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## 2

## Gendered Narratives: Gender, Space, and Narrative Structures in Vālmīki's *Bālakāṇḍa*

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The *Bālakāṇḍa* is generally considered a late addition to Vālmīki's poem. From the earliest scholarship, the book was considered inferior and filled with contradictions.<sup>1</sup> This opinion is still held by many scholars and can be seen in Brockington's own recent discussion on the *Bālakāṇḍa*:

The basic purpose for the addition of the *Bālakāṇḍa* is to provide a curious audience with information on Rāma's birth, youthful exploits and marriage, while at the same time giving to Rāma the enhanced status that was by then being assigned to him. Some of its incidents are clearly elaborated out of suggestions in the main narrative, while others are purely fanciful, and others again are peripheral to the main story and are closer to Purāṇic than epic narrative. The *Bālakāṇḍa* has grown from a number of virtually independent episodes over a considerable period of time.<sup>2</sup>

Brockington is correct in his notion that the *Bālakāṇḍa* provides the audience with the details of Rāma's "birth, youthful exploits, and marriage." He understands that the book is late, and his use of the word "curious" implies that the audience, already familiar with the "central Rāma story," desires background information. Whether or not Vālmīki's audience was ever curious is impossible to tell. The issue, of course, is whether or not the *Bālakāṇḍa* was only added "later" to fill in the gaps, or whether it is integral to the main story. Moreover, Brockington sees many of the episodes as at best tenu-

ously connected to the main narrative, calling them "Purāṇic" in style. This term in and of itself is somewhat pejorative here in that the *pūrāṇas* are not uncommonly considered to be late and "inferior" collections of heterogeneous matter. The attitude expressed here concerning the *Bālakāṇḍa* is often repeated for the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, the last book of the epic, whereas the remaining books are normally considered the "main" or "central" books.

This paper looks once again at the *Bālakāṇḍa* and parts of the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, but from a different perspective, one that will attempt to determine some underlying narrative logic(s) for the *kāṇḍa*. Rather than assume that the *Bālakāṇḍa* is late and made up of only loosely connected stories, the paper will attempt to demonstrate how other considerations, specifically those of gender and space, can be used to examine and understand narrative structure. I will argue that within the books' narrative, gender and space appear as organizing principals. This logic allows that both the physical space and narrative location in which the various episodes of the book occur are marked by considerations of gender. This marking of space is systematic, intentional, and necessary for the internal logic of the narrative. Moreover, I hope to use these considerations of structure, space, and gender to explain what have been considered narrative "gaps" in the story. The epic of Vālmīki, I maintain, is a coherent narrative, carefully structured and rarely allowing a "nod" on the part of the author/composer.

Although the focus of the paper is the *Bālakāṇḍa*, the opening sections of the book are part of a larger frame narrative, one that is reintroduced in the closing sections of the last book of the epic, the *Uttarakāṇḍa*. Thus, in order to understand the structural rationale of the entire *Bālakāṇḍa*, these sections of the *Uttarakāṇḍa* must be looked at, as well. The *Bālakāṇḍa* and the *Uttarakāṇḍa* are tied to the larger narrative of the *āśvamedha* sacrifice of Rāma and to the epic's own tale of its creation and first recitation.<sup>3</sup> The narrative that frames the entire epic, found in *sargas* 1-4, is that of the creation of the poem by the poet-seer Vālmīki. The epic is composed and then taught by the sage to two young men, "sons of kings" who were "in the guise of bards," named Kuśa and Lava (*kuśilavau* 1.4.3-4). Later, at the close of the epic in the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, the boys will be explicitly identified as the sons of Rāma (7.58.9).<sup>4</sup> In the fourth *sarga* of the *Bālakāṇḍa*, these young men are depicted as recounting the tale of Rāma as Vālmīki has taught it to them, and are brought by Rāma to "his own dwelling" (1.4.2.2), where he declares:

*śrūyatām idam ākhyānam anayor devavaracasoh /*  
*vicitrārthapadaṃ samyaggāyator madhurasvaram //*  
*imau munī pārthivalakṣaṇānvitau*  
*kuśilavau caiva mahātapaśvinau /*  
*mamāpi tadbhūtikaram pracakṣate*  
*mahānubhāvaṃ caritāṃ nibodhata //*

Let us listen to this tale, whose words and meaning alike are wonderful, as it is sweetly sung by these two godlike men.

For although these two sages, Kuśa and Lava, are great ascetics, they bear all the marks of kings. Moreover, it is said that the profound tale they tell is highly beneficial, even for me. Listen to it. (1.4.25-26)

The frame then fades into the main story as a story within the story telling the tale of King Daśaratha of Ayodhyā (1.5).

This framing narrative reemerges in the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, starting with Rāma's ordering of the preparations for the *āśvamedha* sacrifice at 7.82, and finally fully completing its narrative cycle at *sarga* 7.85 with Rāma listening, as in the *Bālakāṇḍa*, to his own story as recited by his sons, Lava and Kuśa. At 7.85.11ab, the text clearly completes the circle, telling us that the boys recited the story "as it happened, from the beginning, from the *sarga* in which Nārada appears (*pravṛttam ādīnah pūrvam sargān nāradaśarṇanāt*)" (7.85.11ab).

Thus my examination of the *Bālakāṇḍa* will consist of two parts. In the first I will discuss its frame story, along with parts of the *Uttarakāṇḍa*. In the second, I will treat narrative elements and the remaining parts of the *Bālakāṇḍa*, up through Rāma's encounter with Rāma Jāmadagnya (1.72).

### Engendering the Frame

The frame itself is inhabited by the masculine; it begins with Vālmīki questioning Nārada (1.1.1) about a hero—and the subsequent description of the hero—proceeds to the sage's sight of the Niśāda killing the male of a pair of mating *krauñicas*, and ends with Rāma's *āśvamedha* sacrifice and the events leading to the end of the epic (the division of the kingdom, the visit of Kāla, the final journey to the Sarayū River, and the ascension to heaven). The sites and actions of these events can also be marked as masculine: the ashram, the sacrifice, battle, and even the forest.<sup>5</sup> However, the feminine inserts itself into the frame in at least two crucial places.

During the *krauñicavadha* of the second *sarga* of the *Bālakāṇḍa*, Vālmīki watches as the Niśāda shoots the male of a pair of mating *krauñicas*. The male of the pair is slain, and the sage utters his famous curse:

*mā niśāda pratiśthām tvam agamaḥ śāśvatīḥ samāḥ /*  
*yat kruaṅcāmithurvād ekam avadhīḥ kāmamohitam //*

Since, Niśāda, you killed one [i.e., the male] of the pair of *krauñicas*, distracted at the height of passion, you shall not live very long. (1.2.14)

The verse has been a focus of scholarly attention, in that it is considered the first poetic utterance, a fact commonly commented upon and discussed by scholars.<sup>6</sup> The verse proves quite problematic, however. Since these words set in motion one of the tradition's most famous religious and literary works, the fact that they are inauspicious is disturbing. Moreover, the words do not, as

the commentarial tradition would like, seem to reflect the central theme of the larger story, where Rāma is bereft of Sītā. For here the female is left deprived of her husband in the midst of sexual activity.

*bhāryā tu nihataṃ dṛṣṭvā rutāva karuṇāṃ girāṃ /*

Seeing him struck down and writhing on the ground, his wife uttered a piteous cry. (1.2.11cd)

The female *karuṇica* is left crying piteously and sexually unfulfilled as the love-making has been broken off.<sup>7</sup>

It is the killing of the male rather than the female that has caused considerable debate among traditional scholars. These scholars are largely in agreement that the passage is symbolic and that the verse's emotional tenor of pity (*karuṇarasā*) goes beyond this one event, suggesting instead the theme of the entire poem. For this interpretation to work, some of these scholars have interpreted the text so that the female is the one killed.<sup>8</sup> In order to accomplish this, convoluted explanations are contrived. This, according to Masson, is the reason for the silent "correction" of Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta, who, without comment, interpret the verse in this way.<sup>9</sup>

Yet it is clearly and unquestionably the female who is left mourning in Vālmīki's text. The manuscript evidence is incontrovertible. The commentator Govindarāja, followed by Kataka, goes against the trend and provides a particularly creative understanding of the verse.<sup>10</sup> Like other traditional scholars, he understands the verse to be a *kāvyārthasūcaka*, a verse that hints at the longer poem, suggesting the events of all seven *kāṇḍas*. For him, the *mā* of the verse, normally the negative injunctive "don't," refers to Mā, or the goddess Lakṣmī, and is to be read in compound with *niṣāda*, and understood as Śrīnivāsa, that is, Rāma (the abode of Śrī) and the *karuṇicamithunāt* refers to *rākṣasamithunāt*, that is the lovemaking of the *rākṣasas* (Rāvaṇa and Mandodarī). The verse then is reconfigured to mean, "O Rāma (Māniśāda) since you have killed the male (Rāvaṇa) of a pair of mating *karuṇicas*, (that is, *rākṣasas*, i.e., Rāvaṇa and Mandodarī) you shall live for a long time!" This interpretation changes the verse from a curse to a benediction, thus allying concerns about the tenor of the utterance.

Govindarāja continues to explain the verse. Here his reading is telling, for he understands that the curse is not for killing an animal (*nanu mṛgapekṣy-ādīvadhasya vyākuladharmavāt katham anuparādhanam enaṃ munīḥ śaptum arhati*), which is well within the dharma of a hunter, but for killing somebody in the act of making love (*ratiparavaśatādasāyāṃ tad vadho doṣa eveti*). Govindarāja then cites a verse from the *Mahābhārata* (1.109.21cd, 12.93.12cd) that asks the rhetorical question:

*ko hi vidvān mṛgaṃ hanyāc carantaṃ maithunam vane*

What wise man would kill an animal making love in the forest?

This is, of course, a reference to Pāṇḍu, who has slain a male deer in the act of lovemaking and is cursed for it. My mention of Govindarāja's reading here

is not a digression. It is true that he has gone to great lengths to reinterpret the text in a manner that is syntonic with his cultural view. He has done so by maintaining that which is essential, and probably most disturbing about the original—the presence of a sexually active (and unfulfilled) female—while at the same time distancing that very sexuality from the epic's hero and heroine. Govindarāja understands that sexuality is a key component of the text. But, if one understands the *karuṇicas* as a symbolic of Rāma and Sītā, as do Abhinavagupta and Ānandavardhana, that leaves Sītā bereft—a solution unsatisfactory for several reasons.

The mere fact that the verse is so disturbing, a fact reflected in the tremendous intellectual energy spent on its reinterpretation, is critical, and that the source of that anxiety is sexuality is telling. For the verse symbolically lets loose upon the epic story, as it were, an uncontrolled—therefore dangerous—sexual female. The female *karuṇica* is, I argue, a harbinger of the sexual threat to be loosed upon the males of the Īkṣvāku lineage by various females, particularly Sītā.<sup>11</sup>

The second insertion of the feminine into the frame occurs in the *Uttar-akāṇḍa*. Here the epic story merges with the frame story as Rāma decides to conduct an *aśvamedha* sacrifice. Hearing that the two young reciters of the epic tale, Lava and Kuśa, are the sons of Sītā and himself, Rāma decides to call Sītā back so that she might (again) declare her innocence. Rāma announces:

*śvaḥ prabhāte tu śapatham maithilī janakātmajā /  
karotu pariṣanmadhye śodhanārtham mamahe ca //*

Tomorrow, in the morning, let the lady from Mithilā, the daughter of Janaka, in the midst of the assembly, take an oath as to her purity, and of mine as well.<sup>12</sup> (7.86.6)

Sītā has already undertaken one vow and test of her purity and devotion to her lord at the end of the *Yuddhakāṇḍa*. There, in the presence of the gods, we see her enter the fire. Since Sītā's purity was demonstrated by the trial by fire, the *agñiparikṣā*, then why must it be demonstrated again? A closer look at the passage in its larger structural context will help us understand this second oath of Sītā.

A messenger is sent off to summon Vālmīki and Sītā; and the sages, citizens of all types, even the *rākṣasas* and *vānaras*, assemble to observe. Note that the *Yuddhakāṇḍa*'s trial is carried out primarily before the gods, whereas the *Uttarakāṇḍa*'s is carried out primarily before creatures of the earth. At 7.86.12–13, Rāma extends an open-ended invitation:

*tataḥ prahr̥ṣṭaḥ kākutsthaḥ śrutvā vākyam mahātmanah /  
ṛṣiḥs tatra sametāḥ ca rājās caivābhyaabhāṣata //  
bhogavantaḥ saśiṣyā vai sānugāś ca narādhipaḥ /  
paśyantu sītāśapatham yaś caivāṅyo 'bhikāṅkṣate //*

Then Kākutstha, having heard those words of the magnanimous one, spoke in delight to the ṛṣis and kings gathered there:

Let you, blessed ones, with your disciples, and you kings with your attendants, witness the oath of Sītā, as well as anyone else who so desires. (7.86.12-13)

The difference in audience is again crucial in our understanding of the structural logic of having both passages. The *Yuddhakāṇḍa* episode provides a non-human audience of gods, monkeys, and *rākṣasas*, whereas the *Uttarakāṇḍa* admits humans. It is important to note that at critical edition 7.87.7 even shudras are included in the list of those who come to witness the event. Moreover, we see the test of Sītā's purity carried out for the "common" man. The change of audience marks the change in location and time. We are back in the frame story, in the world of the audience, rather than in Laṅkā. What happens here is what happens to real people, not to those of the mythic past.

At *Uttarakāṇḍa* 87, as Sītā follows Vālmīki into the assembly, the poet says:

*tāṃ dṛṣtvā śrūtīm ivāyāntīm brahmāṇam anugāminīm /  
vālmīkeḥ pṛṣṭhataḥ sītām sādhuvādo mahān abhūt //*

Having seen Sītā following behind Vālmīki, like the Veda (*śruti*)<sup>13</sup> following behind Brahmā, a great cry of "Excellent!" arose. (7.87.10)

The description of Sītā is reminiscent of those found in the *Sundarakāṇḍa*, and here her association with the Veda is significant.<sup>14</sup> For Sītā will shortly utter her vow of truth and devotion to Rāma, wherein the power of language is understood as all-pervasive. In addition, the passage brings the audience's attention to focus once again upon the spoken word.

But before Sītā is allowed a voice, her purity and devotion to her husband must once again be demonstrated, here by the composer of the epic itself, who reinserts himself into the narrative to declare that his heroine has done no wrong. Vālmīki again, as in the *krauvācavadha* episode, is the agency through which the feminine voice is mediated. Unlike the *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, here it is first and foremost the word of the sage Vālmīki that allows the words of Sītā to be considered sufficient testimony of her purity. This is made clear as Rāma addresses Vālmīki:

*evam etan mahābhāga yathā vadasi dharmavit /  
pratyayo hi mama brahmaṃs tava vākyaṃ akalmaṣait //*

O fortunate one who knows dharma, it is as you say. I have faith in (*pratyayah*) (I am convinced by) your faultless words, O brahman. (7.88.2)

Although similar in seeming intent, the contrast between the *agniparikṣā* at the end of the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* and the *Uttarakāṇḍa* oath most sharply focuses on audience and the mechanism under which the oath is taken. If we look more closely at these differences, their significance will become more apparent.

Both episodes center on feminine purity, a purity that can never be assumed nor over-challenged.

*pratyayo hi purā dato vaidēhyā surasamīdhau /  
seyaṃ lokabhayād brahmann apāpeḥ abhijānatā /  
parityaktā mayā sītā tad bhavām kṣantūm arhati. //*

In the past, an oath (*pratyayah*) was given (taken) by Vaidēhī in the presence of the gods. She, O brahman, was acknowledged by me as sinless; but from fear of the citizens, I abandoned Sītā. So please forgive me. (7.82.3)

The *agniparikṣā* is certainly the more dramatic and decisive of the two ways of proving one's virtue. There, after all, the vow was taken in the presence of the gods and validated by Agni himself. The oath, moreover, was accompanied by an act few would be willing to undertake.<sup>15</sup> At the end of the trial, however, Sītā remains a sexually viable character, as is demonstrated by her pregnancy in the final *kāṇḍa*. What then is the significance of the oath of purity, first uttered by Vālmīki and then by Sītā, here in the *Uttarakāṇḍa*? For one, the *agniparikṣā* belongs to the *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, and serves to demonstrate Sītā's purity within the main epic narrative. In the *Uttarakāṇḍa*, on the other hand, the attestation and vow of purity are directed toward the validation of the legitimacy of Lava and Kuśa. This is, of course, intimately linked to the demonstration of Sītā's sexual purity.

A dramatic shift is evidenced, however, in the mechanism of the oath. The burden of proof is placed on the validity of Vālmīki's word rather than on the purifying power of divine intervention. As Vālmīki utters his oath:

*na smarāmy anyāṃ vākyaṃ imau tu tava putrakau (GPP 7.96.18cd-  
20 = CE 7.87.17cd)  
bahuvārsasahasrāṇi tapāscaryā mayā kṛtā  
nopāśrītāṃ phalaṃ tasyā dṛṣṭeyam yadi maithilī / (=I358\*)  
manasā karmaṇā vācā bhūtapūrvam na kilbiṣam (=I359\*)  
tasyāhaṃ phalam aśnāmi apāpā maithilī yadi // (=CE7.87.1ab)*

I do not remember a false word (of mine); these two boys are yours. For many thousands of years, I have practiced austerities. Let me not acquire the fruits of that if Maithilī is tainted. In thought, word, or deed, I have never before sinned. If Maithilī is free from sin, I will obtain the fruits of that.

The audience hears first of all Vālmīki's attestation of his own inability to speak a falsehood, then of the male (*tava* = *rāmasya*) parentage of the twins. Note the structure of Vālmīki's oath as he denies himself the fruits of his ascetic labors if Maithilī is tainted, first as a negative, then as a positive statement. Validation of the reciters of the epic, and their lineage, allows the validation of that which they recite, the epic itself. Thus the scene can be understood within

he narrative frame to mark the truth of Vālmīki's own epic as chanted by the young boys.

That Vālmīki reemerges for his final appearance in the epic at this juncture can be understood as the completed symbolic transformation of speech into poetry and of the epic narrative into poetic expression, a process that was initiated within the narrative frame with the *krañcavadha* and the curse of Vālmīki.

At this point, Sītā utters her poignant vow of devotion to her husband:

*yathāham rāghavād anyam manasāpi na cintaye /  
tathā me mādāhvī devī vivaram dātum arhati ||  
manasā karmaṇā vācā yathā rāmaṃ samarcaye /  
tathā me mādāhvī devī vivaram dātum arhati ||  
yathāhitat satyam uktam me vedmi rāmāt param na ca /  
tathā me mādāhvī devī vivaram dātum arhati ||*

As I have never thought of a man other than Rāghava, may the earth goddess Mādāhvī give me passage (*vivaram dātum*). As I have focussed on Rāma in thought, word, and deed, may the earth goddess Mādāhvī give me passage. As what I have spoken here is the truth, and I have known no man other than Rāma, may the earth goddess Mādāhvī give me passage. (GPP 97.14–16; CE 7.88.10, 137<sup>24</sup>)

Although the powerful oath and subsequent events are open to numerous readings, for the purposes of this discussion issues of gender and voice are most relevant. The tragic irony of the passage is not lost on the audience. Once again, Sītā passes her test but this time, rather than reunion with her husband, she is reunited with her mother, Mādāhvī, whom she has called upon. The result then is the end of her own earthly existence (7.88.11–14). Unlike the *agniparikṣā* episode, where Sītā is permitted to emerge from the fire (in a symbolic sequence of death, rebirth, and purity), here the sexualized feminine is reabsorbed into the archaic mother, the earth, from which she emerged in the *Bālakāṇḍa* (1.65.14–15). Thus she no longer poses threat to Rāma or the patriarchy for which he stands. With that threat dissipated, the epic can come to an end. In this respect it is probably no accident that Rāma subsequently undertakes his sacrifices with a golden Sītā (7.89.4), a woman completely molded and controlled, and of absolutely no threat to the male in her absolute incorruptibility. Once Sītā is taken away by her mother, we have closure of the feminine rupture in the text. Note how the symbolism reflects the rupture and its final closure. For we are told of the Goddess Earth emerging from the earth, created on a throne, borne on the heads of great *nāgas* (7.88.11–12). Taking up her daughter in her arms, she retreats to the lower regions (*rasātala*) (7.88.13–4). This closure, like the rupture at the opening of the epic, begins with the voice of the female calling out and ends with the suppression, the literal burying, of the feminine voice. Throughout the story the feminine voice is me-

diated by the masculine (here, Vālmīki), and these two episodes provide a symmetry of structure that holds the narrative frame together.

Voice and gender thus haunt the frame of the narrative story, providing a cohesiveness and structural unity to the epic story. The two framing episodes of the narrative use the voice of the female to rupture the narrative, mark decisive and structurally related events, and finally provide a space, an opening, symbolic as well as literal, in which the rupture can have closure. It is with this understanding of how space, gender, voice, and rupture function as a carefully constructed matrix in the narrative that we can turn to the events of *Bālakāṇḍa* proper.

### The Feminine Face of the *Bālakāṇḍa*

Given the understanding that the *sargas* that precede this are integral to the narrative structure of the larger epic, the *Bālakāṇḍa* narrative proper can be said to begin at *sarga* 5 with the description of Ayodhyā and the story of Daśaratha's *putreṣṭi* (rite for bringing forth a son) and *asvamedha* (horse sacrifice). The epic itself provides a clear indication that this is a transition, one that functions much like the fade-out and fade-in of the modern cinema (1.4.27).

As Jacobi notes, the story begins within the confines of the city of Ayodhyā (*sargas* 5–20), the locus of civilization, moves to the forest (21–48), and then at its conclusion returns to the city, first Mithilā (49–72), and then once again Ayodhyā (76).<sup>16</sup> At both the opening and conclusion, the locus of action occurs within the confines of the city. At both junctures we have rites of passages wherein a female is an essential component—birth and marriage, respectively. In addition to the hero, these rites also include two additional figures of importance: a powerful sage and a dominant male, here a king. Although these figures may appear to be backgrounded at times, they are nevertheless key figures. Thus during the opening segment of the epic we have an *asvamedha* cum *putreṣṭi*, the two sacrifices employed to provide the impotent or infertile Daśaratha with a long-desired son; whereas at the end of the *Bāla* we have the wedding ceremony in which all four of his sons take wives.

The events in both Ayodhyā and Mithilā have a significant priest or sage associated with them; moreover, the histories of these figures are told within the epic narrative. The son-producing sacrifices of Daśaratha are conducted by the young sage Ṛṣyaśṅga, whose own tale is interwoven with and reconfigured to reflect issues central to the larger epic, while the later section relates the well-known struggle of the sage Viśvāmītra to become a brahman. The stories or histories of both Ṛṣyaśṅga and Viśvāmītra are often considered to be but loosely connected to the main narrative.<sup>17</sup> If, however, we look at the narrative structure of the *kāṇḍa* with an eye to issues of gender and sexuality, we can understand that their inclusion is not just logical but even necessary.

The story of Ṛṣyaśṅga is widespread and certainly not original either to the epic or to the solar lineage of the epic's hero.<sup>18</sup> However, the choice of the

figure of R̥syāśr̥ṅga is significant, and his character integral to the *kāṇḍa*'s development. At *Bālakāṇḍa* 8 and 9, the story tells of the kingdom Anṅga, whose king was Romapāda. The kingdom, because of a transgression on the part of the king, is suffering from a terrible drought. The king is advised by his ministers that in order to bring an end to the drought the son of Vibhāṇḍaka must be brought from the forest. The counselors are uncertain as to how to accomplish this at first, but then come upon a plan by which prostitutes are to be sent to the forest to seduce R̥syāśr̥ṅga. The scene of the seduction is sweet, and in the *Bāla* somewhat bowdlerized compared to other versions. The young sage is seduced and the rains come. He is brought back to Romapāda's kingdom and marries his daughter Śāntā.<sup>19</sup> It is this sage whom Daśaratha brings to Ayodhyā to perform his sacrifice.

The scene of the seduction of the sage appears at first to be only tenuously connected with the remainder of the *kāṇḍa*. As we will see in the discussion that follows, however, the story is important in a number of ways. After first hearing a brief account of Romapāda and R̥syāśr̥ṅga, Daśaratha's advisors repeat the story in greater detail.<sup>20</sup> Romapāda's advisors counsel him to bring the young sage by sending out prostitutes to seduce him. They tell the king:

*ṛṣyaśr̥ṅgo vanacaras tapahsvādhyāyane rataḥ /*  
*anabhiññāḥ sa nār̥iṇām viśayāyām sukhasya ca //*  
*indriyārthair abhīmatair naracittapramāthibhiḥ /*  
*puram ānāyayaiśyāmāḥ kṣipram cādhyavasīyatām //*

R̥syāśr̥ṅga is a forest-dweller devoted to austerity and study. He is wholly unacquainted with women and the pleasures of the senses. So we shall bring him to the city with pleasant objects of the senses that agitate the thoughts of men. Let it be arranged at once. (1.9.3-4)

The women enter the forest and stay near the ashram:

*vāramukhyās tu tacchrutvā vanam pravivīśur mahat /*  
*āśramasyāvīdiṛe smṛin yatnam kurvanti darśane //*  
*ṛṣiputrasya dhīrasya nityam āśramavāsinaḥ /*  
*pituh sa nityasamīkṣo nāticakrāma cāśramāt //*

Upon hearing their instructions, the finest courtesans entered the great forest and stayed near the ashram trying to catch a glimpse of the seer's steadfast son who always stayed within it. Wholly content with just his father, he had never ventured outside the ashram. (1.9.7-8)

Once, however, when the boy's father left the ashram, the boy came out and the women saw him. Wearing beautiful clothes and singing with sweet voices, all those beautiful young women approached the seer's son and said these words:

*kas tvam kiṃ vartase brahmaṇ jñātum icchāmahe vayam /*  
*ekas tvam vijane ghore vane carasi śaṃsa naḥ //*

Who are you? How do you live? Brahman, we wish to know. Tell us, why do you wander alone in this dreadful and deserted forest? (1.9.12)

The boy feels "a sudden feeling of love for these women with their desirable bodies and their looks such as he had never before seen (*adr̥śtarūpās tena kāmyarūpāḥ . . . śrīyāḥ / hārdāt tasya matir jātā*)" (13); and responds by telling them about his father and offering them hospitality in his ashram. The women accept and "are filled with longing" (18), but are afraid of Vibhāṇḍaka. They offer him fruits and sweets:

*asmākam api mukhyāni phalānīmāni vai dvija /*  
*gr̥hāṇa prati bhadrām te bhakṣayasva ca mā citram //*  
*tatas tās taṃ samālivīgya sarvā harṣasamanvītāḥ /*  
*modakān pradadus tasmāi bhakṣyāṃs ca vivīdhāñ śubhān //*

We too have excellent fruits, brahman. Bless you. Take some and eat them now. Then they all embraced him joyfully, offering him sweets and various other good things to eat. (1.19.19-20)

The next day, the boy again comes to where the woman had been, and meets them. They ask that he accompany them to their ashram, and he agrees. On the way the rain begins to fall.

Structurally, we have a number of issues here. The episode is the first time in the story, outside of the *krauñca*'s cry, that the feminine voice is heard in the text. That this voice is that of courtesans, pleasant and seductive, is notable and, as I hope to demonstrate, no accident on the part of the composer. The women are overtly sexualized figures—professionals, as it were. The story is of the initiation of a young boy into the sexual world. Their presence sets the tone for the remaining encounters with the feminine that the *kāṇḍa* will recount.

Before the sage can participate in the main story, his own history must be told, and that history is his own encounter with the sexual world. Thus this history of this sage, with its focus on symbolic and real potency and fertility, reflects, I would argue, the larger concerns of the *kāṇḍa* and even the main epic story. Romapāda, like Daśaratha, is, in effect, impotent or infertile. Romapāda's impotence is marked by the drought his kingdom was suffering, and by the fact that he had only a daughter. Romapāda's impotency/infertility is highlighted in some recensions where Śāntā is said to be an adopted daughter whose biological father is Daśaratha.<sup>21</sup> In order for King Romapāda to become fertile, his daughter must be given to the sage. That the issue is sexual potency is made explicit in the text by the fact that R̥syāśr̥ṅga's potency is marked conspicuously with a phallic displacement, the small erect horn on his head. Thus, when it is clear that the old, impotent Daśaratha needs assistance to help procure a son, the logical choice is the young, virile, ithyphallic sage R̥syāśr̥ṅga. Although the potent male is a brahman and the impotent male is a kshatriya, issues of *varṇa* are not foregrounded in the episode.

### What's in a Rite

It is only after R̥śyaśṛṅga is brought to the kingdom of Ayodhyā (1.10) and after he had dwelt there for some time that the *asvamedha* (1.13) and the *putreṣṭi* (1.14) are performed. The question now arises, why the two rites?

Unlike the *asvamedha* of Rāma, which is employed for the traditional rationale of securing and demonstrating hegemony over a territory, the *asvamedha* of Daśaratha is used at least in part to obtain a son. The use of this sacrifice, normally a sacrifice to sanctify a king's hegemony, in this context is unusual, and has been commented upon by modern scholars and as well as traditional scholiasts.<sup>22</sup> According to P. V. Kane, the rite can function in a variety of ways, including an expiation for the sacrificer of a *mahāpātaka*, or major sin, such as *brahmahatyā*, "murder of a brahman."<sup>23</sup> This is the very purpose that Bhatt assigns to it.<sup>24</sup>

What is additionally clear, however, is that the sacrifice has a strong fertility element to it.<sup>25</sup> After the horse has roamed for a year, the final stages of the sacrifice begin. On the second of the three pressing days, the horse is sacrificed. The animal is bathed and anointed by the chief queen with clarified butter. The horse is ritually slaughtered amid proper recitations, and so on. The wives of the king then circumambulate the horse three times, carrying out a number of ritual actions, including the beating of their left thighs.<sup>26</sup> Then the chief queen lies down next to the dead horse and has intercourse with it.<sup>27</sup> This is the very act that Kausalyā is said to have done at *Rāmāyaṇa* 1.13.27. The *Rāmāyaṇa* also has the other wives of Daśaratha "unite" with the horse (1.13.28). In the descriptions of the *asvamedha*, the priest (the *hotṛ*) abuses the queen with obscene language, and she responds in kind.<sup>28</sup> The actions here are important, since the aspects of sexuality and fertility clearly are foregrounded in the ritual, and it is these very elements that tie the use of the *asvamedha* to the concerns of the *Bālakāṇḍa*.

The second ritual, the *putreṣṭi*, comes in *sarga* 14, at verse 2, where the text tells us that "In order to procure sons for you, I shall perform the son-producing sacrifice (*īṣṭīm te 'ham kariṣyāmi putrīyaṃ putrakāraṇāi*)."<sup>29</sup> This rite is smaller and less imposing than the first, but nevertheless has the same basic function, the procuring of a son. In contrast to the *asvamedha* with its thick description, the *putreṣṭi* is only mentioned. No performance details are given. We are told only that R̥śyaśṛṅga announces to Daśaratha that in order to procure a son, he must carry out a *putreṣṭi* and that it must be done "in accordance with the injunctions of the ritual texts and rendered efficacious by potent verses set down in the *Artharva Veda*" (1.14.2). The *putreṣṭi* is mentioned again at 1.15.8. Here we are told that that Viṣṇu chose King Daśaratha to be his father (1.15.7) at the very moment that Daśaratha was performing the rite (1.15.8).

Striking, too, is the nature of the texts used for legitimization of each rite. The *asvamedha* draws upon the ritual tradition of the *Veda*, whereas the *putreṣṭi* specifically calls upon the *Atharvaveda*, a tradition understood to be later and

held in somewhat less esteem than those of the *R̥g*, *Sāma*, and *Yajur* traditions. The texts, as do the rituals they support, have different audiences and functions. The *asvamedha* harks to the high brahmanic world of the formal and elaborate sacrifice, whereas the *putreṣṭi* clearly functions as a domestic, practical rite for obtaining a son.

Bulcke understands that the *putreṣṭi* is "superfluous," whereas R. Goldman argues that it is the *asvamedha* that is "redundant" and included to demonstrate the "splendor and might of the Kosalan monarchy."<sup>30</sup> In reexamining the structure of the book for issues of gender, however, the rationale for the text's inclusion of both rites becomes apparent. The *asvamedha* sacrifice of Daśaratha is linked to the larger epic frame story of Rāma's own *asvamedha*, and also serves, as R. Goldman has suggested, to solidify and legitimize the Kosalan monarchy. However, the minute, and for the most part accurate, detail of the description of the sacrifice is somewhat unusual, especially the three verses dedicated to the role of the wives (1.13.26–28). I would argue that it is this clearly sexual component that makes the *asvamedha* sacrifice of particular interest to the author of the *Bālakāṇḍa*, although the other issues are not necessarily unimportant. The *asvamedha*, like so many other elements of the text, can be read on various levels. Both rites then must be seen as primarily directed toward the acquisition of a son.

Once we can understand the multivalent nature of the *asvamedha* in the context of the *Bālakāṇḍa*, we can understand why there were two rites. The *putreṣṭi* is the expected domestic rite, but does little to function in terms of the larger narrative of either the *kāṇḍa* or the epic. The *asvamedha*, as Goldman argues, links us to the larger tradition as well as to the frame narrative. It serves to glorify the brahmanic tradition and firmly establish the Kosalan monarchy among its most ardent defenders. At the same time, the detailed description of the sacrifice brings to the forefront the very sexual world to which the R̥śyaśṛṅga episode introduced us and on which the *kāṇḍa* will focus. That the sexual activity is legitimized through vedic ritual is perhaps a mechanism that permits larger investigation of the subject.

### Beyond the City

The two sacrifices have one purpose, to ensure the birth of the epic's hero. His birth sets in motion the entire epic and sets the stage for the main narrative. The book itself is bracketed by two major life events of the hero: birth and marriage. The *kāṇḍa* is called the *bāla*, or "child(hood)." The book, however, spends virtually no time on the actual childhood of Rāma, and rather focuses on the adolescence of the young hero.

Unlike the Kṛṣṇa myth, Vālmīki's narrative allows us scant access to the early childhood of Rāma. Moreover, unlike Sagar, who inserts in his Doordarshan production a charming and, at least in reference to the Vālmīki legend, utterly spurious childhood sequence, Vālmīki is silent. In his telling, imme-

diately after the birth of the boys and the rites accompanying their birth (17.6–12), the four boys appear as young men, over whose marriage Daśaratha is pondering (17.13–22).

Just at this juncture, the second important sage figure of the *Bālākāṇḍa* is introduced. Viśvāmitra suddenly arrives at Daśaratha's court to seek the king's aid, or more precisely, his sons' aid, in fighting *rākṣasas* (1.17.23–1.18.18). From this point until the marriage of the sons of Daśaratha at *sargā* 72, Viśvāmitra becomes the central paternal figure in the *kāṇḍa*. Daśaratha and the city of Ayodhyā are left behind. And for the next fifty-five *sargas* (approximately 70 percent of the book), the figure of Viśvāmitra dominates. Immediately following the marriage, however, Viśvāmitra departs and vanishes from the epic narrative for good (1.73) as the book comes to an end. The timing recalls traditional brahmanic period of studentship, or *brahmīncarya*, with its required *guru/siṣya* relationship. The difficulty with this interpretation is the timing. Normally, studentship starts at an earlier age.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, Viśvāmitra is to take the brother's for only a short period of time (1.19.17). What then is the purpose of Viśvāmitra's temporary guardianship of Rāma? The pretext of the journey is to defend Viśvāmitra's sacrifice from the depredations of the *rākṣasas*. But the journey is, in fact, haunted by a series of figures and episodes that have been considered by many scholars to be only loosely tied to the larger structure. That the stories, such as that of the sons of Sagara and others, reflect larger epic concerns has been discussed elsewhere.<sup>31</sup> But here I would propose that beyond reflecting the epic's themes, they are integral to the development of the character of both the hero and the epic story itself.

Within the Viśvāmitra narrative, as I will call it here, perhaps the most central event is the *Tāṭakāvadha*. Again, as in the frame story, what is striking here is the eruption of the feminine into narrative. Up until the appearance of Tāṭakā and the story of her killing at *sargas* 23–24, the feminine has been admitted to the text but has been minimized and controlled. The *āsvamedha* sacrifice (1.13.26–27), the drinking of the *pāyasa* (1.16.18–28), and even the birth of the boys (1.17.6–9) downplay the participation of the mothers. Thus, in the *Bālākāṇḍa*, the women of Ayodhyā (and for that matter Mithilā) are never given a voice, and references to them are sparse.<sup>32</sup> Only the seductive courtesans of the Ryaśrīga episode have been permitted to speak.

But with the appearance of Tāṭakā, the ugly, fearsome, and uncontrollably sexualized feminine appears at its most horrific.<sup>33</sup> That a demonic threat exists we have already been told. At 1.18.5, Viśvāmitra tells Daśaratha of the demons Māṛica and Subāhu. He makes no mention of Tāṭakā, however. Why is this? Western scholars tend to cite inconsistency and inadequacy of the text. But I have found that Vālmīki rarely truly nods.<sup>34</sup>

Before we can adequately address the question of why Tāṭakā is not mentioned, we need to step back and ask why the author introduces the sage Viśvāmitra. After all, Ayodhyā is filled with eminent sages, including the family *purohita*, who is no less a figure than Vasiṣṭha (1.7.3). What makes this sage narratively so important to the epic at this juncture? In order to understand

this we need to look at the history of Viśvāmitra, an elaborate version of which is provided in the *Bālākāṇḍa* itself. This history, like that of the sage Ryaśrīga, is told in a number of places other than the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and is certainly not original to the *Bālākāṇḍa*.<sup>35</sup> The choice of Viśvāmitra here then is clearly intentional on the part of Vālmīki. The story has as its central focus King Viśvāmitra's hostility toward the brahman sage Vasiṣṭha over the wish-fulfilling cow Śabalā (1.52–64) and the frustrated king's struggles to become a brahman.<sup>36</sup> The cow, the symbol of all nurturing mothers, is in the possession of Vasiṣṭha. As a king, Viśvāmitra covets the cow and tries to take it away from Vasiṣṭha, only to discover that the power of the *daṇḍa*-wielding (phallus possessing) brahman is far greater than that of an ordinary weapon-wielding kshatriya. Viśvāmitra as the impotent kshatriya in his struggle against Vasiṣṭha the hyperphallic male brahman recalls the configuration at the outset of the epic with Ryaśrīga and Romapāda/Daśaratha. Viśvāmitra undertakes severe austerities in order to gain especially potent (in fact Saivite) weapons (the phallus), only to discover that the power of even those weapons is not sufficient to gain the cow/mother.<sup>37</sup>

Viśvāmitra then undertakes still more severe penances in order to become a brahman, the equal of Vasiṣṭha. The sage undergoes a number of tests and adventures until at last he is forced to undergo two final trials. Both these tests focus on sexual seduction. First is the story of Menakā (1.62). The *apsaras* Menakā, sent by the gods, seduces Viśvāmitra and distracts him from his austerities. Realizing that his austerities have been compromised, he is filled with regret (62.12). Next is the story of Rambhā (1.63). Again the sage undertakes severe austerities. Once again the gods are threatened and send an *apsaras* (Rambhā) to seduce him. This time, however, the sage is filled with anger and curses the hapless woman. But despite the control of his sexual desire, the sage's austerities are compromised since he has not been able to overcome his wrath.

The focus of scholarship on this story of Viśvāmitra's history has been normally on the brahman/kshatriya struggle and the changing of one's class, a feat rarely accomplished elsewhere in the literature.<sup>38</sup> These issues are certainly present in the text, but are not, I would argue, central to it in this context. Rather, I suggest that it is Viśvāmitra's struggles with his oedipal anxiety and his own sexuality, and his final victory over them, that tie the story to the *Bālākāṇḍa*. Viśvāmitra's well-known sexual exploits make him an ideal choice to indoctrinate the epic's hero into the world outside of Ayodhyā, a world fraught with dangers, most importantly sexual threats. Notice that Viśvāmitra is a liminal brahman and is treated as such by the "true" brahman, Vasiṣṭha; Viśvāmitra's status is conferred by his ability to overcome his sensual desires rather than by birth or entitlement. His exploits (like those of Ryaśrīga), tell of his own coming of age, his own change of "sexual" or phallic status.

Rāma, too, is at a transitional place in his life, neither boy nor man; he is on the cusp of manhood. Daśaratha says of him: "my lotus-eyed Rāma . . . [is] not yet sixteen years of age" (1.19.2). Thus Viśvāmitra, a figure who has suc-



cessfully encountered and overcome his own sexual demons, is a fitting choice to help Rāma conquer his. From the outset of the journey, the audience is left in little doubt that the adventure at hand has sexual underpinnings.

As the boys and Viśvāmītra leave Ayodhyā, they cross the Sarayū River, and come upon a holy ashram, the very place where Kāma, the god of love, shot Śiva (Sthānu) with his arrow and was burned by the great god's third eye (1.2.11–12). Inhabited now by ascetics of only the fiercest vows, it is marked as a contested locus of sexual activity (1.2.2.11).<sup>39</sup> This is the location where sexuality, personified as the god of love, Kāma, contests asceticism, as practiced by the archetypal ascetic, Maheśvara. The story is much abbreviated, telling us only that Kāma was burned by the wrath of Śiva (1.2.2.13). Of Pārvaṭī we hear nothing in the critical edition. The northern variant only mentions her in the context of her husband's name, that is, Umāpati. Clearly the mention of the incident is not to tell us the story—one that must have been well known to the audience—but to let the reference to the story serve as a symbol. The site marks the exit of the boys from the world of their childhood into the sexual world. Once they pass through the ashram, they are vulnerable to attack from this sexual world.

It is at this very juncture that we find the story of the *Tāṭakāvadhā*. Who is Tāṭakā, and why does she appear at this point in the Rāma story? Tāṭakā is a figure known only to the *Rāmāyana* tradition. The critical edition version of the story provides a brief history of her and her son Mārīca. We are told only this: There was a *yakṣa* named Suketu who had a beautiful daughter named Tāṭakā. She was given to Sunda in marriage. Tāṭakā gave birth to a son named Mārīca (1.2.4.4–8). The text is somewhat vague at this point. It says:

*sunde tu nihate rāma agastyam ṛṣaittamam /  
tāṭakā saha putreṇa pradharṣayitum icchati //  
rākṣasatvam bhajasveti mārīcam vyājahāra saḥ /  
agastyah paramakruddhas tāṭakām api śaptavān //  
puruṣāḍī mahāyākṣī virūpā viktānānā /  
idaṃ rūpam apāhāya dāruṇam rūpam astu te //*

After Sunda had been killed, Rāma, Tāṭakā and her son tried to attack Agastya, greatest of seers. But Agastya cursed Mārīca, saying, "May you become a *rākṣasa*!" and in his towering rage, he cursed Tāṭakā as well: "You are now a great *yakṣa* woman, but you shall be a repulsive man-eater with a hideous face. May you lose your present form and take on a truly dreadful one." (1.2.4.9–11)

But why did Tāṭakā attack Agastya and why did Agastya curse her to be a man-eating *rākṣasī*? The critical edition of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyana* has little to say.<sup>40</sup> That she becomes a "man-eater" (*puruṣāḍī*) provides a clue. The commentators of the vulgate (1.2.5.13) understand "man-eater" (*puruṣāḍī*) to refer to Tāṭakā after she has become a *rākṣasī*. Thus one commentator, Siromaṇi, glosses, "be a *rākṣasī* whose nature is to be an eater of men, a *puruṣāḍī* (*puruṣāḍīpuruṣab-hakṣaṇasīlā rākṣasī bhava*)."<sup>41</sup> Govindarāja, another commentator, glosses "be one

endowed with the characteristics of a man-eater, etc. (*puruṣāḍyādiviśeṣaṇayuktā bhava*)."<sup>42</sup> Elsewhere, I have discussed the connection between the eating of men by *rākṣasīs* and libidinal drive, and I would suggest here too that the libidinal underlies the gustatory.<sup>43</sup> This is further supported by manuscript evidence from the *Rāmāyana* itself. In our notes to the *Bālakāṇḍa* on this passage, we provide a version of this episode that would lend support to the idea that the attack on Agastya by Tāṭakā has a sexual motivation, and that it is for this sexual transgression that Tāṭakā is cursed.<sup>44</sup> A number of southern manuscripts hint at it, but in one case, the sexual component is explicit. Reading:

*āyāntī saha putreṇa sakāśam sō mahāmuniḥ /  
rūpaṃ dṛṣtvā punas tasya manmathasya vaśam gatā /  
tādītā kāmabāṇaughaiḥ yuvatī sō dīgambharā /  
ratyartham kṛtasamrambhā gāyanī sābhyaadhāvata /*

When she [Tāṭakā] drew closer to the sage with her son and saw how handsome he was, she was completely overpowered by the god of love. Smitten by swarms of the love-god's arrows, the young woman took off all her clothes and, wildly eager to make love with him, she ran toward him singing.<sup>45</sup>

It is with this in mind that Viśvāmītra's insistence that Tāṭakā be killed, not just maimed, becomes logical. She is a sexual threat to the brahmanic, and by extension the entire Aryan, world. She is the manifestation of the phallic, archaic mother and must be destroyed.<sup>46</sup> Her size, demeanor, and locus all speak to this.<sup>47</sup> The story of Tāṭakā is of matricide and speaks to the Oedipal fears of the young Rāma. This reading of the episode has been fully discussed by R. Goldman and need not be elaborated here.<sup>48</sup> What becomes apparent in light of this discussion is just how the figure of Viśvāmītra and his story as well as the episode of the destruction of Tāṭakā are integrated, logical components of the epic narrative.

### The Journey

Once Tāṭakā is slain and Viśvāmītra has conferred the magical weapons upon Rāma—clear symbols of phallic compensation—Viśvāmītra takes the two boys to his ashram, where he performs his sacrifice (1.28–29). During the sacrifice the two sons of Tāṭakā, Subāhu and Mārīca, come to harass the sage. Subāhu is killed and Mārīca, who will figure significantly in the *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, is stunned (1.29.14–19). This, of course, is the purpose for which Viśvāmītra originally comes to Ayodhyā. However, the episode only takes up two of the *kāṇḍa*'s seventy-six *sargas*, suggesting that it is more of an excuse than a reason. Rather than returning the boys to their father, their mission accomplished, Viśvāmītra tells the boys that they will now all go to Mithilā to attend the sacrifice of Janaka and see his "jewel of a bow" (1.30.7). Like the episode of the demoness Tāṭakā, the journey to Mithilā is nowhere mentioned by Viśvāmītra

when he comes to Ayodhyā. Here again, Viśvāmītra leaves out an important piece of information. He makes no mention of Sītā or marriage, or for that matter of any self-choice or bride contest that will eventually take place when he tells the boys of Janaka's bow and sacrifice.

As they travel along, Viśvāmītra tells the boys the history of various places, or family lineages, or in some case both. Again these stories appear to be only loosely tied to the epic story with respect to their narrative, but by changing our focus from issues like the brahman/kshatriya struggle to issues of sexuality and gender, we can see how the episodes become logical thematic sequences in the *kāṇḍa*.

On the first night of their journey to Mithilā, the party spends the night on the banks of the river Soṇā, where Rāma asks the history of the region (1.30.18, 22). Viśvāmītra then tells the story of the daughters of Kuśanābha. The story's patriarch Kuśanābha is the grandfather of Viśvāmītra.<sup>47</sup> The story tells of his one hundred daughters, who were cursed by the wind god Vāyu.

The story is a fascinating one, especially in light of the journey to Mithilā that the boys are making. One day these young women, who like all epic unmarried heroines, were "youthful, beautiful, and richly ornamented," resembled lightning in the rains as they went to the park (*yauvanasāliṅgyo rūpavatyaḥ sālankṛtāḥ / udyānabhūmim āgamyā prāvṛṣva satahradāḥ*) (1.31.10).

*gāyanto nṛtyamānās ca vādyaṅkṛtās ca rāghava /  
āmodaṃ paramaṃ jagmur varābharaṇabhūṣitāḥ //  
atha tās cārusarvāṅgyo rūpenāpratimā bhūmī /  
udyānabhūmim āgamyā tārā iva ghanāntare //*

Adorned with the most exquisite ornaments, singing, dancing, and playing musical instruments, they enjoyed themselves immensely. Rāghava. Their every limb was beautiful, and indeed, there was no one on earth whose loveliness was like theirs. There in the park they looked like stars shining among the clouds. (1.31.11-12)

Vāyu, the wind god, "who lives in every one" (1.31.1) spies them and desires them. The young women spurn his advances, and mock him, replying:

*antaścaraṣi bhūtānāṃ sarveṣāṃ tvam surottama /  
prabhāvajñās ca te sarvāḥ kim asmān anamanye //  
kuśanābhasutāḥ sarvāḥ samarthās tvāṃ surottama /  
sthānāc cyaṅvayitum devaṃ rakṣām astu tapo vāyam //  
mā bhūtsa kālo durmedhah! pitarāṃ satyavādānam /  
nāvamanyasva dharmena svayamvaram upāsmahe //  
pitā hi prabhur asmākaṃ daivatam paramaṃ hi sah /  
yasya no dāsyati pitā sa no bhartā bhaviṣyati //*

Best of gods, you move inside all creatures and know their various powers. How dare you then treat us with disrespect? Best of gods, we are the daughters of Kuśanābha. Any of us could send you top-

pling from your lofty state, god though you be, did we not prefer to keep the power of our austerities. Fool! May such a thing never happen! We shall never disregard the wishes of our truthful father and choose a husband for ourselves on our own account. For our father is our lord and our supreme divinity. That man alone will be our husband to whom our father gives us! (1.31.16-19)

Vāyu is enraged at the girls' response, and enters "into everyone of their limbs," and twists them (1.31.20). Deformed, they returned to their father, who says,

*kim idaṃ kathyatāḥ putryaḥ ko dharmam avamanyate /  
kubjāḥ kena kṛtāḥ sarvā veṣṭantyo nābhībhaṣātha //*

What is this? Speak, my daughters. Who has dared to so violate the laws of propriety? Who has turned all of you into hunchbacks? Though you all gesticulate wildly, you do not speak. (1.31.22)

Kuśanābha praises his daughters' forbearance and turns his mind to providing them (still deformed) with a suitable husband. He finds one in the mind-born son of the sage Cūlin named Brahmadaṭṭa. As soon as Brahmadaṭṭa takes the hands of his brides, "all the hundred maidens became radiant with great beauty, free from crookedness, and free from sorrow (*vikubjā vigatejparāḥ / yukitāḥ parmayā lakṣmyā babhūḥ kanyā sataḥ tadā*)" (32.23).

The story explains both the history of a place and, as we find out in the following *sarga*, the lineage of Viśvāmītra. But the tale is unusual, and clearly speaks to the power of the patriarchy. The episode, it might be argued, is a story of seduction and rape, but such a reading does not conform to the typical scenario of other seduction and rape stories such, for example, as one would see in the rape of Vedavātī, who, ruined, commits suicide by immolating herself (7.17). Perhaps the tale can be most simply read as a coming-of-age story. Vāyu is not only determined to possess the girls but does so despite their protestations. Vāyu enters the girls and causes their bodies to be abnormal. But his actions do not make the young women ineligible for marriage—anything but. Once the girls have been entered, they become deformed. Deformity, especially possession of a hunchback, marks a phallic transference, and is considered a sign of impurity or evil.<sup>48</sup> Finally, when the girls explain what happened to their father, they say:

*tena pāpānubandhena vacanam na pratīcchata /  
. . . vāyuna nihatā bhṛṣam //*

we were sorely afflicted by Vāyu, who meant us no good and would not heed our words. (1.32.4)

As soon as the girls are deformed, Kuśanābha begins to consider a suitable husband for the girls. Once they are given in marriage, their affliction ceases. The appropriate male (note that he is a brahman) functions as a restorative, and the girls once again become whole. Moreover, once in the possession of a

suitable male/husband, their sexuality is no longer a threat. The story has a strong sexual undercurrent, and the encounter with Vāyu brings to mind sexual seduction. However, sexual seduction usually does not result in deformity, whereas uncontrolled sexuality is associated with such deformity. Additionally, sexual seduction precludes marriage. Once we understand Vāyu's "affliction" to be the onset of sexual viability, that is menarche, which leaves the girls under no male control, the restorative power of Brahmada becomes comprehensible.<sup>49</sup>

But why include a story of marriage and the onset of female sexual viability at this juncture in the narrative? If we understand that Viśvāmītra's intention is to go to Mithilā to bring about marriage between Rāma and Sītā, and that the journey is to prepare Rāma for his adulthood, then the story no longer seems incongruous in the context of the *Bālakāṇḍa* but becomes integral to its larger purpose.

Following upon this story, the seer and the boys travel for another day and come to the banks of the Ganges. There they camp for the night, and Rāma asks Viśvāmītra for the history of the river (1.34). Viśvāmītra begins by telling of the origin and greatness of the Ganges. Her father was Himālaya, who had two daughters, Gaṅgā and Urmā. In succession we are then told the story of the two daughters of the mountain. Once again, we see the emergence of the feminine into the text. Rāma twice asks about the history of the river Jāhnavī (Ganges) (1.35.10, 1.36.2-4), but instead Viśvāmītra tells first the story of her younger sister, Pārvaṭī. The story of Urmā, or Pārvaṭī, is well known from a variety of sources outside of the *Rāmāyaṇa*,<sup>50</sup> and in all likelihood the version here is early, but not original. But why here? Earlier, at *sarga* 22, the text told us of a holy ashram, the site where Śiva practiced austerities and burned up Kāmadeva (1.22.15).<sup>51</sup> There the episode scrupulously omits any mention of Pārvaṭī. Here, on the other hand, we expect the story of the Ganges, but are told instead a story that is at best only remotely connected to the history of the sacred river and is told in a somewhat selective manner.

The story opens with the marriage completed:

*purā rāma kṛtodavāhaḥ śitikanṭho mahātāpāḥ /  
dṛṣṭvā ca sphayā devīm maithunāyopacakrame //*

Long ago, Rāma, when the great ascetic, black-throated Śiva, had gotten married, he looked with desire upon the goddess and began to make love to her. (1.35-6)

It goes on to tell of the intense lovemaking of the two and the fear born in the gods of the child that would be born from this union. The gods prostrate themselves before Śiva and beg:

*na lokā dhāraṇyīṣyanti tava tejaḥ surohama /  
brāhmaṇa tapasā yukto devyā saha tapāścara //  
trailokyahitakāmārthaṃ tejaṣtejaśi dhārāya /  
rakṣa sarvān imāmi lokān nālokam kartum arhasi //*

Best of gods, the worlds cannot contain your semen. You should, instead, perform with the goddess the austerities prescribed in the Vedas. For the sake of the three worlds, you must retain your semen in your body. You should protect all these worlds, not destroy them. (1.35.10-11)

Śiva agrees to the gods' request but asks what is to be done with the semen that "has already been dislodged from its place" (1.46.14). The semen is deposited on the earth, whereupon Vāyu and Agni enter and transform it into a white mountain with a thicket of white reeds.<sup>52</sup> It was from here that Kārtikeya comes forth. Pārvaṭī, enraged at being thwarted in her desire to bear a son, curses the gods that they too would be deprived of children.

Once again, if we look at the larger narrative structure of the *Bālakāṇḍa* and the "Viśvāmītra narrative," the reason for the inclusion and positioning of this episode becomes clear. The story begins after the marriage of the god and goddess, skipping completely their courtship and the burning of Kāmadeva, briefly alluded to in *sarga* 22, and instead takes up its narrative with the lovemaking of the divine couple and the birth of Kārtikeya. The omission of the earlier segments of the story is not surprising, if we examine the surrounding context. The story is placed immediately after that of the daughters of Kuśanābha. That episode ended with marriage. Now this next episode begins with marriage and takes up lovemaking, the power of semen, and the theme of birth.<sup>53</sup> Note how the birth is abnormal; the child is produced from only the male semen.<sup>54</sup> That these stories follow the *Tāṭakāvadhā* supports the theory that the *Tāṭakāvadhā* marks a rite of passage that allows Rāma to enter the sexualized world. For prior to Rāma's entry into this world, women and sexual issues concerning him are omitted, whereas afterward, the world of feminine sexuality is made manifest.

It is only upon the completion of this narrative sequence that the story of the descent of the Ganges is told, an episode that relates to the history of Rāma's own family. Note that after the story of Kuśanābha's daughters we had the history of Viśvāmītra's family. Again, the longer narrative combines the history of the place, the Ganges, with the lineage, this time of the Ikṣvāku dynasts, beginning with Sagara (1.37-43).

The second night of the journey is passed hearing this sequence of episodes. The party sets out the next morning and crosses the Ganges in a boat (1.44.6-8) near the city of Viśālā. Rāma once again asks about the history of the region. Viśvāmītra then responds with yet another story, that of Diti and Indra. This story, like the earlier ones, is difficult to place within the epic unless one understands that, like those of Kuśanābha and Śiva and Pārvaṭī, the story is included as part of the narrative of Rāma's coming of age.

The story takes us back to the *Kṛtāyuga*, when the mighty sons of Diti and Aditi were engaged in an ongoing conflict. They decide to churn the ocean of milk for *amṛta*, the drink of immortality. The gods and demons churned the ocean, from which arose the *apsaras*, Vārūṇī Surā, the horse Uccaiḥśravas, the gem Kaustubha, and finally the *amṛta*, nectar. In the course of the battle

ensued over the nectar, the sons of Diti were slain. The story of the *Amṛtathana* in the *Bālakāṇḍa* is quite short, taking up only fourteen *śloka*s.<sup>55</sup> At point the story takes a twist and again moves in a direction that is understandable only in the context of the theme of the larger narrative that I have attempted to trace here.

We are told of Diti's grief upon the death of her sons, and how she unakes severe austerities in order to gain a son who can destroy Indra in abution.<sup>56</sup> The story is, in a manner of speaking, the inverse of the story of birth of Kārtikeya. There the role of the mother was omitted; the semen iva alone is the source of the child.<sup>57</sup> The story here does not acknowledge al intercourse at all.

Her husband Mārice Kāśyapa says:

*evam bhavatu bhadrām te śucir bhava tapodhane /  
janayisyasi putram tvam śakrahantāram āhane //  
pūrve varṣasahasre tu śucir yadā bhaviṣyasi /  
putram trailokyahantāram mattas tvam janayisyasi /  
evam uktvā mahātejāḥ pāṇinā sa mamāṅga tām /  
samālabhya tataḥ svastīy uktvā sa tapase yoyau /*

"Bless you, ascetic woman. Make yourself pure for you shall give birth to a son who can slay Śakra in battle. If you remain pure, then, when a full one thousand years have elapsed, you shall through me give birth to a son capable of destroying the three worlds." Speaking in this fashion, the mighty man stroked her with his hand. Then, having touched her in this way, he said, "Farewell," and went off to practice austerities. (1.45-5-7)

is to get her son only if she is pure and undertakes austerities for one and years. The only physical contact comes with a touch of the hand. In story, the father and his role is backgrounded.

The episode becomes more complex as it locates the site of the action in the womb itself. As Diti is undertaking severe austerities, none other than Indra, a figure known for his amorous adventures, as well as her enemy, ads upon her.<sup>58</sup>

*tapas tasyām hi kurvantyām paricāryāṃ cakāra ha /  
sahasrākṣo naraśreṣṭha parayā guṇasampadā //  
agnih kuśān kāṣṭham apah phalaṃ mūlam tathaiiva ca /  
nyavedayati sahasrākṣo yac cānyad api kṅkṣitam //  
gātrasavāhanais caiva śramāpanayamais tathā /  
śakraḥ sarveṣu kāleṣu ditiṃ paricacāra ha //*

But, best of men, while she was practicing these austerities, thousand-eyed Indra served her most virtuously. For thousand-eyed Indra brought her fire, kuśa grass, firewood, water, fruit, roots, and what-ever else she desired. In this way, Śakra served Diti unceasingly, massaging her limbs to lessen her weariness. (1.45-9-11)

When only ten years remain of the vow, Diti, won over by Indra's faithful service, tells him not to worry and promises that she will appease her son. She vows that the two will together rule over the three worlds (13-14). Just as she utters this promise, the sun is at its peak and sleep overcomes her. She falls asleep with her head where her feet should be. Indra immediately understands the significance of this: Diti is in an impure state. He takes advantage of the situation:

*tasyāḥ śarīravivaram viveśa ca puramdarah /  
garbham ca sapādāhā rāma bibhedha paramāmavān //*

Then Indra, that smasher of citadels, entered the opening in her body and, with complete self-possession, smashed her fetus into seven pieces. (1.45-17)

The weapon with which Indra destroys the fetus is the *vajra*, the symbolic phallus. The fetus cries so loudly that Diti wakes up, and begs Indra not to slay him. "In deference to a mother's words, Śakra came forth" (20). Indra explains that she had fallen asleep in the wrong position and made herself impure, thereby providing him the opportunity to destroy the fetus who was to destroy him. Diti understands that it was her fault, but wishes that some good might come of the tragedy, and requests, "Let the seven fragments become the guardians of the regions of the seven winds (*mārits*)" (1.46.3).

Though different in mechanism, the theme of the story is similar to that of the tale of the birth of Kārtikeya: the danger of a too powerful fetus/son. Note that the son of the god Śiva, the child born of the male, is a god himself. If left whole, the son of the female would cause destruction to the gods. The fact that Diti is the mother reinforces this. Note that when her power is diffused, her offspring are no longer a threat, and they too become "gods" (1.46.8), but minor ones, in fact attendants of Indra.

The sexual nature of the story makes it ripe for a myriad readings and possible interpretations.<sup>59</sup> For the purposes of this discussion, I am most concerned with the fact that it is a story that has sexual context. One can hardly escape the overt sexual nature of Indra's entry into the womb of Diti at verse 17. All commentators understand *śarīravivaram*, "opening in the body" to mean *yoniivaram*, "vagina."<sup>60</sup> Somewhat more problematic here is the word *paramāmavān*, translated in its common meaning of "self-possessed" following Govindarāja, who glosses *dhairyaavān*. The intent here, it would seem, is that although the entry was through the sexual organ, the god was in control of his (sexual) emotions. However, other commentators on the vulgate understand the word differently. Siromani glosses *aiiprayatnasīlah*, "with a very energetic nature or with great effort," and Tilaka understands *sāvadhānah*, "with caution, cautiously." Govindarāja, it would seem, is eager to distance the sexual impriety of Indra, whereas neither Tilaka nor Siromani feels the need to do so. Regardless of the emotional state of the god, there is little doubt that he penetrates the pregnant womb of Diti.

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The story of Diti and Indra, although known elsewhere, is not typically

part of the *Amṛtamanthana* narrative.<sup>61</sup> The story would appear to have little if any connection with the *Bālakāṇḍa*, unless we place it within the larger narrative as part of the series of tales told by Viśvāmītra to prepare Rāma for his marriage. In this light, the story takes on a structural significance, and its connection with the stories of Kuśanābha's daughters and of the birth of Kārtikeya is strengthened.

That these stories are linked together is further shown by the repetition of the theme—particularly the threat of undesirable or prohibited (sexual) penetration of the female. Thus the daughters of Kuśanābha are propositioned by Vāyu inappropriately and against their will. Pārvatī is penetrated, but the penetration is interrupted as it poses too great a threat; and Diti is penetrated not by her husband but by Indra, who later in the story is identified as her son—presumably because he has waited upon her as student to a teacher and because he eventually emerges from her womb.<sup>62</sup> The sexual aggressor in each story—seducer, husband, student/son—differs in each story, as does intent, but it is clear that the stories are designed to relate to one another through their concern with issues of sexual penetration.

Another striking feature of the three stories is the presence of the figure of Vāyu. In the episode of Kuśanābha's daughters he is, of course, a major figure, in fact the ultimate "insider." In both of the other episodes, however, Vāyu shows up as a figure on the periphery. Thus in the story of the birth of Kārtikeya, we are told, "Then the gods spoke to Agni the eater of oblations, 'You and Vāyu must enter Rudra's abundant semen'" (1.35.17). Other versions of the story do not admit to Vāyu's participation in the creation of the prince.<sup>63</sup> Again, in the story of Diti Vāyu is mentioned as one of the sons of Diti (1.46.5) who will travel through the sky (the Maruts). And of course, the words Marut and Māruta are names of Vāyu. Vāyu's exact connection here is one that needs to be examined in greater detail, but his appearance is, it appears, intentional, especially in light of the story of the birth of Kārtikeya.

Viśvāmītra finishes the story of Diti and explains that this spot where Diti performed her austerities is where King Viśāla, an ancestor of Rāma, founded the city of Viśālā. In this fashion, Viśvāmītra ties the episode back to the journey. The trio spends the night there and one night with King Sumati, who rules in Viśālā. They then journey to Mithilā. On the outskirts of Mithilā, Rāma once again spies an empty ashram and asks to know its history. As before, Viśvāmītra narrates a story: the famous and widespread cautionary tale of Gautama and his wife Ahalyā, a tale of sexual crime and its punishment.<sup>64</sup> Once, Viśvāmītra tells Rāma, in Gautama's absence, Indra took his form and seduced Ahalyā, telling her:

*ṛtukālah pratīkṣante nārīnah susamāhite /  
saṅgamam tv aham icchāmi trayā saha sumadhyaṃe //*

Shapely woman, men filled with desire do not wait for a woman's fertile period. Fair-waisted woman, I want to make love to you. (1.47.18)

Ahalyā is aware that it is Indra in disguise, but "in her lust" consents to making love with the king of the gods. Satisfied from lovemaking, she urges Indra to leave, and begs him to protect her and himself. Indra departs, but is fearful of Gautama. As Indra is leaving, he encounters Gautama on the path, and the sage, seeing Indra in disguise as himself, curses him:

*mama rūpaṃ samāśhāya kṛtvān asi durnate /  
akartavyam idaṃ yasmād viphalas tvam bhaviṣyasi //*

Fool, taking on my form and doing this thing that is not to be done, you shall lose your testicles.<sup>65</sup> (1.47.26)

After cursing Indra, he then curses his wife as well:

*vāyubhakṣā nīrāhārā tapyanti bhasmasāyini /  
adīṣyā sarvabhūtānām āśrame 'smin nivatsyasi //*

You shall dwell in this ashram with nothing to eat, air your only food (*vāyubhakṣā*), suffering, lying on ashes, and invisible to all creatures. (1.47.29)

She is to remain thus until Rāma arrives to free her from the curse. Indra then addresses Agni (1.48.1), telling him that since he has done the gods a service by robbing Gautama of his ascetic power, the gods should restore his testicles. This they do by substituting a ram's testicles for the god's. Here the story ends, and Rāma, following Viśvāmītra into the ashram, sees Ahalyā and releases her from her curse.

The story is linked to the others through similar thematic concerns. Again it is tale of a sexual encounter, here an illicit one. The consequences for such transgressions are dramatic and clearly serve as a warning. The story, however, differs from those more commonly known from the purāṇic tradition, wherein Gautama curses Ahalyā to "be without flesh and bones" (*Padmapurāṇa* 54.33-34), or to be ugly (*Rām* 7.30), or turn to stone (*Adhyātmarāmāyaṇa* 1.6.14). As in the stories discussed above, there is penetration, here in the form of normal, if adulterous, sexual penetration. As in the story of Diti, the penetration is illicit and carried out by Indra.<sup>66</sup> Moreover as in the other stories, the figure of Vāyu appears on the periphery of the episode, for Ahalyā is cursed to be *vāyubhakṣā*, "one [feminine] who eats only vāyu." The ingestion of *vāyu* harks back to the story of Kuśanābha's daughters.

Additionally, the episodes all reinforce the dangerous and threatening nature of women. The phallic, uncontrolled woman like Tātakā is to be destroyed, but what of the others—those that live within our own walls, as it were, the young maid, the married woman, the pregnant mother, the adulterous wife? The message is clear: sexuality is pervasive in the adult world, in the control of women, and a threat to the male. Marriage is the culturally normative way to control women, but even within it women pose danger to the male, especially when pregnant or adulterous.

The story of Ahalyā marks the final element of the quartet of tales that Viśvāmitra tells to Rāma. Several narrative features mark this episode as the end of the sage's lessons to Rāma on sexuality. First, of course, is that the trio has now reached the outskirts of Mithilā, where the contest and marriage are actually to take place. Second, we see that the last ashram through which they travel is that of Gautama. As Viśvāmitra and the boys leave Ayodhyā, the first place they encounter is the ashram of Śiva (*kārmāśrama*) (1.22). Now as they end their journey, the last place they encounter before they arrive in Mithilā is also an ashram. This ashram is different in that it is deserted. It is deserted because it has been the site of illicit sexual activity. Only through Rāma's newly acquired mastery of sexual knowledge can Ahalyā be restored to her normal state. It thus makes sense that Rāma, now a fully phallicized male, has sight (*rāmasya darsanam*) (1.48.16) and that Ahalyā is once more visible to the world. The male gaze as a marker of the phallus has been discussed in great detail and I need not develop it here.<sup>67</sup> The Ahalyā episode is the point of transition wherein the narratives told by Viśvāmitra and the story of Rāma merge. It is Rāma's gaze that saves Ahalyā from her sexual lapse, and so marks his own passage to manhood. The trio has arrived at Mithilā and the wedding of Rāma and Sītā can take place, not without first, of course, giving the history of the sage that brought them there, Viśvāmitra. Once this sequence of stories has finished, Rāma can now master the feminine world. Thus when Viśvāmitra next discusses the bow of Śiva, the real purpose of the journey can be voiced.

The story of Ahalyā also serves as a cautionary tale and harbinger of the larger epic narrative. For, after all, the very crime that Ahalyā commits is the one for which Sītā will be falsely accused of and finally, like Ahalyā, punished. If this is the case, then we can understand why, when Viśvāmitra first came to visit Daśaratha, neither the *svayamvara* nor Tātakā was mentioned. Rāma first needed to undergo an initiation into the sexualized world. Once that is completed, Rāma can break Śiva's primally phallic bow and thus lay sexual claim to Sītā.

In this way the middle section of the *Bālakāṇḍa*, *sargas* 22–48—the section that I have called the Viśvāmitra narrative—is a clearly and logically developed episode, wherein the sage takes the young boy Rāma, and by default Lakṣmaṇa, on a “coming-of-age-tour.” It is during this tour or initiation that the boys are exposed to the sexualized world. Rāma encounters and defeats the sexualized archaic mother, Tātakā, and then encounters through Viśvāmitra's storytelling a myriad destructive, threatening, and dangerous females. From the potential danger of uncontrolled sexuality of the daughters of Kuśanābha to the story of the unfaithful Ahalyā, an episode that has strong resonances with the epic narrative, the complexities and dangers of the sexual world are made all too clear to the young boy.

With the end of Rāma's journey, the two final events of the *Bālakāṇḍa*, the marriage and Rāma Dāsarathi's encounter with Bhārgava Rāma, fall into place. Prior to the actual events of the marriage, we have the story of Viśvāmitra's adventures and his own transformation discussed above. That this narrative

occurs after the party arrives at Mithilā (1.49) and before a major rite (1.65) structurally places it in a parallel position to that of the story of R̥ṣyaśringa. The trio has come to the outskirts of Mithilā, the sacrificial grounds of King Janaka (1.49.2–3), where many thousands of brahmins are staying (49.3). Immediately upon their arrival, Satānanda—the son of Ahalyā and Gautama and the family priest of Janaka—and the king welcome them. The sacrifice of Janaka will continue for twelve days (49.15), on one night of which Satānanda tells the legend of Viśvāmitra (1.50.16–1.64.20) to King Janaka, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, and the assembled crowd (including Viśvāmitra).

Before the marriage is even mentioned, we have the story of the bow of Śiva. Viśvāmitra makes no mention of Sītā, only that the young men have come to see the bow of Śiva and, having seen it will return home. Janaka, too, in the course of telling the history of the bow, only briefly mentions Sītā, her birth, and how previous kings had tried to win her by lifting the bow (1.65).

Even after the history of the bow has been told, there is no mention of Rāma attempting to lift it; he is only to look at it. Here too there is no talk of other kings present; only Janaka's ministers and the five thousand men required to haul the bow in are mentioned. Rāma, of course, lifts, strings, and breaks the bow,

*tasya śabdō mahān āsīn nirghātasamanihsvanaḥ /*  
*bhūmikampas ca sumahān parvatasyeva dīryataḥ //*  
*nipetus ca narāḥ sarve tena śabdena mohitāḥ /*  
*varjayitvā munivaram rājānam tau ca rāghavau //*

There was a tremendous noise loud as of a thunderclap, and a mighty trembling shook the earth, as if a mountain had been torn asunder. Of all those men, only the great sage, the king and the two Rāghavas remained standing; the rest fell, stunned by the noise. (1.66.18–19)

Rāma, as is well known, then marries Sītā, and his brothers marry her sister Ūrmilā and two cousins, respectively. Two issues are of interest in terms of the present discussion. The first is the story of Sītā's birth and the second is that of the bow. The episode of the breaking of the bow has been subject to discussion in both the traditional commentaries and in more modern contexts. Such discussion has tended to focus on the religious and ethical aspects of the feat, for example the symbolism of breaking the bow of Śiva or the ethics of letting something left in trust be destroyed.<sup>68</sup>

Once Rāma has undergone his “initiation” aided by Viśvāmitra, he must prove his manhood. This he does by breaking the bow. The bow is a phallic projection of the father; its destruction, a symbol of his overcoming the father. In this context, we must look at the following episode of Rāma Jāmadagnya, where once again Rāma is challenged to lift and string a bow. This bow is in the possession of the irascible sage Rāma Jāmadagnya, also an avatar of Viṣṇu. This episode is seemingly unconnected with the remainder of the epic, and

has been criticized as such.<sup>69</sup> That the battle is one between the two avatars—a transfer of power, as it were—is a probable interpretation, but does not help us understand the episode's narrative location.<sup>70</sup>

After the wedding, on the return to Ayodhyā, Rāma and the entire wedding party, including Daśaratha, Sītā, and the rest, observe inauspicious omens. The entire party falls unconscious except for Vasīṣṭha and the other seers, the king, and his sons. They then spy Rāma Jāmadagnya, also known as Parasūrāma, that is, Rāma with an axe. He approaches Rāma Dāśarathi and tells him that he has heard about his wonderful deed of breaking the bow. He challenges Rāma:

*tad ahaṃ te balaṃ dṛṣtvā dhanuṣo 'sya prapūrāṇe /  
dvandvayuddhaṃ pradāsyāmi vīryasāgḥyam idaṃ tava //*

If I see that you have strength enough to put an arrow to this bow, then I shall challenge you to single combat, which is praised by men of might. (1.74-4)

Daśaratha tries to intercede for his son:

*ksatrarosāt prasāntas tvaṃ brāhmaṇas ca mahāyāsāḥ /  
bālānāṃ mama putrāṇāṃ abhayaṃ dātum arhasi //*

Your wrath against the kshatriyas has now subsided, and you are a brahman of great renown. Please grant safe passage to my sons, for they are mere boys. (1.74.6)

However,

*bruvaty evaṃ daśarathe jāmadagnyaḥ pratāpavān /  
anādīryaiva tad vākyam rāma evābhya bhāṣata //*

Despite the fact that Daśaratha was speaking in this fashion, the valiant Jāmadagnya paid no heed to his words, but spoke directly to Rāma. (1.74.10)

Rāma Jāmadagnya then tells of the history of the bows: how Viṣṇu in a fight with Śiva had unstrung and immobilized the latter's bow, and how the now impotent bow had been deposited in the care of King Janaka. Rāma Jāmadagnya then explains the history of the bow of Viṣṇu and how it came into his possession. Once again he challenges Rāma Dāśarathi to single combat (1.74.28).

Rāma, "tempering his response out of respect for his father (*gauravād yantrīkathāḥ pītuh*)" (1.75.1), is incensed and says:

*vīryahīnam ivāśaktam kṣatradharmeṇa bhārgava /  
avajānāsi me tejaḥ paśya me 'āya parākramam //*

But, Bhārgava, you regard me as if I were some weakling, incapable of discharging the duty of a kshatriya. Now you shall witness my strength and valor for yourself. (1.75.3)

Rāma then snatches up the bow, strings it, and fixes an arrow to it. Once strung, however, Rāma "for the sake of Viśvāmitra," cannot harm Rāma Jāmadagnya, because he is a brahman. The arrow, however, must be loosed. He gives the brahman warrior a choice: either his retreat or his worlds, won through audacities, must be destroyed.

*jadīkṛte tadā loke rāme varadhānurdhāre /  
nīrvīryo jāmadagnyo 'sya 'sau rāmo rāmam uddaiḥṣata //*

Then as the world stood stunned and Rāma held the great bow, Rāma Jāmadagnya, robbed of his strength, stared at Rāma. (1.75.11)

Rāma Jāmadagnya then begs that Rāma destroy his worlds rather than his retreat. Rāma Jāmadagnya returns to his retreat, and the remaining party regains consciousness. Then, with bow in hand, Rāma enters Ayodhyā along with the rest, and the *kāṇḍa* comes to an end.

The episode is a variant of the preceding one, and some of the similarities are striking. Earlier, when Rāma breaks the bow of Śiva the force of the sound of the break stunned all, leaving only the king, the sage, and the two Rāghavas standing (1.66.18–19). In the Rāma Jāmadagnya story, only the sages, the king, and the sons remain conscious. During the lifting of the bow of Śiva, Daśaratha was absent; here Daśaratha is literally ignored, and not for the first time.

In both episodes, the bow is a phallic projection of a father figure. In the wedding episode the phallic symbol is destroyed. In the Rāma Jāmadagnya confrontation, the Oedipal nature of the struggle is more pronounced. The single-handed combat elsewhere is marked as Oedipal struggle over phallic possessions.<sup>71</sup> The bow, however, is not destroyed, but the male figure that possesses it is. Rāma Jāmadagnya is now described as *nīrvīryah*, "deprived of his virility" (1.75.11). Since his virility was destroyed (*hatauvīryavāt* 1.75.12), like the remainder of the world he becomes subject to the conditions of the world, and is becomes *jadīkṛtah*, "stunned,"<sup>72</sup> as was the entire world at verse 11 above. The younger male comes into possession of the phallic symbol, gaining his newly discovered virility and depriving the older male of his.

It is clear that the two passages mark a transition. In the first, however, the phallic image itself is broken. Here the action occurs in the context of the marriage, and the phallus is in possession of the father of the bride. In order for the male to take possession of the woman, he must first render impotent the male who protects her. The second episode symbolically renders impotent Rāma's own father figure (and namesake). Here, Daśaratha has from the beginning of the *kāṇḍa* been marked as impotent; his phallus has been represented in turn by Rṣyaśṛṅga, Viśvāmitra, and Rāma Jāmadagnya.

As we asked above concerning Rṣyaśṛṅga and Viśvāmitra, we can now ask, "Why Rāma Jāmadagnya?" The story of Rāma Jāmadagnya is never told in the



*Rāmāyana*; however, he is mentioned several times.<sup>73</sup> Viśvāmītra and Rāma Jāmadagnya are distantly related, and that they are both used in this *Bālakāṇḍa* is probably not accidental.<sup>74</sup> Rāma Jāmadagnya is known for two feats: that of killing all of the kshatriyas twenty-one times,<sup>75</sup> and for the absolute subservience that he showed his father, to the extent of chopping off his own mother's head for a sexual transgression. This last act, the one of more relevance for the present discussion, is narrated in the *Mahābhārata* and is known to the *Ayodhyākāṇḍa* (2.18.29).<sup>76</sup> The sexual transgression of Reṇukā, Jāmadagnya's mother, is described in the *Mahābhārata* as gazing upon another male with desire:

*kriḍānataṃ salile dr̥ṣṭvā sabhāraṃ padmamālinam /  
r̥ddhimantam tatas tasya sphayāmāsa reṇukā //*

Gazing at him, richly endowed and lotus-garlanded, sporting with his wife in the water, Reṇukā desired him. (3.116.7)

Now this is significant, for it is Reṇukā's transgression, like Ahalyā's, that is the impropriety of which Sītā will be accused.<sup>77</sup> Reṇukā's punishment is swift and dramatic. Her husband orders her head chopped off. Now the fact that Rāma Jāmadagnya is the one who carries out that punishment, in absolute adherence to his father's words, ties him to Rāma Dāśarathi in a profound manner. For the incorporation of this figure at this point in the epic serves to reinforce one of the epic's most fundamental ethical and social codes and to prepare the audience for what is to come. In just a few *sarga*'s, Rāma Dāśarathi, too, will face his own challenges to do, unquestionably and unhesitatingly, the bidding of his father and ultimately to cope with the question of sexual infidelity. The encounter then serves, among other things, to highlight once again the impotence of Dāśaratha, to demonstrate the newly gained manhood of Rāma Dāśarathi, and to remind the audience of the cultural imperatives to which our hero must conform.

The *Bālakāṇḍa*'s narrative is dominated by the phallic male, represented primarily by the sages Ṛśyaśṛṅga, Viśvāmītra, and Bhārgava Rāma. The narrative is framed, however, by the two rites, birth and marriage, both of which are associated with the world of women. Nevertheless the feminine in the text is tightly emboxed within the masculine. Thus at both the birth and the marriage the woman is given no voice. Once outside the city, once outside of Dāśaratha's impotent world, Rāma encounters the feminine, but only under the tutelage of the sage Viśvāmītra. The women are only given voice when they are represented as sexually unrestrained or dangerous. Ultimately that voice is destroyed or controlled. Thus figures such as Tātakā, the daughters of Kuśanābha, Diti, Ahalyā all have a voice, but are all defeated, contained, or silenced.

The narrative function of the final encounter between Paraśurāma and Rāma Dāśarathi serves as a transition, allowing our hero to return home a man, ready to undertake his duties as the prince regent. He returns in possession not only of a wife—who is still denied a voice—but also of powerful phallic weaponry, which he has mastered.

## Conclusion

Both the framing narrative and the *Bālakāṇḍa* have in common their masculine landscape. It is a story told of males by males. But the feminine inhabits the text, encased, as it were, by the masculine. Wherever woman is allowed into the narrative, she serves as point of textual rupture, disrupting the narrative, challenging the order. The challenge is, for the *Bālakāṇḍa*, primarily a sexual one. Each female that is allowed a voice articulates a sexual threat to the male. The differing placement of the ruptures—the frame, the story of Ṛśyaśṛṅga, the Viśvāmītra episode, the narrative told to Rāma by Viśvāmītra—each presents the sexually threatening female in different guises. But she is always sexual and she is always dangerous. Those women who are appropriately contained within the masculine world, for example, Sītā (in the *Bālakāṇḍa*) but not in the *Uttara*), Kausalyā, and so forth, are not given voice in the *Bālakāṇḍa*. This appears not to be exclusively the case for the other *kāṇḍas*, and thus marks the use of the feminine voice as significant to the *kāṇḍa*. Thus, here the feminine voice marks male confrontation with the sexual world. These confrontations are intentional, well developed, and interdependent.

Far from being a haphazard collection of disjointed episodes and myths, the *Bālakāṇḍa* can thus be understood as a carefully constructed and narrated work. Vālmīki, as I noted, rarely nods, nor is the popularity of the work among the traditional audiences difficult to understand. It provides an entertaining and yet instructive adventure from adolescence to manhood, and at the same time provides a means for a patriarchal society to articulate a negotiation of sexual anxiety.

## NOTES

1. R. Goldman 1984, pp. 60–61; Holtzmann 1841, pp. 36–38.
2. Brockington 1998, pp. 380–381; see also R. Goldman 1984, p. 77.
3. For a detailed and insightful discussion on the prefatory materials of the *Bālakāṇḍa*, see R. Goldman 1984, pp. 60–81.
4. All references are taken from the critical edition of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* except those marked GPP, that is, the *Rāmāyaṇ of Vālmīki* published by the Gujarat Printing Press. Translations are based on the critical edition (CE) unless otherwise noted, and are generally taken from the Princeton translation (Goldman 1984).
5. See too, S. Goldman 2001. The gender of the forest is much more nuanced than that of the other sites of actions, for the tradition depicts multiple types of forest: the forest as a locus of sensuality, austerities, dread, delights, and so on. Here we see an intersection of multiple actions. The forest is the locus of both the hunter and the sage, marking it as male. However, the fact that it is the site of the sexual union of the birds marks it as a locus of sexual activity as well. The gendering of sites is also made more complex by the fact that the very gendering of a space allows it to be used as a location in which that very gendering can be contested. For example, in the *Brāhmaṇas* (see for example, *Satapathabrāhmaṇa* 3.2.1.18–27), the sacrifice, which I would mark as masculine, is the very location marked as the masculine god Yajña, "sacrifice," where Vāc, the feminine goddess of speech, is seduced; yet in the *Upaniṣads*,

the female sexual organ(s) are mapped onto the sacrifice itself. For example, the sexual nature of the ritual sacrifice is reinforced at *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 6.2.13, where a striking comparison between woman and the *soma* sacrifice is made. The passage rather explicitly compares a man experiencing a sexual orgasm with the *soma* sacrifice. The woman's body, specifically her sexual organs, is mapped onto various aspects of the sacrifice:

*poṣā vā agnir gautama. tasyā upastha eva samit. lomāni dhūmah. yonir arciḥ.  
yad antaḥ karoti te 'nigārāḥ. abhinandā vīṣṭhulīngāḥ. tasminn etasminn agnau.  
devā reto juhvati. tasyā āhutyai puruṣaḥ sambhavanī. sa jīvati yāvaj jīvati. akha  
yadā mriyate. . . .*

The young woman (*yoṣā*), Gautama, is the fire. Her sexual organ is the fire stick; her hair, the smoke; her womb (*yonī*), the flame; when one goes inside, the coals; the excitement, the sparks. Into this fire the gods offer their semen. From this offering, a man comes into being. He lives as long as he lives, and then, when he dies. . . .

See also S. Goldman 2001.

6. For example, Bhatt 1959, Masson 1969, Vaudeville 1961–1962, R. Goldman 2000b.

7. The scene is voyeuristic, as the sage and presumably the Nīṣāda observe the mating *krauñicas*.

8. Thus Anandavardhana in his *vṛtti* on *kārika V*, as well as Abhinavagupta in his comments (in the *Locana*) understand that it is the female, not the male, that has been killed. See also Masson 1969, p. 209. The *Tīlakaṭīkā*, a commentary on the *Rāmāyaṇa* composed by Nāgōjibhaṭṭa, understands the *krauñica* to be a demon, and thus the "curse" of Vālmīki is symbolic: "When he said, you killed one (i.e., the male), he meant his word to terminate with this idea 'just as you caused him to be without his wife, and made his wife be without her lover (*nāyaka*)' so may you be separated from your beloved wife and may she be separated from you" (*Tīlakaṭīkā* on *Rām*, 1.2.14 GPP).

9. Masson 1969, p. 215.

10. Kāṭaka understands the verse symbolically: "The meaning [of the verse] in the form of the curse uttered by Vālmīki to the hunter who killed the bird before his eyes, is quite clear. The deeper [or symbolic] meaning of the verse is this: Vālmīki addresses the stanza to Rāvaṇa calling him a *nīṣāda* because he excessively tormented, i.e., troubled, all the three worlds with their hosts of gods and sages. . . . O tormentor of the three worlds (*nīṣāda*), i.e., O Rāvaṇa! Since from a pair of *krauñica* birds, i.e., the pair of Rāma and Sītā, which had been very reduced, i.e., extremely emaciated, because they had been experiencing the sorrows of the loss of their kingdom, banishment to the forest, etc., you killed one in the form of [Sītā], that has plunged her into grief greater than the pain of death itself by kidnapping her and imprisoning her in Laṅkā. Therefore you will not any longer enjoy in the city of Laṅkā that stability, i.e., peace and happiness, which had been vouchsafed to you in the company of your sons and grandsons and servants, etc., by Brahmā himself. Thus the stanza hints at the main episode of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, namely, the abduction of Sītā by Rāvaṇa and his eventual destruction. And so this stanza, the first verse in Sanskrit, which is the most auspicious thing in all the three worlds, was first (*purastāt*) revealed by the true Goddess Sarasvatī" (*Śrīmadābhīmkīrāṇmāyaṇam* 1965–1975).

Govindarāja, too, provides a long, and somewhat tortuous explanation of the pas-

sages. Like Kāṭaka, he understands Rāvaṇa to be symbolized by the *Nīṣāda*, and Rāma and Sītā the pair of *krauñicas*. "wherein out of the couple of Rāma and Sītā, Rāvaṇa killed, i.e., extremely tormented one member, namely Sītā, by subjecting her to the excessive pangs of separation and thereby causing them both to become emaciated" (*Śrīmadābhīmkīrāṇmāyaṇam* 1953).

11. The feminine voice is, however, quickly taken and controlled by the masculine. The feminine voice, the piteous cry, *karuṇārī gīram*—gendered feminine in the original—is heard, and then transformed by Vālmīki, the male agent, into *śloka*, also gendered male in the language, much as the feminine speech, *vāc*, of the vedic seers is revealed to and controlled by the vedic seers (S. Goldman 2001).

12. Tīlakaṭīkā understands that Rāma's purity refers to the fact that there might be a stain in reference to that purity, in that he might only have a desire for a beautiful woman.

13. Here, I am reading with the vulgate, which understands *śrutim iva*, "like *śruti*." The critical edition reads instead *śrīm iva*, "like *śrī*," even so, in this context *śrī* must be read as Veda or Sarasvatī. *Śrī* is not normally associated with Brahmā, whereas speech, the Vedas, and Sarasvatī are. The word *śrī* can mean the three Vedas, speech, and is a name for Sarasvatī (Apte 1957–1959, sv).

14. See S. Goldman 2000a; *Sundarākāṇḍa* 5.13.15–36, esp. 30–36; Goldman and Goldman 1996, pp. 154–155.

15. S. Goldman 1997a, 1997b.

16. Jacobi 1893, pp. 74–75; see also R. Goldman 1984, p. 73.

17. Jacobi 1893; Bulcke 1952–1953; R. Goldman 1984.

18. R. Goldman 1984, p. 75. See *Mahābhārata* 3.110–113; *Padmapurāṇa Pātālakhanda* 13; *Bhāratamāñjarī* 3:758–795; *Bhadrakalāvādāna* 33; *Avatānakālpalātā* 65; *Alambusā* and *Naiṣanikā Jātakas*, etc. See note on *Rāmāyaṇa* 1.8.7 (R. Goldman 1984, pp. 292–293).

19. *Sāntā* in some editions is said to be Daśaratha's daughter. See R. Goldman 1984, p. 75. See, too, Chatterji 1954.

20. Compare the story and discussion on Umā and Gaṅgā below.

21. Chatterji 1954; R. Goldman 1984, p. 294.

22. R. Goldman 1984, p. 74; Bulcke 1952–1953; Govindarāja on 1.11.12.

23. Kane 1962–1975, 4:91–92.

24. See Bhatt 1960, pp. 331, 334, who argues that the *asvamedha* here is merely a

means to remove obstacles that were preventing the king from obtaining a son, a notion that the text itself supports (1.13.30).

25. See Jamison 1996, pp. 65–72. It is interesting to note that the wives of the king are allocated to different locations around the horse. The crowned queen is in the front, the favorite queen in the middle, and the discarded queen at the back of the horse; Kane 1962–1975, 2:1.234).

26. Kane 1962–1975, 2:1.234. The symbolism of the left thigh is meaningful in the sexual context, in that it represents the sexual side. See Sutherland 1989.

27. *Apastamba Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* 22.18.3–4; *Kāṭyāyana Śrautasūtram* 20.15–16.

28. Kane 1962–1975, 2:1.234–1.235.

29. Bulcke 1952–1953, p. 331. R. Goldman 1984, p. 74.

30. According to Kane 1962–1975 2.276, the ideal age for the thread ceremony (*upanayana*) of a kshatriya is eleven years, with the secondary times being from the ninth to the sixteenth years. The standard period of studentship is thought to have been twelve years (p. 349).

31. Sutherland 1991; R. Goldman 1982.

32. I.9.90-27 gives some voice to the courtesans that seduce Rśyaśiṅga.
33. S. Goldman 2000b.
34. S. Goldman 2000a.
35. See note to *sarga* 52 in R. Goldman 1984. The story is also told at *Mahābhārata* 1.164-165.
36. Brown 1964, S. Goldman 2001, R. Goldman 1978.
37. R. Goldman 1978.
38. R. Goldman 1977, 1978; Sukthankar 1937.
39. See R. Goldman 1984, p. 332, for a discussion on the term *kṛtoḍāham* "prior to his marriage." The northern rendering of the story makes it clear that the term is used for the marriage of Pārvaṭī and Śiva (*[kāmāḥ] āveṣṭum abhyayāt tūṛnam kṛtoḍāham unāpatim*).
40. See R. Goldman 1984, p. 336.
41. S. Goldman 2000b; see also R. Goldman 2000a.
42. *Rāmāyaṇa* 1.24.11.
43. See R. Goldman 1984, p. 336.
44. The term "archaic mother" is understood on the basis of Kristeva's expanded construction of the Freudian oedipal mother—sometimes referred to as the "archaic mother"—as the "fecund mother and the phantasmic mother who constitutes the abyss which is so crucial in the formation of subjectivity" (Creed 1993 p. 25). It is this abyss that is the "cannibalizing black hole from which all life comes and to which all life returns" and is represented as a source of "deepest terror."
45. S. Goldman 2000b.
46. R. Goldman 1982.
47. At 1.33.6 we are given the lineage: Kuśanābha, Gādhi, Viśvāmitra.
48. Sutherland 1992; Masson 1980, pp. 110-124.
49. The story, it seems to me, is really a story of the onset of menstruation. When Vāyu enters them, their periods start and the young women are polluted and polluting and considered impure and deformed until the time that they are suitably married, this reflects traditional attitudes toward unmarried girls who have reached puberty. See Jamison 1996, pp. 237-240, on the haste needed in securing husbands for postpubescent females. The connection is further substantiated by the Ayurvedic tradition. There wind is said to be of four types: *prāṇa* (fore-breath), *udāna* (up-breath), *vyāna* (intra-breath), and *apāna* (down-breath). This last type is understood to be the force that causes urine, feces, semen, fetus, and menstrual blood to flow downward; see Wujastyk [1998] 2001, p. 165. For additional connections between wind [*bṛū*] and menarche, see *Carakasaṃhitā* 1.12.8, 1.1.59, 62; *Sāṛgadharaśaṃhitā* 1.5.25; cf. *Suśrutasaṃhitā*, *Nidāna* 1.1-30. Furthermore, wind in the body is associated with countless illnesses and defects; Wujastyk [1998] 2001, pp. 166-173, esp. R. 171. I would like to acknowledge my deep gratitude to Professor R. K. Sharma for these references and his help in establishing these relationships.
50. For example, *Śivapurāṇa* (*Rudrasaṃhitā*) 4.1-2; *Mahābhārata* 3.213-216; *Matsyapurāṇa* 146; *Vāmanapurāṇa* 28; *Vārāhapurāṇa* 25; *Kumārasambhava* 9-11, etc. See O'Flaherty 1973, pp. 161-168.
51. Note to 1.22.15 (Goldman 1984, p. 332).
52. See too, *Śivapurāṇa* 2.3.23.12; *Skandapurāṇa* 1.1.25.155 (where Vāyu ignites Agni, who sets the seed on fire).
53. The frame motif of interrupted lovemaking comes back to haunt us here, and that in both the frame and, here, the interrupter(s) are cursed: the Niśāda and the

gods. There, however, the voice of the female is inarticulate, whereas here the curse is voiced by the female.

54. S. Goldman 1996.
55. See *Mahābhārata* 1.15ff.; *Bhāgavatapurāṇa* 8.6-9; *Matsyapurāṇa* 249.51; *Viśvapurāṇa* 1.9, etc. See Bedekar 1967, pp. 7-61, and Dange 1969, pp. 239-80.
56. *Skandapurāṇa* 1.1.35.27-34.
57. Symbolically, of course, the "earth" Pṛthivī, substitutes for the mother.
58. See the discussion of the story of Ahalyā below.
59. Psychoanalytic/feminist readings of this jump to mind, especially as we are told at 1.46.9 that Indra is Diti's son.
60. GPP 1.46.18.
61. See Bhatt 1960, p. 453, critical note to *sarga* 45. See too Kirfel 1947, where he has compared *sarga* 45 and verses 1-18 of *sarga* 46 with the *Vāyupurāṇa* passage at 91.68.
62. "Mother and son" (*mātiputrau*) return to heaven (1.46.9). Also note the Śukra story where he enters Śiva and emerges as his son, and the Kaca story where a similar theme, with a gender twist, occurs (*Mahābhārata* 12.278.1-38; Sukra and Śiva; *Mahābhārata* 1.71.1-58; Kaca and Sukra). See too R. Goldman 1977, pp. 1-27, 60-66; 90-92; 124-127; Sutherland 1979.
63. See *Śivapurāṇa* 2.4.1.44-63.
64. *Rāmāyaṇa* 7.30; *Mahābhārata* 12.329.14; *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* 3.3.4.18; 5.2.3.8, 12.7.1.10; *Bṛahmapurāṇa* 87; *Brahmanavivarta* 4.47; 61; *Padma purāṇa* 1.56.15-33; 5.51; *Skanda purāṇa* 5.3.136-138, 6.207-208; *Viṣṇudharmottara purāṇa* 1.128.7.30.
65. Tilakāṅkā and Govindarāja gloss *viphalāḥ* as *vigatavṛṣṇaḥ*, "of departed testicles"; Siromani, *ṛṣṇarāhiṇiḥ*, "without testicles" (GPP 1.48.29).
66. R. Goldman 1978.
67. S. Goldman 1997b.
68. Schoebel 1888; R. Goldman 1982; Gail 1977, pp. 48-56.
69. Sukthankar 1937, p. 20; R. Goldman 1977, p. 115.
70. R. Goldman 1977, 1982.
71. S. Goldman 2000b.
72. Literally, "made cold or frigid," but also, "dull, paralyzed, motionless, benumbed, stupid, irrational, not able to learn the Vedas, senseless, etc." See Apte 1957-1959, s.v.
73. R. Goldman 1977, 1982.
74. R. Goldman 1977, 1982.
75. Sukthankar 1937; R. Goldman 1977.
76. *Mahābhārata* 3.115-117. See R. Goldman 1977 pp. 18-25.
77. *Mahābhārata* 3.1161-1129; see also R. Goldman 1978.

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