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Blaming the messenger: a controversy in late Sanskrit poetics and its implications*

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Abstract

The last active period in the tradition of Sanskrit poetics, although associated with scholars who for the first time explicitly identified themselves as new, has generally been castigated in modern histories as repetitious and devoid of thoughtfulness. This paper presents a case study dealing with competing analyses of a single short poem by two of the major theorists of this period, Appayya Dīkṣita (sixteenth century) and Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja (seventeenth century). Their arguments on this one famous poem touch in new ways on the central questions of what the role of poetics had become within the Sanskrit world and the way in which it should operate in relation to other systems of knowledge and literary cultures.

The last active period in the tradition of Sanskrit poetics, although associated with scholars who for the first time explicitly identified themselves as ''new'', has generally been castigated in modern histories as repetitious and devoid of thoughtfulness.[1] While the texts of the period are filled with energetic debate, the arguments involved have similarly been characterized as nit-picking and *ad hominem*.[2] Recent studies have begun to examine the ways in which the work of this period might justify its claim of novelty.[3] Here we hope to present a case study demonstrating how some of the major texts in this period were not new merely in some shallow sense, but pursued innovative ways of grappling with the fundamental issues of the tradition and with serious tensions that had grown up around them.

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1 An influential example is De (1976: II.252).

2 For example, Gerow (1977: 287), speaking about Jagannatha's *Citramīmāṃsākhaṇḍana*, with which we deal in this paper.

3 Pollock (2001; 2005: 15–39), Bronner (2002; 2004), Bronner and Tubb (forthcoming).

The two most visible characters in this period, from most accounts, were Appayya Dīkṣita (1520–92), a prolific polymath who was based in the Vijayanagara milieu of South India but whose works were widely read throughout the subcontinent, and Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja, who was originally also from the South but who was associated with the Mughal court of the seventeenth century and who was famous both as a poet and as a critic.[4] For this case study we have chosen a work by one of these scholars, the *Citramīmāṃsākhaṇḍana* of Jagannātha, which is totally devoted to attacking the other's main work on poetics, Appayya Dīkṣita's *Citramīmāṃsā*.

Aside from its content, Jagannātha's treatise is innovative in its style. Although the genre of the *khaṇḍana* or demolitionary essay is not entirely new in itself, the cut-and-paste method that Jagannātha employs in its execution is novel. The text was explicitly produced by extracting verbatim passages from an earlier encyclopaedic volume by the same author, even preserving many conjunctions and other transitions that make full sense only in the original; the excerpts are none the less tied together thematically through their focus on what Jagannātha saw as a series of problems in Appayya's scholarship. Other distinctive features of style were shared with Appayya himself and with other writers of the same period. One notable such feature is the careful attention, hitherto very rare, given to precise citation of works being quoted, identifying particular sections of works explicitly named, or even quoting lengthy passages completely and exactly.

The very first passage in both the *Citramīmāṃsākhaṇḍana* and the text it critiques is one dealing with a topic that could hardly be of more central importance, namely how to explain what it is that makes the best type of poetry so great. At the heart of this debate is one short poem, chosen generations earlier as the worthiest example of the best type of *kāvya* poetry. There seems to be wide consensus on the appropriateness of the example, but an equally wide range of disagreement on how to interpret the verse and explain how it works. The entire debate is based on the treatment of the verse in the most widely read treatise on Sanskrit poetics, Mammaṭa's twelfth-century *Kāvyaprakāśa*. We begin, therefore, by looking back to his comments on this poem and the reactions that they provoked.

Love signs on the body of a messenger of love: Mammaṭa and his commentators on the best kind of poetry

The very first two poetic examples cited by Mammaṭa in his vast work embody two developments in the history of Sanskrit poetics that remain fundamentally important to all later scholars in the tradition. That tradition began with a focus on poetic ornaments (*alaṅkāra*s, consisting especially of tropes and figures of speech), only to be reoriented by a ninth-century treatise, the *Dhvanyāloka* of Ānandavardhana, which presented a theory of poetry with suggestion as its soul, and which explained the role of

4 For a sympathetic reading of Jagannātha as a poet see Pollock (2003: 95–9); see also Bronner (forthcoming) on the poetry of Appayya.

poetic suggestion in the evoking of emotional flavours (*rasa*s). The first poem cited by Mammaṭa, which he takes up straight after his new definition of poetry, is one in which there is the suggestion of an emotional flavour but no obvious poetic ornament. The choice confirms the acceptance of a post-*Dhvanyāloka* poetics in which the *alaṅkāra*s, for all the attention they continue to command in a tradition of analysis still called *alaṅkāraśāstra*, are no longer considered an essential ingredient of poetry.[5]

His very next citation marks the first of Mammaṭa's many influential reworkings of Ānandavardhana's ideas. It is meant to serve as an example of the highest category in Mammaṭa's newly conceived hierarchy of types of poetry.[6] Of Mammaṭa's three levels, the highest (*uttama*) is that in which suggestion is predominant. Ānandavardhana of course gave many examples of such poetry in his monograph introducing the notion of suggestion, but Mammaṭa apparently found it important, in presenting his new system of categories, to provide an example of his own selection, and later scholars would refer to the poem as Mammaṭa's example. Here it is:

niḥśeṣacyutacandanaṃ stanataṭaṃ nirmṛṣṭarāgo 'dharo
netre dūram anañjane pulakitā tanvī taveyaṃ tanuḥ
mithyāvādini dūti bāndhavajanasyājñātapīḍāgame
vāpīṃ snātum ito gatāsi na punas tasyādhamasyāntikam
All the sandal paste has fallen
from the slopes of your breasts.
The red has been wiped from your lower lip.
The makeup is missing from the edges of your eyes.
Your body has grown thin and the hair on it is bristling.
You lying go-between!
You don't realize the pain you cause a friend.
You went from here to bathe in the pool.
You didn't even go near that jerk.[7]

The speaker is a woman who attempted to arrange a rendezvous with her lover. She sent a girlfriend to him as her messenger, and the messenger returned saying something like "I tried to talk him into coming, but he wouldn't come".[8] In fact, however, the go-between is hiding the truth, as the speaker in the poem has instantly realized: the messenger and the man not only met but made love. Yet our speaker only suggests her knowledge of this, in a roundabout and sophisticated way. She describes the physical

5 *Kāvyaprakāśa*, example 1, p. 17: "*yaḥ kaumāraharaḥ* …".
6 Ingalls, in his introduction to Ingalls et al. (1990: 22–3), has explained that Mammaṭa's threefold hierarchy of types of poetry appears first in his own work and is not something stated by Ānandavardhana. For a good discussion of Ānandavardhana's own typology see McCrea (1998: 271 ff.).
7 *Kāvyaprakāśa*, example 2 (p. 20). We have used the word "jerk" to translate *adhama*, a word whose literal meaning is closer to the term "lowlife" perceptively suggested by the anonymous reader of this paper.
8 Her report is spelled out by Maheśvara in his *Vijñapriyā* on *Sāhityadarpaṇa* 2.23, p. 62: "*asau matprārthanayāpi nāyāta iti*".

appearance of the messenger in details that lend support to the accusation she then makes, that the messenger has ignored her mission, and instead of going to fetch the lover has gone to bathe in a pool. At the very end of the poem, however, the pejorative word she chooses to refer to her lover reveals a hidden meaning, which fits at least as well with the physical details initially described.

Mammaṭa does not find it necessary to explain any of this background to his own readers, to whom such poems were already well known. He offers a single sentence of explanation: "Here the word 'jerk' suggests, as the predominant meaning, that she did in fact go to him, to make love".[9]

Mammaṭa does, however, return to this example a couple of times later in his work, and uses it, most importantly, to refute a view associated especially with his predecessor Mahimabhaṭṭa (eleventh century). Mahimabhaṭṭa claimed that the meanings attributed by Ānandavardhana to the semantic power of suggestion are actually arrived at simply through the cognitive process of inference. At the end of his fifth chapter, Mammaṭa maintains that the physical evidence mentioned in our verse is not conclusive proof of one activity or the other (bathing or lovemaking), but is described in a way that could support either interpretation. The nature of the man's baseness is therefore not logically proven, and can only be arrived at semantically, through the suggestive capacity of the word "jerk", which is then supported by the physical evidence. Mammaṭa thus uses the verse he originally cited as his example of the best kind of poetry, which is *dhvani* poetry (in which suggestion is predominant), in order to clinch his defence of the theory of suggestion against its most potent critic.[10]

Mammaṭa's showcasing of this poem appears to have had an immediate effect on its popularity. In the oldest surviving anthology of Sanskrit *kāvya*, the *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa*, which was compiled during or immediately after Mammaṭa's time, this verse is already the first item in the section entitled "Blaming the messenger".[11] The verse was later included in all the major anthologies, and at some point became part of the famous collection attributed to Amaru.[12] The poem also became a hot topic of discussion in works on poetics, most obviously in commentaries on Mammaṭa's treatise; the commentaries on his work soon became something of a genre in themselves, serving as the most common vehicle for the development of subsequent poetic theory.

The major voice in this vast discursive universe is that of basic agreement with Mammaṭa's understanding of the poem, expressed by numerous

9 *Kāvyaprakāśa*, example 2, p. 20: "*atra tadantikam eva rantuṃ gatāsīti prādhānyenādhamapadena vyajyate*".

10 *Kāvyaprakāśa*, end of *Ullāsa* 5 (p. 256): "*tathā niḥśeṣacyutetyādau …* ".

11 *Dūtīkopālambhavrajyā*, section 25 in the text as edited in Kosambi and Gokhale (1957), where this is verse 837.

12 See Ingalls (1965: 44–5) on the relationship between the *Amaruśataka* and the *Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa*. As part of the Amaru collection, the verse is commented on by Vemabhūpāla but not by the older commentator Arjunavarmadeva (verse 105 in the edition of Arjunavarmadeva in Nārāyaṇa Rāma Ācārya (1954), but with commentary supplied from Vemabhūpāla).

commentators from Ruyyaka (mid-twelfth century in Kashmir) to Bhīmasena Dīkṣita (mid-eighteenth century in Kanauj). Throughout this line of writers there is growing sophistication in the explanation of the verse, a tendency that can be seen already in Ruyyaka, the author of what is probably the earliest extant commentary. Ruyyaka points out that Mammaṭa's example achieves twice as much as Ānandavardhana's famous opening example, by illustrating simultaneously a positive statement turned into a negative one ("you went to the pool" becomes "you didn't go to the pool"), and the reverse ("you didn't go to him" becomes "you did go to him").[13] Ruyyaka also begins the long tradition of calling attention to details in the choice of words in the verse, by mentioning options that were carefully avoided (e.g., "fallen from", but not "washed off", which would have pointed exclusively to the bathing scenario). And he notices how the realization of the suggested lovemaking brings with it a reinterpretation even of the syntax of the verse (pointing out that the adjective *tanvī*, at first taken as merely attributive in referring to her slender body, comes to be seen as predicative, stating that her body has grown thin).[14]

Many subsequent writers contribute to the accumulated richness of interpretation, describing how the speaker, through her seeming acceptance of the bathing scenario, conveys her awareness of what has happened to the guilty go-between, but at the same time keeps it hidden from unknowing bystanders;[15] or how the word "jerk" suggests also a poetic ornament, reciprocal comparison (*upameyopamā*: here "you are as low as he is, and he is as low as you");[16] or how the mention of the pool plays an important role in making the evidence ambiguous, as Mammaṭa had contended, because it allows possibilities that would not be available if she had gone home to take a shower or had gone to a river to bathe;[17] or how the use of the vocative "go-between" rather than "friend" in itself supports the notion of betrayal.[18] In all of this, what is at the centre of the discussion is the suggestion of a factual situation and the choice of words that support it. The suggestion of emotional states, which might normally be considered the ultimate goal in such a poem, is set aside by most commentators, sometimes explicitly.[19]

Against this dominant strain of agreement with Mammaṭa's statements, there is an opposing view, seldom accepted but often mentioned. Several early commentators trace this view to Vācaspati Miśra, presumably the

13 Ruyyaka on *Kāvyaprakāśa*, p. 545. The verse in the *Dhvanyāloka* ("*bhamma dhammia* …", under *Dhvanyāloka* 1.4, p. 52) is an example of a positive statement turned into a negative one ("wander freely" becoming "don't go there").

14 Ruyyaka on *Kāvyaprakāśa*, p. 545. The correct reading *vidheya* for "predicative" is verified in several later sources, the first of which is Hemacandra, *Alaṅkāracūḍāmaṇi*, p. 59.

15 E.g., Paramānanda Cakravartin on *Kāvyaprakāśa*, pp. 123–4.

16 Māṇikyacandra on *Kāvyaprakāśa*, p. 44: *tathā atraiva "sa iva tvaṃ, tvam iva so 'pi adhamaḥ" iti upameyopamālaṅkāraḥ vyaṅgyaḥ*.

17 Śrīvatsalāñchana on *Kāvyaprakāśa*, p. 125, mentions the home; Gokulanātha Upādhyāya on *Kāvyaprakāśa*, p. 133, mentions the river.

18 Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa on *Kāvyaprakāśa*, p. 16.

19 Śrīdhara on *Kāvyaprakāśa*, p. 116.

author of a commentary no longer available. Śrīdhara (early thirteenth century) ascribes to him the idea that in this poem the suggestion of lovemaking does not proceed directly from what the speaker says, but is arrived at through a different semantic route involving two stages. First there is a realization that the literal meaning, "you went to bathe in the pool", cannot be true, requiring an ironic reversal (*viparītalakṣaṇā*): "you did go to him". This in turn leads to the suggestion of lovemaking.[20]

Shortly thereafter the commentator Caṇḍīdāsa adds support to the view of Vācaspati Miśra, whom he calls ancient (*prācīna*). Caṇḍīdāsa offers emendations to the prose comments of Mammaṭa's that will make them agree with Vācaspati, explaining that otherwise what Mammaṭa says will be inconsistent with his later explanation of a very similar verse, which Mammaṭa interprets in precisely this way.[21] Caṇḍīdāsa also points out details in the wording of the evidence in the verse that cannot be the result of bathing and therefore support the opposite conclusion. This offers further support to the contention that the semantic function of *lakṣaṇā* or secondary usage is at work here, since this requires for its operation the blocking of the literal meaning.[22] All this is repeated and accepted by Viśvanātha (early fifteenth century), both in his commentary on Mammaṭa and in a very similar passage in his independent work, the *Sāhityadarpaṇa*.[23] Most of the other commentators, however, reject this, and the view seems to have had little support after Viśvanātha.[24]

Our verse occasionally appears in connection with other topics in works that are outside this commentarial line. Even before the time of Mammaṭa, Bhoja (first half of the eleventh century in central India) had used the verse as an example of the poetic ornament called *bhāvikā*, which involves the revelation (*udbheda*) of something previously hidden,[25] and it serves the same purpose two centuries later for Narendraprabha Sūri, a Jain monk writing in western India.[26] Amṛtānandayogin, in the Telugu region in the late fourteenth century, uses it to illustrate a similar ornament which he calls *leśa* or *lava*.[27] These are all independent treatises on poetics, composed outside the full sway of Mammaṭa's system.

This tangential discussion highlights the basic uniformity of the far more extensive body of discussion: the commentaries on Mammaṭa constitute a

20 Śrīdhara on *Kāvyaprakāśa*, p. 116.
21 The verse is "*sāhentī sahi suhaaṃ …*", *Kāvyaprakāśa* example 7, p. 29, and Mammaṭa explains it as a suggestion (*vyaṅgyam*) based on the content of secondary usage (*lakṣyam*).
22 Caṇḍīdāsa on *Kāvyaprakāśa*, pp. 116 ff.
23 Viśvanātha on *Kāvyaprakāśa*, pp. 8–9; Viśvanātha, *Sāhityadarpaṇa*, p. 62.
24 Viśvanātha's view is accepted by his son Anantadāsa in his *Locana* on the *Sāhityadarpaṇa* of Viśvanātha, p. 62, and much later by the eighteenth-century commentator Gokulanātha Upādhyāya in his commentary on the *Kāvyaprakāśa*, pp. 133–4. While Viśvanātha comes to be identified with the view in place of Caṇḍīdāsa, and many authors record the view as that of an interlocutor, they do not accept it themselves.
25 Bhoja, *Sarasvatīkaṇṭhābharaṇa*, p. 235.
26 Narendraprabha Sūri, *Alaṅkāramahodadhi*, p. 327.
27 Amṛtānandayogin, *Alaṅkārasaṅgraha*, pp. 50–5.

coherent and continuous discourse in which agreement is far greater than disagreement, a fact that should not be obscured by the controversy within this tradition on the possible role of *lakṣaṇā*. Moreover, all these writers unanimously reject Mahimabhaṭṭa's insistence on inference as an explanation of how such verses work. Especially in the context of the passage at the end of Mammaṭa's fifth chapter, the commentators take turns at beating up on the ghost of Mahimabhaṭṭa, with pointed remarks on the irrelevance of logical rigour to literary sensitivity,[28] and with an increasingly abusive tone.[29]

Busting the messenger: incriminating evidence from Appayya Dīkṣita's flowchart

The body of commentary on Mammaṭa as elaborated through the centuries offers occasional windows into a number of underlying tensions and problems within the tradition, but at the same time increasingly masks their continuing importance behind an ever-stronger consensus.

Here two tensions are especially prominent. One involves a distinction in emphasis between a focus on the experience of the suggested emotional content, which is supposedly the ultimate purpose of the best poetry, and a focus on the experience of the particular wording of a poem and the details of its sophisticated features of texture and construction. As we have seen, the literature on our poem, while paying lip service to the former concern, gives much more attention in practice to the latter. The other tension involves the interest of the poeticians in presenting their independent theories of semantics versus the powerful continuing claims of the existing linguistic theories of the logicians and other major systems. This issue had flared up in Ānandavardhana's work and in the more immediate responses it gave rise to, because the power of poetic suggestion he sought to explain was a semantic function not recognized by the existing authorities on semantics. The commentators on Mammaṭa appeared to have put this issue to rest in their growing agreement on rejecting Mahimabhaṭṭa's views.

There are two further problems worth mentioning. One is the question of authority within the tradition. The absence of a foundational root text (*sūtra*) on poetics, together with the success of Mammaṭa's treatise, raised the question of the extent to which it had become incumbent upon scholars to treat Mammaṭa as an unquestionable authority (as seen, for example, in the fact that the commentator Caṇḍīdāsa felt compelled to suggest an emendation in Mammaṭa's wording rather than to disagree with him explicitly). The other problem, not directly referred to in our texts but quite probably of growing influence in them, is that of the implications of other

28 For example, Māṇikyacandra on *Kāvyaprakāśa*, p. 1409: "*kāvyasāhitye hi arthapratītīnāṃ lokottaracamatkārarūpapratītiviśrāntir eva sādhyā, na tu satyāsatyanirūpaṇā*"; Someśvara on *Kāvyaprakāśa*, p. 1410: "*kāvyaviṣaye hi vācyavyaṅgyapratītānāṃ satyāsatyanirūpaṇaṃ na prayojakam … prītimātraparyavasāyitvāt*"; Gopāla on *Kāvyaprakāśa*, pp. 1414–5, gives far-reaching comments on this in a long passage.

29 Govinda Ṭhakkura on *Kāvyaprakāśa*, p. 1411: "*dhiṅ mūrkha … mūkībhava*".

literatures such as the growing body of vernacular poetry and the advent of Persianate literature. In the context of these competing literary cultures the question of what it is about Sanskrit poetry that is special may have acquired new importance.

Just as these discussions seemed to have arrived at some kind of lasting consensus, Appayya Dīkṣita offered an extensive analysis of our poem that brought several of these tensions and problems to the surface. His re-examination of such issues is one of the reasons why he is appropriately viewed as the first major figure in the "new" period of Sanskrit poetics. Appayya deals with the poem in question at the beginning of his major work on poetry, the *Citramīmāṃsā*, although it appears as the second rather than the first poem discussed – apparently because Appayya, like Mammaṭa before him, preferred to choose his own example of the best type of poetry before turning to the traditional favourite.

His first example is a famous verse from Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhava*,[30] describing the path of the first raindrops that fall on the goddess Pārvatī as she sits in meditation, from her eyelashes to her lower lip, then to her breasts, trickling across the folds of her waist into her navel. Appayya offers a careful critical analysis, in which he shows how the details of the verse lay out a map of her body suggesting that she is perfect both in her beauty and in her yogic practice.[31]

Our poem is his second example, and the two examples have much in common both in the sensitive focus on the importance of closely observed details of the female body, and in the approach that Appayya takes in explaining how they work. The word "jerk", he says, must refer to the man's having had sex with the messenger, through a process of elimination – a lady of culture would never have referred to congenital baseness in a man with whom she was involved, and she would not have sent the messenger if she had not already forgiven any previous misbehaviour. The remaining possible reason for her using such a word is some kind of recent sexual transgression, and we are able to know that this was specifically in the form of sex with the messenger on the evidence of the bodily details mentioned by the speaker.

Appayya contends that the specific way in which each of these details is worded serves to support, at first glance, the literal statement of the speaker that the messenger has gone to bathe in the pool. Eventually, however, we realize that each can only have been caused by a sexual encounter. For example, the poet begins by saying not simply that sandalpaste has been removed, but that *all* the sandalpaste has been wiped off, which suggests a thorough washing. But in the last word of the sentence the poet says not simply that it has been wiped off her breasts, but that it has been wiped off the *slopes* of her breasts, which Appayya claims could only be the result of an embrace, since water would have reached the entire area of the chest.

30 *Kumārasambhava* 5.24, "*sthitāḥ kṣaṇaṃ pakṣmasu …*", cited in *Citramīmāṃsā*, pp. 1–2.

31 The same verse is selected in Ingalls (1965: 27–9), with reference to Appayya's explanation of it, and used by him "to furnish a single example of how the salient characteristics of Sanskrit poetry … may combine".

For each detail in the poem he traces this same deliberate design of two sequential layers – a superficial (*āpātataḥ*) interpretation which supports the literal statement, followed by a hidden (*hṛdi sthitaḥ*) implication which is in the end the only possible conclusion. The techniques used to convey these double layers change from sentence to sentence – additional words, single words interpreted in two ways, syntactical reconstruing – but the ultimate effect is similar in each instance.

In some ways this is a further development of the increasing refinement of analysis that we have already noted in the commentators on Mammaṭa, and many of the details come from isolated remarks in their works, going back as far as Ruyyaka. But the overall argument is new, and goes against the earlier consensus. Although Appayya continues to use this verse as an example of *dhvani* poetry, in explaining it he none the less creates a kind of subversive reading of how suggestion works. He presents a thorough argument using a logical flowchart, in which the assumption is that the reader checks and eliminates all the dead ends before reaching the one and only possible explanation, which is the poem's ultimate meaning. Despite his persistent use of *dhvani* terminology, his overall approach has much in common with the inference-centred attack on *dhvani* made centuries earlier by the now notorious Mahimabhaṭṭa.

We can now see how Appayya Dīkṣita has revitalized or heightened many of the early frictions within the tradition. His reading of the poem is an extreme case of attention to wording, whereas he ignores altogether the question of emotional flavour. Second, his emphasis on deductive processes threatens to subjugate the poeticians' independent notion of suggestion to the functions accepted by the logicians. Finally, his argument that the evidence mentioned by the speaker in this verse is conclusive flies in the face of Mammaṭa's explicit statements to the contrary.

The Bull of the Draviḍas in the poetic china shop: Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja's critique of Appayya Dīkṣita

It is precisely these points of friction that inform Jagannātha's vigorous attacks on Appayya. He begins his critique of Appayya's views by remarking how upsetting and painful those views are to critics and sensitive readers;[32] he clearly views Appayya as a rampaging threat to the well-established tenets of the tradition,[33] a kind of bull in the china shop of Sanskrit poetics – indeed he refers to him more than once, rather sarcastically, as "the Bull of the Draviḍas".[34] Yet despite their differences

32 Jagannātha, *Citramīmāṃsākhaṇḍana*, p. 2: "*tad etad ālaṅkārikānām atitamām hṛdayāruṃtudatayā nālaṅkāramīmāṃsakena vaktuṃ yuktam*".

33 For example, Jagannātha, *Rasagaṅgādhara*, pp. 561–2 (*vyājastuti* section): "*yadi tu prācīnasaṅketasetuṃ nirbhidya svaruciramaṇīyā saraṇir ādriyate … bahu vyākulīsyāt*". For further examples of visions of havoc in Jagannātha's assessments of Appayya, see Bronner and Tubb (forthcoming).

34 For example, *Rasagaṅgādhara*, pp. 399 (*utprekṣā* section) and 563 (*vyājastuti* section).

of opinion on many questions, the two scholars agree in recognizing these particular points of friction as central issues in their enterprise.

Appayya was the first writer after Mammaṭa to generate reactions and commentary from other scholars on a very large scale. Many of the reactions to Appayya continued to be expressed in the format of commentaries on Mammaṭa, but in addition to this, the fact that Appayya had treated certain issues so prominently and provocatively in his independent works had the effect of opening up the debate on these questions to re-examination in fresh ways and new venues. Certainly this was true of his discussion of what makes the best kind of poetry great.

Of all those who reacted to Appayya, Jagannātha Paṇḍitarāja was the loudest and clearest voice, and in both of his relevant treatises our poem holds a special place. In the *Rasagaṅgādhara* his thorough and lengthy critique of Appayya's reading of the verse appears very close to the beginning of the work, and he returns to the topic repeatedly.[35] And when he extracts passages from the *Rasagaṅgādhara* for the purpose of constructing his *Citramīmāṃsākhaṇḍana*, this is the topic he chooses to place at the very beginning of the new work.

It is significant that Jagannātha opts to remain silent on the verse that Appayya himself placed first in the *Citramīmāṃsā* (the description of the raindrops falling on Pārvatī). After all, Appayya's remarks on his two first verses are quite similar. But the first verse is Appayya's own choice of example for the best type of poetry, while the second, our poem on the messenger, is the old example chosen by Mammaṭa. This second verse is therefore of greater interest to Jagannātha, because in addition to all the other problems he finds in Appayya's reading of it, Appayya's remarks also involve what Jagannātha sees as a blatant show of disrespect for Mammaṭa's magisterium. The issue of authority is at the heart of Jagannātha's stance on this verse, and indeed of his scholarly position overall. In this particular case, he accuses Appayya not only of contradicting the original proponents of *dhvani* theory, but also of explicitly repudiating the views of Mammaṭa, who first introduced this verse into the discussion.[36]

The question of the extent of one's obligation to established authority comes to the fore in these passages, as something delicate and not entirely settled. Jagannātha himself is the first to introduce a revision of Mammaṭa's categorization of poetry[37] – the very categorization for which our poem is used as an example – while Appayya is still working within the framework of Mammaṭa's original categories, however subversively. Nevertheless, in Jagannātha's eyes his own refashioning is somehow an improvement within the spirit of Mammaṭa's system, while he considers Appayya's direct overturning of Mammaṭa's comments on the poem an egregious offence.

35 For example, *Rasagaṅgādhara*, pp. 14–9, 21, 22, and 551.

36 *Rasagaṅgādhara*, p. 3: "*sarve 'pi dhvanimārgapravartakās tava pratikūlāḥ syuḥ … anyac ca yenodāhṛtaṃ padyam āyuṣmatā vyākhyātam, tasyāpi viśeṣaṇānām asādhāraṇyam ananumatam eva… evaṃ ca tvaduktivirodhaḥ sphuṭa eva*".

37 He subdivides one of Mammaṭa's levels so as to produce a total of four rather than three levels.

Jagannātha seems to have been especially sensitive to instances of disrepect for authority, and there are other examples, both within the discipline of poetics and beyond, of his finding fault with those he saw as challenging their teachers. He elsewhere rebukes Appayya not only for discounting Mammaṭa but also for disagreeing with Mammaṭa's successor Ruyyaka, whom Jagannātha identified as one of Appayya's gurus.[38] And in the field of grammar Jagannātha's lambasting of Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita for disrespect to a teacher is famous.[39]

In the field of poetics specifically, however, because of the absence of a founding teacher and a single indisputable authority, the licence and procedures involved in innovation are unusually difficult to deal with. It is in this connection that Jagannātha invokes repeatedly and insistently the idea of the importance and authority of a historically developed scholarly consensus within the discipline (*sarvālaṅkārikasaṃmatatva*).[40] This does not mean that Jagannātha is opposed to all re-examination, and his work contains many examples both of his own innovations and of his noting with approval some of the innovations of others.[41] But at the same time he remains constantly concerned with the question of which new developments might threaten the vitality of the received system and of its foundational tenets, and it is on this score that he often finds Appayya so alarming.

Just as bad as Appayya's slighting of the authoritative teacher Mammaṭa, in Jagannātha's mind, is his effective agreement with the renegade scholar Mahimabhaṭṭa. This is because the emphasis on logic that Appayya shares with Mahimabhaṭṭa appears to threaten the hard-won independent status of poetics as a discipline. As Jagannātha argues, if the evidence in this poem is truly conclusive, the success of the inferential procedure will leave the operation of suggestion with nothing to accomplish.[42] This will have the effect of dispensing with the poeticians' distinctive contribution to the theory of semantics. Even though Appayya speaks as though he accepts and respects the role of suggestion in poetry, his analysis of the poem will be destructive of the system of categories that he is supposedly exemplifying. Thus even if Appayya could argue for the presence of suggestion in the poem, the poem would then not be an example of *dhvani* poetry as it is proposed to be, because the suggestion would not be predominant but would be overshadowed by the deductive tour de force that he describes.[43]

38 For example, in criticizing Appayya's view of *paryāyokta*, Jagannātha (*Rasagaṅgādhara*, p. 555) points out that Appayya contradicts Ruyyaka's work, "his own root text (*tanmūlagranthavirodhāc ca*)".

39 This is the background of Jagannātha's *Prauḍhamanoramākhaṇḍana*, often referred to as the *Manoramākucamardana*, literally "squeezing Manoramā's breasts".

40 *Rasagaṅgādhara*, p. 20.

41 See Bronner and Tubb (forthcoming).

42 *Citramīmāṃsākhaṇḍana*, p. 2: "*liṅgajaliṅgijñānarūpeṇānumānena vyaktiṃ gatārthayato vyaktivivekakṛto matam …*".

43 *Citramīmāṃsākhaṇḍana*, p. 2: "*api ca yathākathaṃcid aṅgīkuru vātra vyañjanāvyāpāraṃ tathāpi na taveṣṭasiddhiḥ. vācyānāṃ niḥśeṣacyutacandanastanataṭatvādīnām adhamatvasya ca tvaduktarītyā prakārāntareṇānupapadyamānatayā dūtīsaṃbhogamātraniṣpādyatvena guṇībhūtavyaṅgyatvaprasaṅgāt*".

This brings us back to the question of the sophistication of the wording. On this Jagannātha has two points to make. First, he disagrees with Appayya on the nature of the sophistication at work here. Appayya claims that the words of the speaker appear at first to point in one direction but cleverly turn out to lead instead to another, ineluctable, conclusion. Jagannātha maintains that what makes her words so sophisticated is precisely that they persist in containing ambiguity. For each of the instances of logical elimination that Appayya presents, Jagannātha provides a counterexplanation showing that the evidence remains inconclusive. For example, in response to Appayya's argument that the removal of sandalpaste only from the slopes of the breasts cannot be the result of bathing but only of embracing, Jagannātha offers the possibility that the young woman might have crossed her arms over her breasts because she was embarrassed at bathing in the public pool when a number of young men were present.[44]

At the end of the day, however, sophisticated wording is not what makes this verse an instance of the best kind of poetry. This is Jagannātha's second point, which lies at the heart of the matter. The best category of poetry is supposed to be that in which suggestion is predominant, and this in itself does not require the use of the kind of evidentiary sophistication that Appayya, not unlike many others before him, had devoted so much attention to. To prove this point Jagannātha cites another example from Mammaṭa involving very much the same theme but achieving its suggestion – blaming the messenger – much more simply, without providing any details that could be seen as unequivocal evidence.[45]

Ultimately what this discussion exposes is a fundamental and long-standing difference of emphasis in the appreciation of Sanskrit literary culture and in identifying where its greatness is located. Appayya Dīkṣita seems to believe that it is the sophisticated use of subtle details of construction and wording that are of greatest importance, and in fact he has little to say about the evocation of emotional flavours (*rasadhvani*) in any of his works.[46] Jagannātha, in contrast, believes that the process of suggestion which is essential to making our poem great cannot depend on some kind of forensic certainty, which would in fact preclude it, but that it involves instead a form of awareness resting on a sensitive and sympathetic understanding of an entire set of cultural conventions with its cast of stereotypical characters: the lady betrayed in love, the opportunistic go-between, the libertine man they both fancy.

44 *Citramīmāṃsākhaṇḍana*, pp. 3–4; he is taking this from Siddhicandra, *Kāvyaprakāśakhaṇḍana*, pp. 4–5. According to Pollock (2005: 30–1), Siddhicandra himself is quoting verbatim from Śrīvatsalāñchana's *Kāvyāmṛta*.

45 *Citramīmāṃsākhaṇḍana*, p. 4; the verse is "*auṇṇiddaṃ dobballaṃ cintā …*". On this Jagannātha comments "*na cātra vācyārthavyāvartakaṃ kiṃcid viśeṣaṇam apekṣante sahṛdayāḥ, evam ihāpi*".

46 Note especially the conspicuous absence of *vyañjanā* as a separate section in the *Vṛttivārttika*, despite its subject matter.

An encounter on the Ganges

This recognition of the fundamental role played by a distinctive and highly elaborated cultural milieu finally brings us to the last of the problems that we listed above, that of the possible impact of the presence of other literatures on the Sanskrit literary community. As far as we know, our authors do not directly mention this. But certainly Jagannātha came into close contact with the courtly traditions of Persianate society in India, in addition to the poetry of various Indian vernacular languages. Whether he discussed those literatures with others on an intellectual level we do not know, but he could scarcely have observed the practice of Persian poetry, for example, with its own highly developed conventions distinct from those of Sanskrit, without having been led to contemplate these differences. It has been suggested that an awareness both of the Persian ghazal and of vernacular traditions had an influence on Jagannātha's own Sanskrit poetry.[47] We wonder whether these encounters might also have had an influence in his poetics as well, even if only by motivating him to delineate as clearly as possible the distinctive features of Sanskrit poetry.

It may have been as a comment on the cross-cultural relations of Jagannātha that the story of his having had a Muslim wife or lover has become such an important part of the many traditional accounts of his life.[48] Even some of the stories based directly on verses actually composed by Jagannātha may be seen as a reflection of this and other tensions and problems we have mentioned. We would like to conclude with a look at one such verse, found in printed editions of Jagannātha's *Śāntavilāsa*, a part of the larger collection of his verses known as the *Bhāminīvilāsa*:[49]

> *kiṃ niḥśaṅkaṃ śeṣe śeṣe vayasaḥ samāgato mṛtyuḥ*
> *athavā sukhaṃ śayīthā nikaṭe jāgarti jāhnavī jananī*
> How can you lie so carefree
> when your time is running out
> and Death is approaching?
> But go ahead, lie as you please.
> Mother Ganges will stay awake
> right by your side.

Two things about this verse first attracted our attention in connection with the poem we have been discussing. One was the verbal echoing in the early syllables *niḥ … śeṣe* (reminiscent to us of the word *niḥśeṣa-* that opens our poem); the other was the fact that in the stories this verse is attributed not to Jagannātha but to his arch-rival Appayya Dīkṣita. The stories appear in various versions but all involve a supposed encounter between the pious Appayya, who has just emerged from his ablutions in the Ganges, and the voluptuary Jagannātha, who is lolling near the river, lying under a blanket in the company of a woman (sometimes identified as the Muslim

47 Pollock (2003: 98).
48 Pollock (2003: 96–7).
49 Sharma (1958: 77), *Bhāminīvilāsa* 19.

woman we have mentioned, and perhaps, we suspect, symbolically so). Appayya responds to this sight by uttering the first half of the verse. It is only then that he recognizes the identity of the reclining man. Wishing to avoid a confrontation with Jagannātha, he then backs away, muttering the second half of the verse.[50]

Despite the historical impossibility of these two great figures having actually met in person, the rivalry between them that this story comments on is, as we have seen, quite real, and the personalities that are amusingly constructed here for the two men are likewise not totally improbable. It is also strangely appropriate that the story should have been framed so as to touch on the themes of bathing and lovemaking that are precisely the two options in play in the poem about the lying messenger, on which the two scholars locked horns so prominently. And perhaps it is even more appropriate, given the difference in the focus of attention between the two men in the analysis of that poem, that in the story it is Appayya who has been fussing around in the water, and Jagannātha who gets to enjoy the lovemaking.

Be that as it may, at least one version of the story goes on to include an account of remorse on the part of Jagannātha after hearing Appayya's verse, and connects this incident to another and better-known cluster of stories concerning Jagannātha's death.[51] In this version the repentant Jagannātha composed a hymn to the Ganges (now known as the *Gaṅgālaharī*) and began to recite it on the spot. At the recitation of each stanza the river moved one step higher in the direction of the poet, until at the end of the hymn he disappeared into Her holy water.[52]

It is tempting to allegorize further the story of the encounter between Appayya and Jagannātha, perhaps by exploring the possibility that the river Ganges may be standing in for Sarasvatī, the goddess of Sanskrit poetry (a device that is not without precedent). More important historically is the possibility, already discussed by Pollock,[53] that the legends of Jagannātha's death reflect an awareness of the death of Sanskrit poetry, given the status of Jagannātha as one of the last of the great Sanskrit poets. Connected with this is the role of Appayya as an accuser of Jagannātha. In this he perhaps serves as a compressed representation of the community of Brahmin pundits said in many other stories to have ostracized Jagannātha from the city of Banaras. In any case he may well represent a reference to some uneasiness felt in reaction to Jagannātha's importation into Sanskrit circles of a wider awareness of cultural possibilities. If, as Pollock has argued, the death of Sanskrit literary culture on the eve of colonialism was inevitable, this fictive Appayya was simply blaming the messenger.

50 Ramesan (1972: 131–2); Sri Ramachandrudu (1987: 8–11).
51 Ramesan (1972: 131).
52 As noted by Pollock (2003: 96), several motives come up in the legends: repentance, despair and defiance. Pollock has also discussed the possibility that the stories may reflect the new social realities.
53 Pollock (2003: 96).

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