Advances in the History of Rhetoric, 17:131–156, 2014

ISSN: 1536-2426 print/1936-0835 online
DOI: 10.1080/15362426.2014.933721

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

Anekāntavāda and Engaged Rhetorical Pluralism: Explicating Jaina Views on Perspectivism, Violence, and Rhetoric

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*This study represents a detailed inquiry into the rhetoric of Jainism, an understudied religious-philosophical tradition that arose among Hinduism and Buddhism on the Indian subcontinent. Exploring the unique use of pluralism in Jaina authors such as Mahāvīra and Haribhadra, I advance the concept of engaged rhetorical pluralism to account for the argumentative use of pluralism to promote Jaina views. This concept is linked to Jainism's theory of multiperspectivism (*anekāntavāda*) as an orientation toward one's rhetorical activities in contexts of disagreement. Highlighting the controversies surrounding the relationship between Jaina tolerance and intellectual nonviolence, this study uses the concept of* anekāntavāda *to ground a pluralism of often contradictory critical claims made by those studying rhetorical phenomena from other cultures. Thus,* anekāntavāda *both describes the engaged pluralism evident in important Jaina rhetors and serves as a source of methodological guidance for scholars involved in comparative rhetoric and its inevitable situations of interpretative disagreement.*

The tone of Jaina rhetoric was determined early on by how its most well-known teacher or *jina*, Vardhamāna Mahāvīra (599–527 BCE), decided to position his philosophy in the increasingly crowded intellectual landscape of the Indian subcontinent. Mahāvīra was a contemporary of the Buddha, and both charismatic teachers exerted extreme argumentative energy in criticizing prevailing Brahmanical trends in Indian society. Like the Buddha, Mahāvīra

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focused on suffering and the alleviation of this seemingly inevitable part of human life. This was a focus he also shared with much of the Upaniśadic tradition. All of these strands of thought sought ways to "get rid of the cycle of worldly existence [as] the common end" (Tatia 1951, 17). Mahāvīra—like the Buddha would put it in his contemporary teachings—placed the source of suffering in our passions or desires. Yet a vital change from the Buddha's well-known "middle path" occurred in how Mahāvīra and those following him rhetorically differentiated the Jaina view from the opposing views of Hinduism and its Buddhist critics. When asked about the nature of the self—a vital philosophical concern in Indian thought—Mahāvīra begins a fascinating and unique Jaina tradition of pluralistic argument that displays what I will eventually delineate as a form of engaged pluralism. In the *Bhagavati-sutra*, Mahāvīra is portrayed as answering an overly sure disciple (Jamālī) who asked about the nature of the world, as well as that of the self or soul. Mahāvīra's complex response is worth spelling out:

> Jamālī! This universe (*Lok*) is eternal (from one angle). This is because it is not that it never was, it is not that it never is, and also it not that it never will be. The universe always existed, does exist and will exist. It is *dhruva* (constant), *niyat* (fixed), *shashvat* (eternal), *akshaya* (imperishable), *avyaya* (non-expendable), *avasthit* (steady), and *nitya* (perpetual). Also, Jamālī! This universe is transient (from another angle). This is because progressive cycle of time (*Utsarpini kaal*) comes after regressive cycle of time (*Avasarpini kaal*) and regressive cycle of time comes after progressive cycle of time. (translated in Bothara 2006, 494)

The world is both timeless and changeless, and changing given its progression through large epochs of time in the Indian way of thinking. In regards to the question about the nature of the self or soul, Mahāvīra's response follows a similar path:

> Jamālī! Soul (*jiva*) is eternal (from one angle). This is because it is not that it never was, it is not that it never is, and also it is not that it never will be . . . and so on [It is *dhruva* (constant), *niyat* (fixed), *shashvat* (eternal), *akshaya* (imperishable), *avyaya* (nonexpendable), *avasthit* (steady)] up to . . . *nitya* (perpetual). Also, Jamālī! The soul is transient (from another angle). This is because existing as an infernal being it moves to the animal genus; from animal genus it moves to human genus; and from the human genus it has chances of moving to the divine genus. (Bothara 2006, 494)

These responses may seem puzzling primarily because they appear to be hedging one's rhetorical position at best, or they seem to imply a flat-out contradiction. Yet these responses from Mahāvīra set Jainism out on its more than 2,500-year journey as a distinct religious-philosophical tradition in the

Indian context. If rhetoric is concerned with making artful communicative choices as well as with analyzing others' utterances, these responses begin to show the complex rhetorical implications of Jaina ways of individuating one's philosophical position.

Mahāvīra was espousing a particular brand of pluralism that was calibrated to position the Jainas between orthodox schools of Vedic thought and the heterodox schools, such as Buddhism. Jaina thought has similar roots to Buddhism, as both are part of the *śramana* movement that began to resist the doctrinal and social hegemony of brahmanical systems in an India captivated by the power of the early Vedic texts. The dominant religious and social systems privileged the Vedic priestly castes (Brahmins) and emphasized ritual and (in many cases) the Upaniśadic identification of the self of each individual with the deeper reality of *Brahman*. This was a view of the world and self being identical, unchanging, and permanent. The Buddha challenged these ideas of a reified, important self with his notion of *anātman*, or no-self, and with his view of the world as one of constant flux. As Tatia (1951) puts it, the Upaniśadic sages focused on the "immutable reality behind the world of phenomena and plurality," whereas "the Buddha denounced everything as fleeting and sorrowful and pointed to the futility of all speculation" (18). In his ambivalent answers concerning the self and the world, Mahāvīra gives the Jaina doctrines their distinctive feel by positioning Jainism between these extremes of Hinduism and Buddhism. Instead of negating extreme views, Mahāvīra adopts a pluralistic demeanor in his answers—he asserts that both extreme views have some hold on the truth. The soul and world were both permanent and impermanent. If rhetoric concerns how we argue and advocate our beliefs in community with often-disagreeing others, his pluralism represents a rhetorical tactic to subsume two extreme but limited views.

Pluralism typically denotes a way of incorporating or tolerating as many views as possible, yet here we see the foremost teacher of the Jaina tradition using it to differentiate their position from rival schools. More than this, it is used to argumentatively distance his views from the extreme and less-desirable (from the Jaina perspective) views of the Buddhists and Hindu thinkers. Despite this interesting way of enunciating Jaina thought, Jainism has been studied insufficiently (Skoog 2000). Yet the sort of communicative maneuver we see in many Jaina thinkers represents a fascinating chance to explore the role of pluralism as a rhetorical response to cases of argumentative disagreement. This study takes the scope of Jaina rhetoric to be largely coextensive with the style and methods they employ in arguing their doctrine and positions in a contentious south Asian philosophical landscape (Sen 2005).

By examining the sort of pluralism that appears in significant portions of Jainism's complex history, this study expands the insufficiently studied arena of Jaina rhetoric, as well as our understanding of how method in comparative rhetoric works. In the rising tide of contemporary work in comparative

rhetoric, other studies have usefully examined the communicative implications of the Buddhist tradition (Dissanayake 1983; 2007; Wood 2004), the Chinese tradition (Combs 2006; Garrett 1993a; 1993b; Lu 1998; Lyon 2009), and the Hindu tradition (Mifsud 2009; Oliver 1971; Stroud 2004; 2009a), but nothing has been written on the rhetoric of Jainism. This study begins its exploration of Jaina rhetoric in the following manner. First, another representative author of the Jaina tradition—Haribhadra—is discussed as an example of the Jaina pluralism that both respects opposing views and places them in a subordinate relationship to Jaina thought. This is what I call *engaged pluralism*: the orientation that seeks to accommodate and engage the views of others in one's own system of thought but in such a way as to privilege one's system of thought as a source of insight or value. Second, I examine the relationship of this pluralistic ethos to the Jaina position of *anekāntavāda* or "nonabsolutism." I argue that *anekāntavāda* and its corollaries *nayavāda* (a theory of perspectives) and *syādvāda* (a practice of sevenfold or conditional predication in assertions) serve as rhetorical extensions of *anekāntavāda*. These theories combined represent the most detailed explication of engaged pluralism that one can find in many Jaina authors who respect non-Jaina points of view, all the while maintaining the superiority of Jaina philosophy. In the third section, I seek to explain the prevalence of this sort of engaged pluralism. I consider two plausible explanations within the Jaina tradition, dealing with the Jaina value of nonviolence (*ahimsā*) and with their reading of reality as fundamentally complex. In the final section, the plausibility of each of these groundings of Jainism's pluralistic ethos is connected to a central problem in the study of comparative rhetoric—the multiplicity of perspectives and assertions that can be made about complex cultural phenomena.

JAINA RHETORIC, HARIBHADRA, AND ENGAGED PLURALISM

To understand the rhetoric of the religious-philosophical tradition of Jainism, one must understand something of the rhetorical milieu of the Indian subcontinent. India has always been a geography of competing schools of thought. The Vedas gave way to a range of interpretations, and the Upaniśads ushered in a wave of thinkers rejecting or revisioning the traditional inheritance of the Vedic tradition. Jainism arises next to Buddhism as a movement that critiques many of the basic tenets of the philosophy percolating through the Vedas and the Upaniśads. As Sen (2005) makes clear, the Indian subcontinent has always instantiated these sorts of philosophical conflicts in mostly discursive forms. Over the Indian subcontinent's long history, one can find few areas that lack vigorous communicative contact between groups ranging from Jainas, Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, Parsees, Sikhs, to

Baha'is. Unlike some historical settings of intense doctrinal disagreement, the south Asian context tended to channel its philosophical disagreements into argumentative encounters and texts instead of physical conflict. Around the time of the great advaitin philosopher, Śankara, debates among rival schools attracted large crowds and the "loser" of a philosophical debate often had to "adopt the very doctrines against which he had unsuccessfully argued" (Bader 2000, 183). Such debates featured audience members drawn from a variety of classes: royalty, monks, and laypersons, all potential or actual believers in the philosophies of the debating figures (Solomon 1978). Such activities of public argument, lecturing, and debate were not limited to one school of Indian philosophy. Dasgupta (1999, 75) points out that rhetoric and disputation are included in Siddhasena Sūri's ideal Jaina curriculum for princes. Competitive and vigorous debates were not foreign to the Jaina tradition, as is evidenced by the embellished accounts of the Jaina sage, Haribhadra, who defeated multitudes of treacherous Buddhist opponents in debate and consigned them to the agreed-on punishment of immersion in boiling oil (Granoff 1989). Flügel (2009), in his systematic analysis of Jaina communicative practices, identifies four classically Indian contexts for discourse: "(a) the religious debate (*vivāda* or *prayoga*), for instance at a royal court or modern court of law, (b) the public sermon (*pravacana*), (c) the interaction between ascetics and non-ascetics in informal settings (*bhāṣā*), and (d) the interaction between ascetics (*vinaya*)" (119). Jaina thinkers (typically monks or ascetics) addressed a variety of audiences, including rival thinkers, public audiences, students, and nonhostile fellow Jaina monks. All of these argumentative situations can be seen as rhetorical situations insofar as they represent persuasive situations for the Jaina thinkers to extend the normative influence and religious impact of Jaina thought to others who are either following the path of the Jaina life or could begin following such a path.

Of particular interest to this study will be the method of dealing with contrasting orientations and beliefs of rival thinkers. This method can be discovered in certain texts that evince an author's grasp and evaluation of rival views. Some of these texts could be the Jaina canon, or *āgama*, which comprises a multitude of early texts written in a vernacular form of Prākrit, Ardhamāgadī (Dundas 2002). Later in the Jaina tradition, texts began to be composed in a similar style to Hindu philosophical texts, written in Sanskrit and taking the form of short sutra compositions that invited longer commentaries by other scholars in the tradition. Because this study wishes to explore the rhetorical inflections of pluralism in the Jaina tradition, it begins by examining one of the prime textual examples of a thinker employing a unique form of pluralistic argument: Haribhadra (c. 700–770 CE). Haribhadra was a well-versed writer in both Sanskrit and Prākrit, and was reportedly an authority on logic (Chatterjee 2000). He lived in a time of exciting intellectual change and development on the Indian subcontinent (Chapple 2003).

In Haribhadra's texts, we see a pluralistic respect for other traditions, along with an advocacy of Jaina views on yoga, nonviolence, and the path to purifying oneself (*jīva*) of its encumbering karmic matter (Dundas 2002). Judging from his own writings and not simply the often-embellished Jaina biographies of his life, Granoff (1989) concludes that Haribhadra is "clearly a man of religious tolerance, of quiet respect for differences and particularly of respect for Buddhist ethics and spiritual practices" (106).

Haribhadra's pluralism operates within the Jaina view of the world. Jaina thought typically starts with a basic division of the world into two kinds of objects: living things (*jīva*) and nonliving things (*ajīva*). The former category is characterized by some amount of sentience. The latter category captures the material aspect of existence that inevitably becomes connected to *jīva*. It is this association of *jīva* with *ajīva* that is understood as karma. Long (2011) puts the matter more precisely: "karma is understood in Jainism to be a material substance which produces the universal law of cause and effect, which produces experiences in our souls according to certain regular patterns" (92). The Jainas spend considerable time theorizing the workings of karma; according to Umāsvāti's *Tattvārthādhigama Sūtra* (Tatia 1994), souls become attached to karmic matter through various actions (e.g., 6:4). Some of these actions are "good" insofar as they accrue connection with karma in a minor way, facilitating fewer rebirths in the world of suffering. Some of these actions are "bad," meaning that more harmful karma is attached to the *jīva*, leading to more rebirths and more suffering. Suffering is not teleologically worthless because it is a way of burning off one's accrued karmic debt.

Haribhadra was particularly concerned with disciplines—known as yogas—designed to burn off one's accrued karma and move one toward release from bondage, suffering, and rebirth. In his eighth-century Sanskrit work, the *Yogadṛṣṭisamuccaya* (*YDS*; Chapple 2003), Haribhadra examines a variety of contemporary schools or approaches to yogic practice. These include the popular form of yoga offered in Patanjali's *Yogasutra*, as well as increasingly popular Tantric forms of yoga (referred to as Kula yoga). Tantric yoga posed a particular threat to Haribhadra's Jaina tradition, as it often included banned acts (such as violence and gratuitous sex) and substances (alcohol, meat, and drugs) that were forbidden by Jaina forms of discipline (Chapple 2003). Haribhadra is concerned in *YDS* not with converting such tantric practitioners but with advancing the reasonableness and beneficial nature of the Jaina position on yogic discipline. He does overtly criticize what appears to be hidden behind such practices—a quest for personal power over the world:

> Those who step into licentiousness
> are of excessive manner. Because of this,
> The ultimate [for them] resembles the flickering of a bird's shadow
> moving across the water. (*YDS* 67)

Such yogic practices are extreme, and are driven by desire; the Jaina view, best encapsulated in the *Tattvārthāsutra* (Tatia 1994), is that passions attract karma: "The activities of a person driven by passions cause long-term inflow (bondage)" (6:5). Drawing on this insight, Haribhadra concludes that "according to the illumination of scripture, this wayward perspective is not in accordance with the truth . . . from it only sin is generated" (*YDS* 69). Haribhadra thus vigorously argues for the Jaina orthodox position on action and karma. Instead of continuously critiquing tantric views and other perspectives, Haribhadra begins to adopt a pluralistic view of the religious paths to enlightenment and release from karmic bondage. Tantric or Kula yoga is not *simply* wrong or misguided, as Haribhadra recognizes the limits to his criticisms. While he is firm in his belief that "[t]he wisdom gained from discipline is singular in essence," he does not push the point that only Jainism contains this wisdom; it is "heard of in different ways" (*YDS* 129). This point clearly applies to traditions outside the fold of Jainism, as is evidenced by the next verse's use of a variety of non-Jaina terms to capture the singular truth of enlightenment:

> "Eternal Śiva, Highest Brahman, Accomplished Soul, Suchness":
> With these words one refers to it,
> though the meaning is one
> in all the various forms. (*YDS* 130)

Haribhadra seems willing to allow that other traditions—some of which contradict vital elements to Jaina thought—are conducive to the shedding of karma and the attainment of enlightenment. Buddhism, Vedantic thought, and even the cult of Śiva all can lead to the same goal to which Haribhadra's form of Jaina yoga aspires. These schools seem to differ primarily due to rhetorical considerations of audience: "The variety of teaching is suited according to who is being taught" (*YDS* 134).

Haribhadra's *YDS* is a complex text. It clearly operates from within the Jaina fold of advocacy, but its inclusiveness is startling. It also ensconces its pluralism in an epistemic fallibilism. Even though he begins with criticisms of rival positions, Haribhadra eventually tones down his attacks by referencing his own ignorance about the variety of seers teaching alternative approaches:

> Not having known the intention
> it is not possible to assess the status;
> there would be no purpose in formulating objections
> regarding [the thought of] the great one who has gone beyond. (*YDS* 139)

If one is not certain, one must not object as if one was certain (or omniscient, as enlightened *kevalins* or Jaina sages are). Haribhadra is effectively

saying that he lacks the epistemic status to issue apodictic criticisms of non-Jaina positions, even though he worries that non-Jaina views may stimulate harmful passions. From one perspective, such views seem harmful; but from another point of view (e.g., noting his limitations), such views may be equivalent paths to enlightenment. All of this pushes Haribhadra not simply to opine on yoga, good and bad, but to issue cautions about one's rhetorical interactions with often disagreeing others. These other individuals seem wise, so we must watch how we interact with them:

> Just as the blind are not inclined
> to dispute with ones who possess sight,
> so also the settling of such distinctions
> is not to be made from a lower point of view. (*YDS* 140)

Haribhadra putatively places himself in this lower point of view. This creates the fallibilistic conditions to temper one's discursive arguments. Instead of self-certainty, one sustains a tone of reconciliation and harmonization of various perspectives and positions:

> Hence it is not proper
> to object to words of reconciliation.
> Refuting or reviling noble people, it seems,
> would be worse than cutting one's own tongue. (*YDS* 141)

One should not seek to argumentatively destroy opposing positions, according to this way of thinking, because these positions could be helpful *and* because the passions one creates in "reviling" these possible sages are definitely harmful to one's *jīva* on the Jaina account. The multiplicity of the paths to liberation and the importance of the Jaina path combine in this account in the form of a protective pluralism that limits one's criticism of others. One protects and purifies one's own self by watching how one talks about and to others. Such communicative practices can be motivated by emotions such as pride and grasping (e.g., *YDS* 147), so Haribhadra's fallibilism functions as a Jaina scheme of self-purification of harmful passions.

This leads us to a tentative characterization of Haribhadra's pluralistic respect of other paths to enlightenment. He seems to allow for a variety of paths to enlightenment, or at the least, he cautions against criticizing others as if there is one path, because such a position would accrue karma through the Jaina doctrine of passions attracting karmic debt. In other words, his pluralism of enlightenment paths is based upon the Jaina views of self, passion, nonviolence, and karma. This foundation seems nonnegotiable. Thus, "[e]ven the slightest pain to others is to be avoided with great effort" (*YDS* 150), because such harm to others violates the Jaina concern with nonviolence (*ahimsā*). One should be helpful to others (*YDS* 150), even when

their views and arguments seem misguided, putatively because to not do so would signal an overattachment to oneself and one's doctrines vis-à-vis the criticism of others. Haribhadra wants one to accept the existence of other religious paths, but he does so out of Jaina concerns for how one's passions and actions can harm self and discursive other. I suggest that this is a form of pluralism, but of a particularly interesting rhetorical variety. He allows a plurality of views that could be valid, but his isn't a passive pluralism that would recognize the equal validity of all perspectives. A *passive pluralism* would simply assert the equal wisdom of alternative systems and might be functionally equivalent to what we can call a meek relativism that judges all paths as absolutely equal in value. Warning against reading Haribhadra's pluralism in this way, Dundas (2002) reminds us that "it should not be forgotten that he never compromised his upholding of the integrity and indeed supremacy of Jainism in favour of some sort of watered down relativism" (229). Haribhadra's pluralism was a Jaina pluralism. In the case of rhetorical style, we see the deployment of what I would call a form of *engaged pluralism*. This will be an orientation that recognizes an incomplete or partial validity to opposing perspectives, all the while retaining some unique value for the orientation of the pluralist himself or herself. As displayed in Haribhadra's *YDS*, an engaged pluralism will entail a novel rhetorical style of dealing with conflict. It represents a rhetoric of engaging the views of disagreeing others in a respectful but assertive fashion, and it attempts to facilitate harmony while advancing one's own views. Haribhadra's text still leaves us confused regarding the exact form of Jaina engaged pluralism. This is because the *YDS* is primarily an instance of this pluralism in rhetorical activity; later Jaina texts give us an explicit account of such a rhetorical pluralism as a style of argument.

ANEKĀNTAVĀDA AS ENGAGED RHETORICAL PLURALISM

In the centuries surrounding Haribhadra's important rejoinder to the flourishing of competing systems—and long after Mahāvīra's original positioning of Jaina doctrine between Vedic thought and Buddhism—the Jainas explicitly worked out a system that could explain what was occurring in their pluralistic arguments. This is the doctrine known as *anekāntavāda*, often described as the philosophy of nonabsolutism (Mookerjee 1978). Perhaps a better description of *anekāntavāda* is "the acceptance of the manifoldness of reality" (Matilal 1981, 2) or the avoidance of one-sided (*ekānta*) views. As a complement to Haribhadra's practice of argumentative pluralism, this section seeks to explicate *anekāntavāda* as a theory of engaged rhetorical pluralism. Much more can be said about Mahāvīra's or Haribhadra's specific dialogic styles, but for the remainder of this study it will be useful to talk in general terms of the Jaina rhetorical style of engaged pluralism (in line with

the notion of style in Brummett 2008). By recovering a general *anekānta* view of communicative action, we can begin to see the distinctive elements in the Jaina attempt to place themselves among rival schools of thought in India.

What grounds the *anekāntavāda* of the Jainas? It seems as if this view emphasizes the recognition of the partial truth of the extreme views of others. Why do the Jainas insist on a doctrine that forces them to give some amount of truth to opposing positions, up to and including arguing "for the adoption of all possible points of view in a more global approach from multiple perspectives (*anekānta*)" (Cort 2000, 324)? *Anekāntavāda* is usually tied to the Jaina view of *nayavāda*, or the various perspectives we can take on the world. While the enlightened *jinas* such as Mahāvīra were omniscient, ordinary humans approached knowledge from individual *nayas* (standpoints or perspectives) (Koller 2000). These give partial, but still true, views or accounts of some aspect of reality. Traditionally, there are seven possible *nayas* (Cort 2000; Folkert 1993). The secret to enlightened cognition according to the Jaina view of *anekāntavāda* is realizing the perspectival limitations of any normal person uttering something from these perspectives:

> Any one of these points of view is a relative, one-sided (*ekānta*) perspective and therefore presents a partial and imperfect view of the truth. A judgment based on one or a few of these perspectives is ultimately only partially true; a judgment is impartial only if it encompasses all seven points of view, and is thus adequately many-sided or not-one-sided (*anekānta*). (Cort 2000, 326)

Taking one aspect of the real as the entire account of reality is the problem according to *anekāntavāda*. The perspectivism enshrined in Jainism throughout its development has largely been consistent with this account of *nayavāda*.

Some important Jaina thinkers simplify the categories of *nayavāda*, but the implications are the same in terms of a knower's perspectival limitations. For instance, Pujyapada's fifth-century CE *Sarvārthasiddhi*, a commentary on the *Tattvārthādhigama Sutra*, expands the potential field of *nayas* almost infinitely through the expansion of possible attributes of an object:

> substances are characterized by an infinite number of attributes. For the sake of use or need, prominence is given to certain characteristics of a substance from one point of view. And prominence is not given to other characteristics, as these are of no use or need at the time. Thus even the existing attributes are not expressed, as those are of secondary importance (*anarpita*). (Jain 1960, 157)

Siddhasena Divākara (from the period of 400 to 700 CE) reclassified the possible *nayas* into two general categories (Folkert 1993). In his *Sanmati Tarka*, Siddhasena divides the traditional seven *nayas* into *dravyāstika* and *paryāyāstika* (Sanjavi and Doshi 1939, 1:3). The former deals with seeing something as an enduring, permanent substance or object; the latter deals with the viewpoints that see something as changing, impermanent, or as a flux-affected object. This is the same sort of perspectivism in both Mahāvīra's arguments and the more elaborate versions of *nayavāda*; the central insight is that one need not reject alternative views. Instead, one simply needs to recognize the different perspectives that they come from.

How do *anekāntavāda* and the theory of standpoints (*nayavāda*) relate to communicative interactions with others? Such interactions are filled with assertions and predications of various communicators, many of which are contradictory or mutually exclusive. This fact gets worked into *anekāntavāda* with the addition of a doctrine of conditional assertion known as *syādvāda*. This theory complements *nayavāda* by delineating a method of predication that operationalizes the plurality of *nayas* or perspectives in assertion. *Syādvāda* also recognizes the force of communication and what it enables and resists in how a self reacts to disagreeing others. *Syādvāda* is a vital part of the *anekāntavāda* orientation to rhetorical activity; it is also called "*sapta-bhangi-naya*," indicating its perspectival (*naya*) characteristics (Jaini 1998). Both terms, *saptabhangi* and *syādvāda*, effectively highlight the vital features of this doctrine of assertion—making claims about the world conditional through a sevenfold (*sapta*) use of the indeclinable particle "*syāt*." Mallişena's *Syādvādamaṇjarī* (translated in Radhakrishnan and Moore 1957; Thomas 1960), a thirteenth-century commentary on Hemacandra's (1088–1172 CE) work of 32 stanzas, explicates the practice of seven-fold predication or *saptabhangi*. Mallişena describes the seven possible ways to take a statement such as "the pot exists." Starting with three possible predicates (*exists, does not exist*, and *is inexpressible*), Mallişena provides the following combinations of possible predication as a way of spelling out all the possible stances on such a claim about the pot's property of existence. He employs two important Sanskrit terms, *syāt* and *eva*. *Syāt* can be taken in the sense of "perhaps," but its use in *syādvāda* serves to limit an assertion to a certain viewpoint. It is most often translated as "somehow," "possibly," or "from one point of view." *Eva* is a Sanskrit term that indicates "in fact" or "certainly."

The use of these two terms in conjunction leads to a unique account of predication. Discussing general claims about any object of discourse, Mallişena's account proceeds as follows:

1. Somehow [or, from one point of view] everything *does* exist [or certainly exists]. This is the first mode, by way of affirmation.

2. Somehow [or, from one point of view] everything does not exist. This is the second mode, by way of negation.
3. It is certain that from one point of view everything exists and that from another point of view it does not exist. This is the third mode, by way of affirmation and negation successively.
4. Somehow everything is certainly indescribable [*avaktavya*]. This is the fourth mode, by way of simultaneous affirmation and negation.
5. Somehow everything *does* exist and somehow it is certainly indescribable. This is the fifth mode, by way of affirmation and also by way of simultaneous affirmation and negation.
6. Somehow everything does not exist and somehow it is indescribable. This is the sixth mode, by way of negation and by way of simultaneous affirmation and negation.
7. Somehow everything *does* exist, somehow it *does not* exist, and somehow it is certainly indescribable. This is the seventh mode, by way of affirmation and negation successively and by way of simultaneous affirmation and negation. (263–264)

One notices that the *syāt* particle precedes each assertion, and qualifies it. However, the force of the utterance is not disempowered, as it involves the *eva* particle. It is still "certain," but only from that limited perspective. We can construct a more straightforward analysis of this scheme using the sample claim, "*x* is *y*":

1. From one viewpoint, *x* certainly is *y*.
2. From one viewpoint, *x* certainly is not *y*.
3. From one viewpoint, *x* certainly is *y* but from another viewpoint, *x* certainly is not *y*.
4. From one viewpoint, *x* is indescribable.
5. From one viewpoint, *x* both certainly is *y*, and is indescribable.
6. From one viewpoint, *x* both certainly is not *y*, and is indescribable.
7. From one viewpoint, *x* certainly is *y*, is not *y*, and is indescribable.

This is a very noteworthy scheme of how we assert claims and their contraries in communicative situations. Also interesting is the fourth assertion's predicate—*avaktavya*. This is a difficult predicate to comprehend, but it clearly is meant to capture what would happen should one both assert a property and its negation at the same time. The third assertion does something similar, but it possesses a temporal ordering. Something is asserted, and then it is negated. The fourth predication captures something about the nature of reality that escapes the means of predication. If we try to label the real with *y*, something is gained and something is lost. If we speak on *x*, we must acknowledge it is from a certain limited but valid *naya*, and that even

then something will remain inexpressible from that perspective. From one's current perspective, one knows that one doesn't know everything about a given object. It is *syādvāda* that turns *anekāntavāda* into a fully rhetorical orientation, and that will enable its use as a communicatively valuable variety of pluralism. Jain (2000) identifies the secret to understanding *syādvāda* and *saptabhangi*: "the purpose of the predications of *Saptabhangi* is not to provide a description at all. As I see it, *Saptabhangi* is not a guide to predication. What it is, rather, is a guide to the correct ways of speaking. And here the importance of the term '*syāt*' cannot be overstated" (397). One only needs to "Add a '*syāt*' particle to your philosophic proposition and you have captured the truth" (Matilal 1985, 313).

The Jaina rhetoric of *anekāntavāda* can be reconstructed as a two-part whole: (1) a metaphysics of perspectivism and nonbivalent properties of the world (*nayavāda*) and (2) a concrete rhetorical scheme showing us appropriate argumentative moves in cases of disagreement (*syādvāda*). This rhetorical orientation leads one to communicate in ways that resist one-sided, nonmultiperspectival views. It aims for an interesting and engaged sort of inclusivism. As Matilal (1998) puts it,

> above all, the Jainas were non-dogmatic, although they were dogmatic about non-dogmatism. Their main argument was intended to show the multi-faceted nature of reality as well as its ever elusive character such that whatever is revealed to any observer at any given point of time and at any given place, would be only partially and conditionally right, ready to be falsified by a different revelation to a different observer at a different place and time. The Jainas think [that] in our theoretical search for understanding reality, this point can hardly be overstated. (139)

This analysis is prescient, but it misses the rhetorical operationalization of *anekāntavāda* in our search for knowledge. This search must surely entail discussing topics with others, and such discussion is nothing but (1) the strategic choices we make in our communicative assertion of argumentative claims to others, (2) the reception of argumentative claims from purposive others, and (3) deciding which claims to hold or value. What is powerful about the practice enshrined in *syādvāda* is the openness to alternative predicative judgment it entails. One may assert "*x* is *y*," but one quickly sees that such an assertion is from a particular *naya*. This not only means that there are other *nayas* from which to judge this claim, but it also leads one to see that the reasons for taking her original *naya* instead of another are contingent and idiosyncratic. One's perspective is necessarily biased by interests and purposes, but it is not untrue or invalid because of this—the *eva* particle shows that there is still a certainty to that conditional (*syāt*) predicative utterance. The certainty is simply limited to viewing things from that perspective. *Syādvāda* is not a theory of probability or probable judgment,

because the latter accounts still subscribe to the metaphysical views of the world as bivalent, even if they limit our epistemological access to such a world (Jain 2000).

This openness to the views of others is not without its rhetorical value. The system of *syādvāda* is discussed by Jaina thinkers such as Samantabhadra in his *Āpta-Mīmāṃsā* alongside a defense of Jaina doctrine (Ghoshal 2010, 167). Malliṣena uses *syādvāda* as a way to show the superiority of Jaina doctrine—the views of others are shown to be partial, one-sided views, whereas the Jaina position is the epistemologically superior position. Thus, Dundas (2004) is correct when he claims that "Jainism's apparent inclusivism and tolerance as supposedly resulting from *anekāntavāda* can in fact equally be interpreted as indices of its exclusivism" (125). Perhaps it is better to see such a style of argument as an engaged pluralism, one that mixes inclusion with advocacy. Haribhadra and Mahāvīra employ a perspectivist approach, but each still engages in argument with other traditions. All of this makes sense if one looks at *anekāntavāda* as a rhetorical strategy—as a style of advocating what you think is true and beneficial. *Anekāntavāda* makes one's consciously held limitations a rhetorical advantage. Like Haribhadra, one's synthetic or flexible position is portrayed as superior to those of others because it includes the recognition that others have a grasp of partial truths only. This implies that one's beliefs, or one's beliefs about the nature of belief per se, are better or more truthful than those (limited) commitments of one's opponents. The doctrine of *syādvāda* codifies the intuition that Mahāvīra and Haribhadra evinced at key points in their argumentation—a way to charitably counter an opponent's views with a pluralist position that maintains the omniscience of the Jaina *kevalins* and the veracity of vital Jaina doctrines (such as that of karma).

Anekāntavāda represents pluralism as a method of engagement with the arguments of others, as opposed to a passive or weak pluralism that disengages from the thoughts of others by granting them equal and absolute validity. Dundas (2002) describes its rhetorical value:

> In Jain hands, this method of analysis became a fearsome weapon of philosophical polemic with which the doctrines of Hinduism and Buddhism could be pared down to their ideological bases of simple permanence and impermanence respectively and thus be shown to be one-pointed and inadequate as the overall interpretations of reality which they purported to be. On the other hand, the many-pointed approach was claimed by the Jains to be immune from criticism since it did not present itself as a philosophical or dogmatic view. (231)

Part of the value of this rhetorical strategy stems from the Jaina position as a minority tradition in the south Asian philosophical scene. To gain entry into a world divided by competing schools of Hindu and Buddhist philosophy, the

numerically underrepresented Jainas surely had to innovatively shape their own strategies of argument to differentiate themselves from their opponents. Yet they resisted the urge to disengage, as a passive rhetorical pluralism may have suggested. As Cort (2000) points out, "History has shown that many religious groups have dealt with their minority status by walling themselves off from the surrounding society. This strategy has rarely if ever been adopted by the Jains" (339). The engaged pluralism resident in many parts of the Jaina tradition serves as a way of extending partial respect—by ascribing partial truth—to an opponent's views, while maintaining that one's synthetic or higher-level views grasp more of the real and hence are more desirable. This move is what renders this account of pluralism engaged in nature and rhetorical function.

THE CONTROVERSIAL SOURCE(S) OF *ANEKĀNTA* PLURALISM

The curious pluralism at work in the Jaina tradition is also a rhetorically effective strategy insofar as it respectfully asserts the superiority of some claim or orientation over those of others. Are sources of this style unique to the Jaina tradition and doctrine? This section explores this question in light of a modern dispute regarding *anekāntavāda*. The dispute arises around the possible connection between *anekāntavāda* and the Jaina value of nonviolence (*ahimsā*). As Dhruva (1933) discusses *anekāntavāda*, "Jainism is par excellence *the* doctrine of ahimsā—ahimsā not only of physical life but also of intellectual outlook (darśana)" (lxxiii). Tatia (1951) also connects the pluralism entailed by *anekāntavāda* to Jaina concerns with *ahimsā*:

> One should not hurt the feelings of others. If there are different doctrines, there must be reasons for their origin. It is the duty of a patient thinker to find out the sources of these doctrines. Non-violent search for truth should inspire the enquiries of a thinker. He should not be prejudiced by preconceptions. It is this attitude of tolerance and justice that was responsible for the origin of the doctrine of Non-absolutism (*Anekānta*). Out of universal tolerance and peace-loving nature was born cautiousness of speech. (22)

Taking *anekāntavāda* (hereafter including *nayavāda* and *syādvāda*) as an orientation that functions as an engaged rhetorical pluralism, we can ask: what part of Jaina doctrine most significantly influences or explains this communicative tool? I examine the arguments for and against *anekāntavāda* being a form of intellectual nonviolence.

Why would one want to link *anekāntavāda* to nonviolence? One reason for this seems to be the enormous role that violence (*himsā*) plays in the Jaina reading of the obstacles to enlightenment. For the Jainas, the

cessation of suffering and the achievement of liberation (*mokśa*) entails a physical detachment of the *jīva* from encumbering karma. A vital aspect to this detachment of *jīva* from karma is the noninjury of other creatures. Such violence (*himsā*) is primarily harmful because of the passions (*kaśayas*) that are associated with it—*krodh* (anger), *maan* (conceit), *maya* (illusion), and *lobh* (greed) (Bothara 2004). Passions attract karma to the *jīva*; thus, the Jaina path of purification is one of cultivating the right "disposition of detachment (*vairāgya*) or calm equanimity in the face of all our experiences, both pleasant and unpleasant" (Long 2011, 96). Violence (*himsā*) is particularly harmful, because the "central Jain insight is that the worst passions, the ones that attract the heaviest, most obscuring karmic particles into the soul, are those that are involved in committing acts of violence" (99). Violence must be avoided, or one must resign oneself to working out its karmic consequences.

What is the exact definition of violence on this account? The *Purushartha-Siddhyupaya* (translated in Prasada 1933) gives a definition of violence: "Any injury whatsoever to the material or conscious vitalities caused through passionate activity of the mind, body, or speech is Himsa, assuredly" (27). The conscious vitalities (*bhāva prāna*) include the inherent qualities of a *jīva*—consciousness, peacefulness, bliss, and energy. Violent activity, fueled by and connected to the continuance of passions, harms these qualities of consciousness. Here is where Jainism differs from western analyses of violence, which typically define violence as the unjustified actual harm of another person. The Jaina tradition indicates that violence is bad primarily because it harms one's own *jīva* and secondarily because it harms other *jīva*s. This is not to say other *jīva*s are important only in relation to our *jīva*; it instead recognizes both the equal value of all living beings and the impact on ourselves that the failure to realize this brings. The causal fact is that violence to others is shaped by one's character and further shapes one's future experience. It must be avoided even in those cases where the overt consequences seem innocuous. The *Purushartha-Siddhyupaya* continues, "[I]f one acts carelessly, moved by the influence of passions, there certainly advances Himsa in front of him whether a living being is killed or not. Because under the influence of passion, the person first injures the self, through the self; whether there is subsequently an injury caused to another being or not" (29). Even if no other beings are injured, the primary injury in violence has occurred—one's self has been marred by the accumulation of karma.

The Jaina tradition puts an extraordinary emphasis on the demands of nonviolence (*ahimsā*), even to the point of monastic life involving severe restrictions on eating, moving, breathing, and sitting that are meant to preserve the lives of microorganisms. The Jaina demands of nonviolence are based upon an elaborate reading of the range of violence, both in thought and overt action. The Jainas saw the relation between violent thought and action as having three stages: conceptive, preparative, and operative. There

are different means of acting: in thought, speech, and physical action. Furthermore, there are three different agencies that might be involved in any violent act: one's own self, others commanded by one's demands, and through consenting to the actions of others. All of these result in a possible 108 permutations of violent activity—ranging from thinking about possible violence to commanding others to do it for you (Bothara 2004). All of these accrue some amount of karma that must be worked off by a *jīva*. One could summarize the violence as falling in three categories: "(a) physical violence, which covers killing, wounding, and causing any physical pain; (b) violence in words caused by using harsh words; and (c) mental violence, which implies bearing ill-feelings toward other persons, religions, systems, etc." (Sangave 1991, 66). This comprehensive system covers violence in mere thought, as well as in the more obvious forms that result in actual harm to another being. For laypersons, the hope is to follow part of the path to purification of one's *jīva*, but with the realization that, practically, one can prepare only for the final purification in a future birth as a monk. The layperson takes up demanding vows (called *anuvratas*) that still allow for worldly life: *ahimsā* (nonviolence), *satya* (truth), *asteya* (nonstealing), *brahma* (refraining from sexual licentiousness), and *aparigraha* (nonattachment). Monks take extreme versions of these vows, known as *mahāvratas* (Jaini 1998).

For those asserting a connection of *anekāntavāda* and *ahimsā*, the connection between communication practices and the sorts of passions and attachments associated with violence on the Jaina account is obvious. For the Jaina tradition, many forms of violence that we ought to be concerned with concern communicative interaction with others. How we think of others, how we talk to others, how we make others feel as a result of our communicative practices, all of these aspects are vitally important to the Jaina path of reducing violence in and to our lives. The causal connection of karma and violence seems to be codified into commands concerning violence and communication in the early *Ācārāṅga Sūtra*, which contains lectures on how monks are to communicate such that they do not create embarrassment, jealousy, or mental anguish (see 2.4.1–2 in Jacobi 1884/2013). Thus, the argument goes, there must be some account of communicative nonviolence that can be extracted from Jaina thought. *Anekāntavāda* would represent a way to avoid causing karmic harm to oneself or the selves of others by avoiding passions such as jealousy or hatred, as well as attachment to one's own views. One can see this reading of violence in Pujyapada's *Sarvāthasiddhi*. Commenting on the *Tattvārthā Sutra* verse 7:13 (verse 7:8 in Tatia 1994), he warns against violence in thought as well as external action: "[H]as it not been admitted that mere passionate attitude even without the severance of vitalities constitutes violence?" (Jain 1960, 197). Thought has karmic consequences, so one must be careful what one thinks, speaks, and does in action. Our speech should be truthful according to *Tattvārthā Sutra* 7:9 (Pujyapada's 7:14): "Speaking what is not commendable is falsehood" (Jain

1960, 197). Pujyapada gives a peculiar reading of "commendable," noting "that which causes pain and suffering to the living is not commendable, whether it refers to actual facts or not" (197). One can see how one ought to be nonviolent in thought and action, and speech—being an overt action that can affect those to whom it is addressed—must strive to be "commendable" and nonharming. On this account, the tolerance and pluralism instantiated by *anekāntavāda* would be a way of instantiating nonviolence toward others in speech and nonattachment to passionate views of one's own self. Pujyapada argues along these lines when he addresses verse 7:11 (7:6), which recommends "Benevolence towards all living beings . . . and tolerance toward the insolent and ill-behaved" (Jain 1960, 195). In his commentary, Pujyapada notes that this benevolence is related to "the desire that others should be free from suffering and pain" and that the "ill-behaved are those who don't listen to the truth and don't cultivate virtues" (195). These are most likely non-Jaina individuals; even given this fact, Pujyapada recommends "unconcern towards the indecorous and insolent" in the name of "non-violence and other vows to perfection" (195). It seems that communicative interactions with others can be sites for the practice of nonviolence, if we react in the nonpassionate and tolerant fashion specified by *anekāntavāda* as intellectual *ahimsā*.

On the opposite side, some have argued that the Jaina views on *ahimsā* do not lead to or explain the pluralism resident in *anekāntavāda*. Such opponents to the previous reading of Jaina pluralism will point to the textual fact that nowhere in ancient or classical sources is *anekāntavāda* explicitly linked with *ahimsā*. In addition, *anekāntavāda* does not seem to entail a sustained argumentative nonviolence toward others in the practice of many Jaina partisan arguers (Dundas 2002). Surveying the range of Jaina argumentative texts and noting significant instantiations of tolerance for others, Cort (2000) argues that "there is an equally extensive body of evidence that Jains have been intolerant of others and have advanced the Jain faith as the one true faith" (340). Folkert (1993, 226) complains that intellectual *ahimsā* readings are "highly interpretive," and Long (2011) points out that such views may be tainted by modern concerns for tolerance and religious coexistence. Others highlight the polemic use of the *anekāntavāda* doctrine to position the Jaina views as superior to the "partial" accounts of others (Johnson, 1995). This view claims that, instead of as an entailment of nonviolence, *anekāntavāda* probably arose as a Jaina argumentative style "in which one's own system is depicted as the final truth toward which all other paths point—or, as is the case with Jain inclusivism, the sum total of truths taught in other systems of thought" (Long 2011, 156). Others minimize the role of *anekāntavāda* in Jaina thought, thereby decreasing its relevance to the value of *ahimsā* in actual practice. It is in this spirit that Soni (2007) decries the focus on *anekāntavāda*, calling it "a small, albeit basic, part of Jain thought" (5). On the account that denies a link between *anekāntavāda* and *ahimsā*, what

would explain the rhetorical manifestation of the engaged pluralism that I have been tracking throughout this study?

The answer would focus not on *ahimsā* but on the Jaina view of reality. The Jaina tradition began early on (i.e., in Mahāvīra) to formulate a view of reality that involved seemingly contradictory qualities at a deep level. This tendency is what makes Mookerjee identify the "originality of Jain thought" in the fact that it "asks us to accept the exposure of contradictories as the true measure of reality" (1978, x). Reality itself has a plural character, and attempts to capture it in a one-sided fashion (*ekānta*) are bound to lead to self-illusion. The Jainas saw a different world than our ordinary attitudes might postulate—as Rao (1963) argues of the Jaina worldview, "Reality is many-faced (*anatadharmātmakam vastu*) and intelligence is selective. There are, therefore, as many ways of knowing (*nayas*) as there are faces to reality" (196). This view is corroborated by Matilal's description of *anekāntavāda* as a view of the "manifoldness" of reality, as well as Folkert's (1993) view that the pluralism of judgment displayed by the Jaina thinkers must imply a pluralistic world:

> It is not uncommon for the appellation *anekāntavāda* to be applied only to Jain logic. . . . This is not, strictly speaking, correct; a system that is avowedly realist as is the Jain system must hold that the external world is the arbiter, in the end of correct judgment, and that it is the multi-faceted nature of the world that necessitates multi-faceted judgments concerning it. (220)

The Jaina commitment to a world containing a plurality of characteristics is safeguarded by their realism—the world is a "multifaceted structure, every part of which enters into specific relations and inter-dependencies with other parts of the whole" (Balcerowicz 2002, 38). Consequently, the set of judgments they want to ascribe truth to (and that must reflect some aspect of the world) becomes complex as well. *Nayavāda* arises as a way to do justice to the limits any given human perspective is prone to, and *syādvāda* arises as a directly communicative way to acknowledge a range of truths in various utterances.

One can find evidence for this sort of interpretation in Pujyapada's *Sarvārthasiddhi*. The *Tattvārthā Sutra*, an important Sanskrit philosophical explication of Jaina thought, expands Mahāvīra's pluralistic statements with verse 5:30 (5:29): "Existence is characterized by origination, disappearance (destruction) and permanence" (Jain 1960, 154). All of these attributes of the real object are cognizable from different points of view taken by some subject, according to Pujyapada's commentary on verse 5:32. Right belief is knowledge of what is real (e.g., verses 1:32 and 2:3), so the Jaina concern with right or nondeluded views can be seen as conditioned by the postulation of a complex real. Our judgment must be pluralistic because it mirrors

a pluralistic real. The wrong beliefs would be harmful because they epistemologically mislead an agent. This is why Pujyapada, in his commentary to verse 8:1, equates "right belief" with "belief as things are" and explains that wrong belief in communicative activities such as teaching includes "absolutistic (one-sided) attitude, contrary attitude, doubtful attitude (skepticism), non-discriminating attitude and ignorant attitude" (Jain 1960, 215). All of these can be seen as problematic ways to speak about the real as they fail to enshrine Jaina realistic pluralism. Pluralistic manners of address are the correct way to capture and present right beliefs about the world. This account would foreground *anekāntavāda* as the correct rhetorical orientation to use when undertaking the various rhetorical activities that Jainism recognizes, including "Teaching, questioning, reflection, recitation and preaching" (9:25; Jain 1960, 265). *Anekānta* views on communication, according to this reading, are not grounded on intellectual *ahimsā*; instead, they represent an argumentative style specified by the pluralistic notion of the real of the Jaina doctrine.

ANEKĀNTAVĀDA AND THE METHODOLOGY OF COMPARATIVE RHETORIC

Anekāntavāda spells out the sort of pluralism that is employed with rhetorical skill by proponents such as Haribhadra and Mahāvīra, even if they were not explicitly enunciating and defending a particular (sevenfold) format that it takes. Yet scholars are tempted to explain this doctrine in terms of the rich conceptual wealth of the Jaina tradition. This is what has led us to the impasse noted in the previous section, which effectively argued that there appear to be good reasons why (1) *ekānta* or extreme views are harmful because they are connected with the passions that are correlated with violence and (2) that *ekānta* views are to be avoided not out of tolerance for others but out of epistemological respect for the real posited by Jaina doctrine. A likely temptation would be to take sides in this debate and to adduce evidence why one side is actually superior or more accurate. Perhaps one could exhaustively show that *anekāntavāda* never appeared as a concept connected to *ahimsā*. Or perhaps one could show the logic of intellectual *ahimsā* that "must" be behind *anekāntavāda*, given violence's association with passions and *ekānta* views being passion-provoking reflections of oneself (and its attachments to belief). I doubt either path would silence the other side, as what each fixates on in making its case is a real part of the complex Jaina tradition. One could also try to combine both sides, evincing a concern for the reading of reality as multifaceted in Jainism and the fact that we tend to be passionately attached to our own (limited) views in conversation with others. Yet this will not please all of the disputants in this debate over how to read a rich religious-philosophical phenomenon,

as some will inevitably see this issue as a clash between the claims that "*anekāntavāda* is a form of intellectual *ahimsā*" and "*anekāntavāda* is not a form of intellectual *ahimsā*."

This seemingly intractable dispute about the theory and practice of Jaina rhetoric should spur us to reflect on the presuppositions we take in endeavors in nonwestern or comparative rhetoric. For instance, in a recent discussion of the purposes of comparative rhetoric, some advocated a conception of "accuracy" in scholarly argument and others defended a flexible appropriative pragmatic approach animated by various purposes behind inquiry (Stroud 2009b; 2011). The challenge with appeals to accuracy, of course, is in delineating a clear standard that indicates when one "has it right." Mere intuition and appeals to critical sense will not answer the question of how any given scholar can tell when he or she has produced an accurate interpretation. Concerns over the correct representation of a particular tradition also rely on a tacit assumption—the idea that there is a certain homogeneity and individuation to the phenomenon being studied. The assumption is made that there *is* something called Indian rhetoric, say, and it displays unifying features or characteristics that individuate it from other traditions. This is merely a continuation of our everyday assumption of the identity of particulars, our belief that "*A* is *A*." To know about "my car," I simply figure out where it is located and look at *its* properties. If I run into a contradiction, I must have one side or assertion wrong; evidence or argument can set me right. A theme that comes out in the preceding reading of *anekāntavāda* as rhetorical orientation is a startling one, precisely because it differs from this obvious starting point. Complex cultural phenomena aside, why should I even assume that my car has one consistent, recognizable set of properties that all should observe when they examine it? The exact reading of the level of contradictory properties allowed in the Jaina system is a disputed point (see Ganeri 2002; Priest 2008; Schang 2013), but it is clear that the Jaina account is committed to a multifaceted real that necessitates some rich system of perspectives. Some of these perspectives will issue claims that will contradict the claims of other perspectives. This system of perspectives, as I have argued here, has rhetorical implications when combined with *syādvāda* and its strictures on how we make and respond to argumentative assertions about the world. The Jaina view is that the real (whether it is machine like a car or a tradition of rhetoric) is complex, and that our simplifying assertions, even if they take the form of complex systems of assertions, are always limited to a perspective occupied by that assertor. In the terms of pragmatism, these perspectives on simple or complicated phenomena are all affected by contingent purposes or interests (see Stroud 2009b). This reading is not far from Pujyapada's argument in his commentary on verse 5:32 where he indicates *nayas* are chosen "for the sake of use or need" (Jain 1960, 157). Haribhadra's allowance of a diversity of teachers and teachings because of the diverse needs and interests of various audiences also echoes

this point. This way of reading of human belief and assertion are perspectival primarily because of two features—the contingency and diversity of human purposes in cognitive matters, and the inherently complex nature of the real. Pragmatist approaches to the method of comparative rhetoric highlight the former, but part of the value of studying Jaina rhetoric is that the latter comes into view as a possibility that is often overlooked.

This constitutes the valuable methodological reflection spurred on by the Jaina rhetoric of *anekāntavāda*. Readings and interpretations of simple or varied phenomena will be pluralistic because of the role of human interests and the complexity of the real. We should never allow a confused sense that *this* way of reading a phenomenon (usually our own way) is *the* correct or accurate way, and that any divergent readings err in some transcendental or realist sense. *Anekāntavāda* is both (1) a form of intellectual *ahimsā* and (2) is unrelated to *ahimsā*. Cort (2000) claims, "In the spirit of *anekāntavāda*, one must admit that neither position bears the whole truth" (340). Perhaps one could also combine these two extreme views in fallibilistic despair, one could also utter that the full nature of *anekāntavāda* is beyond specification in one exhaustive assertion. Yet we can still make assertive claims about it, so this view represents a false transcendence of the problem. *Anekāntavāda* both is and is not based on *ahimsā* and goes beyond these ways of describing the conceptual relationship. *Anekāntavāda* as concept and orientation seems deceptively simple; our readings of its complex origins, explanations, and what role it plays in a tradition that stretches from ancient India to modern appropriative contexts get misled quickly. Isn't this the way with any comparative or nonwestern endeavor? We are fooled into giving an analysis of *this* thinker or tradition, because it seems like we can identify and talk about one entity bearing a finite number of properties. But taking all of this very seriously rests on the assumption that our starting point is correct. Such objects of study are subject to countless simplifications at the hands of purposive human investigators.

Anekāntavāda not only pays dividends as a phenomenon of inquiry but also presents a new way to think through the plurality of readings, arguments, and interpretations of complex phenomena in rhetorical studies. One of the contemporary concerns in criticism, as well as in comparative rhetoric, is how to limit the distorting functions of subjective perspective(s). Garrett (2013) offers some useful tactics for enhancing critical self-reflexivity as an antidote to the harmful assumption that our perspective is *the* way to study some object. Comparative rhetoricians are urged to do three things: (1) "to be more self-aware" and mindful of their own limits, (2) to interact with "co-collaborators" or insiders of a culture being studied, and (3) to try to be more empathetic and see things as the objectified subject being studied might see things (252–253). These are all valuable suggestions as long as investigators are truly self-reflective and not simply feeling proud that they seem open to the other. However, self-deception could derail all

of these strategies. This concern could be given a Jaina form, as I do in an appropriative look at Jaina logic and "partisan perfect" strategies of self-focused reasoning elsewhere (Stroud 2014). But Garrett's point remains that if we are able to carry these measures out with the distortions of self and our passions, our work would be more self-reflective of the perspectives which it and other contrary accounts take.

What *anekāntavāda* foregrounds in its engaged pluralism is a structure with which to order competing claims or systems of assertions (namely, "readings" or "accounts"). It could also adjudicate between critical systems (e.g., Freudian and Jungian psychology) and the mutually exclusive readings of texts they often produce. It does this in two different ways. First, it makes the complexity of the object an explanation for why we need to be aware of perspectives taken by arguers. The real is complex and only known positively through engagement with a plurality of differently able and interested agents; our understanding of argumentative accounts ought to reflect this realization about the world and its knowers. These perspectives (*nayas*) are taken not only by interested individuals; they can impact the interests of such investigators by influencing the passions, emotions, and attachments. Scholars as well as ancient Indian gurus can also become too attached to one way of spelling out the complex whole that is this world; ego and self-focused attachment can drive argument that claims it is guided by pure reason alone. Interests and passions direct investigation, and investigation can shape our interests and passions. Staying clear of strongly held, simple assertions represents a way of both reducing attachment to a reading and a way of respecting the complexity of the phenomenon under study. Second, the seemingly dry predicative logic of *syādvāda* offers us a method or procedure to guide us in thinking through conflicts of interpretations without deforming passions or attachments getting in our way. Others can disagree with my reading of a tradition or text; *syādvāda* gives me the procedure to fit their claims alongside my predicative assertions, many of which ultimately come into conflict with their claims. Just as Haribhadra uses the pluralism of the Jaina tradition in an engaged manner, we too can respectfully judge readings that claim too much—accounts that aim to exhaust a phenomenon and exclude alternative, even conflicting, readings. Each of these readings is valuable because it gets some part of the rhetorical phenomenon "right," but the surprising point is that there is a plurality of ways to get something "right" on the Jaina account. This is because the real has a virtually infinite number of attributes, leading to a large range of corresponding ways to describe them in conceptual terms. Thus, *anekāntavāda* has value as a pluralistic framework that excludes other totalizing readings of phenomena, but it still allows and respects a wide range of conflicting readings. In other words, it makes sense of scholarly disagreement by affirming the partial truth of all predicative claims about some subject object. Complementing Garrett's account that attempts to limit deforming influences of the self on

the critical self, the *anekāntavāda* approach to rhetorical interaction with others (including scholars and their critical claims) foregrounds what I will (probably misleadingly) call an objective corrective: it postulates the real (the "object" of study) as a complex whole and then consequently tempers and limits the claims of the self in light of this stand on the possible object of investigation. *Nayavāda* and *syādvāda* become procedural ways of making sure a passion-driven subject does not harmfully err in how he or she engages the object of study. Much more must be said on the complex phenomenon that is Jaina rhetoric. This account, however, has advanced one way of making sense of the complex but fascinating interplay of realism, pluralism, and argument in light of opposing others that is represented by the Jaina religious-philosophical tradition.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

An earlier version of this work was presented at the Symbolic Violence Conference, Texas A&M University, March 1–4, 2012.

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