1
Introduction

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Love may indeed be a universal feeling, but culture and language play a crucial role in defining it at every stage, from sexual arousal to codified sentiment, from norms of comportment to 'significant stories'. Idioms of love have a very long history, and within every culture or cultural area there will always be more than one available at any given time – prescriptive, poetic, commonsensical, satirical, religious, gender-specific, and so on. South Asia offers a particularly rich field for this kind of enquiry because several idioms – of '*śṛṅgāra*', '*viraha*', ''*ishq*', '*prem*' and 'love' – have been active over a very long period of time. This book attempts to map the history of love in South Asia on the basis of these multiple words, conceptual clusters, images and stories of and about love.[1] Elaborated within literature and other arts, such idioms have interlocked and grown into repertoires and have provided templates for ordinary people when thinking, singing or speaking about their own loves. Our attempt at mapping the history of love in South Asia rests on an understanding of love as culturally and historically determined, and on the assumption that the repertoire of images, practices and stories about love is *varied but limited* at any given time, and that some cultural symbols will be more readily available than others.[2]

The aim of this book is to highlight the *plurality* of the idioms of love in South Asia. Far from taking 'South Asia', 'culture' or 'love' as monoliths, it intentionally considers love as both 'affect' and 'sociality' (Sangari in this volume) and brings together a number of analytically distinct phenomena, ranging from courtly ethics to literary conventions, from family structures to sentiment and sexuality. The theme of love is explored from the angles of literature, literary history, philosophy, social history, anthropology and film studies, with a full chronological range, from the Guptas to the 1990s. While each essay focuses on a particular period or a particular text or genre, we have been mindful of the ways in which the various idioms of love have overlapped and influenced each other at various points in history, as well as the ways in which older idioms have been

[1] For an anthology that includes also tribal voices, see C. S. Shackle and N. Awde (ed. and trans.), *Treasury of Indian Love* (New York: Hippocrene, 1999).
[2] Eva Illouz, *Consuming the Romantic Utopia. Love and the Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

revitalised when used by new actors and in new contexts. In fact, in methodological terms, this book suggests that love can be a particularly productive standpoint from which to observe processes of cultural formation and influence in South Asian history. A history of love in South Asia has to take into consideration the fact that shringara, 'ishq and 'love' each originated in distinct philosophical and aesthetic climates, took on several guises in their long and varied history, and are all alive and utilised in contemporary South Asia. Do these concepts overlap or do they occupy different areas of meaning? What happens to these concepts when the socio-historical context changes? How do modern individuals, female and male, use and respond to traditional idioms? What have been the discursive and social spaces actually available for lovers? These are some of the questions that this book seeks to answer through individual case studies. Although this is not a 'History of Private Life' along the lines of George Duby's or Lawrence Stone's, for the social history to support such an enterprise largely still needs to be written for South Asia, it hopes to contribute to it by showing how discourses of love in literary sources and other repertoires could be usefully employed in writing such a history.[3] Given the fact much has been written on love in classical Sanskrit and Tamil poetry, on devotional *bhakti* poetry and on the semantics of love in Tamil, the focus of this book (barring this Introduction) has been on medieval and modern, and largely non-Hindu, non-Sanskritic and non-bhakti, north India.[4]

Genres and repertoires

Most of the discourses about love, especially when we turn to the past, are to be found in literary sources, which in this book include not just creative literature (poetry, prose, drama, song, oral tales) but also writings on aesthetics and ethics and visual sources. (Love occupies in literature a prominent position, quite out of proportion, one is tempted to say, to its place in real life.[5]) If the meaning, means

[3] Philippe Ariès and George Duby, *A History of Private Life*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987–8); Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979).

[4] For Sanskrit poetry see John Brough, *Poems from the Sanskrit* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986); Daniel H. H. Ingalls, *An Anthology of Sanskrit Court Poetry: Vidyākara's "Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa"* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Oriental Series, 1965), vol. XXXXIV; and S. Lienhard and G. Boccali, *Tesori della poesia Indiana* (Milano: Tea, 1997). For Tamil poetry see the pioneering work by A. K. Ramanujan, *The Interior Landscape*: *Love Poems from a Classical Tamil Anthology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1967); his *Speaking of Śiva* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973); and, with Norman Cutler, 'From Classicism to *Bhakti*', in V. Dharwadker (ed.), *The Collected Essays of A. K. Ramanujan* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 232–59. See also Martha Ann Selby, *Grow Long, Blessed Night. Love Poems from Classical India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); and Margaret Trawick, *Notes on Love in a Tamil Family* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

[5] The overwhelming, but by no means atypical, prominence of love themes over several epochs of Indian courtly culture can no longer be explained in terms of aristocratic debauchery and cultural bankruptcy.

of expression and social significance of love, as of any social and cultural entity, are best understood when we take into consideration the philosophical, social and literary conventions that governed its utterance and acted as a 'horizon of expectations' for both the original and the subsequent audiences, the first thing that we need to think about when dealing with literary sources is the mediation of genre. Each writer ('writer' and 'written literature' are here used as a shorthand for the creative process: one could just as well say a singer, artist, musician, story-teller or actor) setting out to compose or recite will have to decide which genre to do it in – a poem, a comedy, a treatise? The choice will be dictated by the writer's intentions or by the requirements of the topic, of the patron, of the occasion (a ritual performance, a newspaper article?) and by the audience. But once chosen, the form – the genre – affects not only the treatment of the theme (comic, serious, highly elaborate or deliberately direct) but also the way the reader or the audience will perceive it: as critics have pointed out, the first few words of a work, or its presentation (the first few bars of a tune, a preamble, the dustjacket of a book), alert the audience to what they can expect.[6] The first line of a classical Tamil poem, for example, signals to the reader what landscape, mood, lover and kind of love will be presented in the poem. This 'contract' engenders an active tension between the virtuality of the work and its realisation, for the writer may choose to introduce variants and play with the conventions of the genre. But the relevant point for us is that within a literary system – which I understand as being the sum of all forms and genres available to a particular culture at a particular time – each genre develops a specific 'competence' and shapes both form and meaning accordingly: the same hero will be described with martial qualities in an epic but largely as a lover by lyric poetry. This apparently banal consideration is of great importance for an attempt like ours to analyse the meaning of a concept from a wide array of literary sources. Genre is the first thing we need to consider: both the genre in which the notion and the story find expression, and the position of that genre vis-à-vis other genres in the literary system. Within the Perso-Urdu repertoire, in what relation does the hero of the *ghazal* stand vis-à-vis the hero of a *maṣnavī*? How are the ethics of love played out in Sanskrit plays, in the epics or in the texts on *dharma*?

Genre has another peculiar tendency: to lead the reader into thinking that its own partial view is in fact the whole. Each genre codifies a particular correspondence between signifiers and signified and thus establishes its own language, its own rhetoric. But while each genre carves up the world and limits the universe of discourse according to its partial intention, it presents itself to the reader as a whole.[7] The Perso-Urdu ghazal will make us think that its way of speaking about

[6] See Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Cambridge University Press, 1997) and Edward Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (New York: Basic Books, 1975).

[7] These observations are based on Giovanni Biagio Conte's Introduction to *Ovidio. Rimedi contro l'amore* (Venezia: Marsilio, 1986), pp. 9–53; for the English reader, see his *Genres and Readers:*

love is the only way, and will make us forget that it is a codified language, a rhetoric, that gives shape and meaning to words and emotions but that also shuts out everything that does not fit its code. When genre absorbs and uses elements from other genres and discourses into its own, it replaces their existing meanings with new ones consistent with its own universe, leaving only their signifiers intact. It is to this process of transcodification that A. K. Ramanujan pointed when he showed how Tamil devotional poets had used the Tamil erotic poetic tradition to produce devotional poetry.[8] The same point could be made about conditions of performance: as performances of devotional songs about Radha and Krishna in film songs show, the mystical love expressed by the singer can easily be made to signify the worldly love between the characters in the film.

Finally, genre is a dynamic agent in the evolution of literary forms. Especially in a multilingual and multicultural system like South Asia, where curious literati, like the Sufi master Khwaja Farid of Christopher Shackle's essay in this volume or the Mughal Persian poet Faizi in Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam's contribution, dabbled in more than one literary tradition, innovation was easily effected by importing into one genre some element belonging to a different form. When Khwaja Farid tried his hand at folk compositions, he accepted their conventions but also added something of his Sufi sensibility and his sophisticated literary skills.

The conventional nature of genres is best understood as a grammar, or rather a syntax, of words and meanings. And while Barthes so aptly pointed out that any talk of love can only be conventional, repeating words that others have said,[9] it nonetheless acquires a ring of personal truth when those words are recited or recalled by a particular individual or heard by a listener in a state comparable to that of the poem or story.[10]

The main repertoires in which notions, emotions and stories of love developed in South Asia are four: the Sanskrit and Prakrit repertoire centring on shringara and *kāma* and comprising epics, lyrics, plays, collections of stories and treatises on philosophy, conduct (including sexual conduct) and medicine; the oral repertoire of folk epics, tales and songs; the Perso-Arabic repertoire centring on 'ishq and *muḥabbat*, comprising religious injunctions, Sufi poems and interpretations, worldly texts on ethics and conduct, poetic romances (masnavis), eulogies (*qaṣīda*) and lyrics (ghazal), and stories of adventure and chivalry; and the repertoire of devotional bhakti poetry and philosophy. To these must be added the modern repertoires of prem and 'love'. Since the individual essays present episodes in the history of love, in order to provide a general background the rest

Lucretius, Love Elegy, Pliny's Encyclopedia (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

[8] Ramanujan and Cutler, 'From Classicism', pp. 232–59.

[9] Roland Barthes, *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990).

[10] Lila Abu-Lughod, *Veiled Sentiments: Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

of this Introduction will offer a brief survey of the main repertoires and a historical sketch of the main idioms of love.

The Sanskritic repertoire

Before modern Indian high culture turned resolutely moralistic, sexual love and passion were recognised as an area dense with meanings and positively valued, at least for certain classes of people in certain contexts: the king, the householder and his wife, the courtesan. Ascetic or moralistic condemnation of love and sexuality were always but one strand of tradition in South Asia. The earliest set of concepts, genres and aesthetics about love evolved in the Prakrit dialects and in Sanskrit. It is a repertoire of extraordinary longevity, thanks to the continued status of Sanskrit as the vehicle of elite composition and philosophical thought and to the way in which Sanskrit literature and aesthetics continued to work as models for sophisticated production in Indian vernaculars after the first millennium. To give an idea of its geographical and historical range, Daud Ali's essay focuses on the Gupta age (fourth to seventh century CE), while Sudipta Kaviraj's essay analyses the shift from the Sanskritic conception of love-beauty (*rūpa*) to modern notions of love and of inner beauty in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Bengali literature.[11]

Within this repertoire, the epics are perhaps the earliest sources for myths, stories and ideas about love that need to be considered. Written in a context of socio-political changes surrounding the transition from a lineage-based society to monarchy, their main concerns also revolve around kingship: succession and just rule, essentially a male world.[12] The epic hero is the *rāja*, which Romila Thapar suggests should better be translated as 'chief' rather than 'king', and beauty and desire are integral features to him, generally expressed through the womenfolk's admiration and his sexual prowess. Love works for the raja as a motif of acquisition, and the various forms and customs regarding marriage reflect how the epic telescopes time and links a varied range of societies.[13] Thus, while *kanyādān*, the 'gift of a virgin', will become the generally sanctioned way of marriage, the girl's choice of her husband (*svayaṃvara*) is deemed appropriate for princely brides, and marriage by mutual consent (*gāndharva*) is lawful and fitting for a warrior (*kṣatriya*) and frequently takes place in the epic between a raja and a woman of the forest, outside the pale of settled society: in the story of Dushyanta and Shakuntala, as told in the *Mahābhārata*, Shakuntala's status as

[11] It is partly to avoid the too easy identification of the Sanskritic cultural tradition as 'Indian tradition' per se that this volume does not include more essays on this important repertoire. This is not to deny its importance, of course, but to see it as one major strand interweaving with others rather than as the source and end of Indian culture. Indologists will have to excuse us.

[12] The following section is heavily indebted to Romila Thapar's brilliant discussion of the historical evolution of the story of Shakuntala in *Śakuntalā. Texts, Readings, Histories* (Delhi: Kali for Women, 1999).

[13] Thapar, *Śakuntalā*, p. 15.

daughter of a heavenly nymph, an *apsaras*, may disguise her status as a forest woman.[14] The plotting of love requires the hero to set off hunting in the forest. Here the tamed wilderness of the hermitage offers the perfect natural setting for love; his sighting of the 'flawless' woman arouses his desire and he successfully seduces her, making extravagant promises. The downside of the gandharva marriage, whose narrative appeal persists to this day and which requires minimum ritual implements – a simple exchange of flower garlands – is its lack of publicity, and the issue of public recognition is at the heart of the Shakuntala story. By contrast, Damayanti, the princely heroine of the other famous love story told in the *Mahābhārata*, a story of conjugal human love pitched against the designs and intervention of gods and demons, chooses her husband Nala in a svayamvara, though their love for each other predated that choice and was the effect of hearing the praises of the other.[15]

With the transition to urban, courtly society, aesthetics and poetry produced elaborate reflections on the direct and indirect ways in which emotions (*bhāva*) manifest themselves. Love became the principal example and the focus of much greater emotional and aesthetic sophistication. It also acquired, as Daud Ali has argued elsewhere, particular connotations within the royal court and courtly society, where desire and one's mastery over it became tropes for talking about relations between the king and his courtiers and among the courtiers themselves: the 'terminology [of desire] is covalent with broader conceptions of affiliation in that society, and some of its key dynamics reflect the preoccupations of that society' with dependence, attachment and autonomy.[16] Thus the rise of terms such as *rāga*, *anurāga* and bhakti in political discourse to signify dispositions of adoration, attachment, affection and participation parallels the rise of *kāvya* as a discursive form and of love as a courtly theme from the second century CE.[17] The successful king or courtier attracts affection and dependants but controls his own passions and avoids becoming excessively attached to anyone, lest he should lose his *sneha* (vital fluid, lit. 'unctuousness'), power and autonomy. Crucial in the

[14] Apsaras were celestial beauties, the fantasy women of the world of the heroes and different from earthly women. As Thapar notes, union with an apsaras occurs frequently in legends, often at a moment of break in the lineage, and may represent a claim to status or a marriage with a woman from an obscure and socially marginalised family; Thapar, *Śakuntalā*, p. 40.

[15] *Mah*. 3.50; see also Alam and Subrahmanyam in this volume. The other story of married love and wifely devotion is that of Savitri and Satyavan, told in *Mah*. 3.42, 277–83. In later courtly epics, where the enjoyment of innumerable beautiful women continues to be the hero's prerogative while his main concern is to vanquish his foe, love is a necessary and pleasurable interlude in the story; women of the city watch excitedly the hero on the march and the couples amuse themselves at the camp before the great battle. Sexual conquest and military conquest reflect each other through a web of metaphors (with armies of bees, creepers, flowers), fulfilling the requirement of Sanskrit literary theorists that the hero should be depicted as desirous of conquest and intent on the three ends of life. Rudrata as quoted by D. Smith, *Ratnākara's Haravijaya; an Introduction to the Sanskrit Court Epic* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 29–30.

[16] Daud Ali, 'Anxieties of Attachment: The Dynamics of Courtship in Medieval India', *Modern Asian Studies* 36.1 (2002), 104.

[17] *Ibid*., 106.

web of relations in urban courtly culture is the courtesan, a figure we shall encounter again as a mistress of manners and a performer (and sometimes author) of discourses on love in a courtly setting,[18] admired for her ability to attract attachments without herself falling in love, but also feared and despised.[19] Daud Ali's essay in this volume examines the issue of courtship in its literary and political dimensions.

The philosophical basis for discourses on love was provided in Sanskrit by the notion of kama, a term with several meanings (desire, attraction to sensory objects, pleasure, lust). On the one hand, as the myth of Kama, the God of Love burnt up by a fiery glance from Shiva's third eye, put it in figurative terms, desire was viewed as the great enemy of asceticism.[20] On the other hand, kama was accepted as one of the original three aims of man, together with *artha* (wealth) and dharma (righteousness); although dharma came to be seen as the overarching principle, even Manu maintained that the ideal was a balance between the three.[21] Manu's code reflects well the ambivalent attitude to kama:

> Acting out of desire [kama] is not approved of, but here on earth there is no such thing as no desire; for even studying the Veda and engaging in the rituals enjoined in the Veda are based upon desire. Desire is the very root of the conception of definite intention, and sacrifices are the result of that intention. (Manu 2.2–3)[22]

Having reluctantly accepted the necessity of kama as the basic driving force, Manu then cautions strongly against its dangers. Desire should be controlled and, we have just seen, acting out of desire is disapproved of. As attraction for sensory objects, kama leads dangerously to addiction (Manu 4.16), for 'desire is never extinguished by the enjoyment of what is desired' (Manu 2.94), and as lust it is listed among the ten vices which the king especially must refrain from (Manu 7.44–52).[23] As the concept of the four stages of life developed, kama was seen as especially bad for the first stage, that of the student (Manu 2.180), while it found greater acceptance in the second age of man, that of the householder. Indeed the Gods are said to fulfil all the desires of the man who fulfils his duty.

[18] See, e.g. S. Subrahmanyam, V. Narayana Rao and D. Shulman, *Symbols of Substance: Court and State in Nāyaka Period Tamilnadu* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992).

[19] Remarkable is also the production of songs by contemporary Telugu poet Kshetrayya in which the female poetic voice is that of the courtesan addressing God as her customer, often taunting him in brazen terms; for a discussion and anthology of these poems see A. K. Ramanujan, V. Narayana Rao and D. Shulman, *When God is a Customer: Telugu Courtesan Songs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

[20] Though Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty has argued eloquently for the convergence of the opposites of asceticism and desire in Shiva himself, the great ascetic but also the great lover; in *Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Śiva* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973).

[21] 'Religion [dharma] and profit [artha] are said to be better, or pleasure [kama] and profit, or religion alone here on earth; but the fixed rule is that the triple path is best'; Manu 2.224, in Wendy Doniger and B. Smith (trans.), *The Laws of Manu* (London: Penguin, 2001), p. 40.

[22] *Ibid*., p. 17.

[23] Ali, 'Anxieties', 113.

In their taxonomic urge to describe and classify every aspect of human existence, the Śāstras (authoritative texts) provided the *nāgaraka*, the citizen of the classical courtly polity, with descriptions of and prescriptions about sexual behaviour as well.[24] Vatsyayana's *Kāmasūtra*, the oldest and most famous Shastric text on kama, instructed the nagaraka on the importance of acquiring knowledge and of setting up a well-appointed house and a sophisticated daily routine; on the kinds of women suitable for love affairs (young girls, married women or widows and courtesans) and on the need for go-betweens. Then he proceeded to detail sexual advances (including embraces, kisses, scratching and biting and penetration), followed by instructions on how to acquire a wife, on the duties and privileges of the wife, on liaisons with other men's wives (overall discouraged) and on how to behave with courtesans. As Daud Ali has pointed out, this was not a universalistic model: the four prerequisites for the nagaraka pursuing pleasure, as for the courtier and for the man of taste (*sahṛday*, lit. 'with-heart') who is the addressee of Sanskrit literature, were good birth, wealth, urbanity and beauty.[25]

According to Sanskrit aesthetic theory, passion (*rati*) is the emotion underlying the *rasa* of love, called shringara and usually translated as the 'erotic'. Ingalls explains the ancillary elements (*vibhāva*) of rati and how they interact to produce the erotic rasa:

> The objective determinants (*ālambanavibhāvas*) are the objects toward which the emotions are felt. In the erotic flavor they will be the lover and his beloved . . . The stimulants (*uddīpanavibhāvas*) . . . will be factors such as springtime, gardens, or a bridal chamber . . . The consequents of emotions may be regarded by the audience as its symptoms. In the erotic flavor, for example, they will include the sidelong glances, smiles, graceful movements of the limbs.[26]

To be added to this list are the eight 'involuntary' bodily states which are caused by natural emotions. In the case of shringara these are paralysis, perspiration (*sveda*), gooseflesh (*romañca*, the translator's scourge), stammering, trembling, change in colour, tears and fainting.[27] These labels of physiological

[24] The most famous in this long tradition of prescriptive texts are Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra* (second century BCE) on economy and polity, Manu's *Dharmaśāstra* on dharma, good conduct and law, and Vatsyayana's *Kāmasūtra* (second to fourth century CE) on courtly behaviour regarding erotic love and pleasure in general; for a reliable and complete translation of the latter, see W. Doniger and S. Kakar (trans.), *Kamasutra* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

[25] The ensuing tradition of erotic Shastras produced a knowledge about the 'kinds of women', elaborate sexual positions, aphrodisiacs and semen-retaining techniques which continued to form an integral part of courtly culture until at least the eighteenth century. After Vatsyayana and his commentators, Kokkoka, the author of the *Ratirahasya* (*c*. twelfth century CE), gave his name to a whole group of texts in Sanskrit and in Indian vernaculars; see Kenneth G. Zysk, *Conjugal Love in India. Ratiśāstra and Ratiramaṇa* (Leiden: Brill, 2002).

[26] Daniel Ingalls, Introduction to *The "Dhvanyāloka" of Anandavardhana with the "Locana" of Abhinavagupta*, trans. Daniel Ingalls, Jeffrey Masson, and M. V. Patwardhan (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990), pp. 16–17.

[27] Selby, *Grow Long*, p. 28.

arousal have remained pretty constant in literary, performative and visual representations of love to this day.[28]

While treatises defined both desire (kama) and the sexual conduct of the urban elite, and the exact nature of the aesthetic experience, the stories and myths told in the epics acquired new twists and layers of meaning in narrative poems (*prabandhakāvya*) and plays. As Romila Thapar has shown, the heroine of the celebrated Sanskrit play by Kalidasa cuts a very different figure from the Shakuntala of the epic: more innocent, submissive and shy, she does not speak directly or hold her ground with the king but lets her friends do the talking. Nor does she set the king any conditions: 'romantic love hides the loss of empowerment and gradually becomes a fantasy'.[29] The high culture of the play is reflected not just in the use of a complex and highly alliterative poetic language but also in the much greater range of emotions and nuanced relationships, and in the tension between desire and compulsion, while subplots delay the action and memory acquires a central role in experiencing love: only perhaps in the act of recollection can the emotion be properly experienced and savoured.[30] The whole tone is unmistakably courtly: not only does the jealousy of Dushyanta's other queens introduce an element of palace intrigue, but the courting takes place in a garden-like part of the forest, and the trees and flowers are those generally also found in palace gardens and provide a subtle parallel to the blossoming of love. Indeed, gardens are necessary to courtly poetry as the site for the rendezvous of lovers.[31]

Erotic love received its fullest aesthetic and psychological treatment in the short love lyric,[32] which revolved around certain fixed, *anonymous* characters – the hero and heroine (*nāyak* and *nāyikā*) and the heroine's friend or go-between (*sakhī* and, in Tamil poetry, her mother) and expanded into an elaborate taxonomy of heroines and their characteristic attitudes.[33] Particularly popular with

[28] The Tamil lyric of love (*akam*), by contrast, drew upon an elaborate scheme of 'landscapes' (*tiṇai*) which set up correspondences between geographical region (dry desert, wet lowland, forest), mood (union, patient waiting, jealous quarrelling), flowers and birds. In this way, the first line of a Tamil lyric immediately identified the situation and the kind of hero–heroine for the reader. And instead of the mediated experience of rasa, Tamil poetics did not explicitly acknowledge a difference between the emotion experienced by the character and that felt by the audience in real life; Selby, *Grow Long*, p. 37; also Ramanujan, *Interior Landscape*.

[29] Thapar, *Śakuntalā*, p. 74.

[30] Barbara Stoler Miller (ed.), *Theater of Memory. The Plays of Kalidasa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984); and Charles Malamoud, 'By Heart: Notes on the Interplay Between Love and Memory in Ancient Indian Poetry', in *Cooking the World. Ritual Thought in Ancient India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 247–58.

[31] Thapar, *Śakuntalā*, p. 53; and Daud Ali, *Courtly Culture and Political Life in Early Medieval India* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[32] For the love lyric, see Ingalls, *An Anthology*; Brough, *Poems*; and S. Lienhard, *A History of Classical Poetry: Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1984). This section draws substantially from Martha Ann Selby's discussion of Tamil, Prakrit and Sanskrit love lyrics in *Grow Long* and from Daud Ali's article 'Anxieties'.

[33] The large, though limited, number of situations and moods of love, in both the aspects of 'love in union' and 'love in separation' also lent itself to codification by writers of poetics, who laid

poets, and later with miniature painters, were: the woman leaving her house at night to meet her lover (*abhisārikā*); the woman abandoned by her husband or lover; the woman sick with love, alone or surrounded by her girlfriends; and the woman sulking after a quarrel with her lover. While the Sanskrit love verse of the anthologies is generally an almost painterly erotic sketch, a sexual vignette whose complex metrical structure made it a virtuoso performance for both the poet and the connoisseur-reader, lyric poems in the literary Prakrits aimed for semantic suggestiveness (*dhvani*) and a sparse poetic language.[34] In place of the frankness of expression of Tamil poems, Prakrit and Sanskrit poems favoured veiled and indirect expression, though the foregrounding of desire is unmistakable.[35]

Finally, food, season, bodily health and sexual activity were closely connected within an integrated view of kama, and appear as such in medical as well as literary texts. Underlying both poetry and medicine is a common perception of the qualities of each season and the activities, food, dress and behaviour appropriate to it. Medical texts grouped the six seasons in two sets of three, *śiśir*, *vasanta* and *grīṣma* (late winter, spring and summer), qualitatively hot and dry, and *varṣā*, *śarad* and *hemanta* (the rainy season, autumn and early winter), characterised as cold and wet. The 'hot and dry' months were deemed debilitating for the human body, while the 'cold and wet' months were said to be invigorating.[36] In the colder part of the year, one ought to consume sweet, sour and salty food together with hot alcoholic drinks; in addition, 'attractive, excited young women with full thighs and buttocks, whose bodies are heated from the effect of incense, saffron and youth, banish the cold'.[37] In the hotter part of the

down typologies matching the age and kind of heroine with situation and mood: for example, the more graphic depiction of sexual intercourse was deemed appropriate for a woman who was not one's wife (*parakīya*), while the open expression of sexual desire indicated a mature woman. Selby remarks that although the goal of union or reunion is seldom explicitly mentioned, the poems about 'love in separation' acquire tension from the knowledge that the woman will be definitely reunited with her lover; otherwise the rasa evoked would be that of compassion (*karuṇā*). Love poems in Sanskrit move therefore from gain to loss to gain; Selby, *Grow Long*, p. 73; see also Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, *The Absent Traveller. Prākrit Love Poetry from the Gāthāsaptaśatī of Sātavāhana Hāla* (Delhi: Ravi Dayal, 1991).

[34] The dense brevity of the lyric also favoured the development of a system of symbols which Selby has termed a 'poetics of anteriority', where a poet had to choose words 'that had a potential plurality of semiotic referents that existed not in the text as it appeared on the page but somewhere outside of it, or 'anterior' to it'; Selby, *Grow Long*, p. 84.

[35] Also, Selby notes, compared to the vast and varied landscapes of Tamil love poetry, Prakrit poems provide their characters with a much smaller world, mostly domestic or rural. Sanskrit poems speak of a definitely urban environment but also confine the heroine: even the woman who sets out in the night to meet her lover rarely ever succeeds; Selby, *Grow Long*, p. 104. If only purely at the level of (male) artistic representation of female heroines, we can notice that 'the 'feminine' is moved indoors, largely trapped inside the house, and fossilised into the different stock roles articulated in the categories of nayika'; *ibid*., p. 106. The painstaking attention to the female body and to categories of female heroines, it should be noted, contrasts strikingly with the lack of attention to masculinity and male sexuality.

[36] Selby, *Grow Long*.

[37] Vagbhata, quoted in Dominic Wujastyk, *The Roots of Ayurveda: Selections from Sanskrit Medical Writings* (London: Penguin, 1998), p. 266.