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The Ends of Man at the End of Premodernity

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
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To have been invited to present the Gonda Memorial Lecture is an especially great honor for someone like me who was trained in a philological style that took the tradition of Dutch Indology as something of a model. I remember as a college student gazing with awe at those fifteen light-blue volumes of Hendrik Kern's *Verspreide Geschriften* adorning the shelves of the Harvard Sanskrit Library. And I still recall reading with a certain fascination Jan Gonda's various essays: his fifteen-page paper on the particle *api*, to say nothing of his fifty-page analysis: 'Altind. °anta-, °antara-, usw.' This kind of care for detail—this artisanal mastery—does tend to focus the mind of the young student, and it did not take much to convince me that this mode of inquiry is an absolutely necessary condition of our disciplinary practice. What I have remained uncertain about my whole professional life, however, is whether it is an altogether sufficient one. Not that Gonda himself (to say nothing of Kern) would have believed that it was. Gonda's own work always seems to aim at some higher-order synthesis—one thinks of his own contributions to the *History of Indian Literature* or *Religionen Indiens*—and to be imbued with deep historical sensibilities. Although he concentrated on the earliest monuments of Sanskrit culture, I believe he would have been sympathetic to an inquiry into the history of the latest, which I offer in what follows.

What I want to show here, among other things, is that we can write a history of Sanskrit learning in the 'late premodern,' or 'early modern,' period (c. 1550–1750)—taking these terms for the moment in a strictly chronological and value-neutral sense as virtually synonymous with precolonial, and thereby suspending judgment about these centuries as a global *Sattelzeit*, as Reinhart Koselleck has called it, and about modernity as a single (and singular) phenomenon, which was introduced into South Asia with Western colonialism and capitalism. We can write this intellectual history because there is a history to Sanskrit intellection. A historiographical project of this sort would hardly seem an audacious enterprise to most reasonable people, yet it brings me into disagreement with some recent Indian and European scholars who, infected with a certain strain of post-colonial nativism or neo-Orientalism, argue that such a history for India is teleological, or even worse, is a fundamental cultural misunderstanding, since it does not conform with indigenous conceptual schemes or is even resisted by them. We are witnessing the return of some of the oldest clichés in the field: that 'the

traditional Indian mind’—whatever that may refer to—envisions not the linear sequencing of events amenable to a historical narrative but rather a cyclic renewal of cultural phenomena.

I find this attitude problematic for many reasons. The absence of an Indian history [*die Geschichte*], assuming for the sake of argument that it is absent, does not entail the absence of Indian history [*das Geschehen*]; more subtly, even the absence of history [*das Geschehen*], assuming for the sake of argument that this is what we see, does not preclude the possibility of a history [*die Geschichte*]. The un-historical has historicity, and cyclicity itself presupposes it; even demonstrating stasis and repetition requires historiography. There is no insuperable contradiction between a historical and a historicist reconstruction of a world less precommitted to history than the modern West; we can still take seriously what they took seriously, as I once put it, and take it historically, whether they took it historically or even unhistorically.

I believe assertions of cyclical renewal are in fact a false generalization about premodern Indian beliefs—seventeenth-century Indian scholars could provide a very linear account indeed of their disciplines when they wished to do so.¹ Even if those assertions were true it would mean that we can never know anything about traditional India but what traditional Indians themselves knew. To abandon historical analysis in the name of what some emphatically call ‘difference’ would be like abandoning heliocentric theory for geocentrism. That people in the past held a geocentric view is crucial for us to know, but it does not mean that in the past the earth did not go around the sun. It is entirely possible for us to learn about premodern processes, even processes involving meaning and its historicity, that premodern people did not reflect upon the same way we do today.

If writing Indian intellectual history is thus not only conceptually justified but necessary, the writing of it is, relatively speaking, the easy part. Far more complex is the interpretation of that history in our present context, and herein—what that history might mean to us—lies a second question I want to explore. The complexity has two sources: First, our own context is not something we can suppress

¹ The problem of history writing in late premodern India is revisited in Narayana Rao et al. 2001. I consider the constraints on historical textualization in Sanskrit culture in Pollock 1989.

by an act of sheer will, since it is constitutive of the very historiographical venture we are undertaking (philosophical hermeneutics has settled this matter). Second, the issues our context generates are themselves complex, for they are inextricably tied up with the triumph of capitalist modernity in India and the truncated trajectory of Indian learning consequent upon this triumph. As a result, we must come to terms with the rise of a postcolonial attempt (often but not always a reactionary indigenist attempt) to recuperate the grandeurs of a civilizational achievement from the cold ashes of the past as an alternative to the present, and of a postmodern, or perhaps nonmodern, attempt (sometimes but not always a progressively postmodern or nonmodern attempt) to transcend this past and the inequities it bequeathed to the present.

The difficulty of understanding Indian intellectual history is compounded by the effect of European history in shaping our understanding. Again, comparison with the development of European knowledge is not something we can simply choose to ignore, for both historical and theoretical reasons. The Sanskrit traditions of knowledge ended with the coming of that knowledge—not necessarily because of it but certainly concurrently with it—and without understanding the relative strengths of these two ways of knowing the world we cannot possibly understand their historical, and historic, agon. Conceptually, it is obviously as important to understand what enables a tradition to radically transform itself as it is to understand what enables a tradition to secure continuity, and here early modern European thought is especially valuable because the causal factors behind the transformation are vividly highlighted. Yet a comparison of India with the West does not produce an entirely unequivocal picture. In some cases, the categories of literary theory for example, a remarkable symmetry between Indian and European traditions lasted into the eighteenth century; in others, such as the history of political theory, a sudden and profound divergence appeared in the seventeenth century after a millennium of what seems a largely parallel development. But in general, the comparative story of what made the West intellectually modern and India intellectually premodern—accepting for a moment the common assumptions—has not yet been told in any detail and so must be labor-

iously pieced together.² And it is unlikely to turn out to be a story with a tightly unified plot, let alone a single moral.

I began the attempt to make sense of the late history of Sanskrit culture with an essay that examined the history of literature, which I consider an especially sensitive gauge of the vitality of a power-culture order.³ In that work, which sought to provide a set of compass bearings of both a historical and a conceptual sort for setting out across what for most Indologists is an almost uncharted terrain, I noted that *kāvya* and *śāstra*, literature and the knowledge systems, did not develop according to the same historical rhythms. It is the rhythms of the latter that I want to explore now, while at the same time trying to address head-on the interpretive challenge of the outcome of this historiography. In brief, this challenge lies in figuring out how to chart a path between an Occidentalist narrative of the inevitability of the triumph of capitalist modernity and an indigenist belief in the perfected world of India before that modernity destroyed it.

It is not news to announce that, with the coming of modernity, the modernity of colonialism, to India, one form of knowledge—an entire epistemological scheme and cognitive map of great antiquity and influence—came to an end, and another—one that was unfamiliar to Indians, that disqualified their own knowledge as knowledge, that was modern in the way the West was then learning to define modernity—took its place. Much of the most influential scholarship in South Asia studies during the past generation has been concerned to show just this. Indeed, the more extreme formulation of this view adds the twist that the new map and scheme were so powerful as to have actually invented what they were mistakenly supposed to have destroyed, entailing a ‘traditionalization’ of the Indian world in which kinds of knowledge and forms of practice took

² Kaviraj forthcoming observes that the one process central to modernity that lacks a high theory is its ‘cognitive constitution.’ The consequences of this lack will be obvious in the unsatisfactory attempts that follow here to identify the salient features constituting modernity in European aesthetic discourse, moral theory, and political thought.

³ Pollock 2002.

on a reality they never had previously.⁴ One might wonder, however, if the greater part of this edifice of postcolonial scholarship isn't built on sand, insofar as it presupposes a level of understanding of the epistemological space invaded by colonialism that has simply not yet been reached, not by a long shot. Whatever sense we finally make of the colonial impact, I believe it can be shown that Sanskrit *śāstra* did experience a historic rupture at the dawn of modernity, though not necessarily because of it, a rupture similar to that which occurred in the case of *kāvya*, though according to a much different timetable (just as the history of Latin literature differed from that of systematic thought in Latin). Of course, parts of the ancient *śāstra* tradition did preserve a residual existence in various regions of India; some have even made a comeback in postmodernity (*āyurveda*, forms of *jyotiḥśāstra*, *vāstuśāstra*, *yoga*). But many of the core components of *vyutpatti*, or Sanskrit education, including the trivium of disciplines dealing with language, discourse, and logic (*śabda-*, *vākya-*, and *pramāṇa-śāstra*), did not make that comeback. On the contrary, production in these knowledge forms—by any reasonable criterion of what constitutes production significant for historical studies or, more simply put, production of the sort that had marked the history of these disciplines prior to the nineteenth century—came to an end.

The fact that the Sanskrit knowledge systems ceased to be creatively cultivated, and the reason why this happened, constitute an intellectual-historical problematic of considerable interest. I want to open up a conversation on that problematic by exploring some central questions concerning the later history of Sanskrit thought—questions that are central not only to the history of the disciplines but to their subject matter (pertaining as they do to the sources of artistic creation, moral authority, and political power). If we can gain some understanding of what precisely this later history is, and how these disciplines looked in the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century, just prior to the colonial

⁴ The literature on this *coupure épistemologique* is large. Any short list of recent contributions would have to include Cohn 1996, Prakash 1999, Dirks 2001, the various essays of Washbrook, especially 1997, and the Subaltern Studies project as a whole (for an assessment see Chakrabarty 2002). Newer scholarship has begun to explore the terrain around the *coupure* from Indian sources: see for example, for the late eighteenth century, Peabody 2001 and Wagoner 2003, and for the early nineteenth, Dodson 2002 and Hatcher 1996.

encounter, we may be in a better position to grasp why it was that ideas developed over two millennia ceded their primacy so completely to the new knowledge forms that came from the West. I should add parenthetically that we can justifiably speak of ‘Sanskrit knowledge systems’ (as we cannot do in the case of, say, Latin) since these were not just forms of thought that found expression *in* Sanskrit, but also in many important cases—including grammar, hermeneutics, moral theory, and to some extent poetics—forms of thought *about* Sanskrit, about the language’s particular linguistic identity, peculiar social and ideological history (its connection with old revelation of the Vedas), and special resources (such as the hyper-synonymy of a non-natural language).⁵ Sanskrit remains a stable organizing framework, though the forms of knowledge it organized were far from stable. As I show they had a remarkable history, if a finite one.

I have chosen to organize this exploration around the ancient grouping of the three ‘ends of man’ (*puruṣārthas*): pleasure, power, and the moral order (*kāma*, *artha*, and *dharma*). In the ideal-typical template of Indian culture, the *puruṣārthas* have to be considered one of the primary *geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, even if these ‘historical core concepts’—and I stress historical, since the concepts were under constant reconstruction, as the following exposition demonstrates—were almost never discussed as a group in the late premodern period. Indeed, the silence is arguably due only to the fact that by then the *puruṣārthas* had taken on the character of common sense. In the discourse on political rule (*nīti*), for example, though later authors seem largely to ignore the category, it is doubtful they would have contested the *Kāmandakeyānītīsāra* when it locates the whole purpose

⁵ To some degree this fact may help explain their non-translatability, though why such systems as logic were not translated is more obscure. See Pollock 2005.

of the polity in its enabling the realization of the three ends of man, while finding no need whatever to argue the primacy of these ends.⁶

My treatment here expands on the traditional definitions and disciplines of the *puruṣārthas* to include some of their more important representatives in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century thought. This expansion is a consequence not of caprice but of a historically significant transformation that had occurred in the production of these discourses. Thus, in the domain of pleasure I deal not with the science of desire (*kāmaśāstra*) and sexual pleasure but with the science of literature (*sāhityaśāstra*) and *le plaisir du texte*—specifically the dispute over the sources or causes (*hetu*) of literature and the discussion of the nature of emotional response (*rasa*), which do in fact traverse the concerns of pleasure that *kāmaśāstra* treats. An additional, negative reason for my choice is the fact that during the period under examination little of importance was written in Sanskrit in the domain of *kāmaśāstra* strictly construed.⁷

Even less was written in the domain of the science of power (*arthaśāstra*), again strictly construed, though this diminution represents less a fall off from earlier productivity than a continuation of the status quo ante. The science of power was the least prolific of the various forms of systematic thought throughout Indian history. No significant independent text on the subject in Sanskrit was produced in the second millennium, with the possible exception of the *Bārhaspatya-sūtra* (perhaps datable to the twelfth century, if I am right that it mentions the

⁶ ‘The entire polity (*rājya*) has thus been described. Its ultimate foundation is wealth, along with the instruments [of force]. When taken in hand by a competent minister it leads to the continuous fulfillment of the three ends of man’ (4.74)—i.e., for the people as a whole; Śaṅkarārya in his *Jayamaṅgala* commentary here suggests it is the ends of the king that is meant (he cites *Arthaśāstra* 1.4.1), yet this is not necessarily a contradiction (note that in 1.15 a good king leads both himself and his people to the fulfillment of the three ends). I now see that the political supplies a standard trope—perhaps *the* trope—for discussions of the *puruṣārthas* throughout Indian intellectual history (Kane 1962–77, 3: 239–41).

⁷ The texts offered in Zysk 2002 illustrate my point. A substantial production, relatively speaking, of *kāmaśāstra* texts in the vernacular is discernible in this period, but—if the Brajbhasha evidence I have examined is in any way characteristic—this was largely derivative of the medieval Sanskrit discourse of the *Kokaśāstra* and related texts (see Pollock 2005).

Hoysala or Seuna kings of the Deccan). Discourse on the political in Sanskrit was not entirely absent, however; it had migrated to be almost completely absorbed within the larger analysis of the social-moral order (*dharmasāstra*), in particular, within the discourse on kingly duty (*rājadharmasāstra*). The possible meanings of the disappearance of political theory as an independent discipline is something I return to in what follows.

The reason for my choice of source material in the science of the moral order will be less obvious. While there is much to say about the structure of *dharmasāstra* in our period, there is almost nothing to say about its views on the sources of moral knowledge. Only one of the major compendia (*dharmānibandhas*) of the seventeenth century discusses this matter in any detail, though it had been a core concern of ancient *sūtra*, later *smṛti*, and still later medieval commentarial traditions. The discipline that reflected most deeply on the sources of knowing what is ‘right’ was *mīmāṃsā*, the science of (Vedic) discourse, or hermeneutics, especially the section of the system dealing with customary moral texts and practices (the *smṛtipāda*, *Pūrvamīmāṃsāsūtra* 1.3). Admittedly this is an old, even foundational problematic of the system, but the question was reinvigorated in the period under consideration with the striking revival of *mīmāṃsā*.

Although at first glance these may appear to be three separate forms of knowledge, *sābhyasāstra* (standing in for *kāmasāstra*), *rājadharmasāstra* (for *arthaśāstra*), and *mīmāṃsā* (for *dharmasāstra*) are entirely of a piece, certainly on the evidence of the seventeenth-century materials examined here (in fact, numerous thinkers contributed to all three discourses). In the concept of the *puruṣārthas* there lies embedded a deep understanding about the interconnectedness of pleasure, power, and the moral order, though so far as I can see the history and logic of this conceptual network remains to be fully charted and understood by Indologists.⁸ In the particular constellation of concerns to be addressed here we will

⁸ Malamoud 1982. Surprisingly little scholarship exists on this topic, let alone scholarship in a historical vein (Malamoud’s excellent article is imbued with the structuralism of the 1960s). Equally understudied is the history of the expansion of the three ends to four by the inclusion of *mokṣa*. The fifth-century lexicographer Amarasimha knew both (*Nāmaliṅgānūsāsana* 2.7.58), but the terminus ante quem remains unclear. I aim eventually to synthesize my findings on the history of term from its origins in *mīmāṃsā*, where it is counterposed to *kratvartha*.

see that the analysis of literature presupposes a certain shared understanding of the formation of the moral person, and this knowledge for its part is critically linked to the organization of power, the whole ensemble providing (as we just saw) the *raison d'être* of the polity. The same interlocking set of values is manifest in the comparative materials I adduce from early modern England and France, where 'wit [i.e., literature], morals, and politics' came to form something of a unity for the first time in European history.⁹

The world of late premodern Indian knowledge is vast, and finding some way to narrow it down is essential. I do that here by choosing what seem to me to be representative persons and environments. Regional formations of the epoch show diverse modes of political organization and hence of patronage structures. The social world of knowledge in courtly Tanjavur (in today's Tamilnadu) or Orcha (Madhya Pradesh) differed from that in Varanasi with its apparently freelance scholars (though to be sure some residents of Varanasi, including two of importance in this overview, Nīlakaṇṭha Bhaṭṭa and Anantadeva, had connections to distant courts). Moreover, although some Sanskrit intellectuals, like their works, participated in transregional networks of circulation, remarkable localized patterns manifest themselves, as in the development of regional disciplinary specializations (including language analysis in Maharashtra, logic in Bengal, and life science in Kerala). I do not pretend to explain these facts here, but I am interested in whether we can find any place for *place* itself in the history of Indian thought of the epoch—whether scholarly production or ideas or methods or standards may have varied in different places in line with their distinctive social features. I therefore choose scholars from a variety of milieus while focusing on one: Varanasi, the capital of the Sanskrit seventeenth century.

Whether an ancient glory was being recreated here or was in fact being created for the first time, Varanasi was the center of the Sanskrit intellectual world, and the center of the center was the Bhaṭṭa family. We know a good deal about this lineage of scholars, one of the most remarkable in Indian history, from what they tell us in their own texts as well as from a family history written around 1600,

⁹ Nisbet and Rawson 1997: 17.

the *Gādhivamśānucarita*.¹⁰ The Bhaṭṭas were originally Maharashtrian but had been resident in Varanasi from the early sixteenth century, when the patriarch, Rāmeśvara, traveled from Paithan around 1522, among the first in what was to be a steady stream of scholars immigrating from the region. The three scholars I deal with here were contemporaries, brothers or first cousins, living in Varanasi in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. The first is Kamalākara Bhaṭṭa, son of Rāmakṛṣṇa, grandson of Nārāyaṇa, great-grandson of Rāmeśvara. As his publications find their way into print today and the full scope of his learning becomes clear, Kamalākara reveals himself as a brilliant if sometimes quite eccentric scholar in a range of disciplines, including *dharmasāstra*, *mīmāṃsā*, and *alaṅkārasāstra*. It is his *Kamalākari* commentary on the *Kāvya prakāśa* that I use to get a sense of the literary theory of the period.¹¹ For the discourse on power I look at the *Nītimayūkha* of Nilakaṇṭha Bhaṭṭa, Kamalākara's cousin and son of the great *mīmāṃsaka* Śāṅkara Bhaṭṭa (who was the younger brother of Kamalākara's father, Rāmakṛṣṇa, as well as the author of the family chronicle earlier mentioned and teacher of, among others, Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita, the most important grammarian of the century).¹² Last, for the understanding of *dharma* I draw on the *Bhāṭṭadinakara* of Dinakara, the elder brother of Kamalākara and father of Viśveśvara Bhaṭṭa, better known as Gāgā, an equally notable intellectual and personality who completed (or perhaps co-authored) the *Dinakaroddyota*, his father's vast work on *dharmasāstra*, and famously performed the royal consecration ceremony for the Maratha king Śivāji in 1674.

My other principal conversation partners are all scholars located in courtly environments. In the case of literary theory, I glance at the work of Rājacuḍāmaṇi Dīkṣita (fl. 1635). He attended the court of Tanjavur during the reign of Raghunātha, son of Acyuta. A student of Veṅkaṭeśvara Dīkṣita, he also wrote on

¹⁰ The work was first made known in Haraprasad Shastri 1912. Benson 2001 gives a summary of the poem; for other references to the family see Kane 1926: v–xlv and Salomon 1985: xxiv–xxvii.

¹¹ His works are described at the end of his commentary on the *Kāvya prakāśa* discussed below, and see *New Catalogus Catalogorum* s.v., and Kane 1962–77, vol. 1.2: 925 ff.

¹² Benson 2001: 114.

mīmāṃsā and *nyāya* and produced a range of literary texts, completing (as he tells us in his *Kāvya-darpaṇa*) the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* of the *Bhojacampū* in a single day.¹³ For *rājadharma* I examine the *Vīramitrodaya* of Mitra Miśra from the early seventeenth-century court of Bīr Singh Dev (r. 1605–27) at Orcha (the ‘Vīra’ who accompanies Miśra in the title of his treatise). We know comparatively much about this *dharmasāstrin* and poet from the family history he provides in the *Paribhāṣāprakāśa*, the introductory volume of his *Vīramitrodaya*. In addition he wrote the *Ānandakandacampū*, a poem on Mathura and Bīr Singh Dev’s construction of the Kṛṣṇa temple there.¹⁴ Last, for thinking through the later history of *mīmāṃsā* I refer occasionally to the work of Vāsudeva Dīkṣita (fl. 1730), author of the little-known if important *Adbhavamīmāṃsākutūbalavṛtti* (and of the better-known if less important *Bālamānoramā* commentary on Bhaṭṭojī’s *Siddhāntakaumudī*). According to his own account he was the son of Mahādeva Vājapeyayāgin (whom he describes as an authority on the *kalpasūtras*), and the student of Viśveśvara Vājapeyayāgin, his elder brother. He had served as chief ritualist (*adbharyu*) of Ānanda Rāya, ‘emperor of the learned,’ who himself was prime minister (*amātyadburandara*) of the ‘Bhosala Cola kings, Śāhajī, Śarabhajī [i.e., Serfoji] and Tukkojī.’¹⁵ I will have more to say about these thinkers when addressing their works.

2. KĀMA: ALAṆKĀRĀŚĀSTRA AND THE END OF LITERARY THEORY

In order to get a sense of the state of literary theory in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century India, I want to look at two questions central to this theory, one apparently narrow (but treated at greater length here) and one more expansive (but treated more cursorily): the ‘causes’ of or factors in the creation of po-

¹³ His philosophical works include a *saṃgraha* text called the *Tantrasikḥāmaṇi* of 1637 (Miśra in Jha 1942: 57), a commentary on the *Śāstradīpikā*, and a restatement of the ‘Śabdapariccheda’ of the *Tattvacintāmaṇi* called the *Maṇidarpaṇa*.

¹⁴ *Vīramitrodaya Paribhāṣāprakāśa* vv. 28 ff. The *Ānandakandacampū* is dated Śaka (i.e., v.s.) 1690, or 1633/34 C.E. He was the son of Paraśurāma Miśra, himself a poet who received the (curiously Brajhasha) title Vāñīrasālarāya at the Mughal court (Kaviraj 1923).

¹⁵ See the colophon to the *Siddhāntakaumudī* with the *Bālamānoramā* p. 955. Tukkojī (also known as Tulajī) ascended the throne in 1729.

etry, and the nature of *rasa*, the emotional states engendered by a literary work. We will consider these issues through two texts already mentioned, both of which center on the *Kāvyaṣa* of Mammaṭa; the one, by Kamalākara, is an actual commentary; the other, Rājacuḍāmaṇi Dīkṣita, is an adaptation or recasting of Mammaṭa's work.¹⁶ It will be useful to begin by saying something about the two texts themselves and the discursive formation of Sanskrit poetics of which they formed part.

The genres of Sanskrit literary theory in the era under discussion were basically three: the independent treatise, or *prakaraṇa*; what we can call the adaptation; and the commentary. Independent treatises were comparatively rare, and only a handful are well known today, including Jagannātha's *Rasaṅgādhara* (c. 1640, probably Delhi) and Viśveśvara's *Alaṅkāraśāstra* (c. 1675, Almora). Even specialists are usually unaware of the few others, which include Viśvanātha Deva's *Sāhityasudhāsindhu* (before 1604, probably Varanasi) and Gokulanātha Upādhyāya's *Rasamahārṇava* (c. 1675, Mithila/Varanasi). A more common genre—and in fact one apparently peculiar to *alaṅkāraśāstra*—was the adaptation, sometimes unacknowledged but usually obvious. This occasionally produced something quite new, such as the *Kuvalayānanda* (based on Jayadeva's *Candrālōka*) of Appayya Dīkṣita (fl. 1550), but more often only provided a new bottle for very old wine, as with the *Kāvyaṣa* of Rāmadeva Cirañjīva Bhaṭṭācārya (c. 1720, Dhaka), similarly an abbreviation of Jayadeva's work but one that circulated widely despite—or perhaps precisely because of—its slightness.¹⁷ More important than either of these genres was the commentary. As in the European scholastic tradition, commentary was the privileged mode of scholarly production not only in *alaṅkāraśāstra* but also in *rājadharma* discourse and in *mīmāṃsā*, but it had a special logic in the first of these knowledge systems.

The development of *alaṅkāraśāstra* as a discipline was shaped from the start by the absence of a foundational text (Bharata's third- or fourth-century *Nāṭyaśāstra*

¹⁶ The recent editions of the *Kāvyaṣa* and the *Kamalākara* are both flawed. For the former, the *editio princeps* of 1926 must still be used; for the latter, one must resign oneself to guessing. A French translation of the *Kāvyaṣa* by François Grimal is forthcoming.

¹⁷ For the *Kuvalayānanda* see Bronner 2004, 2002; on the *Kāvyaṣa*, Pollock 2002: 422 n. 63.

never occupied this position except in the discourse on *rasa*).¹⁸ The major points on the system's historical map can be plotted as the self-nomination (and rejection) of potential claimants to this title. The fact that the *prakaraṇa* genre in *alaṅkāraśāstra* largely disappeared after the middle of the seventeenth century may be a sign that the quest had ended. What is certain is that a claimant had been chosen: Mammaṭa himself. The primacy of his *Kāvyaṅkāśa* (early eleventh century) in the canon of Sanskrit literary theory was a gradual development, not a seventeenth-century creation. The commentary industry on the text began not long after it was composed, with Ruyyaka (in Kashmir) and Māṅḍikyaçandra (in Gujarat), both around 1150. More than sixty commentaries followed, generation upon generation, a figure that may well exceed the total on all the other *alaṅkāra* works combined. A disproportionate number of these were produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and mostly in Mithila, Bengal, and Varanasi.¹⁹

The remarkable intensity of the discussion found in late premodern *alaṅkāra* texts—from Appayya's *Kuvalayānanda* in the mid-sixteenth century to Bhīmasena Dīkṣita's *Kāvyaṅkāśasudhāsāgara* in the early eighteenth—was, however, not sustained. It has proved impossible, for me at any rate, to identify a single significant contribution to the millennium-long conversation on the nature of literature that was produced after about 1750. Consider the picture of Sanskrit literary theory from the eighteenth century onward offered in a recent overview: With the notable exception of Viśveśvara Paṇḍita, none of the *alaṅkārikas* identified for this later era—prominent among those listed are Nṛsiṃha Kavi of Mysore and Acyutarāya Modak of Maharashtra (both mid-eighteenth century)—were serious contributors to the discipline, whether in terms of intellectual substance or disciplinary influence (measured, for example, by the circulation of their works).²⁰

¹⁸ See Bronner 2004.

¹⁹ Commentaries from south India are rare before the seventeenth century. I count only two, both from Andhra. A systematic study of the spatiotemporal distribution of the text is a desideratum.

²⁰ Krishna 2002: 268 ff., an overview worth citing though often erroneous (for example, the *Pratāparudrīyayaśobbhūṣaṇa* is not 'an influential text' in the 'subsequent period'—i.e., subsequent to Jagannātha, fl. 1650; it dates to the early fourteenth century; see also notes 64 and 113). A glance at Acyutarāya's commentary on the *Bhāminīvilāsa* of Jagannātha suffices to reveal how minor is the intelligence at work.

The later history of *alañkāraśāstra* thus exhibits one among what we will see is a series of intellectual ruptures, even more clearly and indisputably in evidence in *rājadharmā* and *mīmāṃsā*, that affected many of the Sanskrit shastric traditions. Something unprecedented had evidently occurred to produce a fissure that was too deep to allow the creative tradition to ever reconstitute itself.

It must have been rather late in his career that Kamalākara Bhaṭṭa wrote his commentary on the *Kāvya prakāśa* ‘for the diversion of his virtuous son Ananta and the pleasure of the learned,’ since at its end he refers to the various contributions he had made over his lifetime to *nyāya*, *vyākaraṇa*, *mīmāṃsā* (both Bhāṭṭa and Prābhākara; the one work he names among the ‘twenty’ he boasts of is his as yet unpublished commentary on the *Tantravārttika*), *vedānta*, *śrauta*, and *dharmāśāstra* (there is an allusion to his *Nirṇayasindhu*). At the start of the work Kamalākara acknowledges that there are ‘thousands of commentaries on the *Kāvya prakāśa*,’ but still, the learned will come to see that his *Kamalākari* possesses a certain superiority (*viśeṣa*) over all the others.²¹ One distinctive feature of the work that this kind of reflexivity seems to herald is its function as supercommentary, or totalizing metacommentary, vetting every earlier exegesis Kamalākara had access to. Thus in the opening comment—on how to define the word ‘book’ (*grantha*) with which Mammaṭa opens his work—Kamalākara cites the commentaries on Mammaṭa of Paramānanda, Śrīvatsalāñchana, Devanātha, Lāṭabhāskara, and ‘the author of the Madhumatī,’ Subuddhi Miśra. Elsewhere he refers to the commentaries of Sarasvatīrtha (from Andhra); Govinda Ṭhakkur, the author of the *Pradīpa*; Caṇḍidāsa; and the ‘author of the Maṇi’ (presumably Lauhitya Bhaṭṭa Gopāla Sūri, author of the *Sābityacuḍāmaṇi*, and also a southerner). This list represents almost every major commentator on the work—four centuries of scholarship from across the subcontinent—apart from the two twelfth-century inaugurators mentioned earlier.

In his *Kāvya darpaṇa* Rājacuḍāmaṇi Dīkṣita follows a radically different procedure. He incorporates the structure and much of the substance from the *Kāvya prakāśa* (though without ever identifying this is what he is doing). In this the *Kāvya darpaṇa* may be indebted to Appayya’s *Kuvalayananda*, but the procedure here

²¹ *Kamalākari* v.3. He makes the same argument in the *Nirṇayasindhu*: ‘Learned men and their compositions exist by the tens of millions; but some may be able to recognize a special brilliance in this work of mine’ (v. 8).

appears to be far less radical. Like Kamalākara—and unlike a number of their predecessors—Rājacuḍāmaṇi came to praise and not to bury Mammaṭa, and his supplements to the master are few and far between.

As is the case with the other *śāstras* examined in the course of this monograph, it is no easy thing to determine what is new, whether in method or substance, in the works of either Kamalākara or Rājacuḍāmaṇi Dīkṣita, since the ability to securely identify an innovation presupposes familiarity with the entire antecedent history of the discipline. We can, however, get some sense of what is typical in their intellectual projects by examining the two central problems in *alaṅkāra-śāstra* named earlier: the account of the causal factors of poetry and the treatment of the nature of *rasa*.

Many readers will remember that Mammaṭa identifies three causal factors in the coming-into-being of *kāvya*: *śakti* (sometimes called *pratibhā*), that is, talent (or inspiration); *nipuṇatā*, learning, ‘the examination of systematic knowledge as well as actual life’; and *abhyāsa*, training, ‘derived from the instruction of experts in literature.’²² As Kamalākara explains, the three elements together form a composite cause (like the potter’s wheel, his stick, the clay, and the rest, which are all required for producing a pot). They are not disaggregated causes, each of which is capable of producing the same effect (as a twirling stick and a magnifying glass can equally and independently produce the same effect, fire). And indeed, this had been the position of theorists since the late seventh century and the work of Daṇḍin, who presents these three as constituting a single unified cause.²³ There is nothing noteworthy in Kamalākara’s discussion with one exception: his report of the dispute on this issue between those he calls the *prāñcab*

²² *Kāvyaṅgīkāśā* 1.3: *śaktir nipuṇatā lokaśāstrakāvyaḍyavekṣanāt | kāvyajñāśikṣayābhyāsa iti hetus tadudbbave |*.

²³ The rest of the prehistory to the dispute about to be recounted—including Daṇḍin’s list of causal factors (natural genius or inspiration, deep and unadulterated learning, and intense application, *naisargikī ca pratibhā, śrutaṃ ca bahū nirmalam, amandaś cābhiyogaḥ, Kāvyaḍarśa* 1.103) and the various challenges to Daṇḍin that are offered in Vāgbhaṭa and others (cf. Kedaranath Ojha’s review in his edition of *Rasagaṅgādhara*, vol. 1: 25-35; the most detailed early account is in Rudraṭa’s *Kāvyaḍalaṅkāra*, see Durgaprasad’s note in *Sābityaḍarpaṇa* p. 3)—is ignored by the late-medieval commentators on the *Kāvyaṅgīkāśā* and so can be ignored here.

and the *navyas*, the ‘ancient’ and the ‘new’ scholars. The *prāñcabh*—here he cites a verse to this effect—understood talent as the cause of the creation of a poem, learning as the cause of its beauty, and training as the cause of its being fully achieved (*abhiṣṛddhi*). ‘It is true, as the ancients argued,’ Kamalākara continues, ‘that we sometimes find in children and others that poetry can come into being without learning or training, merely by way of talent. In such cases, however, we must assume that learning and training were cultivated in a previous birth.’ The new scholars, however, dispute this assumption in the case of a child genius since it is circular: learning and training acquired in a previous birth can only be counted as causes once you have granted the assumption that they actually occurred, but that assumption would never be granted if they were not reckoned as causes in the first place. In any case, they say, a multiplicity of causes cannot be definitively proved; that is why Mammaṭa speaks of ‘cause’ in the singular, not the plural (*betur na tu betavaḥ*).²⁴ Accordingly, the *navyas* conclude, talent alone must be the cause, not the other two; indeed, it is only on this interpretation that it is possible to make sense of Mammaṭa’s expression *śaktiḥ kavītvabījarūpaḥ saṃskāravīśeṣaḥ*, ‘talent is the supreme (*-rūpa*) seed of one’s being a poet.’ Kamalākara for his part accepts that the totality of the three constitute the cause.²⁵

Rājacuḍāmaṇi Dīkṣita, in his discussion of the question, agrees with Kamalākara that the three factors must combine to produce a poem as well as to make it beautiful in the sense of being capable of manifesting *rasa*: ‘When disaggregated, none can function as an independent cause, but only has the capacity to

²⁴ The obvious objection to this interpretation, that it contradicts Mammaṭa’s own argument in his *vr̥tti*, where he explicitly speaks of the factors as ‘conjoined and not disaggregated’ (*samudītā na tu vyastāḥ*), is dismissed by the moderns cited in Śrīvatsalāñchana below, n. 29.

²⁵ *Kamalākara*, end of page 8 through lines 1–2 on page 9: *yady api nipuṇatābhyāsau vināpi śaktimātrād bālādau kāvyotpattir dr̥śyate tathāpi tatra janmāntariyayos tayoh kalpanam. . . . tad uktam*

kavītvam jāyate śakter vardhate ’bhyāsayogataḥ |
asya cārutvanīṣpattau vyutpattis tu garīyasī ||
iti prāñcabh. navyās tu na bālake <na> prāgbhavīyayos tayoh kalpanam anyonyāśrayāt. siddhe hi tayoh kalpane kāraṇatvam kāraṇatvāñ ca tatkalpanam iti. nāpy arthasamājo viniḡamanābhāvāt. ataḥ kāraṇam āba hetuḥ [read: ābeti] kāraṇam uk̄tvā svarūpam ābeti [ca] ekatvaśravaṇāc cbaktir eva kāraṇatvam netarau. ata eva śaktau kavītvabījarūpa ity uktam netarayor ity ābuh.

confer its individual property.’ Since Mammaṭa will define literature as a unity of word and meaning that is devoid of faults (*doṣa*) and endowed with expression-forms (*gūṇa*) as well as with figures of sound and sense, no one causal factor can account for it. On the contrary, all three are necessary, and their functions are distributed according to Mammaṭa’s definition of poetry: talent is the cause of the absence of faults in a poem ([*śabdārthau*] *adoṣau*), training the cause of its having expression-forms (*sagūṇau*), learning the cause of its capacity to manifest *rasa*. Rājacuḍāmaṇi Dīkṣita caps his discussion by quoting the same verse that Kamalākara attributes to the ancients.²⁶

By the end of the century these two positions in the debate between the old and the new scholars were no longer being reported as legitimate alternatives, if that is what they still were even for Kamalākara and Rājacuḍāmaṇi Dīkṣita. Bhīmasena Dīkṣita, who completed his commentary on Mammaṭa in 1723 (in Kanyakubja or perhaps Varanasi), contends that although talent, learning, and training are distinct both in their natures and in their causal consequences, it is only in combination that they achieve results with respect to their effect: the creation of ‘literature,’ which is specified as an object of knowledge that produces an awareness of *rasa*. The view of the *navyas*, on the other hand, must be rejected:

It is erroneous to deny the causal efficacy of learning and training on the grounds that the creation of poetry can be seen in the case of a Ḍimbha [i.e., a *poète naïf*], since these two factors must have been present in an earlier birth. Nor is there any circularity in this reasoning. When a Devadatta [i.e., a John Doe] produces poetry in his childhood, only unrefined readers will not ridicule it. When he produces poetry in his youth after some learning, common readers will praise it. When he produces poetry in his adulthood by virtue of talent, learning, and training, it is treated with respect by refined readers since it is capable of producing an awareness of *rasa*. Thus, actual experience demonstrates that all three are the cause of poetry. Given this proof of their causal efficacy, in the case [of a Ḍimbha] where learning and training

²⁶ *Kāvya-darpaṇa* pp. 9-10: *vyastās tu na sāmāgrī kiṃ tu svarūpavyogā ity arthaḥ . . . trayāṇām arthasamāje sati tattadvīṣeṣaṇopabitaṃ* [sc., *adoṣasagūṇavīṣeṣaṇopabitaṃ*] *kāvyaṃ api nīlaghaṭavat saṃpadyate*.

cannot have taken place yet, we must conjecture that they occurred in a former birth.²⁷

If we follow the track of the little hints offered by Kamalākara and Rājacuḍāmaṇi Dīkṣita, and their fuller exposition in Bhīmasena Dīkṣita, about the dispute between *prāñcaḥ* and *navyas* on the sources of poetry, we will eventually find our way back to the works of one Śrīvatsalāñchana Bhaṭṭācārya, a name few readers are likely to have heard before. His time and place are uncertain: he probably lived in mid-sixteenth-century Orissa and perhaps attended the court of King Mukunda Deva (r. c. 1558–68).²⁸ There is no uncertainty, however, about his obsession with Mammaṭa's *Kāvyaṭprakāśa*: he wrote a commentary on it, the *Sārabodhini*; an adaptation of it, the *Kāvyaṭparikṣā*; and a full frontal assault, the *Kāvyaṭmṛta* (a work appropriated wholesale by another *navya* scholar two generations later, Siddhicandra, at the court of Jahāngīr). In the commentary he argues thus:

Now, the *navyas* say that talent (*śakti*) is the only cause, not the other two, since without them a *Ḍimbha* can produce poetry. And they explain [Mammaṭa's] gloss when he speaks of 'a cause, not causes' as signifying that there is only a single cause, exceptional talent, even though [Mammaṭa] speaks of 'the three as a composite, not as disaggregated.' And [they further argue] that [this singularity of the cause of poetry] is why the text speaks of 'an exceptional seed of poet-hood.' They get the sense of 'exceptional' from the grammarians' definition of the suffix *-rūpa[p]*. 'Exceptional' for its part connotes having a necessary prior existence independent of any other factor. The other two factors

²⁷ *Sudhāsāgara* p. 77: *yat tāvat ḍimbhena kāvyotpādanān na nīpūṅtābhyāsayoḥ kāraṇatety uktam tat prāmādikam. tayor janmāntarīyayoḥ sattvāt. na cānyonyāśrayaḥ. devadattena bālyāvasthāyāṃ kṛtam kāvyam sabṛdayetarānuḥpabasanīyam. nīpūṅtatāvasād yauvanāvasthāyāṃ kṛtam sādharānaiḥ ślāghyam jātam. idānīm prauḍhāvasthāyāṃ śaktinīpūṅtatābhyāsavaśāt sabṛdayavyavaharaṇīyam rasodbodhasamartham kriyata iti vyavahāreṇa trayāṇāṃ kāraṇatāyāḥ siddhatvāt. evaṃ ca siddhe kāraṇatve yatra nīpūṅtatābhyāsayoḥ asambhavas tatra janmāntarīyatvaṃ kalpanīyam.*

Bhīma's animosity is virulent toward earlier critics of Mammaṭa in general and Śrīvatsa in particular, whom he criticizes repeatedly.

²⁸ Ramamurti (ed. *Kāvyaṭmṛta* p. ii), on the basis of two verses in the *Kāvyaṭmṛta*, corrects Vaidya's fourteenth-century guess from a very weak argument from silence (ed. *Kāvyaṭparikṣā* p. 13).

[learning and training] are not of this sort; such is the idea. And they also describe this as the natural interpretation in the context, since [Mammaṭa] goes on to speak of the ‘cause of [poetry]’ and not ‘causes.’ Nor it is possible to say that the case of Ḍimbha contradicts this view, insofar as he does possess [learning and training] though inherited from a previous existence. [The possibility of] this [the *navyas*’ opponents say] is something corroborated by the [scriptural passage stating that] ‘Whatever [charity or study or penance] one practices in birth after birth [sc., is never lost but will eventually bear fruit]’ [untraced]. For this constitutes circular reasoning: you can conjecture the existence of learning and training [in a previous birth] only once you accept that they are in fact causes, but they can only be reckoned causes once you have conjectured that they must have existed.²⁹

That Śrīvatsa is referring to his own view when speaking of the position ‘of the *navyas*’ is certified in his *Kāvyaṃṛta* when he dismisses Mammaṭa’s notion (which he seeks to reinterpret in his commentary) as completely fatuous (*tuccha*) for the same reason he gives in the just-quoted passage.³⁰ It is Śrīvatsa’s words that Bhīmasena Dīkṣita cites verbatim when describing the *navya* position, while the circular argument that Kamalākara and later writers demote to the status of a mere prima facie view is the one Śrīvatsa accepts as final. Moreover, in his *Kāvya-parīkṣā* Śrīvatsa seems to affiliate himself with the *navyas* (or *navīnas*)—indeed, he may have been the very first literary theorist in India to do so.³¹

It would be inappropriate, even in this abbreviated reconstruction, to neglect the rather curious denouement to the story provided by Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja

²⁹ *Sārabodhinī* vol. 1 pp. 72-73; *atra navyāḥ. śaktir eva kāraṇaṃ nāparau tābhyāṃ vinā ḍimbhena kāvyotpādanād ity ābuh. yatra trayāḥ samuditāḥ na tu vyastās tatrāpy eka eva śaktirūpo betur na tu betavaḥ it vṛttam [vṛttim] api gamayanti. ata evoktam kavītvabījārūpa iti. prakarṣe rūpa ity anuśāsanāt [P. 5.3.66] prakṛṣṭam bījam ity artho labhyate. tathā ca prakṛṣṭam ananyathāsiddhinyatāpūrvavartī. anyayos tu na tathābhāva iti bhāvaḥ. ata evāsya kāraṇam ābety uktam. na tu kāraṇānīti granthasvarasam api varṇayanti. na ca ḍimbhe ’pi prāghbhavīyayos tayoh sattvān na vyabhicāraḥ. ata eva janma janma yad abhyastam ity uktam iti vācyam. anyonyāśrayāt. tathā hi siddhe kāraṇatve tayoh kalpanam tasmimś ca sati kāraṇatvam iti.*

³⁰ *Kāvyaṃṛta* p. 2: *trayāḥ śaktinipūṇatābhyāsā betur ity uktam. tad api tuccham. ḍimbhādau kāvyotpattidarśanāt śakter eva betutvāt.*

³¹ *Kāvya-parīkṣā* pp. 6, 7 (regarding certain aspects of *vyañjanā*), cf. introduction p. 12.

in the mid-seventeenth century. He seeks to occupy at once virtually both positions, the *navya* and the *prācīna*, and thereby suggests how the conversation had run its course:

The sole causal factor of [poetry] is the inspiration of the poet, which is the presentation-to-the-mind of the words and meanings necessary to compose a poem. . . . The causal factor of inspiration, in turn, is either a transcendent element produced by such things as the grace of a god or a great personage, or exceptional learning or training in the creation of poetry. The causal factor [of inspiration] is not, however, this group of three as a whole. Inspiration can arise even without those two other factors and solely from the grace of a great personage, as in the case of a gifted child. Here one must not conjecture that the other two must have occurred in a former birth, since such an argument lacks parsimony and empirical proof, whereas the effect can be otherwise explained. [Jagannātha here reviews the narrow conditions under which one might invoke events of a former birth.] Nor can one assert that the ‘transcendent element’ itself can be the sole cause [of inspiration]. We find that sometimes, in the case of a person trying over an extended period of time to write a poem but failing to do so, inspiration can somehow manifest itself after learning and training have taken place, and here, if one were to accept the transcendent element as the sole cause of inspiration, it would have to have

been present prior to learning and training [and so should have enabled the poet to produce a poem].³²

This is the *navya* position in appearance only. Jagannātha does refer explicitly to ‘those who hold that the triad of talent and so on all together are the cause’ of poetry and ‘those who hold that talent alone is the cause’ (p. 11 lines 4–5), but he seems to want to chart a middle course—to have his chapati and eat it too: He may elevate inspiration to the status of sole cause, like the *navyas*, but he smuggles learning and training in through the back door by shifting attention from the three sources of poetry to the three sources of inspiration. As for the actual *navya* position, contemporary and succeeding commentators on *Kāvya*pra-

³² *Rasaṅgād̥bhara* pp. 9–11: *tasya ca kāraṇam kavigatā kevalā pratibhā. sā ca kāvyaghaṭanānukūlasābdārthopasthitīḥ . . . tasyās ca betuḥ kvacid devatāmabāpuruṣaprasādādijanyam adr̥ṣtam. kvacic ca vilakṣaṇavyutpattikāvya-karaṇābhyāsau. na tu trayam eva. bālādes tau vināpi kevalān mahāpuruṣaprasādād api pratibbotpatteḥ. na ca tatra tayor janmāntarj̄yayoh kalpanam vācyam. gauravān mānābhāvāt kāryasyānyathāpy upapatteś ca . . . nāpi kevalam adr̥ṣtam eva kāraṇam ity api śakyam vaditum. kīyantaṃcīt kālām kāvyam kartum aśaknuvataḥ katham api samjātayor vyutpattyabhyāsayoh pratibhāyāḥ prādurbhāvasya darśanāt. tatrāpy adr̥ṣtasyāṅgikāre prāg api tābhyām tasyāḥ prasakteḥ.*

The Candrālōka, an influential earlier work, only seems to prefigure this by declaring that ‘inspiration alone along with learning and practice are the cause of poetry’ (*pratibhaiva śrutābhyāsasabitā kavitaṃ prati | betuḥ*, 1.6). This of course is actually the position of Mammaṭa himself, whereas the simile Jayadeva offers—‘in the same way that earth and water are necessary for a seed to produce a vine’—shows that talent is only *primus inter pares*. This is corroborated by the commentator Vaidyanātha Pāyaguṇḍa (*spaṣtam cedam prakāśadan*), who adds that other positions (e.g., that talent alone is the cause of poetry) do not need to be refuted since the author of the main text doesn’t accept them (*grantha-kṛdasammatatvād anyathoktir api aḥbalā syād*).

Gokulanātha interestingly denies that God’s grace can cause inspiration, since it is a general cause, like time, and cannot be attributed a causal force for a specific effect like the creation of literature (p. 78).

kaśa, such as Jayarāma Nyāyapañcānana, the late seventeenth-century logician of Bengal, continued to reject it.³³

Such, in short, is what we know about this small controversy, a mere footnote in the late medieval commentaries on *Kāvyaṣṭā* (with a divagation in Jagannātha). But it is precisely this reticence or modesty that merits attention in thinking through the late history of Sanskrit poetics. The same curious tension between discursive reticence and conceptual salience holds true for the second topic, the problem of *rasa*, or emotion in literature, about which I will be briefer

³³ *Kāvyaṣṭātilaka* 10v–11r: *nanu pratibhaiva kāvyabetur nāpar[au] tābhyāṃ vināpi bālaka-sya kāvyadarśanād iti cen na. pūrvam aka[v]au vyutpattyabhyāsāntaram kavitarī pratibhāyā api vyabhicārenābetu[va] prasāṅgāt tasyās tatra sattve prāg api kāvyotpādaprasāṅgāt tajjanmani tatra d[e]v[at]ārādbhanādirūpapratibhākāraṇavirahāc ca. attha prāgjanmārjītapratibhaiva kālaviśeṣam apeksya kāvyam janayati yāgādijanyāpūrvam iva svargam iti cen na. nīṣṇatāyā abhyāsasyaiva vā prāgbbhavīyakālaviśeṣasabakṛtasya tajjanakatvaucityāt. dr̥ṣṭena nirvāhād adr̥ṣṭakalpanānaucityāt . . . na ca siddhe kāraṇatve 'nayoḥ kalpanam tasmimś ca tayoḥ siddhir ity anyonyāśrayaḥ. śaktikalpane 'pi tulyatvāt. 'Some assert that inspiration alone is the cause of poetry, not the other two [education and practice], since we find a child able to compose poetry even without them. That assertion is false [for three reasons]: (1) when a person is at first unable to compose poetry but then becomes able to do so after education and practice have taken place, we would be forced to conclude that inspiration is not a cause because it is not constant [in the causal process]; (2) if inspiration were present in the person prior [to education and practice] he should have been producing poetry; (3) in that very birth [the child poet] lacks the causal factors that produce inspiration, such as worship of the gods. One might reply that inspiration could have been acquired in an earlier birth but must await its particular moment to produce poetry, just as the transcendental element (*apūrvā*) produced through sacrifice and the like [must await its particular moment to produce] heaven. That would be false, too. We could equally claim [in the case of the child poet] that it was learning or practice acquired in an earlier birth and later aided by a particular moment that was more properly the causal factor in producing poetry. For if we can explain something empirically it is inappropriate to conjecture a metaphysical cause. . . . Nor is there any circular reasoning in the fact that only once [education and practice] have been established as causal factors can one conjecture them [to be present in the child poet] and they can only be established to be such once you have conjectured them to be present. For precisely the same objection can be leveled against the conjecture of talent. (*Kāvyaṣṭātilaka* 10v–11r; I owe several emendations here to suggestions from Ashok Aklujkar).*

precisely because the controversy was even less engaged than that concerning the sources of poetry.

The problem of *rasa* is more precisely the problem of the number of *rasas*, for late premodern theorists were concerned with no other (a limitation that has implications of its own), given that the principal lineaments of *rasa* theory had long been established. There had been earlier paradigm shifts in the discourse on *rasa*: Ānandavardhana's discovery (in the mid-ninth century) of implicature (*dhvani*) as the linguistic mechanism of *rasa*, and, more important, Abhinavagupta's shifting of the analytic focus from the process of the creation of emotion in literature to that of its reception.³⁴ (As much as any other work, and perhaps more than Abhinava's own writings, it was Mammaṭa's textbook treatment in the generation following Abhinava that was responsible for the diffusion of the novel doctrine.) But the most important aspect of the classical doctrine, which merits special notice in the context of a consideration of later Sanskrit *alanākāraśāstra*, was left untouched: the permeation of aesthetic theory by social theory.

This social aesthetic is something evident from the very inauguration of the discussion in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, though it becomes fully transparent from the time of Abhinavagupta's student Kṣemendra (fl. 1050), who turned the underlying idea of propriety, *aucitya*, 'a state of being in accordance with the nature of a person or thing,' into the core of his concept of literature; propriety, he announced, is the very life force (*jīvita*) of *rasa*.³⁵ Even earlier thinkers such as Ānandavardhana and Bhoja (fl. 1025) had implicitly accepted this. Thus they held that in order to achieve *rasa* any traditional story should be revised if necessary in order to accord with the social proprieties (*aucitya*) that underlie and thus support *rasa*. So Bhoja:

If one were to compose a literary work on the basis of a story just as it is found to exist in the epics, it could come about that [one character,] though acting properly, might not only fail to attain the desired result but might attain precisely the result he does not desire; whereas [another character,] though acting improperly, might attain the result [he desires]. In such cases, emendation

³⁴ Pollock 1998a.

³⁵ *Aucityavicāracarcā* v. 7: *ucitaṃ prābur ācāryāb sadṛśaṃ kīla yasya yad | ucitasya ca yo bhāvas tad aucityaṃ pracakṣate* || For propriety as the life force see v. 4.

must be made in such a way that the character acting properly is not denied the result he desires, whereas the other not only should fail to attain his desire but should also attain what he does not want. Such is what [the category *pratisamskāryetiṛtta*, ‘emendable history’] causes us to understand.³⁶

This is even more explicitly enunciated by Abhinavagupta: ‘If the interests of caste and family were not thereby to be achieved, sexual desire must not be represented [in a drama] at all, because it does not lead to the fulfillment of the ends of man.’³⁷ In other words, for both Bhoja and Abhinavagupta—indeed, for the tradition of Sanskrit literary theory as a whole—to produce authentic emotion, *rasa*, the literary text must reproduce knowledge of the dominant moral order.

By the time of Jagannātha, Sanskrit literature had been virtually prohibited—not too strong a word, I think—from in any way surprising the reader with variations on the socially typical, let alone deviations from it. And the theory of aesthetic sentiment, too, had become transformed into a theory of aesthetic moralism. Consider the social-moral boundaries of the emotions underlying each of the *rasas* according to Jagannātha:

Desire for an inappropriate object (a teacher’s wife, a goddess, a queen), desire that is not reciprocated, desire on the part of a woman for more than one lover: none of these can produce the erotic *rasa* in its pure or authentic form. A father’s grief for a son who is querulous and wicked, or grief on the part of an ascetic [who has given up all attachments]; transcendental disenchantment with life (*nirveda*) on the part of an untouchable, who has no right to participate in transcendental Vedic knowledge; martial energy on the part of a low-born man, or anger on the part of a timorous man or directed toward someone like one’s father; amazement in response to a mere magic trick; laughter directed at one’s father; fear in a hero; disgust felt for the fat or flesh or blood of a sacrificial animal—all these produce merely the semblance of

³⁶ *Śṛṅgāraprakāśa* p. 746: *itibāseṣu yathāsthitavṛttopanibandhane nyāyapṛavṛtter apy apha-lavattvam aṅiṣṭāvāptiḥphalatvaṃ ca drīyate anyāyapṛavṛtter api phalayogo ’vadbāryate. tatra tathā pratisamskāro vidbeyo yathā nyāyapṛavṛtter eva phalayogābbhinivṛttir viprarītasya niṣphalatvāṅiṣṭāvāptī bhavata iti vyutpādayati.*

³⁷ Abhinavagupta in *Nāṭyaśāstra* p. 305: *nijajātikulānurūpasampadabhāve tu ratiḥ puruṣārtharūpatvābhāvād anupadeśyā.*

the *rasas* of (respectively) pity, tranquility, the heroic, cruelty, wonder, the comic, terror, and loathing.

If *rasa* is a way of speaking about the literary promulgation of an ideal-typical social order, *rasābhāsa*, ‘*rasa-in-appearance-only*,’ which had earlier been seen as an essential component of literature (there could be no *Rāmāyaṇa* without Rāvaṇa’s love-in-appearance-only for Sītā), seems now to be viewed not as its necessary complement—something required to complete that ideal type—but as the literary promulgation of an immoral order against which theory imposed increasingly harsh strictures. Desire for someone beyond one’s station (a queen, a teacher’s wife), like desire for someone who does not share it or a woman’s desire for more than one lover, violates this order and so is a false feeling. So, too, is a father’s grief for a wicked son, or an untouchable’s quest for wisdom. Low-born men do not or cannot show heroism, nor can cowards express anger, or heroes fear. Laughter and rage toward a father are as much violations of this order as disgust in the face of sacrificial slaughter. All these are inversions, so to speak, of real eroticism and pity and heroism. Real sentiments, moreover, are absolute and unchanging, not situational and adaptive.³⁸ For Jagannātha, *rasābhāsa* has become an index not only of a different order of literature but of an inferior, even reprehensible, kind of literature—no longer a category for explaining the dynamics of affect in the complex narratives that mark real life but a sign of the unwanted intrusion of real life into literature.

Thus the core theory of *rasa* was, if anything, being strengthened in our period. Only two counterdevelopments can be found, so far as I can tell, both of them framed as taxonomical problems concerning the number of *rasas*. This too was an old question—Bhoja had dealt with it in the most trenchant manner, adjudging the multiple *rasas* to be mere epiphenomena and reducing them to

³⁸ *Rasaganīdhara* p. 122. When Jagannātha discusses what is suggested in a verse depicting Draupadī’s glances at her five new (or soon-to-be) husbands, we get a sense of how complex was the dispute of the ancients and moderns. The *navyas*, he tells us, consider this is a case of *rasābhāsa* because the objects of her desire are multiple, whereas the *prāñcas* restricted the *ābhāsa* of *śṛṅgāra* to a case of multiple lovers to whom the woman is not married (p. 121)—not something that construes at all easily with the ‘new’ positions highlighted in our discussion so far. See further on these questions in Pollock 2001a, from which the above two paragraphs are adapted.

one underlying Ur-affect, Passion (*śṛṅgāra*, to be distinguished from the *rasa* of that name, ‘passion,’ or the erotic). One of these counterdevelopments is well known. The religious movement inaugurated by the charismatic figure Caitanya (d. 1533) had prompted Sanskrit intellectuals in Bengal to elevate *bhakti*, or religious devotion, to the status of a *rasa* (whereas earlier, given the impossibility of consummating such love—in the normal sense of ‘consummate’—it had been taken as the very paradigm of a *bhāva*, a feeling unable to be nourished into the full emotion denoted by *rasa*). Both Kamalākara and Rājacudāmaṇi Dīkṣita had the chance, in their treatment of *Kāvyaprakāśa* 4.29 (where the classical formulation is repeated), to challenge the idea that the *rasas* are limited in number, and neither did so. Both are also silent about the provocation of *bhakti rasa*, a silence that is even stronger reaffirmation than the denial Jagannātha cared enough to at least voice: ‘The enumeration of *rasas* as nine, which is required by the declaration of the Sage [Bharata], would be violated [by the inclusion of *bhaktirasa*], and therefore the view of *śāstra* must prevail.’³⁹ In other words, the canonical list must be preserved precisely because it is canonical.

Besides the question of whether *bhakti* should be included in the list of *rasas*, the one other open dispute in the theory was whether some *rasas* should be *excluded* from the list. Here again Śrīvatsalāñchana seems to have been something of an innovator, if this time a less daring one. In his *Kāvyāmṛta* he argues that there are only four *rasas*—the erotic, the heroic, the comic, and the uncanny or marvelous (*śṛṅgāra*, *vīra*, *hāsya*, and *adbhuta*)—whereas the piteous, the cruel, the fearful, and the disgusting (*karuṇa*, *raudra*, *bbayānaka*, and *bībhatsa*) should not be included because they are essentially painful and therefore cannot be comprised in the by-then universally accepted definition of *rasa* as a transcendently blissful experience. For Śrīvatsa the very representation of such things is inauspicious (*amāṅgalya*), ‘and accordingly some people refuse to even read such texts as the ‘Lamentation of Aja’ [Kālidāsa’s *Raghuvamśa*, chapter 8].’ If anything, such

³⁹ See *Kamalākara* p. 87 and *Kāvyadarpaṇa* p. 83; *Rasaṅgādhara* p. 56: *rasānāṃ navatvagaṇānā ca munivacananiyantritā bhajyeta iti yathāśāstram eva jyāyaḥ* (cf. Pollock 2001a: 15; 2002: n. 34; Bharata of course spoke only of eight *rasas*).

representations have only a didactic purpose; they are not meant to be enjoyed.⁴⁰ The early seventeenth-century writer Siddhicandra, who appropriates this argument in toto in his attack on Mammaṭa, calls it a *navīna* doctrine, further evidence of Śrīvatsa's intellectual affiliations. But in fact the argument, or at least elements of it, go back to the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* of Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra, students of Hemacandra who wrote in the early twelfth century. Although they do not openly reject the *rasa* status of disagreeable aesthetic experiences, they come very close by drawing a distinction that is tantamount to rejection.⁴¹

The main point for us of this taxonomical dispute is the fact that, whereas thinkers such as Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra, and later Śrīvatsa and Siddhica-

⁴⁰ *Kāvyaṃṛta* pp. 11–14. It is the height of folly, according to Śrīvatsa, to argue that such *rasas* can give cognitive pleasure even though their physical impact may be unpleasant (*yat tu śokādāyo 'pi rasādivaj jñānasukhātmakā iti tad unmattapralapitam*). Passages like that recounting Aja's suicide are cautionary tales about passion (*priyānurāga prakarṣapratīpaṭṭyartham*), when not mere literary grandstanding (*kevalibhiḥ svaśaktipradarśanārtham eva*).

⁴¹ See *Kāvyaṇṅkaśakhaṇḍana* pp. 16, 21–22 (and on Siddhicandra more generally, Pollock 2001: 405–7). The position was defended also in the *Sāhityasudhāsindhu* (cited by Gokulanātha, *Vivaraṇa* p. 651). The relevant passage in the *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* (p. 159 ff.) runs as follows: 'Among the *rasas* five, whose full development comes about through desirable objective factors and so on, are pleasurable (*śṛṅgāra, hāsya, vīra, adbhuta, and śānta*); the remaining four (*karuṇa, raudra, bibhatsa, bhayānaka*), however, which come into existence by way of undesirable objective factors and so on, are painful. The argument that all *rasas* are pleasurable is empirically falsified [read *pratīti-*] [The four *rasas*] *bhayānaka* [etc.], even when they are generated by minor *vibhāvas* presented by dramatic representation or in a work of literature—let alone when they are embodied in the chief objective cause [cf. on 3.113] as for example the antagonist—bring those who are having the aesthetic experience into an almost indescribable state of distress. Accordingly the audience is disturbed by those *rasas*, and it is hardly reasonable to maintain that such disturbance can derive from a pleasurable aesthetic experience.' They go on, however, to say, '[Yet] even sophisticated people, beguiled by the beauty that the power of a poet or actor can produce, whereby their whole body is suffused with a kind of ecstasy, acknowledge that there exists a state of transcendent rapture even in these painful *rasas*: *karuṇa* and so on.' Recall Samuel Johnson's *Preface to Lear*: 'I might relate, that I was many years ago so shocked by Cordelia's death, that I know not whether I ever endured to read again the last scenes of the play till I undertook to revise them as an editor.'

ndra, grasped that the classical doctrine of art was somehow no longer adequate to their thought world, they could not mount a critique that could make a difference. The last major thinker I am aware of who addresses the problem of *rasa*, Gokulanātha Upadhyāya (fl. 1675), demonstrates full command of the ancient tradition but only reports the controversies and does not weigh in on them.⁴² It seems justified to conclude that they no longer really mattered.

However minor we may find these disputes over the sources of poetry and *rasa*, along with the relationship of the literary work to social reality and the formation of moral subjectivities, the problems they raise for cultural theory are major ones, as comparison with contemporaneous Europe certifies. The parallels here, in both intellectual style and substance, are striking, and they help us begin to understand how differently India and Europe responded to similar conceptual challenges—and how radically, after centuries of comparability, their intellectual histories diverged.

In terms of style, we can see how in both worlds, well into the seventeenth century, exegesis of classical texts continued to represent the summit of learned practice and to provide core features of the literary-critical idiom. In India the discourse that had been in place for five centuries after the systematization by Mammaṭa maintained itself unchallenged. Thus, as we noted, Kamalākara and Rājacudāmaṇi Dīkṣita, among the last in a long series of commentators and adaptors of the *Kāvyaṭīkā*, wrote and commented on the topics, categories, and examples of old; their arguments and counterarguments typically summarize

⁴² *Kāvyaṭīkā Vivaraṇa* pp. 651-52. His archive is deep and extensive, including Dhānīka and more surprisingly the eleventh-century masterwork of Bhoja, the *Śṛīṅāraprakāśā*, which had long been unavailable in north India (he cites 1.6, a verse not taken from the standard source, Hemacandra; a southern scholar writing in Varanasi, Viśvanātha Deva in his *Sābhīyasudhāsindhu*, pp. 93-94 also cites Bhoja). He explores briefly but tellingly the major views on the number of *rasas* and the question whether other emotional states beyond the *sthāyibhāvas* could be *rasas*. Not entirely clear is his view of *bhakti* as a *rasa*; he only argues that *vātsalya* (often linked with *bhaktirasā*) is to be included in *śṛīṅārarasā*, ‘according to the traditionalists’ (*sāṃpradāyikāḥ*). Śrīvatsa still classified it as a *bhāva* not as a *rasa* (*Kāvyaṃṛta* p. 13). The brilliant *ālaṅkārika* Viśveśvara Paṇḍita offers, unaccountably, an even less inspiring review of the problem of *rasa* in his *Rasacandrikā* (c. 1720), pp. 41-48, where he largely follows Mammaṭa.

much earlier discussions. Turning to seventeenth-century France, we find much the same to be the case, as the work of a Boileau or a La Bruyère shows. Study of classical texts and topics remained the center of literary-critical activity. Pascal made clear the epistemology of this approach in 1651—in a passage marking at once the traditionality of the age and its incipient revolutionariness—when he observed that ‘textual authority is absolute in fields where the truth is established once and for all and therefore cannot be improved on: history, geography, letters, and above all theology. In mathematics and empirical science, by contrast, authority is valueless; here, human thought is capable of indefinite linear progress.’ Aristotle, Cicero, and Horace were the Bharata, Daṇḍin, and Mammaṭa of the period—Horace’s *Ars poetica* in particular was translated repeatedly into Italian, French, and English. One of the most influential literary-critical events of the period was Boileau’s translation of Longinus’s *On the Sublime* in 1674. This was included as an appendix in his *Art poétique* (which borrows hundreds of lines from Horace’s work), whose topics come from the traditional list of forensic skills: invention, disposition, elocution, memory, and delivery. ‘In defining and classifying [Boileau] proceeds by specifying the parallel notions of content and expression [we might say *artha* and *śabda*] to the requirements of the various poetic kinds. . . . He must point out not only beauties [*gūnas*] but also possible faults [*doṣas*] since poets may fall into errors of judgement in both phases of composition.’⁴³ One of the few significant differences in critical practice between Boileau and someone like Kamalākara is that the former wrote not in the classical language but in the vernacular as part of the ‘national-popular’ transition in systematic thought that importantly marked the age and the growing discrepancy between European and Indian intellectual activity.⁴⁴

With respect to our two substantive questions—the sources of poetry and the nature of *rasa*, especially the relationship between representation and social propriety in its creation—the similarities are even more arresting. In India, the stakes in the dispute over the three causes of poetry were by no means as slight as they may appear to be from our present vantage point. Everyone participating in the Sanskrit conversation clearly understood that the rejection of learning and

⁴³ See Norton 1999, respectively pp. 421 (summarizing several pages of a text of Pascal’s from 1651), 199, and 503–504.

⁴⁴ See Pollock 2001a and 2005.

training was precisely the rejection that *vernacular* poets had been making for centuries. We find this in Kannada with Basavaṅṅa in the twelfth century ‘I don’t know anything like time-beats and meter / nor the arithmetic of strings and drums; / I don’t know the count of iamb and dactyl’), in Gujarati with Narasiṃha Maheta in the fifteenth ‘they have mastered all disciplines [yet] they are lost in the night’), in Marathi with Eknāth ‘without knowledge [am I], unstudied in the *śāstra* s’) and Avadhi with Tulsī Dās ‘I am not a poet, I am not skilled with words, I possess neither artistry [*kalā*] nor knowledge [*vidyā*]’ in the sixteenth. In fact, by the time of the Gujarati poet Akho in the seventeenth century, such self-defenses had become stale clichés (he calls them ‘sniveling disclaimers’).⁴⁵ To be sure, despite their protestations, many of these vernacular poets were seriously trained in the traditions they rejected, but the point is their insistence on their own, or rather their deity’s, inspiration. What I have called the second, or regional, vernacular revolution and its *deshi* rather than cosmopolitan idiom was a result precisely of the rejection of *nīpūṇatā* and *abhyāsa* as defined by Mammaṭa, and the insistence on *śakti* alone—indeed, *śakti* as conferred by a divine source.⁴⁶ It is not hard for us to extrapolate from this rejection a larger critique of culture-power—indeed, we need not make the extrapolation, since vernacular intellectuals themselves, like the Militant Shaivas of Karnataka, actually enunciated the critique.

Entirely similar was the discourse on the three sources of poetry in Europe that began in the early seventeenth century. In England this discourse was a basic component of neoclassicism, which was inaugurated with Ben Jonson. For

⁴⁵ ‘Such poets . . . tell us at the beginning of their works, ‘We are ignorant of the units of prosody and we don’t bring in your figures of speech, not having mastered them.’ Through such sniveling disclaimers, they merely establish their self-importance and beg for our pity’ (Pollock 2003: 578 n. 19). The preceding quotations are from Ramanujan 1973: 82; Pollock 2003: 578; Abbott 1927: 183; *Rāṃcaritmānas* ‘Bālakāṇḍa’ lines after *dobā* 8.

⁴⁶ Pollock 2006 (chapter 10). Even learned vernacular poets were to make this the centerpiece of their understanding of the creative process, so Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja in the *Caitanyacaritāmṛta*: ‘Madanamohana [the god Krishna] causes me to write this book; my writing is but the speech of a parrot. . . . Madanagopāla causes me to write, as the magician causes the wooden doll to dance’ (trans. Dimock and Stewart, *Ādi* 8.74).

him ‘naturall wit’ or talent [i.e., *śakti*], a writer’s primary qualification [Mammaṭa’s *kavitvabhījarūpa*], must be shaped by ‘exercise,’ imitation and study (of classical models) [*abhyāsa*], and ‘art’ (knowledge of rules for effective expression) [*nīpūnatā*].⁴⁷ This tripartition was still being discussed a century later at the dawn of European modernity: In 1702 John Dennis, the man hailed as ‘the greatest Critick of this Age,’ listed the qualifications of his calling: ‘Now there are three things required for the succeeding in Poetry: 1. Great parts [i.e., *śakti*]. 2. A generous Education [i.e., *nīpūnatā*]. 3. A due Application [i.e., *abhyāsa*].’⁴⁷ All that changed with Dennis—though some have seen this change as a sign of modernity—was the separation of the critical function from the creative one. But this was precisely the position that Rājacuḍāmaṇi Dīkṣita was arguing in the 1630s in Tanjavur, if not as the first proponent then at least in the most committed and explicit way: ‘With respect to Mammaṭa’s purposes of poetry, note that, no less than the good poet, the good critic wins fame and wealth—but the latter through teaching rather than creating.’ Similarly, with respect to the instruction listed among the factors that go to make a poet, this cannot be instruction only from another poet: instruction from a poet only enables one to become a maker of poems as such, not necessarily poems endowed with *rasa*: ‘Thus essential to the creation of poetry is instruction not only from a good poet but also from a good critic.’⁴⁸

The neoclassical view of the traditionalists was likewise opposed in Europe in the *Querelle des anciens et des modernes*. One of the first salvos in this celebrated culture war was Charles Perrault’s philosophical dialogue called *Parallèle des anciens*

⁴⁷ Norton 1999: 543; Nisbet and Rawson 1997: 11–12.

⁴⁸ *Kāvya-darpaṇa* p. 6: *atra ca kaver iva sabhṛdayasyāpy adhyāpanena yaśo ’rthas ca bhavati*; p. 9: *ataḥ kartur vicārayitūś copadeśād abhyāsaḥ kāvyāṅgam iti dhyeyam*. This is not entirely new. It only states more explicitly something present *in nuce* in *Kāvya-prakāśa* itself and, somewhat more clearly, in Māṇikyacandra’s *Samketa*. Note also the *Madhumatī*: ‘Practice derived from the instruction of a maker of poems makes one a maker, from a knower one becomes a knower, from both one becomes both a maker and a knower. The first is a poet, the second a critic, the third both a poet and a critic; cf. ‘Hail the true Principle of Sarasvatī, termed the *poet-critic*.’ (*śarasvatyāḥ tattvaṃ kavīsabhṛdayākhyam vijayate*, p. 70). Note that a century earlier Ben Jonson had asserted that the critic must be a poet (Norton 1999: 543).

and des modernes (1688). A manifesto of the moderns, it celebrates invention and creativity over imitation and repetition, individual over collective judgment, inspiration (*le génie*) and one's 'own lights' (*propres lumières*) over the *doxa* of tradition, and, above all, talent over training—more particularly, over training based dogmatically on imitation of the classics. This position was intimately associated with new ideas about progress and improvement in a range of cultural practices.⁴⁹ Especially important, in addition, was the challenge to what were termed *vraisemblance* and *bienséance*, 'what it is *probable* for a character to do and what is *appropriate* for him or her.' It was on this point, however—on *vraisemblance* and *bienséance*, and along with them the place of learning and training and the classical past as a whole in the early-modern cultural order—that the European consensus began to unravel. And it was Corneille who began the unraveling, with the staging of *Le Cid* in 1637. The Académie française, founded two years earlier, demanded a revision of his use of the historical narrative (whereby the heroine, Chimène, marries the Cid, the hero who had slain her father) because it violated what was both probable and appropriate. Corneille argued in return (in 1647) that modern writers were free to disobey ancient rules, that 'the subject matter of a tragedy should not conform to *vraisemblance*, because the kind of conflict that creates powerful tragedy involves overriding normal ties of kinship or friendship.'⁵⁰

Vraisemblance and *bienséance* are strikingly similar to what the Indian language of *aucitya* aimed to capture, which in turn is fundamental to the social discourse that is inseparable from *rasa* theory. Yet the literary and intellectual cultures of seventeenth-century France and India were utterly different in their readiness to reassess these norms. Whereas in France the old social-aesthetic order was being radically contested in direct confrontation with the Académie française, in Sanskrit India it was reasserted precisely as the Académie might have wished. By the time of Jagannātha in the mid-seventeenth century, as we have seen, the understanding of *rasa* (and its complement, *rasābbāsa*) had hardened into dogma, while the demand raised by Ānandavardhana and Bhoja more than five centuries earlier to revise a plot wherever necessary to make it conform with *rasa* was Académie doctrine *avant la lettre*. If we look at actual literary practice, as I have

⁴⁹ Dejean 1997: 50.

⁵⁰ Norton 1999: 505, 522 ff., 563.

noted elsewhere, it ‘fully testifies to a progress, slow but certain, in the elimination of core varieties of conflict, a gradual retreat to an ever more complete disengagement from the world of life’s unpleasant realities, in favor of a single moral vision. In Sanskrit literature if not in Indian life Bhoja’s old maxim was followed without exception: ‘It must be the good guy, not the bad guy, who wins.’⁵¹

Neither in Europe nor in India were any of these matters just issues of culture—no issue of culture is ever just that. In Europe, the doctrine of *les anciens*, those who insisted on the centrality of classical culture, was intimately tied up both with their resistance to new challenges to the moral order emerging from Protestant theory and with the expanding power of the nascent absolutist state. The ‘political freedom’ linked with the sublime, and the individual genius that lay behind the sublime, were contrasted by the moderns themselves, especially in the English avatar of the Quarrel, with the rule-mongering ‘correctness’ demanded by the court.⁵² What is even more important than this, some scholars have come to see the Quarrel as a moment of decisive epistemic change. The whole collective temporality was modified, and the sense arose of a closed and vanished world of a different kind—a view of the past as neither superior nor inferior but just different—whereby a new awareness of historicity itself was generated.⁵³

In India, similarly, although it is often difficult for us to socially situate critical voices like Śrīvatsalāñchana and conservative voices like Bhīmasena, Sanskrit (as well as Sanskritizing *bhāṣā*) literature and thought were typically courtly productions, and it is therefore entirely to be expected that *bhāṣā* poets who promoted *pratibhā*, inspired genius were celebrated for shunning the court altogether (including Tulsī and other poets like those cited above, as well as, most famously,

⁵¹ *Śrīngāraprakāśa* p. 728 line 24: *jīgīṣuṅgā guṇavataiva bhāvyaṃ na doṣavatā*. See Pollock 2001b: 220.

⁵² See Norton 1999: 552–53. The relationship between classicizing aesthetics and reactionary morality is visible in La Bruyère’s *Les caractères*, see Norton 1999: 528. For England, see Kenshur 1994, which importantly charts the rise of aesthetics in England in the 1680s in the problematic of the grounding of moral knowledge and its linkage with political theory a generation earlier in Hobbes.

⁵³ Jameson 2001: 10.

Sūrdās). But for all its significance for a theory of culture and power, the *navya* view on *śakti*|*pratibhā* and individual talent, and on the place of *rasa* in the social order, had no larger consequences. Indeed, these problematics never became objects of extended discussion. The primacy of *śakti* in literary theory was asserted by a few small voices in eastern India in the sixteenth century—the rise of the new vernacular Vaishnavism may have been behind the novel claims, though Śrīvatsa was apparently no devotee of Caitanya⁵⁴—and never developed anywhere into anything we could even remotely compare to the Quarrel in Europe. It never amounted to even a spat but remained buried in obscure commentaries on a single verse in a single text. The potentially powerful idea of inspiration outside tradition’s discipline, and with it, a potentially transformative idea of freedom, died on the vine.

Moreover, the *navya* impulse itself was largely repudiated. In contrast to the practices of the *navya* pioneers on literary theory beginning with Appayya in the sixteenth century, we do not see in the seventeenth a return to the oldest texts (typically Daṇḍin) and their authority, the sort of return to the source that we can also perceive in the renewed attention to the *sūtrapāṭha* on the part of *navya mīmāṃsā* and *nyāya* in the same epoch.⁵⁵ The kinds of questions that someone like Gokulanātha raises—*historical* questions about the authorship of the *Kāvya prakāśa* and the unity of the text—might be thought to continue the *navya* spirit. But in fact his treatment constitutes no real break with the past; it is a reassertion of the past in a way entirely representative of larger traditionalist trends. From the beginning of the commentarial tradition scholars had queried the identity of the *kārikākāra* and the *vṛttikāra*, but Gokulanātha’s interest, which he shares with a number of commentators from late medieval Bengal, is different: what

⁵⁴ It is hard to believe that the Caitanya movement of the mid-sixteenth century (Caitanya died in 1533) did not underwrite his *navya* claims, but Śrīvatsa is mentioned in none of the standard—and by all accounts exhaustive—Bangla Vaiṣṇava works (such as Haridāsa Dāsa’s *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava Abhidhāna*, for information on which I thank Tony Stewart).

⁵⁵ On *nyāya* see Preisendanz 2005; on *mīmāṃsā*, see below; on the return to foundations in *alankāraśāstra* (Appayya), see Bronner 2002.

he is concerned to argue for is attribution of the *kārikās* to the divine sage Bharata.⁵⁶ An even more passionate defense of the status of the *Kāvya prakāśa*, unlike anything seen in the past, was made by Bhīmasena Dīkṣita. ‘The truth of the matter,’ he says when discussing authorship, ‘is that the author of the *sūtras* and the author of the *vr̥tti* are one and the same. I have already alluded to this above [introduction v. 7]. Nor does this [attribution] impugn the authority of the work, given that Bharata, Vāmana, and others had also composed *sūtras* on this subject.’ In fact the true author of the work was neither Mammaṭa nor Bharata: ‘The author was no human being at all but the very Divinity of Speech—the justification for such an assertion being the book’s own transcendent qualities.’ The divine origins of the *Kāvya prakāśa* are affirmed throughout Bhīmasena’s commentary; for example, when he rejects the moderns’ view on *śakti* as ‘mere vaporizing done without understanding the hidden intention of the author, who was an incarnation of the Goddess of Speech.’⁵⁷ Bhīmasena is doing far more than recentering the authority of the medieval scholastics; Mammaṭa has become the voice of God pronouncing on the principles of literature. This seems about as complete and anti-*navya* a reassertion of authority as one could find. And it suggests the presence of something internal—not external—to Sanskrit intellectual history, however elusive this something still remains to our historical reconstruction, that arrested its capacity for development by cordoning it off from the kind of critique that had once supplied its very life force.

⁵⁶ The complex argument here is made on the basis of statements in the *vr̥tti* presupposing that the author of the *kārikās* is different (*Kāvya prakāśa Vivaraṇa* p. 35). For earlier arguments see De 1968, vol. 1: 148 ff.

⁵⁷ *Sudhāsāgara*, pp. 30–31: *atra sūtrakāro vr̥ttikāraś caika eveti tattvam. uktaṃ ca prāg asmābhir granthakāraṇaṇāyām. na caitāvatā nirmūlatvāpattiḥ. vāmanaḥ Bharatādibhir apy etadviśaye sūtritatvāt. kiṃca nāyam ācārya mānuṣaḥ kiṃ tu vāgdevataiva. pramāṇaṃ tu granthasyālaṅkikatvam; p. 77: vāgdevatāvatārvr̥ttikāragūḍhāsāyānavabodhavijr̥mbhitam iti beyam.* The very impetus behind Bhīmasena’s commentary (which he describes as the fruit of a lifetime of learning from the age of five, introduction, v. 18, p. 30) lay in the statements contradicting Mammaṭa’s *Vr̥tti* that he saw in thousands of commentaries and that he found ‘insufferable’ (introduction v. 17c-d).

By the seventeenth century the discourse on the sources of the moral order of society—how we know what is right to do, according to the ancient evaluation of ‘right,’ that is, *dharmā*—had become solely the province of *mīmāṃsā*, the system of (largely Vedic) hermeneutics. *Mīmāṃsā* in fact had traditionally discharged the task of arguing out the nature and sources of knowledge of *dharmā*, the very keyword of the *mīmāṃsā* system, but the *sūtra* and *smṛti* of *dharmā* literature had all along also addressed these questions, central as they are to their own disciplinary object. In its late premodern avatar, however, *dharmāśāstra* was almost completely silent on how *dharmā* is known and distinguished from what is *adharma*,⁵⁸ ceding the field entirely to the scholars of *mīmāṃsā*. One Varanasi scholar writing around 1675 put the matter succinctly in the introduction to his synthetic account of *mīmāṃsā*: ‘We find that in this world rational persons who seek to obtain happiness and avoid misery apply themselves to *dharmā* and eschew *adharma*. It is the purpose of [*mīmāṃsā*] to provide a total analysis of what *dharmā* and *adharma* are.’⁵⁹ Only one of the great works of seventeenth-century *dharmāśāstra* (or the only one of those I have access to), Mitra Miśra’s *Vīramitrodaya-Paribhāṣāprakāśa*, bothers to say anything substantial about the sources of our knowledge of *dharmā*, and it does so in a way indistinguishable from a *mīmāṃsā* treatise.⁶⁰

No less curious is the historical trajectory, so to put it, of *mīmāṃsā* itself. Indeed, in many ways it may be the exemplary case history of a Sanskrit scholarly discipline at the end of premodernity, for here we encounter head-on the basic

⁵⁸ Typical is Nīlakaṇṭha Bhaṭṭa, who in his brief review of the sources of *dharmā* in the first volume of the *Bhagavantabbāskara* simply reasserts the old—and by then completely inadequate—*mīmāṃsā* definition of *dharmā* as *codanālakṣaṇa*, ‘defined by Vedic commandment’ (p. 4).

⁵⁹ *Bhāṭṭabbāskara*, p. 1: *iha khalu vai sukhaduḥkhaḥprāptinivṛttyarthināṃ prekṣāvātāṃ dharmā-dharmaviśaye pravṛtтинivṛtṭi dr̥śyete. tatra kārtsnyena dharmādharmanirṇayārtham ayam ārambhaḥ.*

⁶⁰ See his discussion of the definition of *dharmā* (pp. 30 ff.), or of the resolution of conflicting injunctions (pp. 25 ff.). I have been unable to examine the *Paribhāṣāprakaraṇa* section of the *Dinakaroddyota* (see below), which is in the possession of the Raghunatha Temple Library Jammu (*Stein Catalogue* p. 91), but I would be surprised if it did not strengthen this impression.

paradox: An empirically undeniable, even statistically demonstrable, efflorescence of writing on the subject begins around the mid-sixteenth century, but in the absence of any identifiable contextual cause. And it is followed by an equally spectacular, and equally inexplicable, decline that sets in sometime in the eighteenth century. More works on *mīmāṃsā* seem to have been produced during this one-hundred-year period than at any time in the five centuries that preceded it—but then the production stops, for reasons as obscure as those that must account for its start.

Consider the reception history of the *Śāstradīpikā* of Pārthasārathi Mīśra. As Lawrence McCrea has shown, this eleventh-century work, probably the most accomplished *summa* of *mīmāṃsā* ever written, received no scholastic attention whatever prior to our period, when, as if suddenly rediscovered, it received a dozen major commentarial treatments in the space of little more than a century, to say nothing of its wider influence: no one wrote on the subject without reference to Pārthasārathi. The trend seems to have been inaugurated by the still-unpublished *Mayukhbāvalī* of Appayya Dīkṣikta, whose other works, including the *Vidhirasāyana* and *Pūrvottaramīmāṃsāvādanakṣatramālā*, both formally and substantively mark a new intensification of argumentation in the field.⁶¹

Notice too the remarkable productivity in *mīmāṃsā* among the members of the family I am focusing on here, the Bhaṭṭas of Varanasi. Nārāyaṇa (b. 1513) was reputed to be a great *mīmāṃsaka*, though only a portion of his commentary on the *Śāstradīpikā* is extant. His son Śāṅkara Bhaṭṭa wrote among other texts the *Mīmāṃsābālaprakāśa*, the first of the major textbooks of the era (there is not all that much for the *bāla* here), and a major commentary, the *Prakāśa*, on the *Śāstradīpikā*. Śāṅkara's son Nīlakaṅṭha is not known as a *mīmāṃsaka*, though he wrote at least one work on the subject (*Mīmāṃsānyāyasaṃgraha*, or *Bhāṭṭārka*). Śāṅkara's elder brother Rāmakṛṣṇa, though primarily a scholar of *dharmasāstra*, is credited

⁶¹ On the *Vidhirasāyana* and the rise of commentaries on the *Śāstradīpikā* see McCrea in Pollock, ed. forthcoming, and on the *Pūrvottaramīmāṃsāvādanakṣatramālā*, Pollock 2004. A commentary by Nārāyaṇa, son of Mādhava (not to be confused with the Gādhivaṃśīya Nārāyaṇa), the unpublished *Siddhāntacandrikā*, along with his much printed and remarkable commentary on the *Tarkaṭpāda* called the *Yuktisnehaprapūriṇī*, was composed in Varanasi in 1543 (Mishra in Jha 1942: 46, and cf. Upadhyaya 1983: 33), thus virtually contemporaneously with Appayya.

with a commentary on Kumārila's *Tantravārttika*, a specialization developed further by his two sons: Kamalākara composed major commentaries on the *Tantravārttika* and the *Śāstradīpikā* (the *Āloka*) plus an independent treatise, the *Śāstratattvakamalākara* (all unpublished), while his elder brother, Dinakara, wrote a treatise called the *Bhāṭṭadinakara*, about which I have much to say here. Dinakara's son Gāgā composed several *mīmāṃsā* texts, including a large-scale review of the system, the *Bhāṭṭacintāmaṇi* (mostly unpublished), and the *Śivārkodaya* and *Mīmāṃsākusumāñjali*, summaries of the system in verse and prose respectively (both unpublished). And the productivity continued in the following generation or two.⁶² To this single family's contributions can be added the extraordinary output by other scholars in Varanasi during this century: Khaṇḍadeva, the greatest *mīmāṃsaka* of the era (d. 1665), who wrote the *Mīmāṃsākaustubha* and the *Bhāṭṭadīpikā* (the commentary on the latter, the *Prabhāvalī*, by Śambhu Bhaṭṭa, is a major work in its own right, drawing from yet expanding upon the *Kaustubha*); Āpadeva, author of what was to become the standard textbook in the field, the *Mīmāṃsānyāyaprakāśa*; Anantadeva, one of Āpadeva's sons and author of the *Vākyabhedavāda* and *Śāstramālāvṛtti* as well as a commentary on his father's work called the *Bhāṭṭālanikāra*; and Jīvadeva, another son of Āpadeva and author of the *Bhāṭṭabhāskara* quoted above. Two generations earlier, Annam Bhaṭṭa (originally from Andhra but working in Varanasi) wrote an important (and still unpub-

⁶² For Nārāyaṇa's *Śāstradīpikā* see BORI ms. 633/1887-91 (on chapter 7.4; Chandra Shum Shere D 512(2), chapter 7), Mysore ORI 35543 (chapter 4). Śāṅkara Bhaṭṭa's *Saśrādhikarāṇasiddhāntaprakāśa* is found in Kunhan Raja and Sarma 1993: 478. See also Umesh Mishra in Jha 1942: 46 ff. I find a reference to Rāmakṛṣṇa's commentary on Kumārila in the introduction to the *Dbarmadvaitanirṇaya* (p. 2). Kamalākara's potentially highly significant *Śāstratattvakamalākara* mentioned earlier is presently inaccessible, the one complete manuscript being held in Bikaner (it is not clear whether this is identical with the *Śāstramālā*; a copy of this work, but bearing only the commentary of Kamalākara's son Ananta, is available in the Chandra Shum Shere collection (D512(1)), and in the Anup Sanskrit Library (donated to Anūpa Siṃha by Ananta's son, Kunhan Raja and Sarma 1993: 478). Gāgā's *Śivārkodaya* is available only in two mss. (one in Alwar, one in Calcutta), and his *Mīmāṃsākusumāñjali* in (apparently only) one ms. in Calcutta.

lished) subcommentary on Someśvara's *Rāṇaka*, and soon after him, the Maharashtrian logician Mahādeva wrote his own *Mīmāṃsānyāyasamgraha*.⁶³

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, however, this remarkable productivity had almost completely dissipated. The recent overview of late Sanskrit scholarship mentioned earlier is again worth noticing. The account of *mīmāṃsā* begins with Vañceśvara Dīkṣita (1798–1832), author of the *Bhāṭṭacintāmaṇi*, a commentary on the *Bhāṭṭadīpikā* of Khaṇḍadeva, followed immediately by the early twentieth-century scholars Vaidyanatha Sastri (1850–1950, author of a *vyākhyā* on the *Śābarabhāṣya*), Chinnaswami Sastry (whose student, P. N. Pattabhirama Sastry, was my teacher in Varanasi in the early 1980s), and Vasudeva Sastri Abhyankar.⁶⁴ A similarly foreshortened image is given by an earlier scholar, Umesh Mishra, in his well-known bibliography: between Kṛṣṇa Yajvan (c. 1800), author of the *Mīmāṃsāparibhāṣā*, and the beginning of Westernized scholarship (Ganganath Jha), he is able to identify nothing of historical importance.⁶⁵ Even if intensive archival scrutiny were to show (though preliminary research suggests otherwise) that these lists of important post-1800 *mīmāṃsākas* are off by a factor of two or three or even five, the fall-off in production that occurred after the mid-eighteenth century would still be stunning. And this picture is most likely not very distorted. There certainly remains no historical memory of important scholarship produced after c. 1750 and the few texts I have just mentioned. In the same survey, the respected contemporary paṇḍit Thangaswami Sarma, one of the last representatives of traditional south Indian *mīmāṃsā* training, discusses only Vañceśvara's *Bhāṭṭacintāmaṇi* and admits that "in the recent period from the eight-

⁶³ Śambhu Bhaṭṭa (fl. 1700) was the son of one Bālakṛṣṇa and an *antevāsin* of Khaṇḍadeva, but not affiliated with the Gādhivaṃśīya Bhaṭṭas. He wrote also an *Adbikaraṇa-samkṣepa* but not the *Smṛtikaustubha* (see n. 113). For Anantadeva's works see Kunhan Raja and Sarma 1993: 475, 478. Mahādeva's *mīmāṃsā* work is still in manuscript, BORI 577/1884-87.

⁶⁴ Krishna 2002, Appendix A I-A, the 'List of Mimamsa Thinkers from the Eighteenth Century Onward' prepared by K. T. Pandurangi. Further reservations about this survey are raised (see n. 20) by its treatment of the earlier period. No mention is made of the works of Kamalākara Bhaṭṭa, Dinakara Bhaṭṭa, or Rājacudāmaṇi Dīkṣita (contrast for the last Mishra in Jha 1942: 62 ff).

⁶⁵ Mishra in Jha 1942: 62-4.

eenth to the twentieth century no development or growth in the study of *Mīmāṃsā* has occurred.⁶⁶ It seems impossible to avoid the conclusion that beginning sometime in the latter half of the eighteenth century the very idea of *mīmāṃsā* as a vital discipline, one that could be improved or even changed, had somehow become outmoded.

Equally significant as the sheer productivity of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century *mīmāṃsā* is the nature of the social context within which most of the works mentioned so far were written. Originally the theory of Vedic ritual practice, *mīmāṃsā* had long since freed itself from dependence on the elite practitioners of the solemn sacrifices who had been its greatest source of sustenance, but the environment of *mīmāṃsā* scholarship in Varanasi from around the mid-sixteenth century seems to have been something of a novelty. A rather considerable number of scholars worked without any visible means of patronage and, it would appear, lived largely off their teaching (though perhaps this was underwritten by local notables). Two celebrated cases are Khaṇḍadeva, who trained among others Peru Bhaṭṭa, a student from Andhra and the future father of the poet Jagannātha (as immortalized in the *Rasagaṅgādhara*),⁶⁷ and Vīreśvara, son of the celebrated grammarian Śeṣa Kṛṣṇa and teacher of Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita and Jagannātha. And these pedagogical enterprises were substantial. Around the middle of the sixteenth century the Bhaṭṭa family patriarch, Rāmeśvara Bhaṭṭa, according to the family chronicle, had students from across the subcontinent: Drāviḍa, Gurjara, Kānyakubja, Paścimadeśa, Mālava, Braja, Mithilā, the Himalaya foothills, Karṇāṭa, Utkala, Koṅkaṇa, Gauḍa, Andhra, Mathurā, and Kāmarūpa.⁶⁸ There were exceptions to this image of freemarket intellectuals, to be sure. We will see that the *dharmasāstrins* Nīlakaṇṭha and Anantadeva were employed by kings, albeit kings far distant from Varanasi, while Gāgā Bhaṭṭa received legendary patronage from Śivājī that is reflected in his *Śivārkodaya*—“The Sunrise of Śivājī”—which he calls ‘another victory pillar of Śiva[jī]’s that has been implanted

⁶⁶ In Krishna 2002: 93.

⁶⁷ See vv. 2-3: *devād evādhyagīṣṭa smarabaranagare śāsanaṃ jaiminīyam*.

⁶⁸ Pollock 2002: 420 n. 33 (*Gādhivamaśānucarita* cited in Haraprasad Shastri 1912: 9).

by the learned Gāgā Bhaṭṭa.⁶⁹ Courtly patronage of this kind seems to have been the norm in the south, however, the case of Vāsudeva Dīkṣita, author of the *A-dhvaramīmāṃsākutūbalavṛtti*, being typical.

In addition to the marked increase in productivity during this period and the new social contexts, there seems to have been a closer convergence between *mīmāṃsā* and *dharmasāstra* as forms of knowledge. This is not to claim that *mīmāṃsā* abandoned its fundamental character as *vākyaśāstra*, the science of discourse; if anything it recommitted itself to such analysis.⁷⁰ Even less is it to ignore the fact that the conceptual linkage between the two disciplines was of ancient stamp, based both on *mīmāṃsā*'s foundational claim that the Veda was the sole, and also inerrant, source of the knowledge of *dharmā* (*veda eva dharmasya pramāṇam, vedo dharmasya pramāṇam eva*), and on its monopolization of the right to adjudicate that claim (*tasya nimittaparīṣṭibih*). Yet the convergence was necessitated by a new division of labor. By the seventeenth century, as just noted, *dharmasāstra* had largely withdrawn from the debate on vindicating the *dharmā*-authority of non-Vedic texts and nontextual practices—one of the big-ticket questions of Indian moral theory—while concentrating ever more assiduously on the regulation of narrow points of everyday ritual. The standard concerns of the discipline are suggested by the section-headings of Anantadeva's *Smṛtikaustubha: saṃskāra* (rites of passage) *ācāra* (rules of conduct), *dāna* (gifts), *pratiṣṭhā* and *utsarga* (foundations of temples and dedication of philanthropic works), *tithi* and *saṃvatsara* (determination of the monthly and annual ritual calendars), and *rājadharmā* (political thought, to be considered in the fourth section of this essay). There is no general account, even cursory, of the sources and nature of *dharmā*—what it actually is and how we know it—anywhere in Anantadeva's book on *dharmā*, and in this he is typical of seventeenth-century writers in the discipline. Perhaps such an ac-

⁶⁹ *Śivārkodaya* 11:

*śrīmadbhosalavaṃśabhūṣaṇamaṇikṣiṇīśāśābātmaja-
chatrādhibīśaśivakṣitīśayaśasas [s] tambo nikhāto 'parah |
gāgābhaṭṭamanīṣiṇā dhira . . . -nī grantho śivārkodayo
yenābaddhayaśodhvajena [-dhvajaiva?] sakalaivāśv eti lokatrayī || 2 ||.*

⁷⁰ Apparently minor topics such as *matvarthalakṣaṇā*, or 'figurative indication of the meaning of a possessive affix,' assume new prominence and are taken up in separate *prakaraṇa* works such as Khaṇḍadeva's *Bhāṭṭatantrarahasya*. See McCrea 2002.

count was meant to be implied by the sources and nature of the citations themselves; or perhaps the subfield of big theory had been ceded to *mīmāṃsā*.

One aspect of the increased convergence of the two knowledge systems was embodied in the scholarly practices of actual persons. *Mīmāṃsakas* of earlier epochs, such as Pārthasārathi Mīśra and Someśvara in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, composed no works on *dharmā* (this is a fortiori the case with the great masters of the founding schools, Kumārila and Prabhākara, in the seventh century). Correlatively, the *dharmāśāstrins* who were their contemporaries, men like Vijñāneśvara and Lakṣmīdhara, wrote no works on *mīmāṃsā*.⁷¹ The seventeenth-century scene was unmistakably different, for virtually every *dharmāśāstrin* was a published *mīmāṃsaka*, and vice versa. Again the Bhaṭṭa clan personifies the trend in emphatic ways from at least the time of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa. This scholar conjoined an interest in *mīmāṃsā* with a large output in the area of *dharmāśāstra*; besides his own many works (his *Antyeṣṭipaddhati* and of course the *Tristhalīsetu*, among others), he was the scholar chosen by Akbar's *vakil*, Ṭoḍaramalla, to produce the monumental *Ṭoḍarānanda* in the late sixteenth century.⁷² His son Śāṅkara wrote in addition to his *mīmāṃsā* works the *Dharmadvaitanirṇaya* and the *Sarvadharmaprakāśa*. In the former treatise he describes how he 'completely clarified the truth of many contentious points in *dharmāśāstra* in a way no one had done before by use of the gleaming jewels of interpretive principles obtained from churning the deep ocean of *mīmāṃsā*.'⁷³ As we have noted, Śāṅkara's son, Nīlakaṇṭha, though preeminently a *dharmāśāstrin*, wrote also on *mīmāṃsā*. And Nīlakaṇṭha's cousins Dinakara and Kamalākara Bhaṭṭa produced extensive works on both *mīmāṃsā* and *dharmāśāstra*. Add to the latter's *mīmāṃsā* works cited earlier the *Mīmāṃsākutūhala*, a collection of what have to be called essays; his *dharmāśāstra* works include the celebrated *Nirṇayasindhu* (1612) and the ten-volume

⁷¹ There are a few exceptions, such as Bhavadēva in (probably) eleventh-century Orissa, and Mādhava (or Mādhava and Co.) in early Vijayanagara (c. 1350).

⁷² Wujastyk 2005.

⁷³ *Dharmadvaitanirṇaya* p. 146, lines 19–22:
babūnāṃ bindūnām iba vimatibhūyastamatamo
'bbhibhūtaṃ yat kaiścit katham api na tattvaṃ suvivṛtam |
tad etan mīmāṃsājāladhimathanābhyyudbhṛtanaya-
prabhāratnair nītaṃ suviśadataratvaṃ khalu mayā ||

Dharmatattva. In addition, his *Tattvakamalakara* (or *Śāstratattva*) appears to deal specifically with *mīmāṃsā*'s bearing on the interpretation of *dharmasāstra*.⁷⁴ Dinakara, though primarily a *mīmāṃsaka*, also compiled a vast *dharmasāstra* called the *Dinakaroddyota*, partly in cooperation with his son Gāgā.

A second aspect of the new disciplinary convergence, as Dinakara's *mīmāṃsā* text demonstrates, is that *dharmasāstra* authority was now being adduced for the verification of *mīmāṃsā* principles in a way rare in earlier discourse, where *dharmasāstra* may often be cited but not usually for *determining* the validity of *mīmāṃsā* interpretive rule. Here is a typical instance: In the *smṛtipāda* Dinakara addresses a dispute over the possibility of restricting apparently blanket prohibitions in Vedic texts—what in technical terminology is known as *upasaṃbhāra*. Were such a restriction to be permitted, a general injunction such as 'One should not kill any creature' could, in theory at least, be limited by a second prohibition, 'One should not kill a Brahman,' leaving open the possibility of lawfully killing living beings other than Brahmins.⁷⁵ (As in the case of the *upasaṃbhāra* of a general commandment by a specific one, *mīmāṃsā* convention holds that the *upasaṃbhāra* of a general prohibition is possible only if it is unclear, as it is not in this particular instance.) In this context Dinakara finds it perfectly reasonable to resolve this *mīmāṃsā* dispute by quoting the fourteenth-century *dharmasāstrins* Mādhava and Hemādri as authorizing the narrowing of a general prohibition.⁷⁶ This conjuncture of *dharmasāstra* and *mīmāṃsā* may in part be related to the new multidisciplinary visibility across the board in late premodern Indian knowledge systems. It may also be linked to what appears to be a new, or newly intensified, formaliza-

⁷⁴ See above n. 62 and Kane 1962–77: 1.2: 928.

⁷⁵ Dinakara ascribes this argument as a general principle to his *pūrvapakṣin*: *yat tu kaścīn niṣedhānām upasaṃbhāro nāsti . . . ity āha. tan na*. The *kaścīd* to whom he attributes this argument is unknown to me.

⁷⁶ It is of course irrelevant that the case in point will strike modern readers as trivial—namely, that the general prohibition against eating eggplant (*vṛntākaniṣedha*) should really be restricted to the white eggplant; the *Madanaṣārijāta* restricts it even further to the eating of eggplant on the thirteenth day of the lunar fortnight. See *Bhāṭṭadīnā-kara* 42v: *ata eva mādhavahemādribhyāṃ vṛntākaniṣedhasya śvetavṛntākaniṣedhenopasaṃbhāra u-ktāb. madanaṣārijāte ca niṣedhadvayasyāpi trayodaśyāṃ vṛntākam na bhakṣayed iti niṣedhenopasaṃbhāra ukta iti vadāmaḥ*.

tion of judicial proceedings, inferable from the proliferation of councils for the adjudication of caste disputes and from the signed judgments they issued—the *nirṇaya-* or *vyavasthā-patra*—possibly (as some have recently suggested) in imitation of the *fatwa* of Muslim clerics.

The work of Dinakara just cited, the *Bhāṭṭadinakara* (c. 1610), is exemplary of some important trends in late *mīmāṃsā* in what I have been calling moral theory, and I would now like to look more closely at its style and substance. This still-unpublished treatise, in several hundred folios, on the whole of the *mīmāṃsā* system appears to have been widely read across India. Manuscripts are found today in Bombay, Pune, Bikaner, Varanasi (both Sarasvati Bhavan and Ramnagar), and Madras.⁷⁷ Long mistaken as a commentary on the *Śāstrādīpikā*,⁷⁸ the *Bhāṭṭadinakara* is in fact closer to a *saṃgraha*, a genre relatively new in *mīmāṃsā*. Its seeds are perhaps to be found in the *Śāstrādīpikā* itself, as well as in the *Tautātītamātīlaka* of Bhavadeva (eleventh century?) and the *Jaiminīnyāyamālā* and *-vistara* of Mādhava (early fourteenth-century), but it would appear that the *Bhāṭṭadinakara* is the first in the wave of later works. Gāgā's *Bhāṭṭacintāmaṇi* belongs to this genre, as do the two works of Khaṇḍadeva: the marvelously detailed *Mīmāṃsākaustubha* and the *Mīmāṃsādīpikā*, which is more concise and restates the positions of the former. The *saṃgraha* format was popular outside of Varanasi as well, as shown by the *Bhāṭṭasaṃgraha* of Rāghavendra Tīrtha (fl. 1650, d. Mantralayam, Andhra Pradesh) and, in early eighteenth-century Tanjavur, the *Adhvaramīmāṃsākutūbalavṛtti* of Vāsudeva Dīkṣita (c. 1730). Instead of providing an exegesis of a single antecedent commentator (in an ever more deeply nested series of exegeses), the *saṃgraha* explains the prima facie and final tenets by adducing the conflicting interpretations—here the genre subdivides, with some *saṃgrahas* merely reporting such interpretations and others deciding among them—ending with an explanation of the original *Jaiminīsūtra*. (In this consistent concluding focus on the *sūtra* we may be seeing that urge to return to the foundational text that marks other *śāstras* of the period.)

⁷⁷ The only complete manuscript, however, seems to be owned by the Anup Sanskrit Library.

⁷⁸ See the discussion in my edition (Pollock forthcoming).

In many ways the bold announcement with which Dinakara begins his work is indicative of his agenda:⁷⁹

unmūlayan viśadayan sādbayan vā vidhāntaraiḥ |
jīrṇāśayaṃ dinakaro vakṣi sāmpratam aṣṭame ||

That is, Dinakara intends to ‘prove by other means, clarify, or even uproot the thought of the outmoded authorities’ (the objectives are listed, as they are frequently, in descending order of importance). That we are fully justified in hearing a pejorative tone in the word *jīrṇa*—it is often no neutral reference to ‘the ancients’ as a block—is suggested by the same usage by other scholars of seventeenth-century Varanasi.⁸⁰ The expression of critique, even dismissal, is corroborated by the rather curious verse at the opening of the section of the *Bhāṭṭadīnakara* that I am concentrating on here (1.3):

dāreṣu iva nibandheṣu jīrṇeṣu sudbiyāṃ grabhaḥ |
vayasah kṣapaṇāyaiva na rasāya kadācana ||

Outmoded works [or, perhaps digests] are like an old wife: for a scholar to take trouble over them
is a sheer waste of time, and never a source of joy.

Dinakara’s declaration may remind readers of his near-contemporary Descartes (who insisted on ‘the need to start anew from first principles,’ *a primis fundamentis denuo inchoandum*, *Meditationes* [1641]). His radicalism is apparently directed not toward the past as a whole but toward the scholars of the middle period, those who stood between the seventeenth-century scholars and the true ancients, above all the *sūtrakāra* himself, and had sought to mediate their reception. His may have been a radicalism in the service of very ancient values, but it was potentially disruptive of the very systematicity, especially of commentarial authority,

⁷⁹ Or probably began. I have no manuscript of the opening (Sarasvati Bhavan ms. no. 29502, which contains *adhyāya* 1.1–2, is lacking the first page), but the verse is found at the start of all the *adhyāyas* for which I do have manuscripts, e.g., 3 (Government Oriental Mss. Library, Madras, R. no. 2418) and 8–11 (Sarasvati Bhavan mss. no. 29147–29150, part of a set that once belonged to Kavīndrācārya Sarasvatī).

⁸⁰ Pollock 2001a: 9 and n. 9.

that gave the system its strength. In this Dinakara is representative of a number of sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century scholars, such as Appayya Dīkṣita, who aimed to start not from a blank slate but from the most ancient sources (which is what the *saṃgraha* as a genre arguably sought to do). And the reaction to Dinakara is representative, too, if far less virulent than the reaction to Appayya (as found in, say, Śaṅkara Bhaṭṭa's assault on Appayya Dīkṣita's *Vidhirasāyana* for its supposed criticism of Kumāriḷa).⁸¹ For, viewed historically, perhaps the single most important feature of his radicalness, aside from its very existence, is how quickly it was repudiated by his own colleagues in the discipline, and indeed—if I understand matters aright—by his own younger brother and his son.

As is true throughout the Sanskrit intellectual tradition of the era, the actual transformations Dinakara brings about in the analysis of the understanding of the moral order seem small; they mean to fine-tune the system, not subvert it, and they entail only minor practical consequences. Change in strong traditions is typically marked not by open revolt but by reform so measured that it is often hard to perceive. What we noted in the case of *alaṅkāraśāstra* applies to *mīmāṃsā* as well. It is no easy task to identify innovation. To know that anything is new presupposes knowing everything that is old, but *mīmāṃsā* is a jungle and it is folly to assume that a late author is taking a path no one ever took before. That said, Dinakara helps us repeatedly (more than a half-dozen times in *Bhāṭṭadīnakara* 1.3 alone) by identifying the positions he holds to be new, typically with the words *vayam tu* 'but as for me'), in what seems a determined effort to set off his view from much (though not all) earlier tradition, above all, the tenth-through-twelfth-century scholars such as Pārthasārathi and Someśvara (though not always). A few sample topics will give a sense of Dinakara's method and mind: the authority of Vedic and *smṛti* texts, which constitutes the core question of *Pūrvamīmāṃsā* 1.3; the proprieties of language usage; and the relationship of customary practices and textual authority. I address these sequentially, providing a précis of Dinakara's position followed by a brief account of his reasoning.

- The source of the validity of *smṛti* (traditional texts relating to *dharmā*) is intrinsic (*svataḥ*), just as in the case of *śruti* (revealed texts relating to *dharmā*), and

⁸¹ McCrea forthcoming.

is not based on the fact that the agents involved in the two domains of moral practice are the same (*karṭṛsāmānyāt*):

We know *dhārma*, what is right, only through Vedic texts, since only transcendent texts (and the Vedas are the only such texts) transmit knowledge of transcendent entities such as *dhārma*, the ultimate good. But people in the *vaidika* community often rely on texts and perform acts that they believe pertain to what is right but that are not found or mentioned in the Veda. From the earliest stratum of the *mīmāṃsāsūtras* the authority of such texts and practices was based on an argument from the identity of the agents involved (*karṭṛsāmānyā*): if the people who composed such texts—and here the *smṛtis* are principally at issue—were themselves participants in *vaidika* culture, the texts must be based on the Vedas. For Dinakara, however, since ‘no one has actually observed the composers of the *smṛtis* performing acts of *vaidika* culture,’ the true meaning of ‘the fact that the agents involved are the same’ must be this: the same people who have accepted the axiom that the Veda alone has validity in matters of *dhārma* have accepted the *smṛtis*. But more important is the argument that follows: *smṛti* must accordingly derive its authority in precisely the same way as the Veda itself, through its intrinsic validity (*svataḥ prāmānyā*). ‘[The conventional *siddhānta* is based on acceptance by the interpretive community (*śiṣṭaparigraba*)] However, the real reason *smṛti* is valid is because validity is always intrinsic, absent overriding factors.’⁸² It is thus no longer ‘the same actors’ that make *smṛti* true—the fact that those who accept *śruti* as a source of *dhārma* also accept *smṛti* as a source—but the same logic that makes *smṛti* true—the fact that *smṛti* can no more be falsified than *śruti*. And in this strong reaffirmation of the ‘revelation of tradition’ Dinakara seems to adopt a position even more conservative than that of the *sūtrakāra* himself.⁸³

Khaṇḍadeva supports the old position based on the identity of the agents (as,

⁸² 29v: *siddhāntas tu smṛtīnām śiṣṭair adhyayanādhyāpanārthānuṣṭānarūpaparigrabaṇāt prāmānyam. ya eva vaidikārthānuṣṭhātāras ta eva smṛtikartāra iti karṭṛsāmānyāt smṛtīnām vedamūlatvam iti jirṇāḥ. tan na. smṛtikartṛṇām vaidikārthānuṣṭhānasya kenāpy adarśanāt. ato ye vedasyeva [vedasyaiva?] dharme prāmānyāṅgīkartārah te smṛtiparigrabakartāra iti karṭṛsāmānyād vedamūlatvasiddhiḥ. kiṃ ca bādhakābhāve prāmānyasya svatastvāt smṛtīnām prāmānyam. na cātra bādho 'sti. na hi vedarāhitaśūdrādīkartṛtvaṃ vā jaḍādīkartṛtvaṃ vā smṛtīnām āṅgīkṛiyate yena tadbādhaḥ syāt. na ca vipralambhādi bādhakam. śiṣṭaparigrabād eva tadabhāvakaḥ.*

⁸³ For the long history of this problematic see Pollock 1997.

essentially, does Vāsudeva Dīkṣita): the *smṛtis* for their part give knowledge about *dharmā* not intrinsically but by intimating the Vedic passage upon which they are necessarily grounded.⁸⁴

▪ *Smṛti* texts are valid both semantically and pragmatically and constrain *śruti* texts:

As just stated, all texts and acts purporting to deal with *dharmā* must derive from Vedic texts, and if we cannot certify those texts as currently extant, we infer that they must have existed (or still exist somewhere). But what happens to this inference if these texts and acts contradict actually existing Vedic texts and/or if they reveal some worldly concern (*dr̥ṣṭārtha*) such as self-interest? The latter is something impossible for the Veda: it is core *mīmāṃsā* doctrine that the Veda's very purpose is to inform us of what is beyond the realm of interests and instrumental reason (that is, *adr̥ṣṭe śāstram arthavat*, the Vedas is purposeful only in the domain of otherworldly concerns). The history of the response to this question is long and complicated. The earliest extant commentator, Śabara (c. fourth century?), held that such contradictory texts and practices had no authority. Three centuries later Kumāriḥ denied that any contradiction could exist between *śruti* and *smṛti* (or that any material interest could underlie a *smṛti* rule).⁸⁵ Later thinkers such as Pārthasārathi Mīśra and Bhavadēva developed a new strategy for saving the validity of an apparently contradictory rule by distinguishing between what might be termed its semantic and its pragmatic validity: a rule found in a *smṛti* text not contradicted by the Veda has both forms of validity, whereas a *smṛti* text conflicting with an actually existing Vedic text was said to be valid as far as its meaning and authenticity go (that is, it remained valid in terms of its Vedic origin), but was invalid pragmatically, 'invalid regarding outcome' (or, enactment; *phalato 'prāmāṇyam*); in other words, one is not required to perform

⁸⁴ *Mīmāṃsākaustubha*, p. 12: *vaidīkakarṇakartṛtvasāmyāt*; *Bhāṭṭadīpikā*, p. 45: *mūlasrutyupasthāpakatayā*. Slightly different is Vāsudeva Dīkṣita, *Aḍvaramīmāṃsākutūbalavṛtti*, p. 60: *tatkartṛṇām . . . vedamūlakatayā dr̥ḍhaparigrhītasṁṛtīvīhitatvasya samānatvād*: 'For the authors of the *smṛtis* the fact that [a practice] enjoined in a *smṛti* is firmly accepted [by the interpretive community] as based on the Veda is 'the same' [as a practice enjoined by the Veda itself].

⁸⁵ See *Tantravārttika siddhānta* pp. 111–12.

the rule if its existence in the Vedic corpus cannot be corroborated.⁸⁶ Someśvara (again according to Dinakara; not found in *Nyāyasudhā* on 1.3.3–4) held that *smṛti* texts contradicting actually existing Vedic texts are merely ‘limited’ (*samkoca*) by those texts, not rendered ‘invalid for practice.’ Dinakara goes even further, however, in arguing that where there is no other scope for the contradictory *smṛti* text, whereas there may be scope for the *śruti* text, *smṛti* limits *śruti* (and where there is equal scope, the latter limits the former). That is to say, for Dinakara, contradiction not only does not render the *smṛti* rule absolutely invalid (as with Śābara) or even pragmatically invalid (as with Someśvara) but entails a constraint on the application of the *śruti* rule. For example, a *smṛti* text allowing a man to remain celibate until his forty-eighth year, which appears to contradict a *śruti* text requiring him to install the sacred fires as soon as he becomes a father and before his hair turns gray, is not invalidated by the mere fact of contradiction, let alone because it may appear to have been invented for self-interested reasons (like hiding one’s impotence), nor does it become ‘invalid for practice’ so long as we do not find a Vedic text to corroborate it. Rather, it is re-interpreted as a specific limitation on the general *śruti* rule laying out the qualifications for installing the fires. In every case where there is conflict between the two types of rules, it is necessary to differentiate their domains of application, not to challenge the applicability, let alone the validity, of the *smṛti* rule.⁸⁷

Khaṇḍadeva (so too Vāsudeva Dīkṣita) reasserts Kumārila’s position in both his treatises, whereas his commentator, Śambhu Bhaṭṭa, reasserts Someśvara’s: the examples adduced by Śābara are not in conflict with the Veda but are to be

⁸⁶ See Pārthasārathi’s *Śāstradīpikā* p. 26. I do not find in the *Tautātītamatilaka* the position Dinakara here attributes to Bhavadeva.

⁸⁷ 32r: *vayaṃ tu yatra śrutiḥ sāvakāśā smṛtiś ca niravakāśā tatra smṛtyāpi śrutisaṃkocaḥ*; 32v: *evaṃ yatra yatra smṛtīnāṃ virodhas tatra viṣayavyavasthākalpā*.

interpreted as having to do with a *smṛti* text based on an as-yet-undiscovered Vedic text.⁸⁸

- The languages of the uncultured are to be avoided, according to Vedic injunction:

Here the context concerns the authority of grammar (*vyākaraṇādhikaraṇa*) and the significance of the prohibition against using incorrect words (*asādbuśabda*). The grammarians, Dinakara tells us, restrict the prohibition to the domain of ritual practices, not to other occasions. This is so in part because they hold that there exists no direct Vedic injunction against using incorrect language generally, in other words, that the injunction *nāsādbhīm vadet*, ‘One should not speak incorrect words,’ has no scriptural source. Dinakara, however, having already argued that the general *smṛti* text on restriction of usage (*[asādbu-] prayoganiyamasmṛti*) does indeed have Vedic authority (indicated by the Vedic injunction to speak truth and avoid falsehood, since ‘both true and false *signifiers* and true and false *signifieds* can equally be referred to by ‘correct’ and ‘incorrect’), goes on to claim that this is a general injunction restricted by a specific rule of the sociomoral sphere (*puruṣārtha*) regarding a Brahman’s learning (and, by implication, speaking) the languages of the uncultured: ‘In my view, the prohibition “One should not use incorrect words” is to be narrowed (*uṣasambhāra*) to the rule enunciated by Someśvara that “One should not learn the language of the uncultured”.’⁸⁹ It is only the speaking of the *mleccha* language known as Barbara that is being pro-

⁸⁸ *Prabhāvalī* p. 47 column 1: *ata evoktaṃ nyāyasudbhāyāṃ udāharaṇabhāṣyam api adṛṣtamūlāvasthasmṛtiviśayatayā netavyam*. Dinakara’s views may not be as innovative as they appear. As Mitra Miśra points out, rather similar was the *Kalpataru*’s analysis of a passage in the *Bhaviṣya-purāṇa*, see *Vīramitrodaya (Paribhāṣāprakāśa)* p. 28 lines 113–15 (*atas tasyāḥ (smṛteḥ) ‘avirodbena vyavasthaya’ avirodbena vyavasthayaḥ ‘anyatra’ viruddhaśrutyardarśanakālādau ‘viśayaḥ kārya’ ‘bādhitārthakatvam [sic leg.] kalpanīyam*. That is, in the case where a *smṛti* text would cease to have application if in being applied it came into conflict with a *śruti* text, experts must find some non-contradictory way to apply it so as to differentiate its scope from that of the *śruti* text.

⁸⁹ I do not find this sentence in Someśvara. That the prohibition on using incorrect language is *puruṣārtha* as well as *kratvartha* is established on p. 606 (and this I believe is Kumārila’s position anyway).

hibited, and not other forms of language [i.e., *apabhraṣṭa* Sanskrit; possibly also the *deśabbhāṣās*, the ‘languages of Place,’ which of course were also considered *apabhraṣṭa*], [and] the prohibition is a general moral one [and not (or, and not only) restricted to the ritual domain].’ Dinakara goes on to add (with an implicit criticism of Kumārila’s analysis) that the standard prohibition *na mlecchitavai*, ‘One is not to barbarize,’ can only refer to non-Sanskrit, since the presence of incorrect words (that is, Sanskrit solecisms) in a sacrifice is already prohibited since the *mantras* are components of the ritual.⁹⁰

If I understand this complex passage properly, this interpretation of Dinakara’s is rejected (at least for the Vedic text in question) not only by Khaṇḍadeva and his commentator but even by Dinakara’s brother Kamalākara and his own son Gāgā. Thus Kamalākara: ‘The statement about incorrect language has no reference to *mlecchabhāṣā*. . . . That one scholar . . . interprets this as a general moral principle and not as one specifically restricted to the ritual domain is a pure mistake based on his ignoring the liturgical context of the example.’⁹¹ Śambhu Bhaṭṭa is unequivocal: the prohibition does not refer to Persian, which is what he, like Khaṇḍadeva, clearly takes Dinakara to mean. (Khaṇḍadeva distinguishes between *barbarādibhāṣāśabda* and the *bhāṣāśabda* used by ‘all vernacular intellectuals in their everyday activities as well as in chanting the name and virtues of Hari,’ although elsewhere he seems to include the languages of the Romaka—probably the language of the ‘people of Rome,’ i.e., Constantinople/Istanbul, less probably

⁹⁰ 41v: *vayaṃ tu nāsādbhīm vaded iti niṣedhasya mlecchabhāṣāṃ na śikṣeteti someśvaroktavākyenopa-saṃbhārāt. barbarākhyamlecchabhāṣāyā eva bhāṣāṇasya puruṣārthanīṣedho nānyabhāṣāyāḥ.*

⁹¹ *Śāstradīpikāloka* Adyar 89v–90r (Alwar 64r) on *Śāstradīpikā* p. 46: *apaśabda ity ukter na mlecchabhāṣāparatvam . . . yat tu kaścid vāgvadanasyāvryabbicāridvārbbāvān [?] na kratvarthatvaṃ kīṃ tu puruṣārthataivety āba sa te ’surā ity asya jyotiṣtomagatatvam apaśyan bbrānta eva.* Similarly Gāgā Bhaṭṭa, *Bhāṭṭacintāmaṇi* p. 41: *evaṃ ca somaṃprakaraṇasthas tasmād brāhmanena na mlecchitavai mleccho ha vā eṣa yad apaśabda . . . iti nānṛtaṃ vaded iti cāpaśabdaniṣedhaḥ saṃgacchate. na cāyaṃ mlecchabhāṣāviṣayaḥ belayo belayo ity upakramasthārtthavāde re-phasthāne lakāroccāraṇanindayā[pa]śabdāmātraviṣayatvāt.*

the French or Portuguese—among the *mlecchabhāṣā*.)⁹² The prohibition instead pertains to Sanskrit solecisms, an interpretation certified by the introduction and conclusion of the explanatory passage (*arthavāda*) in the *Vājasaneyīśākhā* where the prohibition is found. For his part Vāsudeva Dīkṣita, as he does often, restates the position of the *Śāstradīpikā*.⁹³

Khaṇḍadeva directly refutes Dinakara here on the grounds that (1) *na mlecchītavai* cannot refer to *mlecchabhāṣā* but instead refers to Sanskrit solecisms (for the simple fact that the context and the very example cited in the Vedic passage where the prohibition occurs concern ungrammatical (*apabhraṣṭa*) Sanskrit); (2) a rule against ungrammaticality in the sacrifice is not redundant; (3) *upasaṃhāra* is not in operation here; and (4) the rule against ungrammaticality is pertinent to ritual (*kratvartha*), not to general moral ends (*puruṣārtha*). Yet despite this refutation, he somewhat surprisingly goes on to vindicate Dinakara: ‘There does indeed exist a prohibition of a general moral scope (rather than one restricted to ritual) applying to words of Barbara and other languages, since there is a prohibition on learning them at all: ‘One should not learn a *mleccha* language.’ In this statement there are no grounds, such as initial context [as in the case of *na mlecchītavai*], for setting aside the conventional meaning of the word *mleccha*. Thus the prohibition on Barbara and other languages is purely of a general moral sort,

⁹² *Mīmāṃsākaustubha* p. 132: *sakaladeśīyāḥ śiṣṭā api harināmaguṇasaṃkīrtanādan vyavahārakāle ca bhāṣāśabdān apy aviḡānena prayuñjate*; see also p. 80 where Romaka is mentioned. The term may, however, simply have been adopted from Kumārila (*Tantravārttika* p. 151 line 15: *pārasīkabarbarayavanarāumaka-*) without any real understanding of its meaning.

⁹³ Śambhu Bhaṭṭa in *Bhāṭṭadīpikā* p. 65: *na ca mlecchāśabdāḥ pārasīkīśabdaviṣayaḥ upakramo-pasaṃhārasthārtthavāda-paryālocanāyā apaśabdamaṭravaiṣayatvapratīteḥ*. When Śambhu Bhaṭṭa denies that Persian is at issue, it is not because the word *mleccha* for him does not connote Persian. He is only interpreting the word in an extended sense in order to ensure his *siddhānta*, that there is scriptural proof for the injunction to use correct Sanskrit and to avoid incorrect Sanskrit. See also Khaṇḍadeva: *ayam ca niṣedho prakaraṇāj jyoṣṭo-māṅgam; yajñamātre 'pi ca niṣedhaḥ* (*Bhāṭṭadīpikā* p. 65). For Vāsudeva’s position see *Adbva-ramīmāṃsākutūbalavrtti* p. 92. Kumārila addresses this only in a *pūrvapakṣa*, pp. 189–90; Pārthasārathi does not ask whether the *vidhi* covers extralitururgical language use; he just remarks that the sentence is contained in the Vājasaneyin corpus.

whereas the prohibition on other language [i.e., *apabbraṣṭa* Sanskrit] relates to ritual action and that only.⁹⁴

- Practices vary and so therefore must the Vedic rules from which they are derived:

The ‘practices of the good’ are a source of knowledge of *dharmā*. But (according to the prima facie view) precisely because they are practices and not verbal commandments they are not self-evidently Vedic in origin and therefore could be based on self-interested motives. Whenever practices are in conflict with a *smṛti* text, they cannot therefore prompt the inference that they are based on a preexistent (but unavailable) *smṛti* text. This first inference is necessary to ground a second, namely, inferring a Vedic original from which that *smṛti* text and the practice it grounds would have to be derived (and which ex hypothesi is *puruṣāntarapratyakṣa*, that is, still accessible to other members of *vaidika* culture), enabling them to override the conflicted *smṛti* text.⁹⁵ Dinakara rejects this view on the grounds that since practices never have the character of verbal commandments, they could never, even in the absence of conflict, prompt an inference about their Vedic origin, which *mīmāṃsā* otherwise accepts. But this is merely preparatory to vindicating the case in point, which is cross-cousin marriage. Though the practice stands in conflict with explicit *smṛti* texts, it is acceptable or not depending on geocultural region.⁹⁶

The issue under discussion here was raised first in *mīmāṃsā* by Kumāṛila on the basis of contradictory views in the *dharmasūtra* works of Baudhāyana, Āpa-

⁹⁴ The discussion is found in *Mīmāṃsākaustubha* pp. 128–32; the passage translated at p. 132, para. 2.

⁹⁵ The *pūrvapakṣa* in *Tantravārttika* (the second *varṇaka* of the fifth *adhikaraṇa*) and its derivatives is that both practice and *smṛti* directly prompt the inference of a Vedic original; practice does not first call to mind a *smṛti* text, which then calls to mind a *śruti* text. So they are of equal authority. Kumāṛila holds that practice is always mediated (*antaritā*) by *smṛti*.

⁹⁶ 35r–35v: *na ca smṛtīviruddhācārād api smṛtiṃ kalpayitvā puruṣāntarapratyakṣā śrutiḥ kalpanīyēti vācyaṃ. ācārasya vidhirūpatvābhāvena rāgādīmūlatvasambhāvena ca śrutyakalpakatvād iti. vayan tv etac chintyam. smṛtyavirodhe 'py ācārasya vidhisarūpatvābhāvena śrutyakalpakatvāpatteḥ. . . . mātulakanyāpariṇāyasya deśabhedena pratyavāyajanakatvājanakatvayor avirodhāc ca.*

stamba, and Gautama. (Āpastamba allows for a regionally based validity of customary practices, whereas Gautama rejects any practice in conflict with *āmnāya*, a term that Kumāṛila shows includes *smṛti* texts; Baudhāyana, too, rejects Āpastamba's view by citing practices that are at odds with *smṛti*.) Thus in the case of cross-cousin marriage Kumāṛila holds it to contradict *smṛti* and argues accordingly that it is to be avoided by all, including southerners (among whom such marriage is practiced), a position sustained through the centuries and reaffirmed by Khaṇḍadeva in the generation following Dinakara,⁹⁷ and, somewhat surprisingly, by the southerner Vāsudeva Dīkṣita. Dinakara thus stands in contradiction with Kumāṛila, Pārthasārathi, and every other early authority (aside from Some-

⁹⁷ Here is Khaṇḍadeva's summary from the *Bhāṭṭadīpikā*, p. 54: 'The prima facie view is as follows: In the case of something like cross-cousin marriage, there is a clear contradiction between *smṛti* and practice. But it is not possible to conjecture a once- [or, still-] existing *śruti* text for either of them, and therefore practice and *smṛti* are equally valid. The final determination is as follows: The *smṛtis* were composed by people who had a secure sense (*sapratyaya*) [sc., of the original *śruti* text; this is from *Tantravārttika*, *sapratyayapraṇīṭā hi smṛtib sopanibandhanā*, cited in *Śāstradīpikā* p. 34], and they enable us to hear/read this sense of the commandment expressing what is morally required of us (*kartavyatāvācividhipratyayaśravaṇa*). For these two reasons their validity is greater. With respect to practices, actors cannot be said to be endowed with the same secure sense of scripture as were Manu and the other writers of the *smṛtis*; moreover it is impossible for them to locate the relevant *śruti* text among the masses of texts scattered hither and thither in the canon accessible to others [if the texts were accessible, the actors would be said to be basing their actions on *śruti*]. For these two reasons they have to conjecture [rather than hear/read] this sense of the commandment expressing what is morally required. Hence practice has less validity. Accordingly, it is only by observing some contemporary practice that it is possible to conjecture a text remembered by some [sage] who had seen the actual *śruti* text, or some teaching of his (*tadupadeśa*), and thereby conjecture the existence of a *śruti* text [that provides a foundation for the practice]. In the case of *smṛti* texts, by contrast, there is an unmediated [conjecture of a *śruti* original]. Accordingly, any practice that conflicts with *smṛti* is not to be performed unless and until a *śruti* text is found [to support it].² A somewhat clearer exposition is offered in *Śāstradīpikā* p. 34, especially of the question why *ācāra* is twice removed from *śruti*—mediated by *smṛti*—whereas *smṛti* itself is only at a single remove.

śvara in a rather qualified sense)⁹⁸—and also once again with Kamalākara and Gāgā. Adopting a position directly contrary to Dinakara—who declares that ‘the prohibition on cross-cousin marriage, too, in our view, applies to regions other than the south’—Kamalākara comments in the *Śāstradīpikāloka*: ‘This prohibition [against cross-cousin marriage] is directed not against something established by Vedic practice but against something motivated by desire. . . . There cannot be an actual Vedic commandment [in favor of cross-cousin marriage], since *śruti* itself reiterates that it is clearly something motivated by desire.’ Similarly Gāgā in his *Bhāṭṭacintāmaṇi*: ‘In the case of [cross-cousin marriage], since it can be prompted by desire or some other cause, it is even less possible to conjecture a [Vedic] passage functioning as its warrant . . . nor can we avoid the contradiction [between the practice and the prohibition inferred from the *arthavāda* in *śruti*] by conjecturing a differentiation of spheres of application on the basis of regional variation.’⁹⁹ It is especially confusing that a single family should disagree so fundamentally about an issue of such practical significance, particularly a family like the Bhaṭṭa clan that hailed from Maharashtra, where cross-cousin mar-

⁹⁸ Though a number of medieval *dharmasāstras* argued in favor of it as well, including the *Smṛticandrikā* of the southerner Devaṅṇa Bhaṭṭa (fl. 1200) and the *Saṃskārakaustubha* of Anantadeva (c. 1675; he was another Varanasi *dharmasāstrin* of Maharashtrian lineage—the great-great-grandson of Eknath—and argues that cross-cousin marriage is acceptable as an option (*anukalpa*) for people for whom a narrow construction of incest rules (*sāpīṇḍyasamkoca*) has been a regional or family tradition, cited in *Nirṇayasindhu* p. 206 n. 2), but also the *Smṛtīmañjarī* of Govindarāja (before 1400), who was a northerner. See Kane 1962–77, vol. 2.2: 738; vol. 2.1: 458–462; vol. 1.2: 661. For Kumārila’s position see *Tantravārttika* pp. 369–71.

⁹⁹ Dinakara in *Bhāṭṭadinakara* 36r: *mātulakanyāniṣedho ‘pi dākṣiṇātyabbinnaviṣaya iti vadāmaḥ*. Kamalākara in *Śāstradīpikāloka*, Adyar 42r, Alwar 62r, rejecting Rāṇaka: *tan na. vārttikavirodhāt. rāgaprāptasya hy ayam niṣedho na vaidhasya. vidhino nityaprāv[pt?] akarane doṣāpatteḥ. tena rāgāt < pakṣa > pratyakṣaprāptasyaiva śrutāv anuvādān na vidhiḥ*), and in *Nirṇayasindhu* p. 206 bottom: *tasmād mātrtaḥ pañca pītrtaḥ sapta tyaktvodvabed iti siddham*; Gāgā Bhaṭṭa: *ihaca* [sc., *mātulasūtāparinayane*] *kāmādibetvanta[ra] sambhavān mūlabhūtavākyakalpanam api davīyab. . . nāpi deśabhedena vyavasthākalpanayā virodhaparibhārah* (*Bhāṭṭacintāmaṇi* p. 27). The whole question is subjected to extensive scrutiny by Kamalākara in his *Nirṇayasindhu* (which attacks in particular the *Smṛticandrikā*), where he asserts that marriage requires no less than five degrees of separation on the mother’s side, and seven on the father’s.

riage was in fact practiced (as it still is, at least among Deśastha and Karhāḍā Brahmins).¹⁰⁰

As these four examples suffice to show, Dinakara Bhaṭṭa was very much a *navya* scholar in his readiness to overturn convention, though there seems to be no overarching theme to his rebellion. Sometimes he presents himself as a scourge for all revisionist attempts (even if they begin with Śābara) to circumscribe the claims of traditional authority. Tradition, whether embodied in text or practice, has for him a validity indistinguishable from revelation (*śruti*) both in the authority of its commandments and in the obligation it imposes to fulfill them—indeed, at times tradition can even narrow the scope of revelation. This is so because it is based on the same epistemology of unfalsifiability (*svataḥ prāmānya*) rather than (as for earlier scholars) on the acceptance of the pertinent interpretive community (*kaṭṛsāmānya*). And he believes that the Veda itself imposes, as a general moral principal (*puruṣārtha*) and not merely as a liturgical principal (*kratvartha*), a prohibition against speaking *mleccha* languages (and by extension, one assumes, against participating in the new world order of the Mughals). The same contestatory spirit impels him to argue for a regionalization of the universal *dharma* of a sort apparently never before argued in *mīmāṃsā*, and not argued in *dharmasāstra* since the time of the *Āpastambadharmasūtra*.

In consonance with his desire to ‘uproot the thought of the outmoded authorities’ Dinakara sought innovation in a number of ways not easily subsumed under one rubric, whether it be return to the text or emancipation from the text. There is an unmistakable audacity and independence to his thinking—and this audacity and independence met just as unmistakably with rejection. I at least find no other way to interpret the data. What these reactions seem to represent is the reassertion of a certain strain of neoorthodoxy in *mīmāṃsā* thought—much the same tendency that we find in *sāhityasāstra* in the rejection of the *navya* thinker Śrīvatsalāñchana.

The Indologist who ventures into the history of sixteenth-century European moral philosophy finds himself in a strangely familiar world, given the continuing dominance of scholastic formalism (indeed, this persisted well into the se-

¹⁰⁰ Kane 1962–77, vol. 2.1: 462. Kane believes Kamalākara called his cousin Nīlakaṇṭha Bhaṭṭa a fool in *Nirṇayasindhu* (Kane 1962–77, vol. 1.2: 941) so he might well have said his elder brother was confused about *mlecchabhāṣā* and wrong on cross-cousin marriage.

venteenth century), and the formative presence of the past. If scholasticism is defined strictly as ‘the attempt to reconcile the philosophy of the ancient classical philosophers with medieval Christian theology’ the *mīmāṃsā* project does look rather different. But if we think of scholasticism as a style of thought that seeks ever more precise refinement of a set of pregiven issues—as opposed to modernity’s quest for new issues altogether—and especially as a formal mode of thought that seeks ever more precise argument, the parallel becomes a strong one. As for the presence of the past and its authority, these matters continued to fundamentally shape the moral philosophy of the period in Europe. To an outsider this seems to have been largely a matter of taking sides with Aristotelians, Stoics, or Platonists, while keeping their reconcilability with Christianity always in the background. Deep into the seventeenth century the story of ethics was not one of ancients versus moderns but of ancients versus ancients.¹⁰¹

Yet in the course of that century, scholasticism and its objects and method, as well as the presence of the past, began to die. The new form of the discourse on ethics—the *more geometrico*, as we find it in Spinoza—was fully expressive of its new content, since it was developed to replace textual authority.¹⁰² What precisely had happened in Europe to make early-modern moral philosophy modern? This, as a colleague working in the history of ethics observes, is the million-dollar question in the field. ‘Some scholars say that it really begins with Hobbes and others and then reaches the high point with Kant et al. A more discerning reading, I think, pushes this back to the nominalists, and so to late medieval period, where there is a shift to grounding moral norms in the divine will and so a kind of voluntarism not really seen before. Still others see the ‘break’ in terms of the Reformation and Renaissance (that is, Luther and Pico). So, there really is no consensus other than the fact that for ‘moderns’ moral norms are not grounded in the nature of things and their orientation to some natural or supernatural end, whether that nature is human or the nature system or God, and the end might be temporal flourishing or the vision of God. It is a new vision of freedom vis-à-vis the human situation in finite natural patterns that comes to the fore.’¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Garber and Ayers 1998, 2: 1288, 1294.

¹⁰² Garber and Ayers 1998, 2: 1300.

¹⁰³ William Schweiker, personal communication.

If in a history-of-ideas narrative scholars cannot agree on the proximate source of the modernity of moral philosophy, there can be little doubt about its social context. The modernity of morality emerged from the moral crisis in Europe following the Reformation, the Wars of Religion, and the new colonial experience. It was the need to settle confessional as well as colonial conflicts that produced altogether new thinking about natural law: Could a normative social order be derived from the nature of human beings and accounted for as a human invention without being subject to relativism? What is more, could ‘rights now be seriously pleaded against power?’ The immemorial ‘law’ that defined a group as a people was displaced, as was the linkage of the terrestrial to the cosmic order; the role of the divine legislator was radically reduced, as was that of revelation itself. That all this emerged only given the particularly violent history of a particularly violent world can hardly be doubted. Indeed, Hobbes himself, in the mid-seventeenth century, is clear: ‘What hath hitherto been written by moral philosophers, hath not made any progress in knowledge of the truth,’ which has led to ‘offenses, contentions, nay, even slaughter itself.’¹⁰⁴

In seventeenth-century Indian moral theory, by contrast, it is impossible to identify seventeenth-century concerns except—and this may be a big exception—insofar as these concerns centered on an ever more faithful reappropriation of the past. What scholars are prone to interpret as the social and political upheavals—or, more neutrally, transformations—of the era left no mark whatever on the moral vision of the *mīmāṃsakas* (the question of language usage aside). It is true that some, including Dinakara’s brother Kamalākara, were newly concerned with the place of God in their system: ‘Some reproach the *mīmāṃsaka* with being an atheist and so having no business talking about the ‘Way of Faith.’ This slur may apply to some, but as for me, I believe in God.’¹⁰⁵ But the rise (or second rise, after the short-lived and circumscribed effort of Vedāntadeśika, d. 1369) of a theistic *mīmāṃsā* produced no systemwide change, no more than the conception of *bhaktirasa* produced a systemwide change in *alankārasāstra*, even in Bengal. The return to the core of the discipline, typified by the *saṃgraha* and related gen-

¹⁰⁴ I depend heavily here on Taylor 2002, especially pp. 92–95; and Garber and Ayers 1998, 2: 1350–51. Hobbes’s *De Cive* [*Philosophical Rudiments*] (1642–1652) is cited on p. 1304.

¹⁰⁵ *Mīmāṃsākutūbala*, p. 44: *nanu nirīśvaravādīnas te* [sc. *mīmāṃsakasya*] *ko ’yaṃ bhaktimārga-praveśaḥ. paraṃ tv ayaṃ pravādāsanir ekadeśīṣu. asmākaṃ tv asty eveśvaraḥ.*

res, suggests that the systematicity of the system, and the generations of the dead that it represented after nearly two millennia, weighed like a nightmare on the minds of the living.¹⁰⁶ Somehow, what the age demanded above all was the preservation of the system itself. The power of textual authority and the limits on its interpretation became more unforgiving than ever. And thinkers like Dinakara—and the fleeting moment of renewal they embodied—were subject to disciplinary control as soon as they lifted stylus from palmleaf.

4. ARTHA: RĀJADHARMAŚĀSTRA AND THE END OF POLITICAL THEORY

The history of political theory in India in the late premodern period corroborates several of the tendencies identified so far for literary and moral theory during the same period. These include the particular historical trajectory—political thought, too, shows a remarkable upsurge of intellectual production at the beginning of the sixteenth century and what appears to be a sharp decline at the end of the eighteenth—as well as the reassertion of a robust neotraditionalism. Some details on texts and persons and an exemplification of the discursive development will make this clear.

I alluded earlier to the curious history of *arthaśāstra*, the ‘science of power’ narrowly construed. Kauṭilya’s *Arthaśāstra*, which should have constituted the foundational text, fell into obscurity early on. As is not always remembered, only three manuscripts of the work are now extant (the remaining handful being later transcripts of these) and six fragmentary commentaries. The absence in the second millennium of independent texts on the subject is striking and puzzling; even commentarial literature on the classics of *arthaśāstra* was stunted.¹⁰⁷ A cer-

¹⁰⁶ We find in *alaṅkāraśāstra* precisely the same reaction on the part of seventeenth-century writers to the work of Appayya Dīkṣita. See Bronner and Tubb forthcoming.

¹⁰⁷ What is cited as *arthaśāstra* in our period often turns out to be Kāmandaki’s text, e.g., *Rājanītiratnākara* p. 55. I find only two commentaries on the *Kāmandakīyanīṭisāra* (both impossible to date, but apparently late): the *Jayamaṅgala* of Śaṅkarāya (we have his fragmentary commentary on the *Arthaśāstra*) and the anonymous (but interestingly named) *Upādhyayanirapekṣā*, to add something to a pitiful corpus that even an exhaustive census is unlikely to appreciably augment.

tain interest in *nīti* literature was preserved, especially in south Indian vernacular traditions (the only complete commentary on the *Arthaśāstra* is in fact a remarkably early *Bhāṣāvyaḥkhyāna*, ‘Vernacular Explanation,’ in Malayalam), and of course genres other than systematic thought, such as belles lettres, continued, as in the past, to reflect on the political.¹⁰⁸ Just as the discourse on the nature of *dharmma* had been absorbed within *mīmāṃsā*, so the discourse on polity had been absorbed within *dharmasāstra*.

That a significant transformation in political theory as an independent discipline had occurred is borne out by the nature and quality the *rājadharmasāstra* produced during our period. The key transition, however, had taken place several centuries earlier, with the development of the *dharmānibandha* in the early twelfth century. Whether or not I was correct a decade ago in linking the appearance of this genre, a kind of encyclopedia of Hindu lifeways, to the arrival of unfamiliar power seekers in the subcontinent,¹⁰⁹ the genre was certainly new (even if its textual procedures show affinities with the great commentaries from around the ninth through the eleventh centuries, such as those of Medhātithi or Vijñāneśvara). And it clearly testified to a new degree of interest in the subject on the part of the royal courts (such as Gāhaḍavāla, Sena, Yādava), which is where many of the major works were produced.¹¹⁰

Surprisingly, however, none of these first *nibandhas*, with the exception of the earliest, Lakṣmīdhara’s *Kṛtyakalpataru* (1130), appears to have contained a discourse on *rājadharmma*. To be sure, many of the *nibandhas* have not been transmitted as complete works, and parts may well have gone missing, but it seems pretty

¹⁰⁸ See Narayana Rao et al. 2004.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Totalizing conceptualizations of the society . . . became possible only by juxtaposition with alternative lifeworlds; they became necessary only at the moment when the total form of the society was for the first time believed, by the professional theorists of society, to be threatened’; Pollock 1993: 286.

¹¹⁰ These include the *Kṛtyakalpataru* of Lakṣmīdhara at the court of the Gāhaḍavāla king Govindacandra in Kanyakubja and Varanasi (c. 1130); the *dharmānibandha* composed at the court of, or perhaps even by, King Ballālasena of Bengal (c. 1175); the *Caturvargacintāmaṇi* of Hemādri at the Yādava court in Devagiri (c. 1270), and the *Parāśaramādhavīya* of Mādhava at the Vijayanagara court of Bukka Rāya (c. 1400; or a generation earlier, under Harihara II).

certain that for the more than four centuries that followed the *Kṛtyakalpataru*, Sanskrit intellectuals maintained almost total silence on the question of polity. The one exception I find, the *Rājanītiratnākara* of Caṇḍeśvara, to which I return below, was written some time near the end of the fourteenth century as a supplement, or perhaps afterthought, to the author's seven-volume *nibandha*, the *Smṛtiratnākara*, and it is noteworthy that Caṇḍeśvara refers to only one earlier authority on *rājanīti* besides the *Kṛtyakalpataru*.¹¹¹ This situation was to abruptly change, however, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, for all the major *nibandhas* produced during those years include a section on political theory. The sheer size of these texts and the stature of their authors among the intellectuals of the era mark them as unmistakably important documents: *Rājanītisaukhyā* of the *Ṭoḍarānanda* of *Ṭoḍaramalla* (d. 1589, Delhi-Varanasi; not extant); *Rājanīti* of the *Dinakaroddyota* of *Dinakara* (c. 1615);¹¹² *Rājanītiprakāśa* of the *Vīramitrodaya* of *Mitra Mīśra* (fl. 1620, Orcha); *Nītimayūkha* of the *Bhagavantabhāskara* of *Nīlakaṇṭha Bhaṭṭa* (fl. 1625, Varanasi); *Rājadharmakaustubha* of the *Smṛtikaustubha* of *Anantadeva* (fl. 1675, Varanasi); and *Rājadharma*, or *Rājanīti*, of the *Prapañcāmṛtasāra* from the Maratha court of Tanjavur (c. 1700).¹¹³

¹¹¹ Gopāla, author of the *Kāmadbenu* (not extant; see Jayaswal's introduction, p. 23). Another anticipation of the early modern discourse might be the *Nīticintāmaṇi* of *Vācaspati Mīśra*, fl. 1450, Mithila, but I have not been able to consult the text, assuming it is actually extant (see the catalogue of the Royal Asiatic Society for 1923).

¹¹² BORI ms. 37/1866–68; this is (erroneously?) included in the *Vījavahāra* section of the ms.

¹¹³ The *Rājadharma* section of the *Prapañcāmṛtasāra* is unpublished. The list could be extended if we were to include royal instruction manuals such as the *Sāmrājyalaṅkāsmiṇḍībhīka* (perhaps from sixteenth-century Vijayanagara, see Gode 1954, a reference I owe to Dominik Wujastyk) or the *Śrīrāmadīnacaryā* (mid-eighteenth century Tanjavur) or ritual handbooks like the *Rājyābhīṣekapaddhati* in the *Dinakaroddyota* and the *Rājyābhīṣekapaddhati* (from the *Pūrtakamalākara*) of *Kamalākara Bhaṭṭa*; as well as late commentaries on the *rājadharma* sections of ancient *smṛti* texts, such as the *Vīramitrodaya* on the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* of *Mitra Mīśra*.

Yet by the end of the eighteenth century—just as in the case of *alan̄kērasāstra* and *mīmāṃsā*—this strong scholarly production completely ceased. I can find only one treatise on *rājadharma* composed after 1700, the *Rājadharmasārasaṅgraha* at the Maratha Tanjavur court of Tulājī (Tulajī) II (r. 1765–90).¹¹⁴ The marvelously comprehensive *Rājadharma* volumes of the *Dharmakośa* register no eighteenth-century materials at all because virtually none was written. On the contrary, those large-scale *dharmamibandhas* that continued to be written later—works like Maṇirām Dīkṣita's *Anūpavilāsa* from late seventeenth-century Bikaner or Ratnākara's *Jayasimbakalpadruma* (Amber 1713)—omitted the section on polity. What one can say with considerable certainty, then, is that from 1200 to the victory of colonialism around 1800 the Sanskrit discourse on royal power was almost completely irrelevant to the history of Indian thought—with the critical exception of the period 1550–1750.

Explaining this exception and the moment of renewal it represents is the first of a number of hard problems in the history of late premodern Indian political thought. I put it on the table at once, and return to consider it more closely at the end of this section. Such an explanation partly requires making sense of the spatial no less than the temporal dimension of that political thought. But the spatial distribution of the texts in question is, to my eyes, very peculiar. Why should a petty king of the obscure Seṅgara clan, ruling at the dusty outpost of Bhareha on the Chambal river, retain Nīlakaṅṭha, one of the most celebrated scholars of jurisprudence in India, to write a new encyclopedia for him that includes a major section on *rājadharma*? What prompted Bīr Singh Dev of the small principality of Orcha to invite the Gwaliyari pandit Mitra Mīśra to produce what is probably the largest compendium on *dharmā* in Indian history—some 200,000

¹¹⁴ This work is not in the possession of the Wai Pathasala, *pace* Krishna 2002: 381, and its actual whereabouts is unknown to me. Among eighteenth-century texts on *rājadharma* Krishna also lists the '*Smṛtikaustubha* of Śambhu Bhaṭṭa Kavimandana (1720–22),' but this is by Anantadeva, not Śambhu Bhaṭṭa, and from a generation earlier. A genre of *daṇḍanīti* text is found in the early modern period, including: *Daṇḍaviveka* of Vardhamāna of Bilvapañcagrāma (fifteenth century) and the *Daṇḍanīti* of Keśava Paṇḍita produced at the court of Sambhājī, son of Śivājī. Altogether different is the *Rājyavyavahāraśāstra* of Dhunḍhirāja (c. 1676), which sought to replace the Persian administrative vocabulary with Sanskrit at the court of Śivājī (see Guha 2004a and 2004b).

verses, twice the size of the traditional *Mahābhārata*, or around 5000 printed pages—which includes the longest work we have on polity?¹¹⁵ What was the aim of Baj Bahadur Chandra, overlord of Almora, which since 1587 had been incorporated into the new political order of the Mughals, in commissioning Anantadeva's *Rājadbarmakaustubha*, a major section of his *Smṛtikaustubha*? Why did Akbar's *vakil* himself, Ṭoḍaramalla, assemble a committee of Varanasi scholars headed by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, *jagadguru* and patriarch of the city's most famous clan of scholars, to create a new encyclopedia that again included a section on politics? Part of the meaning of a concept or discourse is the use to which it is put, and we therefore cannot understand some of the meanings of these texts until we understand, concretely, something of their uses. But this is a very elusive quarry, as scholars who work on *dharmasāstra* learn to their despair.¹¹⁶ A simplistic appeal to Weberian legitimation or the Geertzian theater state will not take us very far into the cognitive universe of political actors in seventeenth-century India. The inadequacy of functionalist explanation (whether legitimation or other) is shown by a second, and correlative, conundrum connected with the dissipation of the political-theoretical energies and its specific moment in time. Given the gradual disintegration of the Mughal empire after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 and the concomitant rise or strengthening of new Hindu kingdoms, one might expect *rājadbharma* texts to have proliferated. Yet not only did they not proliferate, they almost completely vanished. (This is so even in places like Varanasi: For the founders of the new dynasty in the eighteenth century—Mansā Rām, Balwant Singh, Chetan Singh—who were in direct contact with the terrible new world of British power, the genre must have seemed outmoded; a search of their library shows no such texts were ever composed.) It would be imprudent, then, to link the new interest in political theory in Sanskrit at the start of the seventeenth century, and its new irrelevance by the middle of the eighteenth, monocausally with the rise and fall of the Mughal imperium and the dramatically altered conditions of Hindu sovereignty during the rise and after the fall. But it would also be absurd not to note the connection.

¹¹⁵ To be sure, Orcha may have been small but Bīr Singh Dev was not; see Kolff 1990: 133 ff.

¹¹⁶ Several contributions to Lariviere 1984 address this empirical difficulty. For the conceptual problem, see Skinner 2002: 178.

It is not only the spatiotemporal matrix of *rājadharma* discourse that requires theoretical attention; so does the genre of the texts that came to be produced. Very few *prakaraṇas*, or independent works in the *arthaśāstra* mode were composed during the second millennium (I count three or four), something that sharply distinguishes political discourse from all other forms of disciplinary knowledge of the epoch. The only genre in common use was the *dharmaṇibandha*. As we have just noted, this emerged in the twelfth century, and no further refinement was made in the later period. Since it is basically an encyclopedia of citations with only occasional authorial intervention to reconcile the ancient sources, the sources themselves have a centrality here that is far in excess of their place in any other Sanskrit knowledge system. It may be possible to detect among the *nibandhakāras* of our period a new attention to the textuality of the texts they adduce—a new or at least heightened philological concern with correct reading—and perhaps a new conservatism visible in the attempt to vindicate the *mūla-grantha* over against the often more critical interpretations of medieval commentators like Medhātithi. But such revaluations are uncommon, and in fact, commentary as such would gradually diminish over the course of the seventeenth century: At the beginning, with the *Rājanītiprakāśa* of Mitra Miśra—who introduces his work with the remark that ‘at the command of King Vīrasimha, [the author] produced the *Rājanītiprakāśa* by his own wit, summarizing the *dharma* of a great king after due consideration, by way of elaborations on the words of the ancients’¹¹⁷—commentary has a rather substantial role to play; at the end, with Anantadeva, it plays almost none. Perhaps a *nibandhakāra*’s contribution was his specific assemblage of authoritative texts rather than in any particular interpretations he gave them—perhaps the assemblage *was* the interpretation—but the particular logic of selection eludes the modern reader, and the personal stamp of the anthologist remains indiscernible amidst the endless quotations.

Nīlakaṇṭha is typical here. There are very few issues in the *Nītimayūkeba* that elicit extended comment from him amidst his hypertrophied citationism (his practice differs in his work on civil and criminal law, the *Vyavahāramayūkeba*). He does not even provide an introduction explaining the purpose that political discourse serves in his conceptual universe. Indeed, the *śāstrārambha*, or set of introductory

¹¹⁷ *Vīramitrodaya Rājanītiprakāśa* p. 8, v. 48: *ājñāpto vīrasimbakṣitīpatitilakena . . . prācāṃ vācāṃ prapañcaibḥ parikalitamabārājadharmād avāntaḥ* [?] *sāraṃ niṣkṛṣya buddhyā racayati*.

arguments justifying a theoretical discourse, is dispensed with almost across the board in seventeenth-century *rājadharma* texts. A mere list of topics is offered (if we are lucky), as in Mitra Miśra’s work. And these are precisely the topics we have learned to expect from the *prācām vācaḥ*, the words of the ancients: starting with the nature of kingship, proceeding through the rules of the royal consecration, working our way across the seven limbs of the polity, and ending (usually) with aspects of the king’s war-making practices.

That there may in fact be a seventeenth-century dimension to this discourse seems to be suggested by the problematic with which many of the works begin: the interpretation of the word *rājan* (king). It is of no little significance that our thinkers initiate this discussion with a citation from the hoariest of texts, the *Manusmṛti* (‘I shall discourse on the *dharmas* of a *rājan*, by what action he becomes a king (*nṛpa*), how he comes into being, and how he achieves his highest goals’),¹¹⁸ for this is of a piece with the conservatism that marks the political thought of our epoch. The terms framing the debate around the *Manusmṛti* passage are very old, too, reverting to the earliest stratum of the *mīmāṃsā* system. Once again—as in moral and literary theory—the dispute may seem to us minor. Yet we will see that it touches on a core contemporaneous problem in the sociology of power. The problematic turns on the question whether the word *rājan* is a *jāti śabda*, a term expressing a class (or here, more properly, a caste) property, or whether it can simply refer to anyone who happens to be protecting the realm. As Mādhava put the matter some two centuries earlier, ‘Is the use of the word *rājan* contingent on one’s having a connection with kingship or, instead, on one’s being a Kshatriya?’¹¹⁹ In other words, does the possession of *rājya*, political power, make one a *rājan*—so that anyone who happens to be ruling becomes ipso facto a *rājan*—or is the acquisition of political power dependent on one’s already being a *rājan*?

According to Nīlakaṇṭha, ‘The term *rājan* has reference solely to a Kshatriya, not to a person who merely happens to be in possession of *rājya*. Scripturally enjoined practices, such as ‘One should consecrate the *rājan*,’ come into play *prior*

¹¹⁸ *Manusmṛti* 7.1:

rājadharmān pravakṣyāmi yathāvr̥tto bhaven nṛpaḥ |
sambhavaś ca yathā tasya siddhiś ca paramā yathā ||

¹¹⁹ Cited in *Dharmakośa* vol. 4.2, *Rājanītikāṇḍa*: 782a.

to one's connection with *rājya*, which arises only *after* the consecration. This shows that such usages too can refer only to a Kshatriya.' Nīlakaṇṭha's position is in full accord with the dominant view of *mīmāṃsā*. Indeed, he forecloses further argument by stating that the matter has already been adjudicated in the *Pūrvamīmāṃsāsūtra* itself (in the '*Aveṣṭi Adbikaraṇa*'). There it is affirmed that the primary meaning of the word *rājan* is a *jāti* term, meaning that it refers to a Kshatriya, whereas its use in reference to Brahmans or other non-Kshatriyas who may be fulfilling the duties of a *rājan* is a secondary usage (*gaṇa*). At the end of his brief comments Nīlakaṇṭha seems to dismiss any extended, nonliteral use of the term as improper, thereby strongly implying that those who ruled but were not of the appropriate social order could not be rulers in accordance with *dharmā*.¹²⁰

Mitra Mīśra, writing almost contemporaneously with Nīlakaṇṭha (around 1620–25), opens his *Rājadharmaprakāśa* with a very similar though more detailed discussion. 'Does the term *rājan* here [in *Manu* 7.1] refer (a) to anyone who happens to protect the subjects of a realm, or (b) to any member of the Kshatriya *jāti*, or (c) specifically to a member of that group who has undergone the royal consecration (*abhiṣeka*)?' He adduces in support of position (a) various dictionaries as well as the *prima facie* view that is formulated in and rejected by *mīmāṃsā*, noting that 'popular usage alone is the valid means of defining terms, and in popular usage the term *rājan* is employed [also] to refer to Brahmans and others who perform the duties of kingship.' Others, however, maintain position (b), asserting that the term refers only to a member of the Kshatriya order, which is the usage of Manu himself, and they also appeal to various Paninian grammatical rules on the formation of the derivative *rājya* from *rājan*. According to this view, then, 'The person with the primary right to kingship is the Kshatriya alone.' The injunction in the Veda to 'consecrate the *rājan*' similarly pertains

¹²⁰ *Bhagavantabhāskara Nītimayūkha*, p. 1: *tatra rājasabdah kṣatriyamātre śakto na rājyayogini. abhiṣekottarabhāvirājyayogāt prāg api rājanam abhiṣiñced ityādeḥ śāstrīyaprayogasya kṣatriyamātre 'pi sadbhāvād iti nirañāy aveṣṭyadbikaraṇe. tasya ca vidhivad abhiṣiktasya prajāpālanam dharmah.* The *aveṣṭi adbikaraṇa* (*Pūrvamīmāṃsāsūtra* 2.3 *adbikaraṇa* 3) is generally concerned with the question whether the rite called the *aveṣṭi*, which is performed by Brahmans and Vaishyas as well as Kshatriyas, forms part of the royal consecration—which would then apply to castes other than Kshatriyas—or constitutes a distinct and separate rite.

exclusively to the Kshatriya, and Mitra Mísra analyzes that rule in a way that denies it any proleptic quality: One does not *make* a man *into* a king through the rite of consecration, the way one makes a tree trunk into a sacrificial post (*yūpa*) by means of a particular ritual, since the latter is a case where the ritual object created is a transcendental entity (*adr̥ṣṭārtha*). ‘The word *yūpa* is otherworldly; whereas the word *rājan* is empirically familiar as referring to a Kshatriya.’¹²¹

Mitra Mísra’s own position is nuanced, even tortured. The details need not concern us; here is his conclusion: ‘Among the divergent viewpoints the correct one is that the word *rājan* as used in statements setting forth the *dharma* of a king . . . refers only *figuratively* to a king (*nr̥pa*) who holds power over a realm, since, for the arguments already given, the word can refer [literally] only to Kshatriyas in general.’¹²² And he goes on to argue:

Although for Vijñāneśvara [the eleventh-century commentator on the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*] the *rājan* is one endowed with such properties as the royal consecration, the word can also refer, through popular usage, to someone who holds such power *without* having undergone the rite—this is so because [the word *rājan*] may be used [or, is used in *Manu* 7.1] in conjunction with the word *nr̥pa* [which implies that the latter carries some surplus signification, such as restriction to a *rājan* who has undergone consecration]. Further, [according to Vijñāneśvara], ‘Although the range of obligations on a *rājan* is naturally set forth with reference to a *rājan*, these should nonetheless be taken to be incumbent on anyone of whatever social order (*varṇa*) who is responsible for the protection of any political region, from the small district on up (*keḍyanmaṇḍalādi*), since (a) [Manu] uses the word *nr̥pa* separately, and (b) the point of the extraction of taxes is protection, and protection entails the application of force [which comes under the constraints of *dharma*].’ In view of all this, a consecration where use is made of non-Vedic, puranic liturgy (*mantras*), or none at

¹²¹ *Vīramitrodaya* vol. 6, *Rājanītiprakāśa* pp. 11 bottom; p. 12: *keṣatriya eva mukhyo rājyādhi-kārīti darśitam*; p. 13: *yūpaśabdasyālankikatvāt. rājaśabdasya tu keṣatriyavacanatvena prasiddh-tvāt.*

¹²² *Vīramitrodaya* vol. 6, *Rājanītiprakāśa* p. 15: *eṣv api pakṣeṣu rājadarmān pravakṣyā-mītyādirājadarmapratipādakavacaneṣu rājaśabdo janāpadaisvavyavannr̥patim lakṣaṇayā pratipā-dayīti pakṣaḥ sādhub. uktayuktyā keṣatriyasāmānyavācivāt.*

all, is to be enjoined for anyone who may not be entitled to the Vedic rite about to be described.

Mitra Miśra proceeds to dispute the position of Aparārka, a twelfth-century commentator on *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, who argued (according to Mitra Miśra's summary) that the word *rājan* as used in scriptural commandments regarding the protection of the subjects refers to a duly consecrated Kshatriya (though it's hard to get precisely that sense out of the words of Aparārka that Mitra Miśra cites). The upshot of this argument seems to be not that non-Kshatriyas cannot be kings but that the application of the term to non-Kshatriyas is figurative and not denotative. 'But in actual fact the rights and obligations apply to anyone who is invested with such purifying 'qualities' (*guṇas*) as the consecration.'¹²³ Although Mitra Miśra's main conclusion seems at odds with Nīlakaṇṭha's—when Manu speaks of the *dharmas* of a *rājan*, he is to be taken as referring to anyone responsible for protecting subjects, which of course implies that anyone could, in full accordance with *dharmas*, be a *rājan*—one cannot be entirely sure, given the highly qualified nature of the argument. What is certain, however, is that his argument is entirely formal, based on what are presented as purely semantic questions of language philosophy.

This approach is again completely in keeping with that of *mīmāṃsā*. In the *Mīmāṃsākaustubha*, for example, Khaṇḍadeva rejects the prima facie view based on the popular usage of *rājan* in north India, where the term is said to refer to anyone carrying out the duties of rulership, in favor of the narrower usage of the southerners, who apply the term to any Kshatriya, whether ruling or not. Khaṇḍadeva defends this rejection first by an etymological argument: grammar supports the derivation of *rājya* from *rājan* as the action of an agent, and not the reverse, which is merely an inference drawn from popular usage. The rejection is also supported by the *śruti* argument found in Nīlakaṇṭha. This allows a *rājan* alone to undergo the consecration (which is the *precondition* of the right of governance), and therefore the *rājan* must exist prior to the rite (and cannot be

¹²³ *Vīramitrodaya* vol. 6, *Rājanītiprakāśa* p. 13: *vastutas tv abhiṣekādiguṇayuktasya vakṣyamānadharmāb*. The passages cited earlier in this paragraph are found on pp. 14–15.

produced by the rite).¹²⁴ Khaṇḍadeva's main point, like that of Mitra Mīśra, has nothing directly to do with the question whether non-Kshatriyas should or should not rule but only with whether or not the word *rājan* in its *primary meaning* refers to a Kshatriya.

That the *mīmāṃsā* argument is carried over in full to the domain of political theory raises complicated questions, not least whether this discussion had any implications for the actual practice of power in late premodern India. Though the point is never openly stated by our thinkers, surely the only reason to care about the primary meaning of a word like 'king' is that its true meaning has consequences for political action. (It seems hardly anachronistic to draw an analogy with contemporary disputes on the propriety of the use of the word 'president'—strictly, 'an elected official . . . in a republic'—with respect to those who seize power illegally, General Pinochet, for example.) I think it does have such implications, if obscure ones, and these begin to emerge if we contrast the nature of the discourse on *rājan* in the seventeenth century with the discourse it replaced.

The one work on Sanskrit political theory between the *Kṛtyakalpataru* (1130) and the proliferation of texts beginning around 1590 has already been mentioned, Caṇḍeśvara's *Rājanīratnākara*. This was composed near the end of the fourteenth century soon after the fall of the last Karṇāṭa dynasty in Mithila at the hands of Ghiasuddin Tughlaq and its replacement by the Kāmeśvaras, who became tributaries to the Delhi sultanate. Caṇḍeśvara, like other *nibandhakāras*, begins his work with *Manu* 7.1, but he asserts that *rājan* refers simply to one who protects his subjects. It is irrelevant, he says, that legendary kings such as Vena who did not protect their subjects could still be referred to as *rājan*: at issue in such a reference is their *capacity* to provide protection, whether or not they actually did so.

That is why Kullūka [a commentator on the *Manusmṛti*, fl. 1250] argues that the word *rājan* in *Manu* refers not to a Kshatriya but rather to any man who

¹²⁴ *Mīmāṃsākaustubha* (on 2.3.3), pp. 20–22. The primary meaning of the term *rājan*, according to Khaṇḍadeva, was preserved among the Draviḍas, not among the people of Āryāvarta (p. 22: *ataḥ śrutyupaṣṭābdhadraviḍaprayogeṇaiva lāghavatarkasabakṛtena kṣatriyavācivasiḍḍhīb. āryāvartaprayogas tu rājakāryapālanakāritvāt gaṇaḥ*). The distinction between geospheres of usage goes back to Śabara (with 'Āndhras' instead of 'Draviḍas').

has been consecrated and who protects the realm. The *Rājanītikāmadhenu* [c. 1300?] claims that a *rājan* is anyone consecrated into the *rājya*, first, because protection of the subjects rightly belongs only to one [who has undergone the ceremony], and second, because prior to that ceremony the man cannot possess the knowledge required for protecting the subjects. Many authorities take *rājan* to refer simply to someone who has undertaken the protection of the subjects. In actual fact, however [and with this *vastutas tu* the author gives his own view], actions like undertaking the protection of the subjects and undergoing consecration are mere contingent factors of *rājan*; a king is actually known as such only given his mastery over the subjects. As my teacher put it, ‘The term *rājan* is used for anyone who has acquired *rājya* through sheer daring or some similar trait.’¹²⁵

What I believe we are seeing as we read across these various passages from *rājadharma* texts—and this may be symptomatic of a larger shift—is a contraction of the discourse on power, especially through the reassertion of *mīmāṃsā* discursive constraints, a contraction that constituted not a continuation from the past but a *reinvention* on the part of seventeenth-century political thinkers. The almost desacralized notion of kingship found in Caṇḍeśvara was replaced in little more than two centuries by a vision that consciously reverted to the most ancient strata of political thought, including archaic strictures on the Kṣatriya monopolization of power. In all the remaining dimensions of his discourse a writer like Nīlakaṇṭha not only reaffirms but recreates a consensus on power that had been reached long ago (and massively documented in the six parts of volume 4 of the *Rājanītikāṇḍa* of the *Dharmakośa*). Like Mitra Miśra, he follows the template of the discipline with great fidelity throughout his work, starting with the seven limbs of the polity, the *guṇas* of the king, and so on down the predictable list, while his commentary is devoted almost exclusively to glossing technical terms, the merest fine-tuning of a theory held to be perfect. All that really counted

¹²⁵ *Rājanītiratnākara*, pp. 2–3: *ata eva kullūkabhaṭṭaḥ rājaśabdo 'pi nātra kṣatriyaparāḥ kiṃ tv abhiṣiktajanapadapālayitr̥puruṣaparāḥ. rājanītikāmadhenu rājyābhiṣikto rājā prajāpālānādes tadīyatvāt tatprāg jñānāsambhavāc ceti. prajāpālāne pravṛtta iti babavaḥ. vastutas tu prajāpālāna pravṛttyabhiṣekādāyo 'sya kāraṇamātram. prajāsvāmitve rājatvena prasiddho rājā. kevalāsauryādyāptarājyasya rājatvavyavahārād iti guravaḥ.*

was evidently orthopractice in the realization of that theory, or ritual precision. Hence the *prayoga*, or performance, of the consecration of the king—which takes us backward into a very misty past, like that of the *Gopathabrāhmaṇa*—occupies the greater part of the author’s attention, as it does for the authors of all the seventeenth-century *rājadharmā* texts.¹²⁶ The very powerful sense of archaism we get from this text and its peers may have constituted, paradoxically, its novelty.

Present-day readers may be forgiven for assuming that archaizing discussions like this one on the meaning of the word *rājan* were purely scholastic, conducted in complete abstraction from the pressing new realities of seventeenth-century politics. And they may assume, correlatively, that shastric intellectuals thought of their task not as ideographic but entirely as nomothetic, or better put, they never seem to have felt that squaring the ideographic with the nomothetic was relevant to their purposes. There is, I believe, considerable truth to these assumptions, but in an unanticipated, *pratiloma* sense, since it is also true that very pragmatic purposes informed this discourse in a world of kings who were Bhonsles, Bundelas, Mughals, and Nāyakas, the patrons of the writers in question. To argue that one does not make a king through the rite of consecration (the way one makes a tree trunk into a sacrificial post by means of a particular ritual), that the ‘king’—if the term is to have its proper meaning—must exist as such by *jāti* beforehand, touches precisely on the problem that would have confronted Gāgā Bhaṭṭa in the person of Śivājī in 1674, and that would have preoccupied Mitra Miśra in the case of the low-caste Bundelas (‘spurious’ Kshatriyas), and indeed any *dharmāśāstrin* living anywhere in India at the time, whether in the Mughal empire, the subimperial *sultānats*, or even the Nāyaka *rājya*.¹²⁷ Whatever the social realities of those rulers, they had to be squared with theory—and they were most definitely squared, as the events leading up to the consecration of Śivājī famously demonstrate. The zeal to claim Kshatriya status no doubt reverts to the early medieval period at least, but the anxiety about such status may have intensified in our period due to the growing conviction that true Kshatriyas had all but van-

¹²⁶ The *Gopathabrāhmaṇa* (perhaps before 500 B.C.E.) is cited on p. 7; the *abhiṣeka* ritual is described on 8-42. The latter occupies perhaps a third of the *Rājakaustubha*, but only around a tenth of the *Rājanītiratnākara*.

¹²⁷ On Śivājī and caste, see Vajpeyi 2005; on the spurious Bundela clan, Kolff 1990: 117 ff.; on the Shudra Nāyaka kings, Narayana Rao et al. 1992.

ished from the face of the earth.¹²⁸ Precisely what this new archaism meant in pragmatic political terms (in regard to caste networks and alliances, for example) is often hard to specify. But with regard to the problem of political theory it seems clear that in the seventeenth century the masters of that theory *set out to make political reality*. Put baldly: new political theory was unnecessary in the face of a new political reality because, for them, reality did not produce theory: theory produced reality.¹²⁹

Thus in the domain of *rājadharmā*, as typified by Nīlakaṇṭha's blunt rejection of the kind of *Machtspolitik* seen in Caṇḍeśvara, as well as in the social character of rulership, we can perceive a resurgence of traditional thought and practice similar to what took place in aesthetics and moral philosophy, even the inauguration of what, accordingly, we might call a neoclassical age across much of India and beyond.¹³⁰

I will be brief on the conceptual changes that took place in the discourse of

¹²⁸ On Kshatriya status in the so-called early medieval era, see for example Chattopadhyaya 1998: 57–88, who also points to the increasing displacement of 'Kshatriya' by 'Rajput' in the self-description of ruling lords of the later period (pp. 82 ff.). The belief was widespread in the seventeenth century that the Kshatriya *jāti* had actually disappeared—and needed to be recreated. Kamalākara says he had to rely on the view of his father that a few Kshatriyas and Vaishyas did indeed remain here and there in the world but in concealed form, having fallen away from their traditional duties (*pracchannarūpāḥ svakarmabhraṣṭāḥ kṣatriyā vaiśyāś ca santy eva kvacid ity asmatpitṛcaraṇāḥ*, cited in Kane 1962-77: 1.2.930 n. 1436 from the *Śūdrakamalākara*). I don't know that the history of this belief has been traced in any detail. It is at least as old as early fourteen-century Rajasthan (*Epigraphia Indica* 9: 75 ff.).

¹²⁹ For an earlier meditation on this question see Pollock 1985. That such thinking is entirely within the realm of possibility is shown by a recent comment of one of George W. Bush's aids. Dismissing what he called 'the reality-based community' (those people who believe 'that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality'), he asserted, 'That's not the way the world really works anymore. We're an empire now, and when we act we create our own reality.' 'Without a Doubt,' *New York Times*, October 17, 2004.

¹³⁰ Mid-seventeenth-century Nepal offers a good example, discussed in Bledsoe 2004. 'Neoclassical' is especially appropriate given such a cultural phenomenon as the new *rīti* style of Brajbhasha poetry.

power in Europe in the same epoch. It is once again no easy thing for an outsider to determine what historians believe produced modernity in European political thought, or indeed, what that modernity consisted of. Anthony Pagden's *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe* seems to take the phrase 'early modern' in a purely temporal rather than conceptual sense. When the conceptual transformation to political-discursive modernity is described, the argument is rather surprising (if I read it aright) but instructive: Whereas during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance political theory was almost entirely dependent on law or theology (as in India), in the seventeenth century a "science" of politics became detached from these forms of thought, to be 'grounded in an account of the natural world and an empirical anthropology.' Pagden goes on to argue that much political theory even into the eighteenth century (Hume, for instance) continued to be little more than 'maxims of good sense,' and it was assumed that nothing novel could occur—until the need arose to account for something novel that did occur: the creation of a radically new political order in the United States of America.¹³¹ Other scholars produce very different historical narratives of the modernity of political thought. Quentin Skinner argues that the modern theory of polity (Hobbes's) distinguished the state from its agents, making kings merely holders of office, 'heads of state.' By contrast, Janet Coleman asserts that such a distinction was already current in the Middle Ages and Renaissance; what was in fact new and modern in the seventeenth century was the separation between state authority and the communities over which the state exercised that authority, and this separation functioned as a wedge between society's vision of the good and the power of the state to realize its own vision. According to this view—surprisingly to the outside observer—the modern revolution in political thought was bound up with the legitimation of the absolutist state, where 'the powers of government must be something *other* than a mere expression of the powers and will of the governed.' Thus modernity lay in the transformation of

¹³¹ Pagden 1987: 15. For Judith Shklar, another contributor to this volume, politics becomes a science marking a true epistemic break only with the creation of representative democracy.

citizens into subjects—indeed, in a new, almost ‘Oriental’ despotism of a sort not easy to parallel in the South Asian Orient itself.¹³²

Even if Pagden’s dating is too late, as most historians would likely judge it to be, and the Skinner and Coleman narratives raise as many questions as they answer, at the core of all this speculation lies a linkage confirmed by so much of the history of Western political thought: the genesis of modern political theory was inseparable from violent social change—not just the fear of revolution but actual revolution or some other form of social upheaval. The new definition of sovereignty Jean Boudin would formulate in the 1570s, whereby the ruler was understood to possess indivisible rights to make laws and apply them to his territories; the distinction Hobbes made in the 1640s that Skinner focuses on, or the new and powerful arguments he offered for the subjects’ obligation of obedience to the state; the differentiation Coleman draws attention to, along with the rise of a new kind of subject-citizenship ‘that places the individual in direct subordinate relationship to the prince’ and has remained ‘the basis of the relationship between the individual and government in every modern country’;¹³³ Locke’s development in the 1670s of a new rights-based conception of liberty and the limits placed on political authority—all these were intimately tied up with some of the bloodiest political change in European history: the Wars of Religion in the case of Boudin, the Thirty Years’ War and English Civil War in the case of Hobbes, and the Restoration and Glorious Revolution in the case of Locke. This obvious connection is not without significance for the larger inferences that can be drawn from this comparative historical exercise, and I return to these when assessing the conclusions—or perhaps more justly the confusions—of these complicated histories.

5. IS THE *PRE-* IN PREMODERN THE *PRE-* IN PRECOLONIAL?

The greater part of the intellectual history of India from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, at least the part embodied in Sanskrit texts, remains to be

¹³² Hegel’s views notwithstanding (see n. 1406). Skinner 2002, vol. 2: 368–413 (first published in 1989) and Coleman 2000, vol. 2: 273.

¹³³ Riesenbergs cited in Coleman 2000, vol. 2: 273, n. 193.

written, since these texts have yet to be accessed, read, and analyzed.¹³⁴ That it can be written—that the Sanskrit knowledge systems have a history to be recovered—should now be obvious. Once we do write their history in its major contours, however, it is unlikely to look radically different from what we know at present. No Indian Enlightenment lies hidden from view, waiting to be uncovered. What does await discovery, however, is something almost as significant: answers to the questions why and how one of the oldest continuous intellectual traditions of the premodern world ended, and why it ended when it did, not before or later. We can already begin to narrow down some of the key disciplinary, historical, comparative, and interpretive problems of this historic occurrence, though we are far from providing altogether persuasive solutions for them. I deal with them sequentially.

As we have seen, the creative energies of the Sanskrit knowledge systems did not begin to dissipate before they had experienced a remarkable moment of renewal in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and understanding why may be a condition of understanding the eventual dissipation. Some elements of the renewal are visible at the level of discursive form. New genres were developed and old ones reinvigorated. We noted the invention of the essay collection; works like Appayya Dīkṣita's *Pūrvottaramīmāṃsāvādanakṣatramālā* in the mid-sixteenth century or Kamalākara's *Mīmāṃsāketūbala* in the early seventeenth have no obvious precedent. In *mīmāṃsā*, the *saṃgraha* genre, which redirects attention to the structure of the system and the exegetical tradition as a whole, became the dominant form of discourse. Certain works were newly canonized—the *Kāvyaprakāśa* in *alankāraśāstra* (probably the most commented-upon work in Sanskrit intellectual history, regardless of discipline), the *Śāstradīpikā* in *mīmāṃsā*. And if commentary on such texts remained a dominant form of intellectual practice, it had often morphed into a kind of hypercommentary, sorting and assessing the whole reception history that preceded (the *Kamalākara* of Kamalākara Bhaṭṭa in *alankāraśāstra*; less obviously, the *Mīmāṃsākaustubha* of Khaṇḍadeva). All this new activity evinces a new valuation of both the origins of the disciplines and the traditions of their transmission. We find this impulse most prominent in fields like logic, where the *sūtrapāṭha* became a new object of inquiry, and grammar, where the authority of the three ancient sages (the *munitraya*) acquired

¹³⁴ Little beyond the title connects the following reflections with Appiah 1991.

a new diagnostic prominence.¹³⁵ The limit case of the centrality of a *mūlagrantha* was the *dbarmanibandha*: here commentary came to consist almost entirely in the selection of primary texts, with at most an occasional philological or polemical aside.

Another dimension of renewal is visible in the cross-disciplinarity that marks the intellectual activity of the epoch. Few precedents are available for intellectuals such as Appayya at the start of this period, or, at its end, Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa, both of whom wrote on grammar, literary theory, *mīmāṃsā*, and other fields. A new interpenetration of knowledge forms is found, too, *dbarmaśāstra* and *mīmāṃsā* offering a salient case. Though these two disciplines were twinned from an early date, older *dbarmaśāstra* authors rarely wrote directly on *mīmāṃsā*, and vice versa, a situation that changed dramatically in the later period. This is not to say that the disciplinary boundaries were relaxed; they were as rigid as ever—so much so that, whereas questions in the moral dimension of literature (e.g., *rasābhāsa*) were increasingly discussed in *alanikāraśāstra*, neither *dbarmaśāstra* nor *mīmāṃsā* ever took note of them.

It is far more difficult to identify features of the lifeworld that correlated with these disciplinary innovations. It is almost impossible, even for so late a period, to get a sense of how Sanskrit intellectuals actually lived.¹³⁶ Not a single personal document from a single scholar working in the amazingly creative world of seventeenth-century Varanasi has been preserved, aside from an occasional signature on the rare *vyavasthāpatra* that has survived (like that from 1658 containing the signatures of Khaṇḍadeva and the grandson of Appayya Dikṣita) and a few autographed manuscripts (like Gāgā's edition of a *Śābarabhāṣya* housed in the Anup Sanskrit Library). We have little information about the educational context (pedagogical practices, syllabi, the division of knowledge) beyond what we can infer from the works themselves. Radically different kinds of sociopolitical contexts present themselves during our period—ranging from the freelance world of Varanasi, where scholars seem to have lived largely on their teaching, to royal courts with their more traditional patronage structures—but no evidence suggests

¹³⁵ For the first see n. 55; for the second, Houben forthcoming.

¹³⁶ The Indologist gazes with a mixture of envy and self-pity on the richness of the social data for the history of seventeenth-century European thought (Garber and Ayers 1998: 9–32).

that such social distinctions made an intellectual difference. A treatise on *mīmāṃsā* produced in the courtly world of Nāyaka Tanjavur or Bundela Orcha differs in no essential way from one produced in Varanasi. Except for occasional disagreement over details, Rājacudāmaṇi Dīkṣita and Kamalākara Bhaṭṭa shared precisely the same view of literary theory, just as Vāsudeva Dīkṣita and Khaṇḍadeva shared the same view of moral theory and Mitra Miśra and Nīlakaṇṭha Bhaṭṭa the same view of political theory.¹³⁷ But the social history of Indian intellectuals is an entirely new field of inquiry, and we need far more research if we hope to find those correlates that could explain the seventeenth-century renewal of scholarship as a social as well as a disciplinary phenomenon.

Among the critical historical problems are several that concern the developmental gradient of the disciplines as a whole, both internally and externally. Regarding the internal, we need a much more systematic account of the *navya* moment. We need a far more comprehensive understanding of the different times and places in which this came to manifestation, of the positions taken, and why *navya* scholars thought of themselves as *navya*, or were thought to be so by others. Equally important, we need further corroboration for what I have come to believe, and have argued here for the first time, was a repudiation of the *navyas* and an assertion of a kind of neotraditionalism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in many fields: in *rājadharmā* (and possibly in the self-understanding of rulership itself) with the restatement of the constitutive role of Kshatriya kingship; in *alanīkārasāstra* with the vindication of the old views on learning and training against the *navyas*' celebration of inspiration, reaching a high point in Bhīmasena Dīkṣita's divinization of Mammaṭa; in *mīmāṃsā* with the resistance to radical revisionism of the sort perceivable in Dinakara Bhaṭṭa.

We have as yet no satisfactory reason for this counterreformation whose importance for intellectual history is far less modest than the data I have been able to adduce here. Perhaps it was the case, as suggested earlier, that the tradition of all the dead generations had begun to weigh like a nightmare on the brains of the living. And just as some Indian thinkers seemed occupied with creating something that did not exist before—to continue with Marx's line of thinking—precisely then did they anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their ser-

¹³⁷ Contrast the theory of place for the history of seventeenth-century British sciences as offered in Shapin 1998.

vice. Better explanations than this, however, are required for what seems to have been a traditionalization of the intellectual and political orders that took place almost two centuries before the traditionalization produced by colonialism.¹³⁸

If we are to address the external gradient more satisfactorily than I have been able to do here, we will need, first of all, to test what I have suggested was a dramatic increase in the production of discourse on literature, politics, the moral order, and much else in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and an equally dramatic decline from the start of the eighteenth century, decades before the real consolidation of colonialism. We need to develop criteria that control as far as possible for the variable of mere survival, to ascertain that the eruption of creativity we believe we see from the middle of the sixteenth century is not a simple reflection of the heightened availability of sixteenth-century manuscripts in contrast to those from the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries, and that the implosion of Sanskrit learning in the eighteenth century is no simple artifact of a failure to find the texts actually produced. I am convinced that an actual decline in scholarship occurred in *alāṅkāraśāstra*, *mīmāṃsā*, and *rājadharma*, and that a systematic census of manuscripts would demonstrate this, but other disciplines may have had other histories. Only once we have satisfied ourselves that something new and progressive happened sometime in the sixteenth century, and something new and regressive sometime in the eighteenth, can we hope to account for these events. The causes were no doubt multiple. In the north, the extraordinary reinvigoration and concentration of intellectual life in Varanasi surely had something to do with the *paḥ mughalana* that began around 1590, while the rich and remarkable Telugu Nāyaka and Maratha polities in the south must have played a similar role.

There would be nothing very surprising—and nothing very interesting—about such a conjuncture of political and cultural flourishing. What is surprising, and far more difficult to understand, is how it all came unglued in the eighteenth century—how the knowledge forms concerning the ends of man effectively ended. Why did seventeenth-century Hindu polities in the supposed penumbra of Mughal ascendancy in the seventeenth century generate such massive texts of *nā-*

¹³⁸ On the latter see Washbrook 1997. Another way to think of these developments is as a ‘return in the archaic’ prior to that of the nineteenth century (see Prakash 1997, 1999: 86 ff.).

jan̄ī and *dharmasāstra*, whereas those in the clear light of Mughal decline in the eighteenth century produced virtually nothing? How did *mīmāṃsā* and *alaṅkāraśāstra* come to be so completely drained of the vitality that had marked their development for centuries? Interactions with colonial knowledge to a degree sufficient to effect change of such magnitude was still decades off, if not a century and more, and nothing but a vague, almost mystical anticipation of colonial newness—and the scholars' concomitant realization of their own oldness—seems to offer itself as explanation.

Let me turn next to the comparison with Europe, underscoring once again that it is not something we can simply ignore. The reason we are interested in Sanskrit intellectual history in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is that those were its last. Its end coincided more or less chronologically—though, as I have tried to show, not necessarily causally—with the coming of Western intellectual history. Why it ended and created a vacuum for Western knowledge to fill is the crucial question, and comparison with the history of the knowledge that did not end it but instead replaced it might contribute to an answer.

The intellectual traditions of premodern India and Europe evince remarkable and long-lasting parallels—but only up to a certain point. Kamalākara Bhaṭṭa and Nicholas Boileau shared a wide range of expectations about the organization of rhetoric, the standards of representation and their relationship to the moral order, and the sources of literary creativity. The concern among all Sanskrit intellectuals of the epoch with the adequacy of description—with over- or under-extension (*atīvyāpti*, *avyāpti*) of the definition (*lakṣaṇa*)—is a good example of the Indian version of the scholastic mode. Shastric discourse also shows strong parallels with the more formal elements of the European scholastic style—the place of key *auctores*, forms of *lectio*, types of argument such as *dubia* and *responiones*, and the like. More generally, the authority of the ancients and the primacy of textual exegesis retained their attractiveness in both worlds deep into the seventeenth century. This attitude was alive and well in Pascal; we have already noted the distinction he drew between the authority of texts in letters or theology, which was absolute, and the authority of texts in mathematics or empirical science, which was illegitimate. His peers in India would have largely agreed.

Yet a systematic account would also point up how dramatically the two intellectual traditions began to diverge in the late seventeenth century.¹³⁹ A style of thought that sought ever more precise refinement of a set of pregiven issues was preserved in India, but it gave way in Europe to one that sought entirely new issues and dismissed the authorities of the past instead of celebrating them. We may now be able to identify with some precision when Europe and India began to part ways in the discourses on literature, the moral order, and polity; we are far less certain why. Although the histories and processes of vernacularization in the domain of expressive literature were remarkably similar in India and Europe, why did only the latter proceed to vernacularize in the domains of science and scholarship more generally? Why did Dinakara's quest to 'uproot the thoughts of the outmoded authorities' fail, whereas that of Descartes, 'to start anew from first principles,' succeed? Why, when both India and Europe witnessed a strikingly similar Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns, was the one case settled in favor of the ancients and the other in favor of the moderns? Why did both experience a kind of neoclassicism at the political and cultural level, yet only Europe witnessed the correlative development (if it was correlative) of true absolutism, revolution, and intellectual upheaval?

These are hard questions to answer, but even harder is my last, which concerns the interpretation of the comparative data. Would India have remained premodern so long as it remained precolonial? Was there another modernity—or if we have no need for the self-constituting value of this import, another sufficiency—lying hidden in what colonialism and capitalism came to define as premodernity?¹⁴⁰ How are we to chart a path between an Occidentalist presupposition of the inevitable conquest of Western modernity—as if the rest of the world were lacking and must eventually make up this lack by compliance with the universal

¹³⁹ Many of the old medieval debates continued to occupy authors into the early eighteenth century, see MacIntyre 1991: 149 ff. Conversely, recent scholarship has found precursors of the seventeenth-century innovations in high and late medieval thought, see Colish 2000: 13–14.

¹⁴⁰ On the West's logical production of an Indian premodernity that is not necessarily premodern, see Pollock 2006, introduction, and Kaviraj, ms. (who correctly identifies 'premodern' as a '*secondary*' description'). The following sentence is informed by the major argument in Chakrabarty 2000.

law of development that modernity represents—and an indigenist belief in a perfected Indian world that was destroyed by colonialism? And most important, why should any of these questions still matter? Let me set out some interpretive possibilities as bluntly as I can: (1) Sanskrit intellectual history in the last centuries before the coming of capitalist modernity demonstrates that India had achieved a kind of civilizational perfection; (2) this history demonstrates how an intellectual order becomes ossified when the old asymmetries of power and unfreedom that sustained it are rendered increasingly obsolete; (3) both interpretations are in some measure true.

(1) Can we imagine, without bending over backward so far that we fall over, a premodern world of equilibrium in South Asia, where the reproduction of cultural and political orders was a sign of plenitude and not deficiency—of problems solved rather than problems denied, of social coherence rather than of social struggle and its ideological management? The production of Western modernity was a response to a set of very peculiar historical circumstances and institutions—none of which were known in India. There was no Church to produce heresy, excommunication, and censorship or to provoke Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and religious wars. There was no regime of conquest to promote foreign colonization, and no absolutist state to construct a repressive security apparatus.¹⁴¹ On the contrary, Indian intellectuals were totally free. It was the absence in India of the miseries of Europe’s peculiar circumstances and institutions that entailed the absence of the intellectual splendors of Europe’s peculiar modernity.

Although it is true that the various elements of a Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns were present in India and such a quarrel was actually engaged in, the *navyapracīnavivāda* never became an engine of historical change. Śrīvatsalāñchana was not to become a Charles Perrault, nor Kamalākara Bhaṭṭa

¹⁴¹ On censorship, see for example Israel 2001: 96–118. Among the more prominent exiled intellectuals were Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. With respect to political violence in premodern India, Jos Gommans makes an important point (if one in need of further empirical evidence) when he says ‘South Asia developed a political culture in which large-scale political violence was deemed highly imprudent and as much as possible to be avoided’ (Gommans 1999: 304; cf. 307, where state violence is described as depreciated, even discredited). The type of absolutism familiar from early-modern Europe (Wilson 2000) or Southeast Asia (Reid 1993: 208 ff.) was unknown in India.

a Boileau. This was so because India was unencumbered by a despotism bent on creating surveillance institutions like the Académie française—devised by the state in order to gain a purchase on intellectual activities previously denied it by the medieval universities¹⁴²—and accordingly never witnessed the various convulsions of such a state that prompted the beginnings of a modern literary criticism (such as Dryden’s ‘Essay of Dramatick Poesy’) aimed at restoring a cultural-moral order from the ruins of revolution.¹⁴³

Indian political theory produced Nīlakaṇṭha Bhaṭṭa and Mitra Mīśra but no Francisco Suarez or Thomas Hobbes because Indian history produced no imperial expansion and no civil wars, and accordingly had no need to define the nature of international law or the obligations of citizens to the state. Indian moral theory produced Dinakara Bhaṭṭa and Khaṇḍadeva but no Francisco de Vitorio or Hugo Grotius because Indian history produced no Wars of Religion and no Thirty Years’ War, and accordingly had no need to settle religious, cross-cultural, and civil conflicts and thereby to develop new thinking about natural law. Last, there was no vernacularization of science and scholarship in India—no Bacon, no Descartes, no Galileo—despite a comparable history of literary vernacularization, because there was no nascent nation-state with its new demands for a popular science.

In short, it seems arguable—though the causal attribution will be too strong for some people’s taste—that it was the peculiarly violent wreckage of premodernity in the West that produced its modernity.¹⁴⁴ (How ironic, then, that the very project of modern discourse, albeit so deeply rooted in its specific contextual determinants, was to believe itself capable of rising above context so as to produce

¹⁴² Garber and Ayers 1998: 26.

¹⁴³ On the relationship between the origins of modern European criticism and the ‘struggle against the absolutist state’ see Eagleton cited in Nisbet and Rawson 1997: 17.

¹⁴⁴ Tilly 1992 offers powerful documentation of this violence, see especially pp. 165 ff.

universalist theory.)¹⁴⁵ By contrast, the stability of Sanskrit intellectual history, so often dismissed as the pointless logorrhea of sclerotic elites, was a sign of the success of the Indian cultural and political orders. The absence of modernity in India before colonialism would therefore be something less to regret than to celebrate—a sign of real civilizational equipoise, where success is not (as in modernity) the capacity to expand but the capacity to endure.¹⁴⁶ There is no law of chronic deficiency in human affairs mandating that societies, like cities (or Chicago, at least), must always be under construction and never complete, that understandings of literary art, the structure of the moral order, or the organization of power can never achieve something like adequacy or even perfection for the social world concerned, but must be constantly rejected for something newer and better—the very slogan of modernity.

(2) Celebrating ‘civilizational perfection’ is nothing more than an indigenist fantasy compounded by postcolonial *ressentiment* and a blind abdication of self-criticism. Together these produce, among other things, a misrecognition of the profound social conflict that lay at the heart of the nonmodern nonWestern political and cultural orders, transforming what was in fact an exhausted ideological apparatus into a cultural achievement. In terms of intellectual history, we are more justified in concluding that the dead hand of tradition arrested an Indian modernity, even a timorous modernity, before it could take political shape and institutional embodiment: scholars like Śrīvatsalāñchana, Dinakara, and Caṇḍeśvara were eventually normalized or marginalized by the enormous condescension of their own traditions. Indeed, the control of conflict in premodernity was so total that freedom could not even be conceptualized as a political value,

¹⁴⁵ See Toulmin 1992. Note especially Grotius’s attempt in legal thought to argue from ‘what is true universally as a general proposition’ and to adopt a mathematical model based on ‘certain broad axioms on which all persons are easily agreed’ (cited in Burns 1991: 505). On the very different character of Indian universalism see Pollock 2006, especially chapter 7.

¹⁴⁶ The last distinction was suggested by Sudipta Kaviraj. This *pakṣa* is not necessarily mine, of course. If in a less provincial theory of modernity a dramatic historical transformation such as literary vernacularization could count as a salient factor, India experienced an autonomous modernity parallel with Europe’s (or so I argue in Pollock 1998b).

let alone enacted in any form of resistance that made history. There was no Locke in India because there was no Glorious Revolution, no Montesquieu because there was no Fronde (if Montesquieu's thought can be traced that far back). Hegel was right, accordingly, that world history is the progress in the consciousness of freedom, but 'in the world of the ancient Orient, people do not yet know that the Spirit—the human as such—is free. Because they do not know this, they are not free.' Why indeed, one may ask—though risking anachronism, perhaps unavoidably—was the idea of freedom so insistently and ubiquitously articulated in Sanskrit only as a spiritual value (*mokṣa*, *mukṭi*) and never as a political value?¹⁴⁷ Why did *bhakti* produce so much new poetry but so little new power, at least institutionalized political power? Why did the Sanskrit tradition fail so utterly to acknowledge the transformed realities of its social world in the seventeenth or eighteenth century? Why did it not produce a single truly independent voice? It was not because intellectuals, let alone the people at large, were free already; it was because the idea of political freedom was successfully excluded from a thought world that would have collapsed had such freedom ever been registered as a value.¹⁴⁸

The advocate of civilizational perfection could reply that to make such claims is simply to extrapolate from Western experience a sociology that, as just shown, was specific to the West. The supposed 'profound social conflict' at the heart of the Indian political order is simply another Orientalist construction and universalization of a Western particularity. Ranajit Guha's view of 'force and fear as the fundamental principles of politics' in premodern India, for example, illustrates the workings of just this mentality, derived as it is from a naive reading of *Manu* in combination with, of all things, Montesquieu's fantasies of Asiatic despotism (which were realities of French despotism).¹⁴⁹ On the contrary, it was precisely the condition of unfreedom in the West that generated the concept of freedom. Furthermore, a critique of Sanskrit knowledge based on its incapacity or refusal to become modern as the West defined modernity, besides ignor-

¹⁴⁷ See Kaviraj 2002 for a discussion of the history of the idea of freedom in India. One could of course be *mukṭa* from incarceration but the political order was never, to my knowledge, metaphorized as a prison. The quote is from Hegel 1988: 21.

¹⁴⁸ To get a sense of the degree of despotic state invigilation, see Wagle 2000.

¹⁴⁹ Guha 1998: 23–59, especially p. 29.

ing the destructive undertow of modernity and the dialectic of Enlightenment, simply takes us back to the tired clichés of British colonialism, which invented an Indian decadence it could be fully justified in replacing.¹⁵⁰

And so the *śāstrārtha* with *pakṣa* and *pratīpakṣa*, the argument with point and counterpoint, could proceed indefinitely.

(3) Others, say Rortian pragmatists, might hold that both of these accounts can be simultaneously true, depending on what we want to do with that truth; that several or all of the above positions can in some measure be simultaneously correct—and in some measure simultaneously wrong. We must therefore acknowledge multiple truths for multiple conversations: ‘the achievements of a perfected lifeworld’ when we are critiquing the abuses of Western modernity and the capitalism that made it possible, the failures of a decrepit intellectual and political oligarchy when critiquing the oppression of tradition. To be sure, one might be justified in asking what the idea of multiple truths means if we believe in producing an actionable historiography, generating statements about past events that can inform our present and future practices. A call to openness to ‘narrative options and alternate storytelling possibilities,’ even coming from

¹⁵⁰ So Lord Minto in his ‘Minute on Native Education’ in 1811: ‘It is a common remark, that science and literature are in a progressive state of decay among the natives of India. . . . The number of the learned is not only diminished, but the circle of learning, even among those who still devote themselves to it, appears to be considerably contracted. The abstract sciences are abandoned, political literature neglected, and no branch of learning cultivated but what is connected with the peculiar religious doctrines of the people. The principal cause of the present neglected state of literature in India is to be traced to the want of that encouragement which was formerly afforded to it by princes. . . . The justness of these observations might be illustrated by a detailed consideration of the former and present state of science and literature at the three principal seats of Hindoo learning, viz., Benares, Tirhoot and Nuddea. Such a review would bring before us the liberal patronage which was formerly bestowed. . . . It would equally bring to our view the present neglected state of learning at those once celebrated places.’ Cited in Majumdar 1941: 223–26. (I thank Allison Busch for this reference).

someone like Fredric Jameson, seems too postmodern by half.¹⁵¹ If we want to get out of the present, we need to ask how we got here. And to find some credible answer to that question we need a more trustworthy map than a set of storylines we can change at will, as if history were a kind of hypernovel—unless of course I am overlooking some obvious way of synthesizing these multiple truths into some new form of analysis.

Amidst this swirling cloud of unknowing there is at least one thing that seems to me increasingly plausible. The conceptual resources for escaping our predicament—epitomized by the boundlessly hubristic universalism of the modern West and the kind of politics that accompanies this universalism—may not be those offered by Western realities alone. If new resources are required, if making a future is in any way connected with remaking the past, then the project of a critical Indology may be among the more compelling intellectual enterprises on offer.

¹⁵¹ Jameson 2001: 32. For ‘actionable’ historiography, see Bennett 1990: 277.

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