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Literary Taxonomy in the West and in India: a Comparative Review of Criteria

Dr. Maulik Vyas

Christ College, Saurashtra University, Rajkot, (Gujarat) India

Abstract

Ontology of literary discourse is principally understood in terms of the way it exists in various creative and critical forms. Literary taxonomy affords a systematic and classified understanding of writings that pertain to a specific literary culture. As the word taxonomy (\sqrt{taxis} 'arrangement' + \sqrt{nomia} 'method' from *nomos*) suggests, it is a methodical arrangement of concerned variables in a given system. Every knowledge culture has its own way of constructing, ordering and disseminating knowledge. And for ordering, classifying and naming, every literary tradition requires its own method. Literary histories of both the West and India inform us of certain criteria as were devised and agreed upon by literary theorists earlier. The present paper aims at studying literary, linguistic, philosophic, aesthetic and even ethical criteria adopted by literary theorists for developing taxonomies in both the Western and Indian traditions in the light of comparative literary theory.

Key Words: Literary Taxonomy, Comparative Study, Criteria for Literary Classification, Genology

The scope and depth of comparative study in literature has been immense. Although comparative studies are frequently challenged—earlier by historical and New Critical studies and later by structural and post-structural ones—it is also a fact that its theory and praxis still retain distinction in the presence of overarching disciplines like translation and cultural studies. One simple reason might be forwarded to explain the tendency to comparative studies that comparison is a natural cognitional reflex. It is invariable. However, it also must be reckoned that comparison is an indirect means of cognition. That is, knowledge derived through comparative analysis is not substantial or essential in philosophical

sense, but relational and mutually illuminating in practical sense. In fact, comparative study makes no bones about the fact that it facilitates provisional truth contingent on its variables as a result of which epistemological and ontological status of comparative study was uncertain. With the passage of time, however, questions are no longer those as were felt by Cooper, Wellek or Etiemble about name and nature of comparative study or its methodology. Koelb and Noakes in their introduction to a collection of essays show how the questions of earlier thinkers and comparative schools have been replaced by semiotics, theory of reading, study of 'minor' genres and how literary theory and comparative study come

to interact with each other. In the present time one may even feel that the whole field of comparative study well neigh be understood by what is theoretically proposed as 'intertextuality'. In the context of literary taxonomy, Roland Barthes in his *S/Z* proposes intertextuality as a rupturing of genres and disciplinary boundaries. This notwithstanding, what comparative study offers to contribute to the domain of literary studies is an insight into inter-relationships between literary principles of genres and its analysis, other art forms and historical-cultural factors of dissemination and practice of literature. To the domain of critical enterprise, comparative study offers its methodology for evaluating more than one object/field of study. If one looks closely at the work of a prominent comparatist S. S. Praver, one finds plausible investigative modalities for a comparative study. Here, the areas of investigation, viz. thematics, influence, reception, genre study, placing of texts might seem defying objectivity but its mode of study proposes to conform to it. Praver suggests a few case studies such as investigation into the history of ideas from antiquity to modern time through 'critical lexicography' or comparing 'thoughts of different theorists, at different times and in different countries or societies, about central questions involving both theory and critical practice'.¹ To this might be added a comparative study of literary taxonomy as it existed in the west and in India by placing them close together, albeit with the awareness of the reach of its findings and its provisional truth or non-conclusiveness.

The obtaining concern in the following discourse is to evaluate the criteria on which literary taxonomy rests in the western and Indian literary traditions. It would also be worthwhile to underscore homology or heterogeneity inherent in the theoretical framework of classification. The task at hand seems too diffused to justify the diversity of and ever new combinations enabled by theories for the factors determining the classification. Malshe attempts on this issue and enlists temporal and atemporal criteria.² The diachronic aspect affecting categorization can be periods, political events, socio-political/economic trends, racial or national history, cultural landmarks, linguistic history, literary or aesthetic parallelism. The criteria of synchronic classification are even more untypical, namely, 1) Geographical/national: Indian literature; American literature, 2) Linguistic: Gujarati literature; English literature, 3) -isms: symbolist; surrealist; classicist, 4) Social: folk literature, urban literature, protest literature, 5) Content based: literary—non-literary; historical, mythological, 6) Formal or structural: verse-prose distinction; on the basis of medium—oral or written.

The above inventory is but one of many demonstrations of literary classification. This indicates how one literary instance or a genre can be classified by different parameters. And the favour for any particular parameter in analysis would hinge on dominant theory/ideology in the concerned writer's works.

I

In the west, the first systematic classification is observed in Aristotle. Aristotle's scheme first distinguishes *visual arts* (painting) from *aural/sound* on the basis of distinct medium. Different components of sound, viz. *rhythm*, *melody*, and *language* in varying combinations lead to different artistic representations. Thus come dance and music for the first two sound components respectively. The language part of artistic representation remains undesignated in Aristotle which should be called 'literature'³ or even better 'vāngmaya' (verbal discourse). The verbal discourse is bifurcated into two: prose and verse. And the verse chiefly being metrical, also imbibes qualities of rhythm or music category. Now on the basis of object of imitation there are two: noble action and trivial action. Performing verbal arts imitating noble actions earlier existed in the form of hymn and encomia (dithyrambic & gnomic poetry) whereas those imitating trivial action were in invectives or satires (Phallic songs). The dithyrambic poetry is heroic poetry that includes epic (narrative) and tragedy (performative). Satires (iambic poetry) incorporate the form of comedy (performative).

What Aristotle does is a calculated elucidation of various art forms that combines each other's elements and shows the natural progress in his categorization. More so, in showing the affinity between music and poetry, he corrects his teacher's metaphor. Plato correlated poetry with painting in order to show its distance from the Idea, but this newfound kinship with music annuls the implications suggested by carpentry and painting.

The criteria for classification employed by Aristotle are three: medium, object, and mode. Of the three, the first and third bear no truck with human essential factors such as reason, emotion, moral, justice among others. Medium and mode, in this way, are formal criteria. On the other hand, the 'object' of imitation refers to the moral character of the human beings: 'comedy takes as its goal the representation of men as worse...than the norm', while tragedy shows men as better than the norm. More to this, Aristotle construes that such a moral criterion is also applicable to art forms other than dramatic poetry such as painting, music and dance. However, he focuses mainly on dramatic poetry. The moral criterion involves value judgement to classify the generic categories such as comedy and tragedy. And this value judgement or moral worldview is not as objective a parameter as the other two criteria. Many modern critics found the moral criterion too simplistic. It also has a binary model where one term is privileged in comparison to the other. Northrop Frye sets himself the task of revising Aristotelian model in non-moral terms. Frye divides literature into five 'modes': 1) Myth: the hero is better than other men and the environment in type. 2) Romance: the hero is better than other men and the environment in degree. 3) High Mimetic: the hero is better than other men in terms of type but not than his natural environment. 4) Low Mimetic: the hero is better than neither men nor his environment; he is as we are. 5) Ironic: the hero is inferior and less intelligent than our selves. The above scheme is indeed speculative and

enables Frye to develop a more refined scheme of dramatic/literary forms.

The complexity in Aristotle's model is due to the fact that formal and moral criteria co-exist wherein the latter has had a telling impact on the entire western literary classification. What one finds in Aristotle's *Poetics* is that the object of imitation is the only fully realized criterion. And responding to this issue in fact makes one postulate few issues from margins.

For the Greeks, action was the culmination of *ethos* (moral principle of character). Aristotle holds that the end and purpose of life is a kind of action: doing something, and not just being a certain kind of person. In fact, 'action' in Aristotle is variously interpreted by successive thinkers, as he famously prioritized action over character. S. H. Butcher, in this regard, construes that the drama is will or emotion in action. To Butcher, action is not different from character insofar as it springs out of character and consequently reflects that character. The indisputable moral choice of human agent leads to *eudaimonai* (happiness). An action morally governed is a central concern in Greek worldview. Here, any further inquiry into the priority given to criteria of classification shoots off in the direction of metaphysics via ethical/religious givens of the time. Secondly, Aristotle puts premium on tragedy-comedy dyad and shows no further ramification of dramatic forms. One can say that he considered works of ancient Greek writers and being an ontological thinker, he studied what was at hand and the way the object of study then existed. But theorizing classification is at once abstract and particular. A speculative

approach would certainly enhance the reach of classification as is evident from Frye's schema. But since the object of imitation in Aristotle recognizes human action on the basis of polar qualities: better/common; good/worse; noble/inferior, the classification itself delimits its scope for the concerned literary forms. The dominance of moral criterion can be further viewed from the point that in Aristotle's view drama is actually an imitation by the poet. The poet controls the performance and the text of the performance. And in the text important is *mythos* (arrangement of events). In principle, Aristotle's poet is a foil to Plato's. A poet now is not tactless imitator but one who recreates the world. And the representation of better men in terms of probability helps him answer philosophical contentions. Hence, Aristotle's poetic forms comprise only four: epic, satire, tragedy and comedy. Aristotle located 'poetry' within a broader aesthetic scheme and analyzed its constituents, especially tragedy.⁴

After Aristotle, there was little theoretical contribution from successive thinkers and literary critics. In the Roman age, Horace almost followed Aristotle in his discussion on tragedy and epic. However, Horace also formally enlisted small genres such as lyric, pastoral, satire, elegy and epigram. These small genres are elaborated upon in his *Satires* and *Epistles*. Horace onwards the genre theory tends to be more formalized and prescriptive, for the principle of 'imitation' was upheld as 'imitate the model'. And the process of imitation becomes easy when the model is more formalized. The criterion for Horace was 'decorum' or propriety. Rules of decorum

were expected to bring about harmony between subject matter and style and meter. Thus, Horace's ideas grew into one formalized and prescriptive genre theory.

By the end of Middle Ages, early Renaissance's different social-economic conditions and literary practice effected a change in literary forms. Tragedy and comedy lost their conventional dramatic signification. Dante uses 'comedy' in the title of his work. Chaucer's Prologue to the 'Monk's Tale' considers 'tragedy' as a 'storie' which shows the hero's fall from prosperity to misery and 'endeth wretchedly'. Other new genre in this period predicating upon the classical form emerge as variants of 'epic' in the form of romance literature along with religious allegory, and Petrarchan sonnet. The Renaissance critic Sidney went to the extent of comparing poetry with two non-poetic genres: philosophy and history. Aristotle had argued that poetry is more philosophical than history, but Sidney crowned poetry and put it above philosophy. Sidney divided poetry into 'three general kinds': i) hymns or religious odes, ii) philosophical poetry (natural, astronomical, historical), and iii) creative poetry. The creative poetry is further classified into the heroic, lyric, tragic, comic, satiric, iambic, elegiac, pastoral and certain others. Interesting to note is that Sidney orders his categories in the chosen hierarchy. Moreover, Sidney favoured mixing of genres in the manner such as tragedy and comedy, prose and verse, heroic and pastoral. Sidney's originality lay not in following the ancient models but having imagination, creation, and invention as the base of his criteria.

The succeeding centuries witnessed a more rigid approach to literary classification. Neoclassicists took genres as pure, classically defined, beyond writerly/readerly intervention and hence inviolable. Dr. Johnson's defence of Shakespeare seems more like an exception in this case. Further, if one looks at the take on literary genres adopted by English critics, one notices that there is an attempt to establish a hierarchy of genres. In the hierarchy, epic or heroic poetry holds pride of place; tragedy thereafter followed by comedy, then satire, and pastoral the endmost. Ironically, Neoclassical age excels at satirical and mock-epical works rather than epical and tragic.

Since then literary forms and genology have undergone major changes. Modern critics have mostly discarded mimetic and moral posits of Classical and Neoclassical poetics.⁵ The postmodern condition accepts 'carnival' of forms, and the very 'impurity', 'indeterminacy', and 'play' of generic norms is cherished. The distinction between 'high' and 'low'; 'classic' and 'popular', 'original' and 'hybrid' is viewed as too simplistic and reductionist practice offering untenable criteria for literary classification.

II

Indian systems of knowledge in general and Sanskrit poetics in particular have always delved deep into systematization of domains of knowledge. For centuries poetics have deliberated on literary classification from various viewpoints. Prof. Singh rightly observes, "The classification of literary forms in Sanskrit poetics is valid because it categorizes literary (verbal) discourse

ontologically on the basis of the primary categories of subject-matter, its originality, organization, suggestion, form, style and liveliness (*ramaniyata*)”.⁶ Here, the criteria involved for literary classification are galore.

The encyclopaedic *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata is the primordial text in providing a rich classification of dramatic forms. The first basic distinction is made between mediums: *drśya* (representation) and *śrāvya* (aural). Since *drśya* involves presentability it is synonymous with drama. The drama in Indian poetics is the imitation of situations (*avasthānūkrīti nāṭyam*) (and not of action, which presupposes centrality of human agent). Drama is called *rūpaka* (representation), as it assumes various *rupas* (personae). There are ten *rūpakas*: *nātaka*, *prakarana*, *samvakāra*, *ihāmrga*, *dima*, *vyāyoga*, *anka*, *prahasana*, *bhāna*, and *vīthī*. Besides these ten *rūpakas*, there are eighteen *uprūpakas* (minor plays). The latter differ in the sense that they rely chiefly on bodily gestures and music, which are secondary in *rūpaka*. The *rūpakas* require superior and more complex forms of acting. However, the classification extends only up to the *drśya* category.

Bhāmaha’s *Kāvyaalamkāra* posits different kinds of literary forms. It is the first extant text on theoretical study of poetry with the focus on figures of speech. The term *kāvya* is a vast rubric in Sanskrit poetics in which all creative verbal types and subtypes submerge. However, *nāṭya* and *kāvya* traditions have received separate critical attention. Bhāmaha uses three broad criteria for the classification: i) structure and language, ii) subject matter, and iii) nature

of composition. The first criterion involves compositions in Sanskrit, Prākṛta, and Apabhramśa. The second category includes four sub-categories: *Khyat vratta*—real narrative of gods; *Kalpita vastu*—fiction; *Kalāśrita*—relating to arts; and *Śāstraśrita*—relating to science. The third criterion of form is further classified into five categories: *sargabaddha* (epic), *ābhineya* (performance based), *ākhyāyikā* (verse narrative in first person), *kathā* (narrative in third person), and *muktaka* (stray verses).

Dandin develops his model on two criteria: form and language. The former involves three classes, viz. *padya* (poetry), *gadya* (prose) and *campu* (mixed). The poetic composition can be connected (*nibaddha*) or unconnected (*anibaddha*). The prose form likewise involves the dyad of connected and unconnected compositions. *Kathā* is example of *nibaddha* type. Dandin does not entirely agree with Bhāmaha’s explanation for *kathā* and *ākhyāyikā*. To him, they more or less denote the identical type of narrative. In Ānandavardhana’s *Dhvanyāloka* *kathā* is further elaborated into *parikathā*, *khandakathā*, and *sakalakathā*. Dandin then includes *nātaka* in the category of *campu*. And, on the basis of language, he reckons with compositions in Sanskrit, Prākṛta, Apabhramśa and Mīśra.

It would be timely to dwell more on the narrative form here. Bhāmaha, Dandin, Bhoja, and Viśvanātha have shown interest in the prose form. The commonly known *Ākhyāna-jāti* or ‘class of narrative’ has its members, viz. *kathā*, *ākhyāyikā*, and *ākhyāna*. The term *kathā* means fictional narrative in general, and ‘story’ of particular scope and size. *Kathā* is an imaginary prose

(or verse) tale rendered in third person. *Ākhyāyikā* is a prose tale based on history or tradition and its narrative is biographical or autobiographical. It is mostly in the first person narration. Hence, Dandin's claim that *kathā* and *ākhyāyikā* are the same in terms of narrative, language or chapter division is often questioned by later poeticians. Hemcandra in his *Kāvyañuśāsana* accepts the difference between two forms and states that concerning the narrative and representation of hero in both the forms, one learns that the hero in *kathā* is noble (*abhijāta*), faultless, and deeply peaceful (*dhīra*). The hero of *ākhyāyikā* speaks about himself at length. This type of hero is full of verve and panache but not as noble as that of *kathā*. *Ākhyāna* is the most ancient form of narrative meant to be publicly recited. It is the wellspring of *kathā* and *ākhyāyikā*. Hence, the distinction between these narrative forms is understood on the following criteria: 1) language of composition, 2) medium, 3) scope, 4) narrator, 5) type of protagonist, 6) subject-matter, 7) nature of subject-matter (fictional or historical), 8) characters (gods, legends, kings...), and 9) construction (*parva*, *sarga*, *kānda*, *lambha* or *ucchvāsa*).

Vāmana's criterion for classification of literary composition is medium: prose and poetry. Poetry could be either *anibaddha* or *nibaddha*. The prose form has three sub-types: *vrttagandhi* (with metrical passages), *cūrna* (with lucid and short compounds), and *utkalikā* (long compounds, metrical passages, complex in understanding).

Rudrata in his *Kāvyaalamkāra* restates the earlier classificatory model with little difference. *Kāvya* is divided, as it were, into

laghukāvya and *mahākāvya*. On the basis of subject matter in narrative (*kāvya-kathā*) he shows two kinds: *utpādyā* (wholly fictional) and *anupādyā* (based on legend and history). Later, Pt. Jagannātha adopts an essentialist view when he classifies *kāvya* into *uttamottam*, *uttama*, *madhyama*, and *adhama*.

Rājaśekhara in the 10th c. AD presents a detailed account of literary and non-literary categories. His model of taxonomy concerns itself with knowledge systems per se than strict literary classification. The classification stems from *vāngamaya* (verbal discourse) which has two classes: *śāstra* and *kāvya*. *Śāstra* is further divided into *apauruṣeya* (non-contingent texts— independent of author) and *pauruṣeya* (authored). In the category of authored text, he enlists *Purānas* which include *Itihāsa*, *Ānviksiki*, *Mīmāṃsā*, *Dharmaśāstra*, *Kāvya-vīdyā*, and a group of *kāmaśāstra* (erotics), *śilpaśāstra* (architecture), *arthaśāstra* (economics), *vārtā* (agriculture, trade). Here, *Purānas* are in narrative mode while the rest in technical and formulaic manner. While considering a category of *Itihāsa* under authored texts, he devises two narrative kinds on the basis of protagonist: *parākriyā*—the progress of narrative is shown through one protagonist, e.g. the *Rāmāyana*, and *purākalpa*—the progress of narrative is shown through many heroes, e.g. the *Mahābhārata*.⁷ Over and above Rājaśekhara is not concerned much with the details pertaining to the narrative form. In the ninth chapter of *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā*, he thinks of five sub-types of unconnected poetic compositions. They are, 1) *Śuddha* (meaning derived from factual description

devoid of any story), 2) *Citra* (with illustrating description), 3) *Kathotha* (meaning elicited with the help of story), 4) *Samvidhānakabhū* (meaning given with the help of an imagined but possible event), 5) *Ākhyānakavāna* (meaning articulated with the help of legend). This model of classification is based on the discorsal devices which are employed by the writer to propound the meaning.

III

The postulates of literary classification in the west and in India show that there are a few parameters similar in kind, but their treatment and application differ. One can enlist the following major criteria for classification in the classical literary tradition of the west.

- Medium
- Object
- Mode (form)
- Decorum (style)
- Imagination/creativity (essence)
- Subject-matter (fictional/non-fictional)
- Protagonist-based (nature of hero)

The criteria adopted for literary genres in India are as follows:

- Language
- Form or composition
- Subject-matter
- Essence/substance
- Medium
- Discorsal devices
- Protagonist-based (nature; role; type; and number of protagonist)
- Style/liveliness

Here, the category of medium must be understood differently in both the literary traditions. Unlike the western classifying criterion of medium, which incorporates distinction of verbal compositions from non-verbal such as painting and music, Indian knowledge system does not harness them together under one parent criterion. *Kāvya* is canonically thought and analyzed in a distinct manner from *kalā*. Classical Indian canon of *kalā* has reckoned with the sixty-four arts and the number of which may be reconsidered to add new forms of arts of the present time such as film-making that has again a distinct medium. To name a few from classical arts, there are *gīta* (music), *vādyā* (instrumental music), *nṛtya* (dance), *nāṭya* (histrionics), *citra* (painting) among others.⁸

Another difference to be observed in the classical western and Indian genology is in the ramification of the criterion of mode. The basic dyadic classification in verbal discourse in the west is *diegesis* (telling) and *mimesis* (showing). The former at its best culminates into epic. Here, the prose form is not much developed (or available for that matter) in the incomplete *Poetics* of Aristotle, nor the subsequent theoreticians come to chip in. In fact, the prose of Plato is also remarkable for its literariness. Plato's philosophical dialogues do share a dramatic literary contract of (verbal) performance. The progress of idea in the narrative is peculiar due to Socratic Method of refutation. And for that matter elenchus, which is a philosophical discorsal device, becomes a narrative technique. However, Plato's dialogues are not much studied from this perspective. In this case then the prose

form has to wait until the romances of medieval age come to the fore in Judeo-Christian civilization and much later, it satisfactorily developed from the 18th century onwards. It is only in modern times that non-literary forms such as essays, memoirs, biographies, travelogues among others gain critical attention. On the other hand, the prose form in Indian classical genology is much discussed and theorized upon. The debate on *kathā*, *ākhyāyika*, and *ākhyāna* is a case in point. Moreover, prose existed in other forms such as *carita* or biography (e.g. *Harśacarita*), narrative (e.g. *Hitopadeśa*, *Pañcatantra*), philosophical treatise with narrative as its device (e.g. *Yoga Vāsistha*, *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*) and the *Pūrānas*. This indicates how comprehensive flourish in thought and practice of diverse literary forms was achieved in the Indian counterpart.

In the western literary taxonomy the moral criteria has had a considerable influence on the philosophy of literary classification. The theoretical alternative model such as from Frye and contesting voices effacing the sacred generic boundaries made the enterprise of classification dynamic and flexible. It has to be noted that not just literary but historical and philosophical factors are equally responsible in overhauling the concept of genology in the west that put a corrective to the reason(s) for classification. More so, theory and practice of literature also brought out the issue of hierarchy in genology. One can add here that the thought of classification is not synthetic but analytic in character. The very act of partitive analysis makes grounds for comparative value judgement. As a result,

hierarchy in genology becomes a by-product of the act. Whether explicit or implicit, but superiority of genre over another does exist in the corpus of literature at any given point of time and irrespective of literary traditions.

When one looks at Indian classical system of literary classification, one finds that its model is richer and subtler. It is also largely formal in character, and one of its reasons lies in epistemological status of *kāvya* (literary discourse). Right from Bharata's time the objectives of *kāvya* have been clear: the four ends of life, viz. *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *moksa*.⁹ The later centuries saw addition in the number of objectives in one or the other way. More so, Indian mind is not perplexed by non-rational approach to the cognizance of the tertiary forms of realities: *vyavahārika* (of manmade society), *prātibhāsika* (of forms and appearances), and *pāramārthika* (of spiritual). Symbolical, figurative and mythical thinking is not treated as antithetical to reason and reality.¹⁰ And the questions regarding truth value and ethical function of literature being largely taken care of by such an arational philosophical worldview, it would not be unlikely to see Indian theoreticians having their taxonomical models based more on formal criteria. Thus, the dilemma as regards the epistemological status of literature in society is not so acutely felt in Indian poetical tradition as it was in the western counterpart.¹¹ Given the philosophical mooring and complex schematization, it remains the fact that in the Indian tradition of genology one scarcely comes across major departures from the established philosophy of classification, which bespeaks doubly of the profundity of the classical

thinkers and submissive appraisal of the latter.

Here, it should be reckoned that both the western and Indian literary traditions have

nurtured critical/philosophical concern for classification and with the passage of time has grown into a large intellectual construct inhering in the rich possibilities of critical ruminations.

Notes

1. S. S. Praver, *Comparative Literary Studies: an Introduction*, p. 160.
2. Milind Malshe, *Aesthetics of Literary Classification*, 2003.
3. Originally in Latin *littera* 'letter of the alphabet', the term 'literature' indicates 'writing'. The oral part still remains on the fringes. Instead, *vāngmaya* is all encompassing.
4. Whether tragedy or epic is superior has been long debated. Theoretically, epic enjoys distinction but tragedy has also been favoured. For instance, Neoclassicists demurred with Aristotle and considered epic to be the highest literary form. On the other hand, narratologist like Gerard Genette in his *Narrative Discourse* holds that tragedy held sway theoretically and historically for centuries until narrative took over in new forms in modern times.
5. There are voices from within western intellectual tradition challenging the critical/philosophical enterprise of literary classification. To address this moot issue requires another space where one can duly consider contesting voices from Kant, Croce, Nietzsche and Derrida.
6. See Avadhesh Kumar Singh, "Classification of Literary Compositions in Sanskrit Poetics", in *Genology*, p. 41.
7. Rājaśekhara considers the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata* as *itihāsa*, as they are too massive to fall into the category of *mahākāvya*. Modern historians like SN Dasgupta and SK De partly agree to it. In their view, the *Rāmāyana* for its sheer poetic quality must be called a *mahākāvya*. In fact, the *Rāmāyana* for its legendary account of Lord Rama also falls in the category of *ākhyāna*. (see Kapil Kapoor's "Theory of the Novel: the Indian View" in *Genology*)
8. For the list of all sixty-four arts, see the note in Ch. 10 of *Kāvya-mīmāṃsā*, English translation by Sadhana Parashar, or the *Purānic Encyclopaedia* by Vettam Mani.
9. Other objectives are: to give mental repose to those who are distressed or afflicted with tiredness, to be conducive to righteous action (*dharmyam*), to lead to glory or fame (*yaśasyam*), to cause welfare or good (*hitam*), to cause one's wisdom to grow (*buddhivivardhanam*), to instruct in the ways of the world (*lokopadesajanam*), to impart proficiency in the fine arts among others. Notably, the *Agnipurāna* does not acknowledge *moksa* as the fourth objective of literature, although most others do acquiesce to it.

10. In India almost all disciplines and art forms are attributed with the origin in non-human divine agency, resulting in a constant blurring of the boundaries of real and imaginative. For a broad perspective and detailed account on the philosophical worldview of India, see Betty Heimann's *Indian and Western Philosophy: a Study in Contrasts*, 1937.
11. Plato's *The Republic* is the major example of questioning the truth value of literary discourse.

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