




The Philosophical Problem of the Grammatical Gender of Terms such as ‘*puruṣaḥ*’, ‘*citiḥ*’ and ‘*caitanyam*’, as well as the Gender of Terms Denoting Non-Existent Things

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Abstract: The Sanskrit grammarians’ theory of grammatical gender is mentioned for the first time in verses that form part of the *Mahābhāṣya* (composed *circa* 150 BCE). This theory would seem to implicate the three grammatical genders in a broader theory regarding the transformation of matter

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and, as such, is therefore readily applicable to all words referring to concrete objects, be they animate or inanimate. Its application to words referring to abstract things, however, is harder to construe: a small number of terms that refer to the ‘ultimate reality’ or ‘consciousness’, for example ‘*puruṣaḥ*’, ‘*citiḥ*’ and ‘*caitanyaṃ*’, pose a particular problem in this regard. Here, the separate philosophical assertion that the ‘ultimate reality’ is permanent and does not undergo change stands in conflict with the grammatically gendered words (implicated, therefore, in ‘transformation’) used to refer to it. Non-existent things, such as the ‘hare’s horn’ (*śaśaśṛṅgaḥ*), which may also be expressed with terms in different genders, are likewise problematic in this way. In this article, I shall seek to explore these problems more fully before then presenting some solutions as posited by the grammarians themselves. I will start by outlining the grammarians’ theory of grammatical gender and shall then evaluate the solutions relevant sources offer as to why it may be justified for terms such as ‘*puruṣaḥ*’ etc., as well as ‘*śaśaśṛṅgaḥ*’, to also take a grammatical gender. Finally, I will consider how Bhartṛhari (fl. *circa* 5th century CE) comes up with an elegant solution to this problem by resorting to a theory of the Sāṃkhya and Yoga systems of thought.

Keywords: Sanskrit, Philosophy of language, Bhartṛhari’s Vākyapadiya, Patañjali’s Mahābhāṣya, Sāṃkhya/Yoga

Introduction

In this article I investigate the philosophical problem presented for the traditional Sanskrit grammarians by the grammatical gender of terms referring to the ‘ultimate reality’ – terms such as ‘*puruṣaḥ*’ (masculine), ‘*citiḥ*’ (feminine) and ‘*caitanyaṃ*’ (neuter). There are of course other words we could also add to these three, for example ‘*ātma*’ or ‘*brahma*’. Bhartṛhari (fl. *circa* 5th century CE¹) – a Sanskrit grammarian of the Pāṇinian tradition whose work I will discuss in this article – considers all these terms to be synonyms;² we can therefore say that, for him,

1 Coward and Kunjunni Raja 1990, 121. The 5th century is widely accepted as the approximate date of Bhartṛhari. Sankaranarayanan and Kazanas, however, believe that Bhartṛhari lived around 300 CE (Sankaranarayanan 2006, 306; Kazanas 2007, 15–16).

2 This is at least the case within the framework of his gender discourse. But, of course, in a different context, for example in the opening verses of the

‘*puruṣaḥ*’, ‘*citiḥ*’ and ‘*caitanyam*’ are just different names, or ‘verbal handles’, for what we may call the ‘ultimate reality’.³

Throughout the history of philosophy, different systems of thought have had different conceptions of the ‘ultimate reality’. The first person within the early Sanskrit grammatical tradition to discuss this topic, at least implicitly, is Patañjali (fl. 2nd century BCE⁴). It seems that for him, *vāk* – divine speech – is such an ‘ultimate reality’.⁵ Patañjali belongs to the Vedic tradition in which Ṛgvedic poets associate *vāk* with *brahma* and the Upaniṣads speculate about *ātmā* or *brahma*, a hidden reality behind perceptible reality; a supreme reality or truth.⁶ This is, ultimately, a monist world view: the *ātmā* or *brahma* is one, indivisible and all-pervasive. Bhartṛhari, by comparison, sets out at the beginning of his *Vākyapadīya* that for him, the *brahma* is the ‘highest reality’. There is nothing but *brahma*; it is one and indivisible and, for Bhartṛhari, the Veda is a means for reaching the *brahma*.⁷

However, as Bhartṛhari also points out, Vedic speculations do in fact provide support for dualist, as well as monist or non-dualist, systems.⁸

Vākyapadīya, which are essential to the understanding of Bhartṛhari’s thought, his preferred term to refer to the ‘ultimate reality’ is ‘*brahma*’.

- 3 I borrow the term ‘verbal handle’ from Diwakar Acharya. It is his translation of the term ‘*vācārambhaṇam*’. See Acharya 2016. See also Olivelle 1996, 149–50.
- 4 Cardona 1976, 263 sq.
- 5 See, for example, Coward and Kunjunn Raja, p. 44–45.
- 6 These terms are polyvalent and have a history in Vedic texts before the Upaniṣads. Both ‘*ātmā*’ and ‘*brahma*’ are attested from the Ṛgveda. EWA, s.v. *ātmān-* notes ‘*Hauch*’, ‘*Seele*’, ‘*Selbst*’ (cf. KEWA ‘breath’, ‘soul’, ‘self’) and EWA s.v. *brāhman-* ‘*Formung*’, ‘*Gestaltung*’, ‘*Formulierung (der Wahrheit)*’ (KEWA does not include any English renderings, but the EWA entries may be rendered by ‘shaping’, ‘composition’, ‘formulation (of the truth)’). For more meanings, including examples, see PW 1, 621 and 5, 135. The development of the term ‘*ātmā*’ is perhaps particularly interesting. Acharya (2013) has shown that it made its way into the *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad* to replace the term ‘*puruṣaḥ*’ which is associated with the *brahma*. This passage (BĀU II.2.23), however, as Acharya argues, must be considered a later addition.
- 7 VP 1.1–5. See below, Part 2.
- 8 VP 1.8: *tasyārthavādarūpāṇi nīśritāḥ svavikalpajāḥ / ekatvināṃ dvaitināṃ ca pravādā bahudhāgatāḥ* // Trans. Subramania Iyer 1965, 11: “Based on the explanatory comments and similar passages, conflicting views have been set forth by

In a non-dual system, since *ātmā* or *brahma* is all-pervasive, it is present in any form of being, even in pots, clothes etc. In a dualist system, by contrast, it stands distinct from perceptible, empirical reality.

It is specifically the dualist systems of early Sāṃkhya and Yoga that appear to have influenced both Bhartṛhari's, and possibly also Patañjali's, discourses on gender.⁹ In the dualist Sāṃkhya and Yoga, there is, on the one hand, the 'empirical reality' or 'primary substance', *prakṛtiḥ*, and, on the other hand, *puruṣaḥ*, the 'ultimate reality'. The former is made of the three 'constituent or essential qualities', namely *sattvam* ('having brightness as its characteristic'), *rajaḥ* ('having action as its characteristic') and *tamaḥ* ('having stasis as its characteristic').¹⁰ Because of the presence of

the exponents of Monism and Dualism according to their own taste." For other translations, see Biardeau 1964, 37; Rau 2002, 6.

9 As to Patañjali, we do not find much evidence in the *Mahābhāṣya* that would help us to determine which early form of Sāṃkhya and Yoga he may have been familiar with. The traditional view, with Bhartṛhari in the first instance, is that there is no contradiction between Patañjali's explanation of the grammarians' 'own theory' of gender (which I will briefly discuss in Part 1) and the worldviews of Sāṃkhya and Yoga. Nāgeśa associates Patañjali, the grammarian, with Patañjali, the *ācāryaḥ* of the *śeśvarasāṃkhyāḥ*, the 'Sāṃkhya with God', i.e. Yoga. As to Bhartṛhari, it is not clear whether he knows Īśvarakṛṣṇa's *Sāṃkhyakārikā* in the form handed down to us, which, according to Potter and Larson (cf. Larson and Bhattacharya 1987, 149), should be dated to 350–450 CE but, according to Frauwallner (1992, 95), to 450–500 CE. However, Bhartṛhari may have known Sāṃkhya texts that are now lost, such as the *Ṣaṣṭitantra*. On the latter, see, among others, Schrader 1914; Larson 1979, 135–38; Larson and Bhattacharya 1987, 124–28. Later commentators, for example Helārāja (fl. 10th or 11th century CE) – one of the commentators of Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* – even clearly state that the gender theory as it is described in the *Mahābhāṣya* is also accepted in the Sāṃkhya system. Cf. Helārāja *ad* VP 3.13.27 (ed. Subramania Iyer 1973, p. 145, l. 7). Modern scholars have discussed whether Patañjali was familiar with Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika, for instance in the framework of research concerning Patañjali's notion of substance. Wezler (1985) analyses Patañjali's "*guṇasamdrāvo dravyam*" and possible affiliation with Sāṃkhya in detail. For a more general account, see Halbfass 1992, 90–91.

10 I borrow all these glosses from the author of the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya* under YS 2.18: *prakāśaśīlam sattvam / kriyāśīlam rajaḥ / sthitiśīlam tama iti* / However, Simonsen's (1970, 193) observations are worth citing here: "If we confine ourselves to the physical world, we can say that *sattva* is the principle of that which is bright and light, *tamas* of that which is dark and heavy, and *rajas* is the principle of

rajah, there is always activity in everything. The *puruṣaḥ*, in contrast to *prakṛtiḥ*, is one, inactive and does not change; it is the ‘enjoyer’ or the ‘experiencer’ of *prakṛtiḥ*. In the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* we find the beautiful analogy of *puruṣaḥ* being the spectator of the performance of *prakṛtiḥ* on stage, like in a theatre.¹¹ Another important distinction that we will see in one of Bhartṛhari’s verses is ‘conscious’ and ‘unconscious’: *puruṣaḥ* is ‘conscious’ (*cetana*), *prakṛtiḥ* is ‘unconscious’ (*acetana*).¹²

Putting to one side the complexities arising from these dualist approaches to construing the ‘ultimate reality’ and its opposite, the common feature that different Sanskrit traditions attribute to the ‘ultimate reality’ of both monist and dualist systems is ‘permanence’: *puruṣaḥ*, *ātmā* etc. are always ‘permanent’, ‘eternal’ (*nitya*) and, crucially for our purposes, do not transform.¹³ However, the meaning of grammatical gender is, according to the early Sanskrit grammarians, ‘coming forth’ (*pravṛttiḥ*), that is to say, ‘transformation’. In this view, each of the three grammatical genders reveals a different form of transformation in the designated object. The three transformations are: ‘increase’, associated with the masculine gender; ‘decrease’, associated with the feminine gender; and ‘continuous existence’, associated with the neuter gender. So, the question arises: if gender entails transformation, how is it possible that terms expressing the ‘ultimate reality’, which does not change, can also have gender?

A similar philosophical problem arises for the grammarians in the case of terms denoting things which do not, or cannot, exist in perceptible reality. The Sanskrit tradition often uses the ‘hare’s horn’, *śaśaśṛṅgaḥ*,

movement. On the psychical plane: *sattva* – serenity, knowledge, *tamas* – dullness, sluggishness, *rajas* – unrest, passion. The constituents always appear together, they can never be entirely isolated, but a powerful preponderance of the one or the other is possible in a given situation.”

11 SK 59: *raṅgasya darśayitvā nivartate nartakī yathā nṛtyāt / puruṣasya tathātmānam prakāśya vinivartate prakṛtiḥ* // Trans. Simonsson 1970, 190: “Just as the dancing-girl after having given her performance in front of the audience retires from the dance, thus *Prakṛti* retires after having shown herself to *Puruṣa*.”

12 We see this distinction, for example, in verse VP 3.14.326 (ed. Rau) which I discuss below on p. 84.

13 There is, however, the Sanskrit tradition of the Jains, who consider that the *caitanyam* also transforms. See, for example, Qvarnström 2012.

as a prime example of these, but many others are mentioned too, including ‘mirage’ (*mṛgatr̥ṣṇā*), ‘sky-flower’ (*khapuṣpam*), the ‘barren woman’s son’ (*vandhyāputrah*) etc. The hare’s horn and all these other mental constructs may be named, but it is accepted widely that they do not exist. So, again, there is a question: how can something that does not exist transform?

In Part 1, I give a short overview of the early grammarians’ theory of gender.¹⁴ Although this theory remains quite obscure, we can at least see briefly the most important terms and notions Patañjali uses in his discussion of the topic in the *Mahābhāṣya*. These are crucial to the understanding of the problem concerning the grammatical gender of terms such as ‘*puruṣaḥ*’, ‘*citiḥ*’ and ‘*caitanyam*’. I shall then analyse how the same discussion is taken up more than five centuries later by Bhartṛhari in his *Vākyapadīya*.

In Part 2, I present the explanation and solutions Bhartṛhari provides concerning the specific philosophical problem as to why ‘*puruṣaḥ*’, ‘*citiḥ*’ and ‘*caitanyam*’ can also have gender. I shall analyse a series of verses of the *Vṛttisamuddeśa*. The *Vṛttisamuddeśa* is an extensive chapter in the third part of the *Vākyapadīya* in which Bhartṛhari treats many different grammatical topics, gender being only one of them.¹⁵ I will show that Bhartṛhari draws on Sāṃkhya and Yoga theory to resolve the problem concerning terms such as ‘*puruṣaḥ*’ etc. Furthermore, I will argue that Bhartṛhari’s verses read as an insightful commentary of Patañjali’s gender discourse and add an ingenious solution to this problem.

In conclusion, I briefly comment on Bhartṛhari’s reception of Patañjali’s gender discourse, as well as the wider implications of the grammarians’ doctrine. I suggest that the two major implications are the incompleteness of the word and the ineffability of the real ‘ultimate reality’.

14 I will include a comprehensive discussion in my thesis. In my forthcoming article “The Neuter Gender in Words and Things: Patañjali and Bhartṛhari on its Doctrinal, Semantic and Ontological Aspects”, I also include a more detailed analysis since this is necessary for the reader to understand the discussion of the neuter by these two authors.

15 For a general study of the *Vṛttisamuddeśa*, see Chaturvedi 2001.

1. Short outline of the grammarians' theory of gender

The first gender theory develops possibly in the time period between Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (circa 500 BCE¹⁶) and Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* (2nd century BCE¹⁷). However, our only witness of it is Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* itself, where Patañjali quotes the theory in the form of a *śloka-vārttikam* under the Pāṇinian rules *sarūpāṇām ekaśeṣa ekavibhaktau* (A 1.2.64) and *striyām* (A 4.1.3).¹⁸ Whilst several modern scholars have studied rule A 1.2.64 along with parts of the commentary it has received by Kātyāyana (fl. circa 3rd century BCE¹⁹), the *vārttikakāra*, and subsequent explanations by Patañjali, rule A 4.1.3 has attracted less scholarly attention.²⁰ In Kātyāyana's extensive comments on A 1.2.64, in which he raises complex

16 See, for example, Deshpande 1979, 3; Jamison and Witzel 1992, 2; Cardona 1997, 1. Von Hinüber and Bronkhorst following von Hinüber, however, advocate for a date around 350 BCE (v. Hinüber 1990, 34; Bronkhorst 2007, 177). Von Hinüber assumes that there is evidence of coinage in the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. In response, Cardona (2013, 152–77) shows that the relevant terms do not refer to coins, and therefore cannot be used as evidence for von Hinüber's dating. Cardona concludes – based on other evidence – that Pāṇini may have lived as early as 500 BCE and no later than 350 BCE (ibid., 167).

17 Cardona 1976, 263 sq.

18 M I, 245, 24 and M II, 197, 27. As to the term '*śloka-vārttikam*', it is worth noting, however, that Patañjali himself does not use this term. Moreover, traditional scholars, for example Helārāja, tend to make no clear distinction between these *vārttika*-like statements and Patañjali's own commentary. After having quoted a *śloka-vārttikam*, Helārāja adds, for example, "*iti bhāṣye varṇitam*". Cf. Helārāja *ad VP* 3.13.1–2 (ed. Subramania Iyer 1973, p. 132, l. 12).

19 Cardona 1976, 267. Other scholars, for example Deshpande and Scharfe have suggested different dates. According to Deshpande (1979, 7; 1993, 17), Kātyāyana composed his work around 300 BCE. Scharfe (1977, 138) suggests a date after 250 BCE.

20 For translations of rule A 1.2.64, see, for example, Böhtlingk 1887, 19; Katre 1987, 48; Renou 1966, vol. 1, 38. The *Mahābhāṣya* under A 1.2.64 has been translated into English by Scharf (1996), into German by Strauss (1927b), and into French, including Kaiyaṭa's and Nāgeśa's commentaries, by Filliozat (1980). As to rule A 4.1.3, for translation see, for example, Böhtlingk 1887, 149; Katre 1989, 355; Renou 1966, vol. 1, 282. Strauss (1927a) has also translated the *Mahābhāṣya* under A 4.1.3 into German; and Feron's unpublished French translation also includes the commentaries by Kaiyaṭa and Nāgeśa.

issues, he mentions the important controversy between Vājapyāyana and Vyāḍi as to whether words denote the ‘generic form’ (*ākṛtiḥ*) or the ‘individual substance’ (*dravyam*).²¹ Subsequently, Kātyāyana also brings up the question of gender.²² Patañjali comments on Kātyāyana’s statement and introduces the quotations in verse form containing the grammarians’ theory of gender. These verses have not yet been attributed to any author. Kielhorn, who developed criteria to identify quotations within Patañjali’s *Mahābhāṣya*, does not attribute them to Kātyāyana.²³

The general contexts in which Patañjali mentions the grammarians’ ‘own theory’ of gender under the two rules – *sarūpāṇām ekaśeṣa ekavibhaktau* (A 1.2.64) and *striyām* (A 4.1.3) – are different. Yet in both places he states that the grammarians cannot accept the ‘*laukikaṃ liṅgam*’.²⁴ This phrase literally means ‘worldly gender’, but it may also be paraphrased as the ‘common understanding of gender’. In his introductory remarks under the rule A 4.1.3, Patañjali quotes a verse which formulates a ‘common understanding of gender’: we recognise a female being on the basis of characteristic signs, such as female breasts and hair; a male due to characteristic signs such as male body hair; and a being whose characteristic signs are neither those of the male or the female we recognise as being neuter.²⁵ Such a description of the genders might be valid in the world, but Patañjali says that it does not work in grammar.

21 M 1, 242, 10 (vt. 35) and M 1, 244, 8 (vt. 45). For a more detailed discussion, see, for example, Matilal 1971, 106–09; Matilal 2005, 76–79 and 82–89.

22 M 1, 245, 6.

23 For Kielhorn’s most extensive study of the quotations within Patañjali’s *Mahābhāṣya*, see Kielhorn 1876. Additional studies are, for example, Kielhorn 1886a and 1886b.

24 M I, 245, 21–22; M II, 197, 25: *tasmān na vaiyākaraṇaiḥ śakyaṃ laukikaṃ liṅgam āsthātum /*

25 M II, 196, 4–5: *stanakeśavatī strī syāl lomaśaḥ puruṣaḥ smṛtaḥ / ubhayor antaraṃ yac ca tadabhāve napuṃsakam //* “The being characterised by breasts and long head hair is feminine, the being characterised by abundant body hair is known as masculine; and the being similar to both [i.e., in terms of being characterised by signs], provided that there is absence of ‘that’ [i.e., both feminine and masculine signs], is [known as] *napuṃsakam*.” The suffix called *matUP* (*-vat*, *-mat*) indicates a relation: y related to x, y pertaining to x, y in or on x. Moreover, depending on the context, the grammarians consider that this suffix has additional nuances of meaning. Patañjali quotes a verse that enumerates seven

In the long and complex discussion of rule A 1.2.64, Patañjali arrives by a different way at the conclusion that the grammarians cannot accept the ‘common understanding of gender’. The broader framework of this discussion is his detailed examination of the two views mentioned above: words denote either 1) the ‘generic form’ (*ākṛtiḥ*); or 2) the ‘individual substance’ (*dravyam*). Patañjali examines the first view regarding its compatibility with the fact that words have gender and number. As to their gender, he states that a class preserves its gender. This means that a term denoting a certain class does not change gender – its gender is fixed. Most terms referring to a class have only one gender while individuals belonging to that class may have different natural genders.²⁶ The grammatical gender might even be in contradiction with the natural gender of the individuals. Patañjali then states that, therefore, the grammarians cannot accept the ‘common understanding of gender’.

In order to corroborate this conclusion, Patañjali now quotes a statement that outlines the grammarians’ ‘own theory’ of gender.

M I, 245, 24 (*śloka-vārttikam*)
*saṁstyānaprasavau liṅgam āstheyau*²⁷

Samstyānam (coagulation) and *prasavaḥ* (setting in motion) should be acknowledged as [the meaning of grammatical] gender.

such meanings in his commentary under the rule A 5.2.94 (M II, 393, 15–16). In the examples such as breasts and hair, the *matUP* suffix may be associated with *bhūmā*, ‘abundance’, and *atiśayaḥ*, ‘pre-eminence’. A similar idea is expressed by *lomaśaḥ* containing the suffix *-śa-*, which also has the sense of *matUP*. I have chosen to render these additional meanings, although, of course, not all women have long hair and not all men have abundant body hair. Yet, the authors of this verse mention a general, noticeable tendency that male and female bodies are somehow distinct. For a translation of this verse into German, see Strauss 1927a, 85; and into French, see Angot 1993–94, 27 and Feron (unpublished), 92.

26 Kaiyaṭa gives the following examples to illustrate this: the phrase “*gāva imāḥ*” refers to a group of cows and bulls, even though the feminine grammatical gender is used; however, the phrase “*brāhmaṇā ime*” may refer to a group of male and female brahmins, although the masculine gender is used.

27 The parallel passage under the rule A 4.1.3 (M II, 197, 27) reads: *saṁstyānaprasavau liṅgam āstheyau svakṛtāntataḥ*. “In our own theory, *saṁstyānam* (coagulation) and *prasavaḥ* (setting in motion) should be acknowledged as [the meaning of grammatical] gender.”

In his commentary, Patañjali always provides a gloss after each quotation, often by replacing one term by a synonym. In this case, he just repeats the quotation to indicate that he has given a citation.²⁸ He then discusses the meaning of the terms ‘*saṁstyānam*’ (coagulation) and ‘*prasavaḥ*’ (‘setting in motion’) within and beyond grammar. The gist of his explanation is that, in grammar, *saṁstyānam* is something like ‘decrease’ and *prasavaḥ* means ‘increase’. The grammarians associate *saṁstyānam* with the feminine and *prasavaḥ* with the masculine gender. The neuter gender is not mentioned in this outline of the grammarians’ ‘own theory’ of gender, and it is not until the *Vākyaṇḍīya* that Bhartṛhari analyses more extensively the semantic and ontological meaning that the grammarians associate with the neuter.²⁹

The core idea of the grammarians’ ‘own theory’ of gender, as Patañjali describes it in his *Mahābhāṣya*, is the association of the feminine and the masculine gender with two modes of transformation in ‘things’. In the passage below, Patañjali mentions the key notion of *pravṛttiḥ*, and it becomes clearer that it implies transformation of matter.

M I, 246, 2–7

- *styānam pravṛttiś ca /*
- *kasya punaḥ styānam strī pravṛttir vā pumān /*
- *guṇānām / keṣām / śabdaspārśarūparasagandhānām / sarvās ca punar mūrtaya evamātmikāḥ saṁstyānaprasavaguṇāḥ śabdaspārśarūparasagandhavatyāḥ / pravṛttiḥ khalv api nityā / na hi iha kaś cit api svasminn ātmani muhūrtam apy avatiṣṭhate / vardhate vā yāvad anena vardhitavyam apacayena vā yujyate / tac cobhayaṁ sarvatra /*
- [In grammar *strī* and *pumān* mean] ‘coagulation’ (*styānam*³⁰) and ‘coming forth’ (*pravṛttiḥ*).

28 M I, 245, 25; M II, 197, 28: *saṁstyānaprasavau liṅgam āstheyau*.

29 I analyse the doctrinal, semantic and ontological meaning of the neuter as Patañjali and Bhartṛhari discuss it in the *Mahābhāṣya* and the *Vākyaṇḍīya* in more detail in my thesis as well as in an article due to be published in 2022.

30 Halāyudha’s *Abhidhānaratnamālā* (10th century CE) gives the term ‘*styānam*’ together with synonyms in the second half of verse II.276 (ed. Jośī): *śīnam styānam śṛtam pakvaṁ vilīnaṁ drutam ucyate* / The first term, ‘*śīnam*’ (‘coagulated’, ‘thick’, etc.) justifies a rendering of ‘*styānam*’ by ‘coagulation’. Modern dictionaries, for

- But of what is *strī* the ‘coagulation’? Or *pumān* the ‘coming forth’?
- [The answer is, it is ‘coagulation’ or ‘coming forth’] of the ‘constituent qualities’ (*guṇāḥ*). Of which? Of ‘sound’, ‘touch’, ‘colour’, ‘taste’, ‘smell’. And indeed, all things are essentially made up of these, that is the ‘constituent qualities’ related to ‘coagulation’ and ‘setting in motion’, and have ‘sound’, ‘touch’, ‘colour’, ‘taste’, ‘smell’. But ‘coming forth’ (*pravṛttiḥ*) is also permanent, because in this world nothing stands still in its own self even for a moment. Either it grows as much as it must grow, or it is bound to decrease. And both of these are everywhere.

Patañjali glosses the terms used in the *śloka-vārttikam* (M I, 245, 24), ‘*saṁstyānam*’, by ‘*styānam*’ (‘coagulation’, ‘increase in magnitude’, ‘thickness’, etc.) and ‘*prasavaḥ*’ by ‘*pravṛttiḥ*’ (‘coming forth’, ‘moving onwards’, etc.). He then says that *styānam* (or *saṁstyānam*) and *pravṛttiḥ* (or *prasavaḥ*) are related to the five ‘constituent qualities’ (*guṇāḥ*), namely *śabdaḥ* etc. And all things are essentially made up of these five *guṇāḥ*. The same five ‘qualities’ are mentioned in the Upaniṣads, although not always in the same sequence. Patañjali then makes a statement about *pravṛttiḥ* that is key for our discussion. To paraphrase this passage: ‘transformation’ in the world – the ‘coming forth’ (*pravṛttiḥ*) – is permanent (or, at least, we perceive it to be so). Things do not ‘stand still’; they come into being, grow and disappear. In other words, they undergo change and transformation. Patañjali seems to allude to Yāska’s enumeration of six ‘modifications’ in his *Nirukta* (composed probably around 500 BCE³¹).³² Both

example, Böhtlingk and Roth’s Petersburger Dictionary (PW, s.v. *styāna* (vol. 7, p. 1275); s.v. *saṁstyāna* (vol. 7, p. 1815)) gives ‘*Gerinnen*’, ‘*Verdichtung*’ for both.

31 Sarup (1920–27, part 1: 1920, 54) holds the view that Yāska should be dated no later than 500 BCE. Cardona (1976, 273) discusses several points of view regarding the dating of Yāska compared to Pāṇini but concludes that the question cannot be resolved. Kahrs (1998, 13–14) accepts Cardona’s view. More recently, Cardona (2013, 99–100, fn. 95) writes that even though he considers that there is not enough evidence for an absolute determination, he is more inclined to accept that Yāska predates Pāṇini.

32 Nir. 1.2: *ṣaḍbhāvavikārā bhavanti vārṣyāyaṇiḥ / jāyate ’sti vipariṇamate vardhante ’pakṣiyate vinaśyatīti* / Trans. Sarup 1920–27, part 2: 1921, 6: “According to

types of transformation, *saṁstyānam* and *prasavaḥ*, occur everywhere, in all things. Patañjali therefore seems to suggest that in the realm of *pravṛttiḥ*, there are these two opposing forces.

Since the grammarians postulate that *pravṛttiḥ* is the general characteristic of gender and, more specifically, that the three types of transformation are the meaning of the three genders, the question is now: how can *puruṣaḥ*, which is not a product of *prakṛtiḥ* and does not change, be associated with transformation through grammatical gender? Similarly, how can a thing that does not exist, for example a 'hare's horn' (*śaśa-viṣānam*), be subjected to transformation? Patañjali does not address the question as to how it is possible that *ātmā* or *puruṣaḥ*, which do not transform, may also be associated with transformation through grammatical gender. Bhartṛhari is the first author of the Pāṇinian grammatical tradition after Patañjali to deal with this issue in the third section of his *Vākyapadīya*, as I shall now go on to explore.

2. Bhartṛhari's solution to the problem pertaining to terms such as 'puruṣaḥ' etc.

Bhartṛhari takes up Patañjali's explanations of the grammarians' 'own theory' of gender in both his *Liṅga-* and *Vṛttisamuddeśa*. In the former, we find a concise analysis of this theory as well as other perspectives on gender. It is in a short section of the *Vṛttisamuddeśa* where Bhartṛhari addresses the problem concerning the grammatical gender of terms such as 'puruṣaḥ', 'citiḥ' and 'caitanyaṁ'. It is important to note, however, that the broader context of his discussion is Patañjali's extensive commentary on Kātyāyana's comments as regards the Pāṇinian rule *sarūpāṇām ekaśeṣa ekavibhaktau* (A 1.2.64). As I mentioned in Part 1, the *Mahābhāṣya* under this rule is extensive and contains many complex issues. As we shall see, Bhartṛhari therefore treats our problem concerning the grammati-

Vārṣyāyaṇi, there are six modifications of *becoming*: genesis, existence, alteration, growth, decay, and destruction." Kaiyaṭa, commenting on Patañjali's statement, clearly states that the meaning of the term 'pravṛttiḥ' in this context is 'pariṇāmaḥ'. See *Pradīpa*, ed. Vedavrata, vol. 3, 448–49. Helārāja – whose commentary of the *Vākyapadīya* probably predates Kaiyaṭa's commentary of the *Mahābhāṣya* – also glosses the term 'pravṛttiḥ' by the term 'pariṇāmaḥ'. See ed. Subramania Iyer 1973, p. 299, l. 11.

cal gender of terms such as ‘*puruṣaḥ*’ etc. and its solution as a tangential topic within this broader, highly complex framework.

In verse 322 of the *Vṛttisamuddēśa*, Bhartṛhari concisely summarises the grammarians’ ‘own theory’ of gender, as Patañjali describes it in the passage discussed above. Bhartṛhari explicitly mentions that *pravṛtṭiḥ* is said to be the ‘general characteristic’ of gender.

VP 3.14.322 (ed. Rau)

*pravṛtṭir iti sāmānyam lakṣaṇam tasya kathyate /
āvirbhāvas tirobhāvaḥ sthitiś cety atha bhidyate //*

‘Transformation’ (*pravṛtṭiḥ*) is said to be its general characteristic.

It is differentiated into ‘appearance’ (*āvirbhāvaḥ*), ‘disappearance’ (*tirobhāvaḥ*) and ‘continuous existence’ (*sthitih*).³³

The term ‘*liṅgam*’, ‘gender’, itself is not mentioned in the verse, but Bhartṛhari refers to it by the genitive pronoun *tasya*.³⁴ To paraphrase this: gender has ‘coming forth’ (*pravṛtṭiḥ*), that is to say, ‘transformation’, as its general characteristic. ‘Transformation’ is differentiated into three

33 My translation slightly deviates from Subramania Iyer’s (1974, 273) which reads as follows: “The general characteristic of gender is said to be activity (*pravṛtṭi*) and it is diversified into appearance, disappearance and stay.” (This verse corresponds to verse VP 3.14.321 in his translation, corresponding to his edition published in 1973.) Subramania Iyer renders the term ‘*pravṛtṭiḥ*’ by ‘activity’. Although we find this rendering in any standard Sanskrit-English dictionary, such as Apte or MW, I suggest that translating the term ‘*pravṛtṭiḥ*’ by ‘transformation’ is preferable in this context. This follows Patañjali’s discussion of this term in his gender discourse (see above Part 1) as well as traditional commentaries on it, as I mentioned above in fn. 32. Furthermore, Rob Williams has pointed out to me that in Standard British English, ‘stay’ is not commonly used as a noun in this context and could be replaced, for example, by ‘stasis’. Subramania Iyer has translated the term ‘*sthitih*’ by ‘continuity’ in VP 3.13.13. See below, fn. 35.

34 Bhartṛhari uses the term ‘*liṅgam*’ in his previous verse VP 3.14.321 (ed. Rau): *sāmānyam ākṛtir bhāvo jātir ity atra laukikam / liṅgam na sambhavaty eva tenānyat pariḡrhyate //* Trans. Subramania Iyer 1974, 272 (verse VP 3.14.320 in his translation and edition): “The worldly conception of gender cannot apply to what is denoted by words like *sāmānya*, *ākṛti*, *bhāva* and *jāti*. Therefore, another has been adopted.”

modes, each corresponding to a gender: ‘appearance’ (*āvirbhāvaḥ*), ‘disappearance’ (*tirobhāvaḥ*) and ‘continuous existence’ (*sthitih*).³⁵ Bhartṛhari makes a clear reference to the passage of Patañjali’s commentary on *pravr̥t̥tiḥ* (M I, 246, 2–7, see above); however, he adds the notion of *sthitih*, which, according to him, the grammarians associate with the neuter.

In the following verse, Bhartṛhari relates *pravr̥t̥tiḥ*, expressed by gender, to speech in general.

VP 3.14.323 (ed. Rau)

*pravr̥ttimantaḥ sarve ’rthās tisṛbhiś ca pravr̥ttibhiḥ /
satataṃ na viyujyante vācaś caivātra saṃbhavaḥ //*

Moreover, all things, being subject to transformation, are never unjoined from the three transformations. And speech is [only] possible as regards to them.³⁶

Bhartṛhari reenforces the role of the three types of transformation (*pravr̥t̥tiḥ*) in things and its relation to speech: no ‘nameable’ object or ‘meaning’ can ever be separated from the three ‘transformations’ (i.e., *āvirbhāvaḥ*, *tirobhāvaḥ* and *sthitih*), and speech is possible only as regards to them. Bhartṛhari does not explicitly use the term ‘*padārthaḥ*’ (an ‘object expressed by a word’ or a ‘meaning expressed by a word’) in this verse. However, we understand that he refers to ‘nameable’ objects by the term ‘*arthaḥ*’, since this is where speech is possible. All ‘nameable’ objects always transform. Therefore, the three modes of transformation are always present in every being and thing.

35 We find the same triad in verse VP 3.13.13: *āvirbhāvas tirobhāvaḥ sthitīś cety anapāyinaḥ / dharmā mūr̥tiṣu sarvāsu liṅgatvenānudar̥śitāḥ //* Trans. Subramania Iyer 1974, 111: “The manifestation, disappearance and continuity are eternal properties found in all things and they are what is called gender.”

36 Compare Subramania Iyer’s translation (1974, 273; verse VP 3.14.322 in his translation and edition): “All objects are active and they are never devoid of the three kinds of activities and it is such objects that words express.” Again, Subramania Iyer uses the term ‘active’ to render the term ‘*pravr̥ttimantaḥ*’. As I have said earlier, I do not think this is the appropriate rendering here. Additionally, contrary to Subramania Iyer’s understanding, I think the ‘*ca*’ in the first half of the verse connects this verse with the previous one. I therefore render it by ‘moreover’.

In the next verse, Bhartṛhari introduces the problem pertaining to terms such as ‘*puruṣaḥ*’ etc. However, he proceeds immediately to its solution rather than raising it as a problem.³⁷

VP 3.14.324 (ed. Rau)

*yaś cāpravṛttidharmārthaś citirūpeṇa gr̥hyate /
anuyātivā so ’nyeṣāṃ pravṛttīr viśvagāśrayāḥ //*

And that which does not have transformation as its feature, [and is] experienced as having the form of consciousness, follows, as it were, the others’ all-pervasive transformations.³⁸

In this verse, Bhartṛhari begins his explanation of why something that is not subjected to *pravṛttiḥ* can also have gender. The compound ‘*āpravṛttidharmārthaḥ*’ (‘the object the feature of which is not being the subject of transformation’) is a *bahuvrīhiḥ* and qualifies *ātmā* or *puruṣaḥ* which is ‘experienced’ as a form of consciousness. The passive structure without agent does not tell us who the agent of this experience is. It is unlikely that Bhartṛhari refers to the average person undertaking their ordinary business. Nevertheless, the Sanskrit tradition more broadly does elsewhere assume that some people with enhanced perception, yogis for ex-

37 In his introduction to verse VP 3.14.324 (ed. Rau), Helārāja (ed. Subramania Iyer 1973, p. 300, l. 13–16) clearly states the problem and, thereby, contextualises the solution that Bhartṛhari provides: *tatra prakṛtes triguṇāyā rajasānavaratam astu pravṛttiśīlatā; tadvikārāṇāṃ ca bhogyātmakānām / yas tu bhoktā puruṣaś cetanaḥ, so ’tyantavidharmā bhogyajātān nirguṇaḥ prakṛtim anubhavan katham ātmā caitanyam citir iti līṅgaviśeṣaniyatābhīdhānaviśayatām anubhavatīty āśaṅkyāha* [“*yaś cāpravṛttidharmārthaś...*”]. “This being so (*tatra*), we accept that *prakṛtiḥ*, made up of three constituent qualities, as well as its products – [both *prakṛtiḥ* and its products] to be enjoyed – have the quality of incessantly being prone to transformation due to *rajaḥ*. But how does the enjoyer, *puruṣaḥ*, the sentient being – the characteristics of which are completely different from all things to be enjoyed, [and] which is beyond constituent qualities [i.e., *sattvam*, *rajaḥ*, and *tamaḥ*], experiencing *prakṛtiḥ* – become associated with expressions that are invariably connected to a particular gender such as ‘*ātmā*’, ‘*caitanyam*’, ‘*citiḥ*’? Having anticipated this doubt, [Bhartṛhari] says [verse VP 3.14.324 (ed. Rau)].”

38 Compare Subramania Iyer’s translation (1974, 274; verse VP 3.14.323 in his translation and edition): “As to the entity which is devoid of all activity and is understood as consciousness it seems to follow, as it were, the multiple activities of others.”

ample, can have a direct experience of the ‘ultimate reality’; we ought therefore to assume that this is what Bhartṛhari implies by using a passive structure here.³⁹ We may then say that it is the yogi who experiences ‘*puruṣaḥ*’ as a ‘form of consciousness’. This ‘*puruṣaḥ*’ follows, as it were, the ‘*pravṛttiḥ*’ of others, that is to say, other objects which have ‘*pravṛttiḥ*’ as their feature.

The compound ‘*viśvagāśrayāḥ*’ (‘having a support everywhere’, which amounts to being ‘all-pervasive’) poses a logical problem in this verse. The term qualifies the ‘transformations’, but we would expect it to qualify *puruṣaḥ*, since only *puruṣaḥ* is truly all-pervasive. Nāgeśa, when commenting on Kaiyaṭa’s quotation of this verse in his *Pradīpa*, mentions both readings, ‘*viśvagāśrayaḥ*’ and ‘*viśvagāśrayāḥ*’, but dismisses the latter as incoherent and repetitive.⁴⁰ If we adopt the reading *viśvagāśrayaḥ* – which I think is preferable – we may translate the verse as follows: “And that which does not have transformation as its feature, [and is] experienced as having the form of consciousness, the all-pervasive [*ātmā* or *puruṣaḥ*] follows, as it were, the others’ transformations.”

Bhartṛhari does not mention the reason as to why the *puruṣaḥ* seems to follow the *pravṛttiḥ* of other things. He presupposes familiarity with a Sāṃkhya and Yoga theory regarding the functioning of the mind.⁴¹

39 This is also Nāgeśa’s opinion, which he states in his commentary of Kaiyaṭa’s *Pradīpa*. Kaiyaṭa quotes verses VP 3.14.322–26 in his commentary. Nāgeśa therefore also comments upon certain terms of these verses. Commenting on the verb *grhyate*, he states (*Uddyota*, ed. Bhārgavaśāstri, vol. 4, p. 24, col. 2, l. 20): *grhyate yogibhir iti śeṣaḥ* / “Experienced, that is to say, [experienced] by yogis” or, more literally: “[to complete the passive structure with the verb] *grhyate*, [the term] ‘by yogis’ remains [to be supplied].”

40 *Uddyota*, ed. Bhārgavaśāstri, vol. 4, p. 24, col. 2, l. 21–22. According to the available print editions of Kaiyaṭa’s quotations of VP 3.14.324 (ed. Rau) in his *Pradīpa*, his reading is ‘*viśvagāśrayaḥ*’, not ‘*viśvagāśrayāḥ*’. Cf. *Pradīpa*, ed. Bhārgavaśāstri, vol. 4, p. 24, col. 1, l. 17; ed. Vedavrata, vol. 3, 449, l. 11.

41 I think it is worth pointing out in this context that Bhartṛhari draws on Sāṃkhya and Yoga theory consistently throughout his gender discourse. In verse VP 3.13.14, for example, he makes a clear reference to the three *guṇāḥ* of Sāṃkhya and Yoga theory by mentioning *sattvam*, etc. VP 3.13.14 reads: *sarva-mūrtyātmabhūtānāṃ śabdādināṃ guṇe guṇe / trayāḥ sattvādidharmās te sarvatra samavasthitāḥ* // “The three ‘essential qualities’ (*dharmāḥ*) that are *sattvam* etc. exist everywhere: in each and every *guṇaḥ* consisting in *śabdaḥ* etc., which make

Bhartṛhari will allude to this theory in the verse after next. Since suspension is an important feature of his style, I will follow his line of argument before attempting to unpack the complexities of his theory.

If it is as though the *puruṣaḥ* followed the *pravṛttiḥ* of other things, this *puruṣaḥ* appears to be like any other object that we may perceive in different forms, at different times and, by extension, in different spaces too. Bhartṛhari emphasises, however, that its ‘own form’ is not like this.

VP 3.14.325 (ed. Rau)

*tenāsyā citirūpaṃ ca citikālaś ca bhidyate /
tasya svarūpabhedas tu na kaś cid api vidyate //*

Moreover, through this, it is divided into a ‘form of consciousness’ and a ‘time of consciousness’; but a division of its own form does not exist at all.⁴²

To paraphrase the verse: through this process (*tena*), *ātmā* or *puruṣaḥ* is divided into different ‘forms of consciousness’ and different ‘times of consciousness’. But such divisions of its own, real form do not exist at all. Yogis may experience consciousness in different forms and may associate consciousness with the past, present and future. However, both dual and non-dual systems agree that the real *ātmā* or *puruṣaḥ* is always one and permanent. In other words, it cannot have different shapes, nor can it belong to certain times and places. All these distinctions are, therefore, merely a construct of the mind.

Verse 325 echoes what Bhartṛhari says about the *brahma* in the opening verses of his treatise: the *brahma*, without beginning or end, is imperishable and unalterable; it can, however, take different forms through existing things. In the second verse, Bhartṛhari says that while the *brahma* is one, it may appear as if it were divided; but this is only because it is the source of different ‘powers’ from which, in fact, it is not divid-

up the essence of all things.” In this verse, Bhartṛhari explains the term ‘*guṇaḥ*’ that Patañjali associates with *śabdaḥ* etc. in the passage of his *Mahābhāṣya* (M I, 246, 2–7) discussed above on p. 76. I examine verse VP 3.13.14 in my article on the neuter mentioned earlier, and I will discuss it in more detail in my doctoral thesis.

42 Compare Subramania Iyer’s translation (1974, 274; verse VP 3.14.324 in his translation and edition): “That is how the form and the time of the consciousness of the experiencer is diversified. It has no diversity of form of its own.”

ed. Time is one of these ‘powers’ which make it seem as if the *brahma* has parts.⁴³ Bhartṛhari mentions the six ‘modifications’, beginning with birth, which Yāska presents in his *Nirukta*.⁴⁴ It is these six modifications which form the source of the division of existence. Bhartṛhari however reiterates in verse 325 of his *Vṛttisamuddeśa* that the ‘ultimate reality’ is one and indivisible.

In the following verse, Bhartṛhari says that what we experience and name by the term ‘*puruṣaḥ*’ is not the real *puruṣaḥ*.

VP 3.14.326 (ed. Rau)

*acetaneṣu caitanyam saṃkrāntam iva drśyate /
pratibimbakadharmeṇa yat tac chabdanibandhanam //*

The ‘consciousness’ (*caitanyam*) which is seen as though it is passed into unconscious things in the form of a reflection is the basis of words.⁴⁵

In this verse, Bhartṛhari alludes to the belief in Sāṃkhya and Yoga theory that the *buddhiḥ* or the *cittam* is like a clear mirror in which all things are reflected, including the form that *puruṣaḥ* takes in the mind.⁴⁶ We also see comparisons with a precious stone, a clear crystal or a still surface

43 VP 1.1–3: *anādinidhanam brahma śabdatattvam yad akṣaram / vivartate ’rthabhāve-
na prakriyā jagato yataḥ // ekam eva yad āmnātam bhinnaśaktivyapāśrayāt /
apṛthakte ’pi śaktibhyaḥ pṛthaktvene va vartate // adhyāhitakalām yasya kāla-
śaktim upāśritāḥ / janmādayo vikārāḥ ṣaḍ bhāvabhedasya yonayaḥ //* Trans. Su-
bramania Iyer 1965, 1–5: “1. The Brahman who is without beginning or end,
whose very essence is the Word, who is the cause of the manifested phonemes,
who appears as the objects, from whom the creation of the world proceeds, 2.
Who has been taught as the One appearing as many due to the multiplicity
of his powers, who, though not different from his powers, seems to be so, 3.
Depending on whose Time-power to which (though one) differentiations is at-
tributed, the six transformations, birth etc. become the cause of all variety in
Being.”

44 Nir. 1.2. See above, fn. 32.

45 Compare Subramania Iyer’s translation (1974, 274; verse VP 3.14.325 in his trans-
lation and edition): “That which is projected on the insentient forms of the In-
tellect as a reflection, it is that which is the basis of the use of words.”

46 Helārāja refers to the *buddhidarpaṇaḥ*, the ‘mirror of the mind’, in his explana-
tions of verses VP 3.14.324 and 325 (ed. Rau). See ed. Subramania Iyer 1973,
p. 300, l. 19; l. 26.

of clear water, all of which reflect the shapes and colours of their surroundings.⁴⁷ It is also in this verse that Bhartṛhari makes the distinction between the conscious and the unconscious: the conscious ‘*caitanyaṃ*’ is seen as though it is ‘passed into’ in unconscious things (*acetaneṣu*). For this reason, Subramania Iyer’s rendering of the verse reads “projected on the insentient forms of the Intellect”, saying in a complicated manner that the *caitanyaṃ* is reflected in the *buddhiḥ*.⁴⁸ However, I think we should understand that *all* unconscious things are reflected by means of this mirror. This includes even non-existent things.

To paraphrase the core idea of the verse: it is the *pratibimbam*, the ‘reflection’ of the *puruṣaḥ*, not the real *puruṣaḥ*, that has a connection with words. We can only express the ‘reflection’, not the real *puruṣaḥ*, with words. Therefore, the reflection of the *puruṣaḥ* may also be associated with gender. In the same way, non-existent things go through the process of reflection in the mind and may therefore also be associated with transformation through their grammatical genders.

With this verse Bhartṛhari ends his explanation as to why terms such as ‘*puruṣaḥ*’, ‘*citiḥ*’ and ‘*caitanyaṃ*’ can also have grammatical gender. In his next verse, he returns to the general context by reaffirming that all words must have gender, except, of course, finite verbs and indeclinable forms.⁴⁹ With this sequence of verses, Bhartṛhari discretely fills a gap that Patañjali had left in his explanations of the grammarians’ ‘own theory’

47 For example, YS 1.41 mentions a ‘precious stone’, and YSBh *ad* 1.41 glosses this by ‘*sphaṭikāḥ*’ (crystal). Bhartṛhari himself uses the comparison of a reflection in clear water, albeit in a different context.

48 See Subramania Iyer’s translation above, fn. 45.

49 VP 3.14.327 (ed. Rau): *avasthā tādr̥ṣī nāsti yā liṅgena na yuyjate / kva cit tu śabdasaṃskāro liṅgasyānāśraye sati //* Trans. Subramania Iyer 1974, 275 (verse VP 3.14.326 in his translation): “There is no condition of an object which is not associated with a gender. Sometimes, when it is not taken seriously, it is only for the sake of the correctness of the words.” I think his “when it is not taken seriously” is somewhat unfortunate, because Bhartṛhari refers to cases in which there is no ‘support’ or ‘resort’ for gender. For example, this is the case in grammatical glosses of certain compounds. The grammarians gloss the compound ‘*kukkuṭāṇḍam*’ (hen’s egg) by the grammatical gloss “*kukkuṭasya aṇḍam*” (“the chicken’s egg”, lit. “the cockerel’s egg”). There is no ‘support’ or ‘resort’ for gender in the sense that the masculine grammatical gender is used in “*kukkuṭasya aṇḍam*” even though the female animal produces the egg.

of gender. In an oral culture that values conciseness in order to facilitate memorisation, we expect authors to leave certain issues unaddressed, particularly in an extensive work such as Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*. It is therefore the role of a good commentator not only to analyse the source text but also to provide additional explanation where needed. Traditional and modern scholars do not actually consider Bhartṛhari's *Vākyapadīya* as a commentary on Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*. Yet Bhartṛhari maintains a close intertextual relationship with the *Mahābhāṣya*, especially in the third section of the *Vākyapadīya* which, in Cardona's words, "takes on aspects of a learned commentary on this work", i.e. the *Mahābhāṣya*.⁵⁰ The verses discussed above are, I suggest, one of these instances; they read as a lucid commentary of Patañjali's gender discourse – to which Bhartṛhari adds his ingenious solution to the problem regarding the grammatical gender of terms such as 'puruṣaḥ', 'citiḥ' and 'caitanyaṃ'.

Conclusions and wider implications

In Part 1 of this article, I have discussed the most important aspect of the grammarians' 'own theory' of gender as Patañjali explains it in his *Mahābhāṣya*: grammatical gender signifies transformation (*pravṛttiḥ*) in the things denoted by words. However, Patañjali remains silent regarding the implications this theory would have as regards at least two critical cases. One of these is the 'ultimate reality', which, although it is expressed by gendered terms, does not transform according to certain Sanskrit traditions. The other is non-existent things, such as the *śaśaśṛṅgaḥ*, the *mṛgatrṣṇā* and the *khapuṣpam*, which the grammarians' 'own theory' of gender also associate with transformation, even though something that does not exist cannot transform. Bhartṛhari is the first grammarian within the Pāṇinian grammatical tradition to address this issue and offer a solution.

In Part 2, I analyse the sequence of verses in which Bhartṛhari concisely summarises Patañjali's general point as regards the grammarians' 'own theory' of gender and how this theory of transformation also works for terms referring to the ultimate, unalterable and indivisible reality. By saying that it is the 'reflection' (*pratibimbam*) of the *puruṣaḥ*,

⁵⁰ Cardona 2009, 121.

not the real *puruṣaḥ* that has a connection with words, Bhartṛhari posits that the ‘ultimate reality’ is beyond the realm of speech. In other words, we can only express the ‘reflection’ with words, not the real *puruṣaḥ*. It is in this sense that the terms ‘*puruṣaḥ*’, ‘*citiḥ*’ and ‘*caitanyaṃ*’ are mere ‘verbal handles’. And ‘verbal handles’ must have gender, since in Sanskrit all words, except finite verbs and indeclinable forms, have gender. The real, ‘ultimate reality’, however, remains forever beyond the realm of language: it is ‘literally’ ineffable.

Bhartṛhari puts forward a powerful interpretative model as to how names are, in fact, incomplete: ‘nameable’ things – even the ultimate, highest reality – may be referred to by different ‘verbal handles’, and each name is, in Gonda’s words, “a form or a mode of existence”.⁵¹ Many Vedic sources suggest that having several names bestows the bearer with power and auspiciousness. This principle of diversification and multiplicity of denominations may also be underlying the wide range of Sanskrit vocabulary for any ‘nameable’ thing. It is in the realm of language that not only words for things can be diversified, but realities too are diversified, and even the ‘ultimate reality’ itself, despite being one and indivisible, can also appear as though it were diversified and diversifiable. However, it is the mere reflection of the ‘ultimate reality’ which is diversified or projected, or, in Bhartṛhari’s words, which follows, as it were, the *pravr̥ttiḥ* of other things. Grammarians of the commentarial tradition of the *Mahābhāṣya*, Kaiyaṭa and Nāgeśa, accept Bhartṛhari’s elegant and lucid solution to one of the major problems implicitly left by Patañjali and refer to it in their commentaries.

51 Gonda 1970, 14.

Abbreviations

- A Aṣṭādhyāyī, see Böhtlingk, Katre and Renou.
- Apte Apte, Vaman Shivaram, *The practical Sanskrit-English dictionary*. Revised and enlarged edition. 3 vols. Poona: Prasad Prakashan, 1957–59. First published: Poona: Shiralkar, 1890.
(I am using the online dictionary prepared by Digital Dictionaries of South Asia, University of Chicago: <https://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/apte/>)
- BĀU *Bṛhadāranyakopaniṣad*, see Acharya 2013.
- Ed. Rau Rau, Wilhelm, ed. 1977. *Bhartṛhari's Vākya-padīya: Die mūlakārikās nach den Handschriften herausgegeben und mit einem pāda-Index versehen*. Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 42.4. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag.
- EWA *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindiarischen*, by Manfred Mayrhofer. 3 vols. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1991–2001.
- KEWA *Kurzgefaßtes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen: A Concise Etymological Sanskrit Dictionary*, by Manfred Mayrhofer. 4 vols. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1956–80.
- M Mahābhāṣya (including volume, page and line). *The Vyākaraṇa-Mahābhāṣya of Patañjali*, edited by Franz Kielhorn. 3 vols. Revised edition by Kashinath V. Abhyankar. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1962–72. First edition: Bombay: Government Central Book Depot, 1880–85.
- MW Monier-Williams, Monier, *A Sanskrit-English dictionary: Etymologically and philologically arranged with special reference to cognate Indo-European languages*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1899.
(I am also using the online dictionary prepared by the Institute of Indology and Tamil Studies, Cologne University: <https://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/scans/MWScan/2020/web/index.php>)
- Nir. Nirukta, see Sarup.
- PW [“(Großes) Petersburger Wörterbuch”] *Sanskritwörterbuch*. By Otto Böhtlingk and Rudolf Roth. Theil I–VII. St. Petersburg: Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1855–75.
(I am also using the online dictionary prepared by the Institute of Indology and Tamil Studies, Cologne University: <https://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/scans/PWGScan/2020/web/index.php>)

- SK *Sāṃkhyakārikā*, in: *Vācaspatimiśras Tattvakaumudī: Ein Beitrag zur Textkritik bei kontaminierter Überlieferung*, edited by Srinivasa Ayya Srinivasan. Alt- und Neu-Indische Studien, 12. Hamburg: Cram, De Gruyter, 1967.
- VP Vākyapadīya, see above under Ed. Rau; and below under Biardeau; Subramania Iyer.
- vt. *vārttikam* i.e., Kātyāyana's commentarial phrases of selected rules of Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. Patañjali quotes Kātyāyana's phrases in his *Mahābhāṣya*. See above under M.
- YS Yogasūtra. *The Yogasūtra of Patañjali with the Commentary of Vyāsa*, edited and translated by Bengali Baba. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976.
- YSBh Yogasūtrabhāṣya, see above under YS.

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