

Ends of the
Mahābhārata

Naama Shalom

Balliol College, University of Oxford

Thesis submitted for the title of Doctor of Philosophy

in Oriental Studies

Michaelmas Term, 2012

Dedicated with undying love to my father,

Ya'acov Shalom (1949-1990),

For whom I searched in foreign lands

Long after he was gone.

‘Ends of the *Mahābhārata*’

Naama Shalom

Balliol College, University of Oxford

Thesis submitted for the title of D.Phil. in Oriental Studies

Michaelmas Term, 2012

Abstract

The assertion that the *Mahābhārata* (MBh) narrative is innately incapable of achieving a conclusion has attained the status of a disciplinary truism in the epic’s study. My thesis challenges this prevalent assumption by proposing an uninvestigated path of inquiry into the philological, historical, literary and semantic aspects of the epic.

The thesis discusses the ending of the MBh, the *Svargārohaṇa parvan* (SĀ) by exploring several trajectories: the study of the SĀ in epic scholarship; its reception in the later tradition in Sanskrit literature; and finally, the problematic aspects of the SĀ and its relation to the rest of the narrative. It first points out that in comparison to other MBh episodes, the SĀ has been received with significant disregard or suppression in the literature commenting on the epic. Second, it characterizes the nature of the suppression of the SĀ in each of the three literary strands commenting on the MBh (epic scholarship, Sanskrit adaptations and theoretical discourses). It argues that all of these considerations, which are external to the MBh, have tended, in various modes, to suppress, ignore or overlook the importance of the SĀ.

The thesis then proceeds to argue that on the most significant and internal level of the text itself, the SĀ is intrinsically consistent with the rest of the MBh narrative, and that this makes it thematically integral to the text as a whole. This argument derives from the importance with which this study addresses the moment of the condemnation of *dharma* in the SĀ, and is furthered by a philological and semantic study, as well as textual analyses of the multiple occurrences of the Sanskrit verb *garh* throughout the MBh. The use of this verb by the epic protagonist, Yudhiṣṭhira, in condemning his father, Dharma, at the last scenes of the SĀ comprises a key moment that bears significant and myriad implications upon the understanding of this pivotal concept (*dharma*), to which the entire epic is devoted.

– Table of Contents –

Acknowledgments	6
Abbreviations	8
INTRODUCTION	9
CHAPTER 1 – Scholarly Literature on the <i>Mahābhārata</i>	27
1. General History of the <i>Mahābhārata</i>	30
1.1 Hopkins’ Model	34
1.2 Winternitz’ Model	35
1.3 Fitzgerald’s Model	36
1.4 Major Points of Agreement	39
1.5 Minor Points of Dispute	41
1.6 <i>Jaya, Bhārata, Mahā-Bhārata</i>	42
1.7 Analytic Versus Synthetic, Plus One Opinion	46
2. Date of the <i>Svargārohaṇa</i>	49
3. The <i>Parvan</i> -list of Manuscript Spitzer	54
4. Reluctance to Accept the SĀ as an Integral Part of the Epic	60
5. Scholarly Retelling of the Ending of the <i>Mahābhārata</i>	68
5.1 ‘ <i>Mahāprasthānika</i> -Only Relaters’	70
5.2 ‘ <i>Naraka</i> -Free Retellers’	72
5.3 ‘Close-Approachers’	76
Conclusion	81
CHAPTER 2 – Sanskrit Literature of the Ending of the <i>Mahābhārata</i> . .	86
1. General Scheme of <i>Mahābhārata</i> Adaptations	89
1.1 Fragmentary Adaptations of the <i>Mahābhārata</i>	89
1.2 Sequence-adaptations.	92
2.1 Summary of Books 17 and 18	95
2.2 Parameters of Examination	99
3.1 Kṣemendra’s <i>Bhāratamañjarī</i>	101
3.2 Amaraçandra’s <i>Bālabhārata</i>	110
3.3 Agastya’s <i>Bālabhārata</i>	121
4.1 The <i>Bhārataprabandha</i>	128
4.2 Initial Questions Regarding the <i>Bhārataprabandha</i>	131
4.3 Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa as a Possible Candidate for Authorship	132
4.4 Relationship of Written <i>prabandhas</i> to the Performance Tradition	136
4.5 Difficulty in Establishing the Authorship of the <i>Svargārohaṇaprabandha</i>	142
4.6 The <i>Svargārohaṇa-prabandha</i>	147
Conclusion	157

CHAPTER 3 – Sanskrit Poetical Theoreticians	163
1. Ānandavardhana	165
2. Abhinavagupta	176
3. Kuntaka	186
Conclusion	191
CHAPTER 4 – Rejecting <i>Dharma</i>: Semantic Typology of the Sanskrit Verb <i>Garh</i> in the <i>Mahābhārata</i>	194
1. Semantic Typology of <i>Garh</i> in the <i>Mahābhārata</i>	198
2. Cognate Verbs of <i>Garh</i> in the <i>Mahābhārata</i>	203
2.1 <i>Nind</i>	204
2.2 <i>Kṣip</i>	210
3. Detailed Analysis of <i>Garh</i> Passages in the <i>Mahābhārata</i>	214
3.1 Instances of <i>Garh</i> Aimed at Wrong Acts	214
3.2 Pāṇḍu and the Deer	216
3.3 Dhṛṣṭadyumna Slays Droṇa	221
3.4 The Death of Abhimanyu	224
3.5 Karṇa Denounces <i>Dharma</i>	229
3.6 <i>Garh</i> in the Concluding Chapters of the <i>Āśvamedhika Parvan</i>	233
3.6.1 <i>Garh</i> Types Reflected in the Mongoose Unit	238
3.6.2 The Mongoose Story in the Bombay Text and the Critical Edition	242
3.6.3 Which <i>Dharma</i> ?	243
3.6.4 Allusions to the Concluding Passages of the <i>Mahābhārata</i>	245
3.6.5 Allusions to the <i>Ādi parvan</i>	248
Conclusion	254
CONCLUSION	259
APPENDIX I - Kṣemendra Vyāsadāsa’s <i>Bhāratamañjarī</i>	265
APPENDIX II - Amaraçandra Sūri’s <i>Bālabhārata</i>	277
APPENDIX III - Agastya Paṇḍita’s <i>Bālabhārata</i>	289
APPENDIX IV - The <i>Svargārohaṇaprabandha</i>	293
BIBLIOGRAPHY	314

Acknowledgments

In India, there are three main *ṛṇas* (debts) that one has to repay in the course of one's life – those due to the gods, those to teachers, and those due to one's ancestors or parents. Although the acknowledgment section of a thesis can hardly mark these debts off, one feels somewhat assured by recognizing them with awe. For, indeed, no achievement -- no matter how small -- is possible without the help of good and beneficial souls. Perhaps the most considerable debt behind the accomplishment of this work goes to my supervisor, Professor Christopher Minkowski. Under his guidance, I was most fortunate to have gained immeasurable learning and knowledge. I am truly grateful for his punctual, thorough and illuminating reading of my work during its various stages. His oceanic knowledge of the *Mahābhārata* epic and capacity for sharp analysis of deceptively trivial points have deeply influenced my work. Whatever merit it may contain owes a great deal to the towering academic standards that he had set for me, which I continue to strive for, and for which I am immensely grateful.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my previous teachers from the Hebrew University, Professor David Shulman and Doctor Yohanan Grinshpon, who have encouraged, supported and accompanied me throughout the production of this thesis. The seed of this thesis was initially planted, as it were, in one of Dr. Grinshpon's seminars on the *Mahābhārata* several years ago in Jerusalem. Among the numerous things I learned from him, Dr. Grinshpon taught me something fundamental about research; namely, that if one is sufficiently patient and receptive to cultivate a capacity for containing open-ended questions, these will eventually, almost miraculously, turn raw material into something tangible of great potential. His tremendous creativity never ceased to arouse my curiosity and its mark is undoubtedly felt in every commendable idea this thesis has to offer. I owe a huge debt of gratitude to Prof. Shulman, who set me off on this thesis-journey and who, at several points when the going got rough, gently picked me up from the mud of eternal brooding simply by calling me, a '*svargārohiṇī*', a 'heaven-mountaineer(ess)'. Although this was said in jest, it often occurred to me that besides his many unparalleled qualities, he has the

singular ability of elevating his students upward, toward lofty peaks and spectacular realms, unimaginable even to themselves. I thank him deeply.

This study was facilitated by the support of several institutions and funding bodies. The Oxford University Clarendon Fund and Balliol College provided me with the means to concentrate solely on research during the first three years of my studies. While the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies and the Oriental Institute contributed toward travel and research in India, the latter institute was also particularly generous in supporting me through the final stages of writing. I am extremely grateful to them all.

This work would not have been possible without the close and helpful reading of Dr. Arik Moran, from the University of Haifa. Dr. Moran read every word in this thesis while making corrections of the English with exceptional dedication and without expecting any reward. It is a rare opportunity to get to know someone who understands what you are trying to say better than yourself. I am eternally grateful to Dr. Moran, for bringing out the meaning of my writing with beauty, elegance and joy, as well as for the pure fun and many good laughs we exchanged in the process.

Lastly, I would like to thank several people who contributed to this thesis and its composer in various ways, knowingly or unknowingly: my sister Yael Baram-Shalom, my uncle David Ben-Ze'ev, and my dearest friends, Yael Gueller, Betya Cohen and Dana Merzel. Particular and profound gratitude goes to my mother, Sarah Shalom, who is the very first teacher to have encouraged me to pursue my studies and explore meaningful knowledge. She is the great bearer and nourisher, whose love and support are present behind every word in this work.

Abbreviations

BB - *Bālabhārata*

BM - *Bhāratamañjarī*

BP - *Bhārataprabandha*

HV - *Harivaṃśa*

MBh - *Mahābhārata*

MhP - *Mahāprasthānika*

SĀ - *Svargārohaṇa*

SĀpra. - *Svargārohaṇaprabandha*

Introduction

“If you want a happy ending, that depends, of course, on where you stop your story.”

Orson Welles¹

The assertion that the *Mahābhārata*² narrative is innately incapable of achieving a conclusion, a claim often latently and at times openly advanced, has attained the status of a disciplinary truism in the epic’s study.³ This thesis seeks to challenge this prevalent and well-reasoned assumption by proposing an uninvestigated path of inquiry into the philological, historical, literary and semantic aspects of the epic. While the problematic nature of the epic’s ending (discussed below) can indeed lead one to perceive it as ‘peripheral’ or even ‘alien’ to the narrative, there is a very good reason for entertaining the opposite view; namely,

¹ *Orson Welles: Interviews*, ed. Mark W. Estrin, University Press of Mississippi, 2002, p. 221.

² Henceforth: MBh.

³ See, for instance, Tamar Reich, “Ends and Closures in the *Mahābhārata*,” *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 15, 1: 9-53, Springer, 2011, p. 9: “This paper reads the *Mahābhārata* in an attempt to clarify how—or whether at all—it may be said to achieve closure. The term “closure” refers to the sense of resolution achieved when a narrative ends. In the case of the *Mahābhārata*, a text that makes [a] totalizing claim about itself, ... *how does one identify closure?*” (Emphasis added). See also *ibid.*, p. 45: “We have seen that the *Mahābhārata* explores potential forms of closure, *but there is no single, straightforward and satisfactory closure to be found within it.*” (Emphasis added). See also Herman Tiekens who discusses the ending of the MBh in “Kill and be Killed: The *Bhagavadgītā* and *Anugītā* in the *Mahābhārata*,” *Journal of Hindu Studies* 2009; 2: 209-228. Tiekens points out that before departing from the world, the Pāṇḍavas divide the kingdom between their successor, Janamejaya, and the Kauravas’ descendant, Yuyutsu. He considers this event as a state which preserves the eternal animosity between these rival parties, concluding that “*the competition does not end; it simply begins all over again ...* The protagonists of the *Mahābhārata* are caught in a painful cycle of fighting for life and death, *which repeats itself endlessly.*” (Emphasis added), *ibid.*, pp. 221-222.

that the closing book of the MBh, the *Svargārohaṇa parvan*,⁴ is the MBh's *natural* and *organic* resolution, and that it is *thematically consistent* with the thematic structure of the epic as a whole.

The assumption that the epic is reluctant to arrive at a conclusion is perhaps most lucidly conveyed in the words of the scholar David Gitomer, who states the following:

Just as the *continual* writing, production, and experiencing of tragedies was vital to the life of the Athenian polis, so the *Mahābhārata* never wants to resolve itself. No beginning can take it far enough back ... No ending ever ties up the story ... And we know that the middle is infinitely expandable.⁵ (Emphasis added).

There are indeed very good reasons to support the supposition that the MBh does not *really* end, or that it is *fundamentally* incapable of finding a conclusion. These stem from two main characteristics of the epic: (1) its aesthetic properties; and, (2) what I call, “the paradox of *dharma*'s ‘*garhification*’ of *dharma*”, which is detailed below.

In the citation above, Gitomer points out a number of fundamental properties of the MBh. He emphasizes the epic's aesthetic quality of prolongation and infinite expansion (“we know that the middle is infinitely expandable”); he notices its multiple beginnings (“no beginning can take it far enough back”); and finally, he stresses its non-resolution (“no ending ever ties up the story”). Yet, Gitomer's remarks discuss only three of the factors that may explain why the MBh “never wants to resolve itself”.

⁴ Henceforth: SĀ.

⁵ David Gitomer, “King Duryodhana: The *Mahābhārata* Discourse of Sinning and Virtue in Epic and Drama,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 112, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1992): 222-232, p. 232.

Problematic Aspects of the Epic's Aesthetic Properties

The MBh features several characteristic properties and aesthetic qualities that may explain its non-resolution. The first of these is encapsulated in the rare self-reflective moment, in which the epic discloses its perception of itself as an inclusive text whose scope encompasses the whole of life, most clearly brought out in the celebrated aphorism – “What is here may be found elsewhere. [Yet,] what is not here is nowhere to be found”.⁶ David Shulman, who discusses the statement at hand, concludes that “the *Mahābhārata* is conterminous with the world. ... It presents itself not as a work of art but as reality itself. No boundary marks off this text from the world.”⁷ This self-reflective perception of the epic directly relates to its non-resolution by pointing to a fundamental problem: if the text claims to an all-inclusive, engrossing scope that necessarily encompasses the *whole of life* within it, then it is essentially incapable of marking either a beginning or an ending point.⁸

The epic's inability to arrive at a conclusion is further validated by another marked characteristic, namely, its astronomical, encyclopaedic length, which

⁶ *yad ihāsti tad anyatra yan nehāsti na tat kvacit.* (MBh, 1.56.33 (repeated in 18.5.38); B. 1.62.53).

Note that unless indicated otherwise, the translations from Sanskrit in this thesis are mine. Unless mentioned otherwise, all citations and quotes of the MBh in the following discussion are from the Critical Edition of the text, V. S. Sukthankar, et al., eds., *The Mahābhārata for the First Time Critically Edited*, 19 vols., Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1933-1966. In most cases, a second reference is provided to the (reprinted) Bombay Edition of the MBh (henceforth: B.), also known as the Vulgate text, R. S. Kinjawadekar, ed., *The Mahābhārata, Śrīmanmahābhārataṁ with the Bhāratabhāvadīpa of Nīlakaṇṭha*, Poona, Citraśala Press, 1929-1936.

⁷ D. Shulman, “Toward a Historical Poetics of the Sanskrit Epics,” *The Wisdom of Poets*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 26.

⁸ In this context, it is interesting to note Alf Hiltebeitel's ideas regarding ‘What is not here is nowhere to be found’. Hiltebeitel remarks that this “is not an encyclopaedic slogan, as many have made it out to be, but an *āstika* (‘Vedic; those who say “it is”’) proclamation or affirmation that the epic is about what ‘is’ and ‘is not’.” (p. 162) Hiltebeitel develops this idea by showing how negative the epic's treatment is with regard to *nāstikyam* or *nāstikas* (‘heresy; heretics’). (p. 163). See *Rethinking the Mahābhārata: A Reader's Guide to the Education of the Dharma King*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2001.

facilitates its aesthetic literary property of prolongation. Indeed, Janamejaya and the other embedded listeners of the story repeatedly insist that events be narrated to them at length (*vistareṇa*). Several scholars have noted this feature of the text. Christopher Minkowski, for example, suggests that the MBh is transmitted through an embedding narrative technique analogous to the embedding property of the *śrauta* sacrifice.⁹ Discussing the highly elaborate structure of embedding in the epic, Minkowski points to a “narratological” question of the text; namely, if the MBh is narrated by one embedded listener to the other, then who is finally narrating the Bhārata story to the last¹⁰ narrator of the text, Vaiśampāyana?¹¹

Minkowski thus concludes,

It still remains to answer the narratological question posed at the beginning. What saves the *Mahābhārata* from an infinite regression of frames, each one the story of the previous narration? *In one sense, nothing does.* The infinite regression is the image of the transmission of the story through history. *New tellers and new audiences retell the story as they heard it, and so the epic continues.*¹² (Emphasis added).

Along similar lines, David Shulman calls this feature of the text ‘emboxing’:

Indeed, ‘emboxing’ is a major technique in the *Mahābhārata*: X, telling the story of Y, recalls how A once told the tale of B to C... At times, the dizzy listener feels he is trapped in an infinite regress of narrative, just as he remains torn by the unresolved dilemmas that the text presents.¹³

⁹ See C. Z. Minkowski, “Janamejaya’s *Sattra* and Ritual Structure,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 109, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1989), p. 401.

¹⁰ Within the epic’s main frames (as these are set in the *Ādi parvan*), Vaiśampāyana is last in the order of narration. However, within the narrative’s inner time perception, he is chronologically the first to have recited the Bhārata story. See also the two main frames of the MBh story, as presented by Minkowski, 1989: 401-420: (1) The bard Ugraśravas recites the Bhārata story at Naimiṣa forest at Śaunaka’s *sattra* which lasted twelve years; (2) He heard it at Janamejaya’s snake sacrifice (*sarpasattra*), where it was recited by Vaiśampāyana as the latter heard it from Vyāsa.

¹¹ Minkowski, (1989): 404 - “... the reader is presented with a curious narratological question – how can the *Mahābhārata* itself describe the history of its own narration? Or, more specifically, if Vaiśampāyana is telling us the story of the Bhāratas, then who is telling us about Vaiśampāyana?”

¹² *ibid.*, p. 420.

¹³ Shulman, (2001): 29.

Finally, A. K. Ramanujan argued that “the central structuring principle of the epic is a certain kind of repetition. ... Not only are there repetitive phrases, similes, and formulaic descriptions ... but incidents, scenes, settings and especially relationships are repeated.”¹⁴ The repetitive mode of the MBh, which, as noted above, constitutes one of its most marked attributes of transmission, thus results in an epic that appears to expand *ad infinitum*.

Another aesthetic attribute emerges from the fluid structure of the epic’s two ends, which J. A. B. van Buitenen terms its ‘Fuzzy Edges’: “On both ends the edges are fuzzy. The complexity necessary at the beginning allowed itself to be extended deeper and deeper.”¹⁵ Van Buitenen further argues that the narrative’s fluidity forces us, as readers of the MBh “to be satisfied with a fuzzily delineated centre, which from the beginning lay open to growth in every direction.”¹⁶ A solid indication of this is found in the *Ādi parvan*, which informs us that the book has at least three different legitimate beginnings, as follows:

Some Brahmins read the Bhārata from Manu onward; others from the tale of *The Book of Āstika* onward; others read it from *The Tale of Uparicara* onward, while some read the whole.¹⁷

Judging from this verse alone, and although the MBh does not state as much, it would appear that the text suggests that in having several openings, the epic has multiple endings, as well.

The attributes of the epic surveyed above – its self-perception as conterminous with the world, the literary quality of prolongation (*vistara*), its

¹⁴ A. K. Ramanujan, "Repetition in the *Mahābhārata*," *Essays on the Mahābhārata*, ed. A. Sharma, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 2007, pp. 421-422.

¹⁵ van Buitenen, (trans.), *The Mahābhārata*, Book I. vol.1, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1975, p. xvi.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p. xix.

¹⁷ *manvādi bhāratam ke cid āstikādi tathāpare / tathoparicarādy anye viprāḥ samyag adhīyate //* (MBh, 1.1.50; B. 1.1.54).

repetitive mode, its transmission through the narratological technique of embedding or emboxing, its fuzzy edges, and its multiple beginnings – are closely related to the way in which it perceives and exhibits the notion of time. As time expands continuously in the MBh, particularly around its edges, the outcome is a limitless narrative that is essentially incapable of finding a starting or a finishing point. In this regard, David Shulman notes that we might consider “this whole epic as an extended essay, carried along a complex narrative frame, on time and its terrors.”¹⁸ The reason for this, according to Shulman, stems from the fact that time “essentially unfolds forward, remorselessly ‘cooking’ all the creatures,¹⁹ in this epic.”²⁰ These remarks bring him to conclude, that:

In the perspective of the *Mahābhārata*, time may ultimately be cyclical, but our experience of it, like that of the heroes, is of a steady progression (actually a degeneration) that both works through the terrible human struggles recorded here and then destroys the struggling actors themselves.²¹

Shulman points to an inherent tension that concerns the concept of time in the MBh. On the one hand, the axis of time indeed seems to be painfully linear in the epic. The story of its heroes is delivered in meticulous detail from birth to death, as all the while the entire narrative progresses toward their terrible demise, and the apocalyptic destruction of the world. On the other hand, time also appears to be flowing cyclically. The *Ādi parvan* is a direct continuation of the *Svargārohaṇa*, and vice versa. The bard Ugraśravas tells the Bhārata story at

¹⁸ Shulman, (2001): 26-27.

¹⁹ See the phrase *kālah pacati bhūtāni sarvāṇi* (“Time cooks all living beings”) and several of its variations in MBh, 1.1.188; 7.57.6; 12.217.19; 12.217.25; 12.217.39; 12.231.25; 12.309.90; 17.1.3.

See also Yaroslav Vassilkov’s thorough study of the concept of time in the epic: “*Kālavāda* (the doctrine of Cyclical Time) in the *Mahābhārata* and the Concept of Heroic Didactics,” *Composing a Tradition: Concepts, Techniques and Relationships*, Proceedings of the First Dubrovnik International Conference on the Sanskrit Epics and Purāṇas, August 1997, eds. M. Brockington and P. Schreiner, 1999, Zagreb, pp. 17-33.

²⁰ Shulman, (2001): 28

²¹ *ibid.*

Śaunaka's *sattra*; yet this is the second recitation of the MBh, for the bard actually heard it at Janamejaya's *sarpasattra* ('snake-sacrifice') from Vaiśampāyana, who was the first to have recited it, having heard it himself from his teacher and the composer of this entire text, Vyāsa. Consequently, the story opens, continues, and closes with the constant presence of Ugraśravas (and his audience - Śaunaka and the Brahmins), as well as with that of Janamejaya, the Pāṇḍavas' sole surviving descendant, whose keen interest to learn about the fate of his ancestors actually invokes the MBh recitation by Vaiśampāyana. Time thus builds up both cyclically and linearly in the MBh, for where Ugraśravas commences the (second) recitation of the story, at the very first lines of the *Ādi*, there closes the narrative that simultaneously terminates at the *Svargārohaṇa*.²²

To a certain degree, then, the unique perspective that the epic exhibits with regard to the concept of time embodies several of the aesthetic properties discussed above.²³ It is inherently related to the epic's repetitive mode in the sense that it is being replicated in certain fixed time-units or particular numbers. The number 18, for instance, features recurrently in the epic and is meaningful to the

²² See also Reich, (2011): 38: "Thus, as strange as it may seem, exploring the end of the *Mahābhārata* will again take us to its first book. We go to the frame story, and enter again into a universe of violence. The *Mahābhārata*'s account of the circumstances of its own narration embeds one story of a destructive 'sacrificial battle' within another story of a destructive, vengeful black-magic sacrifice."

²³ Following Madeleine Biardeau, who pointed out the momentary or transitory nature of the Naimiṣa forest (where the MBh's recitation by Ugraśravas takes place) calling it a 'blink of an eye', Alf Hiltebeitel argues that it is the site of infinite regression: "Naimiṣa is a forest with a give-away name: 'lasting for a moment, a twinkling' (from *nimeṣa*, *nimiṣa*, a moment or wink)." Hiltebeitel, (2001): 95-96. Hiltebeitel relates these intriguing remarks on the Naimiṣa forest with the epic's perception of time. He considers the Naimiṣa forest "not so much a place as a process", which connects "*past, present, and future in the twinkling of the eye*". Finally, he concludes that "The *Mahābhārata*'s Naimiṣa forest might be thought of as 'Momentous Forest', or even the 'Forest of literary Imagination', the forest where bards like the 'hair-raising' Lomahaṛṣaṇa and his 'frightful-to-hear' son Ugraśravas can enchant Brahman Ṛṣis: a 'momentous' forest where stories, to put it simply, *transcend time and defy ordinary conceptions of space*. ... [In this context] it is perhaps best to share Sukthankar's impression that *the poets are winking at us*." (Emphasis added), *ibid.*, pp. 96-97.

very organizational structure of the text. Thus, the epic unfolds within 18 books, the *Bhagavadgītā* has 18 chapters, and 18 armies fight the Kurukṣetra war for the duration of 18 days. Since the main story is narrated in the intervals of several sacrificial settings, each one embedded within the other, time in the MBh likewise reflects the emboxing technique of transmission that is characteristic of the epic.²⁴ It should further be noted that the apocalyptic Kurukṣetra war, situated at the heart of the narrative, is perceived in the MBh as that which moves the world from the third eon (*Dvāpara-yuga*) to the current and degenerated age of *Kali*.

In summary, the characteristic literary qualities of the MBh suggest that the epic is a text that is innately incapable of finding a conclusion, or at the very least, as discussed in the following section, is reluctant to resolve the problematic issues that it raises.

The Paradox of *Dharma's* 'Garhification' of *Dharma*

Another very good reason to consider the MBh as a text that is incapable of finding a conclusion concerns the concept of *dharma* in the epic, and its particular treatment in the narrative's closing scenes. While the entire epic offers a prolonged exposition of *dharma's* meanings and validity, in its final scenes *dharma* itself is subjected to a bitter condemnation. Thus, instead of offering a resolution to the multifaceted problems aroused by the concept throughout the length and breadth of the narrative, the ending points to *dharma's* futility or meaninglessness.

²⁴ See note 10 above.

This presents an intriguing and dramatic paradox in the narrative's concluding scenes. Not only does the epic's protagonist, Yudhiṣṭhira, condemn his father Dharma; the hero's harsh denunciation must also include himself since the MBh perceives Yudhiṣṭhira as the Righteous-King ('Dharma-rāja') or the Son of Dharma ('Dharma-suta'). This moment in the MBh is distinguished by the hero's use of the Sanskrit verb *garh*, 'to censure; denounce', in condemning his father. It would appear therefore, that such a conclusion does not bring about closure or resolution, certainly not to the many doubts and hesitations voiced throughout the narrative regarding *dharma*.

To be sure, many texts address the concept of *dharma*, yet these examine its general, legal, and theoretical aspects through elaborate classificatory frameworks.²⁵ That is perhaps why the Indian tradition calls such texts *Dharmaśāstras* – 'instructive manual literature about *dharma*'. Crudely stated, while *Dharmaśāstra* texts aim at providing rules of conduct and coherent, instructive answers to the numerous problems and dilemmas raised by this intricate notion, what the MBh does best is to raise and explore multiple open-ended questions concerning *dharma* without offering any apparent resolution at its conclusion.

On the level of narrative, the MBh presents in its concluding scenes the deception of Yudhiṣṭhira by Indra, who encourages the hero to enter *svarga* on the false pretext that his brothers and wife await him there. Upon entering, Yudhiṣṭhira finds his long-time bitter rival, the villainous Duryodhana, thriving. He then relinquishes *svarga* in order to search for his relatives, and eventually

²⁵ See in particular the paper of Donald R. Davis Jr., who proposes to view *Dharmaśāstra* texts as a form of legal rhetoric which formulates *dharma* as paradigmatic for the Hindu tradition as a whole. "Hinduism as a Legal Tradition," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, June 2007, Vol. 75, No. 2, pp. 241–267.

finds that they were, in fact, condemned to pain and anguish in hell (*naraka*). Overcome with wrath and despair, this Dharma-rāja then denounces his father Dharma and the other gods. The MBh's concluding scenes thus exhibit a harsh and highly paradoxical act of *dharma* denunciation ('*garhification*'). Not even the events that follow, in which the Pāṇḍavas and other characters in the narrative are assimilated into their divine origins, succeed in appeasing the expectation of relief.²⁶

The epic's closing scenes are, of course, not the only place in the narrative where the MBh presents *dharma* as a complex, paradoxical notion. The text abounds with dilemmas and doubts that are addressed through *dharma*'s intricate operations. A *dharma* of a king, for instance, is to rule at times of peace and fight at times of war. Yet, throughout the MBh kings and other Kṣatriya figures are faced with grave moral dilemmas regarding a relatively well defined duty. Should Dhṛtarāṣṭra, for example, sacrifice his first born son for the sake of the unity of the kingdom, as he is advised by Vidura in the *Ādi parvan*? Is Bhīṣma to claim his princely rights, or relinquish the crown altogether for the sake of his father's recent liaison with Satyawatī (*Ādi parvan*)? Should Yudhiṣṭhira refuse to participate in the dice game, which is obligatory to his kingly duty (*Sabhā parvan*)? Should Arjuna obey sentiments of compassion that take root in his heart on the battlefield, or should he set himself to fight as duty calls (*Bhīṣma parvan*)? Should Kuntī reveal the dark secret of having deserted her first-born child in order to end a catastrophic rivalry between Karṇa and Arjuna (*Ādi to Karṇa parvan*)? Should Yudhiṣṭhira rule an empty state after the war's bloodshed, or

²⁶ See MBh, 18.4-5. See detailed summary of books 17 and 18 in chapter 2 below.

leave for the forest (*Śānti parvan*)? These questions and numerous similar instances are introduced by MBh authors at key narrative junctures of the epic. As such, they afford a ceaseless reminder of the very theme that the text is largely engaged with – what is *dharma*? Is it eternal (*sanātana-dharma*) or contextual? Is it coercive to men as well as to gods? If so, how are we to view Kṛṣṇa’s numerous trickeries? And finally, how are we to determine what is ‘the right thing to do’ at any given moment?

Indeed, we often witness MBh protagonists stating that *dharma* is *atisūkṣma* – ‘extremely subtle’, and therefore beyond the understanding of ordinary people. In response to the Yakṣa’s question ‘what is the path?’ (*kaḥ panthāḥ*), Yudhiṣṭhira, who is surrounded by the dead bodies of his brothers in the lake, states that:

Reason is unfounded, the scriptures contradict [one another], there is not [even] one sage whose opinion counts as authoritative. The truth about *dharma* is hidden inside a cave. Therefore, the path is the one along which great people have trodden.²⁷

According to this verse, then, *dharma* is hidden inside a cave, and one cannot know what is the right conduct except by the conduct of virtuous men (a rather evasive definition in itself). It is no coincidence that the MBh uses an image here that depicts *dharma* as both obscure and extremely inaccessible. The general sentiment of the MBh is that of doubt. Doubt permeates nearly every episode of the narrative which is forever laden with acute moral questions, obscurities, and ambiguities.

²⁷ *tarko ‘pratiṣṭhāḥ śrutayo vibhinnā naiko ṛṣir yasya mataṃ pramānam / dharmasya tattvaṃ nihitaṃ guhāyāṃ mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthāḥ //* (MBh, *Vana parvan*, Appendix I, 32.65; B. 3.313.117).

Since the notion of *dharma* is intrinsically (perhaps even obsessively) dealt with in the MBh, then an act of denunciation of *dharma* at its conclusion stands as a rather poor closure, certainly on the immediate level of plot development, but also on ethical, philosophical and metaphysical planes. It would seem that the reader of the MBh is not presented with a cathartic conclusion, for the SĀ is distinguished by the bathos of its non-closure. This anti-climax stems from the epic's reluctance to resolve the very theme that is pursued throughout its lengthy body, as encapsulated in Yudhiṣṭhira's denunciation of *dharma*.

Given the text's characteristic attributes outlined above, as well as the seeming paradox of its ending, an intermediate deduction would indicate that there are indeed many good reasons to infer that the MBh is inherently incapable of reaching a conclusion.

External Reflections on the *Mahābhārata*

The problematic conclusion of the MBh has aroused a profound ambivalence in the literature that comments on the epic's concluding scenes. This literature can be divided into three main strands: scholarly studies of the epic, the literary retellings of the MBh in Sanskrit, and theoretical discussions in Sanskrit. I argue that despite their breadth and profundity, these literary reflections, which I term 'external' to the MBh, have tended, in various modes, to overlook the importance of the text's closing book, the *Svargārohaṇa*, and as a consequence, the ending has not been widely considered an integral episode of the MBh.

Epic scholarship is partly reluctant to accept the SĀ as an authentic passage of the MBh despite the fact that the manuscript material clearly indicates

that it is as old as any other MBh *parvan*. Whereas the literary tradition produced a small pool of later retellings of the SĀ in Sanskrit, most of these adaptations tend to ignore, and in some cases suppress the epic's closing scenes. Unlike Sanskrit poets, who have largely neglected the SĀ, the theoreticians have indeed acknowledged the harsh nature of the ending of the epic in their discourses. Despite this recognition, their readings of the text are motivated by a search for 'better', 'higher' and more comforting meanings in the unsettling impressions that the MBh arouses, with at least one theorist going as far as to propose a modification of its conclusion (in later poetic adaptations). External reflections of this kind thus suggest that the ending has not been widely considered an integral passage of the MBh, and that this may stem from the reasons discussed above.

'Garhing' Dharma

In contrast to the above-discussed views on the MBh, this thesis argues that there is a very good reason to consider the ending as a vital and significant component of the MBh as a whole. This reason is a direct result of a rather straightforward question. Having established that external reflections on the MBh tend, in various modes, to ignore the ending, the question that remains is - what is the epic's *internal* view with regard to its own conclusion?

Let us assume, for the sake of argument, that the epic *does* conclude, despite the numerous abovementioned reasons that support the postulation that "the MBh never wants to resolve itself". For, after all, the epic text does have, in the most literal sense, an ending. Sure enough, this ending might not offer a cathartic resolution, and it may not even present closure to the repetitive doubts

and dilemmas that haunt the epic. However, paradoxically enough, this *is* the epic's sole *organic* resolution, for the simple reason that it is *thematically consistent* with the intrinsic dismay that MBh authors express with regard to *dharma* throughout the length and breadth of the narrative. Indeed, the main argument of this thesis is that the epic's final *garh* scene, in which Dharmarāja 'garh's' Dharma is crucial to the understanding of the entire text, and that *garh's* semantic patterns reveal that the SĀ constitutes an integral part of the thematic structure of the MBh as a whole.

The significant presence and function of this verb throughout the epic point to a consistent thematic pattern, namely, the negation of *dharma*. *Garh* is a "marker" of the core meditation that the entire epic is devoted to with regard to *dharma*. The many occurrences of *garh* in the MBh thus formulate a prolonged experiment in the rejection of *dharma*. This process of rejecting *dharma* comes to fruition in the epic's closing scenes, where Dharmarāja undermines the very concept of *dharma* by censuring his father. This paradoxical incident is the most explicit layer of a long process of negation that takes place throughout the epic and concludes with the SĀ's earnest denial of *dharma*. *Garh* can thus be understood as a sort of "MBh search engine" that is designed to (1) unravel the thematic structure of the epic; (2) expose the hermeneutics of doubt exercised by the authors of the MBh regarding *dharma*; and (3) define the operations of *dharma* in various contexts. In light of this, the epic's closing scenes form a moment of climax that reflects and encapsulates a chain of numerous incidents linked, in and of themselves, by the abundant questions that the concept of *dharma* raises in the MBh. The 'garhification' moment of Dharma in the SĀ

therefore reveals something *fundamental* about *dharma* in the MBh and is the direct result of *all* the 168 *garh* incidents that precede it.

Summary of Chapters

The following discussion consists of four chapters. The first chapter reviews the scholarly literature on the epic with the aim of establishing the earliest possible date from which we know of the existence of the SĀ. The main argument emerging from this chapter is that epic scholarship is partly reluctant to accept the ending as an integral part of the epic. This orientation is expressed in two main trajectories: in the manner in which scholars doubt the authenticity of the ending and undermine its relevance to the epic as a whole, and in the particular forms in which scholars choose to retell the story of the ending in their studies. Historical evidences that point to the existence of the ending as an inseparable part of the epic are presented. These establish unequivocally that there is little evidence to dispute the ending's authenticity, and that as far as the materials available for the Sanskrit MBh are concerned, an ending for the epic that differs in any appreciable way from the story recorded in the Critical Edition of the MBh, is unknown.

The second chapter discusses reworkings of the MBh in Sanskrit literature. It argues that the ending of the MBh aroused a profound ambivalence among poets of the later tradition, and as a consequence, the epic's concluding passage remains almost entirely overlooked in the literature commenting on the MBh. Examining various retellings of the epic, the chapter addresses several key questions: how is it that the ending of a major canonical text of Sanskrit literature

elicits so little attention, and why has this dramatic episode received such meagre consideration by later writers? While the discussion outlines various adaptations of the epic, it focuses on the following four epitomes: the *Bhāratamañjarī* of Kṣemendra Vyāsadāsa, the *Bālabhārata* of Amaraçandra Sūri, the *Bālabhārata* of Agastya Paṇḍita,²⁸ and the *Bhārataprabandha*, which may be attributed to the Keralan poet, Melputtūr Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa. Particular attention is placed on the latter source, which has hitherto been neither studied nor published, and which includes an original adaptation of the ending, titled the *Svargārohaṇa-prabandha*.²⁹ After locating each epitome in its stylistic and historical context, the discussion offers a close reading of these works with the aim of highlighting their respective relations to the MBh source. This analysis shows that Sanskrit literature has produced a small pool of later SĀ retellings, and that apart from the *Svargārohaṇa-prabandha*, which occupies a unique place among the general resistance the Indian tradition evinced toward the ending, the epic's conclusion has been largely neglected.

The third chapter discusses the stance of Sanskrit theoreticians toward the MBh. It emphasizes that unlike Sanskrit poets who largely neglected the SĀ, the theoreticians did acknowledge the harsh nature of the ending of the epic. However, in expressing their views on the MBh, the theoreticians proposed alternative readings of the text that underline ideological meanings within the epic. Accordingly, their respective understandings of the epic evince what each of them perceived as its essence or core theme. There are three literary theorists who have discussed the MBh in the later tradition – Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta,

²⁸ See Sanskrit text and English translation of these works in appendices I, II, and III below.

²⁹ See a reconstructed edition and English translation of the *Svargārohaṇa-prabandha* in appendix IV below.

and Kuntaka. While Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta read the epic through the prism of the theory of ‘aesthetic suggestion’ (*dhvani*), which stresses the epic’s goal as arousing ‘the sentiment of peace’ (*śānta rasa*) and promoting the human aim of liberation (*mokṣa*), both refrain from directly and elaborately addressing the SĀ’s problematic issues. Kuntaka, whose discussion primarily centres upon the elegance of poetic works and their aesthetic appeal, considers the ending as a quintessential example of a faulty conclusion that ought to be altered.

Having established that external reflections on the MBh imply that the SĀ has not been widely considered an integral part of the epic, the final chapter examines the epic’s internal view with regard to its own ending. Attempting to understand the paradox inherent in the epic’s conclusion, where Yudhiṣṭhira bitterly denounces (‘*garh*’s’) Dharma, this chapter examines several passages in the MBh that feature the verb *garh* in order to establish: (1) a precise understanding of Yudhiṣṭhira’s action in the SĀ; (2) the different implications of the narrators’ use of *garh* in various contexts; (3) the semantic structural patterns of *garh* in the MBh; and, (4) the relation between the use of *garh* and the meaning of *dharma* in the MBh. The study presents several crucial *garh* instances in the narrative by analyzing them according to meaning and context, and offers a typology of *garh*’s structural semantic patterns in the epic. This shows that: (1) *garh* is present in key narrative intersections of the epic; (2) *garh*’s usage in the MBh reveals that *dharma* is perceived as a highly contextual and circumstance-dependant concept; and, (3) *garh* consistently appears in critical passages in the MBh as a “marker” of the core meditation on *dharma*, to which the epic is devoted. In summarizing the findings of *garh*’s semantic patterns in the epic, I

conclude by arguing that the epic's final *garh* scene is significant to the understanding of the entire text, and that by contrast to the stance which tends to overlook the ending, the $S\bar{A}$ constitutes an integral part of the thematic structure of the epic as a whole.

Chapter 1

Scholarly Literature on the *Mahābhārata*

This chapter reviews the scholarly literature on the MBh. The main argument emerging from the discussion below is that epic scholarship is partly reluctant to accept the ending of the MBh as an integral part of the epic. This orientation is expressed in two main trajectories: in the manner in which scholars doubt the authenticity of the ending and undermine its relevance to the epic as a whole, and in the particular forms in which scholars choose to retell the story of the ending in their studies. Addressing these two issues, the discussion first outlines historical views on the MBh, and then attempts to locate the ending of the epic (the *Svargārohaṇa* and the *Mahāprasthānika parvans*)³⁰ within this general framework.

The first section of this chapter delineates the general time frame for the historical growth of the MBh. It presents three comprehensive models of the epic's development that were proposed by both early and contemporary scholars. I have selected these particular models on account of three reasons: (1) because they prove to be the most exhaustive accounts; (2) because they broadly represent the consensual view of epic scholarship for the historical development of the MBh; and, most pertinently, (3) because they provide solid indications about the production of the epic's concluding books. An integrative framework for the approximate dates of the MBh composition is then offered, which is mainly based

³⁰ Henceforth: SĀ and MhP.

on these models but also refers to additional, less comprehensive historical views that were proposed by other scholars. This integrative account is laid out in two parts: an outline of the major points of agreement that epic scholarship tends to share regarding the MBh's time, and a survey of several points of dispute. A comparison between the two shows that MBh scholars are largely in agreement on major points concerning the epic's historical growth, and that those points that are contentious are rather minor and have little bearing on the ending of the MBh. I further discuss older layers of the MBh-story that are represented in the *Jaya* and the *Bhārata* epic with the aim of pointing out the distinction that epic scholarship makes between the epic's older core and the written Sanskrit MBh. This section shows that older versions of the story do not represent the text that epic scholarship recognizes to be the full MBh of 100,000 verses. The discussion then briefly outlines the two scholarly approaches to the MBh, the analytic versus the synthetic, from which different historical perspectives derive. This is followed by an explanation as to why my discussion does not, strictly speaking, commit itself to any one of these approaches. I conclude this section with my personal assessment of the epic's probable trajectory of historical growth.

The second section of this chapter locates the ending of the epic within the timeframe established in the preceding section. The question regarding the earliest possible date from which we know of an existence of the ending within the complete compilation of the MBh is addressed. This discussion also explains why my thesis relies on the Critical Edition³¹ of the MBh as representing the version closest to the archetype of the MBh textual compilation. I further present

³¹ Henceforth: C.Ed.

a list of historical evidence that points to the existence of the ending as an inseparable part of the epic. The arguments constituting this list establish unequivocally that: (1) there is little evidence to dispute the ending's authenticity; and, (2) as far as the materials available for the Sanskrit MBh are concerned, an ending for the epic that differs in any appreciable way from the story presented in the C.Ed. of the MBh, is unknown.

The third section discusses the oldest extant *parvan*-list of the MBh as recorded in the Spitzer Manuscript. I analyze this list, which was reconstructed by the scholar Dieter Schlingloff, with the purpose of pointing out that some of the findings emerging from its study have historical implications for the ending of the MBh. Integrating Schlingloff's findings and the reconstructed list he offers, my discussion concludes that the Spitzer list indicates that the MBh had an ending as early as the Kuṣāṇa era (c. between the first and third centuries CE), which is more likely than not to have been composed of the MhP and the SĀ *parvans*.

The fourth section discusses the scholarly reluctance to accept the SĀ as an integral part of the epic. Despite the fact that an ending for the (full) epic that differs in any appreciable way from the story recorded in the C.Ed. of the MBh is unknown, it shows that scholarly literature on the MBh tends to dismiss the post-battle episodes as irrelevant to the epic as a whole. It is therefore suggested that scholars do not keep to the distinction they themselves are making between the full Sanskrit MBh of 100,000 verses, which they recognize to be the subject-matter of their studies, and the story's earlier representations. The emphasis scholars tend to assign to earlier versions of the epic (like the *Jaya* or the *Bhārata*) is then discussed with the aim of showing that in addressing the final

books of the MBh, epic scholarship is often disinclined to consider them a part of the MBh by relegating them as not pertaining to its “oldest core”. Both contemporary and early epic scholarship raise doubts about the location of the epic’s “real ending” and are sceptical of the authenticity of books 17 and 18 (the MhP and the *SĀ parvans*). Presenting several such views, my discussion shows that scholars are averse to acknowledge the ending’s authenticity, or its relevancy and inseparability from the remainder of the text.

Having discussed the reluctance of scholars to accept the *SĀ* as an integral part of the epic, this chapter’s final section presents the ways in which scholars retell the story of the ending in their studies. Discussing several such accounts, it shows that even in its retelling, epic scholarship is largely ambivalent toward the ending, as scholars misrepresent the concluding narrative of the MBh in their studies, and exhibit it as an insignificant episode, unworthy, as it were, of a closer look. Considering that this inclination to distort the narrative ending is a meaningful choice on the part of MBh scholars, I offer several possible explanations for this tendency in epic scholarship.

1. **General History of the *Mahābhārata***

As early as the beginning of its study, epic scholarship expressed uncertainty regarding the historical growth of the MBh. Two instances conveying scholars’ scepticism in this regard were expressed by E. W. Hopkins and Maurice Winternitz, who stress the difficulty in establishing a sequence for the epic’s growth, as follows:

All theories and hypotheses of development are pure guesswork.³²

Every endeavour to reconstruct “the ancient Indian national epic itself” in its original shape will always be attended by so great an element of arbitrariness, that it can only have a purely subjective value.³³

For more than a century, even before undertaking the greatest project in the history of Indological studies (the production of the MBh Critical Edition), epic scholarship attempted to reconstruct or excavate the Ur-MBh (the original or kernel epic story), and struggled to frame layers of its antiquity within a process of textual growth which appears to have no precedent in the history of classical texts.³⁴ Nevertheless, scholars hypothesized about the growth of the epic and offered several paradigmatic models. The following discussion presents three of the more comprehensive and generally accepted models in epic scholarship (two of which brought forward by early scholars, and the third by a contemporary

³² E. W. Hopkins, *The Great Epic of India*, Yale University Press, Cambridge, U.S.A, 1901, p. 397.

³³ Maurice Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. 1, trans. S. Ketkar, Oriental Books, New Delhi, 1977 (first published: 1927), p. 328.

See also Winternitz, (1977): 318: “How much of this old bard poetry already belonged to the original poem as secondary tales (episodes) and how much was only added later, will probably never be determined.”; V. S. Sukthankar, “Prolegomena”, *The Mahābhārata for the First Time Critically Edited*, Vol. 1, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1933, p. 76: “The original, from which all these versions are derived, is itself preserved in no authentic copy contemporaneous with or even reasonably close to, its period of composition.”; John Brockington, *The Sanskrit Epics*, Brill, Leiden, 1988, p. 133: “Basically, any attempt to correlate the archeological evidence and the literary tradition is likely to remain speculative and hazardous, unless or until some kind of written record is unearthed.”; James L. Fitzgerald, “No Contest between Memory and Invention: The Invention of the Pāṇḍava Heroes of the *Mahābhārata*”, *Epic and History*, eds. David Konstan and Kurt Raaflaub, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, 2010 (103-121), p. 104: “When this expansion of the *Bhārata* occurred and when it was committed to writing are both matters for which we have no direct evidence. We have firm testimonial evidence of its existing fully grown in the early sixth century CE; all we know of its history prior to that is a matter of inference from comparisons of the written text to what we know of its context”.

³⁴ See the following statements by the chief editor of the C.Ed. of the MBh: “Indeed our ideal is the same as that of the classical philologist: restoration of the text, as far as possible, to its original form. But the original of a Sanskrit poem and that of a classical poem: how entirely different they are! Particularly, in the case of the *Mahābhārata*, where, one may well ask, is the original of a whole literature?” Sukthankar, (1933): 77; “The *Mahābhārata* problem is a problem *sui generis*. It is useless to think of reconstructing a fluid text in a literary *original* shape, on the basis of an archetype and a *stemma codicum*. What is then possible? Our objective can only be to reconstruct *the oldest form of the text which it is possible to reach, on the basis of the manuscript material available*.” Sukthankar, (1933): 86.

scholar); namely, those of E. W. Hopkins (1901) M. Winternitz (1927), and J. L. Fitzgerald (2010).

Before outlining these models, it is crucial to define what exactly epic scholarship means by the terms ‘MBh’ and ‘its growth’. In light of important contributions to the study of the epic such as those advanced by James Fitzgerald, this specification is particularly pertinent. Fitzgerald distinguishes between the “Main MBh” and other *Bhārata* or *Mahā-bhārata* traditions in Sanskrit or in vernacular languages, in oral, textual or other modes of transmission.³⁵ The following discussion, as well as the views of various scholars regarding the history and growth of the text therein, is thus limited *only* to the Sanskrit-MBh, also often referred to as the Vyāsa-text, and known traditionally as a *śatasāhasrikī-saṃhitā* (a compendium consisting of some 100,000 verses). This text (designated by Fitzgerald “the main-MBh”) will be henceforth referred to simply as “the MBh”.

³⁵ “... regarding the history of the epic: it is my belief that many elements of a heroic narrative centering upon a great Kuru-Pāñcāla war existed before the “main”, anti-Mauryan, *brāhmaṇyarājya*-chartering MBh was composed; that the anti-Mauryan MBh represents an artistic and ideological transformation of such a preexisting heroic narrative. This post-Mauryan, anti-Mauryan, MBh is the “main MBh” (in the written Sanskrit MBh tradition) because it fused the Pāñḍava epic narrative, the main supplemental narratives, and the ideological and didactic kernels of Bhīṣma’s instructions into a meaningful whole. I believe the “main MBh” grew in the four or five hundred years between the fixing of the main MBh and its recognition as a *śatasāhasrikī saṃhitā* during the Gupta era [i.e. 320-497 CE].” James L. Fitzgerald “Negotiating the Shape of “Scripture”: New Perspectives on the Development and Growth of the *Mahābhārata* between the Empires”, *Between the Empires: Society in India 300 BCE to 400 CE*, ed. Patrick Olivelle, Oxford University Press, New York, 2006: 257-286, p. 270.

See also: “In its largest sense, “the *Mahābhārata*” is a wide and varied tradition which has existed in ancient and “medieval” India in several forms (oral, written, dramatic, danced, in puppet performances) in many languages and in numerous versions, and it is entirely uncharted as such a super-textual tradition. It is conceivable that this tradition is best imagined as a generative matrix of themes, fixed in part, but very fluid and dynamic, and that the Sanskrit version, which became the archetype, is but one specific realization of this ideal tradition of “*Mahābhārata*”, alongside the thousands upon thousands of other realizations of it (including all actual oral recitations and dramatic performances).” James L. Fitzgerald, “India’s Fifth Veda: The *Mahābhārata*’s Presentation of Itself”, *Essays on the Mahābhārata*, ed. Arvind Sharma, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 2007, pp. 153-154.

Of the existing three models, Hopkins' is the most convincing and exhaustive insofar as it is, to the best of my knowledge, the only model that specifically includes the final books of the MBh within its frame, and directly addresses the issue of their production. Hopkins' model thus serves as the basis for the discussions that follow, and is supplemented with cross-references to other models as well. My aim is to present an outline of the general points of agreement that are shared by epic scholarship with regard to the growth of the epic in order subsequently to locate the SĀ within it. I shall also briefly discuss scholars' points of dispute. It must, however, be stressed that since there is no historical evidence as to the existence of the *entire* MBh before the first half of the sixth century CE,³⁶ it would be fair to state that although some models may be more persuasive or evidence-based than others, what MBh scholars ultimately offer are theories and hypotheses based on specific readings of facts.

³⁶ The earliest evidence for the existence of the *entire* MBh in its present extent is based on an inscription depicting deeds of land grants of 532-533 CE, which calls the epic "a collection of a 100,000 verses": "There is an inscription in a land grant dating from 462 A.D. or at the latest 532 A.D., which proves incontrovertibly that the epic about 500 A.D. was practically of exactly the same length as it is stated to have in the survey of contents (*anukramanikā*) given in Book I., and as it actually has now; for it contains the following words: "It has been declared in the *Mahābhārata*, the compilation embracing 100,000 verses, by the highest sage, Vyāsa, the Vyāsa of the Vedas, the son of Parāśara." This quotation at the same time proves that the epic at that date included the very long 12th and 13th, as well as the extensive supplementary book, the *Harivaṃśa*, without any one of which it would have been impossible to speak even approximately of 100,000 verses." Arthur A. MacDonell, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, D. Appelton, New York, 1900, p. 287; see also Georg Bühler and Johann Kirste, "Indian Studies, no. II, Contributions to the History of the *Mahābhārata*", *Sitzungsberichte: Kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Wien. Philosophische-historische Klasse* 127, no. 12 (1892): 26; Winternitz, (1977): 464; Andreas Bigger, "The Normative Redaction of the *Mahābhārata*: Possibilities and Limitations of a Working Hypothesis," *Stages and Transitions: Temporal and Historical Frameworks in Epic and Purāṇic Literature*, ed. M. Brockington, Zagreb, 2002, p. 25; Fitzgerald, "No Contest between Memory and Invention", (2010): 104.

1.1 Hopkins' Model

Edward Washburn Hopkins characterizes five central historical periods of growth in his study. The first establishes a negative date before which we have no knowledge of an epic MBh; the second is the formation of a Pāṇḍava-epic figuring Kṛṣṇa as semi-god; the third is the enormous incorporation of didactic materials, and the full deification of Kṛṣṇa; the fourth (most pertinent to our discussion below) is the time in which the last books of the MBh (including the MhP and the SĀ) were added; lastly, the fifth is a period in which sporadic and inconsequential accretions have been added to the MBh. Hopkins summarizes these five periods, as follows:

- 1) There is no evidence of an epic before 400 B.C.
- 2) A MBh tale with Pandu heroes ..., Krishna as a demigod (no evidence of didactic form or of Krishna's divine supremacy), 400-200 B.C.
- 3) Re-making of the epic with Krishna as all-god, intrusion of masses of didactic matter ... 200 B.C. to 100-200 A.D.
- 4) The last books added with the introduction to the first book, the swollen Anuśāsana separated from Śānti and recognized as a separate book, 200 to 400 A.D.
- 5) And finally 400 A.D. +: occasional amplifications.³⁷

Based on this model, Hopkins further lays out a detailed account of the MBh date, in which he addresses the issue of the production of the epic's last books, suggesting also, that the epic was practically completed by 200 CE,³⁸ as follows:

That the complete Mahābhārata, for the most part as we have it to-day, cannot be later than the fourth or fifth century of our era, follows from the fact, brought out first by Professor Bhandārkār and then by Professor Bühler, that it is referred to as a Smṛti in inscriptions dated not much later than this,

³⁷ See Hopkins, (1901): 397-398.

³⁸ Hopkins further provides a summary for the model cited above: "Certain are these four facts: 1) That the Pandu epic as we have it, or even without the masses of didactic material, was composed or compiled after the Greek invasion; 2) That this epic only secondarily developed its present masses of didactic material; 3) That it did not become a specially religious propaganda of Krishnaism ... till the first century B.C.; 4) That the epic was practically completed by 200 A.D." *ibid.*, p. 398.

while by the fifth century at least it was about as long as it is now. But we may go further back and say with comparative certainty that, with the exception of the parts latest added, the introduction to the first book and the last book [that is, the *SĀ parvan*], even the pseudo epic [i.e. the didactic portions] was completed as early as 200 A.D. For the Roman denarius is known to the *Harivaṃśa* and the *Harivaṃśa* is known to the first part of the first book and to the last book (implied also in the twelfth book); hence such parts of these books as recognize the *Harivaṃśa* must be later than the introduction of Roman coins into the country (100-200 A.D.).³⁹

1.2 Winternitz' Model

Maurice Winternitz offers a relatively detailed paradigm for the historical growth of the MBh that is divided into nine phases. However, in actual fact these can be boiled down to three central periods of MBh evolution: the first phase (the five opening points in Winternitz' model) establishes, like Hopkins' model, a negative date before which we have no conclusive knowledge of an epic MBh; the second phase (points 6-7) dates the gradual growth of the MBh to the period 400 BCE to 400 CE. Winternitz emphasizes that by the end of this timeframe the text attained a structure comparable to the text we have today; the third phase (points 8-9) establishes a later period of sporadic and inconsequential accretions to the MBh. Winternitz thus summarizes his conclusions, as follows:

- 1) Single myths, legends and poems which are included in the *Mahābhārata*, reach back to the time of the Veda.
- 2) An epic "Bhārata" or "Mahābhārata" did not exist in the Vedic period.
- 3) Many moral narratives and sayings which our *Mahābhārata* contains, belong to the ascetic-poetry, which was drawn upon, from the 6th century B.C. onwards, also by Buddhists and Jainas.
- 4) If an epic *Mahābhārata* already existed between the 6th and 4th centuries B.C., then it was but little known in the native land of Buddhism.
- 5) There is no certain testimony for an epic *Mahābhārata* before the 4th century B.C.

³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 387.

- 6) Between the 4th century B.C. and the 4th century A.D. the transformation of the epic Mahābhārata into our present compilation took place, probably gradually.
- 7) In the 4th century A.D. the work already had, on the whole, its present extent, contents and character.
- 8) Small alterations and additions still continued to be made, however, even in later centuries.
- 9) One date of the Mahābhārata does not exist at all, but the date of every part must be determined on its own account.⁴⁰

In his study, Winternitz further expounds on the comparison he draws between the MBh of the fifth century CE and the text known today. Thus, he first explains that, “with the whole Harivaṃśa the number of verses [of the *entire* MBh] is 106,466”. This factor brings him to conclude that the MBh as we have it today, which indeed enumerates some 100,000 verses, is not essentially different in content and extent from the work of the third or fourth centuries CE.⁴¹ These specifications, as well as Winternitz’ citation below are pertinent to the discussion because they establish a time frame which includes the epic’s final books (the MhP and SĀ *parvans*). Thus,

At least 1,500 years ago [i.e. first half of the fifth century CE], this Mahābhārata was already just as we possess it to-day ... *one work* which was of about the same extent as our epic of to-day. Like the latter, it already contained a long introduction with a framework [that is, including the *parvasaṃgraha* and *parvānukramaṇī*] ...; it was divided into eighteen books called *Parvans*, to which a nineteenth book *Harivaṃśa* had already been added as a “supplement” (Khila); and it attained the extent of about 100,000 verses (ślokas).⁴²

1.3 Fitzgerald’s Model

James Fitzgerald outlines six major historical periods of the epic’s growth. The first (prior to 400 BCE), centres upon an old oral *Bhārata* epic (with no

⁴⁰ See Winternitz, (1977): 474-475.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, pp. 464-467.

⁴² *ibid.*, p. 321.

knowledge of the Pāṇḍavas); the second centres upon a new oral Pāṇḍava epic featuring new semi-divine heroes that were grafted into the story (primarily, the figures of Kṛṣṇa and the five Pāṇḍavas); the third is the creation of a written Sanskrit MBh whose trenchant protagonist, according to Fitzgerald, is Yudhiṣṭhira Pāṇḍava; the fourth period sees the addition of didactic materials into the narrative in the form of early philosophizing; the fifth features further developments of systematic philosophizing, devotional theologies (mainly centering upon Kṛṣṇa), and the addition of the *Harivaṃśa*⁴³ appendix; finally, the sixth period is characterized by later expansion and embellishment of this written text. This is summarized by Fitzgerald, as follows:

- 1) Prior to 400 BCE: an old oral *Bhārata* “epic” cycle of some sort, probably centering upon the rivalry of the Kuru-Bharatas and the Pañcālas, with no knowledge of the Pāṇḍavas.
- 2) Between 400 and circa 50 BCE: the continued circulation of that old narrative within a new oral Pāṇḍava epic, in which entirely new semidivine heroes were injected into the Bharata dynasty ... and then suffered exile from it, and, finally, allied with the old Pañcāla rivals, overthrew the Kuru-Bharatas and established a new Bharata reign.
- 3) Between circa 50 BCE and 50 CE: the creation and promulgation of a written Sanskrit *Mahābhārata*. ... This Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* expresses much Brahman grievance against the *kṣatra* of its day, and the narrative consists of the divinely led war that virtually wipes that *kṣatra* out in order to regenerate new institutions of pious kingly rule. Yudhiṣṭhira Pāṇḍava, whose quest for kingship led to the catastrophic war, stands in this tale as the charter king for a new *brāhmaṇya* (Brahmanical) kingship.
- 4) Between 50 and 150 CE: the absorption into the text of new developments in ethical and religious themes and early systematic philosophizing (e.g. Sāṃkhya philosophy) ...
- 5) Between 150 and 350 CE: ... the fully developed theological figure of Parameśvara Nārāyaṇa-Viṣṇu. ... This period of time sees further developments of systematic philosophizing, the full development of devotional theologies centred upon Kṛṣṇa, Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa, and Śiva, and the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* enfolds many expressions of devotion to them, as well as narratives relating their histories. By now, however, the

⁴³ Henceforth: HV.

inventive energy of this Itihāsapurāṇa genre seems to have moved beyond the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata* tradition into that of the Harivaṃśa and early Purāṇas.

- 6) The post-Gupta era: texts of the written Sanskrit epic continue to expand, but chiefly only by the embellishment and extension of already existing features.⁴⁴

Fitzgerald’s model differs significantly from those of Hopkins and Winternitz in proposing the later grafting of the Pāṇḍavas onto the story. Although Fitzgerald does not accept the famous “inversion theory” of Holtzmann, who claimed that the Pāṇḍavas were originally the villainous protagonists later inverted to become the epic’s good heroes (a theory that was eventually rejected by epic scholarship),⁴⁵ he nonetheless addresses the significant issue of the Pāṇḍavas’ complete absence from the earlier Bhārata story, suggesting that their later invention in the MBh was a creative response to a particular historical-political background.⁴⁶ The reasons for the Pāṇḍavas’ later introduction into the epic aside, Fitzgerald’s hypothesis is important in that it affirms that, “... most of the text we have in the written Sanskrit *MBh* certainly existed by 200 CE.”⁴⁷

⁴⁴ James L. Fitzgerald, “Mahābhārata,” in the *Brill Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, vol. 2, eds. Knut Jacobsen et al., 2010 (Leiden: E. J. Brill): 72-94, pp. 91-92.

⁴⁵ See Adolf Holtzmann (Sr.), *Indische Sagen: Übersetzt von Adolf Holtzmann*, Jena: E. Diederichs, 1921, pp. 3-72; Adolf Holtzmann (Jr.), *Das Mahābhārata und seine Theile*, 4 Vols., Kiel: C. F. Haeseler, 1892-1895.

⁴⁶ “Perhaps the single most striking fact about the *MBh* when viewed against the historical bits and pieces about it that we can glean from Vedic literature is the complete absence from the long record of any mention of the central protagonists of our *MBh*, the five Pāṇḍavas, and the three critical “*kṛṣṇa*” figures attendant upon them: their obscure grandfather and advisor, Kṛṣṇa Vyāsa, their affecting wife Kṛṣṇā Draupadī, and their cousin, ally, and advisor, Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva. The narrative of the received *MBh* text came into being as a radical transformation of the eschatologically framed war of the Bharata-Kurus against the Pañcālas. The Pāṇḍavas were grafted into the Bharata lineage with great effort and ingenuity: they are (physically) the divine sons of an (effectively impotent) Bharata scion ... the Pāṇḍavas are effectively intruders who descend upon the Bharata court ... they are thus outsiders ... and, in terms of the great war at the center of the inherited narrative, they reverse the polarity of the heroes and villains (from the good Bharata-Kurus vs. their enemies, the Pañcālas, to the other way around: the Pāṇḍava-Pañcāla alliance vs. the villainous Kauravas).” Fitzgerald, “No Contest between Memory and Invention”, (2010):110-111.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 107.

Having reviewed these central models, it is useful to consult additional, non comprehensive models and historical views offered by other scholars, in order to summarize several points regarding the growth of the MBh, that are widely accepted by epic scholarship. It is my own opinion that, in comparing these rather major points of agreement, scholars' points of dispute (which I also outline below) are rather minor, and in any case, these do not substantially bear upon the inclusion of the final books of the epic into the whole compilation of the MBh.

1.4 Major Points of Agreement

Epic scholarship uniformly agrees that there is no evidence of a Sanskrit MBh prior to 400 BCE.⁴⁸ However, scholars surmise that an oral *Bhārata* epic of some sort existed before this date.⁴⁹

Epic scholarship usually delineates a compositional timeframe for the *entire* MBh between a *terminus post quem* in the fourth century BCE (after the Greek invasion to India in 300 BCE),⁵⁰ and a *terminus ante quem* in the fourth century CE.⁵¹

⁴⁸ See Georg Bühler and Johann Kirste, (1892): 26; J. A. B. van Buitenen, *The Mahābhārata*, Vol. 1, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1973, p. 25.

⁴⁹ See John D. Smith, "Formulaic Language in the Epics of India", *The Heroic Process: Proceedings from the International Folk Epic Conference, Dublin, September 1985*, eds. Bo Almqvist, Séamus Ó Catháin and Prádraig Ó Héalaí, Glendale Press, Dun Laoghaire, 1987, pp. 591-61; J. Brockington, *The Sanskrit Epics*, (1988): 20-21; J. Brockington, "The Textualization of the Sanskrit Epics", *Textualization of Oral Epics*, ed. Lauri Honko, Mouton de Gruyter, New York, 2000, pp. 193-215; Alf Hiltebeitel, *Rethinking the Mahābhārata: A Reader's Guide to the Education of the Dharma King*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2001, p. 24; Fitzgerald, "India's Fifth Veda: The Mahābhārata's Presentation of Itself", (2007): 150-170.

⁵⁰ "The Pandu-Epic, in its present form, was composed after the Greek invasion." Hopkins, (1901): 394. See also Winternitz, (1977): 465-467.

⁵¹ "There is a general agreement that the oldest portions preserved are hardly older than 400 B.C. ... While this *terminus a quo* is reasonable, and generally agreed upon, it is far more difficult to set a date *ante quem*; views on this depend on what one accepts as the "real" Mahābhārata. In particular, the didactic portions of what has been called the pseudo-epic were added to very late, perhaps as late as the fourth century A.D. ... Such a dating, from 400 B.C. till A.D. 400, is of course absurd from the point of view of a single literary work. It makes sense when we look upon

Scholars who contend that the written Sanskrit epic (or the Vyāsa-text) grew gradually from an earlier oral tradition into a *Mahā-bhārata*, also tend to surmise that the Pāṇḍavas were inserted into an earlier *Bhārata*, which probably recorded a Kuru-Bharata strife.⁵² Fitzgerald further explains this as an anti-Mauryan response.⁵³

Between 200-500 CE this text is not essentially different, in extent and content, to the text of today (like the one recorded, for example, in the C.Ed.), that is, it extends over 18 *parvans* and contains the HV appendix, as well as a long introduction and framework (i.e., the *parvasaṃgraha* and *parvānukramaṇī*).⁵⁴

This epic only secondarily developed its didactic material.

Scholars adopting the model of gradual growth agree, more or less, that:

(1) the battle-books are the kernel of the story, representing the oldest portions of

the text not as much as one opus but as a library of opera. Then we can say that 400 B.C. was the founding date of that library, and that A.D. 400 was the approximate date after which no more substantial additions were made to the text.” van Buitenen, (1973): 25.

⁵² “What we know is that the tales which told of Kurus and Bhāratas became the depository of the Pandus, who appear to have substituted themselves for Bhāratas and may in fact have been a branch of the tribe, which from a second-rate position raised itself to leadership.” Hopkins, *The Great Epic of India*, (1901): 397. See also Hopkins, “The Bhārata and the Great Bhārata”, *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1898), pp. 1-24.

Although Winternitz does not expressly state that the Pāṇḍavas were inserted into the story, he nonetheless maintains that their new rule strongly influenced and changed the story of the revised Mahā-bhārata: “... there is probably justification for the supposition ... that a change of dynasty did actually once take place in the North-west of India as the result of a great war. ... in the course of time, as the rule of the victorious Pāṇḍavas was more and more firmly established, these songs were transmitted to bards who were in the employ of the new ruling race.” (p. 455) Like Fitzgerald, Winternitz also argues that the new story of the Mahā-bhārata was devised by the priestly class who wanted to engrave their influence (through the figures of the Pāṇḍavas): “The more the heroic songs grew in favour and the more popular they became, the greater the anxiety of the Brahmanas to take possession of this epic poetry also. ... This priestly caste welcomed the popular epic as the very medium for the propagation of their own doctrines, and thereby for the strengthening and consolidation of their influence.” Winternitz, (1977): 318-319.

⁵³ See discussion on p. 32 and citation in note 35 above.

⁵⁴ See Hopkins, (1901): 398: “... the epic was practically completed by 200 A.D.”; Winternitz, (1977): 465: “... we are justified in concluding that at least ... in the 3rd or 4th century A.D., it [the MBh] must already have received that form which it still has to-day.”; Fitzgerald, “No Contest between Memory and Invention”, (2010):107: “... most of the text we have in the written Sanskrit *MBh* certainly existed by 200 CE.”

this tradition;⁵⁵ (2) the *Sabhāparvan* is part of the oldest core of the MBh;⁵⁶ (3) the introductory portion of the *Ādi parvan*,⁵⁷ the final books⁵⁸ and the HV were added last (circa second or third centuries CE);⁵⁹ (4) the *Virāṭa*⁶⁰ and *Anuśāsana*⁶¹ *parvans* are amongst the latest portions of the MBh.

1.5 Minor Points of Dispute

An issue of slight divergence between scholars is the period in which the Pāṇḍava-MBh was produced: Hopkins places it between 400-200 BCE, while Fitzgerald contends that it was created between 400-50 BCE.

While the compilation of the text extending over some 100,000 verses (composed of the introductory portion of the *Ādi* plus the last books, including the MhP, the SĀ, and the HV appendix) is considered by Hopkins to have been

⁵⁵ Since the variations in the battle-books are “violent”, according to Hopkins, he concluded that they are older material. See “The Bhārata and the Great Bhārata”, pp. 13-20. Like the latter, Winternitz also affirmed that the battle books, “unquestionably contain the oldest parts of the epic”, adding that, “... I myself believe [that] the real nucleus of the *Mahābhārata* is a heroic poem of the conflict between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas.” Winternitz, (1977): 458-460.

⁵⁶ “From the linguistic and metric evidence the *Sabhāparvan* is part of the oldest core of the *Mahābhārata*.” J. Brockington, (1988): 139.

⁵⁷ “... the whole of book I of the *Mahābhārata* is certainly not ‘ancient’.” Winternitz, (1977): 469.

⁵⁸ Maintaining that “late texts have few variations”, Hopkins argued that such is the case for the final three books of the MBh: “So too the short final books, 16, 17, 18, show little variation not only in our [various MBh] editions, but in the MSS inspected by Burnell, who says also that the episodes agree very closely in the MSS.” Hopkins, “The Bhārata and the Great Bhārata”, (1898): 11.

⁵⁹ “... the *Harivaṃśa* ... was certainly added late.” Winternitz, (1977): 469.

⁶⁰ “... the text itself hints that the fourth book as at present composed is a late addition. There are at least two passages, as Holtzmann has pointed out, where the thirteenth year is ignored altogether, as if it were an after-thought.” Hopkins, “The Bhārata and the Great Bhārata”, (1898): 4; see also: “There can scarcely be any doubt that the whole of book IV (*Virāṭa-parvan*) is a later production.” Winternitz, (1977): 458; Holtzmann, *Das Mahābhārata* II, p. 98; N. B. Utgikar, *The Virāṭaparvan of the Mahābhārata*, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1923, pp. xx; J. Brockington, (1988): 131-132.

⁶¹ See Hopkins, “The Bhārata and the Great Bhārata”, (1898): 5.

practically completed by 200 CE, Fitzgerald places it earlier, between 50 BCE to 50 CE.⁶²

While Fitzgerald maintains that the didactic materials were added between 50-150 CE, Hopkins argues for an earlier date between 200 BCE to 100-200 CE.

1.6 *Jaya, Bhārata, Mahā-Bhārata*

The proposed models of the epic's gradual growth are supported by evidence that comes from the text itself. It is disclosed in the preface of the *Ādi parvan* that the epic has three different beginnings, and that its author, Vyāsa, had composed two additional recensions that are shorter than its present extent:

Thus we are told that the Ṛṣi Vyāsa narrated his work in a short summary as well as in detailed presentation; further, that different reciters begin the poem at three different places, and that its length was not always the same. Ugraśravas says that he knows the poem as consisting 8,800 verses,⁶³ while Vyāsa declares that he composed the Saṃhitā of the Bhārata poem in 24,000 verses, “and without the secondary stories the Bhārata is recited in this length by the experts.”⁶⁴ Immediately afterwards it is said, rather fantastically, that Vyāsa also composed an epic of 60 hundred thousand verses, viz. 30 hundred thousand for the gods, 15 for the fathers, 14 for the Gandharvas and *one* hundred thousand for man.⁶⁵ Of course this only hints at the present extent of

⁶² For other views on the composition of the MBh see Hildebeitel, (2001), who suggests an earlier date, between the second half of the second century and the year zero, in *Rethinking the Mahābhārata*, p. 18; Louis Renou suggests the period between the second or third century BCE and the first century CE, in *Hinduism*, George Braziller, New York, 1961, p. 141; and C. V. Vaidya, believed that the “epic period” was from 3000 to 300 BCE, as expressed in *Epic India, or India as Described in the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa*, Mrs. R. A. Sagoon, Bombay, 1907, p. 23.

⁶³ See apparatus to line 36 of passage 1 of appendix I of the *Ādi parvan*:

*aṣṭau ślokaśahasrāṇi aṣṭau ślokaśatāni ca /
aham vedmi śuko vetti saṃjaya vetti vā na vā //*

“[While] these 8,800 verses are intelligible both to myself [Ugraśravas] and Śuka [Vyāsa's son], Saṃjaya may or may not understand them.”

⁶⁴ *caturviṃśatisāhasrīm cakre bhāratasaṃhitām /
upākhyānair vinā tāvad bhāratam procyate budhaiḥ //* (MBh, 1.1.61)

“Learned men call the Bhārata compendium which he [Vyāsa] composed in twenty four thousand verses and without the sub-stories, ‘The Bhārata’.”

⁶⁵ *idam śatasahasram hi ślokānām puṇyakarmaṇām /
satyavatītamajeneha vyākhyātam amītaujasā //* (MBh, 1.56.13)

“These one hundred thousand auspicious verses were related in this world by Satyavatī's son [Vyāsa], whose power is limitless.”

the Mahābhārata, which has also acquired for it the designation *śatasāhasrī saṃhitā*, “collection of one hundred thousand verses.”⁶⁶

According to this data then, apart from the extended version of the (present) ‘*Mahā-Bhārata*’, the epic had two other recensions – an earlier ‘*Bhārata*’ of 24,000 verses, and a concise ‘*Jaya*’ of mere 8,800 verses. This proves, according to a number of scholars (including Winternitz above), that the epic grew gradually from a core story revolving around a military contest between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas (i.e. the ‘*Jaya*’) to an encyclopedic text whose full length extends over some 100,000 verses.⁶⁷

If we accept that there existed a core *Jaya*-epic revolving around a military contest, then we ought naturally to assume that it did not include the SĀ, or indeed any of the books subsequent to the battle books. Although we cannot know for certain whether the *Bhārata*-epic included the post-battle books, *Ādi parvan* 1.61 suggests that it related solely the frame storyline (without the *upākhyānas*

⁶⁶ Winternitz, (1977): 324-325. See also Hopkins, “The Bhārata and the Great Bhārata”, (1898): 5-6; A. N. Jani, “The *Mahābhārata* as an Organic Growth of the Oral Literary Tradition in Ancient India,” *The Mahābhārata Revisited*, ed. R. N. Dandekar, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1990, pp. 71-85; James Fitzgerald, “India’s Fifth Veda: The *Mahābhārata*’s Presentation of Itself”, (2007):150-170.

⁶⁷ “The extant text is the outcome of many centuries of improvisation of the epic by minstrels and rhapsodists. The nucleus is the story of the battle between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas resulting in enormous slaughter on both sides, and the victorious Yudhiṣṭhira’s mind being turned towards the renunciation of the world. This original version, called *Jaya*, consisted of 8,800 stanzas, and was said to have been composed by Vyāsa Dvaipāyana and recited to his son Śuka. The second recension was recited by Vaiśaṃpāyana at the Sarpasattra in Takṣaśilā, conducted by Janamejaya, the son of Parikṣit and the great grandson of Arjuna; it consisted of 24,000 stanzas and was called *Bhāratasaṃhitā*. According to the tradition noted in the text, this recension did not contain legends and episodes, and was pro-Pāṇḍava and pro-Kṛṣṇa in theme and treatment. The third and final recension in 100,000 stanzas was recited by the rhapsodist Ugraśravas Sauti who had learnt it from his father Romaharṣaṇa; the scene of this recitation was the twelve-year Sattra held at Naimiṣa forest in the presence of several sages. This recension is called the *Mahābhārata*.” Kunjunni Raja, “Architectonics of the *Mahābhārata* and the Place of Legends in its Structure,” *The Mahābhārata Revisited*, (1990): 88. See also: “... it is evident that the Itihāsa or Purāṇa (the epic calls itself by both names) to a certain extent recognizes its own gradual construction and that it has been at a pretty late period embellished with the final addition of a preface.” Hopkins, “The Bhārata and the Great Bhārata”, (1898): 6. See also A. N. Jani, “The Mahābhārata as an Organic Growth of the Oral Literary Tradition in Ancient India,” *The Mahābhārata Revisited*, (1990): 71-85.

and ancillary tales).⁶⁸ Therefore, since books 17 and 18 indisputably constitute the epic's frame story, we are inclined to think that these final books were indeed part of the earlier *Bhārata*-epic.

A crucial distinction has to be made in this regard between the *Mahā-Bhārata saṃhitā* of 100,000 verses, and these earlier epic traditions. Once MBh scholars agree, as discussed above, that between 200-500 CE the written Sanskrit MBh is not essentially different, in extent and content, to the text of today (like the one recorded in the C.Ed.), that is, it extends over 18 *parvans* and contains the HV appendix, as well as a long introduction and framework (i.e., the *parvasaṃgraha* and *parvānukramaṇī*), they are in fact referring to this *Mahā-Bhārata saṃhitā* of 100,000 verses, rather than to any of its alleged earlier representations (like the *Jaya* or the *Bhārata* epics). As we shall see below, although MBh scholars regard this *Mahā-Bhārata saṃhitā* of 100,000 verses to be 'The MBh' that their studies recognize as their subject-matter, and as they distinguish between this text and earlier layers of the epic, it would nonetheless appear that they are not keeping to the distinction they themselves are making. In other words, once epic scholarship recognizes that at some point in history the floating oral tradition of the MBh (which is partly represented by the '*Jaya*' or the '*Bhārata*' epic) was fixed in a written text, which became known as the *Mahā-bhārata*, it is in fact distinguishing old layers (that are incidentally traceable only in theory) from the MBh that it is devoted to studying, namely, a text containing *all* 18 *parvans*. Consequently, it should be stated clearly, that because this MBh-*saṃhitā* is the only MBh of which we know for certain to have contained all of

⁶⁸ See note 64 above.

the epic's 18 *parvans* (including the two final books, the MhP and the SĀ), the present study refers to this text alone, and not to any of its alleged earlier representations.

Moreover, as is suggested by the scholar Andreas Bigger, whenever MBh scholars rely on the C.Ed., they necessarily accept the fact that the epic had a textual archetype at some point in history, which this edition represents.⁶⁹ Since the manuscripts⁷⁰ of the MBh appear to stem from a single source-text, Bigger further argues that the written Sanskrit MBh (i.e. the MBh-*saṃhitā* of 100,000 verses) was fixed at some point in history and thus came to dominate the entire Mss tradition of the epic.⁷¹ For this reason, Bigger names this text the “normative redaction” of the MBh, as follows:

German philology has coined the word *Endredaction* (final redaction) for the archetype of the MBh. I prefer ‘normative redaction’, for the following reason: it does not suggest that this redaction was the last one that ever occurred in the history of the MBh. Rather, it is most probably only one among others. What makes it so important is the fact that this redaction came to dominate the whole written tradition of the Sanskrit MBh; it became normative for this part of the transmission. ... We may now assume, as a working hypothesis, that the text of the Critical Edition of the MBh is a reconstruction of this normative redaction. ... We then have before us a text which was, at a certain time, a historical reality. ... The normative redaction is thus the earliest text we can possibly establish.⁷²

If we assume that there was a normative redaction, an archetype that can be reconstructed, we must at least assume that this text, even if orally

⁶⁹ “It looks to me as if the enormous problems connected with the feasibility of the Critical Edition of the MBh to a certain extent obliterated the fact that, to make a critical edition possible at all, one has to presuppose an archetype. ... In taking the Critical Edition for what it is meant to be, we are accepting (silently or openly) the historical existence of an archetype.” Andreas Bigger, “The Normative Redaction of the *Mahābhārata*”, (2002): 19.

⁷⁰ Henceforth: Ms or Mss.

⁷¹ “First of all, we have the evidence from the Critical Edition itself: though many passages found in the mss have been relegated to the appendices, there is still a great amount of text, even the majority of it, that is common to all the mss. Not only that: this text supported by all the mss also gives a continuous story-line to the MBh, containing only minor gaps and inconsistencies and relatively few loose cross-references. This may point to the fact that all these mss go back to a single text.” Bigger, (2002): 21.

⁷² *ibid.*, p. 20.

transmitted, was already fixed. It is therefore no longer a floating oral tradition ... but a fixed oral text, similar to the Vedic corpus, though not so rigidly fixed. It is possible that our normative redaction had the form of a fixed oral text and there is no way of disproving it, but I still think it is more plausible to assume that the normative redaction was the first written MBh. This may also explain why it was possible for one redaction to have come to dominate the whole manuscript-tradition.⁷³

1.7 Analytic Versus Synthetic, Plus One Opinion

Before proceeding to locate the SĀ within the historical timeframe outlined above, it should be noted that the scholarly views discussed thus far belong, broadly speaking, to the “analytic approach” to the MBh. This orientation tends to emphasize the gradual growth of the epic within a long living textual tradition, and proposes to study individual portions of the text linguistically, philologically, stylistically, and historically. There exists, however, an alternative approach in epic studies that is typically referred to as the “synthetic approach”. Unlike the former, this approach tends to emphasize the text as a unified whole.

One of the earliest exponents of the synthetic approach was Joseph Dahlmann, who proposed in the late nineteenth century a unitary authorship and origin for the MBh, arguing that the whole epic was composed as an instructive moral and religious encyclopaedia.⁷⁴ Although Dahlmann’s views were thoroughly rejected by many prominent MBh scholars,⁷⁵ the synthetic approach has other modern exponents, the most central among whom are George Dumézil,

⁷³ *ibid.*, p. 24.

⁷⁴ See Joseph Dahlmann, *Das Mahābhārata als Epos und Rechtsbuch: Ein Problem aus Altindiens Kultur und Literaturgeschichte*, Felix L. Dames, Berlin, 1895; Joseph Dahlmann, *Genesis des Mahābhārata*, Verlag von Felix L. Dames, Berlin, 1899.

⁷⁵ Hopkins called Dahlmann’s views “the Dahlmannian delirament”, in “The Bhārata and the great Bhārata”, (1898): 4; Arthur MacDonell stated that Dahlmann’s book “is not likely to find any support among scholars”, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, (1900): 286; and Hermann Oldenberg called it a “scientific monstrosity”, in *Das Mahabharata: seine Entstehung, sein Inhalt, seine Form*, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1922, p. 32.

Madeleine Biardeau, and Alf Hiltebeitel. While Dumézil emphasized that the text is governed by mythic structures common to all Indo-European myths,⁷⁶ Biardeau suggested a unitary authorship for the MBh, which, according to her, was a brahminical response to the “menace of Buddhism”.⁷⁷ Hiltebeitel calls the analytic approach to the MBh an “excavative scholarship”,⁷⁸ and rejects the gradualist models of the epic. Offering a holistic reading of the MBh as a unified work of fiction, Hiltebeitel further proposes a timeframe for the epic (between 150 BCE and the year zero CE) that considerably differs from the one commonly accepted by scholars, suggesting that, “...the *Mahābhārata* must have been written over a much shorter period than is usually advanced: ... by committee ... or team ..., and at most through a couple of generations.”⁷⁹

I myself do not accept the synthetic theory *per se* insofar as the epic’s complexity, its stylistic variances, and its diversity of topics are concerned. I therefore find the claim regarding unitary authorship of the *entire* MBh or its composition over a relatively short period of time highly implausible. I do, however, hold that there is a significant degree of editorial sense and continuity to the MBh frame-story. Indeed, a reading of the MBh plot and a close examination of the art of storytelling it displays give the impression of a carefully thought out

⁷⁶ See George Dumézil, *Mythe et Épopée: L’Idéologie des Trois Fonctions dans les Épopées des Peuples Indo-Européens*, (3 vols.), Éditions Gallimard, Paris, 1968-1973.

⁷⁷ See Madeleine Biardeau, *Le Mahābhārata: Un Récit Fondateur du Brahmanisme et son Interprétation*, (2 vols.), Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 2002, vol. 1, p. 139.

⁷⁸ Hiltebeitel, (2001): 2.

⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 20. Even though it contains some very interesting ideas, Hiltebeitel’s study aroused quite a lot of debate among MBh scholars. For an excellent and thorough review see James L. Fitzgerald, “The Many Voices of the *Mahābhārata*”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 123, No. 4 (Oct-Dec., 2003), pp. 803-818. For other reviews of Hiltebeitel’s book see Hugh M. Flick Jr., *Asian Folklore Studies* 61, no. 2 (2002): 341-342; Mary Brockington, *Indo-Iranian Journal* 45, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 361-365; Peter Schreiner, *The Journal of Religion* 83, no. 2 (April, 2003): 332-334.

composition that is far from being arbitrary. In this regard, van Buitenen's assertions regarding the story of the MBh having a distinct design thus ring particularly true:

... to me at least, there is little doubt that the story was in part *designed* as a riddle. ... however fortuitous its career of expansion, the epic is not an accident of literary history. The grand framework was a *design*.⁸⁰

That the main story of the *Mahābhārata* was a conscious composition is, to me, undeniable, and one poet, or a small group of them, must have been responsible for it.⁸¹

Hiltebeitel's call for reading the MBh as a work of fiction is valid and important insofar as it broadens the methods of studying the epic. However, as Fitzgerald comments in his review of *Rethinking the Mahābhārata*, a certain caution is required when one makes generalizing assertions about the entire epic as a whole:

Hiltebeitel is partly right to argue that the *Mahābhārata* criticism should shift its focus from oral epic theory and mythology to theories of fiction and self-conscious authorship. But Hiltebeitel's dismissal of "oral epic theory" ... is curious ... The *MBh* has a number of different discourse styles within it ... Hiltebeitel over-generalizes the role of self-conscious fiction-making behind the *MBh* and bypasses all discussion of the quite different narrative and discursive styles and textures in the epic.⁸²

Finally, I further agree with Fitzgerald that a conscious artistic endeavour was initiated either at some point, or at several points in history, to make this long story systematically whole, narratologically meaningful, inter-related, and self-referential.⁸³

... I do think there was a significant *MBh* compositional effort at some point in the first century or two after the demise of the Mauryans, and I agree that writing was likely used in the creation of this text. ... the intricacy of the narrative would have been easier to develop with writing, and some highly refined elements of the text, such as the perfectly regular classical meters, suggest the likelihood of writing being used in their development. If we bear

⁸⁰ van Buitenen, (1973): 16.

⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 24.

⁸² Fitzgerald, "The Many Voices of the *Mahābhārata*", (2003): 807.

⁸³ See further discussion on the verb *garh* in the MBh in chapter 4 below.

in mind the occasional gatherings of early Buddhists and, later and half a world away, early Christians, to address institutional concerns, debate doctrines, and argue about the canons of their common texts, there is nothing inherently implausible in the idea of occasional conclaves of some Brahmins for similar sorts of purposes, including, perhaps, composing, redacting, or commissioning new texts. ... I myself am inclined to imagine the development of the *Mahābhārata* more along the lines of the gradual building, modification, and occasional refurbishment of a great cathedral under the direction of different architects and master-builders at different points in time. I think the “gradualist” models of the epic’s development that have prevailed in Western scholarship are obviously more plausible than Hildebeitel’s one-time symposium.⁸⁴

2. Date of the *Svargārohaṇa*

Having discussed the commonly accepted date for the MBh in epic scholarship, this section seeks to situate the ending of the epic within this timeframe. It is, however, crucial to define what is precisely meant by the term “the ending of the MBh”. Although I shall occasionally refer separately to books 17 and 18 in the discussions that follow, it should be clarified that I consider the term “SĀ” as a somewhat generic term to designate the ending of the MBh; that is, the combination of the two concluding books – the MhP and the SĀ *parvans*. It seems to me, that these two books together are inseparable and function in the epic as one unit that is distinguishable in the narrative from previous *parvans*. In other words, one cannot read, understand or make sense of the MhP without the SĀ, and vice versa. Therefore, when I use the term SĀ, and unless mentioned otherwise, I typically refer to this unit of books as “the ending of the epic/MBh”.

What, then, is the earliest possible date from which we know of the existence of the SĀ? Since, as discussed above, scholars assess that the complete

⁸⁴ Fitzgerald, “The Many Voices of the *Mahābhārata*”, (2003): 814-815.

compilation of the MBh -- that is, a work that extends over 18 *parvans* along with the HV appendix, as well as the long introduction and framework (the *anukramaṇī* and *parvasaṃgraha*) of the *Ādi parvan* -- is in place between 200-500 CE, and indeed most scholars contend that this compilation existed rather earlier than later (circa 200 CE); then we may assume that the MBh had an ending composed of the MhP and the SĀ, from at least the beginning of the third century CE. Since the C.Ed. is widely considered by epic scholarship as representing the closest archetype of this textual compilation, I, too, rely on it in my discussion as the MBh sourcebook which records the earliest possible SĀ.⁸⁵

Furthermore, the manuscripts reported in the C.Ed. for books 17 and 18 are as old as those which are reported for the rest of the text, and there is little evidence to dispute their authenticity. Therefore, the C.Ed. provides us with the oldest available conclusion to the MBh, and an ending for the entire epic that differs in any appreciable way from the story recorded in the C.Ed. is unknown. This point is demonstrated by the following arguments:

The *anukramaṇī* ('list-of-contents')⁸⁶ and the *parvasaṃgraha* ('summary of the books'),⁸⁷ which both appear in the C.Ed., include the MhP and the SĀ *parvans*. All the manuscripts that comprise the text of the C.Ed. attest to this inclusion.

⁸⁵ See Fitzgerald, "India's Fifth Veda: The *Mahābhārata*'s Presentation of Itself", (2007): 153: "The critical edition of Poona is the closest approximation of the archetype behind the manuscript tradition we will ever get."; see also Andreas Bigger, "The Normative Redaction of the *Mahābhārata*", (2002): 19.

It should be mentioned that as a rule, the C.Ed. provides in its extensive appendices alternative readings of the text as recorded in different Mss (including readings offered by other MBh editions). I henceforth cite the C.Ed. throughout this dissertation. Where I cite other editions, I shall provide an established explanation as to why I prefer alternative readings.

⁸⁶ MBh, 1.2.34-69.

⁸⁷ MBh, 1.2.71-234.

Of the dated materials consulted for *parvans* 17 and 18 of the C.Ed., the oldest manuscript is dated 1611 and the most recent is dated 1841 (although the majority of the manuscripts are undated). These dates reflect the picture presented by the dated manuscripts as a whole, of which the oldest is a Nepali manuscript of 1511, and the most recent is a Malayalam manuscript of 1842.⁸⁸ The dated materials for books 17 and 18, therefore, are typical of the C.Ed. as a whole, and are consistent with those consulted for the 16 preceding books of the epic.⁸⁹

The majority of the manuscript material constituting the C.Ed. affirms that the southern and the northern recensions of the text are similar. In his introduction to the C.Ed., the chief editor, V. S. Sukthankar, concluded that no significant variations exist between these two recensions.⁹⁰ This is particularly true regarding books 17 and 18. The several recensions of the MBh depict the same type of story with very small variations.⁹¹

Evidence from the works of Bāṇa and Subandhu, indicates that these poets knew the ending of the epic as early as the beginning of the seventh century CE.⁹²

Another source that records the MhP and the *SĀ parvans* is the Javanese adaptation of the MBh, the *Bhāratam* (c. 1000 CE), which was used as testimonia for the reconstruction of the MBh text in the C.Ed. According to Sukthankar, this adaptation is particularly important because it “precedes the known date of the

⁸⁸ See Sukthankar’s “Prolegomena”, (1927): vi.

⁸⁹ It should be mentioned that, to the best of my knowledge, Devabodha’s oldest commentary of the MBh does not include books 17 and 18. Devabodha, the predecessor of Arjunamiśra (later fifteenth century), comments only on the *Ādi*, *Sabhā*, *Udyoga*, *Virāṭa* and *Bhīṣma parvans*.

⁹⁰ See Sukthankar’s “Prolegomena”, (1927): xxxvi.

⁹¹ See Andreas Bigger, “The Normative Redaction of the *Mahābhārata*”, (2002): 21.

⁹² “An examination of the works of Bāṇa, and of his predecessor Subandhu, shows that these authors, who belong to the beginning of the seventh century, not only studied and made use of legends from every one of the eighteen books of the *Mahābhārata* for the poetical embellishment of their works, but were even acquainted with the *Harivaṃśa*.” Arthur MacDonell, (1900): 288. See also Hopkins, (1901): 387; Winternitz, (1977): 463.

[MBh] manuscripts by several centuries and [is] hence of considerable importance for critical purposes, as a witness independent of and uninfluenced by the main line of our extant Indian witnesses. Most of the Sanskrit quotations of the Javanese text can be traced both in the Northern and the Southern recensions.’⁹³

Additional testimonia of the ending of the MBh allow us to estimate that the version of the text represented in the epic’s extant Mss may be projected back at least to the eleventh century. This derives from Kṣemendra’s oldest available epitome of the MBh, the *Bhāratamañjarī*, from the eleventh century. The *Bhāratamañjarī* appears to have been based on northern Mss from which the C.Ed.’s Kashmiri Ms group has descended. This epitome makes it clear that Kṣemendra’s understanding of how the MBh ends is equivalent to the ending we have in the C.Ed. today.⁹⁴

Further confirmation along these lines comes from the *Bālabhārata* epitome of the Jain poet Amaraçandra Sūri, who lived in the thirteenth century. The conclusion of this poem is clearly based on materials similar to those used for the C.Ed. Of particular significance is the fact that although Amaraçandra Sūri is posterior to Kṣemendra, he lived and wrote in Gujarat, which is a considerable distance from Kashmir, thereby proving that the state of the MBh in the west was similar to that in the north.⁹⁵

⁹³ See Sukthankar’s “Prolegomena”, (1927): 25.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. xxvii-xxviii. See also detailed discussion on Kṣemendra’s *Bhāratamañjarī* in chapter 2 below.

⁹⁵ See also discussion in chapter 2 below, which shows that Amaraçandra drew upon the work of his predecessor Kṣemendra, and therefore knew (apart from the MBh source) the *Bhāratamañjarī*. Chapter 2 discusses two other MBh adaptations: one by Agastya in the fifteenth century, and another originating from Kerala in the eighteenth century. My discussion shows that the latter source knew and borrowed from the former.

Another relevant source is Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka*, which was composed in Kashmir in the second half of the ninth century. It is clear that Ānandavardhana knew the ending of the MBh in the same form as it appears in the C.Ed. For Ānandavardhana, the ending of the MBh produces a despondent feeling and is related to the destruction of the Vṛṣṇis and the Pāṇḍavas.⁹⁶ Ānandavardhana is also familiar with both *Ādiparvan*'s table-of-contents (the *anukramaṇī*),⁹⁷ and the HV appendix.⁹⁸ Ānandavardhana's work thus assures us that books 17 and 18 were understood to constitute the epic's final episodes, from at least the ninth century.

The poetician Abhinavagupta (c. 950-1020), who composed the commentary *Dhvanyāloka-locana* on Ānandavardhana's work, provides a precise depiction of the story of the ending as we have it today in the C.Ed.⁹⁹ This account also confirms that books 17 and 18 were known in India at least from the second half of the tenth and the first half of the eleventh centuries CE.

In the same way, the work of the mid-eleventh century poetician, Kuntaka, supports our knowledge of the ending of the MBh as we have it today in the C.Ed.

⁹⁶ See discussion on Sanskrit theoreticians in chapter 3 below.

⁹⁷ "In the table of contents it has been said [... *anukramaṇyām darśitam*...] in so many words that in the *Mahābhārata*, *śāntarasa* is the main (rasa)..." Translated by J. M. Masson and M. V. Patwardhan, *Śāntarasa and Abhinavagupta's Philosophy of Aesthetics*, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1969, p. 106; "And so, through the sentence found in the table of contents [*tad evam anukramaṇīdiṣṭena vākya*...], it is revealed that everything different from the blessed one is ephemeral..." *ibid*, p. 108.

⁹⁸ "And that same master poet, Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana [i.e. Vyāsa], has made this deep and beautiful meaning completely clear by using the depiction of the genealogy of Hari [the *Harivaṃśa*] as his conclusion at the end of the MBh." (*Dhvanyāloka*, 4.5), translated by Gary Tubb, "*Śāntarasa* in the *Mahābhārata*", *Essays on the Mahābhārata*, ed. A. Sharma, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 2007, p. 197.

⁹⁹ Glossing Ānandavardhana's expression "*virasāvasāna*" (i.e., the 'disagreeable-ending' of the MBh) in his *Locana* on 4.5, Abhinavagupta states the following: "the mutual destruction of the Vṛṣṇis, the end of the Pāṇḍavas by experiencing undeserved troubles on their great journey [north, to death], and Kṛṣṇa's destruction by a hunter, show that everybody's end was pathetic." Translated by J. M. Masson and M. V. Patwardhan, "The *Dhvanyāloka* and the *Dhvanyālokalocana*: A Translation of the Fourth Uddyota, Pt. II", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 97, No. 4 (Oct. – Dec., 1977): 423-440, p. 427. See also discussion in chapter 3 below.

Like Abhinavagupta, Kuntaka follows Ānandavardhana in judging the ending of the MBh a distasteful and a tragic one.¹⁰⁰

In summary, considering the arguments outlined above and the materials available for the Sanskrit MBh, an ending for the epic that differs in any appreciable way from the story preserved in the C.Ed. is unknown. Since, as shown above, the C.Ed. provides us with the earliest possible conclusion of the epic, my discussion relies on this particular MBh edition.

3. **The *Parvan*-list of Manuscript Spitzer¹⁰¹**

The Spitzer manuscript is a Sanskrit palm-leaf Ms in Kuṣāṇa characters from Qizil (Chinese Turkistan), which dates to the Kuṣāṇa period (roughly 0-300 CE). Most of the Ms consists of philosophical texts of the Buddhist Sarvāstivādin-school.¹⁰² One fragment in the Ms includes a list of MBh-*parvans*, which is the *oldest extant parvan*-list of the epic. Unfortunately, the fragment is badly damaged. In 1969, the scholar Dieter Schlingloff presented a study of this

¹⁰⁰ See discussion on the stance of the Sanskrit theoreticians (Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta and Kuntaka) to the ending of the MBh in chapter 3 below.

¹⁰¹ The Ms is named after Dr. Moritz (Moshe) Spitzer from Jerusalem, who was the first to have studied and transcribed it (1927-1928).

¹⁰² See Eli Franco's several studies on these texts: "The Spitzer Manuscript – A Report on Work in Progress," *Abhidharma and Indian Thought: Essays in Honour of Professor Doctor Junsho Kato on his Sixtieth Birthday*, Tokyo 2000: 562-544; "The Earliest Extant *Vaiśeṣika* Theory of *Guṇas*," *Weiner Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 44 (2000) 157-163; "Lost Fragments from the Spitzer Manuscript," *Harānandalaharī*, eds. R. Tsuchida and A. Wezler, Reinbek 2000: 77-110; "Fragments of a Buddhist *Pramāṇa*-Theory from the Kuṣāṇa Period," *Bukyō Dendō Kyōkai Fellowship Newsletter* 4, Tokyo 2001: 2-12; "The Oldest Philosophical Manuscript in Sanskrit," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 31: 21-31, 2003.

fragment, in which he reconstructed the list of *parvans* by juxtaposing it with the lists of 18 major MBh *parvans* and 100 sub-*parvans*.¹⁰³

Since Schlingloff did not directly address the issue of the MBh's ending in his study, I analyze his findings here in order to point out that several conclusions which may be drawn from the list that Schlingloff reconstructed may have bearing on the historical study of the ending of the MBh. I shall do this by cross referencing between the historical data on the MBh and its approximated historical growth that were outlined above, and the arrangement of MBh-*parvans* that this particular list records. I argue that the Spitzer-list suggests that the MBh (or at the very least, the MBh tradition the list represents) had some version of the ending we know today as early as the Kuṣāṇa period, and that this conclusion is likely to have been composed of the MhP and the SĀ *parvans*.

The fragment is composed of successive numbers and names that correspond to several MBh *parvans* or sub-*parvans*. It is worth re-emphasizing that the fragment is very badly damaged and features many gaps. In order to make our discussion here clearer, I took the liberty of integrating Schlingloff's findings as presented throughout his study and the reconstructed list that he offers (appearing here in bold; bracketed letters being reconstructions), as follows:

[**ā**] (**diparvaṃ** 1) – corresponds to *Ādi-parvan* (1st book).

(**pau**) **lomaṃ** 2 – corresponds to *pauloma* sub-*parvan* in the *Ādi-parvan*.

(...3) – potentially corresponds to *Ādi* or *Sabhā* (2nd book) *parvans* or sub-*parvans*.

(...4) – potentially corresponds to *Ādi* or *Sabhā* *parvans* or sub-*parvans*.

¹⁰³ Dieter Schlingloff, "The Oldest Extant Parvan-List of the *Mahābhārata*", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 89, No. 2 (Apr. – Jun., 1969), pp. 334-338.

Besides the *parvānukramaṇī* (MBh, 1.2.34-70) and the *parvasamgraha* (MBh, 1.2.72-233), Schlingloff also consulted the 20-parvan list of the HV (16195-16210) featuring the following names: (1) *Ādi*; (2) *Āstika*; (3) *Sabhā*; (4) *Āraṇyaka*; (5) *Araṇī*; (6) *Virāta*; (7) *Udyoga*; (8) *Bhīṣma*; (9) *Droṇa*; (10) *Karṇa*; (11) *Śalya*; (12) *Gadā*; (13) *Strī*; (14) *Aiṣīka*; (15) *Śānti*; (16) *Āśvamedhika*; (17) *Āśramavāsika*; (18) *Mausala*; (19) *Mahāprāsthānika*; (20) *Svarga*.

- (...5) – potentially corresponds to *Ādi* or *Sabhā parvans* or sub-*parvans*.
 (...6) – potentially corresponds to *Ādi* or *Sabhā parvans* or sub-*parvans*.

āraṇyakam 7 – corresponds to *āraṇyaka* sub-*parvan* in the *Vana-parvan* (3rd book).
[ā] (raṇeyam 8) – corresponds to *āraṇeya* sub-*parvan* in the *Vana-parvan*.

----- Since there is no gap between no. 8 and the following no. 9, Schlingloff concludes that this list could not have included the *Virāta-parvan* (4th book).

(ni) ryyāṇam 9 – corresponds to *niryāṇa* sub-*parvan* in the *Udyoga-parvan* (5th book).
bhaga (vad) yānam 10 – corresponds to *bhagavadyāna* sub-*parvan* in the *Udyoga-parvan*.

bhīṣmaparvvaṃ (11) – corresponds to *Bhīṣma-parvan* (6th book).

- (...12) – potentially corresponds to *Droṇa* (7th book), *Karṇa* (8th book), *Śalya* (9th book), *Sauptika* (10th book), or *Strī* (11th book) *parvans*.
 (...13) – potentially corresponds to *Droṇa*, *Karṇa*, *Śalya*, *Sauptika*, or *Strī parvans*.
 (...14) – potentially corresponds to *Droṇa*, *Karṇa*, *Śalya*, *Sauptika*, or *Strī parvans*.

(śā) nt (i) parvvaṃ 15 – corresponds to *Śānti-parvan* (12th book).

----- Since there is no gap between no. 15 and the following no. 16, Schlingloff concludes that this list could not have included the *Anuśāsana-parvan* (13th book).

āśvamedhikam 16 - corresponds to *Āśvamedhika-parvan* (14th book).

- (...17) – potentially corresponds to *Āśramavāsika* (15th book), *Mausala* (16th book), *Mahāprasthānika* (17th book), or *Svargārohaṇa* (18th book) *parvans*.
 (...18) – potentially corresponds to *Āśramavāsika*, *Mausala*, *Mahāprasthānika*, or *Svargārohaṇa parvans*.

khileṣu – corresponds to the *Harivaṃśa* (appendix).

Several conclusions may be drawn from this reconstruction. First, the *Virāta* and the *Anuśāsana parvans* could not have been included in this list at all, on account of their position in the successive listing of numbers that the Spitzer-list records (see above). As Schlingloff states, this validates the hypotheses posed by several scholars, as to these books being later additions:

... the name of the *anuśāsanaparvan* is missing. It may be supposed that this *parvan* was already regarded as a part of the *śāntiparvan* ... However,

it is far more likely, that it was in those times unknown to the epos at all.¹⁰⁴ ... Besides the *anuśāsana*, another *parvan* too seems to be a late interpolation: the *virāṭaparvan*, which is regarded by eminent scholars¹⁰⁵ as a production not belonging to the original epos.¹⁰⁶

Second, ten additional *parvans* are absent from the list, namely: *Sabhā*, *Droṇa*, *Karṇa*, *Śalya*, *Sauptika*, *Strī*, *Āśramavāsika*, *Mausala*, *Mahāprasthānika* and *Svargārohaṇa*. However, it should be emphasized that these books' absence is *not* identical to the omission of the *Virāṭa* and the *Anuśāsana parvans*, owing to the fact that the absence of these ten results from the numerous gaps in the heavily damaged Ms.

Third, the list clearly includes the HV appendix (designated: *khileṣu*), and further shows a gap of supposedly two numbers between the number 16 (corresponding to the *Āśvamedhika-parvan*) and '*khileṣu*'. This gap must have included some combination of either two of the four concluding books of the MBh: *Āśramavāsika*, *Mausala*, *Mahāprasthānika* or *Svargārohaṇa parvans*. This fact, alone, suggests that the MBh had some version of the ending between the first and the third centuries CE. What this ending was or could have been is a matter of conjecture.

Two arguments support the supposition that the MhP and the SĀ constituted the gap in the fragment. The first derives from the interdependency of these two books, which form a single unit in the narrative. Accordingly, this would suggest that the MhP and SĀ *parvans* were listed at this early stage as one book. If that were the case, and books 17 and 18 occupied one spot in the gap, then it follows that the MBh's four concluding books were reduced to three,

¹⁰⁴ Schlingloff here cites Winternitz, (1977): 424.

¹⁰⁵ Schlingloff here cites several studies: Hopkins, (1901): 382; A. Holtzmann, *Das Mahābhārata*, II, p. 98; Winternitz, (1977): 458; *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, V, p. 23.

¹⁰⁶ Schlingloff, (1969): 338.

possibly even two remaining combinations. If the MhP and the SĀ *parvans* were recorded in the list as one book, then the same might apply to the Āśramavāsika and the *Mausala parvans*, which might have *jointly* occupied the second spot in the gap. This hypothesis is strengthened by Schlingloff’s statement that “the gap [between ‘*āśvamedhikam 16*’ and ‘*khileṣu*’] in Ms. Spitzer, however, may have contained more than two names.”¹⁰⁷

Another argument concerns the date of the HV, which is regarded by scholars as relatively late. Indeed, Schlingloff himself seems to wonder about the inclusion of the HV “at a time when the *Mahābhārata* was still in a state of development”,¹⁰⁸ adding that, “... even the *khilas* [in the Spitzer list] were regarded as belonging to the *Mahābhārata*”.¹⁰⁹ Combining the data about the development of the MBh with the date of the HV, I argue that the Spitzer list is more likely (than not) to have included the MhP and the SĀ *parvans*, and that the list definitely shows that some version of the ending we know today certainly existed as early as the Kuṣāṇa period. These observations derive from the following reasons:

Scholars largely agree that the introductory portion of the *Ādi parvan*, the final books and the HV were added last to the epic. Of these three, both the *Ādi* and the HV are included in the Spitzer list.

There is some degree of inter-relatedness between the HV, the final books, and the introduction to the *Ādi-parvan*. As Hopkins pointed out, these three portions of the text recognize each other.¹¹⁰ This implies that since both the *Ādi*

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p. 335.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*, p. 338.

¹¹⁰ See Hopkins’ citation on pp. 34-35 above.

and the HV are indeed recorded in the Spitzer list, then we are more inclined to suppose the inclusion of the MhP and the SĀ, as well.

Epic scholarship broadly shares the view that the battle books form the nucleus of the epic and constitute its oldest parts. However, out of five battle books (*Bhīṣma*, *Droṇa*, *Karṇa*, *Śalya* and *Sauptika*) only one (*Bhīṣma-parvan*) appears in the Spitzer-list. The other four battle-books are missing from the list in the same way that the MhP and the SĀ *parvans* are. Moreover, the absence of these books from the list is not identical to the exclusion of the *Virāṭa* and *Anuśāsana parvans*, which could not have been included in the Spitzer list at all. Therefore, if these four very “old” battle books and the *Strī parvan* occupied, in some variable combination, a gap of three spaces in the Ms (see the reconstructed list above), then, given the arguments (discussed above) regarding possible combinations to have occupied the Ms’ final gap of two spaces (before ‘*khileṣu*’), our inclination to include the MhP and SĀ *parvans* in the Spitzer-list gains further probability.

In summary, the Spitzer list suggests that some version of the ending we know today (composed of the MhP and the SĀ *parvans*) existed from as early as the Kuṣāṇa period. Since the absence of books 17 and 18 from the list is identical to the omission of books that are considered the oldest portions of the text (i.e. the battle books), I contend that the Spitzer-list points to a further probability regarding the integrity and importance of the ending to the text as a whole at such an early stage of development. In light of the oldest extant *parvan*-list (Spitzer) and the evidence regarding the date of the SĀ’s composition detailed above, the reluctance of scholars to accept the ending as an integral part of the epic is rather

curious. This tendency to disregard the ending by undermining its authenticity merits further discussion, which now follows.

4. Reluctance to Accept the SĀ as an Integral Part of the Epic

Although epic scholarship largely agrees that the complete compilation of the MBh -- that is, containing 100,000 verses, extending over 18 *parvans*, and therefore, inclusive of the MhP and the SĀ *parvans* -- is in place from at least 200 CE (see sections 1 and 2, above),¹¹¹ certain scholars disregard the ending as an intrinsic constituent of the MBh. In the following two sections, I discuss the reluctance to accept the SĀ as an integral part of the epic. The argument emerging from the following sections is that in their discourses on the epic's

¹¹¹ Additional evidence that supports the dating of the SĀ to circa 200 CE comes from the *karma-vipāka* ('the ripening of *karma*') literature. This literary genre which first appears in the early *Purānas* (Gupta era, c. third-fourth centuries CE) may have also drawn upon the *naraka* events of the epic's final scenes. According to Wendy Doniger, The *karma-vipāka* literature is closely related to the concept of *naraka*: "it is usually placed in the context of the cosmological description of the hells, and it explains how people get to hell by committing scenes." Wendy Doniger-O'Flaherty, "Karma and Rebirth in the Vedas and Purānas," *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions*, ed. Wendy Doniger-O'Flaherty, University of California Press, London, 1980, p. 14. Along similar lines, Y. Krishan explains the main features of this literature thus: "The earlier *purānas* (such as *Vāyu*, *Brahmāṇḍa*, *Matsya*, *Mārkaṇḍeya*, *Viṣṇu*, *Bhāgavat* AD 300-600) ... deal with *Karma Vipāka*. They deal with it in the same manner as the *Dharmasāstras* viz. the souls are embodied in different forms of existence due to their deeds; they are born in heaven, hell or on this earth, as a result of their *Karmas*; they suffer various tortures in different hells for their sins done in previous lives; and thereafter they are born as insects, birds, animals, human beings and as gods depending upon the progressive exhaustion of their evil *Karmas* and ripening of their good *Karmas*." Y. Krishan, "*Karma Vipāka*," *Numen*, Vol. 30, Fasc. 2 (Dec., 1983), Brill: 199-214, p. 203.

The Agni Purāṇa 369.15-19 and the Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa 2.113.1-25, for instance, depict a similar account of *naraka* to the one experienced by Yudhiṣṭhira in the SĀ: "... it is evident that the man of mixed karma has one experience body in heaven and another one in hell; if evil predominates, apparently he goes first to hell, then to heaven, and then from hell to an animal womb; if good predominates, he goes first to heaven, then to hell, and then from heaven again to a good birth among humans." See Doniger-O'Flaherty, (1980): 17-18. Another such example comes from the Brahma Purāṇa 217.7-8: "When he leaves the body, *dharma* alone follows him [*taccharīram utsrṣṭam dharma eko 'nugacchati*]; if he has *dharma* he goes to heaven, but if he has *adharma* he goes to hell [*prāṇī dharmasamāyukto gacchet svargagatiṃ parām / tathaiṅdharmasamāyukto narakaṃ copapadyate*]." Translated by Doniger-O'Flaherty, (1980): 16.

ending, scholars do not keep to the distinction they themselves are making. While the majority of scholars recognize the MBh as a compendium (*saṃhitā*) of 18 books (that necessarily includes *parvans* 17 and 18) to be the subject-matter of their studies, in addressing these particular books, epic scholarship largely undermines their authenticity. This tendency is manifested in the emphasis scholars assign to earlier versions or layers of the epic.

I suggest that in such discourses what scholars have in mind is an earlier version of the story, which revolves around a military contest (the *Jaya*-epic of 8,800 verses), and which represents a MBh-story without the *SĀ*. Epic scholarship therefore contradicts itself. For although scholars are set to study the *entire Mahā-Bhārata* while recognizing this text as the subject-matter of their discourses, when treating its final books, scholars are often reluctant to consider them a part of the MBh by relegating them as not pertaining to its “oldest core”. In my opinion, one cannot have it both ways. If one accepts that at some historical point the fluid oral tradition of the epic became the *Mahā-Bhārata* of 18 *parvans* with the *SĀ* as its ending, one cannot subsequently state that it has a different ending other than the *SĀ*. In other words, once scholars distinguish between older layers of the story and the MBh of 18 *parvans*, they necessarily accept: (1) that this story contains the *SĀ* within it; (2) that there is no other version of the epic which records a story without its ending passage; and, (3) that the epic’s (supposed) older core does not represent the MBh story in its entirety.

However, a tendency to dismiss the post-battle episodes emerges in the scholarly literature on the MBh. Early epic scholarship raised doubts about the location of the epic’s “real ending” and was sceptical of the authenticity of books

17 and 18. Maurice Winternitz, for example, suggested that the mass funeral taking place in the *Strī parvan* subsequent to the battle “is probably the point at which the old poem ended”.¹¹² This tendency to view the *Strī parvan* as the real ending of the MBh is also expressed by R. C. Dutt who assertively states:

The real Epic ends with the war and with the funerals of the deceased warriors ... What follows the [Horse-] sacrifice is in no sense a part of the real Epic; it consists merely of concluding personal narratives of the heroes who have figured in the poem.¹¹³

Dutt is evidently influenced by the common scholarly contention that the battle books constitute the kernel of the MBh story. Consequently, he judges the episodes subsequent to the *Āśvamedhika-parvan* as being “in no sense a part of the real Epic”. These passages in the story (including the ending) therefore, are viewed by Dutt as redundant additions. Such contentions, I believe, are both unfounded, insofar as they are not persuasively backed by evidence, and poorly argued. Looking at Dutt’s citation, for example, stating that the epic’s final books consist, “merely of concluding personal narratives of the heroes who have figured in the poem”, we may ask, what sorts of concluding narratives would Dutt suggest the MBh ought to have had? What types of narratives would he hold as composing, in his words, “a part of the real Epic”? The argument regarding “personal narratives” is curious in relation to the MBh, which is strewn, throughout its length and breadth, with precisely such “personal narratives” of the lives and deeds of the heroes who figure in this long story. Why should the concluding books of the MBh, according to Dutt, then, be any different?

¹¹² Winternitz, (1977): 372.

¹¹³ Romesh Chunder Dutt, *Maha-bharata: Epic of the Bharatas*, Ballantyne, London, 1898, p. 367.

Following these views, Kevin McGrath also asserts that the MBh does not end with the SĀ:

The *Strī parvan* closes the narrative that commenced with the gambling in the *Sabhā*; in effect, this is the end of epic MBh. ... The books following the *Strī parvan* – the *Śānti parvan* and the *Anuśāsana parvan* - are virtually given *in toto* to *śāstra* and are not ‘epic’ material. The five subsequent books supply a *coda*. ... these concluding books do not add to the epic matter except in very small part.¹¹⁴

McGrath makes a distinction between portions that are included or excluded from what he somewhat vaguely terms ‘epic material’. Like Dutt, who is an exponent of early epic scholarship, McGrath, a contemporary scholar, is committed to the view that the battle-books form the nucleus of the epic. He thus follows others in maintaining that the MBh ends with the *Strī parvan*, but supplements his own opinion, as he states, that the five concluding books of the MBh “do not add to the epic matter except in very small part”. A quantitative argument such as the one McGrath voices here calls for further discussion. We might ask, for example: (1) what, in McGrath’s view constitutes “real epic matter”?; (2) what “adds” to this matter?; (3) are additions of this sort to be measured in terms of narrative quality or quantity, and what exactly are the measuring tools with which one could appraise the (abstract) value of the MBh’s final five books?; and, finally, (4) how does one evaluate the degree of their contribution to “real epic matter” by way of a definition more substantial than the one offered by McGrath: “except in very small part”? These hypothetical questions aside, it would appear that McGrath’s argument is dismissive toward the epic’s final five books, and consequently undermines the ending as having an innate relation to the epic as a whole.

¹¹⁴ Kevin McGrath, *The Sanskrit Hero: Karna in Epic Mahābhārata*, Brill, Boston, 2004, p. 223.

Another early scholar, Albrecht Weber, divides between portions constituting the “real” epic story and those outside of it:

Of the *Mahābhārata* in its extant form, only about one-fourth (some 20,000 ślokas or so) relates to this conflict [between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas] and the myths that have been associated with it; while the elements composing the remaining three-fourths do not belong to it at all and have only the loosest possible connection therewith, as well as with each other.¹¹⁵

While Weber also emphasizes the antiquity of the battle-books, perhaps having the *Bhārata*-epic (of 24,000 verses) in mind, he effectively dismisses three-fourths of the narrative. Since Weber considers the battle-books to be the kernel of the story, we can assume that the *SĀ* falls into the three-fourth sections that “have only the loosest possible connection” with the one-fourth of the narrative that forms the ‘real’ MBh. Yet Weber not only judges three-fourths of the narrative to be merely redundant, but also states that these portions do not connect, in and of themselves “with each other”. If we take Weber’s argument literally, it follows that except for the five battle books, the entire MBh is, in fact, a nonsensical jumble of unrelated tales and stories, a sort of “literary monster”¹¹⁶ or a “jungle of poetry”¹¹⁷ as the other prominent scholars Herman Oldenberg and Maurice Winternitz (respectively) would have it.

Indeed, the standard view in epic scholarship recognizes the production of the ending at a relatively late date, based, among other substantial evidences, on the intuitive logic that endings are usually produced once a composition is completed. Yet it is one thing to assess or locate the ending within the general

¹¹⁵ Albrecht Weber, *The History of Indian Literature*, trans. John Mann and Theodor Zachariae, Trübner and Co., Ludgate Hill, London, 1882, p. 187.

¹¹⁶ Hermann Oldenberg, *Das Mahabharata: seine Entstehung, sein Inhalt, seine Form*, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1922, p. 1.

¹¹⁷ Winternitz, (1977): 236.

frame of the MBh’s historical growth, and quite another to dismiss its importance or undermine its authenticity as an integral part of the epic. A scholar who represents the former attitude is Adolf Holtzmann (Jr.), who attributed the epic’s final five books to a “second reworking”. While Holtzmann recognized that these books contained older material, he maintained that they must have been inserted after the second reworking.¹¹⁸ Although John Brockington (like Holtzmann) discusses the late date of books 17 and 18, some of the explanations he provides partly represent the latter attitude:

The remaining three books [16, 17 and 18] are all generally regarded as being late and in any case are extremely short, all containing less than ten *adhyāyas*; indeed, it is most likely that they have been treated as separate books only at a very late date, in order to produce the significant number 18 for the total of the books. The *Mausalaparvan* in some ways anticipates the *Harivaṃśa* in its focus on Kṛṣṇa and the Yādavas. The *Mahāprasthānikaparvan* cannot really be separated from the final book, the *Svargārohaṇaparvan*, in terms of its narrative; ... The *Svargārohaṇaparvan*, as noted in relation to the *Ādiparvan*, deliberately repeats in its final *adhyāya* several verses from 1.56 to provide a balance to the opening of the epic, revealing that it is among the latest passages in the whole work.¹¹⁹ Equally, the portrayal of Yudhiṣṭhira in this book turns him even more into an embodiment of brahmanical Hinduism by emphasizing the questioning philosopher – the brāhman influence by now extending to the narrative element.¹²⁰

Although Brockington advances a valid argument regarding the late production of the ending, some of his observations regarding how these books came to be added to the epic seem to attenuate their necessity or relevance to the narrative. Statements about the shortness of books 17 and 18, as well as the verses repeated in the first and the last books, admittedly suggest the ending’s late date.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ Holtzmann, *Das Mahābhārata*, (1892): 189; see also van Buitenen, (1973): xxxii.

¹¹⁹ The verse in question (1.56) corresponds to 18.5.33: *yad ihāsti tad anyatra yan nehāsti na tat kvacit*.

¹²⁰ J. Brockington, (1988): 155.

¹²¹ In “The Bhārata and the Great Bhārata”, Hopkins pointed out that unlike the battle-books, which exhibit “violent” variations, “the short final books, 16, 17, 18, show little variation”.

Nevertheless, other arguments about Yudhiṣṭhira’s character in the epic, the inseparability of the MhP and the SĀ *parvans*, and the formation of the significant number 18, do not necessarily, nor directly suggest that these books were produced at a later date. In contrast to Brockington, I suggest that these arguments actually strengthen the claim that the ending comprises an integral part of the epic, and that it is thematically consistent with its other parts. First, the argument regarding the inseparability of the MhP and the SĀ *parvans* does not necessarily require that they are of a later date, for on the other hand, their separability would equally not make them any older. Second, the fact that these books complete the number 18 in the epic actually enforces the claim that they are extremely significant in the epic, and thematically consistent with other parts featuring the same motif.¹²² Third, a curious observation by the writer centres upon Yudhiṣṭhira’s portrayal in the SĀ, which turns him, according to Brockington, “into an embodiment of brahmanical Hinduism by emphasizing the questioning philosopher”. To this we may reply -- why is it astonishing that the SĀ presents Yudhiṣṭhira as a philosopher Brahman, when he is consistently portrayed in this very way throughout the epic? Moreover, how does this argument support the lateness of this particular book? In my view, these remarks do not contribute to the main discussion embarked upon in this passage regarding the ending’s late date. They do, however, disclose a dismissal toward the ending as having an innate relation to the epic as a whole.

Maintaining that “late texts have few variations” he concluded that while the MBh’s concluding books are relatively late, the battle-books are older material. See Hopkins, (1898): 11-13.

¹²² The 18 books of the MBh correspond to the same number of Purāṇas; the Bhagavadgītā is composed of 18 chapters; there are eighteen armies battling for eighteen days, eighteen branches of younger Yādavas, and 18 islands of earth. See Hopkins, (1901): 371.

It should nonetheless be noted that stronger evidence for the existence of an earlier conclusion to the MBh than the *SĀ parvan* was already put forward by E. W. Hopkins. In 1898, Hopkins pointed out that one of the opening lists-of-contents (*anukramaṇī*) found in the Bombay Vulgate edition of the MBh does not mention the *Anuśāsana*, *Mahāprasthānika* or the *Svargārohaṇa parvans*. Instead, they extend only so far as the *Mausalaparvan*. This passage,¹²³ which appears in the appendix of the C.Ed.,¹²⁴ depicts an image of a tree in which each MBh *parvan* constitutes a different part of the tree (*Bhāratadruma*). On this basis, Hopkins concluded that there existed an older form of the MBh, which was similar to the text of today, but without books 13, 17 and 18. Thus, Hopkins argued that this is:

... a list of the books of the MBh which omits entirely the thirteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth books of the present text, *Anuśāsana*, *Prasthāna* and *Svarga*. The reasons can be only that when this list was made these books, like the *Harivaṃśa*, were not parts of the epic.¹²⁵

According to this theory, then, the *Mausalaparvan* was the original ending of the epic. Yet, unlike the *anukramaṇī* and the *parvasaṃgraha* which are attested in *all* the Mss constituting the C.Ed., and which include the MhP and the *SĀ parvans*, the *Bhāratadruma* analogy which Hopkins is referring to is not affirmed by *all* the Mss.

In summary, the discussion above has shown that epic scholarship is partly reluctant to accept the *SĀ* as an integral episode of the MBh. Unlike these views, the Mss constituting the C.Ed. for books 17 and 18 are as old as those which are reported for the rest of the text, and there is little evidence to dispute their

¹²³ B. 1.1.88-92.

¹²⁴ See C.Ed. book 1, appendix of passage 1, lines 47-56.

¹²⁵ Hopkins, (1898): 1-24.

authenticity. Considering the arguments outlined in sections 1 and 2, above, and the materials available for the Sanskrit MBh, an ending for the epic that differs in any appreciable way from the story presented in the C.Ed. is unknown. The tendency to undermine books 17 and 18 therefore, requires far stronger evidence than the evidence produced by the scholars discussed above. And yet, while a number of scholars voice legitimate arguments regarding the relatively late production of the ending within the complete compilation of the MBh, others do not keep to the distinction they themselves are making. For although epic scholarship generally recognizes the MBh to be a story unfolding over 18 *parvans*, which ought to imply its recognition of the SĀ as the ending, scholars discussing the epic's final books undermine the SĀ as pertaining to "real epic material" by emphasizing this story's other representations like the *Jaya* or the *Bhārata* epic.

5. Scholarly Retelling of the Ending of the *Mahābhārata*

The reluctance of scholars to accept the SĀ as an integral part of the MBh is also evident in the ways in which epic scholarship retells the story of the ending. This section shows that even in its retelling, epic scholarship largely expresses an ambivalent stance toward the ending. Various such accounts tend to exhibit the ending as an insignificant episode, unworthy, as it were, of a closer look. This dismissal of the SĀ gains further validation as we compare accounts of the ending with scholarly retellings of other MBh books, which are usually narrated at greater length and consideration. In my opinion, scholars' tendency to

overlook these particular MBh *parvans* demands attention, if only on the grounds that endings (as indeed beginnings) of stories, especially if they are of such considerable length as the MBh, merit notable emphasis on the part of their narrators.

Various studies of the MBh include summaries of the epic plot. A common attitude in these studies is to prolong the MbP retelling while almost entirely ignoring crucial events in the SĀ. In narrating the SĀ, scholars either provide extremely concise accounts or swiftly hover over its contents, usually in order to capture the moment of ‘all’s well that ends well’ that is encapsulated in Yudhiṣṭhira’s final entrance to heaven. The most striking element that is shared by *all* the scholarly retellings discussed below is the complete absence of Yudhiṣṭhira’s denunciation of Dharma. This points to scholars’ general avoidance of both addressing and presenting readers with the harsh events that feature in the conclusion of the MBh.¹²⁶ It should further be stated that a number of scholars who undermine books 17 and 18 (see section 4 above), are the very same retellers cited in this discussion below.

Our discussion of the ending’s adumbrated accounts, then, categorizes the retellers cited below into three types, and names them, as follows: (1)

¹²⁶ As noted above, few scholars thoroughly consider the SĀ in their studies. However, among the studies I came across with, I found the readings offered by David Shulman and Alf Hildebeitel of the ending of the MBh extremely accurate, sensitive and insightful. See D. Shulman, "The Yakṣa's Questions," *The Wisdom of Poets: Studies in Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit*, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 40-62; A. Hildebeitel, *Rethinking the Mahābhārata: A Reader's Guide to the Education of the Dharma King*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2001. See also Tamar Reich, "Ends and Closures in the Mahābhārata," *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 15, 1: 9-53, Springer, 2011; Christopher R. Austin, "The Sārasvata Yātsattra in Mahābhārata 17 and 18," *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 12, 3: 283-308, Springer, 2008; Christopher R. Austin, "Janamejaya's Last Question," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* (2009) 37: 597-625; John D. Smith, "Introduction," *The Mahābhārata: An Abridged Translation*, Penguin Classics, London, 2009, p. xviii; Herman Tiekens, "The Mahābhārata After the Great Battle," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 48 (2004): 5-46; Herman Tiekens, "Kill and be Killed: The *Bhagavadgītā* and *Anugītā* in the Mahābhārata," *Journal of Hindu Studies* 2009;2: 209-228.

‘*Mahāprasthānika*-only relaters’ consist of scholars who retell events solely from the ending’s first book as recorded in the MhP *parvan*, but avoid recounting the SĀ altogether; (2) ‘*Naraka*-free retellers’ consist of scholars who relate events from both concluding books of the epic, but whose account of the SĀ does not mention *naraka* or any of the scenes taking place in it; (3) ‘Close-approachers’ consist of retellers who provide a relatively sensitive reading of the ending, and whose narration relates crucial events of both concluding books. Despite this, I argue that even when scholars closely approach the original narrative, they are very particular about which parts they choose to omit from their retellings. As a result, their narrations do not fully capture the drama enacted in the harsh conclusion of the MBh.

5.1 ‘*Mahāprasthānika*-Only Relaters’

The first example of a scholar belonging to this category is C. V. Vaidya, who provides a rather detailed and prolonged account of the MBh main story over some 72 pages in his book, *The Mahābhārata: A Criticism*.¹²⁷ Relating the MhP alone, and very shortly at that, Vaidya refrains from recounting the SĀ altogether:

The Pāṇḍavas having sacrificed to the fire for the last time threw it¹²⁸ into the Ganges, and followed by their wife Draupadī, started towards the north-east. They crossed the Himalayas, proceeded beyond the great desert and went onwards till at last one by one they fell down dead.¹²⁹

Although Vaidya relates the opening events of the MhP, in which the Pāṇḍavas abandon their kingdom and set forth toward their death, his narration of this scene suggests that *all* of them died falling down on the ground. In other words,

¹²⁷ C. V. Vaidya, *The Mahābhārata: A Criticism*, A. J. Combridge, Bombay, 1905, pp. 111-183.

¹²⁸ I assume that by “it” Vaidya refers to Arjuna’s Gāṇḍīva bow.

¹²⁹ Vaidya, (1905): 180.

Vaidya’s account implies that the five Pāṇḍava brothers died in the same way. Although the MBh indeed depicts the death of Nakula, Sahadeva, Arjuna, Bhīma and Draupadī as resulting from their fall, Yudhiṣṭhira remains alive to proceed alone on his way as he enters heaven. The reason behind Vaidya’s inaccurate narration in this instance is, as noted above, on account of his abstaining from relating further crucial events both in the MhP and the SĀ *parvans*. The MBh sees Yudhiṣṭhira in these scenes conversing with Indra, passing Dharma’s second test (in his not forsaking his *bhakta* dog), entering heaven, finding Duryodhana and the Kauravas thriving there, descending to *naraka*, discovering his suffering kin, and finally, as a consequence, denouncing Dharma; having passed this third and final test, Yudhiṣṭhira eventually re-ascends to heaven.¹³⁰

Apart from Vaidya’s extremely skeletal narration of the ending above, he also makes an odd comment, as he calls the following MhP scene ‘absurd’:

The story of the Pāṇḍavas going west, south and east and seeing Dvārakā submerged is absurd. They could not have walked so long, and the Mahāprasthāna according to *Dharmaśāstra*, is only towards the north-east.¹³¹

Vaidya criticizes here the ending’s (alleged) mode of realism and doubts its factual credibility. His explanation as to why this scene is absurd, “they could not have walked so long”, is in itself a rather curious one; for how could this be a valid argument in relation to a story such as the MBh, in which fantastical and fictionally illogical motifs and elements abound? Neither the *Dharmaśāstra* reference Vaidya includes here, nor his explanation (“they could not have walked so long”) are capable of compromising this scene’s reliability as part of the epic

¹³⁰ See detailed summary of books 17 and 18 in chapter 2 below.

¹³¹ Vaidya, (1905): 209.

narrative. These do, however, disclose the writer's endeavour to undermine the ending's credibility by suggesting its irrelevancy for the epic as a whole.

Another 'Mahāprasthānika-only relater' is Arthur A. MacDonell, who provides a brief outline of the MBh story in his book, *A History of Sanskrit Literature*.¹³² MacDonell presents a concise account of the MhP without so much as mentioning any of the SĀ scenes. In a way that is similar to Vaidya's account, MacDonell's narration of the story implies that Yudhiṣṭhira died along with his brothers during the Pāṇḍavas' circumambulation of the earth. Unlike the former account, MacDonell's retelling also suggests that the brothers' ascent to heaven occurred immediately after that. This event, which occurs in the MBh right at the very end of the SĀ, cannot be more removed (in terms of narrative sequence) from the order of events presented by MacDonell:

The Paṇḍus themselves, at last weary of life, leaving the young prince Parikṣit, grandson of Arjuna, to rule over Hastināpura, retired to the forest, and dying as they wandered towards Meru, the mountain of the gods, ascended to heaven with their faithful spouse.¹³³

5.2 'Naraka-Free Retellers'

The first 'naraka-free reteller' is R. C. Dutt, whose book, *Maha-bharata: epic of the Bharatas*, primarily consists of translations to selected epic episodes. Dutt, like other scholars in this category, jointly narrates the MhP and the SĀ parvans, as follows:

On hearing of the death of their friend Krishna, the Pandav brothers place Prakshit [i.e. Parikṣit], the grandson of Arjun, on the throne, and retire to the

¹³² See MacDonell, (1900): 291-294.

¹³³ *ibid.*, p. 293.

Himalayas. Draupadi drops down dead on the way, then Sahadeva, then Nakula, then Arjun, and then Bhima. Yudhishtir alone proceeds to heaven in person in a celestial car. There Yudhishtir undergoes some trial, bathes in the celestial Ganges, and rises with a celestial body. He then meets Krishna, now in his heavenly form, blazing in splendor and glory. He meets his brothers whom he had lost on earth, but who are now Immortals in the sky, clad in heavenly forms.¹³⁴

Dutt's account of the epic's concluding books is composed of several successive events that colour the ending of the MBh in a light and positive tone: the Pāṇḍavas retire from their kingly lives toward death; Yudhishtira proceeds to heaven, bathes in the celestial Gaṅgā only to rise up again donned in a heavenly form to unite with Kṛṣṇa and his relatives. Among these events, Dutt mentions that Yudhishtira "undergoes some trial", but the precise nature of this trial and its significance are lost in his stringing of this somewhat vague phrasing within a chain of events that are largely conveyed in a positive manner. Whatever the nature of that trial, it is portrayed by Dutt as an insignificant matter. Moreover, the "trial" that Yudhishtira undergoes occurs, according to Dutt, in *svarga*, and not in *naraka*, which is where it actually takes place in the MBh. A misleading account such as the one provided here could have gained greater accuracy had Dutt bothered to recount the *naraka*-based scenes of the *SĀ parvan*. In abstaining from even mentioning hell or any of the scenes related to it, Dutt imparts to his readers a positive, light and palatable MBh conclusion.

Another instance of a 'naraka-free reteller' is James Fitzgerald, whose entry for the "Mahābhārata" in the *Brill Encyclopedia of Hinduism* provides a

¹³⁴ Dutt, (1898): 367.

summary of the epic plot.¹³⁵ Relating events from the MhP and the SĀ *parvans*,

Fitzgerald states the following:

The Pāṇḍavas then set out on the “great departure” in the *Mahāprasthānaparvan* ... Kṛṣṇā Draupadī and Yudhiṣṭhira’s four brothers drop along the way, but Yudhiṣṭhira enters heaven in bodily form, where, ultimately, he finds both his family and the Kauravas rejoicing happily, but only after he was tested by his father Dharma ... Yudhiṣṭhira satisfies Dharma’s test by proving that he put loyalty to his family and associates ahead of his own benefit.¹³⁶

The first apparent detail about this account is that like Dutt, Fitzgerald makes no mention of the *naraka* scenes. Even when he mentions Yudhiṣṭhira’s test, he refers to it as a singular noun. Since the events of this retelling are set in *svarga*, the mention of Yudhiṣṭhira’s test more likely refers to Dharma’s second test, which does not occur in hell but during Yudhiṣṭhira’s dialogue with Indra at the foot of heaven (resulting in the hero’s refusal to relinquish his dog). Although he states that, “Yudhiṣṭhira satisfies Dharma’s test by proving that he put loyalty to his family ... ahead of his own benefit”, the writer makes no direct mention of Yudhiṣṭhira’s third and final test by his father, which takes place in hell and concludes with the hero’s bitter denunciation of Dharma. Moreover, this retelling re-arranges the narrative’s order of events: after his brothers and wife perish, Yudhiṣṭhira enters heaven for the purpose of reuniting with them, but only after he was tested by Dharma. Thus re-shuffling the sequence of events, Fitzgerald presents a relatively easy ending that emphasizes the notion of “all’s well that ends well”. The accentuated message carried out in this retelling thus seems to be that although some hurdles are presented along the way to *svarga*, these are trite issues given the fact that ultimately, everything sorts itself out.

¹³⁵ Fitzgerald, “Mahābhārata,” in the *Brill Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, (2010): 85-91.

¹³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 91.

The last retelling in this category comes from John Brockington's study, *The Sanskrit Epics*, which includes a summary of the MBh plot.¹³⁷ Brockington relates the MhP and the SĀ, but his account of these books' contents is not fully accurate. Brockington relatively prolongs his retelling of the MhP, and yet his narration of the SĀ is not precise. As a result, this particular account basically does not disclose *any* information about the SĀ at all:

Next, in the *Mahāprasthānikaparvan*, ... after learning about the fate of the Yādavas and Kṛṣṇa's death, the Pāṇḍavas renounce the world, after installing Arjuna's grandson as king. They start first toward the east but then make their way towards the Himālayas, dying one by one on the way; Draupadī is the first to fall (her failing according to Yudhiṣṭhira being her partiality for Arjuna), then Sahadeva, Nakula, Arjuna and Bhīma. In the *Svargārohaṇaparvan*, ... after further tests which involve his refusal to leave the dog which depends on him, Yudhiṣṭhira himself enters heaven.¹³⁸

Brockington provides a rather detailed account of the MhP: he first emphasizes that the Pāṇḍavas' decision to renounce the world is on account of Kṛṣṇa's death; he then discloses the fact that they installed Parikṣit as their successor; relating the Pāṇḍavas' journey toward death, Brockington records the order in which they died, and even mentions Draupadī's *doṣa* (the flaw on account of which she perished). Although Brockington's summary of the ending is relatively elaborate, his depiction of the SĀ merely consists of two events which, in fact, do not occur in the MBh's eighteenth book at all: "after further tests which involve his refusal to leave the dog which depends on him, Yudhiṣṭhira himself enters heaven." Like Fitzgerald, Brockington does not relate Yudhiṣṭhira's third test in *naraka*, nor does his account include any of the *naraka*-scenes. However, unlike the former, Brockington is inaccurate in his narration of the SĀ, since the dog-test and

¹³⁷ J. Brockington, (1988): 28-34.

¹³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 34.

Yudhiṣṭhira's entrance to heaven subsequent to it, occur in the narrative in the MhP rather than in the SĀ.¹³⁹

5.3 'Close-Approachers'

The first 'close-approacher' our discussion examines is Edward P. Rice, who provides a lengthy summary of all 18 MBh *parvans* over some 78 pages in his book, *The Mahābhārata: Analysis and Index*.¹⁴⁰ After an extremely accurate and detailed account of the MhP, Rice summarizes the SĀ, as follows:

Yudhiṣṭhira, seeing Duryodhana in heaven and his brothers not there, refuses to stay, and asks to go where his brothers and Draupadī are. An angel-guide leads him down by the awful 'sinners road', where he hears the voices of his brothers and Draupadī, in torture, appealing to him to stay. He decides to stay with them. The deities, led by Indra, come; the illusory hell disappears; Yudhiṣṭhira is highly commended for his steadfastness, and ascends to the real heaven, where he meets his brothers and Draupadī.¹⁴¹

First, let us note that in comparison to the retellers discussed above, Rice is definitely a 'close-approacher', since his retelling not merely provides a skeletal adumbration of the ending, but actually takes notice of significant details. Rice first mentions Yudhiṣṭhira's (shocking) discovery of finding Duryodhana thriving in heaven, where the hero expects to find his beloved relatives. He then, unlike any reteller above, addresses the fact that Yudhiṣṭhira descends to *naraka* in order to find his brothers. Finally, Rice discloses that upon hearing the pained voices of his relatives calling to him from hell, Yudhiṣṭhira "decides to stay with them". Rice's remarkable attention to detail notwithstanding, he still fails to note Yudhiṣṭhira's denunciation of Dharma. Although he relates two significant events

¹³⁹ See MBh, 17.3.1-29.

¹⁴⁰ Edward P. Rice, *The Mahābhārata: Analysis and Index*, Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, Mysore, 1934, pp. 7-85.

¹⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 84.

around it – one is its cause (the discovery of his brothers in hell), and the other its direct result (“the illusory hell disappears”) – Rice chooses to discard this crucial moment of the original narrative in his narration.

Another ‘close-approacher’ is Louis Renou, who provides in his book, *Hinduism*, an abridged detailed translation of the MhP *parvan*. Moreover, Renou describes key events in the SĀ: Yudhiṣṭhira finds “to his surprise” Duryodhana in *svarga*, “but not his brothers or Draupadī”; declining heaven, he decides to look for his relatives in hell. Renou includes a highly vivid depiction of *naraka* and its frightful sights,¹⁴² followed by the passage below:

Suddenly he hears the voices of his brothers and companions imploring him to assuage their torments, and not desert them. His resolution is taken. Deeply affected, he bids the angel leave him to share their miseries. This is his last trial. The whole scene now vanishes. It was a mere illusion, to test his constancy to the utmost. He is now directed to bathe in the heavenly Ganges; and having plunged into the sacred stream, he enters the real heaven, where at length, in company with Draupadī and his brothers, he finds rest and happiness which were unattainable on earth.¹⁴³

Indeed, like other retellings discussed in this category, Renou offers a sensitive reading of the ending of the MBh. Taking notice of the story’s harsh elements, Renou presents his readers with the heightened emotional affect that the brothers’ tormented voices imposes on Yudhiṣṭhira, while calling the hero’s decision to remain with them “his last trial”. Like Rice, Renou also notes that “the whole scene now vanishes”, adding that, “it was a mere illusion, to test his constancy to the utmost.” Yet, despite the close-reading Renou makes of the ending, he abstains from mentioning (1) how this trial came to be; (2) who Yudhiṣṭhira was tested by; and, finally, (3) what caused this scene to vanish. Had Renou added a

¹⁴² Louis Renou, *Hinduism*, George Braziller, New York, 1961, p. 146.

¹⁴³ *ibid.*, pp. 146-147.

mere sentence or two in his retelling to depict Yudhiṣṭhira's denunciation of Dharma, these questions would certainly have been resolved.

Lastly, we discuss Maurice Winternitz' account of the ending. In his book, *A History of Indian Literature*, Winternitz provides a long summary of the MBh's 18 *parvans* over some 48 pages.¹⁴⁴ Presenting a rather detailed account of the MhP, Winternitz then summarizes the *SĀ parvan* beginning with Yudhiṣṭhira's arrival to heaven:

Now when he even sees Duryodhana seated upon a heavenly throne, and honoured by all, he has had enough of heaven, and demands to be conducted to the worlds where his brothers and heroes like Karṇa are. Then the gods give him a messenger to accompany him to hell, where he sees the terrible tortures of the damned. He is already turning away from this awful sight, when he hears voices imploring him to stay, as a beneficent breath of air emanates from him. Full of pity he asks the tortured souls who they are, and he is informed that they are his brothers and friends. Then he is seized by pain and anger at the injustice of Fate, and he sends the messenger back to the gods to tell them that he will not go to heaven, but will remain in hell.¹⁴⁵

As opposed to the scholarly accounts outlined above, Winternitz offers a highly sensitive reading of the story. In stating that the hero "has had enough of heaven", Winternitz addresses the pain Yudhiṣṭhira undergoes by the shocking realization of finding Duryodhana in *svarga*. Faithfully depicting Yudhiṣṭhira's descent to *naraka*, Winternitz nearly cites the original narrative, stating that the hero "is already turning away from this awful sight, when he hears voices imploring him to stay, as a beneficent breath of air emanates from him". Moreover, Winternitz is the only scholar among those discussed above who even notices the subtle, yet highly crucial detail in the MBh narrative, according to which, Yudhiṣṭhira at first *fails* to recognize the voices calling to him from hell. Yet, despite approaching the

¹⁴⁴ Winternitz, (1977): 327-375.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 375.

original narrative so closely, this retelling also omits the most climactic event in the MBh's ending; for Winternitz fails to recognize Yudhiṣṭhira's condemnation of Dharma, rendering it a mere raging rant against Fate instead: "Then he is seized by pain and anger at the injustice of Fate, and he sends back the messenger back to the gods to tell them that he will not go to heaven, but will remain in hell". It is possible that Winternitz is following here a traditional reading of this moment in the text, as it is recorded in Kṣemendra's epitome of the MBh, the *Bhāratamañjarī*, which turns the hero's denunciation of Dharma to a censure against Fate's fickle working.¹⁴⁶ Be that as it may, scholarly retellings of the MBh share one arranging principle. Even when scholars (like Winternitz) offer a close-reading of the ending, let alone when they concisely sketch it, they do not note the importance of the SĀ's most climactic event as meriting consideration. This paradoxical event sees the personification of *dharma* censuring Dharma.¹⁴⁷

In summary, the discussion above has shown that epic scholarship provides a rather poor presentation of the MBh's ending. This orientation is expressed in scholarly literature in various ways. Some of the accounts outlined above are partially inaccurate in their narration of scenes from the MhP and the SĀ *parvans*. Several accounts distort the actual plot. Vaidya, for example, provides curious explanations as to why the story recorded in the MBh is unreasonable, expecting the text to suddenly shift genre. Other scholars seem eager to present a 'good ending' to the epic's harsh conclusion. And yet a

¹⁴⁶ See detailed discussion on Kṣemendra's *Bhāratamañjarī* in chapter 2 below.

¹⁴⁷ Another "close approacher" who provides a similar account of the ending as Winternitz' is Hermann Jacobi. See *Mahābhārata: Inhaltsangabe, Index und Concordanz der Calcuttaer und Bombayer Ausgaben*, Verlag von Friedrich Cohen, Bonn, 1903, pp. 190-192.

common denominator to *all* the accounts discussed above is their complete omission of Yudhiṣṭhira's denunciation of Dharma.

Since I find this orientation in epic scholarship not only piquant but rather meaningful, we may now ask: what induces scholars to produce distorted accounts of the ending? And why is the SĀ's story so poorly misrepresented by them? Although there can be no conclusive answers to these questions, I would hazard a few assumptions. Historical accounts that disregard the ending as an integral part of the epic are possibly influential to the degree that scholars are reluctant to regard the SĀ as a story worth considering.¹⁴⁸ It may also be that this 'trend' in epic scholarship is so widespread that, since scholars draw upon each other in their studies, they consequently fail to examine the SĀ closely. Another reason may derive from the ending's traditional reading in Sanskrit literature, which either provided a 'happy ending' for the MBh in later adaptations, or advanced the notion that the ending of the MBh is an example of a faulty conclusion which ought to be altered (proposed by at least one Sanskrit theoretician).¹⁴⁹ Another explanation may stem from personal inclinations or aesthetic dispositions, according to which a number of scholars found the idea of this long story ending with such a harsh conclusion simply repulsive, anti-climactic, or even disappointing.¹⁵⁰ Whatever the reasons may be, it is clear that the ending of the MBh has been largely neglected in epic scholarship.

¹⁴⁸ "Because of their perceived lateness, these [four concluding] *parvans* have in the past drawn scant scholarly attention." Tamar Reich, "Ends and Closures in the *Mahābhārata*," *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 15, 1: 9-53, Springer, 2011, p. 12.

¹⁴⁹ See discussion in chapter 3 below.

¹⁵⁰ See Tamar Reich's study that explores several possible closures of the narrative of the MBh. Reich's ground assumption regarding the epic's resolution, though, is expressed in the following: "On the whole I find that a truly satisfying resolution is not achieved within the *Mahābhārata* narrative itself. I do not see this as a fault of the *Mahābhārata* – rather, I see the *Mahābhārata* as a literary work that addresses theological, ideological, and political tensions and does not force a

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the scholarly literature on the epic with the aim of establishing the earliest possible date from which we know of the ending of the MBh. The first section outlined scholars' historical views. I discussed the consensual approach in epic scholarship for the development of the MBh through a detailed presentation of three comprehensive models of historical growth. Based mainly on these models, I offered an integrative framework for the approximate dates of the composition of the MBh, which also made references to the historical views of various other scholars. There are four points worth highlighting that emerge from this integrative scheme: (1) epic scholarship uniformly agrees that there is no evidence of a Sanskrit MBh prior to 400 BCE; (2) epic scholarship typically delineates a compositional timeframe for the *entire* MBh based on a gradual model of growth between a *terminus post quem* in the fourth century BCE and a *terminus ante quem* in the fourth century CE; (3) epic scholarship largely agrees that between 200-500 CE this text did not greatly vary in extent and content from the text of today, that is, as an opus that extends over 18 *parvans* (including the MhP and the SĀ *parvans*) and contains the HV appendix, as well as a long introduction and framework; (4) scholars tend to surmise that this text, which is traditionally known as a *śatasāhasrikī-saṃhitā*, was completed earlier rather than later (that is, c. 200 CE).

monolithic solution.” Reich, (2011): 10. For Reich, then, the SĀ creates an unfulfilled expectation on the part of the reader for closure or a happy ending: “The *Svargārohaṇa Parvan* is perhaps the strongest example of how the attainment of a good afterlife is felt to be a required closure to a virtuous life if a belief in divine benevolence is to be maintained. It is also the perfect example of how the *Mahābhārata* narrative creates in the reader an expectation of closure and immediately subverts it. Heaven is elusive in the *Mahābhārata*. This may be a literary strategy intended to create suspense, as well as to teach a lesson, namely, that as long as one is not fully detached, one expects happy endings, but such endings are ultimately also illusions.” *ibid.* p. 21.

The second section of this chapter located the SĀ within the above discussed timeframe. It concluded that the ending is part of the MBh compilation from at least the third century CE. The discussion further showed that an ending that differs in any appreciable way from the story preserved in the C.Ed. of the MBh is unknown. Apart from the evidence brought forward (in 1898) by Hopkins regarding the *Bhāratadruma*, which is based on one of the Vulgate edition's opening lists-of-contents that does not mention the thirteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth books (thereby pointing to the epic as concluding with the *Mausala parvan*), we have no other evidence of a MBh ending with a different conclusion other than the MhP and the SĀ *parvans*. Moreover, unlike the *anukramaṇī* and the *parvasaṃgraha*, which are attested in *all* the Mss constituting the C.Ed. and which include the MhP and the SĀ *parvans*, the *Bhāratadruma* analogy is *not* affirmed by *all* the Mss. It is thus my opinion that there is simply no sufficient evidence to undermine the authenticity of these particular *parvans*.

The third section analyzed the reconstructed oldest extant *parvan*-list of the MBh that is recorded in the Spitzer Ms. This analysis pointed out that a version of the ending of the MBh existed as early as the Kuṣāṇa period (c. 0-300 CE). Presenting several arguments, I showed that the ending in the Spitzer *parvan*-list is likely to have consisted in the seventeenth and the eighteenth books of the MBh. If this hypothesis is correct, it follows that the Spitzer list further strengthens the view considering these particular *parvans* as constituting important and integral portions of the epic's complete compilation even at a stage when the MBh was still in a state of progressive development.

These discussions provoked further questions regarding the reluctance of scholars to accept the SĀ as an integral part of the epic, and the reasons for their apparent undermining of its authenticity and relevancy. Although both the material available for the Sanskrit MBh, and scholars themselves point to the ending as being an inseparable part of the complete compilation of the MBh, epic scholarship doubts the authenticity of the ending and resists accepting it as a relevant and integral section that pertains to the epic as a whole. The fourth and the fifth sections of this chapter addressed these problems by investigating two aspects of this stance toward the ending in epic scholarship.

The fourth section explored scholarly reluctance to accept the SĀ as an integral part of the epic. The discussion emphasized that an entirely valid stance in epic scholarship tends (naturally) to recognize the production of the concluding books of the MBh at a later date. Nonetheless, I argued that scholars do not keep to the distinction they themselves are making between the *full* Sanskrit MBh of 100,000 verses, which they recognize to be the subject-matter of their studies, and earlier representations of the story. In addressing the final books of the MBh, scholars suddenly emphasize earlier versions of the epic (like the *Jaya* or the *Bhārata* which do not represent the *full* story of the MBh), expressing thereby a disinclination to consider them a part of the epic by relegating these books as not pertaining to its “oldest core”. I therefore concluded that scholarly views that attempt to determine where the epic has ended or suggest a different conclusion other than the SĀ (e.g. the *Strī-*, *Āśvamedhika-* *parvans* etc.) are conveyed without sufficient evidence. I emphasized the seeming unsoundness of these discussions not because they advance the idea of the ending’s production at a late date, but

rather on account of scholars' undermining its relevancy to the narrative. I would like to point out several implications that derive from this ambivalent stance toward the ending: (1) it challenges the consensual scholarly view on the epic's historical growth. For, if scholars largely maintain that there existed, at a certain moment in history, the complete compilation of the MBh extending over 18 *parvans* (including the MhP and the SĀ), then how can the pertinence of the ending to the narrative be undermined?; (2) it also implies that scholars actually deny large parts of the narrative itself and its contents. Consequently, the bias toward the battle books as forming the nucleus of the epic leads to a dismissal of entire sections of the narrative (including the ending), as not pertinent to what certain scholars term the "real MBh"; (3) finally, I suggest that this stance in epic scholarship is subjective. Distinctions between "real epic matter" and portions outside of it, as well as discussions regarding what "adds" or "does not add" to this matter reflect divergence in emphases among scholars, whereby the pertinence of certain parts of the text to the narrative is determined according to personal preferences. These views are subjective simply because there could be no objective criteria to assess the significance or contribution of the concluding books to the epic as a whole, insofar as it comprises a literary work and is thus intrinsically resistant to impartial analyses.

The last section of this chapter discussed the particular forms in which scholars present the ending in their studies. I categorized these scholars into three groups: (1) those who provide concise accounts of the MhP alone; (2) those who refrain from mentioning *naraka*, or from recounting any of the scenes taking place in it, thereby avoiding relating crucial events of the SĀ *parvan* altogether;

and, (3) ‘close approachers’, who offer relatively sensitive readings of the ending in comparison with the first two types of retellers. However, the single most crucial event that *all* the retellers fail to note in their accounts is Yudhiṣṭhira’s denunciation of *dharma*, as recorded in the SĀ. My discussion emphasized that scholars largely distort the story of the ending and misrepresent it in their studies. In light of the fact that this is *not* another tale, episode, or story within the huge encyclopaedia that is the MBh, but rather, *the* ending, which concludes the epic’s main storyline, I expressed my opinion that this tendency in epic scholarship is meaningful and merits attention. The discussion in this section thus sheds light on this anomaly by pointing out that the ending of the MBh has been largely neglected. My own understanding regarding this ambivalent stance is that since MBh scholars refrained from closely examining the SĀ, they effectively tended to overlook the ending of the epic, and consequently lost a crucial aspect of narrative meaning to which I turn in the following chapters.

Chapter 2

Sanskrit Literature of the Ending of the

Mahābhārata

Numerous stories and episodes of the *Mahābhārata*¹⁵¹ have been adapted in the long history of Sanskrit literature subsequent to the epic's completion (what shall hereafter be referred to as 'the later tradition'). Nevertheless, in the later literature that revolves around the MBh, the epic's concluding passage, the *Svargārohaṇa-parvan*, remains almost entirely overlooked. The ending of the MBh aroused a profound ambivalence among poets of the later tradition. One sign of this attitude is the strikingly small pool of SĀ retellings in Sanskrit. Another is the tendency of retellers of the epic to avoid recounting the ending altogether by concluding their versions at an earlier point than the SĀ in the chronology of the original text. We can also sometimes observe later writers grappling with the problematic issues of the ending by producing "sugarcoated" versions of its harsh conclusion. Another major indication of the ambivalence the later tradition evinces toward the ending is the utter absence of its fundamental paradox -- *dharma* censuring Dharma -- in epitomes of the MBh.

How is it that the ending of a major canonical text of Sanskrit literature elicits so little attention? Why has such a harsh and dramatic episode of the MBh,

¹⁵¹ The following discussion often refers to the MBh as the 'sourcebook'. It should be noted that I use this term to indicate the Vyāsa-text or what we can call the base-text (*mūla*), and with the purpose of distinguishing between this *mūla*-MBh and other forms of the MBh (whether textual, oral etc.).

in which *dharma* is denounced by the personification of *dharma* itself (Dharma-rāja), received such meagre consideration by later writers? Looking at various retellings, this chapter seeks to answer these questions in order to understand how the SĀ was received in the later tradition. Specifically, it explores the ways poets addressed the problematic issues inherent to the SĀ and the kind of answers they offered to resolve them.

This chapter opens with a schematic division of later reworkings of the epic into three main groups: (1) fragmentary adaptations of the MBh; (2) sequence-adaptations; and, lastly, (3) epitomes of the entire MBh. Discussing the first two of these (which do not include a SĀ account), the first section of this chapter argues that in comparison to other episodes of the MBh, the SĀ *parvan* suffers from relative neglect in the later tradition. After mapping works belonging to the first two categories, prime consideration will be given to the third category, which consists of MBh epitomes. The second section summarizes books 17 and 18 of the MBh (the MhP and SĀ *parvans*) in order to situate the discussion of later retellings in the context of the epic source. This is followed by a presentation of several central parameters that are meant to show how later epitomists dealt with the difficult issues inherent to the ending of the MBh.

The third section discusses three epitomes: Kṣemendra's *Bhāratamañjarī* (eleventh century), Amaraçandra's *Bālabhārata* (mid-thirteenth century), and Agastya's *Bālabhārata* (first half of the fourteenth century). After locating each epitome in its stylistic and historical context, I then offer a close reading of these adaptations with the aim of highlighting their respective relations to their source (that is, the MBh text) and their relations to one another.

Following the analysis of these epitomes, the last and most important section of this chapter presents a preliminary study of a hitherto unknown and unpublished retelling of the MBh entitled *Bhārataprabandha*. This text consists of several *prabandhas*, including a concluding passage titled the *Svargārohaṇa-prabandha*, which offers an original resolution to the paradox of the SĀ. This section presents several questions concerning the study of the *Bhārataprabandha*. Primarily, I look to the problem of identifying its as yet unknown author. I discuss the Keralan poet, Melputtūr Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa (c. 1550-1650 CE), as a possible, indeed in the present state of our knowledge the only candidate for authorship of this text. A discussion of the link between this text and the tradition of the Cākyār Kūttu theatre follows and is based on the poet's dedication of one of his *prabandhas* to a famous actor of his time. Reviewing the scholarship on Melputtūr Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, I argue that it has created more confusion than understanding. I then raise a few tentative suggestions regarding the nature and composition of the *Bhārataprabandha*, and conclude with a detailed discussion of the *Svargārohaṇa-prabandha*. In offering a close reading of this work in relation to the MBh sourcebook, I argue that in comparison to the other epitomes, this retelling is the most innovative and daring in its interpretation of the MBh text; I also point to some of the reasons for this novel approach in the particular setting of early modern Kerala.

1. General Scheme of *Mahābhārata* Adaptations

Retellings of the MBh can be broadly divided into three central types: (1) the most common form of adaptations are retellings of (usually only) one episode of the epic; (2) another rather common type of adaptations are those consisting of several episodes of the epic that form a complete MBh storyline; and, (3) the rarest type of adaptation consists of epitomes of the entire MBh, and, unlike the first two, these necessarily include a SĀ account.

1.1 Fragmentary Adaptations of the MBh

The first category of later MBh adaptations in Sanskrit includes retellings of discrete episodes of the epic. A number of these works were composed by the greatest poets in classical Sanskrit, and some are labelled ‘great poetic works’ (*Mahākāvyas*). Although such texts typically narrate one episode of the MBh, a few of them contain more than a single episode, usually focused on a specific character or subject of the epic. However, no single text in this category attempts to narrate a MBh storyline (whether partial or complete), and thus none of them includes the SĀ in their narrative.

It is important to note that I do not attempt to provide a comprehensive account of all the works in Sanskrit that may belong to this typology. My purpose, rather, is to outline a representative sample of MBh-based literature in the later tradition as a point of reference when looking at other MBh adaptations that include a SĀ account. Some of the more famous examples of works of this kind are listed below.

There are no less than five dramas on various MBh themes attributed, probably wrongly, to Bhāsa (300 CE):¹⁵² the *Pañcarātra* is based on an episode from the *Virāṭa-parvan*, in which Duryodhana sends Droṇa to track down the whereabouts of the Pāṇḍavas in the course of five nights; the *Dūtavākya* is a one-act drama relating Kṛṣṇa's unsuccessful endeavours to prevent the impending war between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas, as recorded in the *Udyoga-parvan*; the *Madhyamavyāyoga* records Bhīma's encounter with his son Ghaṭotkaca, who was born from his liaison with the *rākṣasī* Hidimbā (*Vana-parvan*); the *Karṇabhāra* depicts the character of Karṇa based on scenes from the first, third, fifth, eighth, and twelfth books of the MBh; finally, the *Ūrubhaṅga* is a one-act play relating an episode from the *Śalya-parvan*, in which Bhīma breaks Duryodhana's thighs, thereby bringing about the latter's defeat at the end of the MBh war.¹⁵³

Approximately in the fifth century CE, the great Sanskrit poet Kālidāsa composed the play *Abhijñāna-Śākuntala*, relating the story of prince Duṣyanta's love for Śakuntalā, as recorded in the *Ādi-parvan*.¹⁵⁴ The *mahākāvya* *Kirātārjunīya* was composed by the poet Bhāravi in the sixth century. This work, which is based on events from the *Vana-parvan*, recounts the story of Arjuna's voyage to the Himālaya in order to acquire the invincible *paśupata* weapon from

¹⁵² Although the above mentioned plays are attributed to Bhāsa, a number of scholars doubt his authorship. See Heidrun Brückner, "New Light on 'Bhāsa'? The Würzburg Multimedia Databank on Sanskrit Drama and Theatre," *Theatrum Mirabiliorum Indiae Orientalis: A Volume to Celebrate the 70th Birthday of Professor Maria Krzysztof Byrski*, eds., Monika Monakowska and Jacek Woźniak, 2007, pp. 380-393 (= *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 60.2; Warsaw: Elipsa); Barbara Stoler Miller, "Karṇabhāra: The Trial of Karṇa," *Essays on the Mahābhārata*, ed. A. Sharma, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 2007, pp. 57-67. Stoler Miller notes that with the exception of the *Pañcarātra*, these plays are written in the *vyāyoga* genre which is a one-act dramatization of a heroic conflict depicted in a brief time-frame of less than a single day. See *ibid.*, p. 58.

¹⁵³ Another MBh-related play attributed to Bhāsa is the *Dūtaghāṭotkaca* depicting Ghaṭotkaca as a mediator messenger attempting to stop the battle that has already begun. However, these episodes are not directly found in the MBh.

¹⁵⁴ For a discussion on the difficulty in determining Kālidāsa's date see M. Krishnamacariar, *History of Classical Sanskrit Literature*, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 2004 (first pub. 1937), pp. 99-113.

Śiva, who takes the form of a hunter (*kirāta*). Another *mahākāvya*, by the poet Māgha (late seventh century), the *Śiśupālavadhā*, relates Kṛṣṇa's slaying of Śiśupāla, as recorded in the *Sābha-parvan*. Also in the seventh century, the poet Nīivarman composed the *Kīcakavadhā*, which depicts Bhīma's slaying of Kīcaka in the course of the Pāṇḍavas' incognito exile, based on events from the *Virāṭa-parvan*.¹⁵⁵

Yet, arguably the most popular MBh story is the *Nalopākhyāna* from the *Vana-parvan*. This story was subject to numerous adaptations in the later tradition, among which are Śrīharṣa's *mahākāvya* the *Naiṣadhīyacarita* (twelfth century), Vāsudeva's *Nalodaya* (ninth century), Vāmaṇa Bhaṭṭa's *Nalābhyudaya* (fifteenth century), Rāmacandra Sūri's *Nalavilāsa*, Nīlakaṇṭha Dikṣita's play the *Nalacaritra*, and Trivikrama Bhaṭṭa Bāṇa's *Nalacampū* (tenth century).¹⁵⁶

As this relatively long list makes clear, later Sanskrit literature was saturated with poetic works that had MBh stories and themes as their prime subject. The epic, so it seems, served as a reservoir overflowing with enticing themes for Sanskrit poets. Nonetheless, despite the ending's dramatic features, and perhaps because of its climactic aspects, later retellers of the MBh avoided incorporating the SĀ in their works. Although the conclusion of the MBh could potentially have served as an extremely interesting source for later writers, this particular episode was almost entirely overlooked by the later tradition.

¹⁵⁵ This work belongs to the genre of double-entendre (*dvisandhānakāvya*). The protagonists' speech has two meanings, one for themselves, and the other for their surrounding (which, as a consequence, can not recognize them). See Yigal Bronner, *Extreme Poetry: The South Asian Movement of Simultaneous Narration*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2010, pp. 57-81.

¹⁵⁶ For several other *Nalopākhyāna* poetic and dramatic adaptations see detailed account in Krishnamachariar, (2004): 183-186.

1.2 Sequence-adaptations

Our second category consists of reworkings of several episodes of the epic. None of these, however, includes an account of the epic's concluding passages, but rather end at earlier chronological points prior to the SĀ. Reworking several episodes from the original story, poets of such retellings not only form alternative sequences of the MBh storyline, but also offer *alternative endings* to the MBh. Indeed, the main argument emerging from the following discussion is that by determining where precisely this long story should culminate, poets of such works tend to soften the ending by concluding on a positive note.

The first of these works is that of the Bengali poet Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa (seventh century), the *Veṅṅisaṃhāra* ("The Binding of the Hair"). This drama of six acts, which begins with the famous *Sabhā-parvan* incident, in which Duṣṣāsana forcibly exposes Draupadī's hair, results in Bhīma's vow to tie it back again only with hands wet with Duryodhana's blood. Depicting Bhīma fulfilling his vow at the battlefield, the play culminates with a Kaurava defeat at the great battle and is followed by Yudhiṣṭhira's coronation.

Two additional works belong to the *dvisandhāna-kāvya* genre, in which the story of the MBh is narrated alongside its sibling epic, the *Rāmāyaṇa*.¹⁵⁷ The first was composed by the Jain poet Dhanañjaya (c. 800 CE), who was the author of the oldest extant bitextual poem. Although Dhanañjaya's MBh begins with the

¹⁵⁷ The first *dvisandhāna kāvya* was composed by the theoretician and poet Daṇḍin (later half of the seventh century), yet most of it is now lost. Other *śleṣa-kāvya*s (now lost) revolving around MBh themes are those of the Jain writer Hemacandra (1150 CE), the *Saptasandhānakāvya*, which relates concurrently the tales of Rāma, Yudhiṣṭhira, and five Jain saints; and the *Rāghavapāṇḍavīya* of Śrutakīrti Traividya (1100 CE), a poem supposedly telling the two epics simultaneously as well as being a palindrome. See Bronner, (2010): 91-121.

Pāṇḍavas' birth and ends with Kṛṣṇa's defeat of king Jarāsaṃdha, as recorded in the *Sabhā-parvan*, this adaptation depicts other famous scenes in the MBh plot, such as the Pāṇḍavas' exile in the forest (*Vana-parvan*), and Kīcaka's death in the *Virāṭa-parvan*. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that large sections of the MBh remain untold by this poet, who narrates several *Rāmāyaṇa* episodes without the corresponding sections from the MBh. It would thus be fair to state that Dhanañjaya is generally more preoccupied with telling the *Rāmāyaṇa* story than he is with the MBh.¹⁵⁸ The *Rāghavapāṇḍavīya*, another work of this genre, was composed by the poet Kavirāja, in the second half of the twelfth century. Among various scenes, the poet relates Arjuna's curse by Urvaśī and the Pāṇḍavas' exile in the forest, as recorded in the *Vana-parvan*, as well as Kīcaka's harassment of Draupadī, and Bhīma's killing of Kīcaka, as recorded in the *Virāṭa-parvan*. Kavirāja concludes his MBh on a positive note, with a Pāṇḍava victory at the battlefield.¹⁵⁹

Another genre in which MBh is retold is the *campū*, a composition in mixed prose and verse. The most famous work in this genre is the *Bhāratacampū* of Anantabhaṭṭa (eleventh century), who concludes his MBh with Yudhiṣṭhira's *aśvamedha* and long-lasting reign.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Bronner notes that Dhanañjaya was most probably from the Kannada speaking region of the Deccan. His work, the *Dvisandhāna-kāvya*, consists of 18 chapters that co-narrate the two epics. The first three cantos revolve around the protagonists' birth, the fourth narrates the Pāṇḍavas' exile years in the forest, and cantos 5-6 narrate Kīcaka's killing by Bhīma in the *Virāṭa-parvan*. See *ibid.*, pp. 102-114.

¹⁵⁹ Bronner notes that Kavirāja's work was composed in Vanavāsi (a.k.a. Jayantīpura) under the patronage of the Kādamba monarch Kāmadeva. For a detailed discussion on Kavirāja's work see *ibid.*, pp. 122-154.

¹⁶⁰ See Krishnamachariar, (2004): 511. Two additional *Bhāratacampūs* are those of Rājacūḍāmaṇi Dikṣita (seventeenth century), and Ghanaśyāma (eighteenth century). Unfortunately, I was not able to find copies of these works. One descriptive catalogue contains a few extracts of Ghanaśyāma's *Bhāratacampū* but these discuss the poet rather than his poem. See E. Hultzsch, *Reports on Sanskrit Manuscripts in Southern India*, iii, 1655, Madras, 1905, pp. 61-2. These poets have also produced *śleṣa-kāvya*s. Rājacūḍāmaṇi Dikṣita composed the *Rāghavayādapāṇḍavīya*,

In comparison with fragmentary adaptations of the MBh, this category clearly includes fewer works. Despite the fact that these works provide a fuller account of the MBh storyline -- even when narrating various, and at times quite different sequences of the MBh's story -- sequence-adaptations of the MBh share one distinctive feature; namely, the MBh's conclusion in a 'happy ending', most often by describing the Pāṇḍava's victory at the battlefield. As a result, the authors of these works consistently refrain from recounting the SĀ episode.

In summary, it would appear that Sanskrit literature has produced a strikingly small pool of later SĀ retellings and that the literature based on the epic treats the SĀ in one of two ways: (1) by avoiding the SĀ section entirely (in producing fragmentary adaptations); or, (2) by concluding on a positive note, usually with a Pāṇḍava victory at the battlefield (in producing sequence-adaptations that typically culminate quite early in the original plot).

Having discussed adaptations that do not include a SĀ account the discussion now centres upon epitomes of the entire MBh. In order to analyze these texts, the next section provides a summary of books 17 and 18 of the MBh followed by an outline of several parameters that guide the subsequent examination of the epitomes in relation to the epic sourcebook.

a poem narrating the stories of Rāma, Kṛṣṇa and the Pāṇḍavas (see Krishnamachariar, pp. 235-6); and Ghanaśyāma composed the *Abodhākara*, a poem recounting the stories of Nala, Kṛṣṇa and Hariścandra (see Krishnamachariar, (2004): 248-9).

2.1 Summary of Books 17 and 18

The *Mahāprasthānika* (book 17 of the MBh) begins with Yudhiṣṭhira's decision to depart from the world after Kṛṣṇa's death. Voicing a famous phrase that the MBh repeats a number of times: "time cooks all living beings",¹⁶¹ Yudhiṣṭhira tells Arjuna that he is reflecting on the "snares of time/death" (*kālapāśa*),¹⁶² and advises him to do the same. Agreeing with his elder brother, Arjuna passes the word to the other Pāṇḍavas, who unanimously decide to withdraw from the world and divide the kingdom between their successor Parikṣit (Abhimanyu's son), and Yuyutsu (Dhṛtarāṣṭra's descendant). Having performed the *śrāddha* ceremonies, they depart from Hastināpura with their wife Draupadī and a dog. Fasting, they set forth on their journey dressed as ascetics. Circumambulating the Bhārata kingdom, they first march southward, then northward. At an early point in their journey they meet lord Agni, who orders Arjuna to relinquish his Gāṇḍiva bow in the waters of the ocean. As they cross the Himālaya (seeing Mount Meru in the distance), Draupadī and the brothers (except Yudhiṣṭhira) fall, one after the other, to their death. Each time one of them perishes, Bhīma (who is the last to fall), points out their good merits. Perplexed, he asks Yudhiṣṭhira the reason for their unwarranted fall. Yudhiṣṭhira mentions a flaw on account of which each of them fell to their death – Draupadī's excessive affection toward Arjuna, Sahadeva's exaggerated pride in his intelligence, handsome Nakula's vanity in his beauty, Arjuna's immoderate pride in his strength and failure to fulfil a vow he took prior to the war (of vanquishing

¹⁶¹ *kālaḥ pacati bhūtāni sarvāṇi* (17.1.3).

¹⁶² B. 17.1.3. The C.Ed. rather reads '*karma-nyāsam*' (i.e. Yudhiṣṭhira considers abandoning his duties/*karma*).

his enemies in the course of a single day), and Bhīma, who was also overly proud of his strength, as well as gluttonous. As they thus perish one after the other, Yudhiṣṭhira carries on walking without so much as looking back at them. Finally, when all of them have passed away, he continues to march on his own followed by his dog alone.

The king of the gods, Indra, then arrives and invites Yudhiṣṭhira to mount his celestial car and travel to heaven. Yudhiṣṭhira agrees on two conditions: that his (dead) brothers and wife enter *svarga* along with him, and that his dog also be allowed entry. As regards the first condition, Indra assures Yudhiṣṭhira that all of them have already entered heaven and are awaiting him there (an information subsequently proven false). The second condition provokes a dialogue between the king and the god, in which Yudhiṣṭhira declares his unwillingness to abandon his dog in order to enter heaven. Referring to the dog as his *bhakta*, Yudhiṣṭhira builds an argument before Indra around the term *ānṛśaṃsya* ('non-violence, compassion, benevolence, absence of cruelty, kindness'), explaining that his resolution to not even consider abandoning his *bhakta* is on his not wishing to be responsible for any act of cruelty (*ānṛśaṃsyā hi me matiḥ*). Since Indra does not consent to this, the dialogue between the two concludes with Yudhiṣṭhira declaring that he will not desert his *bhakta* under any condition.

At that very moment, the god Dharma, having relinquished the dog form he formerly took in order to test his son (the second time in the MBh narrative), appears before his son. Pleased with Yudhiṣṭhira's benevolence, Dharma, along with Indra, carries his son to *svarga*. Upon his arrival there (probably sensing already that something is wrong), Yudhiṣṭhira tells Indra that his only wish is to

go to the place where his brothers are staying, be it good or bad (*śubham vā yadi vā pāpam*). The book ends with Indra accusing Yudhiṣṭhira, who is described as committed to non-violence (*ānṛśaṁsyasamāyuktam*), of (still) “dragging around human ties” (*mānuṣyakam sneham adyāpi parikarṣasi*) that are inappropriate to heaven.

The *Svargārohaṇa parvan* (book 18) opens with Yudhiṣṭhira realizing that the villain Duryodhana, seated on a golden throne, is thriving in *svarga*. Enraged (*amarṣitaḥ*) by this realization, he addresses the gods harshly, informing them that he cannot and will not stay in the company of the cruel and wicked Duryodhana. Again, Yudhiṣṭhira asks for the whereabouts of both Karna and his other brothers, whom he does not see there. Yudhiṣṭhira mentions before the gods that only after Karna’s death did he discover that this warrior was in fact his own brother, and that till today, he is afflicted by the pain of having had him killed in battle. Finally, Yudhiṣṭhira says that in the absence of his brothers, he finds no use in *svarga*. The gods send Yudhiṣṭhira forth with their messenger.

Yudhiṣṭhira’s descent into *naraka* is described in vivid and elaborate detail: the gods’ envoy leads him on a rough road enveloped by darkness; it is terrifying, stinking, and filled with horrible sights. On every step of the way, Yudhiṣṭhira encounters pain, affliction, death, and torture. At one point along the long journey, Yudhiṣṭhira is overcome by the unbearable stench and nearly faints; at which point he resolves to head back to *svarga*, when he suddenly hears afflicted voices calling him. These voices plead with him to remain there a while longer since his mere presence eases their excruciating pain. Although these voices sound familiar (*giraḥ purastād vai śrutapūrvāḥ*), he fails to recognize them

(*abudhyamānas tā vāco*). At last, the voices are disclosed as being those of Karṇa, his Pāṇḍava brothers and Draupadī. Unable to take any more of this pain, Yudhiṣṭhira launches into a monologue in which he reflects on the ill doing of fate (*vimamṛṣe rājā kiṁ nv idaṁ daivakāritam*). Incapable of comprehending why such virtuous people are suffering in hell while the villain Duryodhana is thriving in *svarga*, he calls this injustice a terrible aberration (*vikāra*). Finally, he rhetorically asks: "Am I indeed asleep, or awake? Am I fully conscious or unconscious? Alas! Could this be an aberration of consciousness? Or perhaps an error of my mind?" (*kiṁ nu supto 'smi jāgarmi cetayāno na cetaye / aho cittavikāro 'yaṁ syād vā me cittavibhramah*). Filled with sorrow, pain and confusion, and overcome by violent rage, Yudhiṣṭhira finally denounces his father, Dharma, and the other gods (*krodham āhārayac caiva tīvraṁ dharmasuto nṛpaḥ / devāṁś ca garhayām āsa dharmāṁ caiva yudhiṣṭhiraḥ*). He then sends back the envoy of the gods to deliver the message that he intends to remain in *naraka*.

Yudhiṣṭhira remains there for a while, when the gods, headed by Indra, arrive at the spot. Upon their arrival, the darkness that enveloped *naraka* up until that point vanishes, as if it never existed in the first place. Gradually, all the terrible sights of hell evaporate, and a pleasant, fragrant and soothing breeze begins to blow. Addressing Yudhiṣṭhira, Indra explains that it is necessary for all kings to experience *naraka*. Furthermore, he states that those whose good deeds are greater than their bad actions, first experience *naraka* and then ascend to *svarga*. Since Yudhiṣṭhira had the great guru Droṇa killed in battle by fraudulent means, says Indra, he was brought to *naraka* (and that is presumably why

Duryodhana first enjoyed heaven). Thereupon, Lord Dharma informs his son that this was yet another trial he had him undergo, the third and last in a series of tests. Dharma tells his son how pleased he is with him for once again not failing his test, adding that this awful experience “was an illusion devised by Indra” (*māyaiṣā devarājena mahendreṇa prayojitā*).

Yudhiṣṭhira is then made to plunge in the waters of the celestial Gaṅgā, where he abandons his mortal body, and assumes a heavenly form. As he is worshipped by all the denizens of heaven, Yudhiṣṭhira ascends to *svarga*. There, he beholds his brothers, Draupadī, Karṇa, the Kauravas, his uncles, teachers, ally kings and many other characters (who figured in the narrative) being re-assimilated into their divine origin.

2.2 Parameters of Examination

In order to analyse efficiently later retellings of the ending in MBh epitomes, it is useful to note several parameters that help organize and focus the following discussions. These parameters consist of crucial moments in the original plot that are more prone to modification on the part of later retellers of the epic. Since the alterations introduced in these adaptations are not arbitrary, the following points of reference demonstrate the ambivalence toward the SĀ, as later poets grant such moments novel interpretations. Such “loose joints” serve as a platform on which later poets mould new and perhaps lighter meanings to the harsh conclusion of the MBh. These parameters are:

- 1) The depiction of the main characters of the story; namely, Yudhiṣṭhira, the Pāṇḍava brothers and their wife, Draupadī, Indra, and Dharma. What

significance do retellings of the epic attribute to these characters? For example, by emphasizing the role of the dog that accompanies Yudhiṣṭhira, later poets arrive at starkly different interpretations of the SĀ.

- 2) Variations in the depiction of the heroes' fall to their death. How do later retellers interpret the reasons for their destruction? The variants of this theme are revealing and, as shown below, afford certain poets with the opportunity to 'invent' new flaws in the protagonists to justify their demise.
- 3) The dialogue of Yudhiṣṭhira and Indra prior to the ascent to heaven. Two crucial terms appear in this dialogue: *bhakta* ('dependent') and *ānṛśaṃsya* ('non-violence'). As indicated in the summary above, these are the main reasons Yudhiṣṭhira invokes in support of his adamant rejection to enter *svarga*. Despite their importance to the MBh narrative, later poets of the epic tend to either alter or discard these notions in their retellings.
- 4) Yudhiṣṭhira's second test: the encounter with Dharma disguised as a dog. Later poets offer various interpretations of this component of the narrative, in which the protagonist is (once again) tested by his father.
- 5) Yudhiṣṭhira's realization that his brothers are in hell. Later poets render various readings of Yudhiṣṭhira's liminal state of cognition in this instance. The hero's familiarity with the voices on the one hand, and failure to recognize them on the other, is subject to extensive modification, as is his striking monologue of despair prior to the moment of condemnation.

- 6) Yudhiṣṭhira's denunciation of his father, Dharma, and the other gods. This is the most crucial moment in the discussion of MBh epitomes and, as shown below, is subject to widely divergent interpretations (including, in most instances, its complete omission from the narrative).
- 7) The ontological status of *naraka* and *svarga* with the gods' arrival to these locales. Are these locations subject to transformation by later poets subsequent to Yudhiṣṭhira's condemnation? If so, of what kind and what is its significance?

3.1 Kṣemendra's *Bhāratamañjarī*¹⁶³

The oldest extant epitome of the epic was written by the Kāśmīri poet Kṣemendra Vyāsadāsa (mid-eleventh century). The poet worked under the patronage of king Ananta of Kāśmīr (r. 1029-1064 CE), and was a student of the renowned poetician, Abhinavagupta. Among Kṣemendra's more famous works are the *Rājāvali*, which recounts the history of Kāśmīr, a work on literary criticism titled, the *Aucityavicāracarcā*, and the *Avadānakalpalatā*, which narrates the story of the previous lives of the Buddha. Kṣemendra also wrote three epitomes of major Sanskrit works: the *Bṛhatkathāmañjarī*, and abridged versions of India's two great epics, the *Rāmāyaṇamañjarī* and the *Bhāratamañjarī*.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ See translation of this work's two final cantos in appendix I below.

¹⁶⁴ For a detailed account of Kṣemendra's works see Krishnamachariar, (2004): 170-173.

The *Bhāratamañjarī* (henceforth: BM) recounts the story of the entire epic in 18 chapters.¹⁶⁵ Our discussion focuses on the work's seventeenth canto, the *Mahāprasthānikaparva*, and the eighteenth canto, the *Svargaparva*, which respectively recount events from the MBh's two final books. It is worth noting that this work was extensively consulted by editors in the making of the MBh's Critical Edition due to its close agreement with Śāradā manuscripts of the epic.¹⁶⁶ Consequently, the BM is more faithful to the MBh by comparison with the other epitomes, and its narration of the ending the longest among them, consisting of 67 verses (33 verses in the seventeenth canto and 34 verses in the eighteenth).

From the very first verses of his adaptation, Kṣemendra follows the opening events of the MhP as he depicts the Pāṇḍavas' renouncing their life and setting forth on their journey. In relating the scene of the protagonists' death, the poet introduces a novel element regarding the Pāṇḍavas' flaws (that lead to their death). Although relatively faithful to the MBh account, the BM diverges from the sourcebook in its amplification of the flaws attributed to Nakula and Arjuna. Thus, if the MBh merely states that Nakula's fault was being too proud of his beauty, the BM has Yudhiṣṭhira further gloss that: "thinking himself handsome he could not tolerate competition even by Kāmadeva [himself] (*rūpamānī smareṇāpi spardhām eṣa na ca kṣamī*)".¹⁶⁷ As for Arjuna's failure to fulfil the vow of destroying his enemies in the course of a single day, Kṣemendra, perhaps referring here to the Gītā scene, holds Arjuna accountable for showing blatant

¹⁶⁵ The *Bhāratamañjarī* was published in *Kāvya-mālā*, No. 64, ed. M. Paṇḍit Śivadatta, Bombay, 1898.

¹⁶⁶ See V. S. Sukthankar, "Critical Studies in the *Mahābhārata*," *V. S. Sukthankar Memorial Edition*, Vol. 1, Bombay, 1944, pp. 36-39.

¹⁶⁷ BM 17.17.

signs of weakness on the battlefield (*śūramānī cacāraiṣa śithilaṃ samarāṅgane*).¹⁶⁸

Although the genre of epitome is marked by abbreviation, there are a few moments in the BM where Kṣemendra is perhaps more curt than other. In such moments, the abridged narration appears intentional. One such example is the way in which the poet depicts Yudhiṣṭhira's encounter with Indra. When Yudhiṣṭhira is invited to enter *svarga*, the protagonist directly tells Indra, somewhat prematurely, that he will not enter without his dog (*śunā virahitaḥ svargaṃ saśarīro na kāmaye*). While the MBh gradually builds the exchange between the two, the poet has Yudhiṣṭhira promptly declare his refusal, even before Indra had prohibited his dog from entering *svarga*. Thus, the poet signals to his audience that this scene's main subject is the dog and the conflict it arouses between Indra and Yudhiṣṭhira.

Kṣemendra is the sole epitome-poet to preserve the Sanskrit terms *ānṛśaṃsya* and *bhakta* that are crucial to the original text. Thus, when Indra eventually prohibits the dog from entering *svarga*, the poet makes use of both terms in a question Yudhiṣṭhira poses to the god: “how can I tolerate abandoning my *bhakta*? (*bhaktatyāgaṃ kathaṃ sahe*) How can there be a passage into *svarga* for one who is cruel and hostile toward his *bhakta*? (*bhaktavidveṣiṇaḥ svarge nṛśaṃsasya kuto gatiḥ*)”.¹⁶⁹ And yet, despite the preservation of such crucial terms, at other times they are used merely as contours to enable the poet to transgress (sometimes considerably) from the original. One such moment is the depiction of Yudhiṣṭhira negotiating the dog's entrance into heaven with Indra.

¹⁶⁸ BM 17.19.

¹⁶⁹ BM 17.24.

The BM's Yudhiṣṭhira is making, as it were, a business proposition to Indra regarding the dog's entitlement to heaven, which is based on his (i.e. Yudhiṣṭhira's) own good deeds: "O lord of the gods, if I have some virtue, by that may this dog go to *svarga* in its body. I cannot bear to abandon it."¹⁷⁰ Note that in comparison with Yudhiṣṭhira's firm, resolute and non-compromising character in the MBh, this supplicatory tone constitutes a significant deviation. In the MBh, the hero is so unwilling to negotiate with Indra that he is prepared to relinquish heaven itself for the sake of his *bhakta* and for the goal of fulfilling his moral obligation to *ānṛśaṃsya*. Moreover, Yudhiṣṭhira's holding fast to the value of non-violence (*ānṛśaṃsya*) is actually revealed to be the cause for his indisputable success in Dharma's recurrent tests. In Kṣemendra's retelling, however, despite the retaining of the term (in contrast to his successors who discard of it), the notion is emptied of its inherent meaning, the protagonist being cast as pleading Indra to allow his dog enter heaven.

We see here how an element of the original plot, which is crucial not only to the SĀ but also to the theme of Dharma's tests throughout the epic, is somewhat weakened or undermined by the later tradition, allowing retellers like Kṣemendra to offer easier solutions to the fundamental problems that feature in the sourcebook. Modifications of the kind produced by Kṣemendra in the eleventh century facilitate new readings of the SĀ. In this particular case, the theme of relinquishing *svarga* for reasons of *ānṛśaṃsya* is rendered a negotiable matter that can be potentially settled through bargaining. The very ideal of *ānṛśaṃsya* and its

¹⁷⁰ *yady asti sukṛtaṃ kiñcin mama tena sureśvara /
yātu svargaṃ sadehaḥ śvā nainaṃ tyaktuṃ samutsahe* // (BM 17.25)

significance are thus sidelined in favour of more palatable solutions to the problematic ending of the MBh.

In keeping with the BM's relatively faithful narration of the MBh storyline, Kṣemendra then provides a detailed account of Yudhiṣṭhira's descent to the netherworld. Nonetheless, the poet surprisingly avoids addressing the problematic issues associated with Yudhiṣṭhira's realization that his brothers are in hell. The MBh sees Yudhiṣṭhira situated in an uncanny and agonizing condition, when although the voices sound extremely familiar to him, he is incapable of recognizing them. These moments of utter confusion and disorientation lead to Yudhiṣṭhira's monologue, whose main idea is that everything he knew as valid and true until that point has been completely compromised or gone askew. The orderly world of *dharmā*, which was so central to this character's existence, has been dramatically and irreversibly undermined by the realization that the voices calling to him from hell are, in fact, those of his brothers. It is precisely this sense of bewilderment that provokes the distraught Yudhiṣṭhira to denounce Dharma and the gods altogether.

By contrast, the BM provides a surprisingly short depiction of these scenes to the effect that, as the voices call Yudhiṣṭhira, they *instantly identify* themselves before him as his brothers: "There, the son of Dharma heard the dreadful constant weeping of sinners, as they were being burnt [alive]. [They told him:] "O king, one moment! Do not turn back from this place! Since we are touched by the breezes of your *puṇya* [merit], the darkness [that envelopes us] is removed from us. We are your brothers, the Pāṇḍavas, headed by Bhīma.""¹⁷¹ The fact that

¹⁷¹ *pāpinām kvāthyamānānām ākrandaṃ dhṛtidāruṇam / kṣaṇam ekam ito rājan mā nivartasva śītalaiḥ //*

Kṣemendra introduces substantial modifications to these moments in the original plot illustrates the ambivalence toward the SĀ, and the extent to which later retellers perceived them as problematic.

Another novel element introduced in the BM is the way in which Yudhiṣṭhira is affected by the recognition that his brothers are in hell. Kṣemendra refers to the hero, who simply remains standing upon hearing his brothers' afflicted voices, with the term *nirdvandva* - "indifferent to the pairs of opposites". Yudhiṣṭhira's condition is thus described with a terminology that is often identified with the doctrine of *yoga*, implying that the hero is akin to a Yogin who has risen above duality. It is likely that the poet refers to the motif of duality in keeping with the dual backdrop of these scenes' settings in heaven and hell. This aesthetic choice is nonetheless linked with the ontological status of *svarga* and *naraka* in the MBh, which, it may be recalled, is attenuated with *naraka*'s dispersion upon the arrival of the gods after the protagonist's condemnation of Dharma.

Note that although Kṣemendra's adaptation is considered the closest to the MBh narrative, the poet overtly modifies the most crucial moment in the text. Thus, in the BM, Yudhiṣṭhira does not denounce Dharma at all, his fury being directed against 'fate's ill manner' instead: "He stood at that very spot, and indifferent to the pairs of opposites, he reviled fate's ill-manner." (*tatraiva tashau nirdvandvo nindan durlalitaṃ vidheḥ*).¹⁷² Dharma's absence from Yudhiṣṭhira's condemnation is perhaps the most striking element in Kṣemendra's interpretation of the MBh. In so doing, both Kṣemendra and other MBh

*tvatpuṇyavātaiḥ sprṣṭānām asmākaṃ bādhate tamaḥ /
vayaṃ bhīmaprabhṛtayaḥ pāṇḍavā bhrātaras tava //* (BM 18. 13-14)

¹⁷² BM 18.16.

epitomists (see below) effectively remove the sting from the overwhelming drama of the MBh's ending. It is very likely that later retellers of the epic felt uneasy with regard to this particular moment, in which the concept of *dharma*, so central to the Indian tradition, is dramatically challenged by the epic's authors. The alteration of this specific scene exhibits the extent to which later retellers belonging to the Indian tradition were reluctant to accept the conclusion of one of their most favoured and canonical texts. Producing easier and more comforting endings to this harsh conclusion, these poets sought to eliminate, or sift out elements of the original text that were bound to arouse discomfort in later generations of audiences. The best example for this is in the absence of Yudhiṣṭhira's condemnation of Dharma in the later tradition. By eliminating Dharma from this scene, later retellers like Kṣemendra create a narrative lacking even a shred of the echoing paradox (*dharma* censuring Dharma) of the MBh's ending.

Another expression of the tendency to dilute the SĀ's disturbing elements is the reversal of the chronological order of events in later retellings. While the MBh sees Yudhiṣṭhira ponder over the misfortune of his brothers in *naraka*, in verses that gradually build up until the hero's final condemnation of Dharma, Kṣemendra turns the order of events on its head. The poet thus first has Yudhiṣṭhira condemn fate's ill-doing and only then brood (and very shortly, at that) over the injustice afflicted upon his brothers. This plot-reversal renders an explanatory, exegetical purpose to Yudhiṣṭhira's successive speech. Having condemned fate's ill manner, Yudhiṣṭhira somewhat apologetically explains the reasons for this harsh act of condemnation: "Alas, [my] thought is destroyed by

the folly of the gods (*bata devānām avicārahataiva dhīh*). Because of them [i.e. because of the gods], these [brothers of mine], who are devoted to *dharma*, were abandoned in this anguish (*yair ete dharmaniratāḥ kleśe 'smin samupekṣitāḥ*).”¹⁷³

It would appear that by reversing the order of events, the poet is moved to justify Yudhiṣṭhira’s condemnation. Having condemned fate’s ill manner, Yudhiṣṭhira attempts to understand what has brought him to perform such a harsh act. This, as the citation above illustrates, is due to the gods’ folly. By emphasizing the cruelty of the gods toward his brothers, Yudhiṣṭhira seeks legitimization for his act of condemnation. However, in his attempt to justify, reason or explain Yudhiṣṭhira’s condemnation, Kṣemendra ultimately dilutes the ending of the MBh from its staggering paradox.

In the MBh, the king’s harsh denunciation is depicted as a powerful, transcendental act. Indeed, Yudhiṣṭhira’s final discourse in the MBh occurs when, having denounced Dharma, he informs the envoy of the gods that he intends to remain in *naraka* with his brothers. Nevertheless, soon after uttering these words, *naraka* evaporates, as if it never existed in the first place. The MBh therefore, perceives this act of condemnation as a transformative moment that evokes an existential shift. It also determines Yudhiṣṭhira’s success in his final trial. By way of contrast, in Kṣemendra’s poem this entire scene is delivered in the form of a dialogue between Yudhiṣṭhira and the gods’ messenger. The dialogue between the two concludes when Yudhiṣṭhira announces before the envoy that, given all the reasons he had enumerated, he sees no point in returning to *svarga*: “Thinking, O envoy of the gods, ‘what is this? An error, a dream, or perhaps an illusion?’, I do

¹⁷³ BM 18.16-17.

not know! Whose ill-behaviour is this? I am staying right here! Go, I have no reason [to return to] *svarga* (*devadūta na jānāmi kasyedaṃ durviceṣṭate / ihaivāhaṃ sthito gaccha na me svargeṇa kāraṇam*), where vicious people are worshipped while noble men are cut asunder.”¹⁷⁴ As opposed to this dialogical exchange, in the Vyāsa-epic, Yudhiṣṭhira does not address anyone. In fact, this type of narration, in which the reader gets to hear the protagonist’s inner monologue, is an acutely rare, atypical moment in the MBh. Kṣemendra’s choice to frame Yudhiṣṭhira’s speech in the form of a dialogue with another person (i.e. the envoy of the gods) grants a discursive meaning and reasoning to the protagonist’s highly paradoxical act.

This significant modification that the poet devises diverges considerably from the original plot. In the MBh, the moment of condemnation results from the hero’s perplexed state of mind as he grapples with reality’s harsh events, on the one hand, while doubting the soundness of his mental state on the other (‘Am I indeed asleep, or awake? Am I fully conscious or unconscious? Alas! Could this be an aberration of consciousness? Or perhaps an error of my mind?’). It is only when he fails to understand or find reason, and when his own mental faculties abandon him that he denounces *dharma* altogether. Again, for the MBh this is a transcendental moment that is, by definition, one of extreme loneliness and solitude. This may also be the reason why this existential crisis is conveyed in the form of an inner monologue.

Depleting, as we have seen, the ending of the MBh of its inherent paradox in the final scenes of his adaptation, Kṣemendra predictably prolongs the

¹⁷⁴ BM 18.19-20.

depiction of the SĀ's concluding scenes. In these, Yudhiṣṭhira is reunited with his brothers and wife; the hero returns to heaven and is being propitiated by *svarga*'s denizens; and finally, Yudhiṣṭhira, his brothers, and many other characters who figure in the story re-assimilate with their divine origin.

3.2 Amaraçandra's *Bālabhārata*¹⁷⁵

Born to a family of priests, Amaraçandra Sūri was a Jain poet from the village Vagata in Karnataka. Amaraçandra seems to have flourished around the mid-thirteenth century under the patronage of king Viśaladeva of Gujarat (r. 1243-1262 CE). The poet's works include treatises on poetics (e.g., *Kāvyaikalpalatā*, *Kaviśikṣā*) and on metrics (e.g., *Caṇḍoratnāvalī*, *Muktāvalī*), and a poem describing the life of the Jina, the *Padmānandakāvya* (also known as *Śrī Jinendracarita*). Yet among his works, the *Bālabhārata* (henceforth: BB) is Amaraçandra's most famous work, recounting the story of the entire epic.

The BB bears a strong resemblance to the *Bhāratamañjarī*. Accordingly, in examining the BB in relation to the sourcebook, the discussions below point to potential borrowings Amaraçandra drew from the BM and further developed in his adaptation. The similarity of these poems is apparent in their structure; both texts consist of 18 cantos corresponding with the MBh's 18 books, of which the last two recount the MhP and SĀ *parvans*.¹⁷⁶ The BB's seventeenth canto, the

¹⁷⁵ See translation of this work's two final cantos in appendix II below.

¹⁷⁶ Compare with Agastya's *Bālabhārata* (narrated in 20 cantos), and with the *Bhārataprabandha* which consists of 37 discrete poems (*prabandhas*). See also discussions below.

Prāsthānikaparva, consists of 31 verses, while the eighteenth canto, the *Svargārohaṇaparva*, consists of 25 verses (making a total of 56 verses).¹⁷⁷

Notwithstanding the apparent influence of the BM on the BB, Amaraçandra's rendition of the MBh affords an original interpretation that is distinct from that of Kṣemendra. The poet's autonomous voice emerges, in particular, in assigning his protagonists emotions that are missing in the MBh and that serve as motivating factors for their actions. The first example for this is seen in the cause assigned by the poet to Yudhiṣṭhira's abandoning of his former life as a king. While the MBh considers the king's decision to renounce the world as resulting from his having pondered "the snares of time/death" (*kālapāśa*), concluding (before Arjuna) that, "time cooks all beings" (*kālah pacati bhūtāni sarvāṇi*), the BB sees Yudhiṣṭhira as "terrified by the power of such time/death" (*tādṛkkālabalatrastaḥ* BB. 17.1). For Amaraçandra, Yudhiṣṭhira's decision to renounce the world is thus based on his fear of death. As such, the poet differs from the MBh, which portrays Yudhiṣṭhira as undergoing an existential realization regarding the annihilating motion of time, by introducing an emotional factor as the motive for the hero's action. The mood that the poet grants to the MBh story is characterized, right from the outset, in a humane approach. Amaraçandra draws a psychological portrait of his protagonists, who are laden with human flaws and frailties.

Another innovative element in the BB is Amaraçandra's treatment of the Agni episode. The god's encounter with the Pāṇḍavas is markedly violent, and depicted as if Agni forcefully snatches the Gāṇḍiva from Arjuna: "Then, having

¹⁷⁷ The BB was published in *Kāvyaṃālā*, No. 45, ed. M. Paṇḍit Śivadatta, Bombay, 1894; and in *The Pandit*, No. 61, Vol. 6, Benares, 1871. For additional information about Amaraçandra and his work see Krishnamachariar, (2004): 199-200.

come there, as if with the anger of being let loose, the god of fire like a reproachable friend [i.e. a friend who gives and takes back] (*nindyaḥ suhr̥d iva*), demanded from the sons of Pṛthā, and then reclaimed the bow and [two] quivers, that they had received earlier”.¹⁷⁸ On the one hand, the poet’s depiction of Agni’s arrival “with the anger of being let loose” (*etyotsargaruṣevātha*), corresponds with the imageries that the Indian mythology assigns to this god, as related to the sacrifice. On the other hand, his depiction “as a reproachable friend” (*nindyaḥ suhr̥d iva*) appears peculiar in this context. These ambiguous imageries of Agni, whose portrayal is both positive (a friend) and negative (reproachable), are somewhat vague here.

Another original element is the way in which the dog is first introduced in the poem. After the Agni episode, the poet describes the Pāṇḍavas continuing their journey as follows: “Just as one’s assembled *karma* follows the life breaths, sense organs, and intellect [at the time of death], so did the dog, although warded off, follow these six who abandoned their bodies [or, city].”¹⁷⁹ The parallel drawn between the dog and *karma* is a powerful one, suggesting that just as one may attempt to ward off his own *karma*, it will necessarily follow and determine this person’s passage into their next life. The imagery is particularly appropriate given that the dog is actually Dharma in disguise. The poet plays on its ambiguity even before it is unmasked as Yudhiṣṭhira’s father, thereby hinting at the god’s test. This idea is further validated later in the text, when Dharma reveals himself to his

¹⁷⁸ *etyotsargaruṣevātha pārthān prārthya hutāśanaḥ / nindyaḥ suhr̥d ivādatta prāgdattān karmukeṣudhīn // (BB 17.6)*

¹⁷⁹ *pariyaktapurān etān ekaḥ śvā vārito ’pi śaṭ / tadā buddhīndriyapraṇān iva karmagaṇo ’nvagāt // (BB 17.7)*

son and adds that he had been observing him since the very onset of his journey (i.e. throughout the test).¹⁸⁰

The poet's tendency to portray his heroes' flaws and frailties is distinctly noticeable in the Pāṇḍavas' fall to their death, and in the interpretation provided for Draupadī's ruin in particular. While the MBh understands Draupadī's flaw by virtue of her having more affection for Arjuna than for her four other husbands, the poet's judgment of Draupadī is more severe. According to Amaraçandra, Draupadī's destruction is "on account of abandoning her mind, as intelligence abandons the mind of a fool when something must be done" (*patitā cittam apy aujjhat kṛtye mūdhasya dhīr iva* BB. 17.11). The poet attributes a supplementary flaw to her character when he has Bhīma refer to her as one who used to sleep for long periods during daytime (*kutaḥ ... ahni dīrgham svapiti pārṣatī* BB. 17.12). Thus, in Amaraçandra's rendition, Draupadī is cast as a lazy, frivolous, and even dumb woman, the negative depiction comprising a stark departure from her stout, firm and resolute portrayal in the MBh.¹⁸¹

While the poet's dwelling on the causes of Draupadī's death results in the introduction of an original element, his review of the faults of Arjuna and Nakula largely follows Kṣemendra's. Employing similar phrasing to that of his predecessor, Amaraçandra also holds Nakula's envy of Kāma censurable, explaining that "because [he took] pride in his appearance, he could not stand any competition, even from the god of love [Kāma himself]." (*na spardhām*

¹⁸⁰ "O child! O child! You were observed by me gladly when I was in my dog form." (*vatsa vatsa tvam āloki śvadehena mude mayā*) (BB 17.28).

¹⁸¹ Amaraçandra's background, being brought up and affiliated with Jains, may explain his relatively severe judgment of Draupadī and Arjuna, whose peculiar liaison may have seemed unbecoming or inappropriate for a poet of his kind. The particularly harsh, almost degrading tone in discussing Draupadī's feminine character may similarly be explained by her marriage to five men, which possibly would have been perceived by Amaraçandra's audience as a bit too unorthodox.

rūpadarpeṇa kandarpe 'py eṣa cakṣame BB. 17.15).¹⁸² In the same way, Amaraçandra follows Kṣemendra in amplifying Arjuna's fault (of not fulfilling the vow to annihilate his enemies in the course of one day) by describing his fear during the war as unmanly: “[although] he considered himself a hero, he feebly trembled on the battlefield”. This almost verbatim repetition of Kṣemendra¹⁸³ suggests that Amaraçandra is also referring to the famous Gītā scene, in which Arjuna undergoes an emotional turmoil on the eve of battle, which results in his informing Kṛṣṇa that he will not fight against his own cousins. But while the MBh describes Arjuna as driven by a variety of emotions -- compassion (*kṛpā*), desperation (*viṣḍantam*), remorse (*śoka*) -- fear is not among these. It would appear therefore, that in the later tradition, the Gītā comes to symbolize this hero's weakness.

The most innovative scene in the poem is Amaraçandra's interpretation of Indra's character. The poet explicitly displays what the MBh merely insinuates by portraying the god in an unflattering light. In the MBh, Indra's deception of Yudhiṣṭhira (inviting him to heaven under the pretense that his brothers and wife await him there) is revealed *post factum* with Yudhiṣṭhira's entry into a *svarga* devoid of his siblings and wife. By contrast to the MBh, Amaraçandra has Indra lure Yudhiṣṭhira into heaven as he overtly deceives him: “Yudhiṣṭhita was invited by Indra, who said to him with a fraudulent speech that [sounded] profitable and fortunate: ‘come into my city in your body’”.¹⁸⁴ Amaraçandra sounds even more judgmental toward Indra in his depiction of the discourse between the hero and

¹⁸² Compare with Kṣemendra: *rūpamānī smareṇāpi spardhām eṣa na ca kṣamī* (BM 17.17).

¹⁸³ Compare Amaraçandra: *cacāla śīthilaṃ saiṣa śuramānī raṇāṅgane* (BB 17.16), with Kṣemendra: *śūramānī cacāraiṣa śīthilaṃ samarāṅgane* (BM 17.19).

¹⁸⁴ *dehī matpuram ehīti vāgbhaṅgyā bhāgyabhogyayā / āhūtaḥ puruhūtena puruhūtaḥ kṣīter jagau* // (BB 17.20)

the god. Having barred the dog from entering heaven, Indra is addressed by Yudhiṣṭhira thus: “Where is my *dharma* in deserting this dog? How [am I to obtain] a passage into heaven without him? [By all means], please instruct me [in] this [doctrine] of yours which produces desertion [of one’s dependent].”¹⁸⁵ Amaracandra expresses here a cynical tone toward Indra, whom he presents as an expert in such vile deeds as deserting one’s dependent. And yet, cynical and judgmental as he might be toward Indra around the issue of deserting one’s *bhakta*, Amaracandra surprisingly omits a central notion in the original text. If in the MBh, Yudhiṣṭhira explains his resolution not to desert his dog on account of *ānṛśaṃsya* (which turns out to be the objective to Dharma’s test), in the BB, this notion is discarded altogether.

Another influence the BB seems to draw from the BM is the depiction of Yudhiṣṭhira negotiating the dog’s entrance to *svarga*. Like Kṣemendra, Amaracandra has the hero propose that his dog enter heaven on the basis of his master’s (Yudhiṣṭhira’s) meritorious deeds: “Let there be *svarga* for him in his body, by virtue of the good deeds I have performed!” (*svargo ’stu dehayuktasya sukṛtair asya matkṛtaiḥ* BB. 17.26). Thus, Amaracandra alters the uncompromising character of the Yudhiṣṭhira of the MBh. This re-adaptation of the hero’s character in the later tradition unravels the idea evinced by MBh retellers that *svarga* (as the very ‘fruit’, *phala*, of the warriors’ class) should not be relinquished easily. The negotiation that Yudhiṣṭhira is making with the lord of the gods in these later retellings implies that this ‘new-Yudhiṣṭhira’ desperately wishes to reach there.

¹⁸⁵ *etattyāge kva me dharmas taṃ vinā dyugatiḥ kutaḥ / āstāṃ me tad iyaṃ śikṣā tavāpi bhraṃśakāriṇī* // (BB 17.24)

Having seen Duryodhana in *svarga*, Yudhiṣṭhira, whose anger flared up (*ullasanmanyuh*), descends to *naraka* guided by the envoy of the gods. It is interesting to note that in comparison to the scene depicting Indra and Yudhiṣṭhira’s dialogue, which gains considerable weight in Amaraçandra’s narration, the *naraka* episode is extremely short. It would be fair to state that in general, Amaraçandra is more preoccupied with depicting the hero’s exchange with Indra than he is with any other scene. Quite remarkably, the poet dedicates only one condensed verse to depict Yudhiṣṭhira’s descent to hell: “And so the king set forth on an awful path displayed to him, which afflicts misery by death, imprisonment, and so forth, and which is ill-smelling and rough to pass.”¹⁸⁶ The short consideration the poet gives to Yudhiṣṭhira’s descent to *naraka* presents something of a contrast since, on the one hand, Amaraçandra depicts Indra as far more cunning and deceitful than his character in the MBh, while, on the other hand, he refrains from addressing the staggering injustice that the Pāṇḍavas are experiencing in *naraka* due to Indra’s design.

Another motif Amaraçandra may have borrowed from Kṣemendra is Yudhiṣṭhira’s identification of his brothers in hell. Like his predecessor, Amaraçandra overlooks the hero’s liminal state of consciousness (which results from the problematic recognition of his brothers in hell) and has the voices identify themselves straight away: “Then, he heard the extremely pained sound, disagreeable to the ears, of his relatives as they were tortured and slain in various forms of corporeal punishments. [These voices called him]: ‘We are Bhīma and

¹⁸⁶ *yathā tatprathitenātha pṛthvīnāthaḥ prapedivān /
durgatiṃ durgadurgandhavadhabandhādiduḥkhadām // (BB 18.5)*

the others, and here is Draupadī, who is suffering greatly. Please stay a moment as the breeze of your merit eases [our pain]’.”¹⁸⁷

Both poets, as we have seen, avoid addressing these uncanny and problematic moments of the sourcebook. Instead, Amaracandra introduces a new element to the plot, having Yudhiṣṭhira mesmerized by these voices to the point of becoming as motionless as a pillar: “On account of [their] speech the king [became] paralyzed as if by the power of the *stambha mantra* [freezing-spell].” (*ity uktyā stambhitaḥ stambhamantraśaktyeva bhūpatiḥ* BB. 18.8). In other words, Amaracandra describes Yudhiṣṭhira as having turned utterly numb. This constitutes an original departure from the MBh text, where he is depicted as becoming even more vigilant and aware on account of hearing these voices. The MBh depicts the hero turning increasingly alert, active and angry. The text thus sees him in a successive series of actions, as Yudhiṣṭhira stands up and cries ‘how terrible this is!’ (*aho kṛcchram iti prāha tasthau sa ca yudhiṣṭhiraḥ*), then considers the consequences of fate (*vimamṛṣe rājā kiṃ nv idaṃ daivakāritam*) as he thinks about this for a very long time (*evam bahuvīdham rājā vimamarśa yudhiṣṭhiraḥ*), and, finally, he expresses his extreme anger (*krodham āhārayac caiva tīvram dharmasuto nṛpaḥ*). Thus, while the MBh concentrates on Yudhiṣṭhira’s augmented state of consciousness (and supplements this with corresponding actions), Amaracandra opts for a singularly physical metaphor: Yudhiṣṭhira becomes as motionless as a pillar, paralyzed and helpless. As noted above, in the MBh, this accentuated mental state sets the stage for the

¹⁸⁷ *pravadyavadhyamānānām bandhūnām vividhair vadhaiḥ /
sa tadākṛṇayāt kṛṇakāṣum ārtataram svaram //* (BB 18.6)
*bhīmādayo vyaṃ iyaṃ draupadī ca pṛthuvyathā /
tatpunyapavanenaiva svasthāḥ smaḥ sthīyatām kṣaṇam //* (BB 18.7)

protagonist's inner monologue (prior to the moment of condemnation), a condition that could not be more removed from Amaraçandra's emphasis on the protagonist's stagnant physical state.

The influence Amaraçandra draws from Kṣemendra, as well as the poet's tendency to overlook Yudhiṣṭhira's mental state correspond with the interpretation the poet provides for the moment of condemnation. Like in the BM, neither Dharma nor the gods are condemned by Yudhiṣṭhira in this poem. Rather, Amaraçandra directs the condemnation against one particular god: "He addressed the messenger of the gods reviling the god's mean behaviour." (*nindan devasya durvṛttaṃ devadūtam abhāṣata* BB. 18.8). The question that this sentence prompts is, of course, which god is the poet referring to, and what is the nature of his wicked behaviour? Given Amaraçandra's considerable attention to Indra's conniving character, it appears that the condemnation is specifically aimed at this god's blatant deception. Amaraçandra's tone is moralistic with comparison to the philosophical and existential tones of the MBh's authors, who present their readers with an overwhelming paradox at the close of the epic: the inconceivable outcome of *dharma* turning in on itself by denouncing its very nature. By placing the blame solely on Indra, the poet keeps the plot-boundaries of his narration within the framework of logical causation. Thus, since the protagonist was so strongly offended by Indra, it is only sensible that Yudhiṣṭhira will end up rebuking him.

Amaraçandra follows Kṣemendra also in his avoidance from addressing Yudhiṣṭhira's inner monologue. Framing this speech in the form of a dialogue, Amaraçandra has the hero inform the envoy of the gods: "I am staying here in the

company of my relatives. [Just as] even this hell becomes my heaven now, [so] the Vaitaraṇī river equals the Gaṅgā, and my pains are now pleasures!”¹⁸⁸ Like his predecessor in the BM, Amaraçandra legitimizes Yudhiṣṭhira’s condemnation as he depicts the protagonist producing valid and sensible reasons for his refusal to return to heaven before the gods’ envoy: “Prostrations unto you, [now] go [back]! [Indeed] many prostrations to heaven and its denizens, where wicked people are worshipped and those who behave virtuously are forsaken.”¹⁸⁹ Amaraçandra’s moralistic tone is again voiced in Yudhiṣṭhira’s cynical “prostrations” before heaven, which he judges as an unjust place where the virtuous are forsaken while the wicked are worshipped.

Diluting the SĀ from its disturbing elements, both Amaraçandra and Kṣemendra re-organize the sequence of events by placing Yudhiṣṭhira’s speech after the condemnation. Yet, the author of the BB not only reverses the events, but also blurs Yudhiṣṭhira’s speech by conveying it with extreme brevity. Thus, Amaraçandra describes Indra’s arrival to *naraka*: “[At that very moment], the king beheld Indra standing in front of him, but did not [i.e., could not] see [even] a trace of *naraka* and its other sights any longer. Having consoled [Yudhiṣṭhira], [who stood there] extremely perplexed, asking: “What is this?”, with pleasant breezes, the leader of the storm gods [Indra] now addressed the king.”¹⁹⁰ Through this question asked by Yudhiṣṭhira in the above citation (“What is this?”),

¹⁸⁸ *sthito ’haṃ bandhusaṅgena narako ’py eṣa nākati /
vaitaraṇy eva gaṅgeha duḥkhāny eva sukhāni me //* (BB 18.9)

Note however, that even prior to the evaporation of *naraka*, Amaraçandra emphasizes that the dichotomy between *naraka* and *svarga* is a false concept lacking ontological status.

¹⁸⁹ *svasti te gaccha nākibhyo nākāya ca namo namaḥ /
durvrttā yatra pūjyante tyajyante śīlaśālinaḥ //* (BB 18.10)

¹⁹⁰ *ity ukte ’smin gate dūte puruhūtaṃ puraḥsthitam /
apaśyad bhūpatiḥ kiṃtu na kiṃcin narakādikam //* (BB 18.11)

*spaṣṭam puṇyena marutā marutām adhipo nṛpam /
kim etad iti saṃbhrāntam athainaṃ sāntvayan jagau //* (BB 18.12)

Amaracandra may hint at Yudhiṣṭhira’s perplexed state of mind. In doing so, he may be referring to the protagonist’s monologue of despair in the MBh (“am I awake or asleep?” etc). But here, the depiction is so short that these MBh scenes are almost concealed in the positive events the stanzas convey (that is, the evaporation of *naraka*, and Indra consoling Yudhiṣṭhira with pleasant breezes). As a result, these particular MBh moments leave little impression in Amracandra’s narration. The depiction of Yudhiṣṭhira’s confusion is so vague, that one could have easily been misled to think that it results from *naraka*’s dispersion, rather than the hero’s disorientation aroused by the bitter realization of his brothers’ suffering in hell.

In keeping with the poet’s tendency to abate the MBh’s harsh conclusion, the final scenes of the SĀ occupy considerable space in his poem. In order to justify Indra’s mean behaviour toward the hero, Amracandra has the lord of the gods lengthily explain to Yudhiṣṭhira why he was made to experience this injustice: “O venerable sir, this hell shown to you by my *māyā* [illusion], is the result of that little lie you told the guru [Droṇa] in [your attempt] at stopping him.”¹⁹¹ In the five verses that follow, Amracandra depicts various delights and amusements devised by Indra for Yudhiṣṭhira’s pleasure, as the hero ascends to *svarga*.¹⁹² These scenes conclude when the king “realized that every marvel he

¹⁹¹ *guror vinigrahe ’vocaḍ yadasatyalavaṇi bhavān / adarṣi durgatis te ’sau tatphalaṇ māyayā mayā //* (BB 18.13)

¹⁹² “Then, for his [i.e. Yudhiṣṭhira’s] pleasure, [the gods] headed by the Gandharvas took on the role of bees with their buzzing, as they showered streams of nectar [pouring] from the hollow of their ears, in thickets of golden lotuses.” (*rukmapaṇkajanikuñjaguñjanaiḥ karṇakoṭarasudhaughavarṣiṇaḥ / tanmude madhulihāṇi padaṇi tadā tumbaruprabhṛtayo ’bhajan bhṛśam //* BB 18.16)

“For his pleasure, rows of solar drummers imperceptible to the eye, producing low and soft sounds of drums went into the rumblings of flocks of ‘water-elephants’.” (*tanmadāya ca drśām agocarāḥ sāndramandramurajasvanasprśaḥ / sauramaurajikarājayo yayur vārivāraṇaganasya garjiṣu //* BB 18.17)

possibly wanted to obtain was already in his possession.” (*yad yad aihata sa dātum adbhutaṃ tat tad aikṣata tad ātmahastagam* BB. 18.21). Acquitting Indra from malice in the final verses of his poem, Amaraśāstra portrays Yudhiṣṭhira’s joyous state as that of one “whose path was displayed by Indra” (*śakradarśitapathaḥ*). The poet concludes his MBh version on a very positive note dwelling lengthily on Yudhiṣṭhira’s re-union with his relatives, and the assimilation of the protagonist, as well as many other characters, into their divine origins.

3.3 Agastya’s *Bālabhārata*¹⁹³

Another writer who composed a *Bālabhārata* was the poet Agastya Paṇḍita (first half of the fourteenth century), who worked in the court of King Pratāparudra Deva II (r. 1294-1325 CE) of Warrangal, Andhra. Although the poetess Gaṅgādevī mentions Agastya as the author of some 74 works in her *Mathurāvijaya*, we are able to trace, apart from the *Bālabhārata*, only two other works: the *Kṛṣṇacaritam*, a nearly complete prose work about the life of Kṛṣṇa, and a fragment (containing two cantos) of the poem *Nalakīrtikaumudikāvya*,

“For his pleasure, a group of the gods’ female dancers danced with beautiful *laya* [i.e. accompanying music] of the wind, the beauty of their faces, hands and bodies became lotuses, their forms submerged in water.” (*tanmude ca jalamagnamūrtayas toyajākṛtikarānanaśrīyaḥ / citramārutalayena cakrire nartanāni suranartakīgaṇāḥ* // BB 18.18)

“For him, whose soul indulged in [various] unique delights, and who was somewhat indifferent to the water sports [around him], Gaṅgā created a divine form in exchange for his mortal one.” (*ityananyalayaalīlātmanas toyakeliṣu kim apy ajānataḥ / jāhnavī vapuṣi tasya nirmame martyatāvinimayena divyatām* // BB 18.19)

“He shone like a statue formed by the very best atoms of time, extracted at the end of the Kalpa by the sun and the moon’s embrace, affected by turning the fire of time.”

(*kalpakoṭimadanendubhāsvatā kālāpāvāvakavivartakarmanā / uddhṛtair aṇubhir uttamottamaih klṛptamūrtir iva sa vyarājata* // BB 18.20)

¹⁹³ See translation of this work’s concluding verses (20.83-97) in appendix III below.

which recounts the Nala story. The BB is a complete *mahākāvya* of twenty cantos that recounts the story of the epic.¹⁹⁴ The ending of the MBh is related in the work's twentieth canto. Agastya's *Bālabhārata* is the shortest epitome of the MBh, comprising only 1794 verses, whereas Kṣemendra's BM consists of 8810 verses and Amaraśāstra's BB contains 5330 verses.¹⁹⁵ The poet's narration of both the MhP and the SĀ *parvans* is thus very short, amounting to a mere 14 verses (beginning at 20.83 and ending at 20.97), and its consideration of the MBh's final scenes is consequently rather lean.

Agastya's *Bālabhārata* offers a concise outline of the SĀ events. Consequently, the work avoids addressing many of the ending's problematic issues. It is almost as if the poet takes for granted his audience's familiarity with the story, and therefore refrains from re-narrating large portions of the MBh. The opening verses of this adaptation describe the Pāṇḍavas' decision to depart from the world after the death of Kṛṣṇa. In what would seem to be an inconsequential, or even trite detail, Agastya dispenses with tackling a highly problematic issue of the original plot from the very beginning of his work by having the Pāṇḍavas grant their kingdom to a single heir, Parikṣit.¹⁹⁶ While the MBh's repetitive mode

¹⁹⁴ The work was published as *The Bālabhāratam of Agastya Paṇḍita*, ed. K. S. Ramamurthi, Sri Venkateswara University Oriental Series No. 10, S. V. University Oriental Research Institute, Tirupati, 1983, pp. i-xv.

¹⁹⁵ See K. Ghanasyamala Prasada Rao, *Agastya Paṇḍita's Bālabhārata – A Critical Study*, K. S. Mahalakshmi, Amalapuram, 1992. pp. 1-26; *Bālabhāratam of Agastya Paṇḍita*, (1983): i-xv; Krishnamacariar, (2004): 214-5.

¹⁹⁶ *kṛṣṇe gate jīvitamuktatrṣṇāḥ pañcāpi patnyā saha pāṇḍuputrāḥ / prasthānam urvyān mahad ācaranto dehān vihātum samayam vitenuḥ //* (BB 20.83)

“After Kṛṣṇa departed [from the world], the five sons of Pāṇḍu, who had given up the hunger for life, undertaking the great departure from the earth along with their wife, they agreed to abandon their bodies [i.e. their corporeal state].”

parīkṣitam cakrur anantaram te rājyābhīṣekāmbubhir ārdramūrtim / valkāni vāsāmsi tato vasānā bāṣpāmbubarṣeṇa ca pauralokam // (BB 20.84)

“Immediately after that, they made Parīkṣit [their successor] by [sprinkling] the coronation water on his fresh body. Assuming clothes made of barks of trees [they consoled] the townsfolk [who followed them] with showers of tear drops.”

has been noted by several scholars, Herman Tieken points to the particular significance of repetition in the MhP. According to Tieken, the recurrence of the motif of the eternal rivalry between the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas in the very closing of the epic -- manifested in the Pāṇḍavas' division of the kingdom between their own successor (Parikṣit), and Yuyutsu (the Kauravas' descendant) - - has the potential of impeding the story from ever reaching a finite conclusion.¹⁹⁷ This open-endedness is avoided by Agatsya in his choice not to mention Yuyutsu at all, through the omission of the scene in which the Pāṇḍavas divide the kingdom.

The poem then depicts the Pāṇḍavas as they set forth with their wife, followed by the dog, on their journey. This scene is recounted at length, extending over five of fourteen verses.¹⁹⁸ Along their way, the Pāṇḍavas encounter Agni,

¹⁹⁷ “At the beginning of the *Mahābhārata*, the Pāṇḍavas are warned that the *rājasūya* will end in a complete holocaust. The Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas are indeed caught in a self-destructive competition, which ends in the death of both parties. But even after one has gone as far as one can possibly go, namely by putting one's life at stake, the competition does not end; it simply begins all over again. Thus, before the Pāṇḍavas take their final departure they hand over Hāstinapura to Yuyutsu, a bastard son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. But at the same time they place their own grandson Parikṣit on the throne. In this way a situation is created which is exactly the same as the one with which the *Mahābhārata* started, namely with the Kauravas as the legal heirs to the throne and the Pāṇḍavas as the actual rulers. The competition can begin all over again.” Herman Tieken, “Kill and be killed: The *Bhagavadgītā* and *Anugītā* in the *Mahābhārata*,” *Journal of Hindu Studies* 2009; 2:209–228, p. 221.

¹⁹⁸ *vṛkodarādyair anujaiḥ krameṇa patnyā ca kenāpi śunānuyātaḥ / pradakṣiṇīkartumanā dharitrīm prācīm narendraḥ prathamam pratasthe /* (BB 20.85)

“Intent upon making a circumambulation of the earth [Yudhiṣṭhira], the best of men, set forth first eastward, followed successively by his younger brothers Bhīma and the others, his wife, and some dog.”

saśakracāpadhvajapaṅkajāni manahpadaiḥ śuddhatarīkṛtāni / padāni teṣāṃ pathi pāṇḍavānām siddhā nibaddhāñjalayaḥ praṇemuḥ / (BB 20.86)

“The Siddhās bowed with folded hands to the footprints of the Pāṇḍavas on the path. These footprints, which were marked by Indra's bow, battle standard and lotus, were made more pure by the steps of thought.”

aśrāntam ākrāntamahībhrtas te nistīrṇanānāvidhavāhinīkāḥ / yātrām punardigvijigīṣayeva kutrāpy akunṭhaprasarām vitenuḥ // (BB 20.87)

“Unweariedly, they climbed mountains and crossed various types of rivers as they [once] defeated kings and subdued many kinds of armies. They carried out their journey that never met any impediment as if wishing to conquer again the four quarters of the earth.”

mūrtāya mārge sa niṣaṅgayugmam kṛśānave gāṇḍivam arpayivā / tataḥ pathenaiva payonidhīnām prācīm avācīm prayayuh pratīcīm // (BB 20.88)

before whom Arjuna casts away the Gāṇḍiva bow. In a single verse the poet mentions that Draupadī was the first to fall, and following her, the other brothers fell too. In the following verse, the poet manages to enumerate several flaws in remarkable brevity, abstaining from informing the reader which of these are attributed to the five characters who perished: “The king was asked by Bhīma about the reason for their fall in that order, as well as his own. Yudhiṣṭhira spoke of [Draupadī’s] excessive attachment to Arjuna, [the twins’] arrogance [in their] form and intelligence, [Arjuna’s] contempt for [the other] kings, and [Bhīma’s] immeasurable eating.”¹⁹⁹ The next verses depict Yudhiṣṭhira’s encounter with Indra. The latter invites Yudhiṣṭhira into *svarga* and encourages him to abandon the dog, whom he labels a “hindrance to attaining heaven” (*svargativighnam*). The same verse also depicts Indra’s deceitful assurance that Yudhiṣṭhira will see his relatives in heaven (*anujān ... drakṣyasi pārṣatīm ca*).²⁰⁰ Although the poet omits the terms *bhakta* and *ānṛśaṃsya*, he nonetheless has his protagonist declare before Indra that “the most praiseworthy enjoyments and pleasures of heaven, or [even] the re-union with my brothers are undesirable to me.”²⁰¹ Although laconic

“On this path, [Arjuna] cast away his Gāṇḍiva and the two quivers before the embodied form of lord Agni. Then, [the brothers] advanced the eastern, southern and western seas.”

*udaṇmukhās te tadanu prayānto vilaṅghya puṇyāni vanasthalāni /
srotahparītaṁ suranīnagāyā haimaṁ ca śailapravaraṁ vyatīyuh // (BB 20.89)*

“Then, as they proceeded facing north, they traversed [various] sacred forests. They crossed over the Himālaya, the best of mountains, which is surrounded by the waters of the Gaṅgā.”

*athopavāsavratakarśitāṅgī papāta pūrvam pathi yājñasenī /
tato yamau śakrasutaś ca paścād anantaram so ’pi samīrasūnuḥ // (BB 20.90)*

“Since her body was emaciated on account of the vow of fasting, Draupadī was the first who fell on the path. Following her the twins fell, then Arjuna, and immediately after [him fell] even Bhīma.”

¹⁹⁹ *teṣāṁ kramāt svasya ca pātahetuṁ bhīmena pṛṣṭo nṛpatiḥ śaśaṁsa /
pārthātisaktiṁ matirūpagarvau rājñām avājñām amitāśūtām ca // (BB 20.91)*

²⁰⁰ BB 20.93.

²⁰¹ *sa cainam āha sma cirāśritena śunā śunāsīra vināmunā me /
na rocate nākavihārasaukhyam ślāghyam param bhrātṛsamāgamō vā // (BB 20.94)*

in his narration, Agastya successfully manages to follow the MBh storyline up to this point. This is significant for the analysis of his treatment of the epic's ending. The citation above occurs in verse 94. The poem is left to conclude in only three stanzas (at verse 97).

In fact, Agastya leaves very little room for elaboration on the most crucial scenes of the SĀ: Dharma's second test (disguised as a dog), Yudhiṣṭhira's ascent to heaven, his discovery of Duryodhana in *svarga*, his decision to descend into the netherworld, the depiction of *naraka*'s horrors as the protagonist is led by the envoy of the gods, his realization that his brothers are in hell, the condemnation of Dharma, *naraka*'s evaporation upon the arrival of Indra and the gods and, finally, Dharma informing his son that this was his third test. Instead of narrating these dramatically-laden scenes, the poet merely hints at them in passing. Omitting such lengthy and crucial parts of the MBh sourcebook, Agastya mentions, in the course of just two verses, that along with Dharma, who had abandoned his dog-form, the king ascended to heaven with Indra.²⁰² The single vague hint that the poet provides of the MBh's elaborate descriptions of hell is a play on Indra's sweet fragrance motif, which is depicted in the MBh as the cause for *naraka*'s evaporation. Undoubtedly moved to find a sweeter and better ending to the MBh's disturbing conclusion, the poet depicts these scenes in the following manner: "An intoxicating wind arisen from Indra's paradise, swinging the waves

"He [Yudhiṣṭhira] spoke to him: "O Indra, without this long dependent dog, the most praiseworthy enjoyments and pleasures of heaven, or [even] the re-union with my brothers are undesirable to me."

²⁰² *vihāya tacchaunakarūpam agre mūrtena dharmeṇa saha kṣitīśaḥ / āropito mātalicoditāśvaṃ ratham maghonā divam āuroha //* (BB 20.95)

in the water of the celestial Gaṅgā, made the fragrance of the flowers of [svarga's] *Kalpadruma* tree a present for the king."²⁰³

As could be expected, the final verse of this work concludes happily as the poet describes Yudhiṣṭhira's joy in reuniting with his brothers, the delights of *svarga*, and the assimilation of the characters into their divine origin: "[Yudhiṣṭhira], whose glory was praised by Karṇa and the other brothers who arose from hell with Draupadī, each of them returning to his natural abode, as well as by other relatives who returned to their divine origins, abandoned his mortal body in a river of water anointed by elephant rut. He, whose form is Dharma, caused delight to all the eyes of the denizens of heaven."²⁰⁴

Agastya is not only the author who produced the shortest epitome in the later tradition, but is also the most representative of the tendency of later retellers of the MBh to introduce positive, happy tones into the epic's harsh and disturbing conclusion. While other epitomists also eliminate Dharma from Yudhiṣṭhira's condemnation, it is Agastya who amplifies this propensity by nullifying the story of the MBh of its own conclusion. Delivering a vague version of the original while discarding the major problematic issues of the SĀ, Agastya's epitome conceals more than it reveals. If, hypothetically speaking, it were the only extant testimonial trace of the MBh, readers of Agastya's epitome could not have imagined the epic's jarring conclusion, where the protagonists end up in hell while their adversaries flourish in *svarga*, and in which the main protagonist's

²⁰³ *āndolayann abhranadītaraṅgān madodayo nandanagandhavāhaḥ /
nṛpāya kalpadrumapuṣpagandham upāyanatvaṃ gamayām babhūva* // (BB 20.96)

²⁰⁴ *pāñcālyā samam utthitair nirayataḥ karṇādibhir bhrātṛbhiḥ /
svaṃ svaṃ dhāma gatair abhiṣṭutayaśā divyaiś ca tair bandhubhiḥ /
sindhau diggajādānadigdhapayasi tyaktvā vapur mānuṣam
sarvāsāṃ diviṣaddṛśāṃ sa vidadhe śarmāni dharmākṛtiḥ* // (BB 20.97)

despair is so great that he is finally pushed to denounce himself, his father, and the very order that moves the world (that is, *dharma*), of which he is part.

4.1 The *Bhārataprabandha*

The most original interpretation of the ending of the MBh discussed in this study is the *Bhārataprabandha* (henceforth: BP). This unique text, which has not been previously published or studied, is the subject of this final section, which enquires into its content, authorship, possible uses and, most pertinently, the innovative approach it adopts toward the fundamental ambiguities of the ending of the MBh in its concluding passage, the *Svargārohaṇaprabandha*.²⁰⁵

The BP consists of 37 discrete poems (*prabandhas*) all in the *campū* style. Although the text is composed of *prabandhas* which could stand as separate units, as a whole it follows the outline of the epic plot by recounting many of its famous scenes: Draupadī's *svayaṃvara*, Subhadrā's abduction by Arjuna, the setting fire to the Khāṇḍava forest in the *Ādi-parvan*, the *Sabhā-parvan*'s dice game, the Pāṇḍavas' years in the forest in the *Vana-parvan* followed by their year spent incognito in the court of Virāṭa, a long account of the war and of its disastrous effects as depicted in the *Strī-parvan*, Yudhiṣṭhira's colloquy with Bhīṣma in the *Śānti-parvan*, Yudhiṣṭhira's *aśvamedha*, the destruction of the Vṛṣṇis and the Andhakas in the *Mausala-parvan* and, finally, the brothers' ultimate journey to their end in the *Svargārohaṇa-parvan*.²⁰⁶ The BP text not only imitates the order

²⁰⁵ This title as well as other titles provided by the scribe are found solely in the Devanāgarī manuscript of the text.

²⁰⁶ The following account is the BP table-of-contents. The *prabandha*'s heading and page number are quoted as they appear. I add in brackets which MBh sub-*parvan* the *prabandha* is based upon. The *prabandhas* whose topic is still unclear are indicated by a question mark: No titles are provided by the scribe to the first 43 pages, pp. 17-60; *Hiḍimbavadham* pp. 61-2 (Ādi parvan 1.9); *Bakavadham* pp. 63-5 (Ādi parvan 1.10); *Pāñcālīsvayaṃvaram* pp. 66-90 (Ādi parvan 1.12); *Nālāyanīcarita* pp. 91-99 (Ādi parvan 1.13); *Yudhiṣṭhirābhīṣeka* pp. 99-108 (Ādi parvan 1.14); *Sundopasundopākhyāna* pp. 108-114 (Ādi parvan 1.14); titled *Arjunatīrthayātrā* but published *Subhadrāharāṇa* pp. 115-153 (*Arjunatīrthayātrā* pp. 115-123; *Subhadrāharāṇa* pp. 124-153) (Ādi parvan 1.16); *Khāṇḍavadāham* pp. 154-169 (Ādi parvan 1.18); *Nāradāgamanam* pp. 170-2 (?); *Māgadhūtāgamanam* pp. 173-5 (?); *Jarāsandhavadham* pp. 176-184 (Sabhā parvan 2.4); *Digvijayam* pp. 185-190 (Sabhā parvan 2.5); *Rājasūyam* pp. 191-236 (Sabhā parvan 2.6);

of the MBh *parvans* but also its sub-divisions. Consequently, many of the *prabandhas* are named after MBh sub-*parvans*.²⁰⁷

There are 13 manuscripts (henceforth: Mss or Ms) of the BP in the University of Kerala Manuscripts Library, Karyavattom: a paper notebook in the Devanāgarī (henceforth: Dev) script and 12 palm leaf Mss in Malayalam (henceforth: Mal). According to the Trivandrum Manuscripts Library catalogue, the Dev Ms is the only complete version of the text.²⁰⁸ However, since the catalogue's publication in 1965, three folios have been torn from the back of the Dev notebook so that at present all extant Mss offer incomplete versions of the

Vanavāsam pp. 237-243 (?); *Dyūtam* pp. 244-252 (Sabhā parvan 2.8); *Vanavāsam* pp. 253-261(?); *Kirātārjunīyam* pp. 261-279 (Vana parvan 3.3); *Kalyāṇasaugandhika* pp. 280-294 (Vana parvan 3.7); *Nivātakavacavadham* pp. 295-6 (Vana parvan 3.8); *Ghoṣayātrā* pp. 297-301 (Vana parvan 3.13); *Citrasenavijayam* pp. 302-10 (?); *Karṇakuṇḍalāharaṇam* pp. 311-16 (Vana parvan 3.20); *Ajñātavāsam* - here the scribe's page numbers stop (Virāṭa parvan); the scribe's page numbers resume with the *Dūtavākyam* pp. 385-6 (Udyoga parvan); *Bhīṣmaparvam* pp. 387-410; *Droṇaparvam* pp. 411-448; *Karṇaparvam* pp. 449-462; *Śalyaparvam* pp. 462-464; *Gadāparvam* pp. 464-471 (Śalyaparva); *Suyodhanavadham* p. 472 (Śalyaparva); *Upapāṇḍavanāśa/vadham* p. 473 (Śalyaparva); *Aśvathāmagarvabhañjanam* p. 474 (Śalyaparva); *Strīparvam* pp. 475-7; *Śāntiparvam* pp. 478-481; *Aśvamedhaparvam* pp. 482-7; *Mausalaparvam* pp. 488-498; *Svargārohaṇam* pp. 499-507.

²⁰⁷ See, for instance, Ādi parvan's 9th sub-parvan Hiḍimbavadha-parvan corresponds to the *Hiḍimbavadha prabandha*; Ādi parvan's 10th sub-parvan Bakavadha-parvan corresponds to the *Bakavadha prabandha*; Ādi parvan's 13th sub-parvan Vaivāhika-parvan corresponds to the *Nālāyanīcarita-prabandha*; Ādi parvan's 16th sub-parvan Subhadrāharaṇa-parvan corresponds to the *Subhadrāharaṇa-prabandha*; Ādi parvan's 18th sub-parvan Khāṇḍavadāha-parvan corresponds to the *Khāṇḍavadāha-prabandha*; Sabhā parvan's 4th sub-parvan Jarāsandhavadhā-parvan corresponds to the *Jarāsandhavadhā-prabandha*; Sabhā parvan's 5th sub-parvan Digvijaya-parvan corresponds to the *Digvijaya-prabandha*; Sabhā parvan's 6th sub-parvan Rājasūya-parvan corresponds to the *Rājasūya-prabandha*; Vana parvan's 3rd sub-parvan Kairāta-parvan corresponds to the *Kirātārjunīya-prabandha*; Vana parvan's 10th sub-parvan Ghoṣayātrā-parvan corresponds to the *Ghoṣayātrā-prabandha*; Vana parvan's 17th sub-parvan Kuṇḍalāharaṇa-parvan corresponds to the *Karṇakuṇḍalāharaṇa-prabandha*; Śalya parvan's 2nd sub-parvan Gadā-parvan corresponds to the *Gadāparva-prabandha*. See also note 206 above.

²⁰⁸ Some Mss are fragmentary and some are more complete, as follows: 1) (Single Dev) Ms No. T489 A,B, contains 5,650 *granthas* (507 folios); 2) Ms no. 655 contains 1,300 *granthas*; 3) Ms no. 795 contains 1,200 *granthas*; 4) Ms no. 5593A contains 500 *granthas*; 5) Ms no. 10902A contains 2,250 *granthas*; 6) Ms no. 10927.I contains 570 *granthas*; 7) Ms no. 10927.O contains 50 *granthas*; 8) Ms no. 10927S contains 300 *granthas*; 9) Ms no. L.406B contains 800 *granthas*; 10) Ms no. L.633A contains 150 *granthas*; 11) Ms no. C.612A contains 1,750 *granthas*; 12) Ms no. C.1220B contains 1,400 *granthas*; 13) Ms no. C.2343A contains 1,350 *granthas*. See *Alphabetical Index of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the University Manuscripts Library* (Vol. II), ed. K. Raghavan Pillai, Trivandrum, 1965.

text. Moreover, since none of the Mss of the BP in Trivandrum²⁰⁹ includes a colophon,²¹⁰ the date and the authorship of the text remain open to conjecture.²¹¹

The following discussions of the content of the BP are based on two nearly complete Mss in Dev and Mal scripts, as well as fragments of another Mal Ms.²¹² From preliminary soundings and readings of the Mal and Dev Mss, my assessment is that they have all descended from the same text. Furthermore, it is highly likely that the Dev Ms has been transcribed from an earlier palm leaf Mal Ms into a twentieth century notebook. I have relied primarily on the Dev transcribed copy (T489 A,B), but completed the missing three folios at the end by consulting Mal Mss C1220B and C2343A.²¹³

It is important to note that several *prabandhas* included in the BP have been published independently in the *Prabandhasamāhārah* based on this Dev Ms,²¹⁴ and that all, like the other texts published in this collection are attributed to

²⁰⁹ As far as I know, no other Mss of this text exist elsewhere, apart from a transcribed Ms called *Bhāratacampūprabandha* (No. 3793, paper copy, Dev and Mal scripts, 214 folios) in the Government Oriental Manuscript Library in Madras. Yet the *précis* in the descriptive catalogue of the Madras Manuscript Library suggests that this Ms begins with the episode of Nahuṣa's curse in the Ādi parvan and ends with the *Kirātārjunīya* episode (note also that these concluding verses do not correspond to the *Kirātārjunīya prabandha* published in the *Prabandhasamāhārah*). Further study is required, but this appears to be a different text with the same name. See *A Triennial Catalogue of Manuscripts*, Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, ed. S. Kuppaswami Sastri, Vol. 4 – part 1, Madras, 1927, pp. 5611-13.

²¹⁰ Preliminary collation of the longer Mal Mss of the BP in Trivandrum shows that with the exception of Mss T489A,B; C1220B; and C2343A (see n. 208 above), none includes the SĀ *prabandha*. See also n. 212 below. Naturally, this requires further study.

²¹¹ A Malayalam era date in one of the Mal Mss establishes a *terminus ad quem* in the eighteenth century. This too requires further study.

²¹² These are: 1) a single Dev Ms, listed T489 A,B, which consists of 5650 *granthas* (507 folios); and two Mal Mss – the first, listed C1220B which consists of 1400 *granthas*, and fragments (beginning and ending folios) of Ms C2343A. See notes 208 and 210 above.

²¹³ See notes 208, 210 and 212 above.

²¹⁴ These are: 1) *Dūtavākya*; 2) *Kirātārjunīya*; 3) *Pāñcālī-svayaṃvara*; 4) *Nālāyanīcarita*; 5) *Yudhiṣṭhirābhīṣeka*; 6) *Sundopasundopākhyāna*; 7) *Subhadrāharana* (this *prabandha* appears in the Ms under the title: *Arjunatīrthayātrā*). The *Dūtavākya-prabandha* was published based also on the Mal Ms C1220 A,B. See *Prabandhasamāhārah* (Vol. 1), University of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1971.

8) Another *prabandha* included in the BP text and published in the *Prabandhasamāhārah* is the *Rājasūya-prabandha*. However, it was not based on any of the BP Mss mentioned above.

the poet Melputtūr Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa (henceforth: Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa) of Kerala (c. 1550-1650 CE).

4.2 Initial Questions Regarding the *Bhārataprabandha*

The first question regarding this text is, quite clearly, who wrote it. The identification of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa as the composer of several of the BP *prabandhas* would suggest that the problem of authorship is resolved. However, none of its 13 Mss contains a colophon, in which one would expect to find vital evidence about the text's author (or authors) and date. This problem is exacerbated by the large number of *prabandhas* that constitute the BP, which could suggest the authorship of various poets.

Another question has to do with the BP's construction or arrangement, namely, why does it appear the way it does, divided into discrete *prabandhas*, and edited to resemble an epitome of the entire MBh? How are we to view this text – as a unified coherent collection of *prabandhas*, or as separate independent poetic units? In other words, did its author or authors set out to compose an epitome of the entire MBh through a series of *prabandhas* that follow the order of *parvans*,²¹⁵ or were the *prabandhas* composed at different times by various authors and only subsequently edited into an epitome of the epic?

Finally, we know that such *prabandhas* were often written for the use of Cākṣyārs (actors) who performed in the temples of Kerala during festivals. This performative aspect of the texts points to a fundamental question. How was the

²¹⁵ See notes 206-207 above.

BP text used? Were several or all of its *prabandhas* enacted by professional Cākyārs?

4.3 Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa as a Possible Candidate for Authorship

As already mentioned, eight *prabandhas* out of the BP text have been identified and published as the works of Melputtūr Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa.²¹⁶ The fact that he is the author of several *prabandhas* does not, of course, automatically indicate that he is the author of the entire work; but it certainly suggests that he is a possible, indeed at present the only candidate for its authorship. In light of this, in what follows I present a survey of the life and work of this famous South Indian poet.

Born to a family of Nambūtiri Brahmins, the poet and polymath Melputtūr Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa flourished in Kerala, c. 1550-1650 CE.²¹⁷ According to the introductory portion of his work on grammar, the *Prakriyāsarvasva* ('Extensive [treatise] on Grammatical Rules for the Formation and Inflection of Words'),²¹⁸ Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa was educated in Mīmāṃsā, Vedic literature, Tarka (logic) and Vyākaraṇa (grammar).²¹⁹ This broad scope of education is aptly reflected in his

²¹⁶ See note 214 above.

²¹⁷ It is generally believed that Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa lived a long life; some scholars date his life to the years 1560-1655. For a discussion of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's time see Kunjunni Raja, *The Contribution of Kerala to Sanskrit Literature*, Madras, 1958, pp. 130-135.

²¹⁸ Published in *Trivandrum Sanskrit Series*, Nos. 106, 139, 153, 174, 258, 262, 263, Trivandrum, 1931-1992.

²¹⁹ *mīmāṃsādi svatātān nigamam avikalam mādhavācāryavaryāt
tarkam dāmodarākhyaḍ api padapadavīm acyutāryād budhendrāt /
teṣām kāruṇyayogāt kim api ca kavitaṃ āpnuvam karma me tad
bhūyāt kṛṣṇārpanam me bhavatu ca satataṃ dhūr aghāreḥ kathāyām //*

"I acquired Mīmāṃsā and other subjects from my own father, the entire Vedas from the eminent teacher Mādhava, philosophy from [a teacher] called Dāmodara, and grammar from the wise and respectable Acyuta. By means of their compassion I also got a bit of poetry. May this work of mine be an offering to Kṛṣṇa. And may my mind be ever on the story of the enemy of evil."

works. Thus, apart from the *Prakriyāsarvasva*, which is an original recasting of Pāṇini’s *sūtras* with a lucid commentary explaining the *Aṣṭādhyāyī*’s difficult points,²²⁰ Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa also composed two highly original works on grammar. In “A Proof of the Validity of Non-Standard Sanskrit”, *Apāṇinīyapramāṇyasādhanam*, Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa challenges the orthodox view of Pāṇini as (“the”) sole inventor of grammar by pointing to the innovations of later grammarians whom he also holds to be authoritative.²²¹ In his other work on grammar, the *Dhātukāvya*, Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa uses the story of Kṛṣṇa to illustrate a large number of verbal roots.²²² Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa also composed two works on Mīmāṃsā, an elementary treatise called *Mānameyodaya* about the means of knowledge (*māna*) and their respective categories (*meya*) in the Bhaṭṭa school of Pūrvamīmāṃsā,²²³ and a commentary on Kumārila’s *Tantravārtika* called the *Tantravārtikanibandhana*.²²⁴ His most famous work remains the *Nārāyaṇīya*, a poem of 1036 verses that are divided into 100 sections (*daśakas*) that revolve around the leading incidents of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, narrated in the form of a

See *Prakriyāsarvasva*, end of the Nyāyakhanda, *Trivandrum Sanskrit Series* No. 258 (part 5), ed. T. Bhaskaran, 1987, p. 182; S. Venkitasubramonia Iyer, *Nārāyaṇabhāṭṭa’s Prakriyāsarvasva*, University of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1972, p. 10.

²²⁰ There are three commentaries on the *Prakriyāsarvasva*; none is complete. The first is by Nīlakaṇṭha Dīkṣita (eighteenth century); the second by Rudra Vāriyar (eighteenth century) and the third, fairly modern, is by an anonymous commentator.

²²¹ According to Sreekrishna Sarma, the main idea of this work is that the scope of grammar is too narrow to contain language. Grammar is held by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa as a means for correcting, codifying and explaining language. See E. R. Sreekrishna Sarma, “*Apāṇinīyapramāṇyasādhanam*,” *S.V.U.O Journal*, Vol. 8 – *Texts and Studies* No. 2, 1968, pp. 1-3.

²²² The work, which is based on Bhīmasena’s *Dhātupāṭha* and Mādhava’s *Dhātuvṛtti*, both grammatical works, contains 248 verses and illustrates 1948 roots.

²²³ See *Mānameyodaya* by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa and Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍita, ed. with English translation: C. Kunhan Raja and S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri, The Adyar Library and Research Centre, Chennai, 2004 (first published: 1933). This work was not completed by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa but by Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍita.

²²⁴ Other Vedic-related works are the *Sūktasloka*s (a statistical account of the Ṛgveda which consists of nine stanzas in the Sragdharā metre), and another short work called the *Kriyākrama* or *Āśvalāyanakriyākrama*, which epitomizes 36 items of domestic rituals of Brahmins belonging to the Āśvalāyana branch of the Ṛgveda.

colloquy with the god Viṣṇu, the presiding deity at the temple of Guruvāyūr.²²⁵ Other devotional works include the 12-stanza-*stotra*, the *Guruvāyupureśastava* ("Eulogy of the Lord whose Abode is Guruvāyur") and the *stotra*, the *Śrīpādasaptatī* ("Seventy [verses dedicated] to the Goddess's Feet"), which eulogizes the goddess of Mukkola in Malabar and is considered Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's final work. Besides these, the poet composed several *praśastis* (panegyrics) in praise of various patrons.²²⁶

As this long and diverse list makes clear, Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa was something of a maverick in the intellectual landscape of sixteenth and seventeenth century Kerala. A polymath and scholar, the poet emerges as a grand innovator, while his overt affiliation with Vaiṣṇava devotionalism (*bhakti*) colours large portions of his *oeuvre*. It would seem that it is precisely this complex background that explains the innovative, some might even say, subversive aspects of his work.

In his article "Patterns of Truthfulness", Francis Zimmerman wishes to grant Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa the recognition he deserves "as one of the most creative intellectuals of the seventeenth century."²²⁷ According to Zimmerman, Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa lived at a time when a number of poets and scholars were attempting to

²²⁵ There is a Sanskrit commentary on the *Nārāyaṇīya* attributed to Rudra Vāriyar.

According to popular stories in Kerala, Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa composed the *Nārāyaṇīya* (when he was 27 years old) in the course of a hundred days, dedicating a *daśaka* daily to the Lord in the hope of being cured from rheumatism. This popular story is usually accompanied by the idea that by virtue of his yogic powers, Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa took on to himself his guru Acyuta Piṣāroṭi's rheumatic disease. He completed the work on November 27th, 1586, expressing his full recovery from illness in the chronogram - '*āyurārogyasaukhyam*' ('The Felicity of Life Free from Disease'). Guruvāyūr is considered even today a temple endowed with healing powers capable of dispelling rheumatic complaints. See Kunjunni Raja, (1958): 119-126; C. Rajendran, *Melputtūr Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa*, Sahitya Akademi, 2008, pp. 7-20.

²²⁶ The above account of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's works is based on Kunjunni Raja, (1958): 119-152; N. P. Unni, *Prabandhamāñjarī*, Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, 1998, pp. 5-64; C. Rajendran, (2008): 21-33. For other miscellaneous works of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa or those attributed to him, see Kunjunni Raja, (1958): 146-8.

²²⁷ Francis Zimmerman, "Patterns of Truthfulness," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* (2008) 36: 643-650, p. 643.

bridge philosophical tensions between Śaṅkara's *Advaita* and concurrent *Bhakti* movements; the encounter between these traditions created a new philosophical approach in India, whose most trenchant exponent was Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa. For example, in his *Nārāyaṇīya*, Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa challenges Śaṅkara's concept of *jñānayoga* by offering a new approach, which in many ways encapsulates the uniqueness of his voice as a “philosopher-poet”.²²⁸ In keeping with such views, large portions of the work are dedicated to advocating *bhakti-mārga* above *karma* and *jñāna*.²²⁹

Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's originality is particularly apparent in his approach to grammar. Like Zimmerman, Sheldon Pollock also argues that Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa lived in a historical period when:

In various domains of Sanskrit thinking a kind of neotraditionalism had arisen, which reasserted the absolute authority of the ancients in the face of challenges from those known as the new (*navya*) scholars. [...] Nowhere was this clearer than in grammar, where Nārāyaṇa's contemporary to the north, Bhaṭṭoji Dīkṣita, vigorously reaffirmed as incontrovertible the views of the “three sages” (Pāṇini, Kātyāyana and Patañjali, last centuries BC).²³⁰

Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa expresses radical arguments that have far-reaching implications for the way in which grammar was perceived till that time. Although in the treatise “A Proof of the Validity of Non-Standard Sanskrit”, *Apāṇinīyapramāṇyasādhanam*, the poet generally accepts Pāṇini's views, he nonetheless takes on the task of composing a text which challenges Pāṇini's grammar through systematic argumentation.

²²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 644.

²²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 645.

²³⁰ Sheldon Pollock, “Future Philology? The Fate of a Soft Science in a Hard World,” *Critical Inquiry* 35 (Summer 2009), University of Chicago, p. 942.

4.4 Relationship of Written *prabandhas* to the Performance Tradition

Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa is probably the author of the largest number of *prabandhas*, the majority of which revolve around episodes from the epics and the Purāṇas. Being relatively short stories (of approximately 50 stanzas each) by nature, Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's *prabandhas* are ideal for adaptation into the performing arts. And yet, the high demand for performance of *campūprabandhas* in temples during festivals has led to some scholarly skepticism about the exact number of *prabandhas* composed by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa.²³¹ Kunjunni Raja says that according to some, Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa is the author of all Keralan *prabandhas* dealing with MBh and *Rāmāyaṇa* stories, although he also notes that several of these works were composed by later writers in imitation of the poet's *prabandhas*.²³² It is probable that since Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa and his contemporaries composed many works, those composed by others have been wrongly identified as his own.²³³ Ullur Parameswara Iyer, who was the first to study this matter, maintains that Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa composed approximately twenty or thirty *Campūkāvya*s.²³⁴

Several of the *prabandhas* attributed to Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa relate to the MBh. These include: the *Pāñcālīsvayaṃvara*, which concerns the events that lead to the marriage of the Pāṇḍava brothers with Draupadī; the *Nālāyanīcarita*, in which Vyāsa tells Drupada about his daughter's previous birth as Nālāyanī, and

²³¹ See Unni, (1998): 45.

²³² Kunjunni Raja, (1958): 146.

²³³ See Unni, (1998): 31.

²³⁴ Iyer, however, is inconsistent regarding the number of *prabandhas* he attributes to Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa. As discussed below, Iyer gives two different estimations in his English and Malayalam essays.

the events which were to make her destined to marry the five Pāṇḍavas; the *Sundopasundopākhyāna*, which is a story of two brothers, Sunda and Upasunda, narrated by Nārada to the Pāṇḍavas subsequent to their marriage in order to teach them not to fight amongst each other on account of their common wife; the *Subhadrāharāṇa*, in which Arjuna's love for Subhadrā (Kṛṣṇa's sister) and their elopement are depicted; the *Rājasūya*, which deals with Yudhiṣṭhira's *rājasūya* sacrifice; and the *Dūtavākya*, (or, *Kṛṣṇadūta*), which revolves around Kṛṣṇa's effort to conciliate the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas in order to avert the impending war between them.

Important information regarding the goals of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's writings comes from the *Śūrpaṇakhāpralāpa*, or the *Niranunāsika prabandha*. This *Rāmāyaṇa*-related *prabandha* presents a colloquy between Śūrpaṇakhā and her brother Rāvaṇa that is set after Lakṣmaṇa had cut off the nose of the demoness in the epic narrative. It was accordingly written while avoiding any nasal sounds.²³⁵ The *Śūrpaṇakhāpralāpa* was dedicated by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa to Irāvi Cākyār, a well-known Cākyār actor of his time.²³⁶ It is thus probable that Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa wrote at least some of these *prabandhas* for his friend with the intention that they be performed in temples in the Cākyār-kūttu mode. The Cākyārs, a caste of actors

²³⁵ In addition, Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa composed *prabandhas* based on the Bhāgavata such as the *Nṛgamokṣa*, *Ajāmilamokṣa*, *Matsyāvatāra*, *Gajendramokṣa* and others. For a detailed account of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's *prabandhas* See Kunjunni Raja, (1958): 119-152; Unni, (1998): 5-64; and C. Rajendran, (2008): 21-33; 46-70.

²³⁶ *anunāsikarahitāni vyatanod etāni padya-gadyāni / nārāyaṇābhidhāno dvija-poto ravinaṭeśvarādeśāt // (Śūrpaṇakhāpralāpa, 7). “[I], the young brahman called Nārāyaṇa composed this [mixed] prose and verse [*prabandha*] without nasal [sounds], at the request of Ravi Naṭeśvara”. See *Prabandhasamāhārah* (Vol. 1).*

This actor also composed a prose work called *Mudrārākṣasakathāsāra*, published in the *Calcutta Oriental Series*, No. 6. See Kunjunni Raja, (1958): 135; Krishnamachariar, (2004): 609-10.

and performers,²³⁷ seem to have flourished (primarily) under the patronage of the South Indian Chola kings, c. 1000 CE, where they narrated mythological tales through *abhinaya* (acting) and dance techniques. These stories were written in the form of *prabandhas*, short poetic works which combine a mixture of prose and verse.²³⁸

In Kerala, Cākyārkūttu, the popular dramatic art of storytelling, developed as a performance mode in temples. The Cākyār's performance was literally "a one man show": a lone actor would perform the drama on a stage lit by a brass metal lamp assisted only by a Nampyār drummer, and a Nañnyār (female) cymbal player.²³⁹ Kūttu, the name given in Kerala for this art, thus designates a solo performance that is bare of the characteristic features of classical Sanskrit drama; the Cākyār actor himself assumes the role of the Vidūṣaka clown in presenting the *prabandha*.²⁴⁰ The actor is allowed to make witty and satirical thrusts at the audience, treating them as part of the story, and incorporating them into his art.²⁴¹

It appears that the genre of *prabandha* in Kerala developed along two parallel lines: a written form (*prabandha/campūkāvya*), and a performative one

²³⁷ Several scholars note that the Cākyārs were equally gifted in performing art (*Abhinaya*, acting techniques) and scholarship relating to the *Kāvya*s, *Nāṭakas*, *Śāstras* and the *Purāṇas*. See Unni, (1998): 43-49; P. C. Krishnan Nambudiripad, "Stories of Famous Actors," *Kūṭiyāttam*, M. Lit. thesis, Madras University, 1962, p. 1.

²³⁸ See Farley Richmond, "Introduction to *Kūṭiyāttam*," *Indian Theatre, Traditions of Performance*, eds. Farley P. Richmond, Darius C. Swann, and Phillip B. Zarrilli, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1990, pp. 87-117; V. Venkatarama Sarma Sastri, "Ajāmilamokṣaprabandha of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, University of London, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1926), p. 295.

²³⁹ This dramatic art gradually introduced additional Cākyār actors, and out of this evolved the *Kūṭiyāttam* drama. See M. L. Varadpande, *History of Indian Theatre*, Shakti Malik Abhinav Publication, New-Delhi, 1992, p. 127.

²⁴⁰ P. T. Enros notes that unlike the *Prabandhakūttu*, the *Kūṭiyāttam* theatre was known for the production of stage manuals that accompanied the plays. These provided detailed directions for the production of performances, and became an inseparable component of Kerala's *Kūṭiyāttam* theatre. See Pragna Thakkar Enros, "Producing Sanskrit Plays in the Tradition of *Kūṭiyāttam*," *Sanskrit Drama in Performance*, eds. Rachel Van M. Baumer and James R. Brandon, The University Press of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1981, pp. 275-298.

²⁴¹ See Varadpande, (1992): 128; Unni, (1998): 45-9.

(the *kūttu* theatre). This could explain why the BP text lacks an author's signature. There are three factors that suggest the hypothesis discussed below: (1) that eight *prabandhas* in the BP are supposedly the work of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa;²⁴² (2) that many *prabandhas* prevalent in Kerala could be attributed to him; and, (3) that the genre has both a written and a performative strand. All of these factors suggest the following hypothesis: the assumption regarding the liberty of actors in interpreting the written *prabandhas* suggests a diffuse relationship between the written text and the performance. This may explain why there is no authorship claim to most of these *prabandhas* (which is certainly the case for the BP text). If the disparity between the two versions was indeed large, then perhaps the written texts operated as a matrix of raw material available to actors in Kerala, which allowed them to draw on witty, satirical remarks relevant to the time, space, and context of a given performance. These remarks could have been far removed, at times, from the text of the written *prabandhas* themselves. It is likely, then, that the *prabandhas* were intended for this very purpose. This could explain why it was uncommon for an author to sign his name, as the *prabandhas* became more like an asset of the Cākyār than the author. The genre's strong affiliation with *Bhakti* and religious devotionism further suggests that the act of composing these works was associated with gaining religious merit, or as some sort of religious practice. As such, the author would have served as a mediating link between the *prabandhakūttu* and the reservoir of ancient literary material available in the Purāṇas and the epics.

²⁴² See note 214 above.

That is perhaps why a poet of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa’s caliber did not bother to put his name to his own *prabandhas*, which is surprising, as we know that in his other works the poet freely divulged information about himself, his life, family, education, teachers, and patrons.²⁴³ Thus, in the *nyāya* section of the *Prakriyāsarvasva*, Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa notes: “My home is that of the Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa family (*uparinavagrāmanāmnī svadhāmnī*) in a part of the country called Kerala, north of the river Bharataphuza [Nilā], only two miles from Nāvākṣetra. I was born, named Nārāyaṇa, to the best of Brahmans, Māṭṛdatta, who was extremely righteous and entirely proficient in the knowledge of the Bhaṭṭa Mīmāṃsā doctrine, and so on. At my patron Devanārāyaṇa’s order, I am carrying out this unparalleled [work]”.²⁴⁴ Similarly, at the beginning of the *Mānameyodaya* he states that he planned to write the work in two parts (even though he did not complete the second part, which was ultimately accomplished by Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍita).²⁴⁵ Finally, the *Prakriyāsarvasva* affords precise information about the poet’s patron, king Devanārāyaṇa, who “at some point attracted me by his good virtues to his presence. Led [thus], he then commanded me, the Brahman Nārāyaṇa, son of the venerable Māṭṛdatta”.²⁴⁶

²⁴³ See note 219 above.

²⁴⁴ *bhūkhaṇḍe keralākhye saritam iha nilām uttareṇaiva nāvākṣetrād gavyūtimātre punar uparinavagrāmanāmnī svadhāmnī / dharmiṣṭhād bhaṭṭatantrādyakhilamatapaṭor māṭṛdattadvijendrāj jāto nārāyaṇākhyo niravahad atulām devanārāyaṇājñām // (Prakriyāsarvasva, end of the Nyāyakhanda). See Trivandrum Sanskrit Series No. 258 (part 5), ed. T. Bhaskaran, 1987, p. 181; S. Venkitasubramonia Iyer, Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa’s Prakriyāsarvasva, University of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1972, p. 10; Kunjunni Raja, (1958): 119.*

²⁴⁵ *mānameyavibhāgena vastūnām dvividhā sthitiḥ / atas tadubhayaṃ brūmah śrīmatkaumārīlādhanā //* “The existence of phenomena is twofold by division into means of cognition and objects of cognition. Therefore, we hereby discuss both [parts] through the system established by the venerable Kumārila”. See *Mānameyodaya by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa and Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍita*, (2004): 1; Kunjunni Raja, (1958): 132.

²⁴⁶ *so ‘tha kadācana rājā svaḡair ākr̥ṣya sannidhiṃ nītam / śrīmāṭṛdattasūnum nārāyaṇasaṃjñam aśiṣad avanisuram //* See Kunjunni Raja, (1958): 126.

Unlike the explicit references found in these works, only four of the published *prabandhas* in the *Prabandhasamāhāraḥ* provide factual information about the author. As noted above, in the *Śūrpaṇakhāpralāpa*, Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa states that he wrote the *prabandha* at the behest of his friend, the actor Irāvi Cākyār.²⁴⁷ The *Rājasūya prabandha*'s first verse similarly informs us of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's authorship: "Having saluted Govinda, who is filled with the single flavour of joy, Nārāyaṇa, best among Brahmans, is now creating this *campūkāvya* consisting of Yudhiṣṭhira's success at the *rājasūya* [sacrifice]".²⁴⁸ Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa likewise encloses his name in the *Dūtavākya*'s last verse: "This *prabandha* whose beauty is like a collection of streams of nectar granting long life, emanating from the mouth of the best of Brahmans called Nārāyaṇa, and whose beauty consists of a combination [of both] prose passages worthy of being spoken and verses of faultless splendour, has been concluded".²⁴⁹ In the *Svāhāsudhākara prabandha* (relating the story of the moon's love for Agni's wife, Svāhā), which is not a MBh-related *prabandha*, the work's concluding verse reads the following: "The Brahman Nārāyaṇa has composed this extremely charming *prabandha* called *Svāhāsudhākaram* ['the Moon and Svāhā'] over a short period of time".²⁵⁰

Other MBh-related *prabandhas* published in the *Prabandhasamāhāraḥ* feature what seems to be the scribe's or perhaps even the editor's indication that the *prabandha* was written by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, in such phrases as *śrī-nārāyaṇa-*

²⁴⁷ See note 236 above.

²⁴⁸ *govindam ānandarasaikasāndram āvandyā nārāyaṇabhūsurendraḥ / nirmāti dharmātmajarājasūyasampanmayam samprati campūkāvyaṃ //* See *Prabandhasamāhāraḥ* (Vol. 1). Note that the poet does not use the correct form *campū* (rather than *campu*) probably because it is unmetrical here.

²⁴⁹ *nārāyaṇābhīdhamahīsuraṅvavyavaktrajaivātrkāṃṛtajharīnikarāyamānam / hr̥dyaṃ prabandham idam adya samāptam udyagadyaṃ samastam anavadyavirājīpadyam //* *ibid.*

²⁵⁰ *svāhāsudhākaraṃ nāma prabandham atikomalam / akarod acireṇaiva nārāyaṇamahīsuraḥ //* See Kunjunni Raja, (1958): 144.

bhaṭṭa-viracitaḥ (in the cases of the *Kirāta* and the *Nālāyanīcarita prabandhas*), or *śrī-nārāyaṇa-bhaṭṭa-praṇītaḥ* (*Pāñcālīsvayaṇvara*, *Yudhiṣṭhirābhiṣeka prabandhas*). At the same time, several *prabandhas* are conspicuously lacking in such indications of authorship (like the *Sundopasundopākhyāna* and the *Subhadrāharaṇa prabandhas*).²⁵¹

4.5 Difficulty in Establishing the Authorship of the *Svargārohaṇaprabandha*

Although several lengthy studies have been conducted on the figure of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa and his works,²⁵² none of them seems to have put forward any objective criteria on the basis of which we can establish which of the many *prabandhas* prevalent in Kerala belong to Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa. Three scholars have discussed Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's works: Kunjunni Raja (1958), Unni (1998), and more recently C. Rajendran (2008), all of whom draw heavily on Ullur Parameswara Iyer's important studies.²⁵³ These scholars are divided not only on the question of which of the *prabandhas* prevalent in Kerala came from Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's pen, but also on the *number* of *prabandhas* that should be attributed to him.

In his Malayalam study (*Keralasāhityacaritram*), Iyer estimates that the total number of *prabandhas* to be attributed to Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa is 20.²⁵⁴ Both Unni and

²⁵¹ See *Prabandhasamāhāraḥ* (Vol. 1).

²⁵² These also summarize now outdated previous studies.

²⁵³ See U. P. Iyer, "Narayana Bhattatiri," *A Souvenir of Silver Jubilee Celebration of the Department of Publication of Oriental Manuscripts*, Trivandrum, 1934 (in English); "Keralasāhityacaritram", *Travancore University Series*, no. 30, 1962 (in Malayalam).

²⁵⁴ See Unni, (1998): 17. See also n. 253 above.

Kunjunni Raja maintain that of these, nine concern the MBh.²⁵⁵ However, in his English essay, Iyer states quite clearly that: “As many as *thirty* works of that type [*Campūkāvya*s] from his [Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa’s] pen have come down to us”.²⁵⁶ Not only does Iyer contradict himself with regard to the number of *prabandhas* he attributes to Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa (listing 30 in his English article, and then 20 in the *Keralasāhityacaritram*), he also differs from the other studies concerning the titles of MBh-related *prabandhas* that he attributes to Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa. While the three scholars are largely in agreement regarding nine of the MBh-related *prabandhas*,²⁵⁷ Iyer lists only seven in his english paper,²⁵⁸ a number contradicted by the same author in his Malayalam study, which claims they are nine.²⁵⁹

Despite these inconsistencies, there are several factors that support the claim that the BP is a work of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa. Unni knows of a text to which he refers as “a *Mahābhāratacampū* with 37 episodes narrated in their sequence. All of them may not be by Melputtūr Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa. Others too must have composed *campūs* in order to complete the sequence of the story.”²⁶⁰ However, he does not provide a reference to this text, nor does he provide any basis for his last remark. In a different place in his study, Unni refers to a text that on the face of it, resembles the BP, yet the title of the text is different from the

²⁵⁵ See Kunjunni Raja, (1958): 144-6.

²⁵⁶ See Iyer, (1934): p. 79. See also note 253 above.

²⁵⁷ These *prabandhas* are: 1) *Pāñcālī-svayaṃvara*; 2) *Nālāyanīcarita*; 3) *Yudhiṣṭhirābhīṣeka*; 4) *Sundopasundopākhyāna*; 5) *Subhadrāharaṇa*; 6) *Rājasūya*; 7) *kirātārjunīya*; 8) *Dūtavākya*; 9) *Kailāsavarṇana*.

²⁵⁸ He excludes from this list the *Yudhiṣṭhirābhīṣeka* and the *Sundopasundopākhyāna prabandhas* which he does not mention at all. See Iyer, (1934): 79. See also note 253 above.

²⁵⁹ See Unni, (1998): 17. See also n. 251 above. An additional confusion comes from Rajendran’s recent study which lists fourteen MBh-related *prabandhas* supplementing the nine previously mentioned with four other *prabandhas*, as follows: *Vyāsaotpatti*, *Sabhāpraveśa*, *Dyūtakriḍā* and, *Vyāsaopadeśa*. He also includes in this list the *Matsyāvatāra prabandha* but we know that it is *not* a MBh-related *prabandha* but a Bhāgavata one. See Rajendran, (2008): 24.

²⁶⁰ Unni, (1998): 18.

“*Mahābhāratacampū*” he mentioned above, and to the BP. The “*Bhāratacampū*”, says Unni, is “also a big collection of *Prabandhas*, probably written or incorporated by different hands”.²⁶¹ One could, of course, argue that *Mahābhāratacampū* and *Bhāratacampū* are different titles for the same text, yet as Unni refers to it as a distinctly separate work (in addition to the one he has already mentioned) and does not provide a reference of any sort, this hypothesis cannot be confirmed. It is, however, difficult to dismiss the similarity between the structure and form of the BP text and the description of the collection of *prabandhas* provided by Unni.²⁶² It is of vital importance to note that Iyer’s account is almost identical to the BP’s table of contents, both in the order of the *prabandhas* included in the text, and in their subsequent titles.²⁶³

²⁶¹ *ibid.*, pp. 47-8.

²⁶² “According to Ullur. S. Parameswara Iyer the *Bhāratcampū* contains the following episodes, many of which are epitomised to form smaller *prabandhas*, though most of them are not available at present. The episodes included therein are: 1) *Bhīṣmotpatti*, 2) *Vyāsotpatti*, 3) *Satyavatīpariṇaya*, 4) *Citrāṅgadhavadha*, 5) *Ambopakhyāna*, 6) *Dhṛtarāṣṭrotpatti*, 7) *Pāṇḍavotpatti*, 8) *Hīḍimbavadha*, 9) *Bakavadha*, 10) *Pāñcālīsvayaṃvara*, 11) *Nālāyanīcarita*, 12) *Yudhiṣṭhirābhiṣeka*, 13) *Sundopasundopākhyāna*, 14) *Subhadrāharaṇa*, 15) *Khāṇḍavadāha*, 16) *Jarāsandhavadhā*, 17) *Digvijaya*, 18) *Rājasūya*, 19) *Dyūta*, 20) *Vanavāsa*, 21) *Kirāta*, 22) *Kalyāṇasaugandhika*, 23) *Nivātakavacavadha*, 24) *Ghoṣayātrā*, 25) *Karṇakuṇḍalāharaṇa*, 26) *Ajñātavāsa*, 27) *Dūtavākya*, 28) *Bhīṣmaparva*, 29) *Droṇaparva*, 30) *Karṇaparva*, 31) *Śalyaparva*, 32) *Gadāparva*, 33) *Suyodhanavadha*, 34) *Strīparva*, 35) *Aśvamedhaparva*, 36) *Mausalaparva*, 37) *Svargārohaṇa*.” Unni, (1998): 18.

Note that Unni mentions here a *Svargārohaṇa prabandha*. It is worth noting in this regard that the only other reference I was able to find to the *SĀ prabandha*, is in *History of Classical Sanskrit Literature* by M. Krishnamachariar (pp. 254-6). In an entry about Melputtūr Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, Krishnamachariar lists a *Svargārohaṇa prabandha* in addition to seven of the (uncontroversial) *prabandhas* attributed to him (i.e., the *Rājasūya*, *Dūtavākya*, *Pāñcālīsvayaṃvaram*, *Nālāyanīcarita*, *Subhadrāharaṇa*, *Kirāta* and *Kailāsavarṇana prabandhas*).

Therefore, Iyer’s citation above raises two significant questions: (1) Does he indeed refer to the BP text? (2) What does he mean by saying that “most of them [i.e., *prabandhas*] are *not available at present*”?

Two additional catalogues list a *SĀ prabandha*. One is the NMM (National Manuscript Mission) in Delhi, and the other is the catalogue of Trivandrum Sanskrit Library. Although both list a *SĀ prabandha* as a “*Bhārata Campū*” ascribed to Melputtūr Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, I can now attest, as a result of thorough study (partly conducted in India) that both have been miscatalogued. The *SĀ prabandha* that these catalogues have wrongly listed is actually a *Rāmāyaṇa*-related *prabandha* which describes Rāma’s last voyage to heaven.

²⁶³ See notes 206-207 above.

An additional problem in establishing Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa as the author of this text has to do with the fact that scholarly studies have not set out objective criteria on the basis of which one can establish Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's style of writing. Examining the *Nārāyaṇīya*, for instance, Kunjunni Raja characterizes Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's style of writing with the following features: making the sound seem an echo of the sense; careful selection of meters appropriate to the theme; usage of a large number of meters; outstanding dexterity in the art of summarizing long and complicated passages in a lucid style; the use of both sound and sense figures of speech; occasional humorous remarks; and finally, advocating ardent devotion to Viṣṇu as the best way to salvation.²⁶⁴

Just as Kunjunni Raja attempted to characterize Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's style of writing, Unni cited the historian Vaṭakkumkūr Rājarajavarmaraja to propose the following list of writing qualities: attention to ethical values; predominance of *bhakti*; a rich vocabulary; freshness of ideas; dexterity in the use of humour; priority to matters like meter, figure of speech and sentiments; exhibition of the central principles of worldly affairs; a particular bias toward the usage of double entendre (*śleṣa*); fondness for coining grammatically significant words capable of representing novel ideas; and lastly, ability in description.²⁶⁵ Although clearly the hallmarks of a great poet, such definitions are ultimately too broad to define a specific writing style and could easily be applied to the *kāvya* of any number of poets.

In conclusion, although a few vague references lead to the BP, the difficulty of establishing its authorship (and specifically, its closing passage, the SĀ

²⁶⁴ See Kunjunni Raja, (1958): 140-141.

²⁶⁵ See Unni, (1998): 18; V. Rājarajavarmaraja, *Keraliya Samskrta Sahitya Caritram*, Vol. 3, pp. 1-151 (in Mal).

prabandha) arises from the following reasons: 1) Poor scholarly study of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's works, which failed to establish objective criteria for judging which of the many *prabandhas* prevalent in Kerala are actually his. As shown above, this results in a confused and incoherent state of scholarship, which is incapable of producing a clear and conclusive characterization of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's style of writing; 2) The texture of the BP text, which consists of free standing *prabandhas* (several of which have been published separately),²⁶⁶ suggesting it was possibly composed by different authors. Nonetheless, we should bear in mind that the very fact of compilation of *prabandhas* in the BP text indicates (contrary to what has been said above) a unity of authorship.

Although establishing the authorship of the BP is beyond the scope of this study, it is useful to summarize its key features so as to point to certain conclusions that can be drawn from them. The fact that the BP is transmitted as a collective work copied into a twentieth century notebook, and that 12 earlier palm-leaf Mal Mss of the complete collection are found in a single library alone, indicates that it was an important text (and, in any case, not a subsidiary or a secondary one). The fact that it is found in Kerala, Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's birthplace, and that eight of these *prabandhas* have been identified as Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's works, strengthens the claim that he was the author of the BP.

²⁶⁶ See note 214 above.

4.6 The *Svargārohaṇa-prabandha*²⁶⁷

The *Svargārohaṇa-prabandha* (henceforth: SĀpra.), the most recent retelling among MBh epitomes examined in this chapter, stands out for its poetic expression, usage of language, and richness of *alaṃkāras* (poetic ornaments). The SĀ *prabandha* appears, as the order requires, at the very end of the BP text. Like all other *prabandhas* collected in the text, this *prabandha* is also composed in the *campū* style. It consists of 45 verses and nine prose passages. The poet uses a wide variety of meters such as Sragdharā, Śārdūlavikrīḍita, Pṛthvī, Gīti, Śikhariṇī, Vasantatilakā, Mālinī, Aupacchandāsika, Upajāti and Śloka. A few Śleṣa *alaṃkāras* are incorporated in the poem, as well as a large number of Yamakas.²⁶⁸

A strong influence of *vaiṣṇava bhakti* is sensed throughout the composition. This is evident from the very first verse, where, after Hari's death, the Pāṇḍavas, “drawn by nooses of great devotional attachment to his lotus feet” (*ākṛṣṭās tatpadāmbhoruhayugalamahābhaktipāśair*), decide to withdraw from the world so that they may rejoin the departed deity. Using rich symbolism and *śleṣas*, the poet creates a striking resonance between the Pāṇḍavas' miserable state after Hari's death by referring to them as *apāsāḥ* ('devoid of hope' or 'devoid of human ties'), while at the same time he calls their staying on earth *apārthām*, ('pointless' or 'devoided of their Pārtha identity'):

The Pāṇḍavas [became] devoid of [human] ties (*apāsāḥ*) [or, bereft of hope]. Considering that their own staying on earth was pointless and devoided of their Pārtha identity (*apārthām*) and lacked any basis for celebrated valour

²⁶⁷ See a transliterated edition of the *prabandha* and its translation in appendix IV below.

²⁶⁸ See, for instance, verse 4: [...] *kṛtvā śuddhatarām dharām vratadharāḥ* [...]; verse 6: [...] *viṣṇubhaktikṛtatāṇḍavāḥ pāṇḍavāḥ* [...]; verse 7: [...] *āsrāntam ākrānta* [...]; verse 9: [...] *purogā nīrogā* [...]; campū 1: *tatas teṣu puṇyāranyanadīnadadharaṇīdharādyalaṅkṛtān manujadurgamān* [...]; campū 5: [...] *sādaram tava sodaram* [...]; verse 12: [...] *nāhaṃ nākaṃ* [...]; campū 6: [...] *gatena tena deva-dūtena* [...]. See also appendix IV below.

(*rahitamahitaśauryāśrayām*), they made up their minds to abandon their corporeal state.²⁶⁹

The heroes' hopeless state (*apāśa*) on account of Hari's absence²⁷⁰ recurs when the brothers pass through the city of Dvarkā. Watching the city being submerged in the waters of the ocean, they become "afflicted by sprouts of grief" (*jātaśokāṅkurāḥ*) on account of Kṛṣṇa's departure. Nonetheless, prostrating before the lord, the Pāṇḍavas then carry on with their journey while they "perform dance in their minds in devotion to Viṣṇu" (*viṣṇubhaktikṛtatāṇḍavāḥ*). Elsewhere, the Pāṇḍavas are described as the "knowers of the sweetness emerging from the adoration of Hari's feet" (*haripadaniṣevārasavidah*). Yet, one of the most striking expressions of devotionalism in the *prabandha* is conveyed in the following Śārdūlavikrīḍita verse, in which the poet uses a *śleṣa alamkāra* in order to describe both Mount Meru and the form of the lord:

The mountain was luminous by wild jasmine flowers glittering on account of series of tender leaves mixed with flowers that produced a fragrance attractive to the whole world. It was so high that it nearly drank up the sky. It was lovely due to the melodious sounds produced by the rattling of the bamboo reeds. The mountain was frequented by gods. Seeing that mountain the Pāṇḍavas became joyous, as it appeared to them like their beloved soul friend Hari himself, who is served by all the gods, who is dressed in yellow robe, who is luminous on account of a garland made of wild jasmine flowers glittering with series of tender leaves mixed with flowers that produce a fragrance attractive to the whole world, who is tall and resplendent, and who is attractive by virtue of the melodious sounds [he produces] by playing the flute.²⁷¹

Although the poet vividly depicts the Pāṇḍavas' meaningless existence

²⁶⁹ *śrīkṛṣṇe trāṇaniṣṇe gatavati bhagavaty ambujākṣe nijam dhāmā-
kṛṣṭās tatpadāmbhoruhayugalamahābhaktipāśair apāśāḥ /
bhūlokāvasthitim svām rahitamahitaśauryāśrayām tām apārthām
ālocyā hanta pārthā matim atha vidadhuś cātmadehān vihātum //* (SĀpra. 1)

²⁷⁰ A variant of this term recurs in verse 3 describing Yudhiṣṭhira as *nirāśo*.

²⁷¹ *drśyam viśvamanojñasaurabhamilatpuṣpapravālāvalī-
vibhrājadvanamālikāvilasitam pītāmbaram bhāsvaram /
tuṅgam saṅgataveṇunādasubhagam divyair niṣevyam girim
drṣtvā te harim ātmavallabham iva prāptā mudam pāṇḍavāḥ //* (SĀpra. 10)

subsequent to Kṛṣṇa's death, in later verses he dwells on the richness of their lives and their characteristic qualities. The Pāṇḍavas are described as those "who conquered the surface of the earth with the strength of their arms" (*dorvikramāvarjitabhuvanatalāḥ pāṇḍuputrāḥ*), the allusion to the heroes' past deeds recurring in a verse that is quoted verbatim from Agastya's *Bālabhārata*:

Unweariedly, they climbed mountains and crossed various types of rivers as they [had once] defeated kings and scattered many kinds of armies. They carried out their journey that never met any impediment as if wishing to conquer again the four quarters of the earth.²⁷²

The poet thus draws a parallel between the Pāṇḍavas' journey toward death and the deeds of valour that they performed throughout their lives. Using double entendre, the text presents both actions -- that of the present and that of the past -- as conquests, effectively associating their journey toward death with that of their lives. Such illustrative narration evokes the identification of the Pāṇḍavas' entire cycle of life with the plot time-line, which, somewhat appropriately, is placed at a moment in the narrative in which the heroes themselves circumambulate the earth. The poet thus breaks the linear time line flowing in the narrative solely toward the protagonists' end. Moreover, by mentioning shreds of the heroes' lives whilst they are in fact advancing toward their death, the poet underlines the entire cycle of the Pāṇḍavas' lives; and, since the journey leads to their expected reunion with Hari, it is this end, rather than the heroes' meeting with their own death, that seems to be the ultimate goal that the poet presents before his audience.

²⁷² The poet here quotes verse 20.87 of Agastya's *Bālabhārata*:
aśrāntam ākrāntamahībhrtas te nistīrṇanānāvidhavāhinīkāḥ /
yātrāṃ punardigvijigīṣayeva kutrāpy akunṭhaprasarāṃ vitenuḥ // (SĀpra. 7).

As opposed to other epitomes and also unlike the MBh itself, the SĀ *prabandha* grants distinct significance to the presence of the dog. While these texts typically describe the dog as a random animal by employing phrases like “a dog” (*ekaḥ śvā*), or “some dog” (*kenacid śunā*),²⁷³ the SĀ *prabandha* elaborates upon its character in a number of verses. In one verse, the dog’s footprints are described as auspicious, for they grant even greater purity to the Pāṇḍavas’ own footprints on the ground: “These same footprints (*padaiḥ*) were themselves well purified (*atipūtaiḥ*) by the assemblage (*vinyāsa*) of the dog’s curved footprints in their midst (*madhye bandhura-sārameya-pada*).”²⁷⁴ Another verse describes the dog’s character and features: “A dog followed them with great haste as if [driven] by an eagerness for hunting. It was unbounded by a lead, and clever in crossing [quickly] even those paths difficult to jump upon.”²⁷⁵ These elaborations make clear that the poet of the SĀ *prabandha* does not comply with the usual representation of the dog in the story, as an insignificant animal, instead attributing to it specific traits and an auspicious presence. The dog’s favourable disposition constitutes a marked departure from Kṣemendra and Amaraçandra, who relate that the Pāṇḍavas diligently warded off the dog,²⁷⁶ as the poet here actually has the brothers welcome the dog’s presence.

This depiction of the dog allows for innovative interpretations. It appears that very early in the plot, the poet associates the dog with the character it is

²⁷³ MBh, MhP: *śvā caiva saptamaḥ* (“and the dog as seventh” 17.23); *śvā caivānuyayāv ekaḥ* (“a dog was following them”, 17.31); Kṣemendra: *śvā tān anuyayāv eko ...* (“a dog was following them”, BM 17.8); Amaraçandra: *etān ekaḥ śvā ... ’nvagāt* (“a dog followed them”, BB 17.7); Agastya: *kenāpi śunānuyātaḥ* (“followed by some dog”, BB. 20.85).

²⁷⁴ SĀpra. 4.

²⁷⁵ *mṛgayākautukād iva viśṛṅkhalena durlaṅghamārgākramaṇavicakṣaṇena satvaram anugatvareṇa tena śunā saha* (SĀpra. campū 1).

²⁷⁶ See Kṣemendra: *vāryamāṇo ’pi yatnataḥ* (“although it was warded off diligently”, BM 17. 8); Amaraçandra: *vārito ’pi* (“although warded off”, BB 17.7).

destined to become, i.e., Yudhiṣṭhira’s father, Dharma. This would explain why it is presented as having a favourable influence on the Pāṇḍavas. Also, the dog’s traits somewhat resemble those of the protagonists: it is quick, clever, and heroically crosses over the same impassable paths that its valiant masters traverse. This *prabandha*’s strong emphasis on *bhakti* further explains the highlighting of the dog’s beneficial presence, for in granting significance to its character it amplifies the intensity of Yudhiṣṭhira’s trial and augments the worthiness of his resolve not to forsake his *bhakta* even for the sake of *svarga*.

The poet of the *SĀ prabandha* also offers a novel interpretation for the Pāṇḍavas’ fall to their death. Although he mentions the protagonists’ flaws,²⁷⁷ his judgement of them is attenuated, the deceased brothers being referred to as those “who possessed a *yoga* that had fallen apart.” (*vicyutayogavanto nipatanti sma*).²⁷⁸ In keeping with this benign tone, the poet adds another innovative motif. As all the brothers and Draupadī eventually fall to their death, the poet describes Yudhiṣṭhira reflecting upon what had happened and ultimately stating that ‘everything that has to happen, does occur’ (*tam avaśyaṃ bhavati bhavitavyam iti*).²⁷⁹ In light of the strong influence of *bhakti* in this poem, such a phrase would

²⁷⁷ *matimadagrimatvadarpeṇa sarvāṭiśāyisaundaryagarveṇa
dhānuṣkatābhīmānadhikkṛtasakalarājamaṇḍalatvāt
prathamapratīśrutaikadinanirvartyaśatruvadhavaiyarthyakāritvāc ca sāmpratam ete patitā iti
krameṇa teṣāṃ patanakāraṇam anuyuñjānāya bhīmāyākhyāya ślāghyāmalacaritre gacchati
vipaścidapaścime rājñi tasmin atiprabaladuḥkhabharataptacittaḥ so ’pi vṛkodaraś ca
vivaśacaraṇasañcāram apatat // (SĀpra. campū 4).*

“Yudhiṣṭhira presently explained to Bhīma, who was enquiring after the cause of their fall, the reasons that they fell: Sahadeva fell for his arrogance [in being] the foremost of the wise; Nakula, for his pride in a beauty that surpassed everyone else; Arjuna, for mocking the multitude of kings in priding himself as the best archer, as well as for his failure in the vow he took prior [to the battle] in bringing about the death of his enemies in the course of one day. And as the king, whose conduct is flawless and worthy of praise, who is foremost among learned men, kept walking, Vṛkodara, whose mind was scorched by the burden of unbearable grief lost control over his feet and fell too.”

²⁷⁸ SĀpra. campū 3.

²⁷⁹ SĀpra. campū 5.

seem to reflect the poet's theological world-view regarding the lord, whose presence in the world organizes or determines the way things should be. Consequently, Yudhiṣṭhira is portrayed here as a loyal *bhakta* who accepts and surrenders before the order that is part of Hari's transcendental and mysterious plan.

The poet addresses the dog issue once again as he narrates the dialogue between Yudhiṣṭhira and Indra. By conveying Indra's deception of Yudhiṣṭhira, he emphasizes the dog's central role in the dialogue. This is first visible in Yudhiṣṭhira's eulogizing the dog and the significance it had both during his life, as well as in the course of his final journey to death: "O Lord of Gods, this dog is filled with affection toward me on account of [his] trust. Furthermore, during this great journey, he was with me on earth. O, I cannot abandon him, who has given me supreme happiness! Therefore, I desire to go to heaven along with him!".²⁸⁰ Having said that, the hero then willingly relinquishes heaven for the sake of his dog, to which he refers as his *bhakta*: "I do not desire heaven as one who deserts his *bhakta* with the sin of abandoning his dependents!".²⁸¹ In what follows, the poet puts into Indra's mouth more slander about the dog, Yudhiṣṭhira's faithful *bhakta*. Strongly encouraging Yudhiṣṭhira to abandon it, Indra explains that dogs are banned from entering heaven (*hī hī kauleyakānām nahi nahi suraloke gatiḥ*) due to their irritable (*krodhanānām*) nature. Indra further notes that dogs are "a site for a net of troubles" (*amhojālāspadānām*), "most sinful" (*pāpiṣṭham*) and

²⁸⁰ *ayaṃ śvā viśvāsān mayi samuditanehabharito
mahāprasthāne 'sminn api ca samavartī bhuvi mayā /
na saṃtyaktuṃ śaknomy ayaḥ paramasammodajanakam
tad icchāmy etena tridivam abhigantuṃ surapate // (SĀpra. 15)*

²⁸¹ *nāhaṃ bhaktaṃ viśrjya tridivam abhilaṣāmy āśritatyāgapāpī (SĀpra. 16)*

“worthy of rebuke” (*vinindyam*).²⁸² An important term that appears in Indra’s list of pejorative words is *svasthānahīnam*, which is a compound pun that means both “one who is devoid of a place of its own” and “casteless”.²⁸³ Responding to Indra’s tirade, Yudhiṣṭhira finally speaks: “O killer of Vṛtra, my devoted servant is unfit to be abandoned even though he may be of low order. Without this dog, even heaven in which I would meet my brothers, does not appeal to me.” (*mocanīyo na nīco ’pi bhakto me vṛtrasūdāna / svargo ’pi bhrātr̥saṃsargo rocate na śunā vinā*). Again, the choice of words used in reference to the dog -- *bhakta*, *nīca* (low order), *svasthānahīna* (casteless) -- seems to stem from the world of *bhakti*, where practitioners of devotionalism are entitled to divine grace regardless of caste affiliation or origin of order. The encounter with Indra is concluded with Yudhiṣṭhira relinquishing heaven. The path of *bhakti* is explicitly vindicated with Dharma revealing himself and telling his son that he is pleased with him for having abandoned *svarga* for his *bhakta*’s sake (*bhaktahetu*).²⁸⁴

Yudhiṣṭhira then ascends to *svarga* only to discover a thriving Duryodhana “occupying a golden throne” (*kanakaviṣṭarabhājam*), and “shining with the glory of a hero” (*vilasitaṃ divi vīralakṣmyā*). Having spotted him there, Yudhiṣṭhira declares that “here in heaven, I do not wish to see this greedy villain, my enemy, who has greatly wronged me.”²⁸⁵ Yudhiṣṭhira expresses an even harsher tone regarding Duryodhana’s presence in *svarga*, as he tells Nārada: “if this divine world currently belongs to Duryodhana, who is a traitor to his friends, and a thorn to the entire earth, let it be so! My mind is eager to see today my brothers, friends,

²⁸² See SĀpra. 16-17.

²⁸³ See SĀpra. 19.

²⁸⁴ See SĀpra. 22.

²⁸⁵ *na didṛkṣur asmin lubdhaṃ khalaṃ bahukṛtāpakṛtiṃ ripuṃ me* (SĀpra. 29).

and my sons.”²⁸⁶ The poet recounts these scenes more or less as per the MBh text. However, a new theme introduced in this poem is the emphasis on Yudhiṣṭhira’s feeling of guilt over Karṇa’s traumatic death. The author of the *SĀ prabandha* is the only MBh-reteller who considers the thwarted relationship of this tragic hero with the Pāṇḍavas throughout the narrative. Thus, he depicts Yudhiṣṭhira expressing deep regret for unknowingly having his own brother killed: “I desire to see my brother Karṇa [...] On account of my ignorance, I had him [...] tragically killed in battle by Arjuna! Oh! Alas! [It was only] during the *nivāpa* oblation [in which water is offered to dead manes], that I have heard the speech of my mother declaring: “May water be first offered to Karṇa”. [Thus learning for the first time that he was my brother], my compassionate heart was scorched with agony, for I did not have the good fortune to fall prostrating at his feet.”²⁸⁷ Given the tragedy of the Pāṇḍavas’ ignorance about their kinship with Karṇa, the poet of the *SĀ prabandha* offers a closure in his MBh adaptation of the topic. Addressing this charged issue also allows the poet to emphasize the extent of injustice that Yudhiṣṭhira encounters in heaven. In conveying that even Karṇa is absent from *svarga* despite his close alliance with Duryodhana, he displays the salient unfairness that Indra, Dharma and the other gods subject Yudhiṣṭhira to in heaven.

In keeping with this depiction of the cruelty the hero experiences in *svarga*, the poet then provides a prolonged and vivid depiction of the horrible sights Yudhiṣṭhira beholds as he descends to *naraka*. By contrast to other

²⁸⁶ *duryodhanasya yadi samprati divyaloko
mītradrūho nikhilabhūtalakaṅṭakasya /
āstāṃ tad adya sahaḥjān suhr̥ḍo ’pi bālān
ālokituṃ kutukaśāli mune mano me //* (SĀpra. 31).

²⁸⁷ See SĀpra. 32-33.

retellers, the *prabandha*'s poet treats the scene in which Yudhiṣṭhira is challenged to recognize his brothers' voices calling him from hell with great consideration, stressing his failure to recognise them (immediately) despite their familiarity:

As the king was fainting on account of having been made to smell the rapidly growing stench, making haste to return back, he [suddenly] heard various voices that were mixed with misfortune calling him, which appeared familiar to him (*ākaraṇita-carāṇi*²⁸⁸ *vacanāni*): "O, O, Dharmarāja of pure behaviour, knower of *dharma*, yielder of protection, best of kings, please remain with us a while! The wind that carries your auspicious scents has eased our pain with delight. By virtue of your proximity, our tortures of burning alive do not bother us as much now." As they were all lamenting in this way they identified themselves aloud one by one, in an agitated way, as Kaṃa, Bhīma, and the rest of his brothers."²⁸⁹

Unlike the later retellings examined above (section 3), the poet of this *prabandha* is remarkably faithful to the MBh narrative. Thus, Yudhiṣṭhira's monologue is not inserted after the act of condemnation as a seeming excuse for its harshness, but rather appears in the same order as the sourcebook, i.e., right before the moment of condemnation. Further, Yudhiṣṭhira's bafflement and shock are carefully conveyed in a series of questions that consistently increase the sense of the hero's suffering. Finally, Yudhiṣṭhira's liminal state of cognition, being both awake and asleep, which is crucial to the MBh narrative and ultimately leads to his condemnation of Dharma, is carefully preserved by the poet:

How is it that these good people are experiencing the fruit of bad deeds while this villain, Duryodhana [Nāgaketu 'one whose flag depicts a snake'], is enjoying happiness in heaven? How is it possible? Am I dreaming or am I awake? Or else, is this an error of my perception?²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ I wish to thank Dr. Nāgarāja Rao for bringing to my attention that according to Pāṇini, the suffix *cara* at the end of a compound means – 'that had been X previously'. See also appendix IV below.

²⁸⁹ See SĀpra. campū 7.

²⁹⁰ *atha katham amī sukrīno duṣkṛtaphalam anubhavanti pāpakarmā nāgaketur nākasukham anubhūkte kim idaṃ kiṃ nu supto 'smi kiṃ vā jāgarmi athavā mama cittavibhramah itī* / (SĀpra. Campū 8).

Not only does the poet employ the same Sanskrit verb (*garh*)²⁹¹ as the MBh's to describe the condemnation, but the act itself is amplified as Yudhiṣṭhira explicitly denounces Indra together with his father, Dharma, and the other gods:

[Yudhiṣṭhira] in whom anger and a hundred worries arose, damned Indra [the God of Hundred-fold Wrath], Dharma and the [other] gods.²⁹²

The author of the SĀ *prabandha* clearly perceived this event as a significant moment in the text. It is a wrathful condemnation, directed not only against Dharma and the other gods, but also against the perfidious Indra, whose share in deceiving Yudhiṣṭhira and whose responsibility for the arduous and agonizing trials the hero endured is no less than that of Dharma. This choice on the part of the poet is justified in the final verses of the *prabandha*, where the poet emphasizes Indra's responsibility for Yudhiṣṭhira's misfortune. Accordingly, the king of the gods admits before his victim that the illusory hell (*māyāmaye 'tra narake*) Yudhiṣṭhira had fallen to was the product of his own deceit (*chalena*).²⁹³

²⁹¹ Note, that as opposed to Kṣemendra and Amaraçandra who use the Sanskrit verb *nind* to depict the condemnation (of fate and Indra, respectively), the poet of the *prabandha* uses the same verb as the MBh. The importance of this verb (*garh*) in the MBh and its relation to *nind* are discussed in the fourth chapter of this thesis below.

²⁹² *janitacintāśatamanyuḥ śatamanyum amarān dharmam ca garhayan / (SĀpra. Campū 9).*

²⁹³ See SĀpra. 37-38.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed, what I call, a literary lacuna in the Indian tradition regarding the ending of its longest, and perhaps most revered, epic. I argued that the SĀ's neglect in the Sanskrit literature that revolves around the MBh results from the profound ambivalence that the epic's conclusion aroused in the later tradition, and that nearly every later adaptation reflects this ambivalence, whether it narrates a partial or complete storyline of the narrative.

The first section of this chapter outlined several MBh adaptations of (usually only) one episode of the epic. The abundance of these adaptations in the later tradition revealed that the epic constituted an enticing source for later poets, who re-adapted many of its famous stories, but were still decidedly averse to recounting the SĀ. Another, less frequent type of adaptation, was then discussed, in which several episodes of the MBh were addressed. I argued that retellings of this kind form substitute sequences to the epic narrative and that by forming various types of sequences and in choosing to conclude them at an earlier point than the SĀ, the authors of such works effectively offer alternative endings to the MBh. Nonetheless, all of these 'new' versions of the ending render a happy, saccharine coating to the MBh's problematic conclusion, as retellings of this kind usually culminate with a Pāṇḍava victory at the battlefield or with Yudhiṣṭhira's long lasting reign.

Having discussed adaptations that avoid narrating the MBh's conclusion, this chapter then looked at adaptations of the entire narrative. Three epitomes of the MBh -- Kṣemendra's *Bhāratamañjarī*, and the *Bālabhāratas* of Amaraçandra and Agastya -- were then analyzed using a set of distinct parameters regarding the

problematic issues inherent in the epic's ending. A close reading of these epitomes allowed for outlining the divergences of these texts from the sourcebook, their characteristic idiosyncrasies, and (potential) literary borrowings from one work to the other. The most significant element that all the epitomes share in their ambivalent stance toward the SĀ has been shown to be the omission of Dharma from Yudhiṣṭhira's condemnation: thus Kṣemendra directs the condemnation against fate's ill-manner, Amaraçandra aims it at Indra, while Agastya does not even bother to recount this scene at all.

These findings demonstrated how in softening the disturbing ending of the MBh, later retellers effectively 'pulled the sting' from the overwhelming paradox of the Dharma-king denouncing Dharma. The epitomists who advanced these pacifying solutions to the ending's paradox further resolved the harsh conclusion of the MBh by altering crucial incidents that give rise to Yudhiṣṭhira's moment of condemnation. Thus, none of them dwells on Yudhiṣṭhira's existential crisis, nor upon his monologue of despair, nor do they touch upon the uncanny and agonizing state of liminal consciousness (being incapable to recognize the acutely familiar voices of his brothers). Such scenes in particular are subject to severe modification by the poets. Agastya discards them altogether, while Kṣemendra and Amaraçandra devise various narratological techniques in order to attenuate the full extent of these scenes' implications for the MBh's problematic ending.

Three apparent examples of the tendency to rid the SĀ of its problematic issues have been noted in (1) the depiction of Yudhiṣṭhira negotiating the dog's entry into heaven; (2) the reorganization of the order of events; and, (3) the portrayal of Yudhiṣṭhira's monologue of despair in the form of a dialogue with

the envoy of the gods. By presenting Yudhiṣṭhira negotiating the entry of his dog into heaven with Indra, Kṣemendra and Amaraçandra have considerably weakened the association that the MBh makes between the term *bhakta* and the ideal of *ānṛśaṃsya*. The depiction of Yudhiṣṭhira bargaining with the lord of the gods implies that for these poets of the later tradition, *svarga* or its attainment mattered more than the ideal of not deserting one's dependent due to non-violence. Later retellers undermine these ideas and show them to be much less important than how the MBh perceives them. In reversing the order of events by situating Yudhiṣṭhira's monologue *after* the act of condemnation, these poets use the hero's speech to explain, reason or legitimize the harshness of the act. Delivering it in the form of a dialogue rather than of an inner monologue (as the MBh narrates), the speech is framed within a discursive exchange that grants meaning and order to the paradoxical, solitary, and disoriented moment that the hero undergoes in the MBh.

Exhibiting the idiosyncratic elements in these works, the discussion showed that despite their unique voices and stylistic choices, these poets' were united in their modification of the moment of condemnation and the clouding of the scenes around it. Thus even Kṣemendra, the most faithful of the poets (to the MBh narrative), who even preserves linguistic terms that are most central to the original text, ultimately modifies the sourcebook version in its most crucial moment (by presenting Yudhiṣṭhira condemn fate instead of Dharma) so as to advance a softer, more palatable version of the ending. Amaraçandra's autonomous voice is characterized by a moralistic tone throughout his poem, evident in his preoccupation with the dialogue of Yudhiṣṭhira and Indra and in his

unflattering portrayal of the latter. Another distinct characteristic of his narration is the attention to the psychological traits of his protagonists, manifest in the assignment of emotional incentives for his heroes' actions. The novelty and marked potential of these new elements notwithstanding, Amaraçandra, too, refrains from accounting for Yudhiṣṭhira's mental crisis, as well as for his condemnation of his father. Finally, Agasyta, whose account of the epic's concluding books is the shortest, has been shown to be so preoccupied with narrating the opening events of the MhP that he completely ignores the most dramatic and crucial moments of the SĀ, thereby effectively nullifying the story of the MBh of its own conclusion.

The fourth section of this chapter presented the *Bhārataprabandha* (BP), an original retelling of the MBh. Several of the difficulties concomitant with studying this unique text were discussed, most notably the problems of its (as yet) unknown authorship and time of writing. A number of related paths of enquiry were offered, namely, its relation to the Cākyār kūtṭu theatre in Kerala, and more importantly, its relation to the prolific poet Melputtūr Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa.

Through a close reading of its final section, the SĀ *prabandha*, I argued that the BP constitutes a valuable retelling of the epic's ending that stands out in its poetic expression, originality, as well as in its author's virtuosic display of language and storytelling. Despite its author's overt affiliation with Vaiṣṇava devotionalism (*bhakti*), which finds expression throughout the poem, the author of the *prabandha* is the sole MBh reteller who not only preserves the original story but actually intensifies the drama enacted in it. Noting the importance of the dog to the SĀ plot, the author addresses the issue with marked care: he notes that

its presence is favourable to the Pāṇḍavas and, in doing so, augments the importance of the trial set up for Yudhiṣṭhira by Dharma. Rather than depicting the dog as a random, insignificant animal that is being warded off by the protagonists (as the other epitomists do), the author of the *prabandha* directly addresses this problematic issue of the SĀ. In emphasizing its positive effect on the Pāṇḍavas, the poet sheds light on the SĀ's *bhakta* theme and Yudhiṣṭhira's unwavering loyalty toward his dependent in the course of Dharma's test. Moreover, the moment of condemnation is dwelled upon at length in what appears to be a rare acknowledgement by a later reteller of the protagonist's mental crisis. In a seeming return to the spirit of the sourcebook, the poet elaborates upon the uncanniness of the voices' identification in hell, the protagonist's liminal state of consciousness, and his monologue of despair that leads to the condemnation of Dharma. Lastly, the poet reinforces Yudhiṣṭhira's condemnation of Dharma and the gods by including (and even foregrounding) Indra in his discourse. As opposed to Kṣemendra and Amaraçandra, who narrate the condemnation (of fate and Indra, respectively) with the Sanskrit verb *nind*, the author of the *prabandha* uses the same verb as the MBh. This verb, *garh*, which occurs in key narrative junctures of the epic, is a "marker" of the core meditation that the entire epic is devoted to with regard to *dharma*, and its presence and function point to a consistent thematic pattern throughout the narrative.²⁹⁴

The value of the SĀ *prabandha* retelling offers significant insight into the diverse ways in which the epic's problematic ending was received in the later tradition. A close reading of this text in comparison with earlier retellings shows

²⁹⁴ See discussion in the fourth chapter of this thesis below.

that, among the general resistance or silence that the MBh's ending met with in Indian tradition, the BP occupies a unique place. For, apart from the *SĀ prabandha*, the reception of the ending in later tradition was almost always characterized by a concealment of the condemnation of Dharma entirely, or by a dimming of its harshness by various narratological means. The *SĀ prabandha* thus offers vital evidence as to the reception of the epic in later generations from a specific socio-cultural background, as it is the sole retelling we know of, in which the paradox of the MBh's conclusion is not only accurately reflected but actually presented in graver intensity.

Chapter 3

Sanskrit Poetical Theoreticians

This chapter discusses the stance of Sanskrit theoreticians toward the MBh. Unlike Sanskrit poets who have largely neglected the SĀ (see previous chapter above), the theoreticians have acknowledged the harsh nature of the ending of the epic in their discourses. There are three literary theorists (all originating from Kāśmīr), who have discussed the MBh in the later tradition – Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta, and Kuntaka.

The following discussion dedicates a section to each theoretician in chronological order, beginning with the earliest proponent, Ānandavardhana, and concluding with the latest, Kuntaka. Although I shall discuss them separately, it is important to note that since Abhinavagupta is an exponent of Ānandavardhana, and as he had written a commentary on his predecessor's *magnum opus* (the *Dhvanyāloka*), my presentation of this critic partly discusses his views in relation to those of Ānandavardhana. This is also because his discourse on the MBh addresses several challenges that his precursor's work raises.

The argument voiced throughout this chapter is that in expressing their views on the MBh, the theoreticians proposed alternative readings of the text that underline ideological meanings within the epic. Accordingly, their respective understandings of the epic evince what each of them perceived as its essence or core theme.

The theoreticians are unanimous in judging the ending of the MBh to be a distasteful conclusion, which evokes a despondent feeling on the part of the reader. However, the message emerging from their respective discourses is that the aesthetic experience of the MBh somehow requires a disintegration of the narrative's wholeness. Both Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta read the epic through the prism of the theory of 'aesthetic suggestion' (*dhvani*), which stresses the epic's goal as arousing 'the sentiment of peace' (*śānta rasa*) and promoting the human aim of liberation (*mokṣa*). While they emphasize the importance of the epic's culminating scenes as arousing *śānta rasa*, they nonetheless refrain from directly addressing the SĀ's problematic issues. At the same time, their reading of the MBh suggests that, apart from its concluding scenes, the rest of the narrative is rather forgettable. The monolithic meaning that Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta find in the MBh results from imposing the *dhvani* theory on a complex text which is, in many respects, resistant to dogmatic interpretations of this kind. Kuntaka, whose discussion primarily centers upon the elegance of poetic works and their aesthetic appeal, considers the MBh as a worthy source of adaptation for later poets. Being more concerned with its adaptation and reception than with the text itself, Kuntaka discusses its distasteful ending as a quintessential example of a faulty conclusion that ought to be altered.

1. Ānandavardhana

Discussing the theory of suggestion (*dhvani*) in the fourth chapter of the *Dhvanyāloka*, the Kashmiri poetician Ānandavardhana (second half, ninth century) advances two novel arguments regarding the MBh: first, that it is a unified literary work; second, that it is governed by the aesthetic sentiment of peace (*śāntarasa*). Several scholars note that no writer before Ānandavardhana considered the MBh as a unified work of literature. Gary Tubb, for example, points out the exceptional choice of Ānandavardhana to view the MBh as a unified poetic work: "... the *Mahābhārata*, somewhat surprisingly, served as his chief example of a work that fulfills in its entirety the demanding requirements of poetic unity".²⁹⁵ J. M. Masson and M. V. Patwardhan further note that, "Ānandavardhana shows that it [i.e. the MBh] is not only literature, but that it contains a unity of imaginative mood not even suspected by earlier writers."²⁹⁶ In order to apply the *dhvani* theory to the MBh, Ānandavardhana broadens the epic's traditional classification as an *ākhyāna* by treating it as a *kāvya*:²⁹⁷

In the traditional view of history the *Mahābhārata* ... was usually included in the second category of composition, that of the *ākhyāna*, rather than in the category of *kāvya*; in its broader form that second category contains, along with works of fiction, works of mythology and legendary history (*itihāsa*), and of these the *Mahābhārata* is traditionally the foremost example.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁵ Gary Tubb, "Śāntarasa in the *Mahābhārata*," *Essays on the Mahābhārata*, ed. A. Sharma, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 2007, p. 171.

²⁹⁶ J. M. Masson and M. V. Patwardhan, "The *Dhvanyāloka* and the *Dhvanyālokalocana*: A Translation of the Fourth Uddyota, Pt. I," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 97, No. 3 (Jul. – Sep., 1977): 285-304, p. 287.

²⁹⁷ "Ānandavardhana then describes what gives these works their unity – the employment of a single predominant *rasa*, to which all the other *rasas* are subordinated. And again his remark may provoke some surprise, for in each of these works what he identifies as principal is not the heroic flavour (*vīrarasa*) that one might expect to find predominating in an epic poem, but another flavour altogether." Tubb, (2007): 175.

²⁹⁸ Tubb, (2007): 174-5.

However novel Ānandavardhana’s ideological choice to view the MBh as a unified work of literature may be, the same consideration appears to give rise to a number of analytical tensions in his discourse. Although he emphasizes the unity of this entire text, Ānandavardhana ultimately bases his argument on the MBh’s ending, treating it as both a *kāvya* and a *śāstra*:

... in the *Mahābhārata*, which has the beauty of a *kāvya* while being in the form of a *śāstra*,²⁹⁹ the great sage [Vyāsa] has demonstrated that the creation of dispassion [*vairāgya*] is the principal purport of his work, by composing a conclusion that produces a despondent feeling in response to the sorry end of the Vṛṣṇis and the Pāṇḍavas, and in doing so he has suggested that what he intended as the principal subject of his poem is the peaceful flavour [*śāntarasa*] and the human aim marked by liberation [*mokṣa*].³⁰⁰

By drawing these bold conclusions from the work’s culminating scenes, Ānandavardhana conveys his views not only on its aesthetics, but also on its ideological and philosophical meanings. Although he does not directly discuss the SĀ’s problematic issues (more on this below), Ānandavardhana does recognize it as a disagreeable ending (*virasāvasāna*), which produces a despondent feeling (*vaimansya-dāyinīm*). However, viewing *śāntarasa* as the predominant flavour of the entire MBh, and arguing that this text is essentially about *mokṣa* and *vairāgya* (‘dispassion’), as Ānandavardhana claims, is not an obvious perspective on the

²⁹⁹ In his *Vṛtti* on 4.5, Ānandavardhana further explains, “... what is intended in the *Mahābhārata* is, from the didactic point of view, solely the highest human aim characterized by liberation, and, from the poetic point of view, the flavour of peace, characterized by the fostering of the happiness produced by the extinction of craving, as the predominant *rasa*”. Translated by Tubb, (2007): 199. *mokṣalakṣaṇa evaikah paraḥ puruṣārthaḥ śāstranaye, kāvyanaye ca trṣṇākṣayasukhaparipoṣalākṣaṇaḥ śānto raso mahābhāratasyāṅgitvena vivakṣita iti supratipāditam* / Sanskrit text from *The Dhvanyāloka of Śrīmadānandavardhanācārya with the Locana of Śrīmadabhinavagupta*, trans. Jaganatha Pathak, Chowkhamba Vidyabhavan Press, Varanasi, 2003, p. 576. See also Masson and Patwardhan, (1977a): 297.

³⁰⁰ *mahābhārate ’pi śāstrarūpe kāvyacchāyānvayini vṛṣṇipāṇḍavavirasāvasānavaimansyadāyinīm samāptim upanibadhnatā mahāmuniṇā vairāgyajananaatātparyam prādhānyena svaprabandhasya darśayatā mokṣalākṣaṇaḥ puruṣārthaḥ śānto raso ca mukhyatayā vivakṣāvīṣayatvena sūcītaḥ* / (*Dhvanyāloka*, 4.5). Translated by Tubb, (2007): 176.

MBh. It implies that Ānandavardhana perceives the MBh as an ambiguous text which leaves its listeners and readers uneasy.

Ānandavardhana's view on the MBh thus exhibits a certain discrepancy. On the one hand, he considers, in fact stresses, that the MBh is a unified poem, a *kāvya*. On the other hand, his discussion of the MBh and the arguments voiced therein are based on the work's conclusion (*samāptim*) alone. As such, this approach renders large portions of the MBh less important on account of their potential for triggering impressions other than the main, *śāntarasa* flavour, which is most effectively aroused by the narrative's concluding scenes. Ānandavardhana explicitly states this when he notes that one ought to discard the *vīrarasa*, or any other aesthetic impression for that matter, should this *rasa contradict* the predominant one in a certain poem: "one must abandon anything in the original story that is contrary to the appropriate flavour [i.e. *śānta*, in the case of the MBh]³⁰¹. In other words, the critic holds that the predominant *rasa* in a unified work of literature overrides any other sentiments that may be provoked in the course of an aesthetic experience:

If in larger works a certain flavour is taken up first, and then becomes lasting by being brought in again and again, then, since that flavour pervades the entire composition, its predominance is not destroyed by the coexistence with it of other flavours that appear at intervals.³⁰²

These observations on the MBh prompt several questions – the most crucial of which is how (then), are we to view the *entirety* of this text? If this

³⁰¹ Translated by Tubb, (2007): 185.

itivr̥ttavaśāyātāṃ tyaktvānanuḡṇām̐ sthītim / utprekṣyāpi antarābhiṣṭarasocītakathonnayāḥ // Dhvanyāloka, 3.11.

³⁰² Translated by Tubb, (2007): 182.

prabandheṣu prathamatarāṃ prastutaḥ san punaḥ punar anusandhīyamānatvena sthayī yo rasas tasya sakalabandhavyāpino rasāntarair anatarālavartibhīḥ samāveśo yaḥ sa nāṅgitām upahanti / Dhvanyāloka, 3.22.

entire work, as Ānandavardhana argues, is aimed at evoking the flavour of peace by advancing the notion of *mokṣa*; and since this outcome principally depends on the aesthetic experience that the ending of the MBh arouses, then, what meaning or validity could we assign to the text’s chronology, or its progression within a distinguishable sequence of events? What is the weight of *all* the occurrences taking place in the MBh prior to its ending? Does Ānandavardhana’s theory suggest that we are to dispense with it altogether? If so, then how is this perspective commensurate with Ānandavardhana’s conviction that the entire MBh is a design of its author? If this work was created solely to advance the notion of *mokṣa*, then why would its author compose such a gigantic literary work and not settle, for instance, for the *Bhagavadgītā* episode alone, which is, as Ānandavardhana himself emphatically claims, better suited to Vyāsa’s general purport?³⁰³ If, in other words, this work has a homogenous aim, then why would its author bother to compose such a lengthy text whose thematic diversity and encyclopaedic nature are (considered to be, at least) its very cornerstones?

Tubb likewise notes that in relying chiefly on the ending, Ānandavardhana’s discussion of the epic’s *śāntarasa* somewhat undermines the narrative’s integrality: "It is true", says Tubb, "that towards the end of the poem, in the events culminating in the ascent to heaven ..., Yudhiṣṭhira is finally

³⁰³ See *Vṛtti* on *Dhvanīyāloka* 4.5: “[...] And the depiction of the deeds of the Pāṇḍavas and the others – since its purport is the production of dispassion, and since dispassion is the root of liberation, and since liberation is the means of attaining the Lord – is, indirectly, simply a means to the attainment of the Supreme Brahma, which is set forth as the principal topic in such passages such as the Gītā. Furthermore, the one referred to in being denoted by such names as “Vāsudeva” is the Supreme Brahma – the abode of unlimited power, which has become well known by those names in others passages such as the Gītā [...]” Translated by Tubb, (2007): 197-8. See also discussion on pages 173-174 below.

[...] *pāṇḍavādicaritavarṇanasyāpi vairāgyajananatparyād vairāgyasya ca mokṣamūlatvān mokṣasya ca bhagavatprāptyupāyatvena mukhyatayā gītādiṣu pradarśitatvāt paramabrahmaprāptyupāyatvam eva. paraṃparayā vāsudevādisaṃjñābhidheyatvena cāparimitaśaktyāspadam paraṃ brahma gītādipradeśāntareṣu [...]* /

prompted by weariness and disappointment to leave the world behind him. But if, as Ānandavardhana expressly maintains, the flavour of peace is supposed to be the *aṅgī rasa* in the *Mahābhārata*, then it ought to be predominant throughout the work and not merely come into prominence at the end."³⁰⁴

It would appear that Ānandavardhana himself senses that there exists a difficulty in imposing a single predominant *rasa* of this kind (*śānta*) on such a stupendous and complex literary work. In order to resolve this, he invents an opponent (*pūrvapakṣin*) to argue against him. The imagined opponent delivers a lucid presentation of the problem, stating that since this specific term, that is, *śāntarasa*, does not appear in the MBh's list of contents (the *anukramaṇī*), where it ought to have been included had it indeed been a vital notion in the text; and since the MBh itself declares that it contains everything there is, that is, including the four human life-goals (*sarvapuruṣārthāḥ*),³⁰⁵ then it follows that even though *mokṣa* is potentially one subject that the work is dedicated to, it certainly cannot be the only nor the most predominant one! Ānandavardhana's response to his opponent offers a truly subversive reading of the MBh. Although he admits before the *pūrvapakṣin* that the term (*śāntarasa*) is absent from the list of contents, he subsequently claims that, contrary to expectation, the main subject of this long story is *not* the Pāṇḍavas, or their deeds, or in fact, any other seeming theme around which the MBh revolves; but rather, its real *artha* ('aim; purpose;

³⁰⁴ Tubb, (2007): 182.

³⁰⁵ *dharme cārthe ca kāme ca mokṣe ca bhārataṣabha /*

yad ihāsti tad anyatra yan nehāsti na tat kvacit // MBh, 1.56.33

“O bull of the Bhārata race, [this story revolves around the four human life aims:] *dharmā* [‘duty’], *artha* [‘wealth’], *kāma* [‘pleasure; enjoyment’] and *mokṣa* [‘liberation’]. What is included in this story may be found elsewhere, but what is not here is nowhere to be found.”

meaning’) is *mokṣa* and the removal of *avidyā* by means of cultivating devotion to

Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva:

[Here one may make the following objection.] Everything contained in the MBh is given in its list of contents, and this does not appear there; on the contrary, it is explicitly made known in that list that the MBh is the source of knowledge on all the aims of human life, and that it contains all *rasas* within it.

On this we say [the following]. True, it is not explicitly set forth by the list that in the MBh it is the flavour of peace that is predominant, and that among all the aims of human life it is liberation that is foremost.

But it is conveyed through suggestion in this statement: "And here the eternal Lord Vāsudeva is praised".³⁰⁶ For through this statement is meant to be conveyed, by means of suggestion, the idea that here in the MBh all the deeds of the Pāṇḍavas that are praised come to a painful end and are by nature a manifestation of nescience, whereas the Lord Vāsudeva who is praised here is absolutely real. Therefore, it is only to that Blessed Lord that you should be devoted; do not be enamoured of empty glories or wholeheartedly attach yourselves to any one of those [worldly accomplishments] such as policy, training, or prowess. So also the statements in subsequent passages are seen quite clearly to be expressing that very idea, "Behold the insubstantiality of this world," and [in doing so] are aided by the power of suggestiveness. The verses that follow immediately, "For he is the Real",³⁰⁷ etc., are observed to reveal as their inner meaning the same sort of notion.³⁰⁸

Ānandavardhana argues that this whole book was designed by its author to promulgate the notion of *mokṣa*. Unlike the way the MBh is commonly perceived -- as a story relating the life and deeds of the five Pāṇḍava brothers, and recording the protagonists' colossal strife with their Kaurava cousins -- Ānandavardhana teaches us, that since its events are a form of the relative creation by *avidyā*

³⁰⁶ Ānandavardhana cites here MBh, 1.1.193ab: *bhagavān vāsudevaś ca kīrtyate 'tra sanātanaḥ /*

³⁰⁷ Ānandavardhana cites here MBh, 1.1.193cd: *sa hi satyam ṛtaṁ caiva pavitraṁ puṇyam eva ca //*

³⁰⁸ *Vṛtti* on *Dhvaṅyāloka* 4.5: *nanu mahābhārata yāvanvivakṣāvīṣayaḥ so 'nukramaṇyāṁ sarva evānukrānto na caitat tatra dṛṣyate, pratyuta sarvapuruṣārthaprabodhahetutvaṁ sarvarasagarbhatvaṁ ca mahābhāratasya tasmīn uddeśe svaśabdāniveditatvena pratīyate. atrocyate - satyaṁ sātasyaiva rasasyāṅgītvam mahābhārata mokṣasya ca sarvapuruṣārthebhyaḥ prādhānyam ity etan na svaśabdābhidheyatvenānukramaṇya darśitaṁ, darśitaṁ tu vyaṅgyatvena – "bhagavān vāsudevaś ca kīrtyate 'tra sanātanaḥ" ity asmin vākye. anena hy ayam artho vyaṅgyatvena vivakṣito yad atra mahābhārata pāṇḍavādicaritaṁ yat kīrtyate tat sarvam avasānavirasam avidyāprapañcarūpaṁ ca, paramārtha bhāvitacetaso, ma bhūta vibhūtiṣu nihsārāsu rāgiṇo guṇeṣu vā nayavinayaparākramādiṣu amīṣū kevaleṣu keṣucit sarvātmanā pratiniviṣṭadhiyaḥ. tathā cāgre – paśyata nihsāratāṁ saṁsārasyety amum evārthaṁ dyotayan sphuṭaṁ evāvabhāsate vyañjakaśaktyanugrūtaś ca śabdaḥ. evaṁvidham evārthaṁ garbhīkṛtaṁ saṁdarśayanto 'nantaraślokā lakṣyante – "sa hi satyam" ityādayaḥ / Translated by Tubb, (2007): 195-6.*

(*avidyā-prapañca-rūpam*), then its actual subject is Vāsudeva, for he alone is the embodiment of *vidyā*. Ānandavardhana’s response to the sound *pūrvapakṣa* argument is exemplified by an *Ādi parvan* verse that eulogizes Vāsudeva (‘for he is the real’). Based on this verse, the reading Ānandavardhana offers for the entire narrative highlights what he perceives as the true meaning of the MBh, which is encapsulated in the figure of Vāsudeva:

Therefore, the statement cited from the list of contents, by revealing the impermanence of everything other than the Lord, has firmly established that what is intended in the *Mahābhārata* is, from the didactic point of view, solely the highest human aim characterized by liberation, and, from the poetic point of view, the flavour of peace, characterized by the fostering of the happiness produced by the extinction of craving, as the predominant *rasa*.

And because this meaning is absolutely essential, it is made known through suggestion, not through explicit denotation. And it is quite well known in sophisticated and learned circles that one’s ultimate intention is revealed through suggestion, rather than through direct and explicit statement.³⁰⁹

It should be noted that the arguments regarding Vāsudeva’s permanence (*nityatā*), and the embodiment of the highest truth (*paramārtha-satya-svarūpa*) are somewhat inconsistent with Ānandavardhana’s previous remarks. In these earlier statements he expressly argued that a marked manifestation of *avidyā* in the MBh emerges from “the sorry end of the Vṛṣṇis and the Pāṇḍavas” (*vṛṣṇi-pāṇḍava-virasāvasāna*). Since Kṛṣṇa himself *is* a Vṛṣṇi, and meets with his own sorry end in the MBh narrative as well, this account somewhat counters the consideration of Kṛṣṇa as being “absolutely real” (*paramārtha-satya-svarūpa*), as this would imply that he should be resistant to such a pathetic demise. If it is their death that

³⁰⁹ *Vṛtti* on *Dhvaṇyāloka* 4.5: *tad evam anukramṇīnirdiṣṭena vākyena bhagavadvyatirekiṇaḥ sarvasyānyasyānityatām prakāśyatā mokṣalakṣaṇa evaikaḥ paraḥ puruṣārthaḥ śāstranaye, kāvyanaye ca vṛṣṇākṣayasukhaparipoṣalakṣaṇaḥ sānto raso mahābhāratasyāṅgitvena vivakṣita iti supratipāditam. atyantasārabhūtatvāc cāyam artho vyaṅgyatvenaiva darśito na tu vācyatvena. sārabhūto hy arthaḥ svaśabdānabhidheyatvena prakāśitaḥ sutarām eva śobhām āvahati. prasiddhiś ceyam asty eva vidagdavidyatpariṣatsu yad abhimatatarāṃ vastu vyaṅgyatvena prakāśyate na sākṣācchabdavācyatvena / Translated by Tubb, (2007): 199.*

Ānandavardhana judges as disagreeable (*virasa*), then one cannot overlook the fact that Kṛṣṇa's death in the MBh is no less pathetic than that of the Pāṇḍavas. Moreover, it should be recalled that his eventual destruction in the MBh materializes Gāndhārī's curse of the god himself to be killed by a hunter called Jarā ('old age'), in avenging her 100 sons' death due to Kṛṣṇa's numerous trickeries and deceptions during the battle. It would consequently appear that Ānandavardhana uses the story of the MBh selectively insofar as it reflects his aesthetic theory. His reading of certain events in the text appears to be utilitarian for conveying his ideology of *dhvani*. In my opinion, Ānandavardhana's theory of suggestion is imposed too strongly on the MBh; for he reads too much into the text when it serves his theory, and reads too little when the narrative challenges his ideology. This allows Ānandavardhana to offer an overall meaning for this complex text. In conveying this meaning (which emerges particularly from the narrative's concluding scenes), Ānandavardhana's reading of the MBh urges a sensitive reader (*sahṛdaya*) to discard large portions of the epic narrative; even as the argument for its constituting a complete work of literature is supported by very few elements that demonstrate this meaning's permeability throughout the text.

Furthermore, there is an important omission in Ānandavardhana's argument. Despite the way the ending is carried out, Ānandavardhana suggests that it is eventually meant to produce a peaceful sentiment in the reader. Though he refers to notions such as *nirveda* ('indifference') and *vairāgya* ('dispassion'), which accompany the *śāntarasa*, he does not mention what precisely it is in the MBh that arouses such sentiments of dispassion. In other words, he does not

identify those elements of the text which make the reader feel this particular sense of indifference that constitutes the *śāntarasa*. One can sense that Ānandavardhana hints at the epic's obsessive preoccupation with *dharma* and the many doubts, hesitations and dilemmas which its protagonists experience in regard to *dharma*. He may even allude to the paradox of Yudhiṣṭhira censuring *dharma*, yet merely insinuating the problem, Ānandavardhana abstains from addressing it directly. In my opinion, Ānandavardhana is motivated to find a more comforting meaning in the epic. By establishing that the *entire* MBh arouses the *śāntarasa*, Ānandavardhana imposes his aesthetic theory on this monumental and chaotic text. And in refraining from tackling the ending's problematic issues and failing to pin down which elements thereof eventually arouse the *śāntarasa*, Ānandavardhana is partly dismissive toward it.

The all-engrossing meaning that Ānandavardhana finds in the MBh is perhaps most visible in his remarks on the *Harivaṃśa*. Ānandavardhana claims that Vyāsa *intentionally* presents the genealogy of Hari at the end of the MBh, and that by means of this authorial choice he highlights the true aim of his composition. Therefore, the fact that the epic concludes with the *Harivaṃśa* appendix proves, according to Ānandavardhana, that this text is about the knowledge of truth, and the removal of *avidyā*. Through suggestion (*dhvani*), the poet of this text meant to show, in Ānandavardhana's opinion, that its real *artha* ('aim; purpose') is essentially Hari:

And that same master poet, Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana [i.e., Vyāsa], has made this deep and beautiful meaning completely clear by using the depiction of the genealogy of Hari [the *Harivaṃśa*] as his conclusion at the end of the MBh. And by virtue of this meaning, which impels one toward an abundance of devotion for that other reality that transcends transmigratory existence, all the activities of transmigratory life appear in their entirety as simply a *prima*

facie view. And the depiction of the abundant greatness of deities and sacred bathing places and austerities and so on is due to their being means to the attainment of that same Supreme Brahma, and the depiction of particular gods and others is due solely to their being manifestations of the powers of that Brahma. And the depiction of the deeds of the Pāṇḍavas and the others – since its purport is the production of dispassion, and since dispassion is the root of liberation, and since liberation is the means of attaining the Lord – is, indirectly, simply a means to the attainment of the Supreme Brahma, which is set forth as the principal topic in such passages such as the Gītā.

Furthermore, the one referred to in being denoted by such names as “Vāsudeva” is the Supreme Brahma – the abode of unlimited power, which has become well known by those names in others passages such as the Gītā, and whose entire nature was taken in the incarnation at Mathurā – rather than merely a portion of it that took birth at Mathurā [i.e., Kṛṣṇa], because [the names are] qualified by the word “eternal,” and because we see that in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and elsewhere this name is applied to other forms of the Lord. And this meaning [of the name] has been ascertained by the grammarians themselves.³¹⁰

Thus treating the narrative’s concluding passages, Ānandavardhana resolves the tension between his adamant consideration of the MBh as a unitary work of literature, and the great deal of importance his discourse grants to its final passages. For this purpose, he introduces an additional novel idea in the theory of suggestion. Tubb points out that Ānandavardhana considers the MBh as evoking a state of mind in the reader which is brought about by the suggestiveness of the contents of the poem. This is unusual for the standard form of correspondence in the basic theory of the suggestion of *rasa*, where the aesthetic response of the

³¹⁰ *Vṛtti* on *Dhvanyāloka* 4.5: *ayaṃ ca nigūḍharamaṇīyo ’rtho mahābhāratāvasāne harivaṃśavarṇanena samāptiṃ vidadhatā tenaiva kavivedhasā kṛṣṇadvaiḍyaṇena samyak sphūṭīkṛtaḥ. anena cārthena saṃsārātīte tattvāntare bhaktyiśayaṃ pravartyatā sakala eva sāmśāriko vyavahāraḥ pūrvapakṣīkṛto nyakṣeṇa prakāśate. devatātīrthatapaḥprabhṛtīnām ca prabhāvātiśayavarṇanam tasyaiva parabrahmaṇaḥ. prāptyupāyatvena tadvibhūtitvenaiva devatāviśeṣeṣānām anyeṣāṃ ca. pāṇḍavādicaritavarṇanasyāpi vairāgyajananatatparyād vairāgyasya ca mokṣamūlatvān mokṣasya ca bhagavatprāptyupāyatvena mukhyatayā gītādiṣu pradarśitatvāt paramabrahmaprāptyupāyatvam eva. paramparayā vāsudevādisaṃjñābhidheyatvena cāparimītaśaktyāspadaṃ paraṃ brahma gītādiḥpradeśāntareṣu tadabhidhānatvena labdhaprasiddhi māthuraḥprādurbhāvānukṛtasakalasvarūpaṃ vivakṣitaṃ na tu mathuraḥprādurbhāvāṃśa eva, sanātanaśabdaviśeṣitatvāt. rāmāyaṇādiṣu cānyā samjñayā bhagavanmūrtiyantare vyavabhāradarśanāt. nirṇītaś cāyam arthaḥ śabdātattvavidbhir eva / Translated by Tubb, (2007): 197-8.*

reader or spectator comes about through correspondence with the heroes' emotions. Ānandavardhana thus considers the MBh as producing its effect of *rasa* not instantly, but with a discernible sequence of time. This form of suggestion, that of "suggestion based on the power of the meaning, with a discernible sequence" (*arthaśaktimūla-samlakṣyakrama-dhvani*), is also called suggestion through "aftertone" (*anuraṇana*), because it does not accomplish its effect until the reader has taken the time to ponder the work.³¹¹

The result of this insistence [i.e. Ānandavardhana's insistence on the evocation of the *śāntarasa* through a suggestion of "aftertone"] is to assure us that we must not expect to find a neat and clear pattern of manipulation of the elements associated with *rasa*, but rather must be attentive to the cumulative effect of less obvious processes.³¹²

There is no doubt that Ānandavardhana was one of the most brilliant and novel Indian thinkers of his time. His ingenuity emerges even from the few extracts of his work discussed above: for in addressing the problem of the MBh failing to provoke an immediate aesthetic response in the reader, Ānandavardhana resorts to higher and creative plains of thought. However, as is often the case with abstract theoretical discussions, Ānandavardhana's understanding of the *śāntarasa* in the MBh opens ground for further extensive discussions. Insofar as the intriguing idea of the *rasa* "aftertone" effect, for example, is concerned, several theoretical questions remain unresolved with regard to the MBh. One wonders for instance, whether particular events in the MBh plot are more prone to provoke the "aftertone" response? Whether the effect on the reader is universal or dependant

³¹¹ See Tubb, (2007): 198: "It seems clear from all this that what Ānandavardhana considers the primary end of the *Mahābhārata* is a state of mind in the reader evoked by the suggestiveness of the contents of the poem, but not an aesthetic response corresponding to the emotions of the characters within the poem through the standard form of correspondence that is involved in the basic theory of the suggestion of *rasa*."

³¹² *ibid.*, p. 200.

on particular conditions? Are only sensitive readers/spectators (*sahrdaya*) inclined to sense this? What is the profile of a sensitive *sahrdaya* who is liable to fully grasp the cumulative emotional effect of the MBh? And finally, are all “*sahrdaya*-experiences” of the MBh “aftertone” effect identical? If not, then what are the causes for such distinct impressions?

In his important discourse on the MBh, the critic submits several unresolved issues, which were further addressed by Ānandavardhana’s main exponent, the theoretician Abhinavagupta. The following discussion argues that in sensing the questions that Ānandavardhana’s theory raises, Abhinavagupta attempted to resolve them.

2. Abhinavagupta

The Kashmiri poetician Abhinavagupta (c. 950-1020) composed the commentary *Dhvanyāloka-locana* on Ānandavardhana’s work. As noted by Lawrence McCrea, Abhinavagupta generally elaborates on his predecessor’s discourse, but he also sheds light on several unclear points in the *Dhvanyāloka*:

Unlike Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta does not leave his reader in the dark as to his views on the major linguistic controversies of his day.³¹³

In the course of his commentary on the *Dhvanyāloka*, Abhinavagupta departs in many important respects from the stated views of Ānandavardhana; but in doing so he often seems to carry the implications of Ānandavardhana’s theory through to their logical conclusion in a way Ānandavardhana himself was reluctant to do.³¹⁴

³¹³ Lawrence J. McCrea, *The Teleology of Poetics in Medieval Kashmir*, Harvard University Press, 2008, pp. 365-6.

³¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 396.

While addressing the problematic issues in Ānandavardhana's discourse on the MBh, Abhinavagupta often attempts to resolve them with his own creative and individualistic input. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that as an exponent of Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta adopts his precursor's fundamental assumptions on the MBh. He first considers the epic as a unitary work of literature, and embraces its uncommon classification as pertaining to the category of *kāvya*. J. M. Masson and M. V. Patwardhan, whose book, *Śāntarasa and Abhinavagupta's Philosophy of Aesthetics*, is dedicated to the study of Abhinavagupta's understanding of the flavour of peace, outline these points in his discourse, as follows:

One corollary of his theories ... is that *rasa* becomes available not only to poetry and the theatre but to all literature. Generally *rasa* is only possible in *kāvya* or *nāṭya*. But the *Mahābhārata* is after all already an exception since it cannot be considered *kāvya* in the strict definition of the term. Yet both Ānanda and Abhinava give it the careful literary attention it deserves.³¹⁵

The second essential element that Abhinavagupta adopts from the *Dhvanyāloka* is in viewing the MBh as governed by the aesthetic sentiment of peace (*śāntarasa*). Masson and Patwardhan further argue that although Ānandavardhana opened the discussion on the *śāntarasa* in Sanskrit poetics, it is Abhinavagupta who conveys it in a more articulated form. One such instance comes from his consideration of the "aftertone" effect associated with the MBh. Masson and Patwardhan point out that according to Abhinavagupta, the cumulative effect that the MBh supposedly provokes in its readers results from the very attributes of the *śāntarasa* which the scholars describe as prescriptive by

³¹⁵ J. M. Masson and M. V. Patwardhan, *Śāntarasa and Abhinavagupta's Philosophy of Aesthetics*, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1969, Poona, p. 13.

nature. As such, this particular mood encourages a reader or spectator of the MBh to change his or her life:

The one thing that *śāntarasa* does that no other *rasa* can, is that it disturbs us. If we really believe the message that any successful play dealing with *śāntarasa* tells us, we hear what Rilke said was the final lesson of all great literature: “You must change your life.” By powerful arguments, Abhinava attempts to show that this quality of transcendence, which we must admit in *śāntarasa* ... applies equally well to good literature. The greatest example, which Ānanda was apparently the first critic in Sanskrit literature to notice, is the *Mahābhārata*. Before Ānanda nobody ever considered the possibility of looking at a piece of literature as a unified whole, with a single dominant suggestive atmosphere, and certainly not something of such gigantic proportions as the *Mahābhārata*. But both Ānanda and following him, Abhinava, insist on the overwhelming experience that reading the *Mahābhārata* provides. As unhappiness and doom succeed one another in a seemingly endless display of the vanity of this world; as we slowly become aware of the folly of trusting to the external world to bring happiness; as one after another the heroes of the epic whom we have come to know over volumes and volumes fade from existence and everything seems to desiccate and near its end, the reader is invaded by a sense of doom, a sense of the uselessness of strife, and he is eventually instilled with a craving for tranquillity, for an end to human suffering and misery. If our reading is extensive enough, concentrated enough, with no distractions from the outside world, then we can induce in ourselves a profound imaginative experience of tranquillity, *śāntarasa*. The *Mahābhārata* remains for Sanskrit literary critics the supreme example of this mood, this imaginative creation. It is not surprising that Ānanda is at his most eloquent when he describes this experience in great detail in the fourth *Uddyota* of his *Dhvanyāloka*. The passage was clearly a powerful influence in Abhinava’s theories.³¹⁶

Another example for Abhinavagupta’s elucidation of certain obscure points in Ānandavardhana’s long discourse on the MBh, emerges from his remarks on the *sahr̥daya* notion. Masson and Patwardhan summarize Abhinavagupta’s definition of the profile of a sensitive reader/spectator and his or her intricate experience of *rasa*, as constituted by the following features:

Watching a play or reading a poem for the sensitive reader (*sahr̥daya*) entails a loss of the sense of present time and space. All worldly considerations for

³¹⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

the time being cease. Since we are not indifferent (*taṭastha*) to what is taking place, our involvement must be of a purer variety than we normally experience. We are not directly and personally involved, so the usual medley of desires and anxieties dissolve. Our hearts respond sympathetically (*hr̥dayasaṃvāda*) but not selfishly. Finally the response becomes total, all-engrossing, and we identify with the situation depicted (*tanmayībhavana*). The ego is transcended, and for the duration of the aesthetic experience, the normal waking “I” is suspended. Once this actually happens, we suddenly find that our responses are not like anything we have hitherto experienced, for now that all normal emotions are gone, now that the hard knot of “selfless” has been untied, we find ourselves in an unprecedented state of mental and emotional calm. The purity of our emotion and the intensity of it take us to a higher level of pleasure than we could know before – we experience sheer undifferentiated bliss (*ānandaikaghana*) for we have come into direct contact with the deepest recesses of our own unconscious where the memory of a primeval unity between man and the universe is still strong. Inadvertently, says Abhinavagupta, we have arrived at the same inner terrain as that occupied by the mystic, though our aim was very different from his. Such an experience cannot but make us impatient with the ordinary turmoil of emotions that is our inner life, and though Abhinava never explicitly says so, one cannot help feeling that he expects the reader to search out now these experiences on a more permanent basis.³¹⁷

One of the difficult challenges that Ānandavardhana’s discourse on the MBh presents before its exponent is that although Ānandavardhana emphatically maintains that the conclusion of the MBh is a sorry end, he nonetheless fails to address the exact nature of its problematic issues. Abhinavagupta provides a more precise and comprehensive meaning to this judgement of the epic’s conclusion. While Ānandavardhana often repeats the statement “*pāṇḍavādicaritam*” - ‘the deeds of the Pāṇḍavas and the others’ in discussing the epic’s concluding scenes, he abstains from referring to any specific event or a particular narrative moment on account of which he judges the ending disagreeable. Abhinavagupta expounds on this slightly vague expression by pinning down those elements of the narrative that produce a despondent feeling:

³¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

The mutual destruction of the Vṛṣṇis, the end of the Pāṇḍavas by experiencing undeserved troubles on their great journey [north, to death], and Kṛṣṇa's destruction by a hunter, show that everybody's end was pathetic.³¹⁸

Abhinavagupta thus stipulates that the pathetic ending of the epic results from the mutual massacre of the Vṛṣṇis in the *Mausala parvan*, the unjust anguish of the Pāṇḍavas during the departure from the world prior to their death in the *Mahāprasthānika*, and lastly, the demise of Kṛṣṇa in the *Mausala parvan*. On the face of it, these specifications add a sounder base to Ānandavardhana's argument regarding the MBh as producing sentiments like *nirveda* ('dispassion', 'indifference'). In highlighting these particular events, Abhinavagupta presumably points out -- that in witnessing these final scenes after having developed an attachment for the heroes of this long story, and having been made to observe their terrible demise -- that the reader of the MBh is by now discouraged by a sense of indifference that generates the realization that ultimately, this work essentially revolves around the futility of the human condition as conditioned by *avidyā*. In this manner, Abhinavagupta indirectly addresses two of Ānandavardhana's arguments. He first says that the MBh provokes an "aftertone" effect in its readers, rather than an immediate response. Second, he tackles Ānandavardhana's insistence that the subject of this poem is centred upon an abstract ideal (characterized by the human aim of liberation), rather than the relation of repetitious occurrences in the lives and deeds of its heroes.

The thorniest challenge, however, that the *Dhvanyāloka* presents Abhinavagupta comes from Ānandavardhana's debate with his imaginary

³¹⁸ *Locana* on 4.5: *vṛṣṇīnām parasparakṣayaḥ, pāṇḍavānām api mahāpathakleṣenānucitā vipattiḥ, kṛṣṇasyāpi vyādhād vidhvamsa iti sarvasyāpi virasam evāvasānam iti* / Translated by J. M. Masson and M. V. Patwardhan, "The *Dhvanyāloka* and the *Dhvanyālokalocana*: A Translation of the Fourth Uddyota, Pt. II", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 97, No. 4 (Oct. – Dec., 1977): 423-440, p. 427.

opponent. This dispute, which was presumably perceived by Abhinavagupta as meriting a more thorough treatment than the one offered by Ānandavardhana, seems to have particularly caught his attention. Thus, responding to the *pūrvapakṣin* -- whose argument highlights the absence of the *sāntarasa* from the *anukramaṇī* and gathers further validity from the fact that these passages candidly declare that the MBh contains (in equal measure) the four human life goals (and not merely *mokṣa*) -- Abhinavagupta states:

Although it has been said: “And in *dharma*, and in *artha*, and in *kāma*, and in *mokṣa*,” nevertheless the four “ands” amount to this, that although the essence of *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma* [as described in the *Mahābhārata*] can be found elsewhere, [i.e., in works other than the *Mahābhārata*], nonetheless, the fact that they ultimately come to a pathetic end is to be found here only. But the *paramount* importance (*sāratā*) of the nature of *mokṣa* can be seen only here [in the *Mahābhārata*].³¹⁹

Abhinavagupta’s understanding of the phrase “what is not here is nowhere to be found” (a key MBh self-reflective expression) is that although one may encounter everything that the MBh displays elsewhere, the heroes’ pathetic ending cannot be found anywhere else. In other words, a disconcerting conclusion of this kind is judged by Abhinavagupta as a paramount and inimitable asset of the MBh, for no other text can possibly emulate misery of such a degree. Paradoxically enough, Abhinavagupta maintains that the pride and glory of the MBh is in its offering a terrible conclusion, whose singularity eventually propels one to seriously reflect the ideal of *mokṣa*.

Abhinavagupta’s most interesting remarks on the *Dhvanyāloka* 4.5 tackle the latent tension that Ānandavardhana’s assertions arouse regarding the

³¹⁹ *Locana* on 4.5: *yadyapi “dharme cārthe ca kāme ca mokṣe ce”ty uktam, tathāpi catvāraś cakārā evam āhuḥ - yadyapi dharmārthakāmānām sarvasvam tādrñ nāsti yadanyatra na vidyate, tathāpi paryantavirasatvam atraivāvalokyatām. mokṣe tu yadrūpaṃ tasya sāratātraiva vicāryatām iti /* Translated by Masson and Patwardhan, (1977b): 427.

problematic relations between *śāntarasa* and *mokṣa*. Since an association between the aesthetic experience of the flavour of peace and the human aim of liberation has implications for the way one ought to view the MBh – as a work of literature (*kāvya*) or as a prescriptive manual text (*śāstra*) - the discord between these terms presents a challenge for both poetics in their considerations of the MBh.

Addressing this, Abhinavagupta states the following:

“Looking at the *Mahābhārata* as a *śāstra*.” The designation of *puruṣārtha* [in general] is appropriate [for the subject matter of the *Mahābhārata*], in the sense of “that which is sought after by men,” there being no question of aesthetic pleasure. But the designation of *rasa* [in general] is appropriate [for the subject matter of the *Mahābhārata*], from the point of view of aesthetic delight. This is what is meant.³²⁰

Abhinavagupta resolves this tension by concluding that there ultimately could not be an aesthetic delight in the MBh. The reason being, that its miserable ending generates dispassion, which is, by definition, a state devoid of emotions. This somewhat surprising statement prompts the question – why, then, insist upon viewing the MBh as a work of literature that produces an aesthetic experience?

The scholar Edwin Gerow discusses the *śāntarasa* in Abhinavagupta’s general theory of aesthetics as it emerges from the *Dhvanyāloka-locana*, the *Abhinavagupta-Bhāratī*, as well as his commentary on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharatamuni. Gerow argues that the whole idea of *śāntarasa* poses a great problem for Abhinavagupta, because it challenges both his theory of aesthetics as well as his metaphysics. Calling this problem a “paradox,” Gerow explains that:

The ninth *rasa* is a different *rasa* than the other eight of the tradition. To assert it as a *rasa* involves an aesthetic paradox, for while the eight *rasas* are clearly understood as modifications of the basic emotional constituents [*bhāva*] of our mundane personality, the new *rasa* implies rather a

³²⁰ *Locana* on 4.5: *śāstranaya iti. tatrāsvādayogābhāve puruṣeṇārthyata ity ayam eva vyapadeśaḥ sādaraḥ, camatkārayoge tu rasavyapadeśa iti bhāvaḥ* / Translated by Masson and Patwardhan, (1977b): 428.

suppression of those very constituents: it is a state untroubled by emotion of any sort.³²¹

Although Gerow's study concentrates on Abhinavagupta's general theory of aesthetics, the scholar's remarks on the paradox of *śānta* and *mokṣa* shed light on our understanding of Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta's expositions on the MBh. While the theoretical discussions of both imply that the aesthetic experience of the MBh is ultimately non-existent insofar as the *śāntarasa* provokes a mental state that is devoid of emotions (Ānandavardhana in fact names this condition *trṣṇākṣaya*, "the extinction of craving"), they nonetheless emphatically insist on its being a unified work of literature. Moreover, despite the emphasis on the work's unity, Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta imply that the predominance of the flavour of peace in the MBh derives from the narrative's concluding scenes alone. In the following remarks, Gerow explains the difficulty that the semantic proximity of *mokṣa* and *śānta* arouses: since these terms may function as synonyms, they potentially override each other. In light of the fact that Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta view the MBh as a text that sustains the qualities of both a *śāstra* and a *kāvya*, the semantic proximity that Gerow highlights points to a theoretical discrepancy in their discussions. Thus, as Gerow suggests, Abhinavagupta's understanding of the *śāntarasa* is problematic insofar as a dualistic textual definition of this kind is concerned:

Śānta rasa, all agree, derives its pretext from the fourth *puruṣārtha* ('life-goal'): *mokṣa*, 'liberation'. But *śānta rasa*, if indeed it functions as claimed by Abhinava, and is accomplished in the terms he proposes, would appear to possess the attributes of *mokṣa*, the supreme goal of life, and thus becomes either a synonym of *mokṣa*, or renders the latter notion superfluous. In either

³²¹ Edwin Gerow, "Abhinavagupta's Aesthetics as a Speculative Paradigm", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 114, No. 2 (Apr. – Jun., 1994): 186-208, p. 187.

case, the boundary between “art” and “reality” ... would disappear, and metaphysics would in effect have been reduced to aesthetics.³²²

In the same way as Masson and Patwardhan quoted Rilke’s proverb: “you must change your life” to exemplify *śāntarasa*’s unusual aesthetic implementation, Gerow likewise argues that its particular attributes transgress the aesthetic dimension by transforming into something that is “not a theory of beauty, but a formula for action – a practical ethic that does in fact not only improve us but fundamentally alters our condition.”³²³ These elucidations do not fully resolve the inherent challenge that the *śāntarasa* presents. Having to somehow offer a distinction between the two terms (*śānta* and *mokṣa*), *śāntarasa* remains a challenge to Abhinavagupta’s philosophical position as well as to his aesthetics.³²⁴ The insistence to view the MBh as a unitary literary work that is predominantly governed by the *śānta* rasa, and, at the same time, fulfilling the requirements attributable to a *śāstra*, thus creates a problematic reading of the entire MBh. As Gerow explains:

... it [*śāntarasa*] is a *rasa* essentially different from the other *rasas*, pointing us toward philosophy; yet as having a psychic configuration similar to that of *mokṣa*, it risks, by its generality and ease, to make salvation “aesthetic”. In aesthetic terms, it appears to lead us away from aesthetic; in philosophical terms, it appears to make philosophy unnecessary.³²⁵

It would appear that there is no easy solution for the *śāntarasa* “paradox”. While Abhinavagupta offers a highly creative resolution,³²⁶ the discussion on the

³²² *ibid.*, p. 187.

³²³ *ibid.*, p. 188.

³²⁴ “For these reasons and others, *śānta* rasa represents a challenge to Abhinava’s philosophical position, as well as to his aesthetics. Because he cannot be equated with the activist Vaiṣṇavas, he must be understood as somehow distinguishing *śānta* and *mokṣa*.” *ibid.*

³²⁵ *ibid.*, p. 189.

³²⁶ “Abhinava concludes, after a very intricate argument; that the *bhāva* or concrete experience, on which *śānta* rasa depends is none other than the “Self” itself: the *ātman*, understood both as the permanent background against which all transient experiences (including the other *rasas*) are

śāntarasa in the MBh seems to touch upon a much larger and general difficulty that this unusual *rasa* arouses (probably inherently). Gerow's presentation suggests that both Ānandavardhana, and even more so, Abhinavagupta, are challenged to provide elaborate theoretical discussions for rendering this specific *rasa* the MBh's predominant flavour. His presentation further suggests that Abhinavagupta's complex articulations in his general discussions on the *śāntarasa* (not just in the *Dhvanyāloka-locana*) indicate that the *śāntarasa* does not apply smoothly to the MBh; and that, as an exponent of Ānandavardhana, he was challenged to furnish the arguments sounded in the *Dhvanyāloka* 4.5 with greater coherence.

This impressive rhetoric endeavour of the poetics results, in my opinion, in the forceful imposition of their theory of suggestion on a problematic text that is, in many respects, resistant to total and dogmatic interpretations of this kind. This approach to the MBh raises unresolved questions that create breaches in the *dhvani* theory. These indicate that the monolithic meaning that Abhinavagupta and Ānandavardhana offer for the MBh constrains its diversity, complexity and its rich thematic. Furthermore, the reading proposed by these poetics does not fully capture the gigantic length of the MBh because it latently implies that its enormity is somehow superfluous. By imposing a monolithic meaning on this text, both proponents are compelled to disintegrate large portions of the narrative itself.

projected, and as the object of that experience which consists of total clarity and perspicuity [*tattvajñāna*]." *ibid.*, pp. 188-189. See also: "For Abhinava, the dilemma is resolved in much the same way [that] a similar paradox is resolved by Bhartṛhari: the seemingly opposed worlds of object and subject are made over into always corresponding aspects of a single consciousness, whose business ... is not simply to be passively aware, but to provide for the underlying correspondence which every act of awareness supposes. Thus, its unity is in fact functionally dependent on maintaining a multiplicity; in being aware, the "I" is seen as a functioning agent of this universal consciousness, which even to be possible, must have been given its objects." *ibid.*, p. 190.

Since their analysis primarily relies on the narrative's concluding scenes, it necessarily overlooks the rest of the narrative. An additional inconsistency in their discussion comes from the fact that although they draw their conclusions about *śāntarasa* (mostly) from the narrative's culminating episodes, they abstain from naming precisely which events in these scenes evoke a despondent feeling in the reader, and by what means this emotional state gives rise to the *śāntarasa*. In summary, while Abhinavagupta and Ānandavardhana judge the MBh to be a unified work of literature, the all-engrossing meaning that they find in the text fails to address the myriad topics addressed in the often chaotic array of stories that feature in the voluminous MBh.

3. Kuntaka

Another Kashmiri theoretician who reflected on the MBh is the poetician Kuntaka (mid-eleventh century).³²⁷ As Lawrence McCrea notes, the critic was a maverick and unusual figure in the poetical environment of his time, standing out for his expressed reservations toward the *dhvani* theory:

Kuntaka is the only major figure among the post-Ānandavardhana Ālaṃkārikas of Kashmir to significantly depart from the *rasa*-centered, teleological model of literary aesthetics developed in the *Dhvanyāloka*. He refuses to accept the limitations Ānandavardhana's unified aesthetic theory would impose on the creative liberty of poets.³²⁸

³²⁷ For a discussion of Kuntaka's date see the Introduction of Sushil Kumar De to *The Vakroktijīvitā*, Calcutta Oriental Series, No. 8, Calcutta, 1928, p. xii.

³²⁸ McCrea, (2008): 361.

McCrea further notes that Kuntaka's work attempted to move the poetic debate that was largely predominated by the *dhvani* theory to a new and different domain, that of *vakrokti*:³²⁹

Kuntaka departs from his predecessors (both Ānandavardhana and his opponents), not by offering some new analysis of the question of *dhvani* or "suggested" meaning more generally, but by attempting to marginalize the question altogether and to move the study of poetry in a different direction [*vakrokti*].³³⁰

Toward the end of the fourth chapter of the *Vakroktijīvitā*, after discussing the elegance of distinct sentences (*vākya*) and episodes (*prakaraṇa-vakratā*) in poetic works, Kuntaka turns to the subject of whole works of literature (*samudāyātmakasya prabandhasya*). In this section (and similar to Ānandavardhana) he considers the MBh as a unified poetic work, adding that it became a source of re-adaptation for later poets. In order to exemplify this, Kuntaka discusses the drama, the *Veṅṅisaṃhāra*, as a composition that draws upon the MBh. Juxtaposing the conclusion of the play with that of the original, Kuntaka praises Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa (the author of the play) for his choice to alter *śāntarasa* to *vīrarasa*, while he credits Nārāyaṇa, in particular, for concluding his adaptation on a positive note. In his discussion on the *Veṅṅisaṃhāra*, Kuntaka saliently recognizes the problematic nature of the harsh conclusion of the MBh:

[Although] the play *Veṅṅisaṃhāra* [is based on] the *Mahābhārata*, whose length consists of the worthless impressions of *saṃsāra* which is filled with mental states and emotions, all of them devoured by various desires; in the course of concluding his own work of the Pāṇḍava story with *vīra-rasa*, whose splendour expands to *adbhuta-rasa* [wonderment], which [better] suits [the MBh], and which destroys the [epic's original] *śāntarasa*; the playwright

³²⁹ "Kuntaka's general label for the entire range of factors (phonemic, morphological, and semantic) which impart beauty to poetic texts is *vakrokti* – "oblique expression". It is the "obliqueness" of poetic language, its deviation from everyday usage, that serves as the basis for its beauty. Kuntaka's analysis of poetry consists primarily of an examination of the various types of "obliqueness" employed by poets at all levels of language." *ibid.*, p. 336.

³³⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 335-6.

creates an ending brought about by the victory of Yudhiṣṭhira; the Righteous-King, by him royal duty was superintended over the other enemy kings who were killed at the battlefield.

[By virtue of altering the original *śāntarasa*, and] because there is no destruction of the elegance which grows further and further in the entire composition, the playwright [thus] grants uninterrupted delight to well-versed men.³³¹

Note that in these important remarks, Kuntaka defines what he considers to be a good work of literature. As emerges from the citation above, a work of this kind is that in which the predominant *rasa* is being altered toward its end. This view notably departs from that of Ānandavardhana, whose theory of suggestion considers good works of literature as predominantly governed by a single *rasa*.³³² Kuntaka further clarifies his meaning regarding the alteration of *rasa* at the end of a poetic work in the following *kārikā* and its *vṛtti*:

By means of [selecting] an altered delightful *rasa*, the conclusion [of a work] shall be obtained. [This new *rasa* is that] which disregards the excellence of [previous] *rasas* in a plot, and which is different to those [featuring] in the sourcebook (*itivṛtta*).³³³

³³¹ *yathā veṇīsamhāre. sa hi kāmāntarakavalītasakalabhāvabhāvanāvāritaniḥsārasaṃsāravāsanāmahimani mahābhārata śāntarasavināśinā nibandhanirvahaṇapaddhatau pāṇḍavakathāyās tathāvidhādbhutābhogaśobhinā vīreṇa*

raṇaprāṅgaṇanihataḥkilārāticakradhārādhiṣṭhitarājadharmadharṃarājābhyaḥudayasampāditāṃ samāptim upapādayan prabandhaprarūḍhapraudhavadhakatāvicchityācchinnam abhijātānām āhlādam āvahati / (Vakroktijīvitā, 4.17) Sanskrit text from the Vakroktijīvitā of Kuntaka, critically edited by K. Krishnamoorthy, Karnatak University, Dharwad, 1977.

Above, I preferred to include the clearest translation that I was able to make. However, a more literal and precise translation of this rather difficult passage into English would be: “In the play *Veṇīsamhāra* [that is based on] the *Mahābhārata*, whose length consists of the impressions of *saṃsāra*’s worthlessness, which is filled with mental states and emotions, all of them devoured by various desires; in the course of concluding his own work of the Pāṇḍava story, with *vīra-rasa*, whose splendour expands to *adbhuta-rasa* [wonderment] which suits [the story of the MBh], and which destroys the *śāntarasa*, the playwright creates an ending brought about by the victory of Yudhiṣṭhira, the Righteous-King, by him royal duty was superintended over the other enemy kings, who were killed at the battlefield. [By doing so,] the playwright grants uninterrupted delight to well-versed men because there is no destruction of the elegance which grows further and further in the entire composition.”

³³² “The direction of all elements of a poem toward the communication of a single *rasa* is, Ānandavardhana would argue, generally found in the work of those poets recognized as truly great.” McCrea, (2008): 119.

³³³ *itivṛttānyathāvṛttarasasampadupekṣayā / rasāntareṇa ramyeṇa yatra nirvahaṇaṃ bhavet // Vakroktijīvitā, 4.16.*

What had been declared [above] is this: by means of approaching a conclusion with some different and beautiful *rasa*, a poet [should] abandon the course of *rasa* of one event within the sourcebook (*itivr̥tta*) of a certain story, which [in the original], leads to the conclusion of that literary work. [With this altered *rasa*, such a poet] well-furnishes a whole poetic work with elegance that grants joy to well-versed men.³³⁴

By commending the author of the *Veṅṅisam̥hāra* for the artistic choice of modifying the original *rasa* of the epic, Kuntaka seems to spell out what Ānandavardhana's analysis implies. Agreeing with his predecessor on the disagreeable ending of the epic and on the predominance of the *śāntarasa*, Kuntaka takes Ānandavardhana's argument further by explicitly stating that when used in a Sanskrit poetic work, the ending of the MBh ought to be altered.³³⁵ He uses the *Veṅṅisam̥hāra* play in order to illustrate how by diverging from the original, a good work of literature concludes well. This tendency of wishing to end the MBh on a positive note (namely, with a Pāṇḍava victory on the battlefield) emerges also from the following *kārikās*, in which Kuntaka states clearly that a good poet ought to alter a distasteful ending in the original work:

When a dexterous poet concludes a whole work by [selective] passages of the epic sourcebook (*itihāsa*), which promote the excellence of the hero who has an unprecedented fame in the three worlds, wishing to omit the disagreeableness of a plot in the story following that [i.e., when the poet concludes his work before the real ending of the original], this is the varied elegance of this work.³³⁶

³³⁴ *anenedam abhīhitam bhavati - itivr̥ttāntarvr̥ttāyāḥ kasyāścid ekasyāḥ kathāyāḥ kavīḥ tannibandhanirvahaṇagatarasapaddhatim parityajyābhijātānām āhlādakāriṇā kāmanīyakena kenāpy anyena rasenopasaṁharanam upapādayan prabandhe kamapi vakrimānam ādadhāti / Vakroktijīvita, vr̥tti on 4.16-17.*

³³⁵ As McCrea notes, Kuntaka is heavily influenced by Ānandavardhana's work and re-uses many of his examples. See McCrea, (2008): 337.

³³⁶ *trailokyābhīnavollekhanāyakotkarṣapoṣiṇā / itihāsaikadeśena prabandhasya samāpanam // taduttarakathāvartivirasatvajihāsayā / kurvīta yatra sukaviḥ sāvicitrāsya vakratā // Vakroktijīvita, 4.18-19.*

Therefore, in Kuntaka's view, a distasteful (*virasa*) ending merits the poet's emendation. Yet what is implied here is that there is no better example of this than the conclusion of the MBh. This voice of the theoretician reflects a basic discomfort with the way in which the epic closes. By determining where and how the epic should conclude, Kuntaka offers an alternative reading of the text. The poetician is clearly averse to the disconcerting ending of the MBh. He not only praises Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa for concluding his work with a different *rasa* (*vīra*), a choice made possible by his decision to end the play in a specific narrative moment (namely, the Pāṇḍavas' victory on the battlefield), but also overtly declares that a problematic ending of this kind should be altered. With this stance toward the narrative, Kuntaka certainly expresses an uneasy tone with regard to the way the MBh closes, yet he also displays a significant departure from the whole *rasa-dhvani* approach toward the epic.³³⁷ This is because his analysis is not concerned with the MBh *per se*, but rather with the appropriate means by which later poets should adapt it. Thus, Kuntaka's main concern in this particular discourse is with the elegance (*vakratā*) of poetic works and their potential aesthetic appeal.³³⁸ Consequently, since this specific text (in its entirety) is obviously incapable of granting uninterrupted delight (*acchinnam āhlādam*) to its

³³⁷ “Thus Kuntaka is an exceptional figure in several crucial respects. Despite their vehement disagreements with one another there develops among the Kashmiri Ālaṃkārikas of this period a general framework of agreement regarding the basic function of poetry (to convey *rasa*) and also regarding the proper role of Ālaṃkāraśāstra (to provide a rigorous, philosophically defensible account of the processes by which poetic meaning, including *rasa*, is communicated). Kuntaka alone stands entirely outside this framework. He departs from the conventional understanding of the purpose of poetry and the purpose of Ālaṃkāraśāstra as well.” McCrea, (2008): 361-2.

³³⁸ See one such instance (out of many) in the section dedicated to the subject of the elegance of whole poetic works (*prabandhasya vakratā*):

*tasyā eva kathāmūrter āmūlonmīlitaśriyaḥ /
vineyānandanīṣpattyai sā prabandhasya vakratā // Vakroktijīvita*, 4.17.

“When beauty emerges spontaneously due to the elements of a certain story for the purpose of causing delight to educated [men], [this is what we call] the elegance of a whole poetic work.”

spectators due to its harsh conclusion, rather than being preoccupied with the narrative itself, Kuntaka's discussion on the MBh is far more concerned with its adaptation and reception, as with the means by which poets could make it pleasurable for later generations of audiences.

Conclusion

This chapter discussed the theoretical literature that comments on the MBh through the perspective of Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta and Kuntaka. While the problematic conclusion of the MBh had aroused a profound ambivalence in the Indian literary tradition, it was first emphasized that the poetics have indeed recognized the harsh nature of the MBh's ending in their discourses. Despite this recognition, I suggested that their readings of the text are motivated by looking to find better, higher and more comforting meanings in the unsettling impressions that the MBh arouses.

Ānandavardhana abstained from expressly addressing the epic's problematic issues by defining a grand design of its author, who supposedly composed this entire work while aiming at an underlying higher meaning. The meaning that Ānandavardhana found in the epic highlights the ideal of *mokṣa* and the aesthetic experience of *śāntarasa*. Despite the epic's overflow of themes, stories and characters, Ānandavardhana maintained that its only true subject is encapsulated in the figure of Vāsudeva, because he is the embodiment of *vidyā*. Following Ānandavardhana, Abhinavagupta attempted to better specify which elements in the story provoke a despondent feeling in the reader. As an exponent

of Ānandavardhana, he seems to sense that there exists a difficulty in applying this unusual *rasa* (*śānta*) as the predominant flavour of such a monumental and complex literary work. The need to explicate the relation between *mokṣa* and *śānta* in the MBh poses a particular challenge for Abhinavagupta's aesthetics and philosophical position. The dualistic textual definition of the MBh (as both *kāvya* and *śāstra*), as well as Abhinavagupta's conclusion regarding the incapability of the MBh to ultimately produce an aesthetic experience, present several breaches in the *dhvani* theory. These bear implications on the way in which Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta understand the *śāntarasa* in the MBh, and undermine the poetics' emphasis on the unity of the text. The monolithic meaning that this approach highlights in the MBh thus results from imposing the *dhvani* theory on a complex text which is innately resistant to dogmatic interpretations of this kind.

Lastly, Kuntaka took the ending of the MBh to be an example of a faulty conclusion that ought to be altered. Being concerned with the elegance of poetic works and their aesthetic appeal, Kuntaka maintained that since the MBh is incapable of granting joy or pleasure to its spectators due to its harsh conclusion, a good poet adapting its story must eliminate this problematic ending by replacing it with a happy conclusion that will be palatable to future audiences.

Reflections of this kind on the MBh imply that the SĀ is considered as either not constituting an integral part of the epic, or that the rest of the narrative is somehow not integral to its ending. The readings that the above-discussed theoreticians offer for the MBh undermine the wholeness of the text. While Kuntaka's approach to the MBh suggests that the ending should be discarded and

replaced, Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta impose their theory of *dhvani*, and thus offer a monolithic meaning that emphasizes only those parts of the MBh that arouse the *śāntarasa*, bring out the meaning of *mokṣa* or present the figure of Hari as the embodiment of *vidyā*. As a consequence, their stance toward the MBh points to the negligibility of large portions of this gigantic text.

In summary, as discussed in previous chapters, both scholarly literature on the epic and Sanskrit poets have largely neglected the SĀ. Having established that such reflections on the MBh imply that the SĀ was not widely considered as an integral part of the epic, the following chapter examines the epic's internal view with regard to its own ending.³³⁹

³³⁹ See chapter 4 below that discusses *garh*'s semantic meanings in the epic.

Chapter 4

Rejecting *Dharma*:

Semantic Typology of the Sanskrit Verb *Garh* in the

*Mahābhārata*³⁴⁰

Previous chapters have shown that the ending of the *Mahābhārata* has been largely neglected. Unlike this view (voiced, in particular, by epic scholarship and Sanskrit poets), the discussion below argues that the SĀ is an integral part of the MBh, and its thematic is highly significant for understanding the rest of the narrative.

The most dramatic event in the *Svargārohaṇa* is Yudhiṣṭhira's bitter reproof of his father, Dharma. This moment is distinguished by the use of the Sanskrit verb *garh* which is commonly translated: 'to censure; reproach; reprove; blame'. The use of this verb in this context certainly heightens the dramatic effect, but also exposes a fascinating paradox in the MBh. For, how are we to understand a text whose primary preoccupation is the subject of *dharma* and which concludes in the condemnation of Dharma? This question becomes all the more intriguing if one bears in mind that here in the MBh the word *dharma* denotes the god Dharma, who is Yudhiṣṭhira's father, but also the abstract concept of *dharma*, as well as Yudhiṣṭhira himself, whose common epithets in the

³⁴⁰ Unless mentioned otherwise, all citations and quotes of the MBh in the following discussion are from the C.Ed. In the detailed analysis of MBh verses below, a second reference is provided to the (reprinted) Bombay Edition (B.). See also n. 6 above.

epic are Dharma-rāja ('The Righteous-King'), or Dharma-suta ('Son of Dharma').

The main events leading up to this pivotal moment in the epic's concluding scenes begin with Yudhiṣṭhira's deception by Indra who encourages him to enter *svarga* on the false pretext that his brothers and wife await him there; upon entering he finds his long-time bitter rival, the villainous Duryodhana, thriving. Relinquishing *svarga*, he resolves to search for his brothers, and eventually finds that they (along with Draupadī, Karṇa and the kings who had fought for him in battle), were condemned to pain and anguish in hell (*naraka*). Finally, in an act of self-defiance and desperation, Yudhiṣṭhira denounces (*garhayām āsa*)³⁴¹ his father Dharma and the other gods.³⁴²

A number of scholars have pointed out the problematic nature of the concept of *dharma* in the epic. Although it is emphasized that this concept is one of the central themes around which the MBh revolves, it is also noted that *dharma* is a highly intricate and complex concept in the epic. Indeed, the epic's own understanding of this concept is expressed in its repeated saying that *dharma* is *atisūkṣma* ('extremely subtle'). As noted by James Fitzgerald:

The word *dharma* signifies a concept that is one of the most central and important topics of thought and debate in the *Mahābhārata*. ... The concept is complex and often under contestation in the MBh, explicitly and implicitly. And the usage of the word in the epic is varied and elusive. ... The single biggest problem in coming to terms with *dharma* in the *Mahābhārata* is the tremendous abundance of instances of it, and then the many different modes of variation within and among those different instances of the word. ... Also, the *Mahābhārata* does not always speak with one voice about the particular

³⁴¹ C.Ed., B. 18.2.50.

³⁴² The MhP *parvan* begins with Yudhiṣṭhira's decision to travel to heaven and ends with his refusal to remain in *svarga*. The SĀ *parvan* begins with Yudhiṣṭhira spotting Duryodhana in *svarga*, and ends in the assimilation (*aṁśatva*) of the Pāṇḍavas and other characters in the narrative into their divine origins. See also detailed summary of the concluding books of the MBh in chapter 2 above.

behavior or behaviors that actually have the status of *dharma*, and sometimes what particular actions or behaviors constitute *dharma* are said to be unknown. ... And while the basic attitude toward *dharma* may be one of respect, or even reverence, that attitude is not shared by all the epic's characters. Not even all the supposed 'good guys' in the *Mahābhārata* assume that *dharma* is the most important and valuable kind of action ... And not only is *dharma* frequently said in the *Mahābhārata* to be very subtle (*sūkṣma*) and difficult to know, whole sections of the text develop the point that often what appears to be *dharma* is actually *adharmā*, and vice-versa. ... The word *dharma* points to something that someone holds to be religiously right and good; some voices in the *Mahābhārata* claim to know definitely what that, or those things, are; but often characters in the *Mahābhārata* exhibit uncertainty about the content of what is claimed to be *dharma* and ambivalence toward the idea itself.³⁴³

Along similar lines, John Smith explains:

So *dharma* is not a simple thing: indeed the *Mahābhārata* repeatedly insists how 'subtle' (*sūkṣma*) it is. This subtlety offers storytellers great opportunities for the development of narratives focusing on personal or existential dilemmas, for situations can arise – or be imagined – in which the demands of a person's *dharma* seem to be mutually contradictory.³⁴⁴

Several questions arise from the dramatic moment of the epic's final *garh* scene. The first is, most plainly, what does this moment mean? What is Yudhiṣṭhira actually doing when he censures *dharma*? Additional questions concern the object that Yudhiṣṭhira's censure is directed at, namely *Dharma*. Given the preoccupation with *dharma* throughout the length and breadth of the

³⁴³ James L. Fitzgerald, "Dharma and its Translation in the *Mahābhārata*," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 32: 671-685, 2004, pp. 671-3.

³⁴⁴ John D. Smith, "Introduction," *The Mahābhārata: An Abridged Translation*, Penguin Classics, London, 2009, p. xx. See also, Wilhelm Halbfass, "Dharma in the Self-Understanding of Traditional Hinduism," *India and Europe*, SUNY, Albany, 1981, pp. 316-317. Mukund Lath elaborates along similar lines, explaining that, "the *Mahābhārata* calls itself a *dharma saṃhitā* i.e. compendium of *dharma*, but it is unlike all other *dharmasaṃhitās*... because it treats *dharma* through a living story, through actual situations which make its various concepts come to life. What gives depth to this *saṃhitā* is the poignant manner in which the reflection on *dharma* is woven into the very texture of the story of the epic. ... We should regard it as something inherent to the epic itself. ... What fascinates us in the *Mahābhārata* today is not the mere preponderance of *dharma* in it but its spirit of open-minded enquiry into *dharma*. The *Mahābhārata* presents before us the deepest moments of crisis in human life both at the personal and social levels, when the question, what is *dharma*?, becomes a truly urgent question. The *Mahābhārata* suggests no simple solutions of the kind which mankind has always sought." Mukund Lath, "The Concept of *Ānṛśaṃsya* in the *Mahābhārata*", *The Mahābhārata Revisited*, ed. R. N. Dandekar, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1990, pp.116-117.

epic, what implications does such a conclusion have for the text's perception of *dharma*? How does this moment relate to the rest of the narrative? And lastly, is this an integral and obvious conclusion for the entire epic?

In answering these questions, I shall look at several other *garh* passages in the MBh in order to establish: (1) a precise understanding of Yudhiṣṭhira's action in the SĀ; (2) the various implications of the narrators' use of *garh* in different contexts; (3) the semantic structural patterns of *garh* in the MBh; and finally, (4) the relation between the use of *garh* and the meaning of *dharma* in the MBh.

Having established that a scholarly study of *garh*'s usage in the MBh is vital to understanding the SĀ's significance in the epic, this chapter presents several crucial instances of its appearance in the narrative and analyzes them according to meaning and context. The first section of this chapter offers a tentative typology of *garh*'s structural semantic patterns in the MBh. The second section looks into two of *garh*'s cognate verbs in the MBh, namely, the verbs *nind* and *kṣip*, while the last section offers a detailed analysis of several *garh* passages in the epic. The argument throughout this section demonstrates that: (1) *garh* is present in key narrative junctures of the epic; (2) *garh*'s usage in the MBh reveals that *dharma* is perceived in the epic as a highly contextual and circumstance-dependent concept; (3) *garh* serves as a "marker" of the core meditation on *dharma* which the entire epic is devoted to, in various modes, and that there is a consistency of the verb's appearance in critical passages.

In summarizing my findings of the verb's semantic patterns in the epic, I conclude by arguing that the epic's final *garh* scene is significant to the understanding of the entire text, and that as opposed to the stance which tends to

overlook the SĀ, *garh*'s study in the MBh reveals that the SĀ is integral to the thematic structure of the epic.

1. Semantic Typology of *Garh* in the *Mahābhārata*

The study of *garh*'s usage in the MBh provides an internal perspective of the epic with regard to its conclusion. Looking at other uses of *garh* in passages within the epic may help to establish the significance of the SĀ, and the way *garh* is related to the concept of *dharma* in the MBh as a whole.

It is worth noting some relevant data regarding *garh*'s occurrences in the epic before embarking on the investigation of its semantic flux. To the best of my knowledge, the verb *garh* occurs 169 times in the MBh in a large range of grammatical forms.³⁴⁵ *Garh* features in finite verbs in various modes and tenses,

³⁴⁵ *Garh* appears 16 times in the *Ādi parvan*: 71.54; 85.5; 92.5; 92.47; 109.12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 21; 143.15; 145.39; 146.35; 158.10; 187.15; 221.21;
5 times in the *Sabhā parvan*: 19.37; 41.19; 41.26; 42.16; 61.50;
23 times in the *Vana parvan*: 1.11; 9.7; 13.3; 13.58; 22.16; 29.12; 31.39; 33.1; 33.46; 34.20 34.53; 35.1; 116.9; 131.5; 159.20; 176.25; 178.49; 198.22; 200.6; 263.11; 263.13; 264.38; 264.58);
twice in the *Virāṭa parvan*: 15.28; 17.10;
36 times in the *Udyoga parvan*: 9.26; 22.4; 28.1; 28.4; 28.5; 28.10; 29.28; 32.26; 32.27; 33.9; 39.11; 41.6; 48.30; 54.4; 70.30; 70.31; 70.46; 71.29; 71.30; 85.11; 88.61; 111.16 (x2); 120.4; 125.2; 125.3; 125.4; 127.11; 127.18; 128.14; 128.35; 131.4; 131.14; 133.7; 173.3;
17 times in the *Droṇa parvan*: 34.14; 34.17; 50.77; 62.17; 102.12; 118.3; 118.15; 118.19; 118.24 (x2); 118.25; 127.12; 164.22; 166.56; 168.23; 168.31;
7 times in the *Kaṇva parvan*: 3.9; 3.10; 5.36; 49.73; 49.77; 66.43; 66.44;
5 times in the *Śalya parvan*: 4.30; 4.43; 18.16; 58.23; 63.6;
4 times in the *Sauptika parvan*: 1.48; 2.12; 5.15; 5.24;
thrice in the *Strī parvan*: 14.13; 24.2; 24.20;
36 times in the *Śānti parvan*: 10.14; 35.6; 75.6; 75.15; 83.33; 87.23; 89.24; 91.6; 105.30; 112.16; 115.18; 115.20; 131.15; 142.36; 142.43; 142.44; 147.1(x2); 151.6; 184.10; 184.14; 184.15; 192.86; 205.3; 217.23; 221.53; 227.25; 237.35 (x2); 254.38; 283.5; 286.6; 290.35; 306.95;
10 times in the *Anuśāsana parvan*: 24.9; 48.9; 48.16; 90.41; 91.42; 104.4; 104.12; 125.13; 131.17; 131.18;
thrice in the *Āśvamedhika parvan*: 77.39; 92.10; 94.6;
and once in each of the *Mausala* (7.8), and the *Svargārohana parvans* (2.50).
See *Electronic Text of the Mahābhārata*, ed. John D. Smith, Cambridge, U.K., 1999:
<http://bombay.oriental.cam.ac.uk/john/mahabharata/statement.html>.

as well as in nominal derivations.³⁴⁶ While the verb appears in fifteen MBh books, it most frequently occurs in the *Śānti* and the *Udyoga parvans* (occurring 36 times in each book). Of the 169 *garh* instances, the verb’s perfect periphrastic conjugation features only eight times.³⁴⁷ Notably, in the SĀ the verb *garh* appears exclusively in this particular form (*garhayām āsa*).³⁴⁸ In the majority of cases in the MBh, *garh* tends to mean: ‘to rebuke, reproach, censure, blame, revile’. Yet there are distinct cases where *garh* statements tend to appear more emphatically. In such cases, I have translated the verb: “to denounce”. As will emerge from the discussion below, such cases in the MBh are distinct because, unlike others (where *garh* is aimed by the MBh protagonists at others who have offended them), emphatic *garh* statements are directed against *dharma* itself. Indeed, such is the case of the epic’s final *garh* scene in the SĀ. Therefore, this lends such statements the sense of a public, and certainly more emphasized denunciation. In a few odd exceptions we find examples where *garh* means: “to renounce, reject”. Although the verb holds some proximity to its common semantic meaning (one can see how an act of censuring can gain a sense of rejecting or renouncing), occurrences of this type are quite rare.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁶ See for example *garh* in the present (*garhyam ... garhayati*, 12.147.; *garhayate*, 5.32.26), future (*garhayisyanti*, 9.58.23), passive (*vigarhyate*, 12.89.24), optative (*garhayeta*, 5.28.5; *garhed*, 7.34.14; *garhayed*, 7.34.17), aorist (*agarhad*, 8.66.44) and perfect tenses (*jagarhe*, 12.146.8; *garhe*, 5.32.27). See also the verb’s absolutive (*garhayitvā*, 3.264.38), infinitive (*garhayitum*, 1.109.12), gerundive (*garhyau*, 5.28.4; *garhyāḥ*, 12.10.14; *agarhaṇīyo*, 12.237.35), and various modes of participles (*garhitah*, 12.35.6; *parigarhitāḥ*, 5.39.11; *garhite*, 1.92.47; *garhayan*, 9.63.6; *garhitasya*, 12.142.43; *vigarhamāṇah*, 8.66.43), and other nominal derivatives (*garhām gacchanti*, 12.91.6). See also discussion below.

³⁴⁷ See 1.187.15 (*vigarhayām āsa*); 3.116.9; 7.118.3; 7.118.19; 8.3.9; 12.75.6; 14.94.6; 18.2.50 (*garhayām āsa*).

³⁴⁸ See C.Ed., B. 18.2.50.

³⁴⁹ See for example the colloquy between king Janaka and sage Yājñavalkya in the *Śānti parvan*. Responding to Janaka’s philosophical questions, Yājñavalkya gives a long disquisition on the science of *yoga*. At the end of their conversation, king Janaka crowns his son and takes on the life of an ascetic (*yatidharma*):
sāṅkhyajñānam adhīyāno yogaśāstram ca kṛtsnaśaḥ /

In the discussion that follows I present several crucial *garh* moments in the narrative by analyzing them according to meaning and context. Of the approximately one third of the total range of grammatical forms of *garh* and its derivatives (roughly around fifty cases) examined in my research, I shall discuss seven significant instances, which were selected according to contextual occurrences relevant to the discussion and which contribute to understanding the epic’s final *garh* scene. Moreover, I have developed a tentative typology of *garh*’s usage in the MBh, which is based on the large number of cases my study examined. This typology reflects the majority of *garh* incidents in the epic. That is to say, that other *garh* instances are more or less replicates of the major strands represented here. In the discussion below, I shall refer to the following five main divisions:

1) ***Garh Aimed at Wrong Acts***: In the majority of cases, *garh* reproves transgressions of dharmic laws by the protagonists of the MBh. Examples of this type are often quoted within general statements of reproof and sometimes in the form of censure lists. Such moments typically portray plain, relatively uncomplicated *garh* aimed at acts that are simply deemed ‘wrong’. Often, these statements are expressed in didactic tone by the MBh protagonists and at times,

dharmādharmāu ca rājendra prākṛtāṃ parigarhayan // (C.Ed. 12.306.95; B. 12.318.98)

“O best of kings, studying the wisdom of Sāṃkhya and the science of *yoga* fully, as well as ordinary merit and demerit, [the king now] renounced [the world].”

The passage develops around the theme of renunciation. The semantics of the verb typical to other *garh* instances do not emerge from this passage since it does not depict Janaka censuring or reproving anyone. It is thus unlikely that *garh* is employed here in its common sense ‘to censure’. Rather, *garh* here means to “renounce” or “reject”. Nonetheless, in comparison with the common understanding of *garh* in the sense of censuring, this passage suggests that one of the aspects of an act of reproof is rejection. In employing *garh* with the meaning of renunciation from worldly existence (which is also partly characterized by both *dharma* and *adharmā*), the verse seems to express the idea that one’s withdrawal from participating in the ordinary world-order also implies a rejection of this order.

they may simply express dissatisfaction with or aversion to things he or she dislikes or finds distasteful. Although the majority of *garh* instances in the MBh fall into this category, I shall present but a few examples of these since it is less relevant to the discussion at hand.

2) **Divergence in the Interpretation of *Dharma***: Other *garh* moments in the epic are found when there is a significant difference in interpreting the *dharma*, with both interpretations being correct but contextually determined. These moments are characterized by dharmic polemics and controversial disputes, and often depict both sides of the debate usually offering sound arguments. However, the argument is typically determined contextually according to the different planes of *dharma*'s hierarchies (i.e., a lesser obligatory *dharma* is being rejected in favour of a higher one). It should be noted that in some instances, especially when one of the characters is a Brahmin, the dispute is eventually determined by a curse. In such cases, the curse will oftentimes correspond to the offender's action.³⁵⁰

3) **'Dharmic Deadlock'**: Another type of the verb's occurrence in the MBh is constituted by moments of total dharmic deadlock. This stalemate results in *garh* statements that typically derive from the protagonists' doubt, hesitation, and despair ensuing from dead-end irresolvable dilemmas and are often made in self-deprecating tones. These moments of self-reproach emerge, as will be shown

³⁵⁰ This is typical of other curse stories that the epic narrates where the hero is cursed according to the acts he committed. Examples include the story of king Nahuṣa who, on account of his hubris over the gods in the sky, was cursed by Agastya to be born a humiliated snake crawling on the ground (3.175-178); the story of Aṣṭāvakra who was cursed by his father to be born crooked in eight forms (*aṣṭāvakra*) since he was conceited even whilst residing in his mother's womb (3.132-134); the story of Arjuna who refused the temptations of the Apsarā Urvaśī and was consequently cursed by her to become a eunuch (3.45). See also Pāṇḍu's curse story in the discussion below. See also note 414 below.

below, when one finds himself incapable of accepting the fate he is dealt. In these instances, the MBh protagonists use *garh* when they are utterly despondent, either about an event that has yet to materialize but in all probability will, or when one regrets the consequences of an event that he could not, in all probability, have prevented. Accordingly, such moments are typically expressed in *garh*'s future, optative or gerundive forms, conveying the future's uncertainty (e.g., 'I wish that such and such will not happen'), or conveying retrospect regret when looking back in hindsight (e.g., 'If only this did not happen').

4) ***Garh* Signalling a 'Higher *Dharma*'**: Other *garh* passages point at discursive elaborations of the semantic range of *garh* in specified contexts. Such instances illustrate a semantic linkage between *garh* and *nṛśaṃsa* ('cruelty'), or *hiṃsā* ('injury; harm; violence'). My investigation suggests that by associating *garh* with *nṛśaṃsa* or *hiṃsā*, authors of the MBh draw attention to these terms' counterpart words, namely *ānṛśaṃsa* ('non-injury; non-violence'), or *ahiṃsā* ('harmlessness; non-violence'). Thus, in such passages the verb tends to signal a 'higher *dharma*' and, at times, conclude with a curse.

5) **'*Garhing*' (Censuring) *Dharma***: A rather unique type of *garh* in the MBh consists of cases where epic protagonists, such as Yudhiṣṭhira in the SĀ, censure *Dharma*. These significant moments, where *dharma* twists back upon itself and 'garh's' itself, employ *garh* in a recursive act, as if *dharma* were collapsing into itself. Unlike the preceding four *garh* types (where the verb is used by the protagonists against *others* who have offended them), these instances have *garh*

aimed against abstract agents or notions.³⁵¹ Such passages are unique because they do not necessarily portray a simple judgement like the examples found in the other categories, where the moral authority derives from dharmic laws. Rather, these moments are a cry of anguish, since the mind cannot think beyond the paradox of *dharma*'s turning in on itself. The theme of *dharma* censuring *dharma*, or the censure of *dharma* itself, which is present in cases of this type, resonates strongly from the epic's final *garh* scene. Accordingly, the discussion below pays considerable attention to instances of this type.

2. Cognate Verbs of *Garh* in the *Mahābhārata*

Before embarking on a detailed analysis of *garh* passages, it is useful to explore cognate verbs of *garh* in the MBh so as to establish the precise nature of *garh*'s usage in the epic. It should be emphasized that since the main focus of this discussion is concerned with *garh*, it is beyond its scope to offer a comprehensive study of all its possible cognate verbs in the MBh. Nonetheless, I have looked into two verbs that are closest semantically to *garh* in the epic, namely, *nind* and *kṣip*. The following discussion offers a preliminary study of the occurrences of these

³⁵¹ For an example of MBh protagonists censuring abstract notions or agents other than *dharma*, see the following passage, where Draupadī denounces the Creator (Brahma). In a long lamentation over the Pāṇḍavas' misfortune after the dice game, she addresses Yudhiṣṭhira in agony:

*tavemām āpadam dr̥ṣṭvā samṛddhim ca suyodhane /
dhātāram garhaye pārtha viṣamaṁ yo 'nupaśyati //* (C.Ed. 3.31.39; B. 3.30.40)

“Seeing your misfortune and the prosperity of Duryodhana, I denounce the Creator who witnesses [i.e., allows] [such] injustice.”

Draupadī censures the Creator for his injustice or inequality (*viṣamaṁ*) toward the Pāṇḍavas. Note that she does not censure the Creator for having created or for sustaining the world. She rather accuses him for allowing it to be the way it is, or to revolve in the manner that it does. It therefore appears that the Creator in this passage is tantamount to *dharma*, or rather to the lack thereof. Consequently, *garh* in this passage is directed against the very order by which the world revolves.

verbs in several MBh *parvans*, with the aim of pointing out the major and most common strands in which they are employed. In other words, although it points out some exceptional cases, this section's primary concern is to show in the broadest terms how *garh*'s cognate verbs feature in the epic.

2.1 *Nind*

The closest semantic verb of *garh* in the MBh is the verb *nind* ('to blame, censure, revile, despise, ridicule'). To the best of my knowledge, the verb occurs 266 times in the MBh in each of the first fifteen *parvans* (i.e., it does not feature in the three concluding books of the epic, the *Mausala*, MhP and the *SĀ parvans*).³⁵² Among these 266 occurrences, *nind* has four main semantic uses in the epic, as follows:

³⁵² *Nind* appears 29 times in the *Ādi parvan*: 5.14; 5.16; 6.5; 6.43; 61.95; 66.7; 66.15; 67.6; 67.10; 67.19; 74.10; 77.14 (x2); 92.32; 93.25; 100.14; 110.9; 113.24; 115.14; 149.11; 157.14; 162.1; 165.13; 169.22; 180.4; 185.19; 189.47; 192.13; 200.15;
 9 times in the *Sabhā parvan*: 41.15 (X2); 57.2; 61.23; 61.25; 61.70 (X2); 61.71 (X2);
 50 times in the *Vana parvan*: 13.88; 13.91; 30.24; 32.18; 32.23; 33.29; 34.72; 39.7; 57.11; 58.17; 58.29; 61.69; 61.115; 72.2; 72.4; 72.21; 75.18; 77.15; 122.26; 146.12; 186.126; 188.26; 188.28; 190.80; 197.42; 197.44; 198.1; 198.37; 198.47; 199.32; 205.7; 213.22; 213.50; 219.6; 226.20; 247.42; 248.10; 248.11; 251.21; 253.11; 257.6; 262.30; 264.58; 265.29; 266.66; 280.32; 281.25; 281.27; 289.8; 289.19;
 9 times in the *Virāṭa parvan*: 8.1; 11.11; 14.20; 16.7; 16.8; 21.36; 22.11; 38.13; 63.47;
 34 times in the *Udyoga parvan*: 2.13; 12.16; 15.14; 29.20; 32.21; 32.26; 33.16; 33.76; 35.40; 36.15; 38.6; 61.17; 69.2; 71.19; 71.20 (x2); 71.21; 100.3; 111.13 (x3); 111.14; 128.22; 128.25; 128.28; 133.10; 148.12; 156.10 (x2); 158.29; 180.36; 187.29; 188.16; 192.29;
 10 times in the *Bhīṣma parvan*: 16.3 (x2); 24.36; 34.19; 36.24; 41.26; 44.39; 92.9; 95.3; 114.110;
 6 times in the *Droṇa parvan*: 1.15; 51.27; 51.33; 51.35; 118.20; 118.33;
 6 times in the *Karṇa parvan*: 22.4; 25.8 (x2); 26.43; 30.14; 67.1;
 7 times in the *Śalya parvan*: 5.16; 37.30; 47.23; 49.3; 50.14; 51.5; 51.7;
 5 times in the *Sauptika parvan*: 1.48; 1.49; 3.5; 3.10; 3.20;
 5 times in the *Strī parvan*: 13.2; 16.56; 17.26; 20.4; 24.3;
 55 times in the *Śānti parvan*: 9.14; 10.19; 11.16; 15.33; 18.28; 28.31; 30.29; 30.39; 56.58; 62.4; 90.17; 96.21; 106.20; 115.7; 115.11; 118.5; 118.6; 124.47; 130.6; 140.15; 143.3; 147.1 (x2); 152.8; 152.14; 154.17; 154.19; 154.21; 162.8; 163.23; 173.45; 186.6; 192.15; 213.11; 213.12; 215.5; 222.5; 222.8; 222.14 (x2); 222.18; 222.19; 223.15; 237.10; 237.36; 255.4; 260.12; 261.22; 269.12; 269.15; 269.16; 276.24; 276.27; 287.42; 313.37;
 32 times in the *Anuśāsana parvan*: 1.6; 4.32; 17.50; 17.97; 17.99; 17.110; 17.139; 20.12; 24.9; 33.17; 37.12; 38.3; 38.7; 40.55; 41.10; 41.29; 72.10; 81.19; 82.30; 90.44; 90.45 (x2); 96.49; 105.28; 107.47; 107.60; 126.25; 127.39; 127.43; 128.5; 132.42; 137.9;

1) *Anindita* passages: In a strikingly large majority of cases, the verb *nind* appears in its negative adjectival form, namely *anindita*. Such occurrences of *nind* rise to significant numbers in the epic: there are 129 such *anindita* passages, that is, roughly a *half* of the total occurrences of the verb in the entire MBh. Moreover, it should be mentioned that in the majority of these negative adjectival passages, *nind* mostly appears as a female noun (*aninditā/anindite* etc.) and thus forms a formulaic expression for depicting women (e.g., ‘blameless-lady, faultless woman, woman beyond reproach, woman of faultless form’ etc.). The multiple recurrences of such forms in the MBh indicate that the negative adjectival *aninditā* is a common expression in the epic to describe the women sex.³⁵³ There are of course various occurrences of the positive *nindita* adjectival

6 times in the *Āśvamedhika parvan*: 37.6; 38.1; 50.37; 53.1; 86.26; 89.5; and 3 times in the *Āśramavāsika parvan*: 23.10; 39.5; 45.17.

See *Electronic Text of the Mahābhārata*, ed. John D. Smith, Cambridge, U.K., 1999:

<http://bombay.oriental.cam.ac.uk/john/mahabharata/statement.html>.

³⁵³ Of the 29 *nind* occurrences in the *Ādi parvan*, 24 are *anindita* passages. See *aninditā*: 5.14; 5.16; 6.5; 61.95; 66.7; 66.15; 77.14 (x2); 92.32; 100.14; 157.14; 162.1; 165.13; 169.22; 189.47; 200.15; *anindite*: 113.24; 115.14; 67.6; 67.10; *anindita* (male/neuter): 93.25; 6.43. See also, *aninditagāminī* (“Flawlessly moving woman”), 67.19; *aninditāṅgāḥ* (“[heroes] of flawless limbs”), 185.19; *na ninditam*, 149.11.

Of the 9 *nind* occurrences in the *Sabhā parvan*, one is an *aninditā* passage: 61.23.

Of the 50 *nind* occurrences in the *Vana parvan*, 37 are *anindita* passages. See *aninditā*: 13.91; 57.11; 72.21; 75.18; 77.15; 122.26; 146.12; 213.50; 219.6; 248.10; 251.21; 262.30; 266.66; 280.32; 289.8; 289.19; *anindite*: 13.88; 30.24; 32.23; 58.17; 58.29; 61.69; 61.115; 72.2; 72.4; 213.22; 264.58; 281.25; 281.27; *anindita* (male/neuter): 186.126; 197.42; 205.7; *anindya*, 190.80. See also, *anindyāṅgī* (“woman of flawless limbs”), 248.11; 265.29; *anindyarūpā* (“woman of flawless form”), 253.11; *na...ninditam* (“[Prince] sans blame”), 39.7.

Of the 9 *nind* occurrences in the *Virāṭa parvan*, 7 are *anindita* passages. See *aninditā*: 8.1; 14.20; 16.7; 16.8; 22.11; 63.47; *anindite*: 21.36.

Of the 34 *nind* occurrences in the *Udyoga parvan*, 11 are *anindita* passages. See *aninditā*: 15.14; 100.3; 158.29; 188.16; *anindite*: 12.16; *anindita* (male/neuter): 192.29; *anindya*: 61.17; See also, *na...ninditam karma* (“not a bad deed”), 5.128.22; 5.128.25; 5.128.28.

Of the 6 *nind* occurrences in the *Kaṛṇa parvan*, one is an *anindita* passage: 26.43.

Of the 7 *nind* occurrences in the *Śalya parvan*, 6 are *anindita* passages. See *aninditā*: 37.30; 47.23; 51.5; 51.7; *anindita* (male/neuter): 5.16; 50.14.

Of the 5 *nind* occurrences in the *Strī parvan*, 5 are *aninditā* passages: 13.2; 16.56; 17.26; 20.4; 24.3.

Of the 55 *nind* occurrences in the *Śānti parvan*, 8 are *anindita* passages. See *aninditā*: 30.29; 30.39; *anindita* (male/neuter): 124.47; 154.19; 163.23; 192.15. See also, *anindyātmā* (“blameless soul”), 223.15; 287.42.

form, but these occur in relatively small numbers in comparison with the numerous *anindita* passages.³⁵⁴

2) **‘Praise and blame’ passages:** Another recurrent usage of the verb *nind* in the MBh relates to the antonyms ‘praise and blame’. There are many such copulative compounds (*dvandvas*) in the epic that typically pair up the noun *nindā* (‘blame’) with either *praśamsā* or *stuti* (‘praise’).³⁵⁵ Besides these compounded forms, there are also other fairly elaborate passages that exhibit ‘praise and blame’ as mental conditions toward which one has to cultivate indifference or equality (e.g., *tulya; sama*).³⁵⁶

Of the 32 *nind* occurrences in the *Anuśāsana parvan*, 22 are *anindita* passages. See *aninditā*: 38.3; 41.10; 41.29; 81.19; 90.45; 126.25; 127.39; *anindite*: 4.32; 82.30; 127.43; 128.5; *anindita* (male/neuter): 17.50; 17.97; 17.99; 17.110; 17.139; 20.12; 96.49; 132.42; 137.9; *anindya*, 72.10. See also, *anindyāngī*, 40.55.

Of the 6 *nind* occurrences in the *Āśvamedhika parvan*, 4 are *anindita* passages: 38.1; 50.37; 53.1; 86.26.

Of the 3 *nind* occurrences in the *Āśramavāsika parvan*, 3 are *anindita* passages. See *aninditā*: 45.17; *anindite*: 39.5. See also, *anindyāngī*, 23.10. See also note 352 above.

³⁵⁴ See, for instance, *karmāṇi ... ninditāni* (“bad deeds”), 5.133.10; *ninditaṁ karma* (“bad deed”), 13.1.6; *vṛttam suninditam* (“very reprehensible conduct”), 8.30.14.

See also, *manuṣyeṣu nindyaṁ yaḥ sarvam ācāret sa vadhyaḥ sarvalokasya ninditāni samācaran* (“he who behaves utterly harmfully to people should be slain [for] committing these deeds detested by the whole world”), 6.16.3 (*Gītā*), as well as 5.156.10; *kṣātrāṇi vaiśyāni ca sevamānaḥ; śaudrāṇi karmāṇi ca brāhmaṇaḥ san / asmiṅl loka nindito mandacetāḥ; pare ca loka nirayaṁ prayāti //* (“A Brahmin who performs the duties of Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śudras is ridiculed in this world as a ‘dull-wit’ and goes to hell in the next world.”), 12.62.4; *vijñānabalapūto yo vartate ninditeṣv api / vṛttavijñānavān dhīraḥ kas taṁ kiṁ vaktum arhati //* (“Who can say anything [against] a wise man, who is purified by the power of knowledge and is capable of discerning [different] conducts even when he lives among reprehensible people?”), 12.130.6.

³⁵⁵ See for instance, *tulyanindāmasamstutiḥ* (“indifferent with regard to praise and blame”), 1.110.9; 6.36.24; 12.9.14; *tulyanindāstutir* (“indifferent to praise and blame”), 3.247.42; 6.34.19; 12.215.5; *tulyanindāpraśamsāḥ* (“those who are indifferent with regard to praise and blame”), 13.105.28; *tulyanindāpriyāpriyaḥ* (“indifferent to pleasant [words] and unpleasant blame”), 9.49.3; *stutinindāvivarjanam* (“abstention from praise and blame”), 12.154.17; 12.213.11; *nindāpraśamsoparataḥ* (“he who is beyond praise and blame”), 5.38.6; *apetanindāstutir* (“free from blame or praise”), 12.237.36; *nindāpraśamsāsu samasvabhāvo* (“even-natured at either praise or blame”, 5.36.15; *praśamsānindayoḥ samaḥ* (“equal to blame and praise”), 12.269.16; *samo nindāpraśamsayoḥ* (“equal to blame and praise”), 12.213.12; *nindāpraśamsā* (“blame and praise”), 2.57.2; 12.222.14; 12.222.19; *nindāpraśamsākuśalāḥ* (“skilful in both praise and blame”), 13.33.17.

³⁵⁶ See non-compounded usages of ‘praise and blame’: *praśamsābhir nindābhir* (“by praise and blame”), 3.34.72; *praśamsan vā nindan vā* (“praising or blaming”), 12.115.7; *nindyamānaḥ praśasto vā* (“praised or blamed”), 12.222.18; *puruṣaḥ karmasiddhau praśasyate ... asiddhau*

3) *Vedanindaka* passages: In addition to the passages above, a rather common phrase that comes up often in the epic is *vedanindaka*, ‘a reviler of the Veda’. As to be expected, this expression is sounded in negative terms in the MBh. Below I quote a few similar expressions which use *nindaka* (‘a reviler’) with other nouns, as well.³⁵⁷

4) Finite *nind* passages: The above mentioned *nind* passages (i.e., *anindita*, ‘praise and blame’, and *vedanindaka*) jointly make up nearly *two thirds* of the total occurrences of *nind* in the MBh.³⁵⁸ The remainder is composed of finite *nind* passages, in which the verb features in a variety of its conjugational forms. The semantic meaning of *nind* in such instances may range from ‘to blame’, ‘criticize’, ‘despise’, ‘offend’, ‘mock’ to ‘find fault’.³⁵⁹ My findings of *nind*’s

nindyate (“a man is praised at the success of his action ... and blamed at his failure”), 3.33.29; *ye caiva māṃ praśaṃsanti ye ca nindanti mānavāḥ* (“whether men praise or abuse me”), 3.198.37; *abruvan kasya cin nindām ātmapūjām avarṇayan* (“[If] he does not blame anyone and applaud himself”), 3.198.47; *praśaṃsa vā ninda vā yā matis te* (“you may praise or blame according to fancy”), 5.29.20; *niṣevate praśastāni ninditāni na sevate* (“he cultivates praiseworthy acts and avoids the blameworthy”), 5.33.16; *ātmanindātmapūjā ca paranindā parastavaḥ* (“self-blame and self-praise and speaking ill or well of others”), 8.25.8; *nindām caiva praśaṃsām ca yo nāśrayati* (“he who does not depend on either praise or blame”), 12.154.21; *nindatsu ca samo nityam praśaṃsatsu* (“treat equally to those who blame or praise”), 12.222.8; *nindā stutiḥ praśaṃsā ca* (“blame, praise and fame”), 14.37.6.

³⁵⁷ See for instance, *vedanindaka*: 3.188.26; 5.35.40; 12.15.33; 12.162.8; 12.173.45; 13.37.12. See also, *vedaśāstrārthanindakāḥ* (“a reviler of the contents of the Veda and scriptures”), 3.32.18.

See other related semantic usages of *nindaka* (“reviler”) like *bhrātr̥nindaka* (“abusive toward his brothers”), 7.51.35; and *vedanindā* (“reviling the Veda; heresy”), 13.107.60: *nāstikyam vedanindām ca devatānām ca kutsanam ... parivarjayet* (“he should abstain from atheism, reviling the Veda, as well as reviling the gods”).

³⁵⁸ The number of quoted passages presented above which consist of (negative) *anindita* passages (129), ‘praise and blame’ passages (31), *vedanindaka* passages (9), and positive *nindita* passages (5), is 174 (of the total 266 *nind* occurrences in the MBh).

³⁵⁹ See for instance, *ye na nindanti ninditam* (“those who do not blame the blameworthy”), 2.61.70; *eno gacchati kartāraṃ nindārho yatra nindyate* (“a blameworthy crime leads to its agent, if he is blamed”), 2.61.71; *gurūṃś caiva vinindanti mūḍhāḥ paṇḍitamāniṇaḥ* (“fools thinking themselves Paṇḍits criticize teachers”), 3.199.32; *atha ye karma nindanto manuṣyāḥ kāpatham gatāḥ* (“those who condemn rituals enter an evil course”), 12.11.16; *nindanti svān adhikārān samityajanti ca* (“those who find fault in their responsibilities [eventually] relinquish them altogether”), 12.56.58; *na ninded annabhakṣyān* (“one should not speak ill of food and boiled rice”), 12.186.6; *tatra ye brāhmaṇāḥ ke cin na nindati hi te varāḥ* (“in that case he certainly does not blame respectable Brahmins”), 13.90.44.

See also other finite *nind* passages that sustain some relation to the semantics of ‘praise and blame’: *nindyamāno na kupyasi kā te prajñā* (“you are not angry when blamed, what is your

study in the MBh suggest that in some of these passages *nind* may be interchangeable with *garh* in its most basic semantic meaning, namely, ‘*garh* aimed at wrong acts’, which is the first type proposed above. A typical example of this kind, where *nind* may alternate with *garh* comes from the following verse from the *Śānti parvan*, which illustrates a ‘censure list’ by stringing together several wrong acts that wise men scorn:

striyo ’kṣā mrgayā pānaṁ prasaṅgān ninditā budhaiḥ (12.28.31)

Women, dice, hunting and drinking are condemned by the wise due to their adhesive [nature].

Yet more often than not, finite *nind* passages exhibit situations in which the MBh protagonists are blamed because of their failure to behave according to dharmic laws, and more specifically, with accordance to their own social norms. A typical instance of this kind comes from the *Bhagavadgītā* episode, in which Kṛṣṇa urges Arjuna to fight the battle by warning the latter that a failure to fulfil his Kṣatriya duty will result in his becoming the laughingstock of his enemies:

*avācyavādāṁś ca bahūn vadiṣyanti tavāhitāḥ /
nindantas tava sāmāthyam tato duḥkhataram nu kim* // (6.24.36)

Your enemies will say various unspeakable things about you while mocking your strength. What [could be] more painful than this?

However, the numerous recurrences of *nind* in the particular passages mentioned above (*anindita*, ‘praise and blame’, and *vedanindaka* passages) indicate that although it is semantically close to *garh*, *nind* is not always a default substitute verb for *garh*, for it is seldom used to replace *garh* in its full range of semantic meanings. Significant indications for this come from the fact that *nind* is used considerably more frequently than *garh* in the MBh, and that it is

secret?”), 12.222.5; *tūṣṇīm āsīta nindāyān kurvan bheṣajam ātmanah* (“when he is the object of blame he should keep silent as a remedy for himself”), 12.237.10.

consistently used in the above mentioned fixed expressions. *Garh*, on the other hand, has a far more selective use than *nind* and appears in particular contexts in the epic (i.e., ‘*garh* aimed at wrong acts’; ‘divergence in the interpretation of *dharma*’; ‘dharmic-deadlock’; ‘*garh* signalling a higher *dharma*’, and ‘*garhing dharma*’). The mere nine cases that I was able to find, in which *nind* may thematically share some of *garh*’s semantics (other than ‘aimed at wrong acts’), are rather exceptional, and, as far as I can assess, these are very rare in comparison with the frequent uses in the epic discussed above.³⁶⁰

³⁶⁰ See, for instance, passages where *nind* is used in cases where MBh protagonists blame themselves: *vinindan ... ātmānam* (“blaming himself”), 3.197.44; 3.198.1 (the story of the Brahmin and hunter); 5.180.36, *aham ... vinindyātmānam ātmānā* (“I blamed myself”). See also 3.226.20, where Karna urges Duryodhana to take advantage of the Pāṇḍavas’ years of exile in order to annihilate them in the forest. He mentions the results that such destructive actions will have on Draupadī: *vinindatām tathātmānam jīvitaṁ ca* (“let her blame her own self and her life!”). See also, 6.44.39, where Saṁjaya describes the sights of war to Dhṛtarāṣṭra: *rudhiraughapariklinnāḥ kliśyamānāś ca bhārata / vyanindan bhṛṣam ātmānam tava putrānś ca saṁgatān //* (“O Bhārata, the [warriors], who were tormented and moist from blood-streams, harshly blamed themselves, as well as your assembled sons”). See also, 6.92.9, where having heard the news of the death of Bhīma’s son, Iravat, Arjuna tells Kṛṣṇa: *nindāmi bhṛṣam ātmānam dhig astu kṣatrajīvikām* (“I strongly blame myself. Fie be the life of warriors!”).

See passages where *nind* is used in cases where MBh protagonists blame the Kṣatriya *dharma*/mode of life: 6.114.110, where after Bhīṣma was finally attacked by the Pāṇḍavas, Saṁjaya describes to Dhṛtarāṣṭra the chaos in the Kaurava camp: *prākrośan prāpatānś cānye jagmur mohān tathāpare / kṣatram cānye ’bhyanindanta bhīṣmaṁ caike ’bhyapūjayan //* (“Some cried out aloud, some fell down [on the ground], while others went crazy; yet others blamed the warriors’ mode of life, and a number of them honoured Bhīṣma”). See also, 7.1.15, where upon hearing the news of Bhīṣma’s fall, both the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas react in different ways: *vismitāś ca prahr̥ṣṭāś ca kṣatradharmaṁ niśāmya te / svadharmān nindamānāś ca praṇipatya mahātmane //* (“Perplexed and delighted [by his fall], and observing their warriors’ duty, they blamed their own [kṣatra] *dharma* having bowed down before that illustrious soul, [Bhīṣma]”).

See also 8.6.71 following a *garh* passage, where just before causing Karna’s death (after the latter ‘*garh*’ed’ *dharma* at 8.66.43-44), Kṛṣṇa addresses Karna sarcastically: *athābravīd vāsudevo rathastho; rādheya diṣṭyā smarasiha dharmam / prāyeṇa nīcā vyaśaneṣu magnā; nindanti daivam kukṛtaṁ na tat tat //* (“Now Vāsudeva spoke [to Karna] who was seated in his chariot: ‘O son of Rādhā, how fortunate it is that you remember *dharma* on this occasion [today]! When low-born people are sunk into ruin they usually blame fate, but not this or that wrong deed [of their own]!’”). See also detailed discussion on the preceding *garh* passage (“Karna denounces Dharma”), pp. 229-232 below.

2.2 *Kṣip*

The Sanskrit verb *kṣip* has a relatively large variety of meanings, the most central among which are: ‘to cast; throw; to send; dispatch; to throw a glance; to strike; hit; to put or place something; to scatter; pour; to throw away; get rid of; to strike down; ruin; and, destroy’. An additional, and insofar as the MBh is concerned, less frequent meaning of *kṣip*, is ‘to revile; abuse; and, insult’.

My investigation of the verb indicates that *kṣip* in the latter sense (‘revile; abuse; insult’) is relatively rare in the epic in comparison with its other meanings. Having arrived at this conclusion after examining several epic books, I thought it apt to focus and limit the study of this verb to seven MBh books, namely, the *Ādi*, *Sabhā*, *Vana*, *Virāṭa*, *Udyoga*, *Strī* and *Śānti parvans*. These particular books were selected for closer examination because some of them are considered to be among the longest books of the epic (e.g., *Ādi*, *Vana*, *Udyoga* and *Śānti*), and also because some are considered of a relatively early date (e.g., parts of the *Ādi*, *Sabhā* and *Vana*). The reason why I merely skimmed through the battle books is that a preliminary reading proved that *kṣip* features in them very frequently in its other meanings, which are naturally commensurate with the battle’s semantics of conflict, violence and armed struggle (e.g., ‘to throw/scatter arrows; to cast/dispatch various weapons; to strike down/hit/ruin/destroy’ etc.). In order to show the relatively infrequent use of *kṣip* in the sense ‘to abuse/revile/insult’, the statistics of its occurrence in the seven *parvans* that were selected for closer examination are presented below.³⁶¹

³⁶¹ Of the 67 times *kṣip* occurs in the *Ādi parvan* in a variety of its other meanings, the verb occurs in the sense ‘to abuse/revile/insult’ only thrice. Of the 19 times *kṣip* occurs in the *Sabhā parvan* in a variety of its other meanings, the verb occurs in the sense ‘to abuse/revile/insult’ only once.

The findings of *kṣip*'s study in the latter sense suggest that it is not used as an interchangeable verb of *garh*, mainly because the contexts in which *kṣip* occurs are “weaker” than the emphatic and public *garh* statements that feature consistently in the epic. The primary meanings of *kṣip* are therefore milder and less pronounced than those of *garh*. In the majority of cases, the meaning of *kṣip* in the MBh may range from ‘abuse’,³⁶² ‘insult’,³⁶³ ‘slight’,³⁶⁴ ‘berate’,³⁶⁵

Of the 87 times *kṣip* occurs in the *Vana parvan* in a variety of its other meanings, the verb occurs in the sense ‘to abuse/revile/insult’ only 4 times.

Of the 19 times *kṣip* occurs in the *Virāṭa parvan* in a variety of its other meanings, the verb *does not* occur in the sense ‘to abuse/revile/insult’, at all.

Of the 29 times *kṣip* occurs in the *Udyoga parvan* in a variety of its other meanings, the verb occurs in the sense ‘to abuse/revile/insult’ only 6 times.

Of the 13 times *kṣip* occurs in the *Strī parvan* in a variety of its other meanings, the verb *does not* occur in the sense ‘to abuse/revile/insult’, at all.

Of the 83 times *kṣip* occurs in the *Śānti parvan* in a variety of its other meanings, the verb occurs in the sense ‘to abuse/revile/insult’ only 6 times.

³⁶² See *kṣip* in the sense ‘to abuse’: at 1.126.17 and 1.126.20, Karṇa intrudes upon a wrestling match between the young Kaurava and Pāṇḍava princes by interrupting Arjuna during a display of his excellent martial skills. Karṇa announces that he will match Arjuna’s feats. Offended by this (*tataḥ kṣiptam ivātmānaḥ matvā pārtho*; “Thus Pārtha thought himself insulted”), Arjuna calls Karṇa an intruder (*anāhūta*) and threatens to kill him. The dialogue between the two ends when Karṇa challenges Arjuna to a duel: *kiṁ kṣepair durbalāśvāsaiḥ śaraiḥ kathaya bhārata / guroḥ samakṣam yāvat te harāmy adya śiraḥ śaraiḥ //* (“What is the point of abusing? That is a weak-man’s consolation! Speak [to me] with arrows, Bhārata, until before your teacher’s eyes I shall carry your head off today with my arrows!”); at 3.15.18, Kṛṣṇa tells Yudhiṣṭhira that when Śālva (the demonic lord of Saubha) heard that he had slain Śiśupāla, Śālva attacked Dvārakā in revenge. Enraged by this, and as Kṛṣṇa learns that Śālva also abused him (*kṣepam cātmani*), he resolves to kill Śālva (*niścītya manasā vadhāyāsyā*); at 5.33.6, Vidura tells Dhṛtarāṣṭra: *param kṣipati doṣeṇa vartamānaḥ svayaṁ tathā / yaś ca krudhyaty anīśaḥ san sa ca mūḍhatamo naraḥ //* (“He who abuses another when he himself is at fault, and who gets angry when he is powerless, he is a most foolish man.”); at 5.75.1, Kṛṣṇa scolds Bhīma for his leniency toward the impending war with the Kauravas, and then explains that he did not speak with the intention of abusing him (*idam abruvam na cākṣepāt*); at 5.94.32, Balarāma warns King Dambhodhava never to abuse anyone out of his conceit (*mā ca darpasamāviṣṭaḥ kṣepsīḥ kāmś cit kadā cana*); at 12.84.30 (*Rājadharmaparvan*), Bhīṣma instructs Yudhiṣṭhira on the subject of “the servants of the king”. He tells him that sometimes when a master (*svāmī*) is enraged (*samrabdhah*) with his servant, he abuses him verbally (*vācā kṣipati*); at 12.208.10 (*Mokṣadharmaparvan*), Bhīṣma instructs Yudhiṣṭhira that one ought not to speak abusively (*vaktavyam avikṣiptena*); and, at 12.276.25, he further tells him that vicious people (*nirguṇāḥ*) abuse men of merit by dwelling on their own qualities (*guṇavataḥ kṣipanty ātmaḥ guṇakṣayāt*).

³⁶³ See *kṣip* in the sense ‘to insult’: at 3.142.13, Yudhiṣṭhira tells his wife and brothers about his grief at their five years of separation from Arjuna, whose merits he praises highly, thus: *satatam yah kṣamāśīlah kṣipyamāno ’py anīyasā* (“He is always patient, even when insulted by a lesser man”); at 3.252.2, having been abducted by King Jayadratha, Draupadī, who is urged by him to abandon her husbands and marry him, addresses the king harshly: *yaśasvinaś tīkṣṇaviṣān mahārathān; adhikṣipan mūḍha na lajjase katham* (“You insult illustrious great warriors whose [power is like] venomous snakes. You fool, how are you not ashamed?”); at 5.133.30, Kuntī relates a story about a mother’s instruction to her son: *kruddhāmī lubdhān parikṣṇān avakṣiptān*

‘offend’,³⁶⁶ ‘accuse’³⁶⁷ to ‘contempt’.³⁶⁸ A rather good example that demonstrates *kṣip*’s weakened meaning in relation to *garh*, comes from the following *Vana parvan* passage, where after Draupadī ‘*garh*’ed’ Brahmā (at 3.31.39),³⁶⁹

Yudhiṣṭhira warns her:

*ato nārhasi kalyāṇi dhātāraṁ dharmam eva ca /
rajomūdhena manasā kṣeptuṁ śaṅkitum eva ca // (3.32.14)*

Therefore, beautiful woman, you certainly ought not, with heart stupefied by anger, abuse or distrust the Creator nor *dharma*.

This *kṣip* passage is extremely pertinent to our discussion because it responds to, and follows an act of *garh* (censuring). It is rather obvious that in his speech, Yudhiṣṭhira is careful not even to verbally repeat the same verb Draupadī used in her desperate act of censure against the Creator (Brahmā). Yudhiṣṭhira uses a different verb that allows him to attenuate the harsh act of censure previously

vimānitān / spardhinaś caiva ye ke cit tān yukta upadhāraya // (“Beware of angry men, greedy people, those who are lost, insulted, dishonoured, and competitive.”); at 12.8.1, Yudhiṣṭhira informs his brothers of his intention to renounce the kingdom by taking the life of an ascetic in the forest. Arjuna, who takes the news badly, is depicted as one who cannot bear to be insulted in this way (*adhikṣipta ivākṣamī*).

³⁶⁴ See *kṣip* in the sense ‘to slight’: at 1.27.32, the tiny Vālakhilyas (a class of ṛṣis the size of a thumb) are slighted by Indra. In revenge, they sacrifice in order to engender a creature mightier than the king of the gods. Sage Kaśyapa takes over their rite and creates an Indra of birds (i.e., Garuḍa). Having accomplished this, he addresses Indra thus: *na cāpy evaṁ tvayā bhūyaḥ kṣeptavyā brahmavādīnaḥ / na cāvamānyā darpāt te vāgviṣā bhṛśakopanāḥ //* (“These knowers of Brahman, whose word is [like] poison, and whose rage is fierce, shall never again be slighted or dishonoured by you out of pride”).

³⁶⁵ See *kṣip* in the sense ‘to berate’: at 2.41.2, the events that led to the slaying of Śiśupāla by Kṛṣṇa are related. Śiśupāla belittles Kṛṣṇa’s feats, berates Bhīṣma, and accuses him of hypocrisy. Addressing this before Bhīma, Bhīṣma states the following: *ko hi mām bhūmasenādya kṣitāv arhati pārthivaḥ / kṣeptuṁ daivaparītātmā yathaiṣa kulapāmsanaḥ //* (“What king on this earth, Bhīmasena, dares berate me like this defiler of his line, [if not] he who is possessed by fate?”).

³⁶⁶ See *kṣip* in the sense ‘to offend’: at 12.235.19 (*Mokṣadharmaparvan*), Bhīṣma instructs Yudhiṣṭhira that when one is offended (*adhikṣiptaḥ*), he should always endure (*sahen nityam*) the offense without anger (*asamjvaraḥ*).

³⁶⁷ See *kṣip* in the sense ‘to accuse’: at 5.37.30, Vidura tells Dhṛtarāṣṭra about various virtues (*guṇāḥ*) of one who consumes food in measured quantities (*mitabhuktaṁ bhajante*); one of which, is that people do not accuse him of gluttony (*na cainam ādyūna iti kṣipanti*).

³⁶⁸ See *kṣip* in the sense ‘to contempt’: at 5.175.18, Hotravāhana re-tells Akṛtavarna the story of Ambā’s abduction by Bhīṣma (from the *Ādi parvan*). Hotravāhana says that as Bhīṣma carried her off, he was contemptuous of the other kings (*nṛpān avākṣipyā*); at 12.151.3, Bhīṣma tells Yudhiṣṭhira the story of the wind and the Śalmali tree, mentioning that the tree was contemptuous (*ākṣepayukta*) of the wind.

³⁶⁹ See note 351 above.

enacted by Draupadī. In this passage, Yudhiṣṭhira warns his wife of the danger that her “*garhing*” may arouse, and by using a different verb, namely, *kṣip*, he perhaps wishes to undo the “damage” she had caused in its utterance.

In summary, the discussion above has shown that among *garh*’s cognate verbs, *nind* is semantically closer to *garh* than *kṣip*, and that unlike *kṣip*, *nind* occurs in the epic very frequently. However, despite its contiguous semantic relation to *garh*, *nind* mostly features in specific contexts that are characteristic of the verb’s usage in the epic (that is, in *anindita*, blame and praise, and *vedanindaka* passages). Furthermore, we have seen that as a general rule, none of these cognate verbs are used as alternate verbs of *garh* in its full capacity of semantic meanings in the epic. In certain cases, both, if at all, may be used akin to *garh*’s most basic, or simplest meaning in the epic: the first type proposed above, ‘*garh* aimed at wrong acts’. Besides this particular context, in the majority of cases, neither *nind* nor *kṣip* may semantically replace *garh* in moments where the MBh exhibits a ‘divergence in the interpretation of *dharma*’; in cases of a ‘dharmic-deadlock’; nor in passages where ‘*garh* signals a higher *dharma*’; or in recursive moments where *dharma* twists back upon itself and ‘*garh*’s’ itself.³⁷⁰ The most important thing to note in summarizing our findings of these verbs’ occurrences in the epic is that unlike *garh*, these cognate verbs are generally not present in key narrative junctures of the epic, and their consistency therein does not reveal significant information about *dharma* and its meaning in the epic.

³⁷⁰ Note also that when accompanied by prepositions (*upasargas*), neither *nind* nor *kṣip* may semantically replace *garh* in its full capacity of semantic meanings in the epic. It should further be noted that as a general rule, *upasargas* like *abhi-* or *vi-* (*nind*), or *avi-*, *adhi-*, *ava-*, *avā* or *ā-* (*kṣip*) do not greatly change the meaning of these verbs in the epic. See quoted examples of such prepositions with *nind* or *kṣip* in notes 359, 360, 362, 363, 366, 368 above.

Lastly, both verbs do not occur in the ending of the epic, and are consequently, far less relevant for understanding the implications that Yudhiṣṭhira's condemnation of *dharmā*, which concludes the MBh, bear on the epic as a whole.³⁷¹

3. Detailed Analysis of *Garh* Passages in the *Mahābhārata*

The majority of the cases investigated below are elaborate passages in which *garh* occurs many times. Therefore, except for the first two instances, which exemplify the relatively straightforward 'garh aimed at wrong acts', I will not attempt to illustrate each type individually with a corresponding *garh* instance, because in some of the selected passages, one can find several (typically two or less) of the above *garh* types.

3.1 Instances of *Garh* Aimed at Wrong Acts

The first *garh* instance to be considered is from the *Śānti parvan*. Overwhelmed with guilt over his kinsmen's death during the war, Yudhiṣṭhira asks Vyāsa what might be considered as an appropriate atonement (*prāyaścitta*). Vyāsa provides a long list of sinful acts that require expiation. Among these, he mentions the following:

*sūdrastrīrvadhako yaś ca pūrvah pūrvas tu garhitaḥ /
vrthāpaśusamāmbhī vanadāhasya kāraḥ //* (C.Ed. 12.35.6; B. 12.34.7)

³⁷¹ *Nind* does not occur in the MhP and the SĀ *parvans* at all. *Kṣip* occurs twice in the MhP in the sense to 'throw/cast' (at 17.1.40; 17.3.6), but not in the sense 'to abuse; revile; insult'. *Kṣip* does not occur in the SĀ, at all.

One who kills a woman or a servant – each earlier one is more blameworthy than the following - one who hunts animals at pleasure or one who sets fire to a forest.³⁷²

This is a relatively straightforward example of *garh* which illustrates the case of the first category. Here, *garh* is aimed at several wrong acts arranged in the form of a list. This list of censurable acts consists of various expressions of transgressions of dharmic moral laws.

The following verse, quoted from the *Udyoga parvan*, is taken from the events leading to the outbreak of the Kurukṣetra war. At Dhṛtarāṣṭra's command, Saṃjaya tries to dissuade Yudhiṣṭhira from declaring war. Pointing out the grave injustice committed by the Kauravas against the Pāṇḍavas, Yudhiṣṭhira discusses several reasons as to why he thinks this is a just war. He concludes his speech by alluding to Duryodhana as a thief:

*steno hared yatra dhanam hy adrṣṭaḥ
prasahya vā yatra hareta drṣṭaḥ /
ubhau garhyau bhavataḥ saṃjayaitau
kim vai pṛthak tvaṃ dhṛtarāṣṭrasya putre //* (C.Ed. 5.29.28; B. 5.29.33)

Whether a thief steals valuables when he is unobserved, or when he does so forcibly and while being noticed, he is [equally] culpable in both instances. O Saṃjaya, why do you then [reckon] differently as far as Dhṛtarāṣṭra's son is concerned?

Exemplifying the first category, *garh* in this passage is aimed at an act which is judged unlawful by the codes of *dharma*'s moral law, and as in the first instance, the verb is voiced here in a didactic tone. *Garh* further expresses here the protagonist's (in this case, Yudhiṣṭhira's) dissatisfaction or aversion from what he finds absolutely distasteful or harmful. Considering the verse in context,

³⁷² My translation follows James Fitzgerald's interpretation of the expression '*pūrvah pūrvas*' in this instance. See J. L. Fitzgerald, *The Mahābhārata, Volume 7*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 2004, p. 245.

Yudhiṣṭhira claims that although going to war against one’s own cousins might be considered immoral (adharmic), Duryodhana’s having robbed the kingdom from its rightful heirs (the Pāṇḍavas) comprises an even greater act of immorality (*adharma*).³⁷³

3.2 Pāṇḍu and the Deer

The next passage is the famous story of Pāṇḍu’s curse in the *Ādi parvan*. This elaborate episode, in which *garh* occurs six times, demonstrates two of the verb’s types (types 2 and 4). Consequently, the discussion looks at several semantic layers: the first of these is the second type, which I labeled ‘divergence in the interpretation of *dharma*’; the second is the fourth type, namely ‘*garh* signalling a ‘higher *dharma*’.

After shooting the deer, Pāṇḍu attempts to justify his act before the animal, which is in fact the ṛṣi Kindama, as follows:

*śatrūṇāṃ yā vadhe vṛttiḥ sā mṛgāṇāṃ vadhe smṛtā /
rājñāṃ mṛga na māṃ mohāt tvaṃ garhayitum arhasi //* (C.Ed. 1.109.12; B. 1.118.12)

O Deer, the conduct of kings in striking enemies is stated in Smṛti to be the same for striking deer. It does not fit you to reprove me out of ignorance.

*acchadmanāmāyayā ca mṛgāṇāṃ vadha iṣyate /
sa eva dharmo rājñāṃ tu tad vidvān kiṃ nu garhase //* (C.Ed. 1.109.13; B. 1.118.13)

Indeed, the *dharma* of kings is impelled to deer-hunting without trickery and cunningness. Knowing this, why do you then reprove [me]?

³⁷³ For other relatively uncomplicated *garh* statements aimed at wrong acts see: (C.Ed., B. 5.28.4-5); (C.Ed. 5.39.10; B. 5.39.12); (C.Ed. 12.87.23; B. 12.86.23); (C.Ed. 12.89.24; B.12.88.28); (C.Ed. 12.91.6; B. 12.90.6); (C.Ed. 3.264.38; B. 3.280.38).

*pramāṇadr̥ṣṭadharmeṇa katham asmān vigarhase /
agastyasyābhicāreṇa yuṣmākaṁ vai vapā hutā // (C.Ed. 1.109.15; B.
1.118.15)*

Why do you reprove me for a conduct which is countenanced by authority?
Your kind's omentum was sacrificed in Agastya's sorcery.

*pramattam apramattaṁ vā vivṛtaṁ ghnanti caujasā /
upāyair iṣubhis tīkṣṇaiḥ kasmān mṛga vigarhase // (C.Ed. 1.109.17; B.
1.118.17)*

[Kings] kill [an animal] openly and forcefully by means of sharpened arrows,
whether it is on guard or off guard. So why do you reprove me, O Deer?

Having listened patiently to his offender's speech, the deer replies thus:

varjayanti nṛśamsāni pāpeṣv abhiratā narāḥ (C.Ed. 1.109.9; B. 1.118.9)

[Even] men who delight in sins avoid [such] cruel [acts].

*nāhaṁ ghnantaṁ mṛgān rājan vigarhe ātmakāraṇāt /
maithunaṁ tu pratīkṣyaṁ me syāt tvayehānṛśamsataḥ // (C.Ed. 1.109.18; B.
1.118.18)*

O King, I do not blame [you] for deer hunting or [even] out of my own
selfish reasons. But out of lack of cruelty you should have waited for my
intercourse [to conclude].

*nṛśamsaṁ karma sumahat sarvalokavigarhitam /
asvargyam ayaśasyaṁ ca adharmiṣṭhaṁ ca bhārata // (C.Ed. 1.109.21; B.
1.118.22)*

[Such a] deed is extremely cruel and is universally reprehensible. It is hellish,
infamous and is utterly against *dharma*, O Bhārata.

*tvayā nṛśamsakartāraḥ pāpācārāś ca mānavāḥ /
nigrāhyāḥ pāṛthivaśreṣṭha trivargaparivarjitāḥ // (C.Ed. 1.109.23; B.
1.118.24)*

O best of monarchs, men who act cruelly, sinners, and those who have
abandoned the three precepts [*kāma*, *artha* and *dharma*]³⁷⁴ ought to be
condemned by you!

Concluding his harsh speech, the deer (the ṛṣi Kindama) eventually curses Pāṇḍu,
as follows:

tvayāhaṁ himsīto yasmāt tasmāt tvām apy ahaṁ śape (B. 1.118.26cd).

³⁷⁴ The compound *trivargaparivarjitāḥ* may also be understood as "those avoided by the top three *varṇas*".

Since I was killed by you, therefore, I now curse you!³⁷⁵

It should first be noted that this *garh* passage presents two different interpretations of *dharma*. Both characters (Pāṇḍu and the deer) use *garh* in their speech, but their interpretations of the Law diverge considerably. While Pāṇḍu is convinced that his deeds are not censurable for the mere fact that the duty (*dharma*) of kings is, among other things, to hunt animals, the deer deems Pāṇḍu's act censurable as he shot it during copulation. Thus, according to the deer's interpretation of *dharma*, while kings are permitted and even encouraged to hunt, they are restricted from hunting an animal that is mating.

Both characters present strong and correct arguments, yet this passage clearly illustrates the extent to which the MBh perceives *dharma* as a polemical concept. The use of *garh* in this passage exposes a view of *dharma* as fundamentally disputable. The verb's presence (here and elsewhere in the MBh) draws attention to *dharma*'s hierarchical nature, and consequently highlights the problem that arises from the multifarious hermeneutics intrinsic to *dharma*.

Apart from the twofold divergence in the interpretation of *dharma*, this passage illustrates another category of *garh* as that which signals a 'higher *dharma*'. The deer repeatedly mentions in his speech the term *nṛśaṃsa*, 'cruelty'.

³⁷⁵ While the Bombay edition uses *śap* to describe Pāṇḍu's curse, the C.Ed. avoids this verb but relates the contents of the curse in detail, as follows:

*tvayāhaṃ hīmsito yasmāt tasmāt tvām apy asaṃśayam
dvayor nṛśaṃsakartāram avaśaṃ kāmamohitam
jīvitāntakaro bhāva evam evāgamiṣyati* (C.Ed. 1.109.25)

"Therefore, since you have injured me, you yourself will fall a victim to love: when you are helplessly overcome by love, your love will unfailingly kill you, who outraged a mating couple!"

*asya tu tvam phalaṃ mūḍha prāpsyasīdrśam eva hi
priyayā saha saṃvāsāṃ prāpya kāmavimohitaḥ*

tvam apy asyām avasthāyāṃ pretalokaṃ gamiṣyasi (C.Ed. 1.109.28)

"But for that, fool, you shall find the same fate. When you are lying with a woman you love, blinded by your passion, you too in that very same state will depart for the world of the dead."

Translated by J. A. B. van Buitenen, *The Mahābhārata* (book 1), The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1973, p. 245.

In fact, he does not accuse Pāṇḍu for hunting (it), at all. Rather, the deer accuses the offender of an act of *cruelty*. In other words, the deer does not censure Pāṇḍu for the offensive act (of hunting), but rather for the callous motivation behind it. However, not once is the term *nṛśaṃsa* used in Pāṇḍu’s speech. The deer, on the other hand, specifically says that out of *ānṛśaṃsa* Pāṇḍu should have waited for its intercourse to conclude.

The semantic linkage between *garh* and *nṛśaṃsa* is instructive of the epic’s finer distinctions as regards this verb. By associating *garh* and *ānṛśaṃsa*, the authors of the MBh use *garh* as a ‘marker’ of a higher *dharma*.³⁷⁶ Judging by the dictionary definition of *ānṛśaṃsa*: ‘absence of cruelty or harm; absence of injury; mildness; kindness; benevolence’, it would appear that the deer’s accusation of Pāṇḍu derives from values which transcend customary dharmic laws. The deer’s moral authority grants it an edge over its interlocutor, which eventually leads to its winning the debate. Since the passage presents *garh* as signalling a higher moral authority, which is denoted by the term *ānṛśaṃsa*, the legitimacy for the deer’s

³⁷⁶ In his paper “The Concept of *Ānṛśaṃsya* in the *Mahābhārata*”, Mukund Lath discusses *ānṛśaṃsya* as a central moral concept in the MBh. According to Lath, the MBh understands *ānṛśaṃsya* as the highest moral duty: “The *Mahābhārata* embodies one of the greatest adventures of the human spirit into the field of the perennial moral question: What should I do; what should we do? ... The question, as we know, has no easy, simple answer, for, human action is a field beset with dilemmas. Dharma represents the area of human actions and the codes and norms governing them. It is also inherently an area of *dharmasaṃkṣāta*, that is of a dilemma. Supremely aware of the complexity of the moral problem of action, the *Mahābhārata* comes up with more than one supreme moral principles, *paramadharmas*, that should guide our action. One of these is *ānṛśaṃsya*, often extolled as *paro dharmah* in the epic.” Lath, (1990): 114.

Lath also addresses the question as to why the epic interchanges between *ahiṃsā* and *ānṛśaṃsya*. Arguing that *ānṛśaṃsya* is a newer word, Lath offers a distinction between the two, and concludes that the epic adapted *ahiṃsā* into *ānṛśaṃsya* for the latter better commensurates the value system of the *pravṛttimārga*: “*Ahiṃsā* ... is an ideal which is central to what is called the *nivṛttimārga*, the *mārga* of *saṃnyāsa* [the way of renunciation]. But the MBh is, if anything, a great text of the *pravṛttimārga* [the way of turning toward the world]. It argues for *pravṛttimārga*, though it is very much attached by *nivṛttimārga* and *ahiṃsā*. But total *ahiṃsā* cannot be practiced, because the human condition is such that some *hiṃsā* has to be there for both the practice of both the *gṛhasthadharma* [householder’s *dharma*] and the *rājadharmā* [king’s *dharma*]. Therefore, what the MBh preaches is not *ahiṃsā* but *ānṛśaṃsya*. This latter is one of the most outstanding moral concepts of the epic. *Ānṛśaṃsya* is *ahiṃsā* adapted to the *pravṛttimārga*.” Lath, (1990): 118-19 (brackets by Hildebeitel, (2002): 202-3).

accusation ensues from Pāṇḍu's lack of benevolence, kindness or goodwill toward it. This semantic range (denoted by *ānṛśaṃsa*) signals the *motivation* behind the offender's act (in this case, Pāṇḍu). The passage therefore, shows that the motivation behind one's action is judged more severely by the censurer.

Lastly, the use of a curse within close proximity of *garh* in this passage is of marked significance. Indeed, the deer is revealed to be a potent ṛṣi (Kindama) whose moral authority derives from the ability to cast a curse when he so wishes. The curse thus creates a higher moral vantage point for the deer over Pāṇḍu's argument of self-defence, and as such, unequivocally establishes the deer's victory in this dispute about *dharma*'s multifarious hierarchies. This argument gains further validation by the content of the curse, which directly corresponds to Pāṇḍu's offence. According to this analogy then, since Pāṇḍu shot the deer at a time of copulation, he is sentenced by his cursor to meet the exact same fate (i.e., dying during intercourse with his wife Mādrī).

This *garh* instance, as well as others to be discussed below, reveals that *garh* is palpable in key narrative junctures of the MBh, and is crucial to the advancement of the entire plot.³⁷⁷ The offense against *dharma*, its prohibition, and the recurrent reflection on correcting or redefining *dharma*'s intricate operations are themes that preoccupy the authors of this text.

³⁷⁷ See also discussion on pp. 254-255, below.

3.3 Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna Slays Droṇa

Another episode that exemplifies the MBh protagonists' divergence in interpreting the *dharma* comes from the Droṇa *parvan*. This *garh* instance takes place after Droṇa's beheading by Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna during the Kurukṣetra war.³⁷⁸ Having heard the news, Arjuna shows signs of sudden remorse and accuses Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna of killing his guru. Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna attempts to defend his actions by tarnishing Droṇa's character, as follows:

*bībhatso viprakarmāṇi viditāni manīṣiṇām /
yājanādhyāpane dānaṁ tathā yajñapratigrahaḥ //* (C.Ed. 7.168.22; B. 7.198.24)

O Arjuna (*bībhatso*), the following duties have been declared by the sages to belong to the Brāhmaṇas – conducting sacrifice on behalf of others, teaching, gift offering, sacrifice, and the acceptance of presents.

*ṣaṣṭham adhyayanam nāma teṣāṁ kasmin pratiṣṭhitah /
hato droṇo mayā yat tat kim mām pārtha vigarhase //* (C.Ed. 7.168.23; B. 7.198.25)

The sixth duty is called study. In which of those was Droṇa, whom I killed, accomplished? Why do you, O Pārtha, reprove me for this?

*vidharṁiṇaṁ dharmavidbhiḥ proktaṁ teṣāṁ viṣopamam /
jānan dharmārthatattvajñah kim arjuna vigarhase //* (C.Ed. 7.168.31; B. 7.198.33)

Knowing that one who has transgressed the duties [of his order] is called by the virtuous equal to poison for them; why, O Arjuna, knower of the truth regarding the essence of *dharma*, do you reprove [me]?

³⁷⁸ This is another *garh* incident. On the fifteenth day of battle Kṛṣṇa plans to defeat the invincible Droṇa. With this in mind, he sends Yudhiṣṭhira to give Droṇa the misleading message that Aśvatthāman is dead, referring in fact, to the death of an elephant by the same name (which was earlier slain by Bhīma). Taking the opportunity to strike the great warrior, who in his shocked state believes his son had passed away, Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna (Draupadī's brother) beheads the grieving and armless Droṇa. Learning of his father's death, Aśvatthāman resolves to avenge Droṇa's death: *mītrabrahmagurudveṣṭi jālmakaḥ suvigarhitah /
pāñcālāpasadaś cādya na me jīvan vimokṣyate //* (C.Ed. 7.166.56; B. 7.196.45) "That fallen Pāñcāla [i.e., Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna], who is a despised enemy to his guru [Droṇa], a Brahmin and friend, and who is extremely reprehensible, shall not escape me alive today!"

Resembling the Pāṇḍu episode, this passage depicts two protagonists whose interpretations of *dharma* diverge considerably. From Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna's speech it is understood that Arjuna accuses him of Droṇa's killing. Yet the passage does not clearly state *why* Arjuna reproves this action. However, it would appear that Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna's speech reveals the reason behind Arjuna's accusation. The passage implies that Arjuna's interpretation of *dharma* differs from that of Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna's, and that Arjuna's stance is one of doubt and hesitation regarding the 'right thing to do' (i.e., *dharma*).

Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna presents before Arjuna a clever syllogism which juxtaposes two moral duties (*dharmas*). His basic claim is that Droṇa's killing was not an adharmic act because although Droṇa was born a Brahmin, he never practiced any of his duties as one. This therefore, makes him a Brahmin by name alone, and so it is permissible for Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna to kill him. This entire manoeuvre is designed by Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna to eliminate Arjuna's doubt regarding one of the gravest *adharmas*, namely the *mahāpātaka* ('grave sin') of killing a Brahmin. What Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna wants to prove is that he did not slay a Brahmin in battle but a Kṣatriya, and that this is a fair killing, certainly at times of war. Being a full-fledged Kṣatriya, as Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna would have him be, it is a warrior's moral duty to fight against someone like Droṇa and slay him.

Garh is employed here by the authors of this passage as a moral compass that guides the way to unravel hierarchies of *dharma*. The question that Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna's speech raises is: what is more appropriate - killing Droṇa, or allowing him to bring the Pāṇḍava army to destruction? Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna claims to have loyally served Arjuna's purpose. Hence, he repeatedly asks – 'why do you

then reprove me?’ The implicit message in Dhṛṣṭadyumna’s words is that had he not killed Droṇa, the great warrior and guru would not have hesitated to kill even his closest pupil (Arjuna).³⁷⁹

The passage thus centres on a moral dilemma regarding the ‘right thing to do’ (*dharma*). Two contradictory *dharmas* are illustrated in this episode: on the one hand, the law (*dharma*) prohibiting the killing of Brahmins (represented by Arjuna), and on the other, the duty to fight the war in order to bring about victory (represented by Dhṛṣṭadyumna). *Garh*’s usage in the epic thus repeatedly exposes the hermeneutics of doubt exercised by authors of the MBh regarding *dharma*. This instance encapsulates, to a certain degree, the ways in which the epic authors perceive *garh*. Every such juncture of doubt regarding hierarchies of *dharma* in the narrative presents a moral dilemma. These dilemmas are adapted in the MBh through *garh*’s defining, refining and selecting *dharmas*. The employment of *garh* thus serves MBh authors as a kind of engine designed to determine what *dharma* is or should be at any given moment. By employing *garh* in instances where doubt regarding the right *dharma* arises, MBh authors are offering some resolution. Yet, those moral resolutions also hold within them the rejection of other sets of morality; lesser, or rather less pertinent *dharma* is rejected in favour of higher or more relevant *dharma*. Since the semantics of this verb are so closely related to the elusive meanings of the concept of *dharma*, *garh*’s moral compass, as is apparent from the examples presented here, does not operate transparently in

³⁷⁹ See the following verse in which Dhṛṣṭadyumna clearly states that his feat is beneficial to Arjuna:

nṛśaṁsah sa mayākramya ratha eva nipātitaḥ |

tan mābhinandyaṁ bībīhatso kimarthaṁ nābhinandase || (C.Ed. 7.168.32; B. 7.198.34)

“Attacking him, that ruthless warrior has been overthrown by me alone! O Arjuna, why do you not then congratulate me, who am to be congratulated?”

the MBh. This particular passage for instance, shows that by employing *garh*, the epic certainly exhibits a world of moral hierarchies, yet it does not seem to paint a black and white picture of them, as a clear cut dichotomy between ‘good’ and ‘evil’ might.

3.4 The Death of Abhimanyu

As emerges from the episode above (3.3), some of *garh*’s most striking moments in the epic come from the war books. These books’ dramatic setting corresponds well with *garh*’s semantics of conflict. The following passage is another famous MBh scene quoted from the *Droṇa parvan*, which occurs on the thirteenth day of battle when the Pāṇḍavas are challenged by the Kauravas to break the circular array (the *cakravyūha*). On that day, Kṛṣṇa and Arjuna, who are the only ones who know how to defeat such a formation, are dragged to another war front. Since only Arjuna’s young son, Abhimanyu, knows how to break into the formation (but he has no idea how to break out of it), Yudhiṣṭhira is left with no alternative other than to assign him the dangerous task:

*etya no nārjuno garhed yathā tāta tathā kuru /
cakravyūhasya na vyaṁ vidma bhedaṁ kathaṁ cana //* (C.Ed. 7.34.14; B. 7.35.14)

As none of us knows how to break the circular array, O you dear boy act in such a way that when Arjuna comes he will not censure us.

*dhanamjayo hi nas tāta garhayed etya saṁyugāt /
kṣipram astraṁ samādāya droṇānīkaṁ viśātaya //* (C.Ed. 7.34.17; B. 7.35.17)

Quickly taking up your arms, knock out Droṇa’s army. Surely, Arjuna will reprove us upon his return from the battle.

Abhimanyu gets trapped in the array and is killed by the Kauravas, who fight him jointly in contradiction of the warrior’s code of conduct. This instance

exemplifies the third *garh* type, namely, ‘Dharmic Deadlock’. The verb’s occurrence in this passage ensues from a gridlock moment, where Yudhiṣṭhira must choose between two duties: the duty of protecting the wellbeing of his nephew on the one hand, and the duty of conducting the battle as efficiently as possible in order to protect the wellbeing of his entire army, on the other hand. Portraying Yudhiṣṭhira as having the ominous premonition that both prospects will have misfortunate outcomes, the authors of this passage express the hero’s ghastly moment of doubt with *garh*’s optative conjugation. Note here that *garh* in the optative expresses two near-opposing messages. In the first verse, Yudhiṣṭhira expresses a wish that his premonition (regarding Abhimanyu’s probable death in the *cakravyūha*) will not materialize (‘may Arjuna *not* reprove us’, *no nārjuno garhed*). Whereas in the second verse, Yudhiṣṭhira’s premonition gains a sense of certainty (‘Arjuna will *surely* blame us upon his return from the battle’, *dhanamjayo hi nas tāta garhayed etya samyugāt*). *Garh*’s optative conjugation thus features in both cases, once in the negative and once in the affirmative. *Garh* statements of this type thus ensue from grave doubts and moral dilemmas regarding *dharma*. In such moments of dharmic deadlock, the MBh protagonists find themselves again and again in situations where all they can do is to “*garh*”. Such is the case in this passage, where Yudhiṣṭhira finds himself facing a dilemma consisting of a very poor selection of alternatives and anticipating events he cannot prevent from materializing.³⁸⁰

This idea is further validated by the consequences ensuing from Yudhiṣṭhira’s decision to assign Abhimanyu the dangerous task. When Arjuna

³⁸⁰ A preceding verse indicates that although Yudhiṣṭhira knew that Droṇa’s army cannot be overcome (*aśakyam*), he decided to place this heavy burden (*aviśahyaṃ guruṃ bhāraṃ*) upon Abhimanyu (C.Ed. 7.34.12; B. 7.35.12).

learns about the tragic outcome of this mission, he blames solely himself for his son's death while addressing Yudhiṣṭhira:

*ātmānam eva garheyam yad aham vaḥ sudurbalān /
yuṣmān ājñāya niryāto bhīrūn akṛtaniśramān //* (C.Ed. 7.50.77; B. 7.72.82)

I should blame only myself for this; actually knowing that all of you are weak, cowards and incapable, I went away.

Like Yudhiṣṭhira's *garh* statement above, the text has Arjuna producing a *garh* statement in the optative. By contrast to what might be expected, this statement is not directed at Arjuna's brothers (or specifically at Yudhiṣṭhira), but rather by Arjuna at himself in a clear act of self-reproach. Such moments of self-reproach emerge in the epic, when the protagonists fail to accept the fate that they are dealt. This is another example of the third category of 'dharmic deadlock', which consists of cases where the MBh protagonists use *garh* in reaction to states of utter despondency, induced either by an event which has not yet materialized but in all probability will (like Yudhiṣṭhira), or when one regrets consequences of an action which could not have been prevented. Unable to prevent what had happened, Arjuna blames himself for his son's death. In such *garh* moments in the MBh (as Arjuna's self-'*garhification*' demonstrates), the protagonists are facing moments where regardless of how one chooses to act, his actions are destined to be self-defeating.³⁸¹

³⁸¹ Another elaborate *garh* passage that exemplifies a moment of dharmic deadlock, as well as *garh* marking a higher *dharma*, is the story of the Hunter and the Pigeon. A wicked hunter was once roaming the forest when a great storm burst out, which led to all the birds and animals of the forest falling to the ground frozen and benumbed. Although the hunter was in the same state, he nonetheless managed to cage a she-pigeon that was lying motionless on the ground. Hearing her husband's piteous cries begging her to return home, the she-pigeon replied to him that he should treat the hunter as he would a guest (*atithi*). Hearing these words from his wife, the pigeon honoured the hunter who came to him by collecting leaves from the ground and setting up fire to warm him. After some time, the guest asked for food but the pigeon had nothing to feed his guest with. He grew pale and reflected:

*katham nu khalu kartavyam iti cintāparaḥ sadā /
babhūva bhārataśreṣṭha garhayan vṛttim ātmanah //* (C.Ed. 12.142.36; B. 12.146.18)

Such impasses, where *dharma* is revealed to be self-defeating, often lead MBh protagonists to point the blame at *dharma* itself. Although Arjuna’s self-reproach is not such a case, the thematic of *garh* cases of the fifth type (‘*Garhing dharma*’) is partly palpable in this passage, as well. This *garh* statement expresses Arjuna’s disillusionment with *dharma*. The explicit reason for Arjuna’s self-‘*garhification*’ is explained as he states that knowing that his brothers were incompetent, he went away. Arjuna is looking to find a logical explanation for his son’s death. According to this logic, if he had not moved to a different war front, this horrid event could have been prevented. And yet, Arjuna’s remorseful grief, expressed by the use of *garh*, is portrayed as futile. His *garh* statement expresses

“Continually lost in thought as to what should be done, he [finally], O bull of the Bhārata race, censured his own mode of living.”

Thinking thus, the pigeon threw himself into the fire in order to satiate its guest’s hunger. Seeing this, the hunter thought to himself:

aho mama nṛśamsasya garhitasya svakarmanā /

adharmah sumahān ghorō bhaviṣyati na samśayah // (C.Ed. 12.142.43; B. 12.146.25)

“Alas, there is no doubt that an immense dreadful *adharmā* will occur on account of this deed of mine, I, who am cruel and contemptible.”

evam bahuvidham bhūri vilalāpa sa lubdhakah /

garhayan *svāni karmāṇi dvijaṁ drṣtvā tathāgatam //* (C.Ed. 12.142.44; B. 12.146.26)

“Having witnessed the bird passing away, and reproaching his own deeds, the hunter repeatedly lamented in various ways.”

tatas tam lubdhakah paśyan kṛpayābhipariplutaḥ /

kapotam agnau patitaṁ vākyaṁ punar uvāca ha // (C.Ed. 12.143.1; B. 12.147.1)

“Beholding the pigeon entering into the fire thus, and overflowing with compassion the hunter spoke again:”

kim īdrśam nṛśamsena mayā kṛtam abuddhinā /

bhaviṣyati hi me nityam pātakam hṛdi jīvataḥ // (C.Ed. 12.143.2; B. 12.147.2)

“A crime of the type that I have performed in my cruelty and ignorance shall certainly perpetually exist in my heart as long as it goes on beating.”

Note that *garh* is employed here to depict both the hunter and the pigeon’s reproachful moods. But unlike the pigeon’s reproach of its own mode of living, the text specifically identifies the hunter’s bad deeds, of which he reproached himself, as cruel (*nṛśamsa*). Like Arjuna in the Abhimanyu episode (section 3.4, above), the hunter faces here a moment of dharmic deadlock. There is absolutely nothing he can do to save the pigeon’s life after it jumped into the fire in order to satiate his hunger. Consequently, his reproach is aimed at himself alone. It should further be noted that while the pigeon’s reproach of itself leads to an act of self-sacrifice, the hunter’s brings about transformation. This transformation materializes as the hunter relinquishes his former behaviour and acquires a dharmic mode of conduct. *Garh* related to *nṛśamsa* seems to demarcate this shift away from violence. The final fate of this episode’s characters conveys a transformation of violence to non-violence (*ānṛśamsa*) through the linkage between *garh* and *nṛśamsa*. This is expressed in the passage when, witnessing the pigeon’s voluntary death, the hunter becomes overcome with compassion (*kṛpā*), and ultimately turns to the path of *dharma*.

a wish to prevent that which could not have been prevented. It is hard to believe that this hero, who had trained his son to become an exemplary warrior (like himself), did not consider that dying in battle would not only be a highly probable outcome of his action, but also a warrior's most valued form of dying.³⁸² Arjuna accuses himself of *dharma*'s futility – that is to say, he admonishes the very order that compels him to perform such duties as having to move to a different war front (thus, failing to defend his son), which, simultaneously demands, that his son perform the heroic attempt of breaking the *cakravyūha*.

All of the cases discussed so far (exemplifying four *garh* types) demonstrate the progressive sublation of the ruling and overruling of *dharmas* in the epic. *Garh* is employed in such cases where, depending on context, one (obligatory) *dharma* is being rejected in favour of another. The last example, that of Abhimanyu's death, clearly demonstrates that such *dharmas* are not necessarily portrayed as superior, but are rather determined according to context and relevance. MBh authors exercise a mechanism of rejection with regard to *dharma*. In refuting *dharma* X (as *adharmas*), the text embraces *dharma* Y. The 169 *garh* occurrences in the MBh are, in some respects, a prolonged experiment in this act of negation. These *garh* incidents repeatedly disclose different levels of *dharma*, thereby reflecting the hermeneutics of doubt exercised by the authors of this text in an inquiry into the "right thing to do" (i.e., *dharma*). The text uses the verb contextually as a device designed to adjust, at any given occurrence of *garh*, the current horizon of *dharma* with an alternative horizon of *dharma*.

³⁸² I am referring here to the term *tyaktajīvita*, 'one whose life had already been forsaken' (i.e., before entering the battle), that denotes the Kṣatriya ethos.

However, this progressive sublation is not linear. While some incidents of *garh* are designed to define, refine, re-define, or merely ponder on the nature of *dharma*, there are other instances where *dharma* is stripped of its own content, refuted and eventually turned upon its head by the authors of the epic. The SĀ's significant scene, in which Dharmarāja refutes the very concept of *dharma*, is undoubtedly such a moment, which has a retrospective impact upon the entire epic. The following examples demonstrate that the SĀ is not the only place in the MBh where recursive *garh* moments of this kind occur.

3.5 Karṇa Denounces *Dharma*

The following two instances illustrate the fifth *garh* type ('*Garhing dharma*'). The nature of this category considerably differs from the examples presented so far. The passages discussed above revolved around reprovals that are made valid by the authority of dharmic laws. While every act of censure is made possible by dharmic means (the victim ought to have some moral ground on which to base his reproof), in the examples below, *dharma* is understood as the *object* of censure.

The first of these instances, from the *Karṇa parvan*, is one of the most famous MBh war scenes. When Karṇa forgets the formula of the Brahma weapon (due to Paraśurāma's curse), and as his car is made to sink into the ground by Kṛṣṇa, he denounces *dharma* in the following manner:

*amṛṣyamāṇo vyasanāni tāni
hastau vidhunvan sa vigarhamāṇaḥ
dharmapradhānān abhipāti dharma /
ity abruvan dharmavidaḥ sadaiva
mamāpi nimno 'dya na pāti bhaktān
manye na nityaṁ paripāti dharmāḥ // (C.Ed. 8.66.43; B. 8.90.85)*

Unable to bear these misfortunes he shook his arms and denounced [*dharma*] saying: “The ones who know *dharma* always assert that *dharma* protects those whose supreme concern is *dharma*. Though inclined toward me, [*dharma*] did not protect [me] today (*mamāpi nimno ’dya na pāti*).³⁸³ I think that *dharma* does not always protect its followers.”

*evam bruvan praskhalitāśvasūto
vicālyamāno ’rjunaśastrapātaiḥ /
marmābhighātāc chalitaiḥ kriyāsu
punaḥ punar dharmam **agarhad** ājau //* (C.Ed. 8.66.44; B. 8.90.87)

Saying thus, with his charioteer and horse scattered, he was brought down by the attack of Arjuna’s shafts. Deceived in his actions on account of the injury to his mortal spots, he repeatedly denounced *dharma* on the battle [field].

In this important moment of the epic, Karṇa reaches a gridlock that marks the end of his life. It should be noted that although many prominent figures in the narrative -- Kṛṣṇa, Indra, his guru Paraśurāma, his mother Kuntī, and others -- have either directly or indirectly brought him to the present state, Karṇa chooses here to *garh dharma*. Whereas in the previous *garh* passages, the MBh protagonists censure other people who have offended them, Karṇa’s *garh* statement is aimed at an abstract notion. This notion could be understood as either the god Dharma or the abstract concept of *dharma*. My reading of this passage suggests that in several moments in the MBh, the text’s authors use the term *dharma* with deliberate ambiguity.³⁸⁴

³⁸³ Unfortunately, the C.Ed. does not offer here alternative readings of the word *nimna*.

³⁸⁴ Another example of *garh* aimed at an abstract notion, and which illustrates an additional layer of *dharma*’s meanings in the epic, comes from the *Āśvamedhika parvan*, where Arjuna condemns the *dharma* of the Kṣatriyas. As the Pāṇḍava army conquered all the states reached by the roaming horse, Arjuna arrived in the Sindhu land. The weeping Duḥśalā (Dhṛtarāṣṭra’s daughter) who was the wife of Jayadratha, the Sindhu king, approached Arjuna while carrying her grandson in her arms. Replying to Arjuna’s question regarding the whereabouts of this boy’s father (whose name was Suratha), Duḥśalā said that Suratha died of sorrow having heard that his father (Jayadratha) was killed by Arjuna in battle. Taking her grandson to him, Duḥśalā pleaded with Arjuna:

*tam anāryam nṛśamsam ca vismṛtyāsya pitāmaham /
āgaskāriṇam atyarthan prasādān kartum arhasi //* (C.Ed. 14.77.38; B. 14.78.41)

“Forgetting his cruel and vulgar grandfather (Jayadratha), it befits you to forgive him who caused you grave harm.”

evam bruvatyaṁ karuṇam duḥśalāyān dhanamjayah

In his final moribund speech on the battlefield, Karṇa puts forward an argument on the nature of *dharma*. According to this argument, although *dharma* is inclined toward those who adhere to it, it does not always protect its adherents. Deserted on the battlefield, Karṇa denounces the very notion of *dharma* by using *garh* in the crux of his speech. Somewhat paraphrasing the Pāṇḍavas’ (and other characters’) repeated saying, ‘*yato dharmas tato jayah*’ (‘where *dharma* is, there is [our] victory’),³⁸⁵ Karṇa asserts that he had always followed the rule by which *dharma* protects those who adhere to it. However, when approaching the end of his life, the hero is bitterly disillusioned by the truth of this logic.³⁸⁶

saṁsmṛtya devīm gāndhārīm dhṛtarāṣṭram ca pārthivam

provāca duḥkhaśokārtah kṣatradharmam vigarhayan (C.Ed. 14.77.39; B. 14.78.42)

“Remembering queen Gāndhārī and king Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Arjuna spoke compassionately to Duḥśalā, who addressed him thus. Afflicted with grief and agony, he censured the [very] duty of the Kṣatriya.”

dhik tam duryodhanam kṣudram rājyalubdham ca māninam /

yatkrte bāndhavāḥ sarve mayā nītā yamakṣayam // (C.Ed. 14.77.40; B. 14.78.43)

“Fie on the vile and arrogant Duryodhana, who coveted the kingdom, and for whose sake all his relatives died at my hands!”

Given that Arjuna is *himself* a Kṣatriya (as is Duryodhana, whom he holds responsible for this abominable war), how are we to understand Arjuna’s condemnation of the Kṣatriya *dharma*? It would appear that *garh* here denotes a universal reproof (i.e., one that is not directed specifically against a person - Jayadratha or Duryodhana, in this case). By including Jayadratha, his son Suratha, Suratha’s baby boy (a future warrior himself) along with Arjuna and Duryodhana, the text uses *garh* to express a bitter reproof of the warriors’ duty, which is to kill and be killed.

³⁸⁵ See, for instance, 5.39.7; 5.141.33; 5.146.16; 6.2.14; 6.21.11; 6.61.16; 6.62.34; 6.117.33; 7.158.62; 11.13.9; 11.17.6; 13.153.39; 9.62.58.

³⁸⁶ In this context, where *dharma* is expected by the epic’s protagonists to protect its followers, it is interesting to note that even the villain in this long narrative has moral authority to censure the actions of those who are considered virtuous. The following *garh* incident exhibits the intricacy of *garh*’s patterns in the MBh. Based on the examples discussed here, one might think that *garh* is aimed only at wrong acts or against villainous characters. The following example reveals how fine the line between *dharma* and *adharmā* in the MBh really is. Here is the case of Duryodhana, the epic’s quintessential villain, censuring the epic’s model for good behaviour, Yudhiṣṭhira. Recounting the news of the war, Saṁjaya tells Dhṛtarāṣṭra the very last words uttered by his eldest son as he was dying in the lake:

bāhū dharāṇyām niṣpiśya muhur matta iva dvipaḥ

prakṛṇān mūrdhajān dhunvan dantair dantān upasprśan

garhayan pāṇḍavam jyeṣṭham niḥśvasyedam athābravūt (C.Ed. 9.63.6; B. 9.64.7)

“Pounding his arms on the ground for some time like an infuriate elephant, he shook his dishevelled hair. As he was gnashing his teeth he censured the Pāṇḍavas’ eldest brother. Hissing, he now said the following.”

Duryodhana launches here on a rather long monologue, in which he counts the Pāṇḍavas’ unjust actions (*adharmas*) against him, from first to last, explicitly stating that he was killed unjustly by Bhīma (*adharmād bhīmasenena nihato ’ham yathā raṇe*). The *adharmā* that

The very employment of *garh* in this passage, which depicts the death of the epic's quintessential tragic hero, demonstrates several significant elements of the verb's occurrence in the MBh. The first of these is that *garh* is present in key narrative junctures of the epic. Second, *garh* is intrinsically associated with the core meditation that concerns the epic with regard to *dharma*. This is most lucidly brought out in Karṇa's *garh* statement, for *garh* is here aimed *directly* at *dharma*. As emerges from Karṇa's speech, the very notion of *dharma* is unfathomable and ruthless. Like his younger brother Yudhiṣṭhira in the SĀ, Karṇa arrives at the conclusion that even when adhering to it, *dharma* abandons its strictest followers to perish purposelessly. This message characterizes the patterns of *garh* in the MBh. By employing *garh*, the authors repeatedly express their intrinsic dismay or doubt with regard to *dharma*. These moments of *garh* form a semantic fabric which culminates in the negation of *dharma* itself in the epic's final *garh* scene. The next passage discusses a recursive moment of *garh* in the MBh, in which *dharma* censures itself.

Duryodhana is referring to relates to the mace duel, during which Bhīma broke his thighs. The combat, as Duryodhana states, was not in accordance with the rules of mace fighting (*adharmeṇa gadāyuddhe yad ahaṁ vinipātitaḥ*). Needless to say, the idea of breaking Duryodhana's thighs was devised by Kṛṣṇa. Duryodhana's reproval of Yudhiṣṭhira also implies the censure against the workings of the god himself. The moral ground, upon which Duryodhana bases his reproval, is thus directly related to Kṛṣṇa's numerous tricks that brought to the victory of the Pāṇḍavas.

3.6 *Garh* in the Concluding Chapters of the *Āśvamedhika Parvan*³⁸⁷

Several types of *garh*'s semantic patterns feature in the concluding chapters of the *Āśvamedhika parvan*. The relevance of these chapters dictates that the analysis in this section is particularly thorough. Accordingly, the paragraphs below present a brief account of the sequence of stories in the final chapters of the *Āśvamedhika parvan*. This is followed by an analysis of the use of *garh* through a close reading of these stories. Finally, it is argued that the *Āśvamedhika*'s closing chapters draw heavily upon the epic's beginning and ending passages. An important (and therefore heavily referenced) theoretical anchor that informs the discussions below is Tamar Reich's study of the final chapters of the *Āśvamedhika parvan*, "Sacrificial Violence and Contextual Battles: Inner Textual Interpretation in the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata*".³⁸⁸

The Mongoose Story, which concludes the *Āśvamedhika parvan*, is the last in a sequence of four stories. Although the Mongoose Story opens this sequence, its content is only related at the very end of the sequence.³⁸⁹ In keeping with the epic's framing of the story, it is recounted here in two parts. In order to separate the Mongoose Story in the following discussion from the other three, I shall refer to this sequence of four stories as the 'Mongoose Unit'.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁷ C.Ed. 14.92-96; B. 14.90-92.

³⁸⁸ See Tamar C. Reich, "Sacrificial Violence and Textual Battles: Inner Textual Interpretation in the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata*," *History of Religion*, Vol. 41, No. 2. (Nov., 2001): 142-169.

³⁸⁹ C.Ed. 14.96; B. 14.92.

³⁹⁰ C.Ed. 14.92-96; B. 14.90-92. I follow here Tamar Reich's presentation of these stories as the 'Mongoose Unit'. See Reich, (2001): 152.

1.1 *The Mongoose Reviles Yudhiṣṭhira's Horse-sacrifice (first part)*³⁹¹

Janamejaya asks Vaiśampāyana to tell him about any unusual occurrences that took place at Yudhiṣṭhira's *aśvamedha* (*yad āścaryam abhūt kiṃ cit*). Vaiśampāyana replies that during the course of the horse sacrifice, while gifts were presented, flowers were showered and the respectable assembly was gathered, there suddenly appeared a blue-eyed mongoose (*nakula*) with a half golden body that spoke with a human voice. Reviling the sacrifice, the mongoose stated that the measure of barley offered was not equal to that of a munificent giver from Kurukṣetra who observes the *uñcha-vṛtti* (i.e., of one who subsists merely on gleaned grain).³⁹² Thus blamed and stricken with wonder (*vismayam paramam*), the Brāhmaṇas officiating at the sacrifice asked the mongoose:

*kiṃ balaṃ paramaṃ tubhyaṃ kiṃ śrutam kiṃ parāyaṇam /
katham bhavantaṃ vidyāma yo no yajñam vigarhase* // (C.Ed. 14.92.10; B. 14.90.10)

What higher power do you possess? What learning? What is your design? O respectable sir, how are we to know you who revile our sacrifice?

2. *The Story about the Gleaner Brahmin*³⁹³

Attempting to justify the sacrifice before the mongoose with various arguments, the Brāhmaṇas ask him to explain what he meant (*tad bhavān vaktum arhati*). The mongoose replies with a story about a Brahmin family of gleaners (consisting of a Brahmin couple, their son and daughter-in-law), who despite suffering from hunger served their Brahmin guest the meagre portion of barley they had left. As a consequence, the gleaner family was left without any food. By virtue of this

³⁹¹ C.Ed. 14.92.

³⁹² *saktuprasthena vo nāyaṃ yajñas tulyo narādhipāḥ /
uñchavṛtter vadānyasya kurukṣetranivāsinaḥ* // (C.Ed. 92.7; B. 90.7).

³⁹³ C.Ed. 14.93.

altruistic behaviour, says the mongoose, the family attained *svarga*. Just as the Brāhmaṇa guest, who revealed himself as the incarnation of god Dharma, was inviting the family to join him in heaven, the mongoose came out of his hole in the ground and accidentally stepped on the remaining barley. The mere touch of the grain scattered on the ground miraculously turned half of the mongoose's body into gold. Ever since that moment, says the mongoose, he has been trying to turn the remaining half of his body into gold. Wandering around various sacrificial grounds he finally reached Yudhiṣṭhira's horse sacrifice in the hope that the miracle would occur, but he was disappointed. This is the reason behind his statement that the gleaner's meagre offering is greater than the one offered in Yudhiṣṭhira's *aśvamedha*.

3. *Indra's Dispute with the Sages*³⁹⁴

In chapter 94, Janamejaya again asks Vaiśampāyana:

*yathā yudhiṣṭhiro rājā bhīmārjunapuraḥsarah /
sadr̥śo devarājena samṛddhyā vikrameṇa ca // (C.Ed. 94.5; B. 91.5)
atha kasmāt sa nakulo garhayām āsa taṁ kratum /
aśvamedham mahāyajñaṁ rājñas tasya mahātmanaḥ // (C.Ed. 94.6; B. 91.6)*

Since king Yudhiṣṭhira, along with Bhīma and Arjuna, resembled the king of the gods [Indra] in prosperity and valour, why then did the mongoose revile the great horse sacrifice of that illustrious king?

In response, Vaiśampāyana relates the third story, which revolves around Indra's dispute with the ṛṣis. Śakra (Indra) was performing a sacrifice and when the hour for slaughtering the animals came, the ṛṣis, taking pity (*kṛpayānvitāḥ*) on the miserable (*dīnān*) animals, told Indra that the sacrifice was inauspicious (*nāyaṁ yajñavidhiḥ śubhaḥ*). Trying to dissuade him from killing the animals, the ṛṣis claimed that violence is improper (*na hiṁsā dharma ucyate*). Overwhelmed with

³⁹⁴ C.Ed. 14.94.

pride and delusion (*mānamohavaśānugaḥ*), Indra did not accept the sages' position. A great dispute (*vivādah*) ensued amongst the ascetics concerning whether sacrifices should be performed with animate creatures or immobile objects (*jaṅgamaīḥ sthāvarair vāpi yaṣṭavyam iti*). Unable to resolve the ongoing dispute, the ṛṣis presented the question to king Vasu. Serving as arbitrator, king Vasu established that sacrifices could be performed with anything brought forward as offering (*yathopanītair yaṣṭavyam iti*). However, the MBh tells us that having ruled the dispute falsely (*vitatham*), king Vasu (also known as the king of the Cedis), entered hell (*praviveśa rasātalam*).

4. *Story of Agastya*³⁹⁵

Continuing their dialogue, Vaiśampāyana tells Janamejaya the fourth story about Agastya's *sattra*. Once, the sage Agastya performed a great sacrifice (*mahāyajña*) which required the illustrious ṛṣi to enter a twelve-year-long consecration period (*dīkṣā*). Many ṛṣis who participated in that sacrifice alongside him, observed various other extraneous vows. At some point, while Agastya was undergoing this *dīkṣā*, Indra ceased to pour rain. As a result, the ascetics expressed their worry before Agastya. Agastya assured them that if Indra would not rain for twelve years, he himself would do so by means of mental powers. Agastya evoked numerous deities to perform their respective duties, summoning them to his sacrifice. Realizing Agastya's immeasurable ascetic energy, Indra finally poured rain.

³⁹⁵ C.Ed. 14.95.

1.2 *The Mongoose Reviles Yudhiṣṭhira's Horse-sacrifice (second part)*³⁹⁶

In the concluding chapter of the *Āśvamedhika parvan*, immediately following the story of Agastya, the Mongoose Story resumes as Janamejaya asks Vaiśampāyana:

*ko 'sau nakularūpeṇa śirasā kāñcanena vai /
prāha mānuṣavad vācam etat prṣṭo vadasva me //* (C.Ed. 96.1; B. 92.39)

Who was that person who spoke earlier in a human voice and had the form of a mongoose and a golden head? Thus asked, do tell me this.

At this moment, just as the book is closing, the full story is related. It should be noted in passing, that the story has two different versions, one in the C.Ed. and the other in the Bombay edition. This discussion refers to the Bombay version of the story. I will, however, discuss the C.Ed. version and explain my reasons for preferring the Bombay version below. The Bombay version of the Mongoose Story is as follows:

In earlier times, the ṛṣi Jamadagni wished to perform a *śrāddha* (a ceremony offered to one's deceased relatives). He milked his *homa* cow (a cow yielding milk for an oblation) and placed the fresh milk in a pure vessel. Assuming the form of anger (*krodhasvarūpeṇa*) and desiring (*jijñāsuḥ*) to test how the muni would react, Dharma entered the vessel and spoiled the milk. Recognizing him as anger, the muni was not enraged at all (*tam ājñāya muniḥ krodhaṁ naivāsya cukupe tataḥ*). Assuming the figure of a Brāhmaṇa lady, Krodha (Anger) then stood in front of the muni (*krodhas tato brāhmaṇīm mūrtim āsthitaḥ*) and confessed his defeat. Seeking Jamadagni's forgiveness (presumably out of fear of a curse), Krodha was sent away by Jamadagni. However, before sending him away, Jamadagni said to Krodha that since he planned to give this

³⁹⁶ C.Ed. 14.96.

milk to the Pitṛs (ancestors), he should go and face them (*tebhyo budhyasva gamyatām*). Hearing what had happened, the Pitṛs cursed Krodha to become a mongoose (*pitṛñām abhiṣaṅgāt tu nakulatvam upāgataḥ*). Despite this, the Pitṛs said that by abusing *dharma* (*taiś cāpy ukto yadā dharmam kṣepsyase mokṣyase tadā*), Krodha will be released from the curse (*śāpasyāntaḥ*). The mongoose then wandered around various sacred sacrificial grounds and despised them (*taiś cokto yajñīyān deśān dharmāraṇyāni caiva ha / jugupsan paridhāvan sa yajñam tam samupāsadat*). Arriving at Yudhiṣṭhira's *aśvamedha*, Krodha then abused (*ākṣipya*) Yudhiṣṭhira for the measure of barley (*saktuprasthena tena saḥ*) used in the sacrifice.³⁹⁷ By virtue of this accusation, Anger was finally freed from the curse. The reason for this, as the MBh explains, was that Yudhiṣṭhira was *dharma* himself (*muktaḥ śāpāt tataḥ krodho dharmo hy āsīd yudhiṣṭhiraḥ*). At this point, the mongoose disappeared (*nakulo 'ntarhitas tadā*) and the *Āśvamedhika parvan* comes to an end.

3.6.1 *Garh* Types Reflected in the Mongoose Unit

The *Āśvamedhika* passages include several *garh* types. The first of these consists of instances where *garh* is aimed at wrong acts. Speaking with a didactic tone, the mongoose in this story censures the priests officiating at the sacrifice by referring to some improper technicality (the *prastha* measure of barley). Offended by this accusation, which compromises the propriety of the sacrifice, the sages plead with the mongoose to explain.

³⁹⁷ This is obviously an exceptional example, where the verb *kṣip* may be used in close semantic proximity to *garh*, or even as its alternate. However, note that *kṣip* in this instance means 'to abuse' rather than 'to censure; denounce; revile etc.', and that the main verb in this long passage of the Mongoose Unit is *garh*. See also discussion on pp. 210-214, above.

The fourth *garh* type consists of cases where *garh* tends to signal a higher *dharma*. Such moments point at discursive elaborations of the semantic range of *garh* in specified contexts. As discussed above, the Pāṇḍu case (section 3.2, above) exemplified that such moments in the MBh are specifically concerned with the perspective of non-violence, which is related with terms like *ānṛśaṃsa* or *ahiṃsā*. The discussion of the Pāṇḍu episode also showed that at times, such moments of *garh* signalling a higher *dharma*, conclude with a curse. Let us note that not only is the *nakula*, who reviles Yudhiṣṭhira’s *aśvamedha*, indeed cursed by the Pitṛs, but that the *Āśvamedhika* passages are also greatly concerned with questions arising from the violent ideology of the sacrifice.

In her insightful analysis of these passages, Tamar Reich asserts that the Mongoose Unit constitutes an ongoing cultural debate about the violent ideology of the sacrifice.³⁹⁸ Looking at the classic ritual texts, Reich says that these record a practice occurring at the end of a sacrifice, when an exchange between the “reviler” (*apagara*) and the “praiser” (*abhigara*) on the exactness of the ritual proceedings takes place.³⁹⁹ These findings lead her to conclude that, “the *Āśvamedhika* Parvan includes a number of variations on the theme of reviling the sacrifice, and in each case the fault in question is the violence of the rite.” In Reich’s analysis, the Mongoose Unit unveils the internal debate over ritual violence that is fundamental to the Brahminic community.⁴⁰⁰ Reich analyzes the stories to show that each one addresses the issue of the Vedic sacrifice’s violence

³⁹⁸ Reich, (2001): 143-144.

³⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p.150.

⁴⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p.151.

by supporting an alternative concept of non-violence, based on renunciatory ascetism and grain offerings.⁴⁰¹

For example, Reich rightly suggests that the setting of the story about the gleaned Brahmin family within the context of the horse sacrifice, creates a contrast with the preceding *aśvamedha* of Yudhiṣṭhira. For “the story not only praises the gift offered by the gleaners but also casts some doubt on the value of royal Vedic sacrifices like the *Aśvamedha*.”⁴⁰² According to Reich, the story of Indra’s dispute with the ṛṣis dramatizes “a ritual dilemma concerning the sacrificial slaughter of animals.” However, Reich further notes that:

... the ṛṣis in this story reject animal sacrifice because it involves injuring living things, violence (*hiṃsā*). They prefer to offer grains. The ṛṣis’ position in the story is quite a radical revision of the old Vedic sacrificial tradition. The fact that this view is put into the mouths of the ṛṣis, the same cultural figures who are said to have “seen” the Veda, means that the authors of this story wished to give their revisionist view as much “Vedic” authority as possible.⁴⁰³

Reich likewise maintains that the question regarding the violence of the sacrifice is again addressed in the third story about Agastya’s *sattra* through Indra’s interruption of Agastya’s rite:

Agastya plans to offer a vegetarian sacrifice, to replace the customary animal flesh offerings with grain offerings. ... He intends to subvert the very power-oriented structure of the sacrifice by eliminating the violence that is at the heart of the rite. Indra’s unusual, indeed, Vṛtra-like, behaviour, of blocking the fall of rain, is directed against this plan.⁴⁰⁴

As to the Mongoose Story, Reich finally confirms that:

The mongoose’s appearance at Yudhiṣṭhira’s sacrifice was not a singular event; it was part of the ritual’s structure. The mongoose is not an idiosyncratic fellow, he is a ritual functionary, the sacrificial “reviler” (*apagara*). ... If every decent sacrifice ought to be interrupted by an outsider

⁴⁰¹ *ibid.*, p.168.

⁴⁰² *ibid.*, p.155.

⁴⁰³ *ibid.*, p.156.

⁴⁰⁴ *ibid.*, p.160.

who breaks into the compound and reviles it, it only seems right that this should happen also in the case of Yudhiṣṭhira's *Aśvamedha*.⁴⁰⁵

Thus, *garh* is used in these passages as a divider between the four stories revolving around issues of the violent ideology of the sacrifice. Beginning with Janamejaya's question ('Why did the mongoose revile Yudhiṣṭhira's *aśvamedha*?'), the stories unfold in a frame within a frame structure. Each time one of the inner frame stories (i.e., the sages' dialogue with the mongoose, the gleaning Brahmin, Indra's dispute with the sages, and Agastya's sacrifice) concludes, the narrative typically returns to the outer frame, where Janamejaya repeatedly inquires after the mongoose's reviling of Yudhiṣṭhira's *aśvamedha*.⁴⁰⁶

Apart from the first and the fourth *garh* types, an additional type is reflected in the Mongoose Unit of stories. Since the story depicts the *nakula* (who is Dharma disguised as Krodha cursed to be a mongoose) censuring *dharma*, this passage also reflects the fifth type, which consists of recursive *garh* moments. Furthermore, by virtue of this censuring the mongoose is released from the curse. I shall elaborate below on the various ways in which the Pitṛs' injunction could be interpreted. For now, let us simply note the literal sense of the Pitṛs' words. They tell him that if he censures or reviles *dharma*, he will be released from the curse.

⁴⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p.166.

⁴⁰⁶ It should be noted that only once the narrative stays within the inner frame, where the sages ask the Mongoose why he reviled them.

3.6.2 The Mongoose Story in the Bombay Text and the Critical Edition

The Bombay version of the Mongoose Story recounted above is based on nine different manuscripts: K1; B1,3-5; and D2,4-6.⁴⁰⁷ These nine were selected from a group of sixteen manuscripts which record this version of the story and were consulted by the editor of the MBh's C.Ed. in preparation of the *Āśvamedhika parvan's* critical text: one from five Kashmiri manuscripts, four from five Bengali manuscripts, and four from six Devanāgarī manuscripts. The fact that so many manuscripts from diverse parts of India preserve the Bombay edition's version of the Mongoose Story indicates that it was a rather popular one, and not a local or subsidiary reading of the story, at least as far as the Northern recension of the MBh is concerned. It must also be noted that the variants between the C.Ed. and the Bombay edition are inconsequential with one exception. This single incongruence is of relevance to this discussion. Unlike the Bombay edition, which depicts Dharma disguised as Krodha spoiling Jamadagni's milk, the C.Ed. omits *dharma's* presence all together. According to the C.Ed.'s reading of the story then, it is (simply) *krodha* who spoils the milk.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁷ See the C.Ed.'s apparatus of these passages in the *Āśvamedhika parvan*, edited by R. D. Karmarkar, (1960): 362.

⁴⁰⁸ *tat kṣīraṁ sthāpayāṁ āsa nave bhāṇḍe dṛḍhe śucau /
tac ca krodhaḥ svarūpeṇa piṭharaṁ paryavartayat //* (14.96.4)

“[Jamadagni] had placed that milk in a sealed, fresh and pure vessel. Anger prevailed inside this vessel in its own form.”

*jijñāsus tam ṛṣiśreṣṭhaṁ kiṁ kuryād vipriye kṛte /
iti saṁcintya durmedhā dharṣayāṁ āsa tat payaḥ //* (14.96.5)

“Desirous of testing what this best of Munis shall do when offended, thinking thus, the dull-witted [Krodha], violated that milk.”

*tam ājñāya muniḥ krodhaṁ naivāsya cukupe tataḥ /
sa tu krodhas tam āhedam prāñjalir mūrtimān sthitaḥ //* (14.96.6)

“Recognizing him as anger, the muni [Jamadagni] was not at all enraged with him. Personified in form, Krodha stood with hands folded [in respect], and said.”

One could persuasively argue that the C.Ed.'s version of the story makes better sense editorially, since there appears to be no logic in a reading which depicts Dharma disguised as Krodha reaching a paradoxical state of release from the curse by means of censuring itself (*dharma*). If Dharma *is* Krodha, as the Bombay edition reads, then its release from the curse is brought about by means of self-negation. Both versions of the story point out that the mongoose was eventually released from the curse because he reviled Yudhiṣṭhira's *aśvamedha*. The texts agree that the reason for this is that Yudhiṣṭhira is, in fact, *dharma* (*muktaḥ śāpāt tataḥ krodho dharmo hy āsīd yudhiṣṭhirah*). So how are we to understand *dharma*'s release from the curse by means of self-censuring? The Bombay text presents an entangled narrative that leaves its audience understandably perplexed.

However, the Bombay edition records a reading of the story which is thematically consistent with other sections of the MBh. The Mongoose Story is not the only episode in the MBh where a paradox of this kind occurs. This theme of *dharma* censuring *dharma* in the *Āśvamedhika* mirrors the SĀ. In the ending of the MBh, Yudhiṣṭhira, whose very nature is *dharma*, similarly censures *dharma* (personified as his father). Therefore, both the SĀ and the *Āśvamedhika parvans*' conclusions present this paradox.

3.6.3 Which *Dharma*?

Reich, who follows the C.Ed.'s version in her discussion on the Mongoose Unit, understands the Pitṛs' curse as follows:

He [the mongoose] is also presented in this story as something of a fool. He does not understand the ancestors' promise of release. They say that he

would be freed from his curse when he abuses the specific person called “Dharma”, that is, Yudhiṣṭhira. Instead he goes about abusing *dharmā*, the sacred order itself!⁴⁰⁹

However, Reich’s viewpoint (i.e., *dharmā*=Yudhiṣṭhira) is questionable because it prompts the question, which *dharmā* is the MBh referring to whenever this term is mentioned? In my reading of the text, all that the Pitṛs are effectively saying to the mongoose is “when you will abuse *dharmā*, then shall you be released” (*yadā dharmam kṣepsyase mokṣyase tadā*). The ambiguity is conscious and deliberate, as it is often repeated in the MBh where the term *dharmā* is used, such as in the SĀ, the Karna episode (section 3.5, above), and indeed, in several other places.

The authors of the SĀ play on the ambiguity of the term *dharmā* and its double entendre. The ending of the MBh underlines this, as Yudhiṣṭhira is censuring his father Dharma, censuring himself, and censuring the sacred order that sustains the world (*dharmā*, deriving from the Sanskrit verb *dhṛ*, ‘to carry; maintain; preserve; support’). There is no reason to suggest that this is not the case in the *Āśvamedhika parvan*, as well.

Reich is correct insofar as the ‘test-result’ is concerned, for the *nakula* is indeed released from the curse only when he reviles Yudhiṣṭhira’s *aśvamedha* and not prior to it. According to her reading, while the first three stories in the Mongoose Unit are critical of the violent ideology of the sacrifice, the last story (the story of Anger) undermines the view expressed in the first three. Reich

⁴⁰⁹ Reich, (2001): 167.

suggests that the reason for this is that the emphasis in the latter story is on the sacredness of the horse sacrifice despite its innate violence.⁴¹⁰

The analysis I offer for the story differs from Reich's, partly since I rely on a different version of the text. However, additional divergences with the critic's argument stem from the thematic I am concerned with in the Mongoose Story. My analysis is concerned with the theme of *dharma's* censuring *dharma*, as well as with the allusions that the *Āśvamedhika parvan's* concluding passages make to other passages of the MBh (in particular, the ending and the beginning episodes).

3.6.4 Allusions to the Concluding Passages of the *Mahābhārata*

The theme of *dharma* censuring *dharma* is not the only feature that the *Āśvamedhika* shares with the epic's concluding passages. There are several other motifs in the Mongoose Unit that allude to the ending of the MBh. The first of these is that of Dharma's tests. Twice in the Mongoose Unit Dharma tests other characters that figure in the narrative.

In the first of these instances, Dharma, assuming the form of a Brahmin, arrives at the gleaned Brahmin family as a guest in order to test their virtue. The Brahmin family members are described at least eight times in the text as suffering

⁴¹⁰ "The *Story of Anger's* stance is a strategy of defence. A central religious institution, Vedic sacrifice, has been attacked, and it must be defended. The defence is to try and discredit in principle, to sully the character of anyone who might venture to criticize sacrifice. ... The agonistic elements found in actual Vedic sacrifices ... are interpreted away as traces of aggressive impulses that still need to be curbed. Jamadagni exemplifies the correct way of dealing with anger – one must simply dismiss it with a spirit of equanimity. The *Story of Anger* basically rejects the agonistic worldview and the sacrificial model based on it. Conflict is unreal. The only real conflict is with the enemy within, the struggle to end all struggles." Reich, (2001): 167-8.

from great hunger (*kṣudh*).⁴¹¹ And yet, relinquishing their hunger, they feed their guest with the meagre quantity of powdered barley that they have managed to collect with much effort and toil. On account of this exemplary deed of virtue and altruism, the pleased (*prītātmā*) guest, who is none other than Dharma himself embodied in a human form (*dvijaśreṣṭho dharmah puruṣavigrahaḥ*), invites the Brahmin and his family to ascend to heaven (*divam*) in his celestial car, in their own bodies.⁴¹²

In the *Mahāprasthānika parvan*, assuming the form of a dog, Dharma similarly tests Yudhiṣṭhira. Not yielding to Indra’s plead to desert his loyal dog, Yudhiṣṭhira ultimately renounces even heaven. At that very moment, Dharma appears before his son and announces to Yudhiṣṭhira that he has successfully passed this test of virtuousness. He then invites Yudhiṣṭhira to enter *svarga* in his celestial car. Upon his arrival there, the sage Nārada declares before the denizens of heaven that nobody but Yudhiṣṭhira had ever attained heaven in his own human body (*svaśarīreṇa samprāptam nānyam śuśruma pāṇḍavāt*).⁴¹³

A second test is initiated by Dharma in the Mongoose Story. The text tells us that, wishing to test Jamadagni, and note in particular the desiderative *jijñāsu*, Dharma disguised as Krodha penetrated Jamadagni’s milk, and spoiled it. Presumably, the objective of the test was to determine Jamadagni’s anger-tolerance. Elsewhere in the MBh however, Jamadagni is portrayed as a powerful,

⁴¹¹ See, for example, *kṣudhārtaḥ*, ‘afflicted with hunger’ (C.Ed. 14.93.7; B. 14.90.30); *kṣudhāviṣṭaḥ*, ‘burdened by hunger’; as well as, (C.Ed. 14.93.6; B. 14.90.19); (C.Ed. 14.93.27; B. 14.90.53); (C.Ed. 14.93.35; B. 14.90.61); (C.Ed. 14.93.36; B. 14.90.62); (C.Ed. 14.93.46; B. 14.90.72); (C.Ed. 14.93.49; B. 14.90.75).

⁴¹² *tārīto hi tvayā deho loke kīrtiḥ sthirā ca te / sabhāryah sahaputraś ca sasnuśaś ca divam vraja //* (B. 14.90.106)

“Your body was also made to cross over [to heaven]. Your fame is lasting in this world. Go [now] to heaven along with your wife, your son and daughter-in-law.”

The C.Ed. reads *pāvīto* instead of *tārīto* (14.93.81). See also Reich, (2001): 154.

⁴¹³ C.Ed., B. 17.3.27.

hot-tempered ṛṣi, who will rarely desist from casting curses when the opportunity to do so arises. For example, in another *garh* episode from the *Vana parvan*, Jamadagni censures his wife Reṇukā for her unchaste behaviour. As a consequence, the ṛṣi orders his sons to kill Reṇukā. When they are incapable of committing such a cruel act, Jamadagni not only curses his sons to become motionless, but also has his own son, Paraśurāma, behead his wife with an axe.⁴¹⁴ In contrast to this story, even if Krodha’s offence against him is quite severe, Jamadagni refrains from punishing his offender. So, although provoked by Krodha, Jamadagni passes *dharma*’s test successfully and simply sends Krodha away. Yet, the text depicts other consequences ensuing from this act of Jamadagni’s forgiveness. These, as we have seen, are that having been cursed by the Pitṛs to become a wandering mongoose who reviles *dharma*, the *nakula* reaches the *Aśvamedha* and eventually censures Yudhiṣṭhira.

In the *SĀ*, Yudhiṣṭhira’s third and final test occurs when, having been deceived by Indra with the false information that his brothers and wife were awaiting him in *svarga*, he discovers that they have, in fact, been sentenced to terrible anguish in hell. Facing this bitter realization, Yudhiṣṭhira denounces Dharma and the other gods. The text tells us that at that very instant the horrible sights and the terrible stench that had been filling *naraka* up to then suddenly vanished, as if they never existed in the first place. Dharma arrives at the spot and

⁴¹⁴ This *garh* episode is another instance in which the proximity of a curse matters:

sa tām dṛṣṭvā cyutām dhairyād brāhmyā lakṣmyā vivarjitām / dhikśabdēna mahātejā garhayām āsa vīryavān // (C.Ed., B. 3.116.9)

“Seeing her diminished in composure and deprived of the lustre of chastity, the powerful Jamadagni, whose *tejas* is great, reproached her with the word shame [on you!].”

Resembling the Pāṇḍu story (section 3.2, above), *garh*’s employment here leads to a curse by a powerful Brahmin, and like other curse stories that the epic narrates, the nature of the curse corresponds to the heroes’ acts. Accordingly, since Jamadagni’s sons are incapable of killing their mother, he curses them to become motionless (*jadopamāḥ*).

informs his son that this was yet another test, *jijñāsā*, the third and final in the series of trials which he forced upon his son (*eṣā tr̥tīyā jijñāsā tava rājan kṛtā mayā*).⁴¹⁵ Like the Mongoose story, the text uses here the desiderative form of the Sanskrit verb *jñā*, ‘to know’.⁴¹⁶

Returning to the two tests in the *Āśvamedhika parvan* that Dharma initiates, we see that the first test results in the Brahmin family entering heaven in their own bodies (which is an allusion to Yudhiṣṭhira’s entering *svarga* in his own form); and the second test (of Jamadagni) results in Dharma (the cursed mongoose) eventually censuring Dharma (Yudhiṣṭhira), thus alluding to Yudhiṣṭhira’s censure of Dharma in the *SĀ*.

3.6.5 Allusions to the *Ādi parvan*

The concluding chapters of the *Āśvamedhika parvan* do not allude to the ending of the MBh alone. The presence and function of the king of the Cedis, king Vasu, as an arbitrator in the sage’s dispute (*vivāda*) in Indra’s sacrifice, suggest that these passages make reference to the beginning of the epic as well.

Reich notices that the inclusion of this character in the story is unusual and prompts a number of questions, such as: “Why do Indra and the ṛṣis need to turn to this relatively obscure kṣatriya figure for arbitration? How does the land of Cedi figure in this dispute?”. In addressing these questions, Reich interprets Vasu’s role in the narrative as representing the ideology of violence in the sacrifice, as follows:

⁴¹⁵ C.Ed. 18.3.30; B. 18.3.32.

⁴¹⁶ Thus, a subject’s desire or intention to know another is understood by Sanskrit to denote a ‘test’.

I have no complete answer to these questions. King Vasu's involvement in debates concerning violence is briefly mentioned elsewhere in the MBh. In the context of a discussion of the effect of action on one's destiny, the MBh (13.6.34) tells us, "Vasu, like a second Vāsava (Indra), sacrificed a hundred sacrifices, and yet because of a single false assertion went to the lowest hell".⁴¹⁷

My own interpretation is that Vasu's inclusion in the narrative functions as an additional allusion to crucial MBh passages. As is well known, in the *Ādi parvan* ('The Book of the Beginning'), the MBh declares that the text has three different legitimate beginnings:

*manvādi bhārataṃ ke cid āstīkādi tathāpare /
tathoparicarādy anye viprāḥ samyag adhīyate //* (C.Ed. 1.1.50; B. 1.1.52)

Some Brahmins read the Bhārata from Manu onward, others from the tale of *The Book of Āstika* onward; others read it from *The Tale of Uparicara* onward, while some read the whole.

As this verse indicates, one of the epic's legitimate openings is called the Uparicara - *The Tale of Uparicara*. Who, then, is Uparicara? He is none other than the king of the Cedis, Vasu, who is one of the progenitors of the Bhārata clan.⁴¹⁸ A brief summary of Vasu's story will clarify the origin of his name:

Immediately after the *Āstika parvan*,⁴¹⁹ the *Aṃśāvatarāṇa parvan* ('The Descent of the First Generations') begins.⁴²⁰ Opening with a rough outline of the epic's outer frame story,⁴²¹ the *Aṃśāvatarāṇa parvan* then recounts the tale of Uparicara. According to this episode,⁴²² the king, a *paurava* descendant of the Purū lineage (Purū, son of Yayāti), conquered the kingdom of Cedi at Indra's command. Having witnessed Vasu practicing severe penance for a long time after

⁴¹⁷ Reich, (2001): 156-7.

⁴¹⁸ I am grateful to Professor David Shulman who first brought to my attention that Vasu is in fact Uparicara.

⁴¹⁹ Ending at C.Ed. 1.52; B. 1.58.

⁴²⁰ At C.Ed. 1.53; B. 1.59.

⁴²¹ Where Śaunaka asks Sauti to tell him Vyāsa's Bhārata, as recounted in Janamejaya's snake sacrifice.

⁴²² Beginning at C.Ed. 1.1.57; B. 1.1.63.

conquering the Cedi land, Indra and the other gods feared that he would conquer the kingdom of the gods, as well. Therefore, they approached him one day in order to dissuade him from practicing *tapas* and promised to grant him a passage to heaven with an aerial car. For this reason, he became known as Uparicara (Uparicara, ‘One Who Moves About in the Sky’).

Continuing with Uparicara’s tale, the text clarifies the circumstances under which Vasu became the progenitor of the Bhārata clan, consequently addressing the question as to why the story of this relatively obscure Kṣatriya figure is considered one of the three MBh beginnings:

One day, the river Śuktamatī was molested by the mountain Kolāhala. Vasu kicked the mountain with his foot, thereby releasing the river from its grasp. Nevertheless, from the mountain and the river’s embrace twin babies were born. As a token of gratitude for saving her, the river gave Vasu the twins. Vasu made the boy a general of his army and married the girl, Girikā. One day, Girikā told Vasu she was in her menses. It so happened that on that day Vasu’s ancestors asked him to hunt a deer for their *śrāddha*. The king went hunting but could not stop thinking of his wife who was expecting him at home. Overcome with desire, he sat in the pleasant shade of an Aśoka tree, and sexually aroused, he discharged his semen on the ground. Thinking of his wife’s fertile season he had collected the semen on a leaf and sent it forth with a hawk that passed by. Although the hawk flew away, it was interrupted by another hawk who thought the semen to be a piece of meat. The hawks pecked each other and as a result, the semen fell into the river, Yamunā. There lived the *apsarā* Adrikā, who was formerly cursed by a Brāhmaṇa to live as a fish in the water. Detecting the semen, she immediately

swallowed it. About ten months later a fisherman caught her in a net. Twin babies were born from her womb – a son and a daughter, and by this the *apsarā* Adrikā was released from the curse. The fisherman, who was overwhelmed by the fact that a fish gave birth to human babies went to seek Vasu’s advice. The boy became the powerful king Matsya, whereas the girl, who suffered from a slight smell of fish remained with the fisherman. This girl, named Satyavatī, is none other than the mother of Vyāsa (conceived of the powerful ṛṣi Parāśara), who is both the progenitor of the Bhāratas as well as the author of the *entire* MBh.

Thus, the Tale of Uparicara, a MBh beginning, conveys that king Vasu is the progenitor of the entire Bhārata clan (both the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas). For this reason, the great Bhārata story commences with a detailed account of his origin, and the story of his life.

Returning at this point to the story of Indra’s dispute with the sages, the narrative sees the sages seek Vasu’s advice. Having ruled the dispute falsely, Vasu meets his death by descending to the netherworld. Whereas in the *Ādi parvan* we are told of Vasu’s beginning, which is certainly unlike any other character’s origin in the long story of the MBh, but rather *the* beginning of the entire epic, the *Āśvamedhika parvan* completes the story of Vasu’s life by recounting the circumstances of his death.

By including Vasu’s character in the *Āśvamedhika* and relating the circumstances of his death, authors of these passages allude to the *Ādi parvan*. In so doing, they offer an alternative ending to the MBh.⁴²³ The artistic play on

⁴²³ Indeed, several scholars suggest that the *Jaya* epic commenced with the Uparicara episode and ended in the *Āśvamedhika parvan*. See A. N. Jani, “The *Mahābhārata* as an Organic Growth of the Oral Literary Tradition in Ancient India,” *The Mahābhārata Revisited*, ed. R. N. Dandekar, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1990, p. 76. Along similar lines, K. K. Shastri, who attempted to

Vasu's character cannot be merely coincidental. Furthermore, another, albeit minor allusion, may be discerned in these passages: if, indeed, by relating the death of Vasu, the authors of this text have designed an alternative ending to the MBh, then it is reasonable to consider the circumstances which brought about Vasu's death as a playful version of a test. Vasu is being tested here (although not by Dharma) for his knowledge *on dharma*, and specifically, on the question of whether sacrifices should involve killing. If that were a test on the subject of *dharma*, then according to this story, Vasu failed the exam and was consequently sent to hell. By relating Vasu's descent into the netherworld as a consequence of failing to manage correctly the matter of *dharma* (the question regarding sacrificial violence), the authors of this passage are alluding to the concluding scenes of the SĀ. These scenes, which end the entire MBh, depict Yudhiṣṭhira as he is tested by Dharma descending to *naraka* where he ultimately censures *dharma*.

The final occurrence of *garh* in the MBh (expressed by Yudhiṣṭhira) is reflected throughout the *Āśvamedhika parvan*, where *garh* is repeatedly used in the Mongoose Unit of stories. Given the various allusions that these chapters sustain with the ending of the MBh as pointed out above, one cannot overlook the possibility that authors of these passages in the *Āśvamedhika parvan* were perhaps seeking to create a manifestation of both ends of the MBh narrative (the SĀ and the *Ādi parvans*).

reconstruct the *Jaya-Saṃhitā*, assumed that the original poem began with the Pāṇḍavas' arrival from the forest after the death of Pāṇḍu (at 1.1.54) and ended with the account of the *aśvamedha* sacrifice of Yudhiṣṭhira (at 14.91). See K. K. Shastri, *The Jaya-Saṃhitā*, Vol. 1, Bhandarkar Oriental Series, Pune, 1998, pp. 23-24.

In summary, the *Āśvamedhika* passages shed light on a fundamental structural feature of the MBh. The *Āśvamedhika* takes up themes and figures from the *Ādi parvan* and re-examines them. At the same time, the book adumbrates the end of the epic in very exact and parallel ways. Vasu Uparicara is such an example and so is the reviling theme embodied by the mongoose. The narrative moves between the two fixed points of the *Ādi* and the *Āśvamedhika parvans*, creating a circle, as it were, which sets the stage for the SĀ scenes. There are other moments in the epic that are situated between this circular structure and that strongly resonate with that configuration, or take up parts of it by alluding to the ending. Such an example is the ‘*Yakṣa-praśna*’ episode, in the *Vana parvan*, where Yudhiṣṭhira is presented with Dharma’s first test (*jijñāsā*).⁴²⁴ Another, is the Karṇa scene, where the hero censures *dharma* (section 3.5, above). Given the epic’s multiple beginnings, it is possible that in the long narrative of the MBh there are other passages, which, like the *Āśvamedhika* episodes, embody additional and alternative endings of the SĀ.

⁴²⁴ David Shulman argues that Yudhiṣṭhira’s final trial by Dharma in the SĀ is “the narrative twin” of the *Yakṣapraśna* episode in the *Vana parvan* (C.Ed. 3.297-298; B. 3.313-314), and that a narrative parallelism exists between these passages: “... the Yakṣa section concludes a critical stage in the unfolding of the epic story – the end of the forest exile. ... Our passage is thus the bridge to the year of disguise and, following this, to the coming war. More than a technical lapse of time comes to an end with Yudhiṣṭhira’s successful answers to his father’s puzzles. But the test recurs, again at a moment of closure, in the final chapters of the *Mahābhārata*. Indeed the text recognizes this parallelism and continuity: Dharma himself mentions the ordeal with the Yakṣa as the first of three trials to which he has put his son – the second and third both emerging out of the *Svargārohaṇa*, the final ascent to heaven. ... It is almost as if, within the internal perspective of the text, Yudhiṣṭhira’s ordeal were being replayed in the light of the further experience and knowledge he has acquired. ... Repetition, as A. K. Ramanujan has eloquently shown, is one of the keys this text offers us to perceiving its unity and range of meanings. ... Yudhiṣṭhira finds himself back in the same, familiar situation, where he must struggle again for the lives of his fallen brothers, in a context of seemingly incomprehensible injustice, against the same disguised father-opponent, with the same questionable linguistic means.” D. Shulman, “The Yakṣa’s Questions”, *The Wisdom of Poets: Studies in Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit*, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 56-7.

Conclusion

This chapter offered an explanation of the dramatic moment with which the MBh concludes, where the epic protagonist, Yudhiṣṭhira, paradoxically ‘*garh*’s’ Dharma. Having established that, broadly speaking, cognate verbs like *nind* and *kṣip* are not regularly interchangeable with *garh*’s usage in the epic, and that *garh* consistently occurs at important narrative moments, I looked at other *garh* passages that the epic narrates in order to establish several issues: (1) to understand the meaning of Yudhiṣṭhira’s ‘*garhification*’ of *dharma* in the SĀ; (2) to consider how this conclusion reflects retrospectively on the central concept of *dharma*, which is elaborated upon throughout the epic; and (3) to determine whether this is an integral and obvious closure for the entire MBh. For this purpose, I developed a typology of *garh*’s structural semantic patterns in the MBh based on a large number of critically examined cases, and presented seven detailed passages of *garh* that were analyzed according to meaning and context.

My findings of the verb’s occurrence first show that *garh* is present in key narrative junctures of the epic. *Garh* recurrently appears at significant points in the narrative which are crucial to the advancement of the entire plot. Dhṛtarāṣṭra, for instance, is repeatedly ‘*garh*’d’ by several prominent figures in the epic for failing to stop his villainous son, Duryodhana, from executing his malicious plans, which eventually lead to the outbreak of the horrid Kurukṣetra war.⁴²⁵ In

⁴²⁵ See, for example, a *garh* passage from the *Udyoga parvan*, in which, failing to convince Dhṛtarāṣṭra to relinquish his son, Saṃjaya eventually denounces the blind king, as follows:
priyāpriye sukhaduḥkhe ca rājan; nindāpraśamse ca bhajeta enam /
paras tv enam garhayate ’parādhe; praśamsate sādhuṣṛtam tam eva // (C.Ed. 5.32.26; B. 5.32.27)
sa tvā garhe bhāratānām virodhād; anto nūnam bhavitāyam prajānām / (C.Ed. 5.32.27ab; B. 5.32.28ab)

“A man, O king, is subject to pleasant and unpleasant [conditions], pleasure and pain, as well as blame and praise. One censures another for his transgressions and praises another for his good

the *Ādi parvan*, king Śaṃtanu likewise censures his wife Gaṅgā when he finds out that she has systematically drowned their seven sons on the day they were born.⁴²⁶ Bitterly disillusioned with their marriage, he forsakes her and marries Satyavatī. The new relationship is conditioned by the agreement that Satyavatī’s son (and not Bhīṣma, Śaṃtanu’s successor) shall become Śaṃtanu’s heir. Eventually required to impregnate the couple’s widowed daughters-in-law, Satyavatī’s son, Vyāsa, who is the author of this epic text, indeed becomes the progenitor of the entire Bhārata clan. In this chapter alone, we discussed several *garh* moments which are crucial to the epic’s storyline. Pāṇḍu’s *garh* passage (section 3.2, above) for instance (as well as Śaṃtanu and Gaṅgā’s episode), re-enacts one of the epic’s pivotal themes, namely the ‘non-heir’ motif.⁴²⁷ In this particular case, since Pāṇḍu cannot impregnate his wives on account of the curse (imposed by the deer) the text depicts the miraculous birth of the Pāṇḍavas (originating from five different gods). Other examples include the famous MBh scenes of Abhimanyu’s death (section 3.4, above), Droṇa’s beheading by Dhṛṣṭadyumna (3.3), Karṇa’s death on the battlefield (3.5) and finally Yudhiṣṭhira’s *aśvamedha* (3.6).

Examining these moments through *garh*’s five types, this discussion demonstrated that there is a consistency of the verb’s appearance in crucial MBh

deeds. I denounce you for the strife amid the Bhāratas. This will surely result in the destruction of [your] race.”

See also Vidura’s censure of Dhṛtarāṣṭra at C.Ed. 5.39.10-11; B. 5.39.12-13.

⁴²⁶ Spotting her attempting to drown their eighth child (i.e., Bhīṣma), Śaṃtanu censures his wife:

mā vadhīḥ kāsi kasyāsi kiṃ hīmsasi sutān iti /

putraghni sumahat pāpam mā prāpas tiṣṭha garhite // (C.Ed. 1.92.47; B. 1.98.16)

“Do not kill [the baby]! Who are you? To whom do you belong? Why do you kill [your own] sons? O you children slayer! Do not perform this grave sin! Hold still, you contemptible woman!”

Note, however, that ironically enough, this story revolves around the theme of deliverance from curse; for every time Gaṅgā drowns her own babies she is in fact freeing the eight Vasu gods from a curse that was imposed upon them by sage Vasiṣṭha, and that forced them to be born human by birth.

⁴²⁷ See A. K. Ramanujan’s views on the epic’s circular and repetitive mode in "Repetition in the *Mahābhārata*", *The Collected Essays of A. K. Ramanujan*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1999, pp. 161-183.

moments, which points to the thematic structure of the entire epic. *Garh* first reveals *dharma*'s moral law when it is aimed at wrong acts committed by the MBh protagonists. Second, it exposes the polemical, contextual nature of *dharma* when it repeatedly occurs in moments where the MBh protagonists diverge in their interpretations of *dharma*. Third, the verb occurs in the MBh at moments of total dharmic deadlock that ensue from grave dilemmas and doubts regarding *dharma*. Fourth, *garh* signals a higher *dharma*, when it is associated in specific contexts with terms like *ānṛśaṃsa* or *ahiṃsā*.

In concluding my findings of *garh* patterns in the MBh, I would like to suggest that the fifth type, which consists of recursive moments in which *dharma garh*'s itself, necessarily stems from the previous four. *Garh* is a "marker" of the epic's core meditation on *dharma*. The verb's presence and function throughout the epic point to a consistent thematic pattern, namely, the negation of *dharma*. *Garh* is employed in cases where, depending on context, one (obligatory) *dharma* is being rejected in favour of another. Thus, the 169 occurrences of *garh* in the MBh are a prolonged experiment in the rejection of *dharma*. This process of rejecting *dharma* by interpreting it as *adhharma* comes to full fruition in the epic's closing scenes, where Dharmarāja refutes the very concept of *dharma* by censuring his father. This paradoxical incident is the most explicit layer of a long process of negation that takes place throughout the epic and that concludes with the SĀ's earnest denial of *dharma*. *Garh*'s fifth type therefore, necessarily emanates from the abovementioned four.

Immediately before Yudhiṣṭhira denounces his father Dharma in the SĀ, the text provides a glimpse into his mind. In this condensed internal monologue,

the text depicts Yudhiṣṭhira as undergoing a switch of consciousness: "Am I indeed asleep, or awake? Am I fully conscious or unconscious? Alas! Could this be an aberration of consciousness? Or perhaps an error of my mind?" (*kim nu supto 'smi jāgarmi cetayāno na cetaye / aho cittavikāro 'yam syād vā me cittavibhramah*).⁴²⁸ Amid this overwhelming gap of consciousness, Yudhiṣṭhira experiences a paradox regarding *dharma* that the mind simply cannot grapple. For, something fundamental to *dharma* is seen here to have gone askew, or to have produced an aberration (*vikāra*) from the order of wholeness that *dharma* represents. It is from this moment that Yudhiṣṭhira's 'garhification' of *dharma* ensues, as if the numerous *garh* moments that preceded it in the epic narrative were to necessarily culminate in this staggering moment, where *dharma* twists back upon itself and 'garh's' itself.

The mere fact that the SĀ concludes the entire MBh suggests that the epic's final *garh* scene bears a significant weight in comparison to all the others which preceded it. Moreover, the study of *garh* demonstrates that other passages in the long narrative of the MBh resonate strongly with the conclusion of the SĀ. The most striking example for this comes from the *Āśvamedhika* passages (section 3.6, above). Replicating themes and figures from the *Ādi parvan*, the *Āśvamedhika* adapts them, as it alludes to the end of the epic in very exact and parallel ways. Other passages in the MBh take up parts of this configuration. Passages like the 'Yakṣapraśna',⁴²⁹ the Karṇa passage (section 3.5, above), or other dharmic deadlock moments in the MBh, exhibit epic protagonists

⁴²⁸ 18.2.48.

⁴²⁹ See note 424 above.

overwhelmed by *dharma*'s intricate operations and incapable of resolving the paradox.

In summary, this chapter affirms that the *SĀ* is integral to the entire epic. Unlike the stance which tends to overlook the *SĀ* (voiced by later re-tellers and several scholars), the epic's final *garh* scene is significant to the understanding of the entire text, as it is revealed to be intrinsically consistent with the thematic structure of the MBh.

A wider question remains about the pivotal role of *garh* in the ending of the MBh. The conclusion implies that *dharma*'s self-'*garhification*' leads to some form of completion. That is to say, that wholeness could be achieved by this very harsh self-reproach. To negate or reject *dharma* from inside it is to transcend the condition of which *dharma* is part. Thus, the question which remains unanswered is: how is it that *garhing* the *entire* system from inside confirms, enacts or enables its wholeness?⁴³⁰

⁴³⁰ In this context one can think of insightful arguments on the structure of the MBh as those brought forward by Christopher Minkowski. Minkowski argues that one of the ways to get the narrative going in the MBh is by interrupting a sacrifice. Considering several stories in the Sanskrit literature and in the epics, Minkowski shows how in each of them the theme of the disruption of the sacrifice is a significant point from which the story begins or proceeds. Minkowski notes that in the MBh this element points to a larger structural pattern of the narrative: "In the *Mahābhārata* ... the disrupted rite motif is not so much disclosed as a plot element as it is alluded to in the larger schematic plan of the narrative, which models itself on a picture of rituals gone bad." See Minkowski, "The Interrupted Sacrifice and the Sanskrit Epics," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 29: 169-186, 2001, p. 176.

Perhaps, then, since the MBh is narrated in the intervals between ritual actions, which are already, as Minkowski notes, a mild form of ritual interruption on the outermost frame of the story (*ibid.*, p. 177), the act of the negation of *dharma* at its ending, re-affirms its function in the epic. In the same way that right from the beginning, the disruption of the sacrifice moves the story forward, the negation of the epic's most central theme (i.e., *dharma*) perhaps brings about its conclusion.

Conclusion

This thesis discussed the ending of the *Mahābhārata* by exploring several trajectories: the study of the *Svargārohaṇa* in epic scholarship; its reception in the later tradition in Sanskrit literature; and finally, the problematic aspects of the SĀ and its relation to the rest of the narrative. The discussion first pointed out that in comparison to other MBh episodes, the SĀ has been received with significant disregard or suppression in the literature commenting on the epic. Second, it characterized the nature of the suppression of the SĀ in each of the three literary strands commenting on the MBh (that is, epic scholarship, Sanskrit adaptations and theoretical discourses). I discussed the stance of epic scholarship by looking into general historical studies of the epic as a whole, as well as by examining the particular considerations of certain scholars and their accounts of the SĀ. I further offered a close reading of SĀ adaptations and theoretical discussions in Sanskrit in order to portray the reception of the ending in the later tradition. I argued that all of these considerations, which I termed external to the MBh, have tended, in various modes, to suppress, ignore or overlook the importance of the SĀ by presenting the particular manners in which each of them addressed it. The outcome of this suppression, I argued, was responsible for the SĀ having not been readily accepted as an integral episode of the epic.

Having examined these external reflections on the MBh, I then argued that on the most significant and internal level of the text itself, the SĀ is intrinsically consistent with the rest of the MBh narrative, and that this makes it thematically

integral to the text as a whole. This argument derived from the importance with which this thesis addressed the moment of the ‘*garhification*’ of Dharma in the SĀ, and was furthered by a philological and semantic study, as well as a textual analysis of the multiple occurrences of the Sanskrit verb *garh* throughout the MBh.

I wish to add at this point that each external reflection on the MBh fundamentally sought to find or emphasize what it perceived as the epic’s *anta* – namely, its end, meaning, or purpose. Or, to state this more cautiously, we could say that at the very least, *antas* of different types are implied in each of these considerations of the MBh. If we accept that external reflections on the MBh represent different voices of MBh readers, then we could suppose that each reader finds what he or she perceives as its essence or core theme, and consequently defines what is its end.

While scholar-readers of the epic largely concentrated on the battle books in their quest for locating the Ur MBh, they neglected the importance of the text’s concluding books and dismissed them as insignificant, basing their claims on the presupposition that they were not a part of the original core story. Sanskrit poet-readers were far more drawn to retelling MBh episodes other than the SĀ, perhaps because these episodes’ appeal was greater than the SĀ, whose problematic issues may have been perceived by these poets as disturbing or disconcerting. Whereas the majority of poets overlooked the SĀ, very few poets have indeed retold it as part of the MBh epitome-genre, which required the retelling of the ending as well. Yet apart from the poet of the *Svargārohaṇa-prabandha*, MBh-epitomists distorted the epic narrative by unanimously omitting

the condemnation of Dharma. So even though they were obviously aware of the original story, they chose to suppress the ‘garhification’ of *dharma* in their novel versions of the MBh. Sanskrit theoretician-readers of the epic mainly adjusted the text to fit into their respective doctrinal discussions. Thus, while Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta discussed the MBh through the prism of the *dhvani* theory, Kuntaka judged it through the perspective of *vakrokti* or aesthetic appeal.

While all of these are valid considerations of the MBh narrative, representing views of different readers, the thesis presented here may be considered an additional such reader-view of the text. Be that as it may, I would hazard to conclude my thesis with two sets of questions that this study points to, and which remain to be answered. The first of these concerns the unstudied and unpublished MBh retelling that my thesis discussed. It remains to be answered what distinguishes the *Bhārataprabandha* (BP) text in its approach to the ending of the MBh from the various adaptations that preceded it. How is it that among the general resistance and silence with which the SĀ was received in the later tradition, the BP is the only adaptation that adopts a novel approach to the MBh narrative? Could we think of distinct reasons that allowed this South Indian text to address the problematic ending of the epic? We know for a fact that the composer of the BP corresponds with and consciously borrows from one of these later adaptations (i.e. the *Bālabhārata* epitome of Agastya Paṇḍita).⁴³¹ Furthermore, considering the BP’s estimated time of composition, it is highly likely that its author knew the other two MBh epitomes (i.e. Kṣemendra’s *Bhāratamañjarī* and Amaraçandra’s *Bālabhārata*), as well. It is thus even more

⁴³¹ See p. 149 above.

surprising that the author of this text not only did not follow his predecessors' ambivalent and suppressive stance toward the MBh narrative, but that he actually departed from the voice of tradition and dared to address the problematic ending of the MBh in his unique version of the epic story. A study of the BP that would attempt to understand the reasons behind its novel approach to the MBh thus seems to be a fruitful path for further research. Several questions that would concern such a study may already be noted - does its novel approach to the MBh derive from its provenance in seventeenth or eighteenth century-Kerala? What significance could we assign to the time and cultural environment in which it was written? What are the specific conditions that facilitated its unique approach to the SĀ? Finally, and most pertinently, who is its author or authors? In summary, a study of this text will need to elucidate some crucial aspects of this unstudied MBh version, its provenance, uses and meanings in their cultural, historical and social contexts.

Another question that remains to be answered is what is the epic's own voice with regard to its own conclusion. It should be noted that Yudhiṣṭhira's '*garhification*' of Dharma in the SĀ is not delivered in the first person. Rather, it is conveyed in the third person, that is, in the voice of the narrator and author of this entire text, Vyāsa. Being both the (meta-) narrator and the author of this text, we may consider Vyāsa's voice here as both external and internal to the narrative. Yet, in whichever way we regard it, this voice ultimately chooses to include the bitter condemnation of Dharma at the narrative's ending. A choice of this kind cannot be merely coincidental, and it is certainly not an insignificant matter, for in many respects, the narrator/author's voice here *is* the epic's own articulation of its

anta. It should further be noted that the very last speech of the hero in the narrative is delivered in this scene.⁴³² That is to say that from this point onward, we hear no more of Yudhiṣṭhira's uttering even a single word. If we think of "having the final word" in this instance as something more than a mere expression of language, then it would appear that in having his final word, the main protagonist of this long epic indeed completes the story of his own life, and by extension, concludes the story of the book he features in with a harsh condemnation of Dharma. Therefore, the voice informing us of Yudhiṣṭhira's 'garhification' of *dharma* with the myriad implications that this entails *is* the epic's way of stating what is its hero's, as well as its own *anta*. So although there are arguably various *antas* to the MBh (as many as its readers), the only *anta* that the text presents in its concluding scenes is encapsulated in the voice of its (meta-) narrator/author and in the absolute final speech of its hero.

⁴³² As noted in the summary of books 17 and 18 (chapter 2 above), having denounced Dharma, Yudhiṣṭhira then tells the messenger of the gods that he intends to remain in *naraka*. This scene that takes place in *naraka* consists of the very last speech of the hero in the epic.

A P P E N D I C E S

Appendix I

Kṣemendra Vyāsadāsa's *Bhāratamañjarī*⁴³³

17. *Mahāprasthānika-parva*

*nārāyaṇaṃ namaskṛtya naraṃ caiva narottamam /
devīm sarasvatīm vyāsaṃ tato jayam udīrayet //1//*

Having prostrated before Nārāyaṇa and Nara, the best of men, as well as before Vyāsa and the goddess Sarasvatī, may hail [now] be uttered. (1)

*atha vṛṣṇikṣayaṃ śrutvā dharmasūnur dhanamjayāt /
namaḥ kālāya baline niḥśvasann ity abhāṣata //2//*

Having heard about the destruction of the Vṛṣṇis from Arjuna, the Son of Dharma said while sighing: “salutations to the might of time/death!” (2)

*sarvatyāgakṛto yogo⁴³⁴ viveśa bhrātr̥bhiḥ saha /
rājyaṃ dauryodhanaṃ dattvā guṇār̥hāya yuyutsave //3//⁴³⁵*

Resorting to yoga, [Yudhiṣṭhira] who renounced everything along with his brothers, gave Duryodhana's kingdom to Yuyutsu [a Kaurava descendant], whose merits are worthy. (3)

*nije parikṣitaṃ rājye sthāpayitvābhimanyujam /
tatpālena samādiśya subhadraṃ satyaśāsanāḥ //4//*

Having appointed Abhimanyu's son, Parikṣit, to his own kingdom as its protector, [Yudhiṣṭhira], the instructor of truth, blessed [him] with good fortune. (4)

⁴³³ Published in *Kāvya-mālā*, No. 64, ed. M. Paṇḍit Śivadatta, Bombay, 1898.

⁴³⁴ In order to make better sense of the verse, the translation above reads the word *yogo* (nominative case) as *yogam* (in the accusative).

⁴³⁵ Note that due to their difficulty, asterisk marked verses are ones in which the offered translation is tentative.

*prakṛtibhyo viniṣṭīpya taṃ dvijebhyaś ca dharmavit /
śrāddhaṃ vidhāya bandhubhyaḥ puṇyāṃ iṣṭiṃ ca naiṣṭhikīm //5//*

Having entrusted him with [his] ministers and Brahmins, this Knower of Dharma performed the *śrāddha* ceremony for his relatives, as well as the final sacred oblation. (5)

*agnīm utsṛjya salile paurān āśvāsya duḥkhitān
devīm āmantrya vasudhāṃ sānujo draupadīsakhaḥ
pratathe sarvasamnyāsī yogayukto yudhiṣṭhiraḥ //6//*

Having renounced the fire[s] in water, he consoled the grieving townsfolk. Taking leave from goddess Earth, Yudhiṣṭhira, who renounced everything, set forth absorbed in *yoga* along with his brothers, and accompanied by Draupadī. (6)

*tataḥ sametya bhagavān svayam eva hutāśanaḥ /
pārthāj jagrāha gāṇḍīvaṃ tau cākṣayau maheśudhī //7//*

Then, Lord Agni arrived in his own form, and seized the Gāṇḍīva [bow] from Arjuna along with its double undecaying quivers. (7)

*śvā tān anuyayāv eko vāryamāṇo 'pi yatnataḥ /
atha te śanakaiḥ prāpur diśaṃ dakṣiṇapaścimām //8//*

Although it was warded off diligently, a dog was following them. Gradually, they now arrived at the south-western region. (8)

*dṛṣṭvā tatra samudreṇa bhṛtāṃ dvāravatīm jalaiḥ /
āśām udīcīm prayayur bhuvāḥ kṛtvā pradakṣiṇam //9//*

There, they saw Dvarkā filled with water by the ocean. By advancing toward the northern quarter, they made a circumambulation of the earth. (9)

*himācalam atikramya prāptās te vālukārṇavam /
dadṛśur merum uttuṅgaśṛṅgāliṅgitanandanam //10//*

Having crossed the Himālaya, they reached an ocean of sand and saw mount Meru, where Nandana [Indra's paradise] is encircled by lofty peaks. (10)

*niragāre nirālambe tasminn adhvani dustare /
śirīṣapelavatanuḥ papāta drupadātmejā //11//*

The daughter of Drupada, whose body was delicate as a śirīṣa flower, fell down on this path, which was difficult to cross, shelterless, and lacking support. (11)

*tāṃ yātajīvitāṃ dr̥ṣṭvā bhīmaḥ prāha yudhiṣṭhiram /
rājan pāñcālarājasya suteyaṃ patitā bhuvi //12//*

Seeing her life slipping away, Bhīma said to Yudhiṣṭhira: “O king, the daughter of the Pāñcāla king has fallen on the ground. (12)

*cintayann api paśyāmi nāsyāḥ kim api kilbiṣam /
kasmād eṣā tapoyogaṃ tyaktvā pañcatvam āgatā //13//*

Even though I reflect [on this matter], I do not [i.e. I cannot] see even the slightest fault in her. Why, then, having lost her ascetic *yoga*, has she passed away?” (13)

*dharmasūnur niśamyaitad anāvṛttamukho 'vadat /
babhūva pakṣapāto 'syāḥ sarvadābhyadhiko 'rjune //14//*

Hearing this, the Son of Dharma said without averting his head back: “she always had exceeding partiality toward Arjuna.” (14)

*ity ukte bhūmipālena sahademo 'patad bhuvi /
tasmin nipatite pṛṣṭo bhīmenoce nṛpaḥ punaḥ //15//*

When this was said by the king, Sahadeva fell on the ground as well. As he was falling, the king was again asked by Bhīma, and Yudhiṣṭhira responded [thus]: (15)

*eṣa prajñābhīmānena jaḍaṃ jagad amanyata /
iti dharmasutenokte papāta nakulaḥ kṣitau //16//*

“On account of being proud of his intelligence, he thought the whole world dumb.” When this was said by the Son of Dharma, Nakula also fell on the ground. (16)

*rājā pṛṣṭo 'tha bhīmena vrajann evābravīt punaḥ /
rūpamānī smareṇāpi spardhām eṣa na ca kṣamī //17//*

As the king kept on walking, he was asked again by Bhīma, and replied to him thus: “thinking himself handsome he could not tolerate competition even by Kāmadeva [himself].” (17)

*ity ukte vrajatā rājñā nipāpata dhanamjayah /
punaś ca pṛṣṭo bhīmena jagāda jagatīpatiḥ //18//*

As this was stated by the king who carried on walking, Arjuna fell. Again he was asked by Bhīma, and the king replied: (18)

*śūramānī cacāraiṣa śithilaṃ samarāṅgane /
iti bruvāṇo bhūpālo jagāmaivāviluptadhīḥ //19//*

“Thinking himself heroic, he behaved weakly on the battlefield”. Speaking thus, the king, whose mind is undamaged, went along. (19)

*bhīmas tato nipatitaḥ patito 'smīty uvāca tam /
so 'bravīd baladarpo 'bhūd bhīma bahvaśanasya te //20//*

Then fell Bhīma who cried to him: “I am fallen!”, [to which] he responded: “O Bhīma, you were proud of your strength and you also ate excessively.” (20)

*tato 'bhūd eka evātha vrajann anugataḥ śunā /
dadarśa sāksād āyātaṃ rathenendraṃ yudhiṣṭhiraḥ //21//*

Remaining all alone, he kept on walking as he was followed by the dog. [Then,] before his eyes Yudhiṣṭhira saw Indra, who arrived [there] in his chariot. (21)

*rājan matpuraṃ ehīti śakreṇokto jagāda saḥ /
śunā virahitaḥ svargaṃ saśarīro na kāmāye //22//*

Addressed by Indra [who told him]: “O king, come into my city!”, [Yudhiṣṭhira] replied: “having [still] a body, I do not want *svarga* [if] I am deprived of this dog.” (22)

*tam abravīt surapatiḥ śunāṃ svarge kuto gatiḥ /
dhiṣṇyam ārohatu śveti tvadanyaḥ ko 'nubhāṣate //23//*

The Lord of the Gods told him: “how [could there be] a passage for dogs in *svarga*? Who else but you [would] say that this dog should rise up to the quarter of the sky?” (23)

*tatas tam ūce nṛpatir bhaktatyāgaṃ kathaṃ sahe /
bhaktavidveṣiṇaḥ svarge nṛśamsasya kuto gatiḥ //24//*

Then the king told him: “how can I tolerate abandoning my *bhakta*? How can there be a passage into *svarga* for one who is cruel and hostile toward his *bhakta*? (24)

*yady asti sukṛtaṃ kiṃcin mama tena sureśvara /
yātu svargaṃ sadehaḥ śvā nainaṃ tyaktuṃ samutsahe //25//*

O Lord of Gods, if I have some virtue, by that may this dog go to *svarga* in its body. I cannot bear to abandon it. (25)

*strīvadhenaiṣa sadṛśaṃ brahmasvaharaṇena ca /
sarvāpāpātmaṃ santo bhaktatyāgaṃ pracakṣate //26//*

Wise men consider the desertion of one’s *bhakta* as the essence of all evil, equivalent to the killing of women or stealing the property of Brahmins.” (26)

*ity ukte dharmarājena dharmas tyaktvā śvavigraham /
tam ūce putra tuṣṭo ’smi sadvṛttena tavāmunā //27//*

When this was stated by Dharmarāja, [Lord] Dharma cast away the dog-form and declared: “O son, I am pleased by this virtuous conduct of yours. (27)

*dṛṣṭo ’si pāthaso hetoḥ purā dvaitavane mayā /
svasti te vraja bhūpāla saśarīraḥ surālayam //28//*

Formerly, you were seen by me in the Dvaita forest for the purpose of [attaining] water. O king, salutations unto thee. Go to the abode of the gods with your [mortal] body.” (28)

*iti pitrā samādiṣṭo vimānaṃ vipulaprabham /
āruhya puṇyasopānaṃ viveśa suramandiram //29//*

Commanded thus by his father, and having mounted a chariot of ample lustre, he entered the dwelling of the gods which had sacred steps [leading up to it]. (29)

*pūjyamānaḥ suraiḥ sārdhaṃ munibhir nārādādibhiḥ /
rājarṣitārakāmadhye sa rarājāṃśumān iva //30//*

Being praised by the gods along with *munis* like Nārada and the others, he shone amidst the kingly sages as the moon amidst the stars. (30)

*tataḥ sa śakram avadad bhrātaro yatra me sthitāḥ /
śyāmā ca yatra dayitā tatra vāso mamepsitaḥ //31//*

Then he said to Indra: “I long to be where my brothers and [our] wife of dark hair are staying.” (31)

*tam abravīt sahasrākṣo bhāvaṃ mā mānuṣaṃ gamaḥ /
rājarṣibhir anāsādyāṃ prāpto ‘si gatim uttamām //32//*

Thousand-eyed [Indra] told him: “do not indulge [now] in human sentiments! You have gained the highest passage which is inaccessible [even] to the kingly sages” (32)

*ity ukto ‘py asakrd yatnād vajriṇā dharmanandanāḥ /
bhrātṛn avāptum icchāmīty abhāṣata punaḥ punaḥ //33//*

Although addressed repeatedly and vigorously by Indra in this way, the Son of Dharma said again and again: “I wish to see my brothers!” (33)

18. Svarga-parva

*nārāyaṇaṃ namaskṛtya naraṃ caiva narottamam /
devīṃ sarasvatīṃ vyāsaṃ tato jayam udīrayet //1//*

Having prostrated before Nārāyaṇa and Nara, the best of men, as well as before Vyāsa and the goddess Sarasvatī, may hail [now] be uttered. (1)

*tataḥ svargaśriyā juṣṭaṃ bhrājiṣṇumukutāṅgadam /
dadarśa śakrasaṅkāśam kururājaṃ yudhiṣṭhiraḥ //2//*

Then, Yudhiṣṭhira saw the Kuru king [Duryodhana] resembling Indra, with radiant crest jewel and bracelet, and furnished with the lustre of *svarga*. (2)

*taṃ vīkṣya sānujaṃ tatra jātamanyuḥ śatakratum /
uvāca svasti devebhyaḥ svargāyāstv ayam añjaliḥ //3//*

Having seen Duryodhana along with his younger brother [Duṣṣāsana] in heaven, he became furious and addressed Indra: “hail to the gods! May this salutation be unto *svarga*. (3)

*yatra duryodhanaḥ pāpaḥ pṛthivīkṣayakāraṇam /
sumerukūṭavikaṭe vibhāti paramāsane //4//
na tatra mama vāso ’sti vrajāmy eṣa namo ’stu te /
yatra me bhrātaraḥ sūrās tatra vāso mamādhunā //5//*

Where the vicious Duryodhana, [my enemy], who is the cause for the destruction of the earth shines forth on the highest throne, which is as great as the peak of mount Meru, *there* is not my dwelling place! I am leaving! Salutation unto thee. Where my heroic brothers are, *there* is my dwelling place now!” (4-5)

*iti rājño bruvāṇasya devadūtaṃ surās tataḥ /
bhrātṛṇ prati prayāhīti prāhur vāyumanojavam //6//*

As the king spoke in this way, the gods said to their messenger, whose apprehension was swift as the wind: “go forth to [his] brothers.” (6)

*sa devadūtādiṣṭena vrajan sapadi vartmanā /
dadarśa puruṣān ghorān narakāntaravartinaḥ //7//*

As he was walking quickly on the path directed by the envoy of the gods, he saw awful [looking] men abiding inside hell. (7)

*keśaṣoṇitamāṃsāsr̥gvasāsamaṅghātapicchile /
praklīnānekakuṇapavyākīrṇakṛmisamaṅkule //8//*

kākakaṅkabakolūkavadanair abhito vr̥te /
śavadurgandhanīrandhrasaṃghaṭṭasatasamkule //9//
karapattraśīlāpākasaṃtaptasikatātate /
lohitalivasākumbhakūṭasaśalmalidāruṇe //10//
kṣurakaṅṭhakakīlograjvālāstambhavibhīṣaṇe /
taptavaitaraṇīvisrapūyapūritasaikate //11//
asipatravanotkṛttanaranārīkṛtasvane /
ghorāndhakāragahane tatra śuśrāva dharmajaḥ //12//
pāpinām kvāthyamānānām ākrandaṃ dhṛtidāruṇam /
kṣaṇam ekam ito rājan mā nivartasva śītalaḥ //13//
tvatpuṇyavātaiḥ spr̥ṣṭānām asmākaṃ bādḥate tamaḥ /
vayaṃ bhīmaprabhṛtayaḥ pāṇḍavā bhrātaras tava //14//

There, in a cave of terrible darkness, which was slimy from phlegm, marrow, blood, red flesh and hair; infested by worms scattered over numerous wet corpses; enveloped on all sides by cries of owls, cranes, herons and crows; crowded by the dense friction of a hundred-fold stinking corpses; [surrounded by] shores of burning hot sand, rocks and saws; frightful on account of the *śalmli* [tree], and a pile of urns of marrow, oil and blood; terrifying on account of blazing pillars and sharp stakes, thorns and razors; [having] a sandbank filled with pus smelling from raw meat due to the inflamed Vaitaraṇī river; [and emanating] sounds that were uttered by men and women who were cut to pieces in the forest of sword-like leaves; [there,] the Son of Dharma heard the dreadful constant weeping of sinners, as they were being burnt [alive]. [They told him:] “O king, one moment! Do not turn back from this place! Since we are touched by the breezes of your *puṇya* (merit), the darkness [that envelopes us] is removed from us. We are your brothers, the Pāṇḍavas, headed by Bhīma. (8-14)

kṛṣṇā ceyaṃ varārohā mahiṣī vallabhā satī /
śrutvaitat karuṇaṃ rājā vajreṇeva vidāritaḥ //15//

[And] this is [your] handsome queen, [our] wife Kṛṣṇā.” Having heard this, the king was woefully torn apart, as if by thunderbolt. (15)

*tatraiva tasthau nirdvandvo nindan durlalitaṃ vidheḥ /
so 'vadad bata devānām avicārahataiva dhīḥ //16//*

He stood at that very spot, and indifferent to the pairs of opposites, he reviled fate's ill-manner. He said: "Alas, [my] thought is destroyed by the folly of the gods. (16)

*yair ete dharmaniratāḥ kleśe 'smin samupekṣitāḥ /
ayaṃ mohaḥ prasādo vā viveko nāyam īdrśaḥ //17//*

Because of them [i.e. because of the gods], these [brothers of mine], who are devoted to *dharma*, were abandoned in this anguish. This is delusion or clarity[?] [In this case] there is no such distinction. (17)

*vibudhānām na jānanti ye dharmasya vyatikramam /
bhramaḥ svapno 'tha māyeyaṃ kim etad iti cintayan //18//
devadūta na jānāmi kasyedaṃ durviceṣṭate⁴³⁶ /
ihaivāhaṃ sthito gaccha na me svargeṇa kāraṇam //19//*
pūjyante yatra durvṛttā viśasyante nu sādhaḥ /
ity ukto dharmarājena devadūtaḥ surādhipam //20//
gatvā vyajijñapat sarvaṃ sa ca tūṣṇīm samāyayau /
prāpte surādhipa tatra saha dharmādibhiḥ suraiḥ //21//
nādrśyatāśubhaṃ kiṃcid vavau puṇyaś ca mārutaḥ /
tato 'bravīt surapatir viṣaṇṇaṃ dharmanandanam //22//*

They [i.e. my brothers] are among the wise who do not know the violation of *dharma*. Thinking, O Envoy of the Gods, 'what is this? An error, a dream, or perhaps an illusion?', I do not know! Whose ill-behaviour is this? I am staying right here! Go, I have no reason [to return to] *svarga*, where vicious people are worshipped while noble men are cut asunder." Addressed thus by the Dharma-King, the messenger of the gods returned to Indra, approached him quietly, and informed him everything. When Indra reached there along with Dharma and the other gods, nothing inauspicious was seen, and an auspicious breeze blew. Then, Indra spoke to the sorrowful Son of Dharma: (18-22)

⁴³⁶ The form *durviceṣṭate* is unclear. The verse possibly should have read *durviceṣṭitam*.

*asatyam etan māyeyaṃ⁴³⁷ mayaiveha pradarśitā /
etadālokanam rājñām avaśyaṃ miśrakarmaṇām //23//**

“This is unreal. This [entire] illusion here was shown by me alone. Such vision [of hell] is necessary for kings whose actions are mixed. (23)

*asatyaleśasaṃsparśād etaddroṇavadhāt tava /
ehi paśya nijān bhrātṛṇ divyaṃ svapadam āśritān //24//*

A slight trace of this falsehood afflicted you because you [had] Droṇa killed. Come see your own brothers, who resorted to their respective divine abodes. (24)

*svargaśriyaṃ ca pāñcālīṃ putrāṃś cāmaratām gatān /
ity ukte devarājena vītaśoko yudhiṣṭhiraḥ //25//*

[Behold] Pāñcālī, who has the glory of heaven, as well as [your] sons who became immortal.” Addressed in this way by the king of the gods, Yudhiṣṭhira’s sorrow vanished. (25)

*snātvā dharmagirā svargagaṅgāmbhasi nabhaḥprabhe /
utsṛjya mānuṣaṃ bhāvaṃ puṇyāṃ surasabhāṃ yayau //26//*

At Dharma’s order, Yudhiṣṭhira bathed in the waters of the heavenly Gaṅgā, whose splendour is celestial. Having deserted his human existence, he went to the holy assembly of the gods. (26)

*apsaronṛttalalitān gāyan gandharvakiṃnarān /
tatra svapadam ārūḍhān apaśyad anujān nijān //27//*

There, he beheld the lovely *apsarās* dancing, and the *gandharvas* and *kiṃnaras* singing. [He also saw] his own brothers who had ascended to their own abode. (27)

*maṇḍale ca raveḥ karṇaṃ svayam indreṇa darśitam /
abhimanyuṃ ca rucirākāranirjitamanmatham //28//
varcobhidhānaṃ somasya taṃ sutam somamaṇḍale /
gandharvarājaṃ sāksāc ca dhṛtarāṣṭraṃ janeśvaram //29//*

⁴³⁷ Since the original reading *nāyeyaṃ* does not make sense, I have amended it to *māyeyaṃ*.

In the disc of the sun, he saw Karṇa himself, who was pointed out to him by Indra. In the disc of the moon, he saw the son [of Arjuna], Abhimanyu, whose name is 'lustre of the moon', by whose beautiful form [even] Manmatha [the God of Love] is surpassed. In front of his eyes he beheld the best of men, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, as the king of the *gandharvas*. (28-29)

*vasuṃ śāntanavaṃ bhīṣmaṃ guruṃ droṇaṃ bṛhaspatim /
nārāyaṇaṃ ca viśveṣaṃ śaṅkhacakraḡadādharam //30//*

[He beheld] Śāntanu's son, Bhīṣma, as a Vasu, as well as the guru Droṇa, Bṛhaspati, and the lord of the universe, Nārāyaṇa, holding his club, discus and conch-shell. (30)

*yadaṃśā bhuvi ye jātās tāṃś ca dṛṣṭvā tadāśrayān
āśasāda sadānandaṃ vandyam nandanavāsinām
dharmasūnur nidhir dhāmnām hariścandrocitaṃ padam //31//**

Having watched them resort to that part from which they were born in this world, the Son of Dharma, who is a receptacle of glories, reached that venerable place of perpetual bliss proper to Hariścandra and that belongs to the dwellers of Nandana [i.e., Indra's heaven]. (31)

*atha nahuṣadilīpadhundhumārasagarabhagīratharāmakārtavīryaiḥ /
nṛpatibhir abhito 'bhivandyamānaḥ sitacaritaḥ sa rarāja rājacandraḥ //32//*

As he was being venerated on all sides by the kings Nahuṣa, Dilīpa, Dhundhumāra, Sagara, Bhagīratha, Rāma and Kārtavīrya, [Yudhiṣṭhira], the most excellent among kings, whose behaviour is pure, shone. (32)

*śrutveti bhāratakathāṃ vaiśampāyanakīrtitām /
saṃpannasarpasatro 'bhūn nirvṛtto janamejayaḥ //33//*

Having listened thus to this story of the Bhāratas related by Vaiśampāyana, Janamejaya, whose snake sacrifice was completed, came back. (33)

etatsūtena kathitaṃ naimiṣāraṇyavāsinaḥ /

niśamya śaunakamukhās tasthur ānandanirbharāḥ //34//

Having heard this [Bhārata story] related by the Sūta [Ugraśravas], the dwellers of the Naimiṣa forest headed by Śaunaka, were excessively joyous. (34)

Appendix II

Amaracandra Sūri's *Bālabhārata*⁴³⁸

17. *Prāsthānika-parva*

*śrutvātha vṛṣṇinidhanaṃ dhanamjayamukhān nṛpaḥ /
tādṛkkālabalatrastaḥ samastatyāgadhīr abhūt //1//*

Having learned about the destruction of the Vṛṣṇis from Arjuna, the king [Yudhiṣṭhira], who was terrified by the power of such time/death, made up his mind to renounce everything. (1)

*dhṛtarāṣṭrabhuvāṃ rāṣṭram anuyujya yuyutsunā /
parikṣite kṣitiṃ svīyāṃ dadau sodarasammataḥ //2//*

He enjoined the kingdom of Dhṛtarāṣṭra's land to Yuyutsu, and agreeing with his kin, he gave his own dominion to Parikṣit. (2)

*udārapuṇyaprakṛtiṃ dvijaprakṛtisaṃmatām /
subhadrām iha bhūpālas tatpālanakṛte 'diśat //3//*

The king assigned Subhadrā, whose meritorious and noble nature was esteemed by the king's ministers and Brahmins, to his [i.e. Parikṣit's] protection. (3)

*śrāddham ādhāya bandhubhyo vidhāyeṣṭiṃ ca naiṣṭikīm /
utsasarja jale so 'gnīn rāgān iva śamāmṛte //4//*

Having performed the *śrāddha* ceremony and final oblation for his relatives, he relinquished the fires in water, as if deserting desires in immortality's tranquillity. (4)

*paurān āsvāsya vidhurān dharām āmantrya sānujaḥ /
urvīśaḥ sarvasamnyāsī yājñasenīsakho 'calat //5//*

⁴³⁸ Published in *Kāvya-mālā*, No. 45, ed. M. Paṇḍit Śivadatta, Bombay, 1894; *The Pandit*, No. 61, Vol. 6, Benares, 1871.

The king who renounced everything, consoled the distressed townsfolk, took leave of the earth along with his brothers, and went forth accompanied by [his wife], Yājñasenī. (5)

*etyotsargaruṣevātha pārthān prārthya hutāśanaḥ /
nindyaḥ suhr̥d ivādatta prāgdattān kārmukeṣudhīn //6//⁴³⁹*

Then, having come there, as if with the anger of being let loose, the God of Fire like a reproachable friend [i.e. a friend who gives and takes back] (*nindyaḥ suhr̥d iva*), demanded from the sons of Pṛthā, and then reclaimed the bow and [two] quivers, that they had received earlier. (6)

*parityaktapurān etān ekaḥ svā vārīto 'pi ṣaṭ /
tadā buddhīndriyapraṇān iva karmagaṇo 'nvagāt //7//*

Just as one's assembled *karma* follows the life breaths, sense organs and intellect [at the time of death], so did the dog, although warded off, follow these six who abandoned their bodies [or, city]. (7)

*athāmī diśam āseduḥ śanair dakṣiṇapaścimām /
magnām dvāravatīm vīkṣya na ca te yogino 'muhan //8//*

Then, these *yogins* gradually approached the south-western region, and upon seeing the city of Dvarakā submerged [in the ocean], they were not perplexed. (8)

*kṣoṇim pradakṣiṇīkr̥tya tataḥ sphītānugadyutiḥ /
rājā yayau diśam dīpyamāno bhānur ivottarām //9//*

Having made a circumambulation of the earth, the king, whose splendour was followed abundantly, went to the northern region luminous as the sun. (9)

*tato gatyā ca kīrtyā ca tuhinācalalaṅghinaḥ /
vālukārṇavam āpyaite 'paśyan meruṃ sanandanam //10//*

⁴³⁹ Note that due to their difficulty, asterisk marked verses are ones in which the offered translation is tentative.

Then, having successfully crossed the mountain of snow [the Himālaya] through a passage, they reached an ocean of sand, and saw Mount Meru with its [garden] Nandana. (10)

*nirāśraye nirālambe tatrātha pathi pārṣatī /
patitā cittam apy aujjhat kṛtye mūdhasya dhīr iva //11//*

There, on this shelterless and supportless path, Drupada’s daughter fell because she abandoned her mind, as intelligence abandons the mind of a fool when something must be done. (11)

*sarvato nirmalā rājaṃs tapoyoge sthitādbhute⁴⁴⁰ /
kutaḥ kumudvatīvāhni dīrghaṃ svapiti pārṣatī //12//**

“O king, she was entirely faultless in [the practice of] *yoga* and austerity, which were wonderfully kept [by her]. Why did Draupadī use to sleep at length during day time like a lotus pond?” (12)

*bhūpaḥ śrutveti bhīmoktim anāvṛttamukho ’vadat /
pakṣapātam adhataikā surādhipasute ’dhikam //13//*

Having listened to Bhīma’s speech, and without averting his face, the king said: “this one had exceeding partiality toward Indra’s son [Arjuna].” (13)

*patite sahadave ’tha bhīmapṛṣṭo ’bhyadhān nṛpaḥ /
ayaṃ dhiyo ’bhīmānena mene mohajaḍaṃ jagat //14//*

Then, when Sahadeva fell, the king replied to Bhīma who asked [him again]: “because [he took] pride in his intelligence, he thought the whole world erroneous and dumb.” (14)

*nakule patite bhīmapṛṣṭaḥ kṣmāpo ’vadat punaḥ /
na spardhāṃ rūpadarpeṇa kandarpe ’py eṣa cakṣame //15//*

⁴⁴⁰ The compound *sthitādbhute* is unclear here.

When Nakula fell, the king who was asked again by Bhīma, replied: “because [he took] pride in his appearance he could not stand any competition, even from the god of love [Kāma himself].” (15)

*jātapāte ’rjune vātaputrapṛṣṭo jagau nṛpaḥ /
cacāla śithilaṃ saiṣa śuramānī raṇāṅgaṇe //16//*

When Arjuna’s fall took place, the king, asked by the son of the wind, replied: “[although] he considered himself a hero, he feebly trembled on the battlefield”. (16)

*patito ’smīti bhīmena pātinābhihitas tataḥ /
bhūpo ’bhyadhād bale darpo bahvāśasya tavābhavat //17//*

“I have fallen!”, [he cried]. The king replied to Bhīma, who spoke to him as he was falling: “you were proud of your strength, and you also ate too much.” (17)

*ity ākramat paraṃ lokaṃ dharmavīro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ /
nākṣipac cakṣur apy eṣu patiteṣv api bandhuṣu //18//*

Having said that, Yudhiṣṭhita, the *dharm*-hero, proceeded to the world above without even casting a glance at his relatives as they have fallen. (18)

*śunaivānugato gacchann aviluptamatir nṛpa /
puruhūtaṃ purobhūtaṃ rathasthitam athaikṣata //19//*

O king, as [Yudhiṣṭhita] whose intelligence is unimpaired walked along, he was followed by his dog alone. Then, he saw Indra in front of him standing in his car. (19)

*dehī matpuram ehīti vāgbhaṅgyā bhāgyabhogyayā /
āhūtaḥ puruhūtena puruhūtaḥ kṣiter jagau //20//**

Invited by Indra, who spoke with a fraudulent speech that [sounded] profitable and fortunate [stating]: “come into my city in your [mortal] body!”, the Indra of the Earth [i.e. Yudhiṣṭhira] [now] spoke: (20)

*nākam ākalayiṣyāmi na vinaivāmunā śunā /
dhik taṃ kila sampatsu vipatsevakam ujjhati //21//*

“I will not [even] consider [entering] heaven without this dog. Fie indeed upon one who abandons a follower in distress at [times of] success! (21)

*vane 'py anujhitāsaktir malino 'py alināṃ gaṇaḥ /
suramūrdhādhirohe 'pi sumanobhir na mucyate //22//**

Even a swarm of black scorpions in the forest is wholly unimpaired by good people. It is not being deserted [by them] even for the sake of ascending up to the summit of the gods. (22)

*naivāliṅganti gobrahmaśivaliṅgādibhedinaḥ /
jāhnavīsavanālasya janam āśritamocinam //23//*

[Even] those who violate Śiva-liṅgas, Brahmins, cows and so forth, who are [too] lazy to bathe in the Gaṅgā, do not embrace a man who deserted his dependent. (23)

*etattyāge kva me dharmas taṃ vinā dyugatiḥ kutaḥ /
āstāṃ me tad iyaṃ śikṣā tavāpi bhraṃśakāriṇī //24//**

Where is my *dharma* in deserting this dog? How [am I to obtain] a passage into heaven without it? [By all means], please instruct me this [doctrine] of yours which produces desertion [of one's dependent].” (24)⁴⁴¹

*iti bhāṣiṇi dharmajñe rājñi saṃkrandano 'vadat /
sukṛtādikriyāhīnaḥ śvāyam etu kva me puram //25//*

After the *dharma*-knowing king said this, Indra spoke: “where would this dog, devoid of meritorious deeds, sacrificial acts and the like, go in my city?” (25)

*svargo 'stu dehayuktasya sukṛtair asya matkṛtaiḥ /
ity athoce nrpaḥ kampraśirobhiḥ pūjitaḥ suraiḥ //26//*

⁴⁴¹ I have taken the liberty in this instance to offer a more loose translation that brings out the meaning of the verse in English.

“Let there be *svarga* for him in his body, by virtue of the good deeds *I* have performed!”. Saying this, the king was now worshipped by the gods whose heads were shaking. (26)

*tataḥ śvarūpamugdharmaḥ svarūparuciraś cirāt /
prītaḥ sarvāṅgam āliṅgya bhūvallabham abhāṣata //27//*

Then, Dharma, who was pleased, released finally from the dog form, and having embraced [his son] on every limb, addressed the king in his own brilliant form: (27)

*vatsa vatsa tvam āloki śvadehena mude mayā /
prīto 'smi pattram āroha svargas te 'stu sanātanaḥ //28//*

“O child! O child! You were observed by me gladly when I was in my dog form. I am pleased. Ascend into this car. May the eternal *svarga* be yours!” (28)

*anayā samayābhogacaturaḥ pitur ājñayā /
vimānaṃ divyasopānaṃ prāpya dehī divaṃ gataḥ //29//*

At this command of his father, Yudhiṣṭhira, who was clever in the multifariousness of the law, having reached the car and the heavenly staircase, went to heaven in his [own] body. (29)

*arcito nākibhiḥ sākāṃ munibhir nāradādibhiḥ /
rājarṣiṣu rarājāyaṃ tatra candra ivoḍuṣu //30//*

Worshipped by the denizens of heaven along with *munis* like Nārada and others, he shone there among the kingly sages, as the moon among the stars. (30)

*prasthānastho divam anu nṛpaḥ prāha śakraṃ sthitās te
matsodaryāḥ saha makhabhuvā yatra tatrāsmi neyaḥ /
mā mānuṣyaṃ tridivabhuvane bhāvam ehīti tena
vyāśiddho 'pi dhruvam ayam abhūd atra gādhānubandhaḥ //31//**

After accomplishing his departure to heaven, the king said to Indra: “I should be led to that cheerful place where my brothers are staying.” By [Indra was said:]

“do not resort to human sentiments in the world of triple heaven. Even this attachment that was once closely fastened is firmly prohibited here.” (31)

18. *Svargārohaṇa-parva*

*athāyam āyataśrīkaṃ sasaudaryaṃ suyodhanam /
divi vīkṣyollasanmanyuḥ śatamanyum abhāṣata //1//*

Now, having seen Duryodhana, whose prosperity extended forth, along with his brothers in heaven, Yudhiṣṭhira, whose anger flared up, told Indra (*śatamanyum*). (1)

*namaḥ svargāya yatrāyam anapāyaḥ prapūjyate /
mahāpīṭhasthitaḥ pāpī jagatāpī suyodhanaḥ //2//*

“Salutations to [that] *svarga*, in which evil Duryodhana, who caused pain to the [entire] world, is seated on a high throne, and worshipped without obstacles. (2)

*kiṃ kāryaṃ nirvicāreṇa svargācāreṇa me 'dhunā /
sabandhuvargasamṣarga eva svargo 'stu gocaraḥ //3//**

What use is there for me now in a *svarga* whose [common] custom is inconsideration? Let *svarga* be a place for association with [one’s] family and relatives.” (3)

*atho sagarbhān ānandaḥ⁴⁴² samdarbhān asya bhūpateḥ /
darśayety adīśan devā devadūtaṃ manastvaram //4//**

Then, the gods ordered their messenger, whose mind was quick, [by] saying: “show the king [where his] brothers are assembled together.” (4)

*yathā tatprathitenātha pṛthvīnāthaḥ prapedivān /
durgatiṃ durgadurgandhavadhabandhādiduḥkhadām //5//*

And so the king set forth on an awful path displayed to him, that afflicts misery by death, imprisonment, and so forth, and is ill-smelling and rough to pass. (5)

⁴⁴² The function of the word *ānandaḥ* in the syntax of this verse is unclear here.

*pravadyavadhyamānānām bandhūnām vividhair vadhaiḥ /
sa tadākarnāyat karnakatum ārtataram svaram //6//*

Then, he heard an extremely pained sound, disagreeable to the ears, of his relatives as they were tortured and slain in various forms of corporeal punishments. (6)

*bhīmādayo vayam iyaṃ draupadī ca pṛthuvyathā /
tatpunyapavanenaiva svasthāḥ smaḥ sthīyatām kṣaṇam //7//*

[These voices called to him]: “We are Bhīma and the others, and here is Draupadī, who is suffering greatly. Please stay a moment as the breeze of your merit eases [our pain].” (7)

*ity uktyā stambhitaḥ stambhamantraśaktyeva bhūpatiḥ /
nindan devasya durvṛttaṃ devadūtam abhāṣata //8//*

On account of [their] speech, the king [became] paralyzed, as if by the power of the *stambha mantra* [freezing-spell]. He addressed the messenger of the gods reviling the god’s mean behaviour: (8)

*sthito ’haṃ bandhusaṅgena narako ’py eṣa nākati /
vaitaraṇy⁴⁴³ eva gaṅgeha duḥkhāny eva sukhāni me //9//*

“I am staying here in the company of my relatives. [Just as] even this hell becomes my heaven now, [so] the Vaitaraṇī river equals the Gaṅgā, and my pains are now pleasures! (9)

*svasti te gaccha nākibhyo nākāya ca namo namaḥ /
durvṛttā yatra pūjyante tyajyante śīlaśāliṇaḥ //10//*

Prostrations unto you, [now] go [back]! [Indeed] many prostrations to heaven and its denizens, where wicked people are worshipped and those who behave virtuously are forsaken.” (10)

⁴⁴³ I adopted the *Pandit*’s reading here: *vaitaraṇy eva* over the *Kāvya*mālā’s: *vaisariṇy eva*.

*ity ukte 'smin gate dūte puruhūtaṃ puraḥsthitam /
apaśyad bhūpatiḥ kiṃtu na kiṃcin narakādikam //11//*

Addressed in this way, the messenger went away. [At that very moment], the king beheld Indra standing in front of him, but did not [i.e., could not] see [even] a trace of *naraka* and its other sights any longer. (11)

*spaṣṭaṃ puṇyena marutā marutām adhipo nṛpam /
kim etad iti saṃbhrāntam athainaṃ sāntvayan jagau //12//*

Having consoled [Yudhiṣṭhira, who stood there] extremely perplexed, asking: “what is this?”, with pleasant breezes, the leader of the storm gods [Indra] now addressed the king: (12)

*guror vinigrahe 'voad yadasatyalavaṃ bhavān /
adarśi durgatis te 'sau tatphalaṃ māyayā mayā //13//*

“O venerable sir, this hell (*durgati*) shown to you by my *māyā* [illusion], is the result of that little lie you told the guru [Droṇa] in [your attempt] at stopping him. (13)

*tatpramodasudhāsindhūn bandhūn paśyādhunā divi /
nandinīm drupadasyāpi svargaśrīpadatām gatām //14//*

Behold now your relatives [enjoying] streams of heaven’s elating nectar in the sky, as well as the daughter of Drupada gone among those who participate in *svarga*’s glory.” (14)

*ity amartyapativākyasaṃmadī svarṇadīpayasi dharmanoditaḥ /
dharmasūnur aviśad dravikṛte śreyasīva vimale malacchidi⁴⁴⁴ //15//**

Rejoiced by the speech of the Lord of the Gods and impelled by his father, the Son of Dharma [now] entered spotless water, devoid of impurity, that generated liquefied gold, as if it was bliss. (15)

⁴⁴⁴ While the *Kāvyaṃālā* has a broken reading in this instance (‘*vimalacchidi ...*’), the *Pandit* offers the reading quoted above.

*rukmapaṅkajanikuṅjaguṅjanaiḥ karṇakoṭarasudhaughavarṣiṇaḥ /
tanmude madhulihāṃ padaṃ tadā tumbaruprabhṛtayo 'bhajan bhṛśam //16//*

Then, for his [i.e. Yudhiṣṭhira's] pleasure, [the gods] headed by the Gandharvas took on the role of bees with their buzzing, as they showered streams of nectar [pouring] from the hollow of their ears, in thickets of golden lotuses. (16)

*tanmadāya ca dṛśām agocarāḥ sāndramandramurajasvanasprśaḥ /
sauramaurajikarājayo yayur vārivāraṇagaṇasya garjiṣu //17//*

For his pleasure, rows of solar drummers imperceptible to the eye producing low and soft sounds of drums, went into the rumblings of flocks of 'water-elephants'. (17)

*tanmude ca jalamagnamūrtayas toyajākṛtikarānanaśriyaḥ /
citraṃrūtalayena cakrire nartanāni suranartakīgaṇāḥ //18//*

For his pleasure, a group of the gods' female dancers danced with beautiful *laya* [i.e. accompanying music] of the wind, the beauty of their faces, hands and bodies became lotuses, their forms submerged in water. (18)

*ity ananyalayaḥlīlītmanas toyakeliṣu kim apy ajānataḥ /
jāhnavī vapuṣi tasya nirmame martyatāvinimayena divyatām //19//*

For him, whose soul indulged in [various] unique delights, and who was somewhat indifferent to the water sports [around him], Gaṅgā created a divine form in exchange for his mortal one. (19)

*kalpakoṭimadanendubhāsvatā kālapāvavakavivartakarmanā /
uddhṛtair aṇubhir uttamottamaiḥ klṛptamūrtir iva sa vyarājata //20//**

He shone like a statue formed by the very best atoms of time, extracted at the end of the Kalpa by the sun and the moon's embrace, affected by turning the fire of time. (20)

*traidaśīm atha sabhām abhivrajan prekṣaṇīyakavidhāyinām puraḥ /
yad yad aihata sa dātum adbhutaṃ tat tad aikṣata tad ātmahastagam //21//*

Then, going toward the divine assembly in front of those causing beauty [i.e. the gods], he realized that every marvel he possibly wanted to obtain was already in his possession. (21)

*rājasūyamakhakarmasiddhijaṃ siddhagītiṣu nijaṃ piban yaśaḥ /
śakradarśitapathaḥ pṛthūtsavo 'nutsukaḥ surasabhām sa bhejivān //22//*

The calm [king] who was excessively joyous, whose path was displayed by Indra, joined the assembly of the gods, feasting upon his own fame caused by his success in the ritual of the Rājasūya sacrifice, amidst divine songs. (22)

*tatra samprasaraḍapsarogaṇaprekṣaṇīyakamahān sahodarān /
tān vibhāvasuvibhābhivibhāvino bhāsītāmarasabhān nyabhālayan //23//*

There, he beheld his brothers, whose assemblies were immortal and resplendent, victorious among close kings and friends, their might [clearly] visible [as they were] propitiated by troops of *apsarās*. (23)

*arke karṇābhimanyū harimahasi hariṃ tatra gandharvarāje
gāndhārīśaṃ kṛpīśaṃ guruvapuṣi vasāvaṣṭame sindhusūnum /
yeṣāṃ anye 'pi yeṃ 'śāḥ⁴⁴⁵ kṣitibharahataye 'vātaran martyalokaṃ
līnāṃs tān eṣa teṣu tridaśapatigirā dharmaputro dadarśa //24//**

There, the son of Dharma saw Karṇa and Abhimanyu [merge] at the invocation of the Lord of Heaven [i.e. Indra], into the sun; Hari [merge] into the splendour of Hari; the husband of Gāndhārī [i.e. Dhṛtarāṣṭra], [merge] into the king of the Gandharvas; the husband of Kṛpī [i.e. Droṇa], [merge] into the form of the guru; and the son of the Sindhu king, [i.e. Bhīṣma], [merge] into the eight *vasus*. [He also saw] others whose portions descended into the world of mortals for the sake of the annihilation of the earth, merging into their respective [original parts]. (24)

⁴⁴⁵ Although it appears identically in both published editions of the text (the *Kāvyaṃālā* and the *Pandit*), the expression *yeṃ 'śāḥ* is unclear here. A better reading would be *ye 'mśāḥ*.

*bhuktākḥiladvīpadilīparāmabhagīrathādyādbhutavīrasevyaḥ /
ayaṃ svayaṃ tatra rarāja rājacandro hariścandrapadocitaśrīḥ //25//**

This lunar king, whose glory is suitable for king Hariścandra's abode, shone there himself, attended by wondrous heroes as Bhagīratha, Rāma, Dilīpa and others who possess the entire peninsula. (25)

Appendix III

Agastya Paṇḍita's *Bālabhārata*⁴⁴⁶

Canto 20⁴⁴⁷

*kṛṣṇe gate jīvitamuktatrṣṇāḥ pañcāpi patnyā saha pāṇḍuputrāḥ /
prasthānam urvyāṃ mahad ācaranto dehān vihātuṃ samayaṃ vitenuḥ //83//*

After Kṛṣṇa departed [from the world], the five sons of Pāṇḍu had given up the hunger for life. Undertaking the great departure from the earth along with their wife, they agreed to abandon their bodies [i.e. their corporeal state]. (83)

*parīkṣitaṃ cakrur anantaram te rājyābhiṣekāmbubhir ārdramūrtim /
valkāni vāsāṃsi tato vasānā bāṣpāmbubarṣeṇa ca pauralokam //84//*

Immediately after that, they made Parīkṣit [their successor] by [sprinkling] the coronation water on his fresh body. Assuming clothes made of barks of trees, [they consoled] the townsfolk [who followed them] with showers of tear drops. (84)

*vṛkodarādyair anujaiḥ krameṇa patnyā ca kenāpi śunānuyātaḥ /
pradakṣiṇīkartumanā dharitrīṃ prācīṃ narendrah prathamam pratasthe //85//*

Intent upon making a circumambulation of the earth, [Yudhiṣṭhira], the best of men, first set forth eastward, followed successively by his younger brothers Bhīma and the others, his wife, and a certain dog. (85)

*saśakracāpadvajapaṅkajāni manaḥpadaiḥ śuddhatarīkṛtāni /
padāni teṣāṃ pathi pāṇḍavānāṃ siddhā nibaddhāñjalayaḥ praṇemuḥ //86//*

⁴⁴⁶ Published as *The Bālabhāratam of Agastya Paṇḍita*, ed. K. S. Ramamurthi, Sri Venkateswara University Oriental Series No. 10, S. V. University Oriental Research Institute, Tirupati, 1983.

⁴⁴⁷ The translation consists of the verses relating the MhP and SĀ *parvans* in the work's twentieth canto.

The Siddhās bowed with folded hands to the footprints of the Pāṇḍavas on the path. These footprints which were marked by Indra's bow, battle standard, and lotus, were made more pure by the steps of thought. (86)

*aśrāntam ākrāntamahībhṛtas te nistīrṇanānāvīdhavāhinikāḥ /
yātrām punardigvijigīṣayeva kutrāpy akunṭhaprasarām vitenuḥ //87//*

Unweariedly, they climbed mountains and crossed various types of rivers as they [had once] defeated kings and scattered many kinds of armies. They carried out their journey that never met any impediment, as if wishing to conquer again the four quarters of the earth. (87)

*mūrtāya mārge sa niṣaṅgayugmaṃ kṛśānave gāṇḍivam arpayitvā /
tataḥ pathenaiva payonidhīnām prācīm avācīm prayayuh pratīcīm //88//*

On this path, [Arjuna] cast away his Gāṇḍiva and the two quivers before the embodied form of Lord Agni. Then, [the brothers] advanced toward the eastern, southern and western seas. (88)

*udaṇmukhās te tadanu prayānto vilaṅghya puṇyāni vanasthalāni /
srotaḥparītāṃ suranimnagāyā haimaṃ ca śailappravaram vyatīyuh //89//*

Then, as they proceeded facing north, they traversed [various] sacred forests. They crossed over the Himālaya, the best of mountains, which is surrounded by the waters of the Gaṅgā. (89)

*athopavāsavratakarśītāṅgī papāta pūrvaṃ pathi yājñasenī /
tato yamau śakrasutaś ca paścād anantaraṃ so 'pi samīrasūnuḥ //90//*

Since her body was emaciated on account of the vow of fasting, Draupadī was the first who fell on the path. Following her, fell the twins, then Arjuna, and immediately after [him] even Bhīma [fell]. (90)

*teṣām kramāt svasya ca pātahetuṃ bhīmena pṛṣṭo nṛpatiḥ śaśaṃsa /
pārthātisaktiṃ matirūpagarvau rājñām avājñām amitāśītām ca //91//*

The king was asked by Bhīma about the reason for their fall in that order, as well as his own. Yudhiṣṭhira spoke of [Draupadī's] excessive attachment to Arjuna, [the twins'] arrogance [in their] form and intelligence, [Arjuna's] contempt for [the other] kings, and [Bhīma's] immeasurable eating. (91)

*sārdham śunaivānugatena yāntaṃ śubhaṃyucāritram ajātaśatrum /
avocad agre namucer vijetā rathena māрге kṛtasannidhānaḥ //92//*

As Yudhiṣṭhira, whose good conduct is splendid, marched on followed by his dog alone, [Indra] the conquerer of Namuci, came in his chariot to his presence on the path, and spoke before him: (92)

*śvānaṃ nṛpa svargativighnam enaṃ santyajya yānena divaṃ bhajethāḥ /
tato 'nujāms citrapadāpadānān divyākṛtīn drakṣyasi pārṣatīm ca //93//*

“O king, abandon this dog who is [nothing but] a hindrance to attaining *svarga* and obtain heaven by this car. Then shall you see your younger brothers, whose noble work is marked distinguishly, [who have attained] divine bodies, as well as your wife.” (93)

*sa cainam āha sma cirāśritena śunā śunāsīra vināmunā me /
na rocate nākavihārasaukhyam ślāghyam param bhrātṛsamāgamo vā //94//*

He [Yudhiṣṭhira] spoke to him: “O Indra, without this long dependent dog, the most praiseworthy enjoyments and pleasures of heaven, or [even] the re-union with my brothers are undesirable to me.” (94)

*vihāya tacchaunakarūpam agre mūrtena dharmeṇa saha kṣitīśaḥ /
āropito mātalicoditāsvam ratham maghonā divam āruroha //95//*

Along with Dharma, who cast away his dog-form in front of him and was [now] in his natural form, the king was raised on a chariot whose horses were driven by Indra's charioteer – Mātali. [Thus,] he ascended to heaven with Indra. (95)

*āndolayann abhranadītaraṅgān madodayo nandanagandhavāhaḥ /
nṛpāya kalpadrumapuṣpagandham upāyanatvam gamayām babhūva //96//*

An intoxicating wind arisen from Indra's paradise, swinging the waves in the water of the celestial Gaṅgā, made the fragrance of the flowers of [svarga's] Kalpadruma tree a present for the king. (96)

*pāñcālyā samam utthitair nirayataḥ karṇādibhir bhrāṭṛbhiḥ
svaṃ svaṃ dhāma gatair abhiṣṭutayaśā divyaiś ca tair bandhubhiḥ /
sindhau diggajadānadigdhapayasi tyaktvā vapur mānuṣam
sarvāsāṃ diviṣaddrśāṃ sa vidadhe śarmāṇi dharmākṛtiḥ //97//*

[Yudhiṣṭhira], whose glory was praised by Karṇa and the other brothers, who arose from hell with Draupadī, each of them returning to his natural abode, as well as by other relatives who returned to their divine origins, abandoned his mortal body in a river of water anointed by elephant rut. He, whose form is *dharma*, caused delight to all the eyes of the denizens of heaven. (97)

Appendix IV

The *Svargārohaṇaprabandha*⁴⁴⁸

hariḥ

śrīkṛṣṇe trāṇaniṣṇe gatavati bhagavaty ambujākṣe nijaṃ dhāmā-

*kṛṣṭās*⁴⁴⁹ *tatpadāmbhoruhayugalamahābhaktipāsair apāsāḥ /*

bhūlokāvasthitim svām rahitamahitaśauryāśrayām tām apārthām

*ālocyā hanta pārthā matim atha vidadhuś cātmadehān vihātum //1//*⁴⁵⁰

O dear (*ā hanta*)!⁴⁵¹ Subsequent to the departure [from the world] of the lord of lotus eyes, Kṛṣṇa, who is skillful in protecting [the earth], to his natural abode; drawn by nooses of great devotional attachment to his lotus feet, the Pāṇḍavas [became] devoid of [human] ties and bereft of hope (*apāsāḥ*). Considering that their own staying on earth was pointless and devoided of their Pārtha identity (*apārthām*), and lacked any basis for celebrated valour (*rahitamahitaśauryāśrayām*), they made up their minds to abandon their corporeal state. (1)

⁴⁴⁸ The following reconstructed edition and translation of the text are based on the Devanāgarī manuscript T 489 B (henceforth: Dev). In cases where Dev is unclear or missing passages, I have also consulted the Malayalam manuscripts C 1220 B (henceforth: M1), and C 2343 A (henceforth: M2). It should be noted however, that M2 consists of fragments (beginning and ending folios) of the text, and was therefore consulted only at the concluding sections of the narrative. All of these manuscripts are found in the University of Kerala Manuscripts Library, Karyavattom.

I wish to thank several people who generously helped me prepare this translation. First and foremost, my supervisor, Prof. Christopher Minkowski, from whom I gained invaluable knowledge about the study of manuscripts, and the preparation of an edition of a text (a training I never acquired before). His suggestions regarding this text's translation and reconstruction were nothing short of immeasurable. I would also like to thank Mr. Shaji from the University of Kerala Manuscripts Library, for the professional assistance he provided, as well as his hospitality and good will toward me; Dr. Nagaraja Rao, for an outstanding initial reading experience of the Devanāgarī manuscript in Mysore; Prof. David Shulman, for the time and dedication he invested in reading the Malayalam manuscripts with me in Jerusalem; and finally, Dr. Csaba Dezső for his brilliant ability in deciphering the Malayalam, and his generous help in editing and polishing the translation from Sanskrit. I am grateful for each of these encounters from which I profited immensely.

⁴⁴⁹ Dev reads *ākṛṣṭah*; I adopted M1's reading *ākṛṣṭāḥ*.

⁴⁵⁰ Sragdharā metre.

⁴⁵¹ I thank Dr. James Benson for bringing to my attention that according to Pāṇini *ā hanta* is an idiomatic expression for remembering something with regret. According to Dr. Benson, this may be the poet's signature at the beginning of his work.

*tāvad dorvikramāvarjītabhuvanatalāḥ pāṇḍuputrāḥ svapautraṃ
śāntaṃ svāntena nārāyaṇacaraṇaratim puṣṇatā viṣṇurātam /
rājye prājyānubhāvaṃ sumahitam abhiṣicyātha jātātmayogā
gehān nāgāhvayād valkalavasanadharāḥ prasthitāḥ kṛṣṇayā te //2//⁴⁵²*

The sons of Pāṇḍu who conquered the surface of the earth with the strength of their arms, then consecrated for kingship their own free-from-passion grandson [Janamejaya], of great nobility and honour, who was given to them by Viṣṇu. They did this with hearts filling with delight at [serving] the feet of Nārāyaṇa. With self-discipline arisen in them, they set forth from their home in Hastināpura dressed in bark garments, along with their wife, Draupadī. (2)

*paurān bāṣpāyamāṇān galitadhṛtisamaṃ nirgatān duḥkhitāms tān
sāmnāśvāsya praveśya sphuritarucipurim viṣṇurātena guptām /
prācīm āśāṃ nirāśo vibudhanutayaśāḥ⁴⁵³ dharmajo bhīmamukhyaiḥ
sodaryaiḥ kṛṣṇayā kenacid atha sa śunā cānuyātaḥ pratasthe //3//⁴⁵⁴*

They consoled the grieved townsfolk, who left [Hastināpura] contently weeping for their fallen joy (*galitadhṛtisamaṃ*), with kind words; while sending them back to the town that was glittering with lustre, [for it was now] protected by [their grandson, Janamejaya,] granted by Viṣṇu. Devoid of hope, the Son of Dharma, Yudhiṣṭhira, whose glory is praised among gods, set forth toward the eastern region followed by his brothers headed by Bhīma, his wife Kṛṣṇā, and a certain dog. (3)

*cakrābjadhvajacāpacihnaruciraiḥ siddhāvalīvanditair
madhye bandhurasārameyapada⁴⁵⁵ vinyāsātipūtaiḥ padaiḥ /
kṛtvā śuddhatarāṃ dharāṃ vratadharāḥ pūrvāmbudhiṃ prāpya te
nīreṇaiva diśāṃ kṛṣṇānulasitā⁴⁵⁶ m āpannatāpaṃnudah //4//⁴⁵⁷*

⁴⁵² Sragdharā metre.

⁴⁵³ Dev reads *yaśaḥ*; I adopted M1's reading *yaśāḥ*.

⁴⁵⁴ Sragdharā metre.

⁴⁵⁵ Dev reads *padam*, but it would seem that the *anusvāra* is redundant and anyhow makes the verse unmetrical.

⁴⁵⁶ *Anusvāra* in the Dev Ms on top of *kṛṣṇānulasitā* seems redundant.

⁴⁵⁷ Śārdūlavikrīḍita metre.

Resolved in their vow they made the earth purer by virtue of their footsteps, that were praised by flocks of Siddhas [semi-gods], and were beautiful due to the [regal] signs of disc, lotus, flag, and bow. [These same footprints] were themselves well purified by the assemblage (*vinyāsa*) of the dog's curved footprints in their midst (*madhye bandhurasārameyapada*). [Finally], they reached the eastern ocean. There, they dispelled the heat which they received (*āpanna-tāpaṃ-nudaḥ*) at the quarter of blazing fire (*diśāṃ kṛśānulasitām*) with water alone (*nīreṇaiva*). (4)

*tatrādrśyata viśvavanditavapur drśyāṃ tanuṃ dhārayan
devo vāyusakho mukhaṃ makhabhujāṃ tasyājñayā gāṇḍivam /
cikṣepāmbunidhau dhanur viratakarma svaṃ ca tūṅyugaṃ
jiṣṇur yad varuṇāhṛtaṃ sa bhagavān asmai dadau khāṇḍave //5//⁴⁵⁸*

There, god Agni, whose form is praised by the whole world, who is the friend of the wind and the mouth of the enjoyers of sacrifice, assuming a visible body, was seen [by the Pāṇḍavas]. At [Agni's] order, [Arjuna] threw his own bow, Gāṇḍiva, whose duty came to an end, and the two quivers into the ocean. The victorious lord (*jiṣṇur sa bhagavān*) had given this bow to him having received it from Varuṇa [at the time of the burning of the] Khāṇḍava [forest]. (5)

*sarītpatīpariplutām jaladhitīrato dvārakām
vilokya kṛtavandanāḥ kim api jātaśokāṅkurāḥ /
pradakṣiṇam atha kṣīter iha vidhāya codaṅmukhā
gatā manasi viṣṇubhaktikṛtatāṇḍavāḥ pāṇḍavāḥ //6//⁴⁵⁹*

Seeing Dvārakā, which had been submerged by the lord of rivers [the ocean - *sarītpatī*], on the shores of the sea, the Pāṇḍavas prostrated, but were rather afflicted by sprouts of grief rising [in their minds]. Having made a circumambulation of the earth at that place, they faced toward the north, and kept on walking while performing dance in their minds in devotion to Viṣṇu. (6)

⁴⁵⁸ Śārdūlavikrīḍita metre.

⁴⁵⁹ Pṛthvī metre.

*aśrāntam ākrāntamahībhṛtas te nistīrṇanānāvidhavāhinikāḥ /
yātrām punardigvijigīṣayeva kutrāpy akunṭhaprasarām vitenuḥ //7//⁴⁶⁰*

Unweariedly, they climbed mountains and crossed various types of rivers as they [had once] defeated kings and scattered many kinds of armies. They carried out their journey that never met any impediment, as if wishing to conquer again the four quarters of the earth. (7)

*mahāgirim umāgurum dadṛśur unnatam te tataḥ
priyāmadhuragītahāriharanṛttaśṛṅgāritam /
praṇamya tam atītya ca sphuritayogavanto gatā
dṛśāpur atha vālukārṇavam udīrṇakautūhalāḥ //8//⁴⁶¹*

Then, they saw the great high mountain [Himālaya], father of goddess Umā, that was made loveable by Śiva's dance and captivating on account of melodious songs of his beloved [Pārvatī]. Having bowed to that mountain, they, who were joined with radiance, crossed it, and went along. Then, their eyes reached an ocean of sand and their curiosity was very much aroused. (8)

*adarśan durdarśam kumatibhir athāmī sukṛtinām
purogā nīrogā haripadaniṣevārasavidah /
sumerum svastraiṇam raṇavinihatān yatra sudṛḍham
parīrambhaiḥ sambhāvayati kila rambhādi satatam //9//⁴⁶²*

Now, they, foremost of meritorious people, free from disease, knowers of the sweetness emerging from the adoration of Hari's feet, saw mount Meru which is difficult to be seen by fools. As is widely known, local women of the mountain, such as Rambhā and others, continuously adore with firm embraces those who have been killed in battle. (9)

*dṛśyam viśvamanojñasaurabhamilatpuṣpapravālāvalī-
vibhrājadvanamālikāvilasitam pūtāmbaram bhāsvaram /
tuṅgam saṅgataveṇunādasubhagam divyair niṣevyam girim*

⁴⁶⁰ Upajāti metre.

⁴⁶¹ Prthvī metre.

⁴⁶² Śikhariṇī metre.

dr̥ṣṭvā te harim ātmavallabham iva prāptā mudam pāṇḍavāḥ //10//⁴⁶³

The mountain was luminous by wild jasmine flowers glittering on account of series of tender leaves mixed with flowers that produced a fragrance attractive to the whole world. It was so high that it nearly drank up the sky. It was lovely due to the melodious sounds produced by the rattling of the bamboo reeds (*saṅgata-veṇu-nāda-subhagaṃ*). The mountain was frequented by gods. Seeing that mountain, the Pāṇḍavas became joyous, as it appeared to them like their beloved soul friend Hari himself, who is served by all the gods, who is dressed in yellow robe, who is luminous on account of a garland made of wild jasmine flowers glittering with series of tender leaves mixed with flowers that produce a fragrance attractive to the whole world, who is tall and resplendent, and who is attractive by virtue of the melodious sounds [he produces] by playing the flute. (10)

*tatas teṣu puṇyāraṇyanadīnadadharaṇīdharādyalaṅkṛtān manuḥjadurgamān
adhikavismāpakān bahūn deśān darśaṃ darśaṃ mṛgayākautukād iva viśṛṅkhalena
durlaṅghamārgākramaṇavicakṣaṇena satvaram anugatvareṇa tena śunā saha
nirmalamatiṣu dharmajamukheṣu gacchatsu pāṇḍaveṣu /1/*

While the Pāṇḍavas, whose minds were pure, were walking, headed by the Son of Dharma, Yudhiṣṭhira, they repeatedly saw many countries. Those were adorned by auspicious forests, different kinds of rivers, mountains and so forth. Those countries were greatly astonishing and inaccessible to human beings. A dog followed them with great haste, as if [driven] by an eagerness for hunting. It was unbounded by a lead, and clever in crossing [quickly] even those paths difficult to jump upon. [1]

*caṇḍopavāsavratakarṣītātmaśaktir adhidharaṇi taruṇī mañjarī⁴⁶⁴ pāñcālatanayā
vigalitayogā nipapāta.⁴⁶⁵ tatpatananiśāmanadīnamānasena bhūmasenena*

⁴⁶³ Śārdūlavikrīḍita metre.

⁴⁶⁴ According to Dr. Csaba Dezső, although there is no *iva* after *taruṇī mañjarī* in M1, judging from the close similarity of the letters ‘*va*’ and ‘*pa*’ in the Malayalam alphabet, it is likely that the letter *va* of the word *iva* subsequent to *mañjarī* and preceding *pāñcālatanayā* was omitted by the scribe (a mistake which was copied in the Dev Ms as well). This supports the reading offered above which is consistent with the contents of the narrative. For surely, Draupadī could not have possibly been young before her death. Therefore, the translation “*like a fresh flower*”, makes better

*prṣṭapatanahetur dr̥ṣṭasakalayogavibhāgo vṛkodara satī seyam asmaddayitā
samadayitāpi dhanañjayātisaktyāḥ phalam idam avāptety udīrya sudhīr imām
anavalokayann ākalitamanodhairyo manujavaryo⁴⁶⁶ niryāti sma /2/*

[While the Pāṇḍavas were thus walking,] the daughter of the Pañcāla king, Draupadī, who was like a fresh flower, whose personal capacity thinned down on account of fasting severely, lost her balance and fell down on the ground. Noticing her fall Bhīma’s heart became afflicted, and he asked Yudhiṣṭhira the cause for her fall. Yudhiṣṭhira, knower of all types of *yoga* said to him: “O Vṛkodara, although our dear wife was common to us all, she now obtained the fruit of her strong affection for Dhanañjaya.” Having said this, wise Yudhiṣṭhira, best among men, did not look at her, held courage fast in his mind and carried on walking. [2]

*tato matimān atimātrānubhāvah sahadevas tadanantaram atisundarah
kṛṣṇāsahadevayor dr̥ṣṭvā nipatanam atigariṣṭhaśokākulo nakulah [.] tadanu
tannidhanadarśanajanitavyasanajātamohaśvetavāhaś ca vicyutayogavanto
nipatanti sma /3/*

Right afterward, the wise Sahadeva of extraordinary powers [fell]. Seeing the fall of both Draupadī and Sahadeva, the very handsome Nakula, exceedingly overwhelmed by heavy grief [fell also to his death]. Then, Arjuna [Śvetavāha – ‘one who drives white horses’], who was shaken up by the sorrow caused by beholding their death, [fell too]. [Thus,] the three of them, who possessed a *yoga* that had fallen apart, fell [one after the other]. [3]

*matimadagrimatvadarpeṇa sarvātīśāyisaundaryagarveṇa
dhānuṣkatābhimānadhikkṛtasakalarājamaṇḍalatvāt⁴⁶⁷
prathamapraṭiśrutaikadinanirvartyaśatruvadhavaiyarthyakāritvāc ca sāmpratam
ete patitā iti krameṇa teṣāṃ patanakāraṇam anuyuñjānāya bhīmāyākhyāya*

sense in this instance. I wish to thank Dr. Dezső for his remark on this passage as well as many others in this translation.

⁴⁶⁵ Throughout this transliteration the scribe’s *daṇḍas* are marked with full stops. When necessary, added *daṇḍas* are marked in brackets.

⁴⁶⁶ Dev reads *manuja-vararyo*; I adopted M1’s reading *manuja-varyo*.

⁴⁶⁷ M1 reads *maṇḍalāt*.

*ślāghyāmalacaritre gacchati vipaścidapaścime rājñi tasmin
atiprabaladuḥkhabharataptacittaḥ so 'pi vṛkodaraś ca vivaśacaraṇasañcāram
apatat /4/*

Yudhiṣṭhira presently explained to Bhīma, who was enquiring after the cause of their fall, the reasons that they fell: Sahadeva fell because he arrogantly [considered himself] the foremost of the wise; Nakula, because he took pride in having a beauty that surpassed everyone else; Arjuna, because he mocked the multitude of kings, priding himself as the best of archers, as well as for his failing [to accomplish] the vow he took prior [to the battle] in bringing about the death of his enemies in the course of one day. And so, as the king, whose conduct is flawless and worthy of praise, who is foremost among learned men, kept walking, Vṛkodara, whose mind was scorched by the burden of unbearable grief, lost control over his feet and fell too. [4]

*bho bho mahārāja nirupamakṛpāsāgara sādaram tava sodaram atipriyaṃ mām
paśya viśvabandho kiṃ nu me patananidānam iti pṛcchantam amitāśitvān
niṣṭhurabhāṣitayā⁴⁶⁸ ca patito 'sīti vadan apaśyann eva tam avaśyaṃ bhavati
bhavitavyam iti cintayann antarnigūhitaśokabhārāśrāntaniṣṭtaniśvāso
niḥsaradaśrukaṇamiśritanayanapuṭaḥ pūrvam anuyatā tena kauleyakottamena
saha mahāmatir mahīpatir ajātaśatrur jagāma /5/*

[Bhīma asked:] “O great king! O ocean of unmatched compassion! Behold me! [Behold] your brother, who has much regard [for you], who is very dear to you! O friend of the entire world, what is the cause for my fall?”

“You have fallen because of your excessive eating and due to your harsh speech”. Replying thus to Bhīma who asked him, and without even looking at him, Yudhiṣṭhira thought to himself – ‘everything that has to happen, does occur’.

With continuous short sighs due to the weight of grief hidden within, and as the folds of his eyes were mixed with flowing tear drops, this great minded king who has no enemy, went on his way along with that best of dogs that was following him from behind. [5]

⁴⁶⁸ Dev reads *niṣṭhurabhāṣitayā*; I emended this to *niṣṭhurabhāṣitayā*.

*tejobhāreṇa rodovivaram atha rathodīrṇaghoṣaiś⁴⁶⁹ ca sampūry-
āvīrbhūtas tadānīm adhidharaṇi narendrāgrabhāge mahendraḥ /
rājan nākaṃ bhajethās sukṛtivaśam anenādya tūrṇaṃ rathena
śrīmānn⁴⁷⁰ ity ābabhāṣe vibudhaparivṛtaḥ sādaraṃ bhūpatiṃ tam //11//⁴⁷¹*

Then, on the ground in front of the king Indra appeared, having filled the space between heaven and earth with great brightness by sounds emanating from his chariot. Surrounded by gods, he respectfully spoke to that king: “O venerable king, please enter today, quickly, into heaven with this chariot by virtue of the force of [your] good deed”. (11)

*svārājaṃ dharmarājas tadānu kṛtanatiḥ śokasantaptacetā
vāṇīm ity ūcivān samprati mama patitāḥ sodarās caiva dārāḥ /
nāhaṃ nākaṃ vinā tair iha kim api śunāsīra vāñchāmi gantum
sākaṃ vegād amī ca tridivam api mayā yāntu yuṣmatprasādāt //12//⁴⁷²*

Having bowed to him with mind afflicted by grief, Dharmarāja spoke in this fashion to the King of Heaven: “My brothers and wife just now fell [to their death]. O Indra, in no way do I wish to go to heaven without them. Let them also come together with me speedily into *svarga*, by your grace.” (12)

*drakṣyasi divyaśarīrān akṣayayaśaso viśīda nṛpa mā mā /
agreyātān bhrātṛn svarge putrāṃś ca kṛṣṇayā sahitān //13//⁴⁷³*

[Indra:] “Grieve not O king! You shall see your brothers who have gone ahead to *svarga* before you with divine bodies and endless glory, as well as your sons together with Draupadī. (13)

*saśarīro yāhi divaṃ vismāpitabhuvanam āśu puṇyābdhe /
iti vādinam amarendraṃ matimān ūce dayālur avanīndraḥ //14//⁴⁷⁴*

⁴⁶⁹ Both Dev and M1 read *ghauṣaiś ca*, which seems erroneous; I emended this to *ghoṣaiś*.

⁴⁷⁰ M1 reads *śrīman* (in the vocative case).

⁴⁷¹ Sragdharā metre.

⁴⁷² Sragdharā metre.

⁴⁷³ Gīti metre.

⁴⁷⁴ Gīti metre.

O Ocean of Good Deeds, go quickly with your human body into heaven astonishing the whole world.” Compassionate and wise Yudhiṣṭhira, king of earth, addressed the king of the gods who had thus spoken to him. (14)

*ayaṃ śvā viśvāsān mayi samuditasnehabharito
mahāprasthāne ’sminn api ca samavartī⁴⁷⁵ bhuvi mayā /
na saṃtyaktuṃ śaknomy ayi paramasammodayanakam
tad icchāmy etena tridivam abhigantuṃ surapate //15//⁴⁷⁶*

[Yudhiṣṭhira:] “O Lord of Gods, this dog is filled with affection toward me on account of [his] trust. Furthermore, during this great journey, he was with me on earth. O, I [simply] cannot abandon him, who has given me supreme happiness! Therefore, I desire to go to heaven along with him!” (15)

*hī hī kauleyakānām nahi nahi suraloke gatiḥ krodhanānām
amhojālāspadānām tyaja nṛpa sahasā śvānam enaṃ vinindyam /
evaṃ devaṃ bruvāṇaṃ narapatir avadat kukkuraṃ vāsuraṃ vā
nāhaṃ bhaktaṃ viśṛjya tridivam abhilaṣāmy āśritatyāgapāpī //16//⁴⁷⁷*

[Indra:] “Oh no! Entry into *svarga* is banned for dogs who are irritable and the site for a net of troubles. O king, abandon this dog who is worthy of rebuke, at once!”

King Yudhiṣṭhira said to Indra who was speaking thus: “Let it be a dog or an *asura* [demon], I do not desire heaven as one who deserts his *bhakta* with the sin of abandoning his dependents!” (16)

*dustyajyān⁴⁷⁸ sahajāṃś cāpi priyāṃ ca tyaktavān asi /
kiṃ na muñcasi pāpiṣṭhaṃ kukkuraṃ sadguṇāmbudhe //17//⁴⁷⁹*

[Indra:] “O Ocean of Virtues, you have abandoned both your brothers and your beloved wife who are extremely hard to leave behind, why do you not release this most sinful dog?” (17)

⁴⁷⁵ Dev reads *samavartā*; I adopted M1’s reading *samavartī*.

⁴⁷⁶ Śikhariṇī metre.

⁴⁷⁷ Sragdharā metre.

⁴⁷⁸ Dev reads *dustyān*; I adopted M1’s reading *dustyajyān*.

⁴⁷⁹ Śloka metre.

*mṛtānām katham atyāgo ghaṭeta vibudhādhipa /
te na jīvayituṃ śakyās tena muktā mayānujāḥ //18//⁴⁸⁰*

[Yudhiṣṭhira:] “O Lord of Gods, would it have been sensible had I not abandoned the deceased? They cannot be brought to life. Therefore, I abandoned my [younger] brothers.” (18)

*kīrtiṃ prāpto 'si śuddhām tribhuvanamahitākālpaduṣprāpam anyair
agrāmyaṃ cāmaratvaṃ tridivasukham aśeṣaṃ tvadāyātam⁴⁸¹ āsīt /
śvānaṃ svasthānahīnaṃ tyaja nṛpa sahasā tena te naiva doṣaḥ
svargaṃ satkarmagamyāṃ bhaja vibudhavadhūgīyamānāvadānaḥ⁴⁸² //19//⁴⁸³*

[Indra:] “Already you have gained pure fame that is celebrated by the whole world as uneasy to obtain by others, even till the end of this age. You have also obtained godliness [immortality] unfamiliar to humans, as well as complete happiness in heaven. All this has come to you. O king, abandon this dog who has no place in heaven and who is devoid of a place of its own [casteless] at once! By doing so, you will not incur sin. Enjoy *svarga* which is attainable to the virtuous. Your achievements will be sung by the women of heaven.” (19)

*mocanīyo na nīco 'pi bhakto me vṛtrasūdana /
svargo 'pi bhrāṭṛsaṃsargo rocate na śunā vinā //20//⁴⁸⁴*

[Yudhiṣṭhira:] “O killer of Vṛtra, my devoted servant is unfit to be abandoned even though he may be of low order. Without this dog, even heaven, in which I would meet my brothers, does not appeal to me.” (20)

*itivādini dharmanandane 'smin muditātmā sa śuno vihāya deham /
nijam eva sametya rūpam agryaṃ sutam ābhāṣata tatra dharmadevaḥ //21//⁴⁸⁵*

⁴⁸⁰ Śloka metre.

⁴⁸¹ M1 reads *tvadāyatam*.

⁴⁸² Dev reads *apadānaḥ*; I emended this to *avadāna*. Since a close similarity exists between the letters ‘va’ and ‘pa’ in the Malayalam alphabet, it is likely that they were mixed up in the Mal Ms and copied erroneously to the Dev Ms. See also n. 464 above.

⁴⁸³ Sragdharā metre.

⁴⁸⁴ Śloka metre.

⁴⁸⁵ Aupacchandasika metre.

When Dharma's son spoke thus, God Dharma became happy. Having forsaken the dog's form, he took on his own excellent form and spoke to his son. (21)

*prīto 'haṃ sarvabhūteṣv anupamakṛpayā śuddhiyuktaiś ca vṛttaiḥ
satyodyatvena śāstreṣv avihatagamanasphītayā medhayā ca /
anyaiś cānanyalabhyais tava vimalaguṇair vīrarājendra mānyo 'sy
asmābhir yat tvam adya tridaśaratham aho tyaktavān bhaktahetoḥ //22//⁴⁸⁶*

[Dharma:] “I am pleased by your unparalleled compassion toward all beings, your pure conduct, truthful speech, and full wisdom [stemming] from unobstructed passage into all *śāstras*; as also by other pure virtues which are not easily available to others. O best among heroic kings, you are worthy of respect by us since you have abandoned today the heavenly chariot itself for the sake of your devotee. (22)

*pr̥thvyāṃ tvatsadr̥śo na kaścana nṛpaḥ samdr̥śyate bhūpate
sarveṣāṃ uparisthito guṇagaṇaiḥ svarvāsinām adya naḥ /
bhāgyābdhe saśarīra eva bhuvanaṃ kīrtiyā samudyotayan
gaccha⁴⁸⁷ svacchamate rathena mudito lokān sukhenākṣayān //23//⁴⁸⁸*

O king, no other king is seen on this earth who is equal to you. With an abundance of virtues you rise above all of us, the denizens of heaven. O ocean of Good Fortune, even in your corporeal body you are illuminating the whole world with fame. Delighted, go easily, O man of pure wisdom, to the imperishable worlds by [this] divine chariot.” (23)

*ityūcuṣo viracitāñjalir eṣa rājā
dharmasya cātimuditasya tadā niyogāt /
ārohad indrakaradattakarāvalambo
divyaṃ ratham gaganasambhṛtadīptatejāḥ //24//⁴⁸⁹*

⁴⁸⁶ Sragdharā metre.

⁴⁸⁷ M1 reads *gacches*.

⁴⁸⁸ Śārdūlavikrīḍita metre.

⁴⁸⁹ Vasantatilakā metre.

At the command of Dharma, who had spoken to him in this fashion and was extremely happy, king Yudhiṣṭhira, with his hands folded in respect, climbed onto the divine chariot supported by Indra's hands, while filling the entire sky with his lustre. (24)

*āropyārādhyasīlaṃ nṛpatim atha rathaṃ dharmadevaś ca śakro
vāyur nāsatyadevau nabhasi sakaladevāś ca devarṣayo 'pi /
sarve sammodamānās tridivam abhiyayuh saṅghaśaḥ śaṅkhabherī-
saṅghoṣonmiśravaimānikanikarajayodghoṣaṅghūrṇitāsāḥ*⁴⁹⁰ //25//⁴⁹¹

Having made the king, whose character is worthy of respect, to climb the aerial car, the gods Dharma, Indra, Vāyu, the two Aśvins and all the other gods of heaven, as well as the celestial ṛṣis, went in groups toward *svarga*. As they all went delighted toward heaven, the directions were echoing on account of plenty of aerial beings crying “hail!” mixing with noise that was emanating from drums and conches. (25)

*udgacchati tribhuvanaprathite tadānīm
arkacchavipratimatejasi dharmarāje /
svargaukasāṃ samudaye munir ūrdhvaḥ
uccair uvāca muditaḥ sa hi vaiṇikendraḥ* //26//⁴⁹²

While Dharmarāja who is celebrated in all the three worlds was raising up to heaven, his brightness was equal to that of the light of the sun. Then, amongst the group of the denizens of *svarga*, sage Nārada raising his hands, spoke aloud delightedly: (26)

*pūrve ye samupasthitāḥ surapadaṃ rājarṣayo bhāsvarāḥ
sarveṣāṃ api kīrtim adya sakalāṃ pracchādya teṣāṃ asau /
rājā dharmasuto 'dhitiṣṭhati divaṃ puṇyāmbudheḥ pāṇḍavād
asmād anyam aho na śūsruma purā prāptaṃ sadehaṃ nṛpam* //27//⁴⁹³

⁴⁹⁰ Dev reads [...] *udghoṣaṅghā* [...]; M1 reads [...] *utghoṣaṅghā* [...]. I emended to *udghoṣaṅghā*.

⁴⁹¹ Sragdharā metre.

⁴⁹² Vasantatilakā metre.

⁴⁹³ Śārdūlavikrīḍita metre.

[Nārada:] “Earlier, resplendent kingly sages have risen to the status of gods. Yet this king, Dharma’s son, who resides heaven today, overshadows all of their glory. Apart from this son of Pāṇḍu, who is an ocean of virtue, never before have we heard of another king who reached heaven in his mortal body.” (27)

*sa tu munigiram ākaṇḍyābravīd gantum icchāmy
 api padam iha yasminn āsate bhrātaro me /
 atha surapatir ūce kiṃ tvam adyāpi rājan
 bhajasi manujabhāvaṃ svargatiṃ prāpito 'pi //28//⁴⁹⁴*

But having heard the Muni’s words, Yudhiṣṭhira said: “Where my brothers are staying, there alone I wish to go”. Then, Indra the king of the gods said: “Why, O king, are you still engaging in human emotions even though you were brought to heaven?” (28)

*dr̥ṣṭvā tadā kanakaviṣṭarabhājam agre
 duryodhanaṃ vilasitaṃ divi vīralakṣmyā /
 rājāvadat suravarā na didṛkṣur asmin
 lubdhaṃ khalaṃ bahukṛtāpakṛtiṃ ripuṃ me //29//⁴⁹⁵*

Then, beholding Duryodhana in front of him in heaven, occupying a golden throne, shining with the glory of a hero, the king said: “O venerable gods, here in heaven, I do not wish to see this greedy villain, my enemy, who has greatly wronged me.” (29)

*yuddhe hatātmatanur eṣa nirastabhīṭ
 prāptaś ca vīragatiṃ ujjvala⁴⁹⁶ divyatejāḥ /
 svarge nisargamahite na hi pūrvavairaṃ
 tat smartum arhasi nr̥peti munis tam ūce //30//⁴⁹⁷*

The sage [Nārada] said to him: “O king, Duryodhana expelled fear and lost his body in battle. Therefore, he obtained a hero’s domain and his divine lustre is

⁴⁹⁴ Mālinī metre.

⁴⁹⁵ Vasantatilakā metre.

⁴⁹⁶ Dev reads *ujvala*; I emended to *ujjvala*.

⁴⁹⁷ Vasantatilakā metre.

blazing. In *svarga*, which is celebrated for relinquishing [previous conditions], it does not befit you to maintain previous animosity of that kind.” (30)

*duryodhanasya yadi samprati divyaloko*⁴⁹⁸
mitradruho nikhilabhūtalakaṅṭakasya /
āstām tad adya sahajān suhrdo ’pi bālān
*ālokituṃ kutukaśāli mune mano me*⁴⁹⁹ //31//⁵⁰⁰

[Yudhiṣṭhira:] “O sage, if this divine world currently belongs to Duryodhana, who is a traitor to his friends, and a thorn to the entire earth, let it be so! My mind is eager to see today my brothers, friends, and my sons [who died in the war]. (31)

karṇaṃ pṛthātanayam udbhaṭabāhuvīryaṃ
madbhrātaraṃ surasadrkṣam ahaṃ didrkṣe /
ajñānato yudhi mayā bata phalgunena hā-
*hanta*⁵⁰¹ *yaḥ śrītaripur vinipātito ’bhūt* //32//⁵⁰²

I desire to see my brother Karṇa, son of Pṛthā [my mother], of extraordinary strength of arms, who resembles a god. On account of my ignorance, I had him, by whom the enemy was joined, tragically killed in battle by Arjuna! Oh! Alas! (32)

karṇasya pūrvam udakaṃ kriyatām pureti
mātur vaco bata nivāpavidhau niśamya /
santāpam eti hṛdayaṃ sadayaṃ madīyaṃ
nantuṃ na tatpadayugaṃ mama bhāgyam āsīt //33//⁵⁰³

[It was only] during the *nivāpa* oblation [in which water is offered to dead manes], that I have heard the speech of my mother declaring: “May water be first offered to Karṇa”. [Thus, learning for the first time that he was my brother,] my

⁴⁹⁸ Dev provides *divyaloko* as alternate reading of *vīraloko* (M1: *vīraloko*).

⁴⁹⁹ Dev reads: *āstām mune tad adya sahajān suhrdo ’pi bālān ālokituṃ kutukaśāli mano me*. Since this is unmetrical, I adopted the above quoted reading of M1.

⁵⁰⁰ Vasantatilakā metre.

⁵⁰¹ The word *hāhanta* is unclear here.

⁵⁰² Vasantatilakā metre.

⁵⁰³ Vasantatilakā metre.

compassionate heart was scorched with agony, for I did not have the good fortune to fall prostrating at his feet.” (33)

*vibudhapreṣitenātha nrpatih prayayau samam /
devadūtena dharmātmā bhrāṭṛdarśanakautukī //34//⁵⁰⁴*

Thereupon, the king, whose nature is *dharmā*, went along with a messenger appointed by the gods, eager to see his brothers. (34)

*tataś ca viśva-janīna-śīlo nara-patiḥ sura-pati-preṣitena purato gatena tena deva-
dūtena saha gacchann acchetaram adhvānam atuccha-tamaś-caya-
samācchāditaṃ prasṛmara-bahutara-durgandha-durgamaṃ bahala-kaiśika-
piśita-śakala-rudhira-jhara-medah-kadamba-jambālitam pāpi⁵⁰⁵-jana-śarīra-
vidāraṇa-vicakṣaṇa-tīkṣṇa-daṃśa-maśaka-makṣikā-jhillikotkara-durgāham
utkata-vikata-kṛmi⁵⁰⁶-kīṭa-pātala-sañcitam sarvato jājvalyamāna-jvalana-jvālā-
jālam⁵⁰⁷ caṇḍa-tuṇḍa-hiṇḍamānāṇḍaja-maṇḍala-bhayaṅkaram kaiścana
samutpāṭita-netratayā tata ito nipatadbhiḥ kaiścana vilūna-rasatayā
viracitāspaṣṭa-varṇa-pralāpair nikṛtta-nāsikoṣṭha-bhayānakaiḥ kaiścana
vicchāta-duścāvala⁵⁰⁸-doś-caraṇatayā viluṅṭhanam⁵⁰⁹ kurvānaiḥ kaiścana
vidāritodara-bhāgaiḥ śoṇita-vasā-paṅkilaiḥ tatra⁵¹⁰ duṣkarmi-jālakair durālokaṃ
kam-api-deśam udvela-pūya-rudhira-dhoraṇīm vaitaraṇīm taraṅgiṇīm avirata⁵¹¹-
viracita-duṣkṛti-tanu-kartanam asipatra-vanam pāpijana-nirddhāvanākulām
tapta-vālukām kvathamāna-taila-sambhṛtāni loha-kumbha-jālāni duḥsparśa-
kaṅṭaka-ṣaṇḍa-kavacitam kūṭa-śalmalim⁵¹² anyāś ca kalpita-khala-jana-vedanā-
yātānā nirīkṣām-cakre /6/*

Led by the messenger appointed by Indra, the king, whose good conduct is directed toward the entire world, was walking along a filthy road covered by thick

⁵⁰⁴ Śloka metre.

⁵⁰⁵ Dev reads *papi*; I adopted M1's reading *pāpi*.

⁵⁰⁶ Dev reads *krimi*; I adopted M1's reading *kṛmi*.

⁵⁰⁷ Dev reads *jvālā-mālam jālam*; I adopted M1's reading *jvālā-jālam*.

⁵⁰⁸ The compound *vicchāta-duścāvala* is unclear here (*vicchāta* probably stemming from the verb *vicchā* or *viccho*).

⁵⁰⁹ M1 reads *viluṅṭhanam*.

⁵¹⁰ M1 reads *tatra tatra*.

⁵¹¹ Dev reads *avirata*; I adopted M1's reading *avirata*.

⁵¹² Both Dev and M1 read *śanmali*; I emended to *śalmali*.

darkness. The road was difficult to travel due to a terrible smell that was spreading everywhere. It was muddy on account of clumps of bodily fat, streams of blood, pieces of flesh, and thick heads of hair. It was impassable on account of hoards of crickets, flies, mosquitos, and wasps expert in sharply stinging the bodies of sinners. The road was infested by teams of aggressive and monstrous insects and worms. All around was a net of garland-like flames of an incessant burning fire. It was terrible on account of birds with fierce beaks hovering about.

There, he saw the Vaitaraṇī river [separating the earth from the netherworld] which has a continuous overflowing of pus and blood. And he saw a place that was horrible to behold thronged by wicked people. Some of them were falling here and there [on the ground] as their eyes were torn out [and they could not see where they were going]. Others, who had their tongues cut off, were speaking unintelligibly. Yet others were frightful looking on account of having their noses and lips cut off. Some were rolling [on the ground] because their arms and legs were severed. Some were smeared with blood and marrow having parts of their bellies having been torn open.

He also saw a forest whose [trees'] leaves were like the blades of a sword continuously cutting the bodies of sinners. He saw burning hot sand which was disturbed by the running away of the sinners (*pāpijana-nirddhāvanākulām*). He saw rows of iron pots filled with boiling oil. He saw a thorny Śalmali [tree] covered with bunches of thorns that were difficult to touch. The king saw the above cited sights, as well as other tortures and torments afflicted upon wicked men. [6]

*tatra cāmanda-durgandhānubandhātta-gandhatayā mūrccchite rājñi tasmin
nivartanāya kṛtatvare bho bho dharmarāja nirmalācāra dharmajña śarma-dāyin
kṣaṇaṃ tiṣṭha nṛpa-variṣṭha tava puṇya-gandha-vaho gandha-vāhaḥ sukhayati
sarasam asmān tvat-sannidhānād yātanās ca nādhunā bādhante samindhāna-
santāpam iti pralapatāṃ pratyekam atyākulam uccair niveditātmanāṃ karṇa-
bhīmādi-sodarāṇām ākarṇita-carāṇi⁵¹³ vacanāni vyaśana-miśrāṇy aśrūyanta [7]*

⁵¹³ I wish to thank Dr. Nāgarāja Rao for bringing to my attention that according to Pāṇini, the suffix *cara* at the end of a compound means – ‘that had been X previously’.

As the king was fainting on account of having been made to smell the rapidly growing stench, making haste to return back, he [suddenly] heard various voices that were mixed with misfortune calling him, which appeared familiar to him: “O, O, Dharmarāja of pure behaviour, knower of *dharma*, yielder of protection, best of kings, please remain with us a while! The wind that carries your auspicious scents has eased our pain with delight. By virtue of your proximity, our tortures of burning alive do not bother us as much now.” As they were all lamenting in this way they identified themselves aloud one by one, in an agitated way, as Karṇa, Bhīma, and the rest of his brothers. [7]

*atha katham amī sukṛtino duṣkṛtaphalam anubhavanti pāpakarmā nāgaketu
nāka-sukham anubhunkte kim idaṃ kiṃ nu supto 'smi kiṃ vā jāgarmi athavā
mama citta-vibhramah iti /8/*⁵¹⁴

[Yudhiṣṭhira:] “How is it that these good people are experiencing the fruit of bad deeds while this villain, [Duryodhana], Nāgaketu [i.e., ‘one whose flag depicts a snake’], is enjoying happiness in heaven? How is it possible? Am I dreaming or am I awake? Or else, is this an error of my perception?” [8]

M1 (Ms C 1220 B) ends:

*janitacintāśatamanyuḥ śatamanyum amarān dharmam ca garhayan devadūtam
surapati-samīpam prasthāpya narapatis tatraivāste sma. /9/*

[Yudhiṣṭhira] in whom anger and a hundred worries arose, damned Indra [the God of Hundred-fold Wrath], Dharma and the [other] gods. Having sent away the messenger of the gods to Indra’s vicinity, the king remained at that very place. [9]

*ākarṇya dūtād atha tasya vṛttam
sākaṃ suraughais tam upetya modāt /
ākhaṇḍalo bhūpam uvāca nirdhūy-
ākamradīptyā narakān aśeṣān //35//*⁵¹⁵

⁵¹⁴ The Dev Ms ends here. From this point onward the text is reconstructed based on the readings of M1 and M2, as well as on the Dev Ms based on *A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Curator’s Office Library*, Trivandrum, 1939, pp. 3232-3234 (Ms No. T 489 B).

⁵¹⁵ Indravajrā metre.

Then, having heard the news about him from the messenger, Indra (*ākhaṇḍalah*) along with multitudes of gods approached the king and spoke to him with delight, having expelled the netherworlds by means of [his own] splendour which is very lovely. (35)

*tat pūrvaṃ bhuñjate martyā hy alpam yat puṇyapāpayoḥ /
bahupāpo nāgaketur iha bhukte sukhaṃ puraḥ //36//⁵¹⁶*

[Indra:] “Indeed, people first experience that little [part] of their merit and demerit. [That is why] the very sinful Duryodhana first enjoys happiness here [in heaven]. (36)

*śrīmann ameyasukṛtāmbunidhe nṛpendro
sīmātigam surasukhaṃ suciram bhajethāḥ /
droṇo hato yudhi sa kiṃ ca na jihmatas te
tenādya dṛṣṭanarakas tvam iha cchalena //37//⁵¹⁷*

O venerable [Yudhiṣṭhira], you are an ocean of immeasurable meritorious deeds. As best among kings you shall partake of the gods’ happiness, which surpasses all boundaries, for a very long while. [The fact that] Droṇa was killed in battle is furthermore not [considered an act of] your deceit. Therefore, you have witnessed *naraka* today in this place due to [my] illusion. (37)

*māyāmaye ’tra narake patitā vimuktās
tejasvino divi vibhānty adhunā tvadīyāḥ /
rājan mayā saha sukhaṃ viharasva moda-
prācuryavān suravadhūparigīyamānaḥ //38//⁵¹⁸*

Having fallen into this illusory hell, your glorious brothers have been liberated and are now shining in heaven. O king, enjoy yourself together with me. You are one whose happiness is plentiful, you are one who is celebrated by the women of the gods. (38)

⁵¹⁶ Śloka metre.

⁵¹⁷ Vasantatilakā metre.

⁵¹⁸ Vasantatilakā metre.

*hariścandrasya māndhātur*⁵¹⁹ *bhagīrathanṛpasya ca /*
*upary api ca dauḥśanteḥ sarveṣāṃ vicariṣyasi //39//*⁵²⁰

You stand above king Hariścandra, Māndhātṛ, king Bhagīratha, Duṣyanta and all [other kings]”. (39)

dharmo 'vadat tadanu putra parīkṣitas tvam
atrāpi susthīramatir mahitasvabhāvaḥ /
prito 'smi gaccha sahajān pariṣāśya divyān
*mandākinīpayasi mocaya martyadeham //40//*⁵²¹

Right afterward Dharma spoke: “O son, having been examined [by me], you [remained] resolute in mind and noble in nature even in this test. I am pleased [with you]. Go, behold your divine brothers, and discard your mortal body in the water of the celestial Gaṅgā.” (40)

M2 (Ms C 2343 A) ends:

dharmeṇa tridaśeśvareṇa ca samaṃ sarvaiś ca vṛndāarakaiḥ
*sammodollasitas*⁵²² *tadā suradhunīṃ samprāpya puṇyodakām /*
rājā vāsavasindhurendramadagandhodañcite tajjale
*so 'py āmajjya śive rarāja*⁵²³ *sukṛtī tyaktvā vapur mānuṣam //41//*⁵²⁴

Then, the virtuous king, exhilarated by great joy, reached along with god Dharma, Indra, and all the other gods, the holy water of the celestial Gaṅgā. Having plunged to its waters, which were distinguished (*udañcite*) by the fragrance of Indra’s elephant [Airāvata’s] rut liquid, he abandoned his mortal body in these auspicious waters, and shone. (41)

vidyotamānanavadyamanojñadeho
vidyotayan daśa diśo nijakāntipūraiḥ /
*udyānamandapavanena niṣevyamānaḥ*⁵²⁵

⁵¹⁹ M1 reads *māndhāta-bhagīratha-nṛpasya*; I emended this to *māndhātur*.

⁵²⁰ Śloka metre.

⁵²¹ Vasantatilakā metre. From this point onward M1 is relatively corrupt and unintelligible. As a general rule consequently, I favoured M2’s reading of the text’s concluding verses.

⁵²² M1: *samodollasitas*; M2: *sammodollasitas*.

⁵²³ M2: *rajāta* (which appears to be a scribal error); I adopted M1’s reading *rarāja*.

⁵²⁴ Śārdūlavikrīḍita metre.

sadyo jagannayanamodabharam⁵²⁶ vitene //42//⁵²⁷

[The king] whose beautiful new divine body was shining, illuminated the ten directions with floods of his own splendour. Propitiated by gentle breeze [arising] from the garden, he then rendered straightaway (*sadyo*) abundant amounts of joy to the eyes of the [whole] world. (42)

kirīṭamaṇikuṇḍalāṅgadavilolamuktāvalī-

suvarṇaraśanāṃbarādi pariśobhayann ātmanā /

sphuranmaṇisitātapatranavacāmarodañcīto

babhau divicarāvalīnayanacandramā dharmajāḥ //43//⁵²⁸

He beautified with his own self the diadem gem, earrings, armlet, swaying pearl necklace and golden belt, robes and so on [which adorned him]. The Son of Dharma shone [like] a moon to the eye of the rows of heaven's denizens as he was honoured with a new chowrie and a white parasol with sparkling jewels. (43)

surarṣigaṇasevitas tadanu śaṅkhabherīrava-

prakāmadhadharīkṛtāśam⁵²⁹ avanīśamaulis tadā /

jagāma sahajāntikaṃ⁵³⁰ kusumavarṣaharṣākulaṃ

prasannasurayauvatollasadulūlunādāñcītaḥ //44//⁵³¹

Worshipped by groups of divine sages, that crest jewel among the lords of the earth, went, making all the directions deaf by loud sounds of conches and drums, to the vicinity of his brothers, where flowers were joyously showered. He was honoured by cries of hail ensuing from the young women of the pleased gods. (44)

⁵²⁵ M2: *niṣevamāṇaḥ*; I adopted M1's reading: *niṣevyamāṇaḥ*.

⁵²⁶ M2: *nayana-moda-karam*; I adopted M1's reading: *nayana-moda-bharam*.

⁵²⁷ Vasantatilakā metre.

⁵²⁸ Pṛthvī metre. From this point onward M1 is completely corrupt and undecipherable. The next few verses are therefore based solely on M2's reading, or the Dev Ms based on *A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Curator's Office Library*, Trivandrum, 1939, pp. 3232-3234 (Ms No. T 489 B).

⁵²⁹ A better reading here would be *badhirīkṛta*.

⁵³⁰ M2 reads: *sahasāntikaṃ*.

⁵³¹ Pṛthvī metre.

*svarvandiḡītacarīto dhṛtadīvyadehaiḡ
sarvaiḡ svabandhubhir⁵³² amā sa mahānarendrah /
amlānakāntir amarālayam adhyuvāsa
dharmātmajo bhuvanamaṅgalakīrttilakṣmīḡ //45//⁵³³*

That great king, whose feats have been sung by the heavenly bards, resided in the world of gods along with all his relatives who possessed divine bodies as well. Dharmarāja, whose brightness never faded, possessed prosperity and fame auspicious to the whole world. (45)

*iti mahāprasthānikaparvaṇi svargārohaṇaprabandhaḡ samāptaḡ / oṃ
śrīmatparamagurubhyo namaḡ / śubhamastu /*

Thus concluded the *Svargārohaṇa-prabandha* in the episode of the Great-departure [*Mahāprasthānika*]. Oṃ, salutations to the highest illustrious teacher.

May good fortune be [upon you].

⁵³² M2: *svabandhubhir*; Dev (according to cat.): *sabandhubhir*.

⁵³³ Vasantatilakā metre.

Bibliography

Primary Works

The *Mahābhārata*

DUTT, M. N., *Mahābhārata*, Sanskrit Text with English Translation, 9 vols.,
Parimal Publications, Delhi, 2004.

KARMAKAR, R. D., ed., *The Āśvamedhika Parvan*, Bhandarkar Oriental
Research Institute, Poona, 1960.

KINJAWADEKAR, R. S., ed., *The Mahābhārata, Śrīmanmahābhāratam with the
Bhāratabhāvadīpa of Nīlakaṇṭha*, Citraśala Press, Poona, 1929-1936.

SMITH, J. D., ed., *Electronic Text of the Mahābhārata*, Cambridge, 1999, U.K.:
<http://bombay.oriental.cam.ac.uk/john/mahabharata/statement.html>.

SUKTHANKAR, V. S., et al., eds., *The Mahābhārata for the First Time
Critically Edited*, 19 vols., Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona,
1933-1966.

UTGIKAR, N. B., *The Virāṭaparvan of the Mahābhārata*, Bhandarkar Oriental
Research Institute, Poona, 1923.

Other Primary Works

The *APĀṆINĪYAPRĀMĀṆYASĀDHANAM* of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, ed. E. R.
Sreekrishna Sarma, *S.V.U.O Journal Vol. 8 – Texts and Studies No. 2*, 1968.

- The *BĀLABHĀRATA* of Agastya Paṇḍita, ed. K. S. Ramamurthi, *Sri Venkateswara University Oriental Series*, No. 10, S. V. University Oriental Research Institute, Tirupati, 1983.
- The *BĀLABHĀRATA* of Amaracandra Sūri, *The Pandit*, No. 61, Vol. 6, Benares, 1871.
- The *BĀLABHĀRATA* of Amaracandra Sūri, ed. M. Paṇḍit Śivadatta, *Kāvyaṃālā*, No. 45, Bombay, 1894.
- The *BHĀRATAMAÑJARĪ* of Kṣemendra Vyāsadāsa, ed. M. Paṇḍit Śivadatta, *Kāvyaṃālā*, No. 64, Bombay, 1898.
- The *DHVANYĀLOKA* of Śrīmadānandavardhanācārya with the *Locana* of Śrīmadabhinavagupta, ed. J. Pathak, Chowkhamba Vidyabhavan Press, Varanasi, 2003.
- The *MĀNAMEYODAYA* by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa and Nārāyaṇa Paṇḍita, eds. C. Kunhan Raja and S. S. Suryanarayana Sastri, The Adyar Library and Research Centre, Chennai, 2004 (first published: 1933).
- PRABANDHASAMĀHĀRAḤ* (a collection of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's *prabandhas*), Vol. 1, University of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1971.
- The *PRAKRIYĀSARVASVA* of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa, *Trivandrum Sanskrit Series*, Nos. 106, 139, 153, 174, 258, 262, 263, Trivandrum, 1931-1992.
- The *PRAKRIYĀSARVASVA*, ed. T. Bhaskaran, *Trivandrum Sanskrit Series* No. 258 (part 5), 1987.
- The *VAKROKTIJĪVITA* of Kuntaka, ed. K. Krishnamoorthy, Karnatak University, Dharwad, 1977.

Secondary Sources

AUSTIN, C. R., “The *Sārasvata Yāsattra* in *Mahābhārata* 17 and 18,” *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 12, 3: 283-308, Springer, 2008.

_____. “Janamejaya’s Last Question,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* (2009) 37: 597-625.

BIARDEAU, M., *Le Mahābhārata: Un Récit Fondateur du Brahmanisme et son Interprétation*, (2 vols.), Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 2002.

BIGGER, A., “The Normative Redaction of the *Mahābhārata*: Possibilities and Limitations of a Working Hypothesis,” *Stages and Transitions: Temporal and Historical Frameworks in Epic and Purāṇic Literature*, ed. M. Brockington, Zagreb, 2002, pp. 17-33.

BROCKINGTON, J., *The Sanskrit Epics*, Brill, Leiden, 1988.

_____. “The Textualization of the Sanskrit Epics,” *Textualization of Oral Epics*, ed. Lauri Honko, Mouton de Gruyter, New York, 2000, pp. 193-215.

BROCKINGTON, M., book review of *Rethinking the Mahābhārata* (Hiltebeitel: 2001), *Indo-Iranian Journal* 45, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 361-365.

BRONNER, Y., *Extreme Poetry: The South Asian Movement of Simultaneous Narration*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2010.

BRÜCKNER, H., “New Light on ‘Bhāsa’? The Würzburg Multimedia Databank on Sanskrit Drama and Theatre,” *Theatrum Mirabiliorum Indiae Orientalis: A Volume to Celebrate the 70th Birthday of Professor Maria Krzysztof Byrski*, eds., M. Monakowska and J. Woźniak, 2007, pp. 380-393 (= *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 60.2; Warsaw: Elipsa).

BÜHLER, G. and KIRSTE, J., “Indian Studies, no. II, Contributions to the History of the *Mahābhārata*,” *Sitzungsberichte: Kaiserliche Akademie der*

Wissenschaften zu Wien. Philosophische-historische Klasse 127, no. 12 (1892).

DAHLMANN, J., *Das Mahābhārata als Epos und Rechtsbuch: Ein Problem aus Altindiens Kultur und Literaturgeschichte*, Felix L. Dames, Berlin, 1895.

_____. *Genesis des Mahābhārata*, Verlag von Felix L. Dames, Berlin, 1899.

DAVIS, D. R. (Jr.), "Hinduism as a Legal Tradition," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, June 2007, Vol. 75, No. 2: 241–267.

DE, S. K., *The Vakroktijīvita: a Treatise on Sanskrit Poetics*, Calcutta Oriental Series, No. 8, Calcutta, 1928.

DONIGER-O'FLAHERTY, W., "Karma and Rebirth in the Vedas and Purāṇas," *Karma and Rebirth in Classical Indian Traditions*, ed. W. Doniger-O'Flaherty, University of California Press, London, 1980.

DUMÉZIL, G., *Mythe et Épopée: L'Idéologie des Trois Fonctions dans les Épopées des Peuples Indo-Européens*, (3 vols.), Éditions Gallimard, Paris, 1968-1973.

DUTT, R. C., trans. *Maha-bharata: Epic of the Bharatas*, Ballantyne, London, 1898.

ENROS, P. T., "Producing Sanskrit Plays in the Tradition of *Kūṭiyāṭṭam*," *Sanskrit Drama in Performance*, eds. R. van M. Baumer and J. R. Brandon, The University Press of Hawaii, Honolulu, 1981, pp. 275-298.

ESTRIN, M. W. ed., *Orson Welles: Interviews*, University Press of Mississippi, 2002.

FITZGERALD, J. L., "The Many Voices of the *Mahābhārata*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 123, No. 4 (Oct-Dec., 2003): 803-818.

_____. "Dharma and its Translation in the *Mahābhārata*," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 32: 671-685, 2004.

- _____. trans. *The Mahābhārata, Volume 7*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 2004.
- _____. “Negotiating the Shape of “Scripture”: New Perspectives on the Development and Growth of the *Mahābhārata* between the Empires,” *Between the Empires: Society in India 300 BCE to 400 CE*, ed. P. Olivelle, Oxford University Press, New York, 2006, pp. 257-286.
- _____. “India’s Fifth Veda: The *Mahābhārata*’s Presentation of Itself,” *Essays on the Mahābhārata*, ed. A. Sharma, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 2007.
- _____. “Mahābhārata,” in the *Brill Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, vol. 2, eds. K. Jacobsen et al., 2010 (Leiden: E. J. Brill), pp. 72-94.
- _____. “No Contest between Memory and Invention: The Invention of the Pāṇḍava Heroes of the *Mahābhārata*,” *Epic and History*, eds. D. Konstan and K. Raaflaub, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, 2010, pp. 103-121.
- FLICK, H. M. (Jr.), book review of *Rethinking the Mahābhārata* (Hiltebeitel: 2001), *Asian Folklore Studies*, Vol. 61, Issue 2, 2002: 341-342.
- FRANCO, E., “Lost Fragments from the Spitzer Manuscript,” *Harānandalaharī*, eds. R. Tsuchida and A. Wezler, Reinbek, 2000, pp. 77-110.
- _____. “The Earliest Extant *Vaiśeṣika* Theory of *Guṇas*,” *Weiner Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 44 (2000): 157-163.
- _____. “The Spitzer Manuscript – A Report on Work in Progress,” *Abhidharma and Indian Thought: Essays in Honour of Professor Doctor Junsho Kato on his Sixtieth Birthday*, Tokyo, 2000, pp. 562-544.
- _____. “Fragments of a Buddhist *Pramāṇa*-Theory from the Kuṣāṇa Period,” *Bukyō Dendō Kyōkai Fellowship Newsletter* 4, Tokyo 2001: 2-12.
- _____. “The Oldest Philosophical Manuscript in Sanskrit,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 31: 21-31, 2003.

- GEROW, E., "Abhinavagupta's Aesthetics as a Speculative Paradigm," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 114, No. 2 (Apr. – Jun., 1994): 186-208.
- GITOMER, D., "King Duryodhana: The *Mahābhārata* Discourse of Sinning and Virtue in Epic and Drama," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 112, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1992): 222- 232.
- HALBFASS, W., "*Dharma* in the Self-Understanding of Traditional Hinduism," *India and Europe*, SUNY, Albany, 1981.
- HILTEBEITEL, A., *Rethinking the Mahābhārata: A Reader's Guide to the Education of the Dharma King*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2001.
- HOLTZMANN, A. (Jr.), *Das Mahābhārata und seine Theile*, 4 Vols., C. F. Haeseler, Kiel, 1892-1895.
- HOLTZMANN, A. (Sr.), *Indische Sagen: Übersetzt von Adolf Holtzmann*, Jena: E. Diederichs, 1921.
- HOPKINS, E. W., "The Bhārata and the Great Bhārata," *The American Journal of Philology*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (1898): 1-24.
- _____. *The Great Epic of India*, Yale University Press, Cambridge, U.S.A, 1901.
- IYER, U. P., "Narayana Bhattatiri," *A Souvenir of Silver Jubilee Celebration of the Department of Publication of Oriental Manuscripts*, Trivandrum, 1934 (in English).
- _____. "*Keralasāhityacaritram*," *Travancore University Series*, no. 30, 1962 (in Malayalam).
- IYER, V. S., *Nārāyaṇabhaṭṭa's Prakriyāsarvasva: A Critical Study*, University of Kerala, Trivandrum, 1972.

- JACOBI, H., *Mahābhārata: Inhaltsangabe, Index und Concordanz der Calcuttaer und Bombayer Ausgaben*, Verlag von Friedrich Cohen, Bonn, 1903.
- JANI, A. N., “The *Mahābhārata* as an Organic Growth of the Oral Literary Tradition in Ancient India,” *The Mahābhārata Revisited*, ed. R. N. Dandekar, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1990, pp. 71-85.
- KRISHAN, Y., “*Karma Vipāka*,” *Numen*, Vol. 30, Fasc. 2 (Dec., 1983), Brill: 199-214.
- KRISHNAMACHARIAR, M., *History of Classical Sanskrit Literature*, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 2004 (first pub. 1937).
- KRISHNAN NAMBU DIRIPAD, P. C., “Stories of Famous Actors,” *Kūṭiyāttam*, M. Lit. thesis, Madras University, 1962.
- LATH, M., “The Concept of *Ānṛśaṃsya* in the *Mahābhārata*,” *The Mahābhārata Revisited*, ed. R. N. Dandekar, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1990.
- MACDONELL, A. A., *A History of Sanskrit Literature*, D. Appelton, New York, 1900.
- MASSON, J. M. and PATWARDHAN, M. V., *Śāntarasa and Abhinavagupta’s Philosophy of Aesthetics*, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1969.
- _____. “The *Dhvanyāloka* and the *Dhvanyālokalocana*: A Translation of the Fourth Uddyota, Pt. I,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 97, No. 3 (Jul. – Sep., 1977): 285-304.
- _____. “The *Dhvanyāloka* and the *Dhvanyālokalocana*: A Translation of the Fourth Uddyota, Pt. II,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 97, No. 4 (Oct. – Dec., 1977): 423-440.

- MCCREA, L. J., *The Teleology of Poetics in Medieval Kashmir*, Harvard University Press, 2008.
- MCGRATH, K., *The Sanskrit Hero: Karna in Epic Mahābhārata*, Brill, Boston, 2004.
- MINKOWSKI, C. Z., "Janamejaya's *Sattra* and Ritual Structure," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 109, No. 3 (Jul. - Sep., 1989): 401-420.
- _____. "The Interrupted Sacrifice and the Sanskrit Epics," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 29: 169-186, 2001.
- OLDENBERG, H., *Das Mahabharata: seine Entstehung, sein Inhalt, seine Form*, Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1922.
- POLLOCK, S., "Future Philology? The Fate of a Soft Science in a Hard World," *Critical Inquiry* 35 (Summer 2009), University of Chicago.
- PRASADA RAO, G. K., *Agastya Paṇḍita's Bālabhārata – A Critical Study*, ed. K. S. Mahalakshmi, Amalapuram, 1992.
- RAJA, K., *The Contribution of Kerala to Sanskrit Literature*, Madras, 1958.
- _____. "Architectonics of the *Mahābhārata* and the Place of Legends in its Structure," *The Mahābhārata Revisited*, ed. R. N. Dandekar, Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 1990.
- RĀJARAJAVARMARAJA, V., *Keraliya Samskrta Sahitya Caritram*, Vol. 3: 1-151 (in Malayalam).
- RAJENDRAN, C., *Melputtūr Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa*, Sahitya Akademi, 2008.
- RAMANUJAN, A. K., "Repetition in the *Mahābhārata*," *The Collected Essays of A. K. Ramanujan*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1999, pp. 161-183.

REICH, T. C., "Sacrificial Violence and Textual Battles: Inner Textual Interpretation in the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata*," *History of Religion*, Vol. 41, No. 2. (Nov., 2001): 142-169.

_____. "Ends and Closures in the *Mahābhārata*," *International Journal of Hindu Studies* 15, 1: 9-53, Springer, 2011.

RENOU, L., *Hinduism*, George Braziller, New York, 1961.

RICE, E. P., *The Mahābhārata: Analysis and Index*, Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, Mysore, 1934.

RICHMOND, F. P., "Introduction to *Kūṭiyāttam*," *Indian Theatre, Traditions of Performance*, eds. F. Richmond, D. C. Swann, and P. B. Zarrilli, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1990.

SCHLINGLOFF, D., "The Oldest Extant Parvan-List of the *Mahābhārata*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 89, No. 2 (Apr. – Jun., 1969): 334-338.

SCHREINER, P., book review of *Rethinking the Mahābhārata* (Hiltebeitel: 2001), *The Journal of Religion* 83, no. 2 (April, 2003): 332-334.

SHASTRI, K. K., *The Jaya-Saṃhitā*, Vol. 1, Bhandarkar Oriental Series, Pune, 1998.

SHULMAN, D. D., "The Yakṣa's Questions," *The Wisdom of Poets: Studies in Tamil, Telugu and Sanskrit*, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 40-62.

_____. "Toward a Historical Poetics of the Sanskrit Epics," *The Wisdom of Poets*, Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 21-39.

SMITH, J. D., "Formulaic Language in the Epics of India," *The Heroic Process: Proceedings from the International Folk Epic Conference, Dublin, September 1985*, eds. Bo Almqvist, Séamus Ó Catháin and Prádraig Ó Héalaí, Glendale Press, Dun Laoghaire, 1987.

- _____. "Introduction," *The Mahābhārata: An Abridged Translation*, Penguin Classics, London, 2009, pp. xi-lxx.
- STOLER MILLER, B., "Karnaḥbhāra: The Trial of Karṇa," *Essays on the Mahābhārata*, ed. A. Sharma, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 2007, pp. 57-67.
- SUKTHANKAR, V. S., "Prolegomena," *The Mahābhārata* (Vol.1, Ādiparvan), Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1927.
- _____. *Critical Studies in the Mahābhārata*, Vol. 1, ed. P. K. Gode, Karnatak Publishing House, Bombay, 1944.
- TIEKEN, H., "The *Mahābhārata* After the Great Battle," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 48 (2004): 5-46.
- _____. "Kill and be Killed: The *Bhagavadgītā* and *Anugītā* in the *Mahābhārata*," *Journal of Hindu Studies*, 2009; 2: 209-228.
- TUBB, G., "Śāntarasa in the *Mahābhārata*," *Essays on the Mahābhārata*, ed. A. Sharma, Motilal Banarsidas, Delhi, 2007.
- UNNI, N. P., *Prabandhamañjarī*, Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, 1998.
- VAIDYA, C. V., *The Mahābhārata: A Criticism*, A. J. Combridge, Bombay, 1905.
- _____. *Epic India, or India as Described in the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa*, Mrs. R. A. Sagoon, Bombay, 1907.
- VAN BUITENEN, J. A. B., trans. *The Mahābhārata* (5 Vols.), The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1973.
- VARADPANDE, M. L., *History of Indian Theatre*, Shakti Malik Abhinav Publication, New-Delhi, 1992.
- VASSILKOV, Y., "Kālavāda (the doctrine of Cyclical Time) in the *Mahābhārata* and the Concept of Heroic Didactics," *Composing a Tradition: Concepts*,

Techniques and Relationships, Proceedings of the First Dubrovnik International Conference on the Sanskrit Epics and Purāṇas, August 1997, eds. M. Brockington and P. Schreiner, 1999, Zagreb, pp. 17-33.

VENKATARAMA SARMA SASTRI, V., "The *Ajāmilamokṣaprabandha* of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, University of London, Vol. 4, No. 2 (1926).

WEBER, A., *The History of Indian Literature*, trans. J. Mann and T. Zachariae, Trübner and Co., Ludgate Hill, London, 1882.

WINTERNITZ, M., *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. 1, trans. S. Ketkar, Oriental Books, New Delhi, 1977 (first printed: 1927).

ZIMMERMAN, F., "Patterns of Truthfulness," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* (2008) 36: 643-650.

Catalogues

A Triennial Catalogue of Manuscripts, Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, ed. S. Kuppaswami Sastri, Vol. 4 – part 1, Madras, 1927.

Alphabetical Index of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the University Manuscripts Library (Vol. II), ed. K. Raghavan Pillai, Trivandrum, 1965.

Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, vol. 20.

Reports on Sanskrit Manuscripts in Southern India, iii, 1655, ed. E. Hultzsch, Madras, 1905.