, but stands in for something else. To work as a sign, the actual individual has to shed his/her personal attributes and become a 'signifier';[68] in fact, he can work as a signifier only if, and because, he has become emptied of his personal attributes. There is no other way to grasp how an individual—for example, the Dalit leader Mayavati—turns into the sign for the entire community of Dalits in North India. Even more significantly, this sign quality is required to understand why, although personal circumstances change—for instance, from her being a relatively poor school teacher, by becoming the Chief Minister of India's largest state, she becomes considerably wealthy—her followers see no reason to desert her. Because they are not following an individual, but a sign. What the constituency finds in the representative is not an individual bearing accidental biographic attributes, but a semiotic icon—an assemblage of features that the collectivity imaginatively perceives. A line of thinking of this kind, however, needs a supplemental argument from generalization theory. Imitation conceptions of representation introduce this valuable element of analysis, but still leave the content of this sign unclear and indeterminate. It is only a theory like *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* that can move forward into an explanation of what happens 'inside' this sign function in the theater of political life.

Generalization: Understanding/Unpacking 'De-individuation'

Abhinavagupta's critique of Śaṅkuka focuses, among other things, on ascertaining the nature of the *generality* of the emotive effect produced in theater. *Sādhāraṇīkaraṇa* theory offers us a complex and delicate argument that resolves a central difficulty with the process of universalization. As we saw earlier, generalization/universalization/commonization remains, in ordinary discussions, indeterminate between two very different forms. The first, which is seductive for theorists of revolutionary action, insists that the 'common' conception's commonality consists in the *singular* conception or image being present to all. That can be persuasive in the case of abstract and discursive arguments. All conceptions of a Socialist revolution might be singular or overlapping or convergent because they are produced through a long process of collective discursive deliberation. But whenever a politics of *experience* is involved, as in the case of poverty or stigmatization, analysts

of representation have to face the problem of transition from the episodic, immediate, interior experience of affect to something that is shared, made common.

Experience, however, is irreducibly individual and interior: to be politically recognizable for public discourse or action it must require a commonized form. The detailed reflection on generality production (*sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*, particularly the use of the verb-root *kṛ* inside the word[69]) in Abhinavagupta's theory disambiguates the crucial process of public presentation of political ideas. The idea of the deprived, or the oppressed, or the stigmatized—in order to acquire political meaningfulness—must have the peculiar form of generality that Abhinava's theory develops to understand what goes on in the theater. It is a common perception that creates affective fusion (the Sanskrit word is evocative—*ekaghanatā*[70]—dense oneness or singular solidity), but it leaves the densely, viscerally felt interiority of every individual's image uniquely singular and vivid. In thinking about the appeals of the populist mobilization of political affect it is essential to grasp this fact. Externally, these ideas of humiliation or resentment may appear to lack concreteness and clarity, but inside each individual hater's mind the image is personal, vivid, real, making the resulting rage really incandescent.

V. Conclusion

One possible consequence of a return to the political after a detour through Indian artistic representation theories is that it serves to alter our analytical perspective on one crucial point. Theories of textuality gained enormously when it was shown that the textness of a text consists in its being an entity placed between two horizons of context and activity.[71] A text is now standardly seen—whether it is a discursive text, artistic object, or musical composition—as being placed between an authorial horizon of production and the readerly/audience horizon of reception.[72] An adequate understanding of what goes on through a text can never be achieved without a close attention to both these horizons—sometimes located in vastly different points of historical time. *Rasa* analysis on representation—the two doctrines of *anukaraṇa* and *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*—startles us into a recognition that the representative figure should be analyzed in a parallel style, because representation is a process with three sides or steps, which could be placed initially in a linear design (Figure 1).

Sometimes the individual who will become a representative will emerge from a particular social group, although Kashmiri theory also shows how

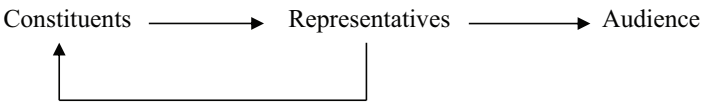

Fig. 1.

they might not, but still function as equally effective representatives (e.g., in the case of Communist MPs representing working-class constituencies). Even if they come from the same social group, they have to go through the essential activity of *de-particularization* in the first sense: obliviating their personal characteristics as an essential prior condition for turning into a representative symbolic figure. This allows us to see that there is an intensive and crucial process of self-making going on in the case of every political representative. Narendra Modi is constantly modifying his image himself, sensing what his audience expects of him. So, the image is never static, but it is ever an image of the same-yet-different figure. Like the rise and decline of great thespians, political figures also rise and decline as their staged persona gains or loses historical meaningfulness. The uncertainty in the representative's political life is caused not merely by the historical shifts in the 'objective' reformations of group interest, but also by the fluctuating fortunes of the specific theatrical persona they patiently carve out for themselves; metaphorically, it is like a statue carving itself. The activity of political self-fashioning of the representative figures never ceases: they only succeed or fail.

Finally, as in text theory, the representative figure is always faced two ways—it must face its constituents, but in modern democracies, it must have its face turned toward its audience, and it is bound to its audience in complex relationships of cueing and constant complex feedback. But representative activity is directed toward the audience, with the proviso that the constituent group is also firmly and crucially included in the audience group as well. Nearly every theatric move of a representative would have two distinct values: a value directed at the constituent group and a separate value directed at the audience group in general.[73] Political theater is so complex because it is a play occurring in the 'presence' of intersecting and overlapping audiences, whose interests are often distinct if not contradictory. Reading Kashmiri theory of theatricality helps in refining and expanding our understanding of what happens inside the other un-optional theater—that of political representation. We can choose not to see a play. But we cannot choose not to live inside the theater of political life.

Notes

I want to thank Arindam Chakrabarti, Sheldon Pollock, and Vivek Yadav for their help in thinking through different aspects of Kashmiri theory.

1 – *raso na pratīyate, notpadyate, nābhivyajyate* (*Abhinavabhāratī*, Book 6, 462; see Abhinavagupta 1970).

2 – There must be serious reflection on these themes in other traditions of thought as well—like the East Asian and the Islamic and African—of which I am unaware.

3 – For a brief analysis see Spivak 1999.

4 – The two thinkers I discuss below are Śrī Śaṅkuka and Abhinavagupta. Unfortunately, Śaṅkuka's own texts are lost, and we have to depend on reconstructions of his arguments in Abhinavagupta's famous commentary, *Abhinavabhāratī*, on the primary text of Indian aesthetics, Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Recently, two remarkable studies of Indian aesthetic theories have been published. Sheldon Pollock (2016) provides selected excerpts from the most consequential steps in the long history of Indian aesthetic theory—from ancient times down to the seventeenth century. His study includes translations of most of the sections used in the discussion in the second part of this article. David Shulman (2012, chap. 2) also provides a short analysis of Sanskrit poetics.

5 – For a discussion of these terms see Spivak 1999.

6 – These are terms in Sanskrit, Bengali, and Hindi. *Pratibimba* (reflection) literally means 'counterpart image'.

7 – And this is a similarity noted since ancient times—particularly by Greek philosophers, Roman essayists, and ancient Indian state theorists. The modern tradition of thinking about this likeness begins with Machivaelli's *Prince*.

8 – Since the questions taken up in the cases of both politics and aesthetics are general, this should not raise the usual alarms about anachronism.

9 – There were premodern conceptions of representation, for example of the monarch representing his subjects. But the legitimacy of his power is not derived from that source. Sieyès presents this idea in its fullest force: "all power originates in representation." (Sieyès 2003, p. 168)

10 – Figgis 1914.

11 – There is a parallel here to the larger problem regarding how to read God's sovereignty over the world. Is God's hand behind every leaf that moves (Gandhi) or in the inflexible rules into which the universe is tuned (Tagore)? The first idea is that no one can intend anything without God intending him to intend it; the second allows for free will to the extent that within the framework of inviolable rules, created beings can work with some freedom—which then creates room for their bearing responsibility.

12 – Or, to use C. B. Macpherson's apt characterization, *possessive* (i.e., property-owning) individualism (Macpherson 1962).

13 – Aristotle 1946.

14 – Common history does not mean that all groups have an identical experience of historical events, but rather that there is a differential experience of a single incident.

15 – Hobbes 1968.

16 – Pitkin 1989.

17 – Pitkin 1967.

18 – Some readers of Hobbes' philosophy have, however, given attention to the theatrical element in his analyses of the sovereign's presence in the world (Vieira 2009 and Dumouchel 1996).

19 – Hobbes' phrase suggests a connection between this political form and the rise of the modern capitalist economy. This suggestion is probably overplayed in C. B. Macpherson's readings (Macpherson 1962).

20 – John Locke, *Second Treatise on Civil Government* (see Laslett 1967). These ideas are particularly clear if we read the chapters on property and revolution together (Dunn 1969). For a longer genealogy of constitutionalist thinking, see Taylor 1990.

21 – Ibid.

22 – Locke, *Second Treatise*, chap. 19.

23 – Although the consent is from the propertied, not from the people in general as in a modern democratic state.

24 – He says unambiguously "representation is a modern idea" (Rousseau 1920).

25 – See Ankersmit 1997 for the premodern conceptions of the ruler as a representative of the people, derived from Stoic ideas.

26 – Rousseau is clear that numerical scaling up destroys true democratic decisional procedures.

27 – *The Federalist Papers*.

28 – Manin 1997.

29 – A primary concern for Madison in the *Federalist Papers* was to prevent the danger to property arising from a concerted will of a majority of poor voters.

30 – Urbinati 2006 examines these issues in detail, and offers a particularly illuminating discussion about the use of the Kantian notion of a regulative ideal in discourses on representation. See also Saward 2010.

31 – Such censure came from the Leninist critique of the "reformism" of trade unions, and from sociologists like Robert Michels, observing an "iron law of oligarchy" in Social Democratic parties in Europe (Michels 1962).

32 – Such arguments from experience are common in philosophical disputation. When I have sprained an ankle and feel real pain, I can

be excused from participating in a march for justice. Months later, when my ankle has healed, and the pain is a memory, getting special treatment lacks justification. Either I should be replaced by a new figure who shares that experience at the moment, or my continuing to be an elected representative should cease its justification by an appeal to experience.

33 – I use this term unconventionally in discussions on the media to mean a stadium-like arena for viewing.

34 – This fact has been noted by political analysts in the United States during the rise of Ronald Reagan, and in the India of Indira Gandhi—but, most emphatically, of Narendra Modi (Rogin 1987; Rajagopal 2001).

35 – I.e., something that is acted in order to be seen. More on this later.

36 – Ankersmit (1997) touches on some of these issues. He suggests a difference between Anglo-American and German philosophic traditions on this point, and indicates that some German thinkers also gesture toward a tripartite analysis. However, interestingly, these thinkers introduce a third step through a discussion of *premodern* conceptions of representation in which the monarch, for instance, represents the realm or, subsequently, the people to the world. Strictly speaking, this showing to the world is somewhat different from the Kashmiri notion of showing to the rapt audience in the theater. Ankersmit's discussion does not go in the direction of the further detailed exploration of the *vācika* (verbal) and *āṅgika* (gestural) *abhinaya* (acting)—i.e., acting by speech and by bodily movement—offered by the Kashmiris. So, exploring the Kashmiri theory is not a repetition of Ankersmit's analysis.

37 – The exception is the literature on 'political judgment', which obviously begins from an analysis of the concept of judgment in Kant's third critique, and its applicability to political life. See Beiner 1983 and Bourke and Geuss 2009.

38 – Usually, this tradition is taken to have continued from the eighth to the tenth centuries in an uninterrupted sequence of exchanges between major schools and thinkers. Their general philosophical approach is called '*rasa* theory'—which had several distinctive internal strands. For an excellent comprehensive account of this tradition, see McCrea 2008. For a comprehensive selection of excerpts from its major texts, see Pollock 2016. An English translation of the relevant sections of Abhinavagupta's work can be found in Masson and Patwardhan 1970. For an insightful reading of Indian artistic theory, see Shulman 2012.

39 – Shulman's lapidary phrase.

40 – For them, the textual relation is a less elaborate version of this structure in that their thinking is reminiscent of Gadamer's insistence that the meaning of the text always waits to be brought into representation: there is no music in a score until it is played (Gadamer 1979).

41 – *Anukaraṇa* literally means acting (*karaṇa*) after (*anu*).

42 – I am bracketing out detailed and complex discussions about the relation between *pratibhā* (talent) and *abhyāsa* (practiced skill).

43 – It does not matter if characters are historical or entirely imaginary; when they are portrayed on the stage they are equally fictional.

44 – Again, I bypass a detailed consideration of their principal conceptual distinction—between *bhāva* (a real-world affect) and *rasa* (a theatrical-world or art-world affective state). The *bhāva*s are then further differentiated into *sthāyi* (stable or permanent) and *byabhicari* (transient) and linked to the concepts of *vibhāva*s (factors that give rise to *rasa*s) and *anubhāva*s (expressive signs by which internal affective states are ascertained). For an excellent discussion of the central concepts of *rasa* theory, see Pollock 2016, introduction.

45 – This was a theoretical position held by an earlier theorist, Bhatta Lollata. See *Abhinavabharati*, Book 6, 442, for a presentation and refutation of Lollata's theory.

46 – Although this is not relevant to the arguments here, I believe that one of the attractive features of Kashmiri theory is that it pushes us to think that there is a matter of credibility/credence in art, although that is very different from the question of reality or credence in an epistemic sense. Truth is involved in both art and knowledge—but in different senses—which must be held clearly apart.

47 – It is a crucial part of the doctrine that good art avoids using the *svaśabda* (the self-word): a love poem is not great because the word love occurs in it nineteen times.

48 – Media theory discussions about the differential effects of the discursive and the visual can benefit greatly from the technical arguments in Kashmiri theory.

49 – In more stilted terminology, identity, non-identity, indeterminacy between identity and non-identity, appearance of identity (*Abhinavabhāratī*, Book 6, 449).

50 – The verb root *dṛś* means to see or look.

51 – Notice here that this is a radically anti-representational argument—and justifies people of very different classes/kinds to represent a group. Just as the actor who is entirely happy inside can impersonate a distraught

Rāma wandering weeping through the forest, there is no bar to a middle-class professor representing a working-class constituency, or leading a movement in their interest. Because what is crucial is the grasp of the nature of the interest, not re-experiencing or parallel experience.

52 – Because of the usual difficulties with these two more familiar terms, Pollock uses 'commonization'.

53 – *Abhinavabhāratī* 451 ff. and corresponding sections in Pollock 2016.

54 – *Abhinavabhāratī*, 451 ff.

55 – Historically, strictly speaking, it was not Abhinava but another highly innovative predecessor, Bhattanāyaka, who incorporated the Mīmāṃsā concept of *bhāvanā* into the analysis of aesthetics. But Abhinava absorbed that argument into his more expanded and nuanced conception of generalization/*sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*. See Pollock 2010.

56 – See Ollett 2013 for an excellent detailed account of the concept, although Ollett does not discuss its subsequent aesthetic applications.

57 – Such technical terminology is hard to translate; the candidates on offer are generalization, universalization, commonization. The first two have conventional sedimented meanings; the last is unusual and thus alerts us to the innovativeness of its denotation. But it would be hard to commonize its use. A related discussion uses the term 'communization' to indicate that there is a communion with the audience (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969).

58 – For the famous analysis of *sādhāraṇīkaraṇa*, see *Abhinavabharati* 469–473. A later theorist calls art *navarasarucira*, made beauteous by the nine *rasa*s, but *hlādaikamayī*, consisting of artistic rapture alone (Mammaṭa 1966 I, 1ī):

> *niyatikṛta-niyama-rahitām hlādaikamayīm ananyaparatantrām navarasarucirām nirmitim ādadhatī bhāratī kaver jayati.*
>
> Let the word of poetry triumph which constructs things that are exempted from nature's laws, made of rapture alone, unconditioned by anything else, beautified by the nine *rasa*s.

59 – We should note how barring the road to a solution by imitation forces Abhinava to look for another innovative solution.

60 – Chakrabarti 2019, chap. 13, "In Defense of an Inner Sense" (see also *Vedānta-Paribhāṣa of Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra* 1942).

61 – I feel there is a gap in the literature: scholars do not interrogate the precise meaning of commonization.

62 – This also introduces a distinction within the conception of a common idea: the first common has a general or universal content, the second a particular content. An audience watching a lecture by Trump on television is watching the first kind of common image. A Vaisnava congregation listening to a *kīrtan* to Krishna meditates on a common image of the second kind. This is not the place to expand on this question.

63 – I have discussed this problem briefly in Kaviraj 2010.

64 – Interestingly, some of Rousseau's strongest objections seem to focus on the same question.

65 – As opposed to identitarian.

66 – Kashmiri theory, like Levi Strauss, is full of culinary metaphors, and the example of 'cooking' something that is 'done', produced, '*kṛtaka*', is common—particularly in the case of *rasa*—often compared to a drink made of various ingredients (Abhinavagupta, *Locana*, commentary on Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka*; see Abhinavagupta 1990).

67 – Think of the role played by a figure like Ambedkar in the creation of a picture of the Dalit experience in India.

68 – I am using this concept somewhat gingerly, because it is used widely in other contexts; but I hope the simple sense in which I use it should be clear. To work as a sign, it must be empty—an elementary idea of structuralist theory.

69 – Shared in a term like *kṛtaka*.

70 – *Abhinavabharati*, Book 6, 471.

71 – For the most elaborate theory of textuality of this kind, see Gadamer 1979 and also Ricoeur 1976.

72 – In Gadamer, the emphasis is on objects of artistic and musical creation.

73 – I have sought to show elsewhere that Gandhi's moves in his famed trial were similarly double-valued—directed both at Indians and the British. See "The Politics of Performance: Gandhi's Trial Read as Theater," in Kaviraj 2011.

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