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**COOKING THE WORLD**

**Ritual and Thought in Ancient India**

CHARLES MALAMOUD

Translated from the French

by

DAVID WHITE

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## Abbreviations

AitĀ	Aitareya Āraṇyaka
AitB	Aitareya Brāhmaṇa
ĀpDhs	Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra
ĀpSS	Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra
AśvGs	Aśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra
AS	Atharva Saṃhitā (Saṃhitā of the Atharva Veda)
BaudhDhs	Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra
BĀU	Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad
BhSSPaitr	Bhāradvāja Paitṛmedhika Sūtra
ChU	Chāndogya Upaniṣad
GauDhS	Gautama Dharma Sūtra
GopB	Gopatha Brāhmaṇa
GobhGS	Gobhila Gṛhya Sūtra
HGS	Hiraṇyakeśi Gṛhya Sūtra
JB	Jaimīniya Brāhmaṇa
JUB	Jaimīniya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa
KātSS	Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra
KS	Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā
Kauś	Kauśika Sūtra of the Atharva Veda
KauṣB	Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa
KhādiraGS	Khādira Gṛhya Sūtra
Mitākṣarā	Vijñāneśvara commentary of <i>ad</i> Yājñavalkya-Smṛti
MS	Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā
Manu	Manu Smṛti (Mānava Dharma Śāstra)

Mbh	Mahābhārata
MNU	Mahā Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad
PB	Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa
RS	Ṛk Saṃhitā (Saṃhitā of the Ṛg-Veda)
SB	Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (Mādhyandina recension)
SBE	Sacred Books of the East
TĀ	Taittirīya Āraṇyaka
TB	Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa
TS	Taittirīya Saṃhitā
TU	Taittirīya Upaniṣad
VS	Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā
VaiGS	Vaikhānasa Gṛhya Sūtra
VāsDhS	Vāsiṣṭha Dharma Sūtra
Yāj	Yājñavalkya Smṛti
YogaS	Yoga Sūtra

## Introduction

This volume brings together fifteen articles edited between 1968 and 1987. Some of these essays have appeared in specialized journals and multi-author works on Indian studies, and others in magazines or books intended for a more general public. The difference between these two sets of articles is neither to be found in the subjects treated nor in the tone adopted. Simply put, the more 'Indological' articles contain a greater number of Sanskrit citations and references, whereas in the more general articles I have taken care to introduce more basic information and points of reference, for the benefit of those readers for whom India is not familiar territory. In every case, my intention has been to treat a truly Indian subject, one which corresponds to a problem or body of themes expressly formulated in the Indian sources, yet which nevertheless remains meaningful to anthropologists and historians from outside the Indian Studies concentration.

The common theme of all of these studies is the India described in the Sanskrit texts. Most often, but not always, I have based myself primarily on the Vedic texts (the Hymns and the Sacrificial Treatises) which constitute, as we know, the most ancient body of Indian literature. At the same time, I have not hesitated to show how various features of traditional social and religious life in present-day India may be elucidated in the light of these ancient texts.

The title of this collection, as well as that of its longest article, is the translation I propose for the Sanskrit term *lokapakti*, 'cooking the world', a literal translation that is, I feel, the sole possible correct translation of the term. For me, this expression epitomizes all of the myriad ways in which ritual practice, and especially the performance of the sacrifice, is capable of transforming both the

humans who engage in such practices and the world around them. This metaphor is grounded in the fact that the actual cooking of foods is itself a rite of sorts. What I study is thus the way in which this concept comes to be turned on its head, such that one arrives, in the end, at the notion that the rite is a form of cooking. My reason, then, for employing the expression *lokapakti* as the title of the book as a whole is the fact that all of its constituent essays treat directly or indirectly of this 'cooking'. What first led me, of course, to concentrate on metaphors relative to sacrifice was the realization that the sacrifice itself is, in brahmanic Indian thought, an explanatory schema (causally and analogically) not only for the world order, but also for all human actions and aspirations.

The book's subtitle, *Ritual and Thought*, is first and foremost a homage to Jean-Pierre Vernant and his *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs* [*Myth and Thought among the Greeks*]. But in this case, it is not myth, but rather ritual, that I place in relationship to thought. But ritual and thought are antithetical terms, in and of themselves. When one thinks, does one not divorce oneself, precisely, from all that is stereotyped, repetitive, and determined in advance — from that which is, by definition, proper to ritual? Yes of course, and this is true, for Indian as well as any other culture. Vernant himself takes a number of historians of religions (especially of Greek religion) to task for their interest in forms of worship, to the exclusion of any study of myth, seeing in such an attitude, *vis-à-vis* the non-monotheistic religions, an upshot of an 'anti-intellectual prejudice' which moves historians to smooth over 'the differences and the oppositions which distinguish the gods within a pantheon from one another' and to simultaneously negate 'all distance between polytheist religions of the Greek kind and Christian monotheism, which comes to be taken as a model'.<sup>1</sup>

But it happens that extensive and profound speculation on ritual began to develop at a very early date in India, and it was precisely to the subject of rituals that Indian thought devoted its most rigorous mental gymnastics, in reasoning out the question of 'differences and oppositions' (simultaneously taking up the same question, this is foundational to its grammar). The explicit brahmanic discourse on the gods tends, above all else, to underscore their equivalence and interchangeability, showing how they may variously encompass or signify one another, according to the

changing circumstances — which is tantamount to saying, according to the demands of varying ritual situations. With the noteworthy exception of Indra, the gods are not characterized by life stories so often as they are by lists of attributes. Those myths in which one would expect to find the stuff of which they are made are evoked in a fragmentary and fleeting manner. This is the case both in the Vedic hymns in which the rules of the genre require that one proceed from allusion to enigma, and in the *Brāhmaṇas*, whose principal aim it is to show that the integrity of these divine personalities can only be maintained through the rites to which they are linked, and that it is these rites which define the limits of their domain.

Does there exist a brahmanic pantheon in the proper sense of the word? Yes, in the sense that there are, without a doubt, a multitude of gods, and that each of these gods is caught up in a network of relationships with all the other gods. But this pantheon lacks the familiar and reassuring coherency which the anthropomorphism of the Greek gods confers upon that pantheon. Joined to one another through family and marriage ties, the Greek gods are sufficiently individualized as to be able to constitute a society. Their stories fit together such that, in the final analysis, there can be said to be a history of the gods, even if the structure of divine time is different from that of human time. The gods of Brahmanism are of an indeterminate number which varies according to the point of view one adopts. They have no true genealogy and their identity is too volatile to be contained within any kinship system. The myths proper to individual gods are overgrown with a vegetation of quasi-myths, accounts whose function is to justify these gods' names, or to show how a given group of gods or the gods as a group, came to enjoy the status of recipients of a given offering. I hasten to qualify this discussion by saying that this is the specific case of Brahmanism *per se*; that is, of the religion that the *Brāhmaṇas* describe. The Epic works, the *Purāṇas*, and the texts of sectarian Hinduism are possessed of gods who are more classically mythological; but even in the long-winded narratives in which they figure as heroes, the differences and oppositions between the individual gods who make up the pantheon are secondary to the speculative discussions of a given divine power's many faces and levels of reality.

Contrary to these later sources, we find that the Indian ritual texts — incredibly numerous and varied as they are — are most concerned with imposing a kind of order upon the myriad acts to be performed, materials to be manipulated and words to be pronounced, in the ritual sphere. The most didactic of these, the *Kalpa Sūtras*, add definitions and meta-rules to their lists of ritual prescriptions, while establishing criteria for their classification. Another body of texts, the *Brāhmaṇas*, offer considerations that are less dry or homogeneous, but which tend to raise the following questions: What is it that makes a rite a rite? What are its constituent units? Working to comprehend the chain of ritual sequences, the Vedic authors and the ritualist schools who comment on them come not only to establish paradigms, but also to derive from them such semantic categories as continuity and discontinuity, repetition and difference, 'principal' and 'remainder', perishable and permanent, immediate and deferred, fullness and emptiness, implicit and explicit: universal categories all, but unique in India, inasmuch as they come to be arrived at in the course of speculation on the sacrificial act.

It was through their consideration of the '[one] must' that is so typical of ritual obligation that philosophers in India were brought to contemplate the linguistic presuppositions and metaphysical significance of obligation itself. Similarly, it was their desire to account for what really happens in the sacrifice that led the Vedic authors to ask questions about the gods to whom the offering was made, their language, and their bodies—as well as about the political bond that united them when they incorporated themselves, to do battle with the *Asuras*, in the same way that humans incorporate themselves when they undertake the group performance of a common sacrifice. One speaks of the gods as a means to extending and illustrating one's discussion of ritual, but in the end, it is the rite itself which comes to generate its own mythology, with the sacrifice itself as well as its various components being personified and made into the heroes of mythological accounts.

It is thus noteworthy, but in no way surprising, that it is with regard to ritual that India formulates yet another classical opposition: these are the antitypes of the active life and the contemplative life, whose two members correspond in part to the contrasting

poles of village and forest. A person who leads an active life devotes himself to ritual, whereas he who follows the contemplative path distances himself from the rites, or interiorizes them in such a way that they no longer constitute real acts.

Lastly, it is in a ritual trope that the Veda offers the following definition of man (to be compared and contrasted with Aristotle's definition of man as the political animal): 'Of all the animals capable of *being* sacrificial victims, man is the sole creature who is also capable of performing, of *doing* the sacrificial act'. It is its very ambiguity that makes formulation so rich in potential. Clearly, none but a member of the human race could be capable of playing both these roles. Thus, the individual person, short of making his sacrifice a suicide (which, to be sure, is not the sacrificial norm), must either be one or the other. However, if we are to understand the statement of what it is to be human in its broadest sense, we must recall that even when his sacrificial activity is directed towards an object external to himself, there is always a moment in which, according to brahmanical doctrine, it is the sacrificer himself who is transformed into the sacrificial oblation. Nothing less than an entire anthropology is concentrated in this formulation and the interplay it implies between reflexivity and relationship with another self—and it is this anthropology that the present studies attempt to elucidate.

Apart from a few incidental allusions, I do not discuss Buddhism in this book. At the same time, it is not my wish that it be entirely absent from this volume. The painting by Paul Klee, reproduced on the cover of the French edition, is entitled *Friendly Gaze*, and it is by this same title or name that the great Buddhist emperor Ashoka identified himself on the edicts he had engraved.

The articles brought together here have been modified on a number of counts. I have, most importantly, attempted to give these writings a greater formal homogeneity. I have thus standardized both my transliterations of Sanskrit terms and my use of abbreviations. The bibliographic references all follow the same format: author's name, date of publication, and page number. Exceptions to this rule are P.V. Kane's *History of Dharmasāstra*, and Louis Renou's seventeen volume series entitled *Etudes védiques et*

*pāninéennes*, for both of which I give the volume number rather than the date of publication.

I have also made certain stylistic corrections, and have reduced the number of repetitions, even if I have been unable to totally eliminate them. Lastly, I have attempted to tighten up the conclusions of both the 'Pierced Brick' and 'By Heart'. I have added to 'Village and Forest' a number of illustrative paragraphs taken from an article entitled 'A l'articulation de la nature et de l'artifice: le rite', published in *Le Genre humain* 12 April 1985: 233-46.

Prior to their publication, the majority of these essays were delivered orally, in one form or another. I am grateful to my listeners for their patience as well as for the insights they often offered me in the form of questions and comments, as well as that less defineable inspiration to which their mere physical presence gave wing. These exchanges occurred, in the main, in four contexts: these were the courses I taught in the fifth section of the Ecole pratique des hautes études; the Centre d'études de l'Inde et de l'Asie du sud; the courses taught by Jean-Pierre Vernant at the Collège de France; and the Oriental Institute of Oxford University. I also wish to offer my thanks to Wolfson College, Oxford, where I had the opportunity, through a Spalding Fellowship, to reside and work on the revisions of these texts from April to June of 1988.

It was Pierre Vidal-Naquet, with whom I have enjoyed a relationship of brotherly friendship since 1947, who encouraged me to put this book together and who afforded me great joy and pride when he welcomed its French edition into his collection within the Editions de la Découverte.

I close this introduction with this final note. In 1978, Hermann Press brought out a collection of articles written by Louis Renou, chosen and prefaced by myself. Is it not improper of me to now bring out, this time a collection of my own writings? I can only hope the reader not conclude from this that I have lost all sense of proportion. I know better than anyone else that the only common measure between Louis Renou and myself is that described by the following Sanskrit verse: 'Poets? Kālidāsa was one. And so we are poets too, for are not the mountain and the atom both, one and the other, things?'<sup>2</sup>

## Remarks on the Brahmanic Concept of the 'Remainder'\*

A wide array of regulations, found in the Smṛti tradition, stand as so many descriptions of what we know to have been a general attitude of revulsion toward leftover food. This disgust is but one expression of the extreme circumspection with which India regards all that concerns food: exalted in all its forms in Vedic poetry and speculation, food (considered in terms of its ingredients, preparation, rules of exchange and consumption) becomes charged with a social and religious symbolism so powerful and complex that there is simply no end to the number of precautions that one may take with regard to it. Food is a prime vehicle of pollution, and there is no time when one is more vulnerable to assaults of impurity than when eating. To put the matter more precisely, it is in the food we eat that the opposition between pure and impure emerges most clearly, and consequently, also in food that the hierarchical distinctions based upon this opposition are most highly concentrated.<sup>1</sup>

Consisting most often of organic matter, itself subject to putrefaction, what we eat may be further tainted when it comes into contact with other forms of organic matter, with living bodies or with all that, having been a part of a living body, has become separated from it: blood, sperm, saliva, excrements, urine, nail filings, body hair, dead skin, etc.

Such is the danger that threatens every kind of food that exists—but most especially, it goes without saying, leftover food.

\* This is an expansion of a paper presented in 1970 at the École pratique des hautes études, at a seminar organized by Madeleine Biardeau. I am extremely grateful for the hospitality and encouragement she showed me, as well as for her valuable comments.

Leftover food is not only the remains of some thing, it is also the remains of some one; and as such, the more vile and impure the person who might have eaten or touched it, the more impure the leftover. Just as one must be more cautious with cooked food than with raw food, since the former brings the question of 'Who cooked it?' into play, so the general attitude of disapproval regarding leftover food may be understood more clearly and precisely in the light of the question of 'Who ate it?'. So it is that we must append this properly social criterion to that already constituted by the degree to which contact, of foodstuff with polluting body, might have occurred.

Most noteworthy of all, however, is the fact that, independent of any other consideration, anything left over—simply because it is left over—is polluted.

Table scraps are precisely that order of food which a person characterized by *tamas* finds most appealing, according to the *Bhagavad Gītā*.<sup>2</sup> A prayer found in the *Taittirīya Aranyaka* (10.23) and repeated in the *Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra* (2.8.11), draws an equivalence between the consumption of leftovers and the most serious offences against the dietary laws: 'May the waters purify me of [the sins I have committed by eating] leftovers, forbidden foods, of all of my shortcomings, and of accepting gifts from evil men.'<sup>3</sup> So too, Yājñavalkya (1.33), prohibits the *brahmacārin*, in a single breath, from 'honey, meat, unguents, leftovers, foods that have "turned", women, violence against living creatures, looking at the sun, falsehood, begging . . .'<sup>4</sup> One cannot oblige a man who has taken a pledge (*āhita*) to handle leftovers, any more than corpses, urine or excrements, says the *Artha Śāstra* (3.13.9).<sup>5</sup> In a similar vein, the matter of calling some foodstuff a leftover is not to be taken lightly: the brahmanic student, when he has received alms in the form of food, should not reject it out of hand, simply because he has inferred (from its appearance) that it is a leftover. This he may only do if he has himself witnessed the act by which the offering was tainted, or has the testimony of some other reliable witness (*Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra* 1.3.27).<sup>6</sup> This same text reminds us that one ought never to denigrate the Vedic lineage of one's neighbour (2.5.14)<sup>7</sup> by declaring for example (and here we follow the commentary of Haradatta)—on the strength of a legendary reference to the

Black *Yajur Veda* as having been vomited forth by Yājñavalkya—that the *Taittirīya Veda* is a leftover.

Not only is it impure to eat leftovers, it is also impure to touch them. When can one say that a brahmin is physically pure and fit to begin the rites (*prayata*)? According to the *Āpastamba*, it is when he has—after having urinated or defecated—cleansed himself of every stain of urine and excrement, as well as of stains left by food, leftovers and sperm, and has washed his feet and drunk a mouthful of water.<sup>8</sup> It is thus proper that one rid oneself of all leftovers, just as one would one's urine and the water used to wash one's feet, by dumping these at some distance from one's dwelling.<sup>9</sup> The *Āpastamba* specifies that the brahmanic student should, after he has eaten, clean his own eating receptacle such that no leftovers remain: if he cannot eat his entire meal, he should bury the scraps or throw them into a body of water, or else, place them in a pot and leave this on the ground, somewhere in the vicinity of an (uninitiated) *ārya* or a *śūdra* in the service of his teacher (1.3.36–41).<sup>10</sup> (The *śūdra* then takes on the task of disposing of these leftovers, but should not eat them himself, if we are to believe *Manu* (2.56), who prohibits brahmins from giving their leftovers to anyone—<sup>11</sup> even to a *śūdra*, remarks Kullūka.)<sup>12</sup>

One's own leftovers are polluting to oneself on the same grounds (if not in the same way and to the same degree) as are other peoples' leftovers. One ought not, for this reason, to eat the scraps of one's own food, nor should one eat food that has come into contact with these leftovers.<sup>13</sup> After one has eaten, one is oneself polluted—literally, 'transformed into a leftover', *ucchiṣṭa*—and comparable as such to a dirty eating vessel. So long as one has not purified oneself by washing one's hands and rinsing one's mouth, one may not evoke the Veda, even in thought, any more than one may while one is defecating or urinating, in the water, in the middle of the night, or when one has partaken of a *śrāddha* meal (*Manu* 4.109).<sup>14</sup> So it is that the adjective *ucchiṣṭa* can qualify a person who is tainted in a general sense, even in those cases in which that special order of pollution brought on by leftovers does not come into play. Therefore, says *Manu* (4.142), an *ucchiṣṭa* brahmin should not touch a cow, a brahmin or fire with his hand.<sup>15</sup>

In the end—as is so often the case when one is dealing with



dietary prohibitions—one arrives at a situation in which casuistry is the only resort for him who would keep the fear of pollution from degenerating into a sort of phobia capable of paralyzing every form of activity, especially ritual activity. Therefore, for example, a man is not *ucchiṣṭa* when the hairs of his moustache go into his mouth, at least so long as he does not touch them with his hands.<sup>16</sup> Elsewhere, a person is not rendered impure if, while giving someone else water to drink, a few drops fall on his feet: in such a case, the water is to be considered as equivalent to water on the ground.<sup>17</sup>

Such reassuring statements are not without utility: down to the present day, orthodox Hindus know that even the smallest 'scrap' is capable of tainting the offering given to a divinity.<sup>18</sup>

One should not, however, take this to mean that if every scrap of food is impure, food is only impure when it is, in some sense, a scrap. The widely variant uses of the term *ucchiṣṭa*, if one takes each of them lightly, might lead to this conclusion. In fact, a piece of food may be declared inedible for a number of reasons, reasons pertaining to its intrinsic nature, to the social status or the particular situation of the person who prepared it or who gives it to us, and to impurities produced through contact with polluting substances. Yet none of these criteria make it a scrap or leftover. A piece of food is called *ucchiṣṭa* when it is in fact considered to be the remains of a bulk of food that someone has begun to eat. It is for this reason that even one's own leftovers are impure to oneself. The same rules hold for the gods, concerning what is to be done with leftovers of sacrificial food. The *Brāhmaṇas* treat the matter clearly; they cannot be thrown into the fire, since such would be tantamount to offering table scraps to the gods! The best procedure is that the sacrificer eat them himself, or throw them into a body of water.<sup>19</sup> These leftovers that are not to be given to the gods, it must be noted, are scraps from a meal they themselves have eaten; and while no foreign element has come to alter this food, its status has nevertheless changed, for the simple fact that it has continued to exist after the conclusion of the sacrifice.

This is not to say that sacrificial remains play a wholly negative role, as mere waste products, in the rite. We will come to see, on the contrary, that a reversal (already under-way in the Veda itself) occurred, by means of which such remains came to be placed at

the forefront of speculation on ritual, if not of the ritual itself.<sup>20</sup> In Smṛti ritual, however, the remains of the sacrifice—when they are used and not simply eliminated—come to stand as a degraded form of the principal oblatory material.

The monthly *śrāddha* rite—that is, the rite known as *piṇḍān-vāhāryaka*, performed on the new moon in honour of the Fathers—is instructive in this regard, since it is depicted as a veritable downpour of leftovers. Here we reproduce the principal stages of the rite, as it is set forth in *Manu* 3.122f.

We should begin by noting that this ceremony, while it is intended to feed the human ancestors of the sacrificer, is only valid when preceded by a *vaiśvadeva* rite in which the gods are the beneficiaries. The *śrāddha* itself only begins with an oblation (*havirdāna*) to the gods Agni, Soma and Yama, followed by the distribution of sprigs of *kuśa* grass around the fire. Using the scraps left over from the food offered to the gods (*haviḥśeṣāt*), the sacrificer makes three balls (*piṇḍas*) [v. 215], of which he feeds small fragments to especially pious and wise brahmins he has invited to this ceremony [v. 219], brahmins who are followed in their every movement by the shadows of the Fathers in honour of whom the ceremony is observed. In turns, the remains of this meal—both that which has not been served and which is now spread pell-mell over the *kuśa* grass, as well as that which the invited guests have left uneaten in their eating vessels—are mixed together into a kind of gruel [v. 244] that serves as the sacrificial portion of uncremated dead children [v. 245].<sup>21</sup> One may dispose of the remains of the *piṇḍas* by feeding them to a cow, a brahmin, a goat, or by throwing them into fire or water [v. 260]. The sacrificer's wife may eat the remains of the *piṇḍa* intended for her husband's grandfather; by so doing, she will obtain the son she desires [vv. 260–2]. As for the fragments of food that may have fallen onto the ground during the ceremony, these may be claimed by the sacrificer's good servants [v. 246].

Henceforth, three kinds of meals offer themselves up for comparison: meals eaten by the gods, in other words, the sacrifice itself; meals eaten by the Fathers, in other words, *śrāddha*; and meals eaten by humans. Each of these meals may be reduced to that part eaten by the intended eater, and that part left over as a

remainder. The remainder left by the gods is eaten by the sacrificial participants, that is, by living *dvija* men. The remainder left by the Fathers is eaten by persons who have died prior to reaching the age of initiation and, to a lesser degree, by non-*dvijas*. Human table scraps may only be consumed by persons of servile status (and it should be recalled that the prescriptions on this subject are obscure and contradictory).<sup>22</sup> We have further seen that the Fathers' meal is, to a great extent, the remains of a meal of the gods (a meal they are only served, to be sure, in order to legitimize the Fathers' food). This is also the case with the monthly *śrāddha*, as well as with the daily rite: the *gr̥hastha* is to make offerings, in his domestic fire, to the multitude of gods, and then toss *bali* offerings in each of the cardinal directions, for the gods who dwell there (*Manu* 3.87.f). He is then to throw what remains (*balīśeṣa*) towards the south, for the Fathers. It appears, then, that remains are always to be consumed by a class of beings inferior to that group which begins the consumption of a given bulk of food.

There exists, nonetheless, a situation that might provoke one to reappraise this schema, or, more exactly, to look at these matters from a different perspective: this is the relationship that obtains between a brahmanic student and his teacher. Because the two belong to the same class, the subordination of the *brahmacārin* to his *ācārya* is of a quite different order than is the uninitiated person's inferiority with regard to the *dvija*. Yet, the *Smṛti* literature states that the student is to eat his teacher's table scraps. One of the pupil's basic duties is to gather alms, in the form of food, for his master: once he has received such alms, says the *Āpastamba* (1.3.31), he is to lay them down before his master and offer them to him;<sup>23</sup> after which he is to eat the *ucchiṣṭa* of his master's meal (1.4.1).<sup>24</sup> The offering of food to one's teacher has all the characteristics of an oblation. 'Alms', it is said in 1.3.43, 'are recognized as sacrificial food. With regard to these, the master is the divinity'.<sup>25</sup> 'He is also the *āhavanīya* fire' (1.3.44) because, as the commentary tells us, a portion of these alms are thrown into the fire of his stomach.<sup>26</sup> If the teacher is not present, one must find a substitute for him, some other member of his family or else some other brahmins (1.3.33f.).<sup>27</sup> 'And if it is the student who is on a journey, he is to throw a portion of his alms into the

fire and eat (the remainder)' (1.3.42).<sup>28</sup> In this way, the food he himself eats is 'nothing other than the remains of an oblation' (1.4.2).<sup>29</sup> A student may not refuse to eat his teacher's leftovers, unless these contain prohibited foods (such as meat or honey), foods he may not eat under any circumstance; but here, the teacher is himself prohibited from offering him such foods (1.4.5).<sup>30</sup> The special sort of commensalism that exists between student and teacher, a relationship defined by the role leftovers play, denotes a wholly personal relationship. The student is to behave toward his teacher's son as he would toward the teacher himself (he is to help both, in an identical way, in their toilet)—except in matters of eating his leftovers (1.7.30);<sup>31</sup> and this even in such cases where the son is himself extremely wise (*BaudhDhS* 1.3.37).<sup>32</sup> Curiously, this highly pronounced devotion of a disciple for his master does not prevent the establishment of a kind of reciprocity between the two. It is the pupil who provides his master with the necessary material conditions for eating, since it is he who brings him the alms he has collected. It is the master who provides his disciple with the necessary ritual conditions for eating, when he leaves him his table scraps. Throughout this process, the student and his teacher protect one another, mutually: 'The pupil (*śiṣya*)', Patañjali tells us *ad Pānini* 4.4.62, 'is to be shaded by his master (*guru*) as by an umbrella; and the master is to be shaded as by a parasol, by his pupil'.<sup>33</sup> The *brahmacārin* is, by definition, a person without a sacrificial fire: that which fulfills this role for him is, as we have seen, his master's stomach. In this light, the relationship between the student and teacher is very similar to that obtaining between a sacrificer and the gods. The comparison holds for the parts as well as for the relationship as a whole: god is nourished by human offerings; as for the sacrificer, however, he is only able to avail himself of oblatory material (and those things that are necessary for his own existence) because the gods are ever watchful over the order of the cosmic processes—most especially the proper succession of the seasons—and because they are protectors of *dharma*. The master is nourished by his disciple's oblations—and, apart from leaving him his leftovers (as do the gods with the sacrificer), it is also he who makes it possible for the disciple to gather alms, and he who provides him with a knowledge of *dharma*, if not with *dharma* itself.

There nevertheless appears, between the pair constituted by god and sacrificer and that of master and disciple, a distinction which reminds us, in timely fashion, of the human character of the master, and of his homogeneity with his student—and thus brings us back to the idea of remains. This is the notion that while the student eats his *guru's* leftovers, the *guru* also eats, in a certain sense, his student's leftovers. To put the matter more exactly, the student belongs to that group of beings who, by their mere existence, allow the *grhastha* or the *vānaprastha* (and we must not forget here that the master belongs, of necessity, to one of these two *āśramas*) to himself be a consumer of remains, a *śeṣabhōjin*.

Here we encounter a phenomenon, of a paradoxical order, that it behoves us to bear in mind. On the one hand, human remains are abhorrent; yet, on the other, nothing but remains can be eaten. This is clear enough in the case of the student, but the rule also holds for all *dvijas*. How can this be? Scraps from offerings made to the gods are good food: they are the remains of a *yajña*. But there also exist *yajñas* to humans as well as to *bhūtas*, those indeterminate beings, animals, or low-level spirits who haunt houses and whom one may appease by leaving food for them in certain predetermined places (on thresholds, especially).<sup>34</sup> Of the five *mahāyajñas* which define the broad outlines of the *grhastha's* everyday ritual, four—the *yajña* to the gods, to humans, to the *bhūtas*, and to the Fathers—are comprised of oblations of food. Truly dharmic food is that constituted by the remains of the first two (or three) of these oblations.<sup>35</sup> 'Upstanding people who nourish themselves with the remains of sacrifices are freed from all taint; but those who cook food for themselves are sinners and nourish themselves on sin', says *Bhagavad Gītā* 3.13.<sup>36</sup> *Manu* (3.118) says: 'He who prepares food for himself alone eats nothing but sin; for it is ordained that the food which remains after a sacrifice has been carried out constitutes food for upstanding people'.<sup>37</sup> The *yajña* to humans, called *manusya-* or *nṛ-yajña*, is first and foremost a donation of food to a (brahmin) guest. Thus according to the *Āpastamba* (2.8.2), the householder 'should be an eater of his guests' leftovers'. The one in *vānaprastha*, who should also be an eater of remains (*śeṣabhakṣa*), is obliged to perform the *manusya-yajña*, by feeding errant ascetics, guests and students (*BaudhDhS* 3.3.5).<sup>38</sup> The *grhastha* 'should first feed his

guest and then, according to regulations, give alms to an ascetic or to a student' (*Manu* 3.94).<sup>39</sup> In this way, 'one insures the subsistence of his body with the leftovers of the gods and of his guests' (*Mahābhārata* 3.260.6).<sup>40</sup> At times, we encounter a broader concept of this *yajña*: 'The householder should first feed his guests, children, elderly persons, the sick, and pregnant women' (*ĀpDhS* 2.4.11f.),<sup>41</sup> which *Manu* (3.116) amplifies: 'After the brahmin (guests), family, and servants have eaten, the householder and his wife may eat that which remains (*avaśiṣtam*)'.<sup>42</sup> The brahmin householder's food is thus composed of two parts, called *vighasa* and *amṛta*. The *vighasa* is what is left over from his guests' meal and the *amṛta* is what is left over from the gods' meal; both are *śeṣa* (cf. *Manu* 3.285).<sup>43</sup>

To be sure, the problem here consists of knowing how these principles are applied. It is hard for us to imagine that the householder would only eat after everyone else, including the servants, in his household, had eaten; or that he would eat the food they have deigned to leave as scraps.<sup>44</sup> It nevertheless remains the case that the principal *saṃskāra* regarding food—that which prevents the eater from being a *kevalāgha*, a mere sinner, and from eating worthless food (*BaudhDhS* 2.13.2)<sup>45</sup>—is its transformation into a leftover, termed *ucchiṣṭa*, *avaśiṣṭa* or *śeṣa*.<sup>46</sup>

The flow of social and ritual life is channelled, in a sense, by food scraps. Far from being inert waste matter, such remains are the seed, the *bīja* of acts whose intersections and sequences constitute *dharma*.

There exists, nonetheless, a category of *dvijas* who remain out of this circuit, that is, a group that is allowed for the consumptions of foods that are not sacrificial remains: these are the *saṃnyāsins*, the 'renouncers'. This is the only case, however, because the *saṃnyāsin* does not, properly speaking, eat at all: the foods he ingests, and which he receives in the form of alms or finds haphazardly are, for him, so many medical preparations (*BaudhDhS* 2.18.12).<sup>47</sup> The *saṃnyāsin* stands outside the system of remains, just as he does that of the sacrifice, to the extent at least that sacrifice implies a recipient of the oblation, who is distinct from the sacrificer himself. In fact, the *saṃnyāsin* has placed his sacrificial fires inside himself, and thereby sacrifices to the *ātman* (*BaudhDhS* 2.18.9–10).<sup>48</sup>

The data we have examined till now has mainly come to us from the *Smṛti* texts. The *Śruti* texts, as well, provide a number of passages that highlight the role played by food remains in the mechanics of *dharma*. Rather than attempting to review Vedic texts of an injunctive stamp, texts which offer, in their ritual prescription, an impressive array of data, we will concentrate here on a limited number of aetiological myths or parables.

We begin with the account of the birth of the Ādityas. The Vedic texts give divergent versions of this myth, but these nevertheless allow for a common pattern to emerge.<sup>49</sup> Aditi wants to have sons. She prepares porridge for the Sādhyas 'who were gods before the gods', and eats the leftovers (*uccheṣāna*, in *TS* 6.5.6 and *TB* 1.1.9; *ucchiṣṭa* in *GopB* 1.2.15; *uñsiṣṭa* in *MS* 1.6.12).

This she does several times over, with a son being born to her after each offering: these sons are the Ādityas. But when she decides one day to help herself first, the process runs awry and she gives birth to a 'dead egg', Mārtāṇḍa, a formless mass of flesh, according to the ŚB (3.1.3.3) version. She then must pray that her sons, the Ādityas, consent to infusing life and form into this still-born infant and to accepting him as their equal; but this on the condition that his descendants vow to offer sacrifices to them. So saved, Mārtāṇḍa becomes the Āditya Vivasvant and his 'descendance', the human race. The lesson to be drawn from this myth bears on the use of remains in what may be considered as the starting point of the ritual cycle: this is the installation of the sacrificial fires, the *agnyādhēya*.<sup>50</sup> (This practical application of the myth is put forward in *TB* 1.1.9.4. Here, it is not a case of transgression that is at the origin of Mārtāṇḍa: the eight Ādityas rather emerge, two by two and in regular fashion, from the remains of the *brahmaudana* that Aditi duly offers, four times, to the Sādhyas): 'With the remains of the *ājya* (once the four *ṛtvij* priests have eaten), one is to oil the logs one adds to the fire. In truth, Aditi became pregnant with the remainder'.<sup>51</sup> The aim of this particular phase of the rite is, moreover, to insure that the sacrificer have descendants. 'This is why', says Sāyaṇa, 'he who wishes to beget should cook the *brahmaudana*. By this means, he emits sperm that engenders sons'.<sup>52</sup> (The *Rg Veda* makes use of the noun *śeṣas* for 'descendance'.<sup>53</sup> This is, says

*Nirukta* 3.2, an *apatyanāma* which may be explained as follows: 'Descendants are what remains of a man who passes away'.<sup>54</sup>)

The *TS* (2.5.3.4f.), by way of explaining why the *Agnihotra* is followed by the new moon sacrifice, recalls the story of Indra who, powerless after his slaying of Vṛtra, recovers his strength by drinking milk curds (*dadhi*) which, on Prajāpati's orders, animals have prepared for him. Now, there are several ways by which to curdle milk. According to the ingredients one uses, one arrives at a preparation that is proper to one or another of the gods. The preparation that best suits Indra is one obtained by causing milk to curdle by adding curds. So we are told that one should curdle the remains of the *Agnihotra* in order to insure the continuity of the sacrifice.<sup>55</sup>

This is perhaps the moment to attempt to comprehend a somewhat mysterious but quite famous passage from the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (1.10.1-7).

Among the Kurus who had been smitten by the hailstorm [?], Uṣasti Cākṛāyaṇa and his wife Āṭikī lived a poor life in the village of a wealthy man. He begged alms from the wealthy man, who was eating peas. The man replied, 'None other than these have been set aside for me'. Uṣasti answered, 'Give me some of them.' The other gave them to him, saying, 'Here's something to drink now.' To which Uṣasti replied, 'That would be drinking a remainder (and thus the commission of an impure act)'. 'But isn't this pea also a remainder?' 'If I don't eat them, I shall die of hunger. Drinking would be a pleasure for me'. When he had eaten, he brought the remains of his meal to his wife. She had already found something to eat. She took them and put them aside. When he arose on the following morning, Uṣasti said, 'If we had a bit of food, we could make some money. A certain king is going to offer a sacrifice. He could choose me for all of the priestly functions.' His wife answered, 'Well, my husband, there are these peas here.' He ate them and went to the sacrifice that had been prepared . . .<sup>56</sup>

Without asking too much of this text, it would appear to us that it is comprised of two parts, of which each highlights a different aspect of the idea of food-remains. The first does no more than to formulate and illustrate with an example a prescription relevant to *āpaddharma*. In times of famine, a brahmin may eat a (probably non-brahmin) rich man's leftovers; it is better to sully oneself by eating leftovers than it is to die of hunger. Or,

put in other words, since such are the terms of this alternative, these remains would not be transmitters of impurity. But the brahmin would be polluted if he were to accept the water the wealthy man also offers him, because he no doubt has the means to find some other water that is not a remains, and because he is not in a situation of *āpad* with regard to thirst.<sup>57</sup> The second part is, on the other hand, a parable. Here, the matter is not one of other peoples' leftovers, about which one is obliged to ask whether they constitute polluting *ucchiṣṭas*, but one concerning the remains (*atiśeṣa*) of his own meal. The brahmin brings these to his wife who, rather than eating them, lays them aside, and when it appears that he can earn some money with a small bit of food, these foodstuffs that have been so laid up present themselves just in the nick of time. Are these to be taken as food for the road? No, because the brahmin eats them before he sets out. Everything in this account unfolds in such a way as to lead one to think that eating leftovers (and the foods eaten here are leftovers of leftovers) was the condition the brahmin had to fulfil for it to be possible for him to accomplish one of his specific functions, that of serving as a priest.

The data we have considered to this point has allowed us to see that food-remains, far from being an endpoint in the ritual and social processes in which they appear, are, on the contrary, the starting point of a subsequent act, the beginning of a new beginning, as it were.<sup>58</sup>

But this concept of remains is not limited to the realm of food. It manifests itself most clearly in the Purāṇic and Epic cosmogonies, precisely because these are not creations in some absolute sense of the term, but rather, re-emergences that follow upon reabsorptions (*pralayas*), which themselves mark the end of each cosmic eon (*kalpa*). Just as in the archaic *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (1.8.1.6) version of the flood story we find that only Manu—a Manu who will become the source of the next creation—remains;<sup>59</sup> surviving alone, free and out in the open while all around him has been inundated, so too the post-Vedic mythology also describes a universal dissolution, but now in a recurring fashion, at the end of which, at each *kalpānta*, there survives a

remainder, which is the serpent Śeṣa. As an active remainder, this serpent—whose name means 'Remains'—holds the earth up atop his infinite serpent coils between two *pralayas*, and becomes, during a *pralaya*, the support for the sleeping Viṣṇu, thus insuring the reconstitution of the cosmos.<sup>60</sup> And it is no coincidence that Śeṣa counts among his brothers the *nāga* Takṣaka, which is another name for Viśvakarman, the carpenter of the Universe. It is thanks to Śeṣa that cosmic history became the *samsāra*.

What is true for the cosmic *samsāra* is equally true for the fate of the individual. What is the impulse behind rebirth? It is the fact that at the end of one's life, one's good and bad acts do not balance each other out, and that there thus remains an excess of one with regard to the other. More exactly, a good life (that is, one characterized by a great quantity of good *karman*) leads to a heavenly abode in which one may enjoy, for a certain time, the fruits of one's good acts. But these fruits are not exhausted. There remains an *anūśaya*, a residue, an outstanding balance on one's karmic account which, once one has completed this period of pure consumption, brings about a rebirth. Because this shall no doubt be a good rebirth, one shall, in the course of it, come to experience all manner of pleasures; however, one will also commit acts during this period, that is, one will accumulate new *karman* which shall, in turn, come to fruition and leave a new residue, etc. The same mechanism also comes into play, it goes without saying, in the case of a life in which bad *karman* dominates.

Thus, the notion of a residue, of an outstanding balance, plays a foundational role in the ceaseless re-firing of the motor of *karman*. That this is an idea befilling the realms of philosophical speculation, and also to brahmanism in general, is indicated in the *ĀpDhS* 2.2.2–3 and 5–6: 'When they apply themselves to their proper *dharma*s, the members of each and every *varṇa* come to know a supreme and great happiness. After this (that is, after one has enjoyed a time of felicity in heaven) one returns (to this world) due to the (unconsumed) remainder of the fruits of one's acts (*karmaphalaśeṣa*) and is made to take birth in a caste (appropriate to one's merit, just as one attains) beauty, (fair) complexion, strength, intelligence, wisdom, wealth (and the joy of) pursuit of one's own *dharma*. Thus one rolls, like a wheel, through the happiness of both worlds . . . It is in this very same way that one

may (also) explain the ripening of the fruits of one's faults. The (gold-) robber, the brahmin-killer, having endured the torments of hell, for an immeasurable time in the other world, is (re-) born as a *cāṇḍāla* if he was a brahmin, as a *paukasa* if he was a *ksatriya*, and a *vaiṇa* if he was a *vaiśya*.<sup>61</sup>

This residue remains attached to the soul of the individual even as he passes through (divine or animal) existences, during which he accumulates no *karman*. This explains, moreover, how it is impossible for an earthly existence—in which one merely enjoys or suffers an existence in a wholly passive manner—to ever be one's final rebirth.<sup>62</sup> The way in which one's death triggers a selection of those *karman*s—from among the *karman*s of the life one has just lived—that will immediately bear fruit in the form of suffering or pleasure in the other world, as well as the composition and dynamic of the *anuśaya*, are the themes of a long discussion in Śankara's commentary *ad Vedānta Sūtra* 3.1.8.<sup>63</sup> One encounters similar preoccupations in the Yoga<sup>64</sup> school which, rather than describing the *anuśaya* as that which remains after a stay in the other world, portrays it as that which remains once the neutralization of good *karman* by bad *karman*, and the absorption of secondary *karman* by primary *karman*, have been effected.

So it is that any effort towards liberation, whether it be through the acquisition of *vidyā*, yogic techniques, or the *saṃnyāsin*'s asceticism, is, in the final analysis, an attempt to do away with the residue of *karman*. This is particularly the case with the *saṃnyāsin*—who, as we have seen, evades the system of food remains because he places himself outside of social and ritual exchanges—and who endeavours to escape from the network of the remains of acts because his goal is to escape from *samsāra*.

But the soteriological *darśanas* (so called because they establish a necessary link between *karman* and rebirth, and make man's highest goal the suppression of *karman* as a means of escaping from the series of rebirths) are not the only ones which emphasize the notion of the residues of acts. In fact, what was the effect of sacrificial activity on the fate of the sacrificer for the *Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā* school, whose goal was heaven rather than *mokṣa*, and whose prime means to that end was the proper performance of the Vedic rite? The sacrifice, inasmuch as it consists of the destruction, by fire, of sacrificial materials, abolishes itself at that

very moment in which it comes to an end. This cause, even though it is perishable, nevertheless establishes a distant effect, which is the attainment of heaven. This is because a trace of the sacrifice remains: this is called the *apūrva*, 'a particular tendency, established by an ongoing sacrifice, which is expected to bear fruit at a later time'.<sup>65</sup> According to the *Mīmāṃsā*, the sacrificer therefore has a twofold involvement with the remains of the sacrifice: he consumes the scraps of the *dravya*, and he is affected by the residual effect that is the *apūrva*, an effect that makes it possible for him to reach heaven after he dies.

We must now look at a particular situation, in which one burdens oneself, in advance, with a remains; and in which one measures the cause, in a sense, on the basis of its effect or, more exactly, on that of the obstacle which impedes the effect from wholly exhausting its cause. Such a case may be found in the treatises on architecture. Whether one wishes to determine a temple's orientation, breadth, length, perimeter, or the day of the week or month upon which it is auspicious to begin its construction, the problem always takes the following form: given a particular *śeṣa*, what must the elements of the *śeṣin* be? Let us take, for example, the temple's orientation. First, one numerically indexes the cardinal points from 0 to 7, in the sense of *pradakṣiṇā*, and starting from the east. Next, one measures the temple's breadth by such a figure that, if it is multiplied by 3 and the product is divided by 8 (the number of cardinal points), there will be a remainder after this division, which will correspond to the numerical index of the desired orientation. Significantly, this remainder is called the *yonī*, 'matrix'. At least six 'remainders' are thus to be determined from the outset, remainders that will in turn define the whole numbers by which the temple's dimensions are to be measured, and which thus constitute the dividends.<sup>66</sup>

So long as they remain external to the hierarchical processes of the sacrifice, food scraps are objects of repulsion. But when they become the remains of a *yajña*, they become the edible food *par excellence*, and play an essential role in the continuity of *dharma*. Considered from the standpoint of 'secular' religion, the residue

of acts insures the persistence of a person, a person who can thus hope to reach either heaven or a series of good rebirths; considered from the perspective of *mokṣa*, it is, by definition, the prime obstacle. The notion of a remainder plays a key role in several explicit doctrines. Elsewhere, it functions as an intellectual schema to which brahmanic thought makes constant reference. According to this schema, a body of matter or of acts is, normally, never wholly consumed (in either sense of the term), and the procedures by which these are treated never arrive at any definitive, exhaustive result. There always remains a residue which, while ambiguous, is nevertheless always possessed of an active, rather than an inert character. It is because he is conscious of the range of this notion, of the omnipresence of this schema, that the poet of *AS* 11.7 exalts the *ucchiṣṭa*.<sup>67</sup> It is useless here to follow Keith,<sup>68</sup> who saw in these lines a 'poor piece of theosophical juggling with words', a 'pseudo-theosophy' comparable to that which 'exalts . . . to the rank of supreme powers, the ladles, the *Darbha* grass amulet, the porridge cooked for the priest . . . ' a monotonous and mechanical excitation of sorts that would have driven the *ṛṣi*s to indiscriminately glorify all the ingredients of the sacrifice. Equally impractical, however, is Deussen's<sup>69</sup> estimation of this hymn as 'a homage to the transcendent world, to that which "remains" once one has, through thought, done away with the phenomenal universe'.<sup>70</sup> One should rather take this hymn for what it claims to be: a meditation on sacrificial 'remains' as the symbol of remains *per se*, with all the contradictory connotations that post-Vedic brahmanism might find in this notion, connotations which are foreshadowed, moreover, in this text.

1. *ūchiṣṭe nāma rūpām cōchiṣṭe lokā āhitah*  
*ūchiṣṭa indras cāgnīś ca viśvam antāh samāhitam . . .*
3. *sānn ūchiṣṭe āsamś cobhau mṛtyūr vājah prajāpatiḥ . . .*
25. *prānāpanau cakṣuḥ śrōtram āksitīś ca kṣitīś ca yā*  
*ūchiṣṭāḥ jajñire sārve divi devā diviśritah*

'On remains are founded name and form, on remains is founded the world. In remains, Indra, Agni, and everything are concentrated [ . . . ] Being and non-being, both are in remains, death, vigour, Prajāpati [ . . . ] Inbreath and outbreath, sight, hearing, the fact that things are imperishable, and the fact that they perish: from remains are born all of the gods in heaven, who live in the sky'.

## Cooking the World

Prajāpati considered: 'if I add this, such as it is, to my being, I will become a mortal carcass, unliberated from evil. May I therefore cook this with fire'. He cooked it with fire. He made it into [the food of] immortality. In truth, the offering becomes [the food of] immortality when one cooks it with fire. This is why one cooks the bricks with fire. In this way, one renders them immortal.

ŚB6.2.1.9

A metaphor is a pun with loose ends. I tighten the knot until my finger feels nothing but the string.

Jean Cocteau, *Essai de critique indirecte*

In *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 11.5.7.1 we read: 'Here now is the praise of the personal recitation of the Veda. The personal recitation and learning are sources of pleasure for the brahmin. He acquires presence of mind, becomes independent, and acquires wealth day after day. He sleeps well. He is his own best physician. To him belong mastery of the senses, the power to find joy in a single object, the development of intelligence, glory and cooking the world. As this intelligence grows, four duties come to incumb upon the brahmin: a brahmanic origin, behaviour consonant with his status, glory, and cooking the world. And as it cooks, the world protects the brahmin through the fulfillment of its four duties towards him: respect, generosity, non-oppression, and immunity'.<sup>1</sup>

The expression *lokapakti*, translated here as 'cooking the world', has been met with a remarkable reticence on the part of commentators. The *St. Petersburg Dictionary* (Böhtlingk and Roth, 1855–75, s.v. *pakti*) gives an altogether different interpretation of 'high

consideration in the world', 'das Angesehensein bei der Welt'. Eggeling (1900: 99) translates it as '(the task of) perfecting the people' (or 'perfecting the world', as he adds in a footnote), while Monier-Williams's (1899: s.v. *pakti*) gloss is 'the mental evolution of the world'. For Oldenberg (1919: 213), the term means 'Reifmachung, the maturation obtained through a spiritual solicitude (*geistliche Fürsorge*) for all creatures'. These divergences may be explained by the fact that *loka* can mean 'world' as well as 'people', and that *pakti*, a verbal noun derived from the root *PAC*, has 'cooking' for its primary meaning, but can also be employed figuratively to mean 'maturation', 'perfecting', and even 'dignity, good reputation'. We should note, moreover, that in compounds of the *loka-pakti* type, the first term is a determinant of the second; however, the sense of this determination remains a variable one. The first term can be a 'nominal adjective' of the second, but it can also be used as a modifier governing attribution, place, etc. The context alone is pivotal in the choice of one grammatical analysis over another.

There is, however, no reason whatsoever to deny the literal sense of the term.<sup>2</sup> Taken on its own terms, the expression *lokapakti* is in fact a powerful summation of every definitive description and definition of the brahmin. We should, moreover, be discouraged from diluting this metaphor (that is, from considering this expression to be only metaphorical) by a feature which characterizes Hindu India: it is the brahmins who do the cooking.

This characteristic may be easily explained. 'The brahmin is naturally the preferred cook . . . we shall encounter a Brahmin serving a lower caste who calls another to replace him in the mourning ritual, whereas he takes care of the cooking for the banquet himself' . . . [In the intercaste meal that brings together all who have accompanied the mortal remains to the cremation ground], 'pakkā food is cooked by the brahmin, so as to permit the greatest number to consume it' (Dumont 1966: 179, 186; English translation 1980: 139, 145). Keeping a brahmin cook—or, more often, having a brahmin to do one's cooking—is a highly effective precautionary measure. In Hinduism, the place of a man or a group is notably revealed (and confirmed) by the answers given to the following questions: what does one eat, or rather what are the foods that one refuses to eat? In whose company does one

agree to eat? From whose hands does one accept cooked food? (The answer to this last question will vary according to the nature of the food and the way it is cooked). The operative principle here is that the higher one is located in the caste hierarchy, the more sensitive and exclusive one is on all of these counts. (One's status determines one's behaviour, and is signified by it. Contrariwise, to adopt a certain behaviour is to proclaim an ambition to accede to a corresponding status, with the possibility of attaining that status in the long run). The brahmin is located at the summit of the hierarchy, and eminently vulnerable to pollution;<sup>3</sup> he therefore is, among Hindus, a person who is most concerned with and most particular in his choice of eating companions, and of persons from whom he will accept cooked food. If, on the other hand, it is the case that one may—in some highly schematic way—only accept cooked food from one's peers or superiors, there are no grounds for anyone to refuse food cooked by a brahmin, since brahmins can only have equals and inferiors. For not only is one assured that the brahmin's contact with the food has not polluted it, but also that the food is intrinsically pure. A brahmin, as we very well know, would not consent to working in a material whose contact might be polluting for him; if it is pure for him, it is *a fortiori* edible for others. (A vegetarian may not eat meat; but a meat eater is not polluted if he eats food containing no flesh).

This explanation is only a 'positional' one: while correct in theory, it is nevertheless insufficient. Brahmins alone are possessed of the capacity to be everyone else's cooks; but why—or at least how—do they accept this role? One should recognize that in the rules concerning the transfer of food, the critical moment is that in which the food is cooked. It often occurs that a brahmin, on the occasion of some festival observance, will agree to eat in the company of non-brahmins and deign to eat food offered by non-brahmins. This is in fact a means by which the brahmin is able to accomplish his priestly duty, inasmuch as he provides his host with the opportunity of offering a sacrifice which, without the presence of a brahmin, to eat it, could not take place. Elsewhere, the brahmin, when he accepts food offered by persons of lower castes, acts in the same way as does a god when he accepts the food offered by humans: in both cases, it is an act of grace which the eater performs with regard to the donor of food. But



the brahmin's condescension has its limits: if he is to eat cooked food, it is imperative that the food be cooked by a brahmin.

In order to grasp the definitive feature of the moment of cooking, and to attempt to understand the particular affinity that obtains between brahmins and the art of cooking, it is necessary that we refer to ancient brahmanical tradition. Here, the rules of commensalism and the acceptance of food are not exactly the same as they are in classical Hinduism. The doctrine varies greatly with textual traditions. Some follow the Vedic ideal, while others manifest those gradual transformations that would culminate in the new system. What follows here is a summary of the conclusions one might draw from the data set forth by P.V. Kane (2: 789f.). Taken as a whole, the *Smṛti* tradition appears to be pulled in two directions: on the one hand, it wants to assert that the only cooked food a brahmin may legitimately consume is the food prepared by himself, his wife (that wife whose *varṇa* is the same as his own), his daughter-in-law, his son, his disciple, his master or a relation who is older than he; on the other hand, it insists on the priestly function of brahmins, which requires that they accept all food offered to them.

The *dharma Sūtras*, as well as the treatises of Manu and Yājñalkya, draw up a list of those persons who, because of personal imperfections (diseases, degrading occupations, infirmities, evil behaviour, un-expiated sins), may not be donors of food to brahmins. With the exception of these cases, brahmins may eat food given to them by any of the 'twice-born' castes, with the condition, nonetheless, that such be offered to them spontaneously and discreetly. Conversely, the brahmin is prohibited from soliciting food from a non-brahmin, and it is even recommended that he refuse food from anyone who has been loud in expressing his intention to give him such. Where then is the mendicant brahmin in all of this? He should not have to beg: his presence alone ought to be sufficient. As a matter of fact, he quite often has a disciple who will do his begging for him. Certain authors go so far as to allow that a brahmin might accept cooked food offered by his sharecropper, his barber, his cowherd or his servant. Others, however, declare that a brahmin loses all his dignity in such cases. As with Hinduism, restrictions are more severe for cooked food than they are for the raw, but we do not find any *Smṛti* text (nor any

remarks in Pāṇini or his commentators) which restricts the function of cooking food to brahmins. On the contrary, the *Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra*—a treatise which one must situate in the rigourist category—teaches that all 'twice-born' persons (*dvijas*) may cook once they have purified themselves; and that even *śūdras* may do the same provided they are under brahmin surveillance and have taken care to wash themselves and clip their nails.

In the ancient brahmanic tradition, then, a brahmin, when he accepts or refuses food cooked by another, does this not so much as a means to showing off his rank in the hierarchy, but rather as a way of demonstrating the limits within which he will agree to exercise his *dharma*<sup>4</sup> as officiating priest, as a substitute for the gods, or as a representative of the divinized ancestors. But, in this perspective, the cook is not necessarily a brahmin, the brahmin is fundamentally a cooker, and here we see the extent to which Hinduism, in the innovations it made, narrowed and hardened its Vedic base. This it did by reinterpreting the formula 'cooking the world' into 'doing the cooking for other people'.

This theme of cooking, of actual and metaphorical cooking, displays itself in all its fullness and coherence in the brahmanical doctrine of sacrifice.

To be sure, the sacrifice is not the concern of brahmins alone: all the 'twice-born'—that is, the members of the three highest *varṇas*<sup>5</sup>—are capable of offering sacrifices (of assuming the functions of *yajamāna*). But brahmins alone are, in theory, allowed to officiate (to serve as *ṛtvij*) in ceremonial (*śrauta*) sacrifices. And, while it is possible to forego the services of brahmins in domestic (*gṛhya*)<sup>6</sup> rites (for the reason that there is no need for any *ṛtvij* other than the *yajamāna* himself) it remains the case that all of these rites are grounded in the Vedas, inasmuch as they include the recitation of Vedic *mantras* and the performance of gestures prescribed in and legitimated by the Vedas. Even now, it is still a brahmin's prerogative—and this is an element of the *dharma* that belongs to them alone—to teach the Vedas. Furthermore, the neuter noun *brahmaṇ*, from which is derived the masculine *brāhmaṇa* ('brahmin'), at once designates both the purport of the Vedic text and 'brahman-hood', the essence of the brahmin's *varṇa* (just as *ksātra* designates the power specific to the *ksatriyas*). Officiants at ceremonial rites, as well as the exclusive transmitters of the Vedas,

brahmins are, therefore, by definition, men of sacrifice (and according to some, every sacrificer, throughout the sacrifices duration, is to be likened to a brahmin).<sup>7</sup> The place they occupy in the sacrifice is much more richly described, and with greater complexity, than are those of members of the other *varṇas*. Like all the twice-born, the brahmin celebrates his own domestic rites and studies the Veda. He maintains an advantage, however, over the *ksatriyas* and *vaiśyas*, in that he participates (as officiant) in the rites of others, and teaches the Veda to others.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, he does his own cooking, but, more than this, he does the cooking for others.

The relationship between cooking and sacrifice cannot be reduced to the analogy that obtains between the privileges that characterize the brahmin in each of the two spheres. We must also consider these activities in and of themselves, and see how they are accommodated to each other, or how they imply one another. The question we are asking here is whether every case of cooking is not a sacrifice, and whether every sacrifice is not a case of cooking, or a series of such cases (and here we take up once again a line of questioning proposed by Madeleine Biardeau: cf. *Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études*, Vth Section, 1973-4).

On what sources might we draw upon in sketching out an answer to these questions? Three groups of texts deal principally with brahmanic sacrifice: these are the Vedic Revelation in the proper sense of the term (*śruti*); the *Kalpa Sūtras*, and treatises relating to the prior *Mīmāṃsā*.

The Veda, in the broad sense of the term, is defined by Indian tradition as the sum total of *mantras* and of *Brāhmaṇas*.<sup>9</sup> The *mantras* are those verses which constitute the hymns (*sūktas*), or else they are the elements, in prose or verse, which make up the sacrificial formulae known as *yajus*. In the context of the doctrine of the sacrifice, it is the isolated verse, and not the hymn in its totality, that matters. In fact, the liturgy generally prescribes the recitation of a particular *mantra* (or group of *mantras* belonging to different hymns), and it is rare that an entire hymn be recited as an accompaniment to a given sacrificial act. Inasmuch as it is comprised of *mantras*, the Veda stands as a constitutive part of the rite, and is as important to the rite as are the obligatory material or the sacrificial victim: it is part and parcel of the sacrifice, and does not present itself to be a discourse on the sacrifice. In another

vein, although the Vedic hymns—when taken in their expanded, complete form—are, to be sure, very frequently exaltations of a divinity, they can just as often elevate the offering, the sacrificer, the officiants, fire, Vedic poetry itself, as well as the power of inspiration that brings it forth. These fervent panegyrics are blended together, of necessity, with fragments of description or of discursive explanation. However, these hymns provide us with enough information to understand that all brahmanic thought is organized around this theme of sacrifice—this being its structuring principle, in the words of Madeleine Biardeau—it nevertheless remains that they are not explicit enough to give us an exact idea of the rites and their relationship with the myths.

For a sharper image of this relationship one must look to the *Brāhmaṇas*, which make up the second part of *śruti*. The scholastic tradition makes a distinction between the two types of texts within this corpus: these are the *vidhis* and the *arthavādas*. The *vidhis* (or *codanās*) are instructions regarding the gestures that are to be accomplished, the postures to be maintained, and the formulae to be recited. In the passages that fall under this heading, verbs are generally declined in the optative mode; and even when the verb is in the indicative, the statement still tends to be normative in nature. The *vidhis* are the essence, the *raison d'être*, of the *Brāhmaṇas*. But clustered around these prescriptive phrases, there is the matrix that consists of the *arthavādas*. Arguments intended to illustrate the *vidhis*, hyperboles that encourage their observance by the faithful, the *arthavādas* describe in grandiose terms, the benefits one may reap in this world and beyond, through the proper execution of the rites, rites for which they also provide, in every case, the mythic origin and the symbolic purport. Indian theorists of the sacrifice hold the *arthavādas* (and, it should be noted that if one considers their textual content, rather than their use in the rites, most *mantras* are *arthavādas*) to be concessions to fancy and emotion. According to such persons, these are rhetorical inducements, and play a subordinate role to that which is truly serious: the precept, the order to act. In the end, it is this husk of *arthavādas* that become the flesh and blood of the broader tradition: it is by virtue of these accretions, tagged as *arthavādas*, that the *Brāhmaṇas* truly stand as theological works, since it is the *arthavādas* which furnish

justifications for the rite by placing the ritual present in relationship to a mythical past, and to the perspective of an eternity which lies beyond, by relating the circumscribed act to the cosmic whole. From a theological standpoint, the essential part of the *brāhmaṇa* is in fact the *bandhu*, the 'bond'—not in the sense intended by Winternitz (1905: 164), of a bond between the act and its accompanying prayer, but rather as Oldenberg (1919: 4) correctly saw it, between act and prayer as an all-encompassing whole, and the forces that the rite sets in motion.

The *Kalpa Sūtras* are not, properly speaking, a portion of the Veda: they are counted among its appendices, or its members (*aṅgas*, as opposed to a body in its entirety). These aphorisms are, in a sense, instructions for use of the *vidhis*. They place these in their proper order, develop and complement them. Meticulous, elliptical and very dry, the *Kalpa Sūtras* are texts that are manifestly devoid of any trace of *arthavāda*.

Finally, we come to the *Pūrvā Mīmāṃsā*, with which we part ways with the world of texts related to the 'body' or 'members' of the Veda. This is the philosophical school, a *darśana* among others, which, like the other schools, belongs to the orthodox Vedic tradition. Its special feature is that it counts the Vedic word as one of the *pramāṇas*—authentic means to knowledge (on the same level, for example, as sensory perception)—and that it promulgates a theory concerning the eternity and uncreated character of the Veda. It endeavours to construct a logic of ritual and of those texts which render treatment of such. That which it especially retains from the Veda is its system of prescriptions, which, taken as a whole, constitute *dharma*.<sup>10</sup>

What does it mean then, for one who would rely on the texts we have just enumerated, to attempt to 'understand' brahmanic sacrifice?

Its primary purport may be that one ought to study the explicit system of justifications that the *arthavādas* provide and, in the spirit of the texts themselves, allow that the rites might 'mean' something other than themselves, that they may be the heterogeneous and fragmentary translation of another discourse, or the issue of some other narrative account. Or, one may see them as generating—not in some directly causal way, but through a sort of mimesis—an effect that overspreads the limits of the sacrificial

ground in such a way as to concern the world in its entirety. Why is it, in the *agnihotra* ceremonies, that the coals should be set at a distance from one another? 'It is in this way that one separates the two worlds [our world and the world beyond]. This is why the two worlds, although they lie together are, so to speak, separated'.<sup>11</sup> What are the three perforated bricks which must be piled upon one another when one builds the fire altar? They signify the earth, atmosphere and heaven, respectively (Keith, 1914: cxxvi-cxxvii). Why is it, during the *agnihotra* once again, that one is to brandish a wooden sword? This is because this sword represents the bolt thrown by Indra against Vṛtra (more exactly, it represents a portion of Indra's bolt, a third or a quarter of it).<sup>12</sup> Why must one filter the *soma*? This is because the god 'Soma had wronged his chaplain Bṛhaspati . . . he had redressed his offence . . . but a residue of the sin remained, which the gods eliminated by the *soma* [this time, the drink]; and Soma, thus cleansed and purified, became the food of the gods'.<sup>13</sup> Why must one give a name to a young child (with this name-giving itself, of course, constituting a rite)? In order to do as Prajāpati did: it happened that a boy was born out of the love of Prajāpati for his daughter, the Dawn. Once when the boy cried out, 'Prajāpati said to him: "My boy, why are you crying? Now that you have been born, you are out of peril, you are no longer suffering". He said "Yes, but I am not free from evil, for I am without a name. Give me a name". This is why one should give a name to a son who has been born, for one so delivers him from evil . . .'<sup>14</sup>

All of these examples concern portions of the rite. The same sort of explanations, however, obtain for the sacrifice in general. What does it mean to sacrifice? It is the re-enactment of the primal sacrifice of the *Puruṣa* who, by means of the creative oblation which he made from himself, set in place both the model of, and the necessary conditions for, the accomplishment of the sacrifices offered by humans. Sacrificing is thereby the means by which one can mend this primary sacrifice: the rites (especially the edification of the fire altar) accomplished by the gods, and following their example, by men, have as their goal the reconstitution of the body of *Puruṣa*-Prajāpati, who dispersed himself in his creation.<sup>15</sup>

In any event, the sacrifice taken in its entirety—like the partial rites that constitute it—is the repetition, or the consequence (or

counterpart) of mythic acts or events. Therefore, understanding the sacrifice means understanding the bond between the sacrifice *hic et nunc* and that to which it refers—this being the basis for its very existence.

But there is another possible approach to understand the sacrifice. This consists of attending to the 'vidhi' as much as to the 'arthavāda' portions of the texts, and of examining the mechanism of the sacrifice, and the operations accomplished by the men who serve it—rather than seeking the truth of the rites in their corresponding myths. This does not imply that the latter interpretation should be ruled out, or that one should limit oneself to a perspective of pure 'photo-realism'. Whatever the case, brahmanic sacrifice—regardless of whatever light, practices observed today 'in the field' might cast upon the subject—is only known to us through texts, through texts that have been drafted by poets and theologians, by theoreticians who themselves were incapable of completely dissociating description from interpretation. To put it simply, if we are to approach the rite as a mode of being and an activity rather than as a symbol, then we must pay less attention to the extended poetico-theological glosses that serve as the foundation for priestly arguments, and rather emphasize the basic phraseology of ritual—the stock expressions and simple metaphors that recur time and again, and which remain the most straightforward means for talking about the sacrifice.

Taken at this very basic level, Vedic sacrifice—as practiced by humans as well as by gods—appears first and foremost as work: *yajñó vai kárma* 'verily, the sacrifice is work', says the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*<sup>16</sup> in a passage which explains that invoking work at the moment in which one begins a sacrifice is the same as invoking the sacrifice itself. To be sure, this is work that issues in a work, a product; but it is primarily a displacement of substances and energies, and above every thing else, effort and toil. In the passages that follow, a privileged relationship associates derivatives of the root *YAJ* ('sacrifice') with those of the roots *ŚAM* and *ŚRAM* ('strive, toil after'). 'O Agni, the mortal has sacrificed, he has toiled'.<sup>17</sup> 'Come to know he who strives, who cooks, who presses (the Soma). Cause him to reach the path to heaven'.<sup>18</sup> 'He has sacrificed with sacrifices, he has tired himself with ritual toils'.<sup>19</sup> 'He among you who would think to censure the efforts of he who

has toiled ritually, may he render vain his (own) desires even if he has sweated in his (sacrificial) efforts'.<sup>20</sup> 'Busy yourselves with zeal': *suśāmi śamīdhvam*<sup>21</sup>—it is in these terms that one exhorts the *śamity*s, specialists in the ritual killing of the victim.<sup>22</sup>

Another sacrificial officiant is the *adhvaryu*, who is responsible for the most active part of the rite: he busies himself, comes and goes, follows a course—and it is noteworthy that although the *adhvaryu* (like the *śamity*) is but one officiant among many, the term *adhvara* which is related to his name designates the rite in a general sense; and both *adhvaryu* and *adhvara* are derived from *adhvan*, 'course, way'.<sup>23</sup> Is this an itinerary that leads from earth to heaven (and back)? No, it is rather circumambulation around the fires, and a regulated and ceaseless movement from one end of the sacrificial ground to the other.

This effort is exhausting, just as was the labour of the *ṛṣi*s, the Vedic seers, who so strongly desired the Universe, in the beginning, that they brought it into existence: it is because they exhausted themselves (the verb is *RIS*), says the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, that they were called *ṛṣi*s.<sup>24</sup>

Sweat testifies to the laborious fervour of the person who sacrifices: 'O Lord, you whose strength is real', says a hymn addressed to the Maruts, 'you know, to be sure, the sweat [of the man] who has taken pains [through the rite], the vow of the man who sees in depth'.<sup>25</sup> The paths traced on the sacrificial ground by the comings and goings of the officiants are sprinkled with their sweat, and this sweat is an offering, to Agni, which one pours out (the verb *HU*) as one would an oblation.<sup>26</sup>

The oblatory substance, that is sweat, appears in the course of the sacrificial endeavour. Here again, humans do no more than to imitate a prestigious exemplar: in the beginning, the sole oblation Prajāpati had to offer was his own sweat.<sup>27</sup>

The source of Prajāpati's travail is his desire, his *kāma*, to 'become manifold'. The texts of the *Brāhmaṇas* never tire of describing the manner in which this first desire took effect: this desire, which would determine the work of sacrifice (and, in the same vein, the work of sacrifice, as practiced by man, is without meaning, without legitimacy, and is not even possible unless it is rooted in a pre-existing *kāma*), is itself a form of work. More exactly, desire 'works Prajāpati over', bringing about his exhaustion (*śrama*) and

painful overheating (*tapas*).<sup>28</sup> Whatever ascetic connotations this latter term might generate (and these connotations would become increasingly enriched in the late Vedic literature), the word *tapas* designates, in its most primal sense, that heat born of *kāma* and in which *kāma* must of necessity culminate in order to trigger *karman*, that activity *par excellence* which is nothing other than the sacrifice. *Tapas* determines a transformation in the person of the sacrificer, one which allows him to move from that self-directed activity, that is desire, to the exteriorization of the act of creation (in the case of Prajāpati) which is implied by the manipulation of external objects that is implicit to sacrifice (in the case of the human sacrificer).

We will have the occasion to return to *tapas*. For the moment, let us note that the transformation we have just discussed is not a clean 'break with the past'. This is because the work for which internal heating is a preparative, that sacrificial labour which consists, as we have seen, in all sorts of comings and goings, in fatigue and the production of sweat, turns on the pivotal moment that is constituted in cooking. A great number of definitions for brahmanic sacrifice have been put forward. That of the Vedic theologians, reiterated by the *Mīmāṃsakas*, is the following: *yajña* is the surrendering (*tyāga*) of oblatory substances (*dravya*) to divinities (*devatā*) in the perspective of obtaining a certain benefit (literally, a fruit, a *phala*).<sup>29</sup> But if we attempt to describe, rather than define, the sacrifice, we come to acknowledge that it is essentially a matter of cooking: it is the preparation, sometimes through the combination, but always through the cooking, of edible substances. And in those cases in which the cooking process does not occur in the course of the sacrifice itself, we find that the substances to be manipulated have been cooked in advance.

The reason for this is a simple one: the gods (who are the principal recipients of the oblation<sup>30</sup>) like substances which have been cooked: *śṛtākāmā hi devāḥ*.<sup>31</sup> 'Cooked, verily, and not uncooked, should be the food of the gods . . .': *śṛtām vai devānām havir nāśṛtam*.<sup>32</sup> 'Cook the oblation for the gods [such that it be] well cooked'.<sup>33</sup> (After the word *PAC*, the verb most frequently employed by Vedic texts to designate cooking is *ŚRĀ*,

'cook to a turn'. *ŚRĀ* does not however lend itself as well as does *PAC* to such derivative meanings as 'mature', 'perfect (oneself)'.<sup>34</sup>

An even better characterization is 'that which is cooked, belongs to the gods'.<sup>35</sup> Such is intended for them alone, quite by definition. This is at least the opinion, according to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, of the ṛṣi Bṛhaspati Āṅgīrasa: 'that which we have heard was brought forth by the gods, that indeed is the sacrifice; that is, the cooked oblations and the prepared altar . . .'.<sup>36</sup> To eat cooked food is thus to consume, in one's meal, something intended for the gods. We can understand, under these conditions, that such could only be legitimate when that which one ate was the remainder of a meal that had in fact been served to the gods. When we read, as a matter of fact, that the leitmotiv of *śruti* and *smṛti* literature was the prescription that sacrificial leftovers were the sole *dharmic* food (see above, pp. 11ff.), we must not fail to note this caveat, provided by the *Viṣṇu Smṛti*: 'He who cooks for himself eats nothing but sin. Food consisting of sacrificial remains, this is in fact the food prescribed for people of worth'.<sup>37</sup> Here we come to understand the sense in which it must be said that just as the sacrifice is a case of cooking, so is the cooking of food itself a sacrifice. However, the latter instance is not automatic. Rather, the end of this process is the production of food intended for the gods, and this food must be served to them, through a sacrifice, before one may eat what they have left behind.

This sovereign right enjoyed by the gods to receive cooked food figures prominently in a rite which immediately follows the marriage celebration, a rite which sets the pattern for what will thenceforth be the married couple's daily routine: as soon as the new household's domestic fire (*aupāsana*) has been installed, the husband has his wife perform a sacrifice of cooked food. 'The wife husks [the rice grains]. She cooks [the rice dish called *sthālīpāka*], sprinkles it [with clarified butter], takes it off the fire, and then sacrifices it to Agni and to Agni Sviṣṭakṛt. With [the remains of] this rice dish, the husband feeds a brahmin whom he respects . . . And from that day forward . . . morning and evening he daily offers—pouring them from his hand—two oblations of rice and barley, to Agni and Prajāpati'.<sup>38</sup> Thenceforward, the active day of the couple will begin in this way: after a long series of purifications

and prayers, observed individually by each of them, the wife prepares a rice dish, and says, once it is cooked, 'it is ready'; and her husband replies 'Om'. Portions of this heap of food are successively set apart, as offerings to the gods, which are placed in the domestic fire; next are the *bali* offerings, pellets placed in hallways in the house for the 'beings'. Following this, alms for an ascetic are set aside, and then pellets intended for the ancestors. Finally, the husband and his wife may themselves eat the cooked rice.<sup>39</sup>

Several texts mention a class of sacrifices called *pākayajña*, literally 'sacrifices of cooking'. Their number, grouping and characteristic principles vary widely from text to text. At times, this term seems to designate the totality of *gṛhya* rites, 'every sacrifice that is offered into a single fire',<sup>40</sup> the domestic fire. At other times, on the contrary, seven *pākayajñas* are specified, which correspond to periodic sacrifices, observed on the eighth day of the dark lunar fortnight, at the time of the full and new moon, etc.<sup>41</sup> Certain treatises teach that these are constituted by the daily *mahāyajña* rites, with the exception of the *brahmayajña* rites.<sup>42</sup> Other sources know of four kinds of *pākayajñas*, which they sometimes analyze in detail. Thus, the *Kāthaka Gṛhya Sūtra* enumerates the *huta* (which consists of an offering poured into the domestic fire), the *ahuta* (in which the offering is placed on the ground), the *prahuta* (the offering of pellets, *pindas*, to the ancestors), and the *prāsita* (that which is 'tasted', that is, the offering poured into the stomach of a brahmin, to whom one offers a meal)—a distribution which may coincide with that of the four *mahāyajñas*.<sup>43</sup>

But whatever place the 'cooking sacrifices' may hold in the ritual ensemble, most noteworthy of all is the fact that there exist no *āmayajña*, sacrifices of raw foods to complement them. Here we must emphasize that in Vedism, in ancient brahmanism, every sacrifice is an offering of cooked food; barring this, sacrifice is the process itself of throwing food into a fire in order that it be cooked. Whatever the case, it must reach the divinities in a cooked form.

This is not a self-evident truth, and it is certainly not a universal feature of sacrifice: in India itself, there are post-Vedic *pūjās* which include uncooked offerings, such as flowers and fruits. In the ancient brahmanic religion, on the contrary, we never encounter a reference to sacrificial operations that does not employ a derivate

of one of the roots signifying 'cook': *PAC* or *ŚRĀ* (or one of their partial synonyms, such as *UṢ*, *GHR*, *TAP*, or *DAH*).

We should begin by noting that the distinction we have introduced by way of precaution, between offerings that have already been cooked and offerings that are to be cooked, is of but minor importance: this is because the offering that has already been cooked was prepared through an act that was sacrificial, over a fire which was also sacrificial. This distinction therefore only holds for the ceremonial rites, since the domestic ritual uses no other raw material than the heap of food cooked in advance, on the only fire it has at its disposal, for the *vaiśvadevas*. On the contrary, in the ceremonial ritual there are three fires: the *āhavanīya*, the 'offertory' fire in which the oblations called *homa*, mainly clarified butter, are poured;<sup>44</sup> the *gārhapatya*, the 'household' fire, whose function is to cook the offering, but also to 'perfect' the sacrificial utensils;<sup>45</sup> and, lastly, the *dakṣiṇa*, upon which is prepared the porridge intended for the officiants.<sup>46</sup> The first two fires are in fact interchangeable; or rather, the *āhavanīya* can fulfill the *gārhapatya*'s cooking functions: this multiple usage is even recommended by the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, which finds it troublesome to have to transfer sacrificial preparations from one fire to the other. 'One may do it one way or the other, as one wishes'.<sup>47</sup>

It is therefore not the order of the operations that counts: what is essential is that cooking take place at some point in the procedure.

We encounter several ways in which sacrifices may be classified, in accordance with the nature of the offering. For example, the *Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtras* distinguish five sorts of oblatory matter: plants (*auśadha*), milk (*payas*), animal victims (*paśu*), *soma*, and clarified butter (*ājya* or *ghṛta*).<sup>48</sup> The *Yajña Paribhāṣā Sūtras*, on their part, recognize two major groups: vegetal oblations, including granulated rice (*tanḍula*), flour (*piṣṭa*), the rice cake (*puroḍāśa*), rice porridge (*odana*), gruel (*yavāgu*), rice that has been ground after boiling (*prithuka*), etc. Animal oblations include milk (*payas*), curdled milk (*dadhi*), clarified butter (*ājya*), a mixture of curdled milk with boiled milk (*āmikṣā*), whey (*vājina*), the caul, or the membrane enveloping the viscera (*vapā*), the skin (*tvac*), the flesh (*māmsa*), the blood (*lohita*),<sup>49</sup> and the *paśurasa* (pith?).<sup>50</sup> (Note the absence of *soma* in this latter list.)

It is possible, albeit with a bit of difficulty, to reconcile these

two lists. What they have in common, for all intents and purposes, is the fact that they only mention elements consisting of cooked substances. This is manifestly the case for whatever is cooked by the sacrificer himself or by his officiants, before or during the ceremony. Furthermore, milk and consequently all milk products and derivate substances in which milk is blended are, as far as Indian physiology is concerned, cooked in advance.

Already in the Vedic hymns, we find celebrations of the paradox of the cooked (milk) inside the raw (cows).<sup>51</sup> How is this possible? In truth, milk is nothing other than the sperm of Agni, and all that comes from Agni is, by its very nature, cooked. Agni, as a matter of fact, creates the cow, and as is so often the case in Vedic mythology, comes to desire his creation: he unites with her and his sperm becomes milk: 'That is why, although the cow is raw, the milk in her is cooked; for it is the sperm of Agni. And this is also why it is always white [like sperm] whether the cow be black or red, and why it shines like fire, for it is the sperm of Agni. This is why it is warm when one milks it out; for it is the sperm of Agni'.<sup>52</sup>

The body of the victim itself, in the case of animal sacrifice, is, contrariwise, the object of an intensified cooking process. While the victim is still standing, it is made to undergo a simulated or approximal cooking: it is tied while still alive, to the sacrificial post, and the officiant called the *āgnīdhra*, the 'igniter', besmears it with butter before waving a firebrand or torch over it three times in succession.<sup>53</sup> And, after the animal has been put to death, an offering must be made, of a kind of pudding, which will 'close the wound', following which the officiant is asked as to who has put the victim to death (the *śamitṛ*): 'Is the oblation cooked?'<sup>54</sup> The *śamitṛ* takes care that everything be cooked inside the victim, as a stanza of the *Ṛk Samhitā*, preserved as a ritual formula in the horse sacrifice, shows us: 'The undigested foods which are in its stomach and which he exhales, the odour of his raw flesh—may the *śamitṛ*s prepare all of this carefully, may they cook the sacrificial victim to a turn'.<sup>55</sup> The very odour of the cooked food, the *pakvagandha*, is a constituent part of the sacrificed animal. In the *āsvamedha*, the dismembered victim sates the hunger of every creature: while the serpents feed on the odour of its blood, the birds receive the odour of the cooked flesh as their portion.<sup>56</sup>

One must be prepared for everything. For instance, in the rite by which a sterile cow is put to death, what is to be done if, in the process of dismembering her, one perceives that she is carrying a foetus? Expose the foetus in a tree? Throw it in the water? Bury it under a molehill? Better than any of these solutions is to find a means of transforming this mass, which is not an oblation in the proper sense of the word (it is *abuta*), into something not completely excluded from the sacrifice. For this, one must cook this foetus and offer it on a fire kindled from the *āhavanīya* fire—but not on the *āhavanīya* itself—and present it, not to some individual god, but to those beings who constitute, among the gods, a unit, a 'mass' or the masses (the divine *viś*); that is, to the Maruts, the 'eaters of that which is not [truly] an oblation' (*abuta-ad*).<sup>57</sup>

Are there no exceptions? If, when making an offering to the gods, the necessary cereal grains are lacking for the domestic ritual, one may use fruits or leaves, on the condition that they be cooked. Or one may use water, pure and simple.<sup>58</sup> The text does not stipulate that this water, too, be 'cooked'. But it is worthy of note that this final recourse is a teaching offered *ad hoc* by an authority on the subject, a mythic character significantly named 'Cooked Oblation', Pākayajña, the son of Iḍā (the domestic rite, as one can see, is the 'son' of the ceremonial rite).

The real problem lies with *soma*. While it is the case that *soma* is subjected to all kinds of procedures (its stems are sorted, measured, set to soak, pressed out; the juice is filtered, decanted, etc.), it is never cooked. Thus, the gods' favourite delicacy, upon which they gorge themselves and through which they are transported outside of themselves, is a raw substance. What is more, they do so together with the human guests who are invited to these grandiose and complex ceremonies, ceremonies which are the archetype of every sacrifice, and which are the subject of the most extended of all descriptions found in the treatises, and the most exalted of invocations in the hymns. The theologians are aware of the problems this presents: 'Indra slew Vṛtra. He caved in his skull and made from it a wooden trough through which the *soma* flowed . . . He thought, "shall I make an offering or not? . . . If I offer, this would be a raw offering; if I do not offer, then I disturb the sacrifice". He decided to make an offering. Agni said "You should not offer by pouring into me that which is raw". He mixed

it with parched grains and when it became cooked, he offered it.<sup>59</sup> Mixed together with a cooked substance—including milk—*soma* is thus considered to be cooked. But this practice is not always observed in full, and so falls short of the ideal. In the *soma* sacrifice, the question in fact boils down to knowing whether *soma* is the true oblatory material, or at least whether it is nothing more than such. Basically, *soma*, Soma, is a god. Shall we then say, along with Hegel (1952: 498ff.), that every offering, every victim, is the image of god, and that it is the god who is put to death in the sacrifice?<sup>60</sup> Indeed—but in the case of *soma*, this is not a question of some a posteriori identification with an indistinct divinity: from the outset, the *soma* plant one presses, as well as the *soma* drink quaffed by the gods and brahmins is the god Soma, the celestial *soma*, who is possessed of a mythology all his own.<sup>61</sup> Thus when we look at the Vedic hymns, we find that the *soma* sacrifices in which *soma* is offered also figure as celebrations of the god Soma, and even as offerings to this god. We cannot stress this point enough: the rite and the *mantras* lead us to see these stems as much more than some provisional facsimile of the god. They are the god himself—and Soma is a royal god, the king of the brahmins.<sup>62</sup> In the *soma* sacrifice, the consumption of *soma* as an offering is but the final moment of a long and extremely complicated sequence of events in which king Soma is a guest who is called upon in procession, and who is brought back in a chariot to a sacrifice in which he is welcomed according to the rules of hospitality; that is, he is offered food which has, of course, been cooked.<sup>63</sup> A strange but nonetheless important stage in these proceedings is the tractations through which the officiant goes to buy the *soma* from an owner who will only consent to part with it after a sometimes violent bargaining session, and who demands as payment a one year-old brown cow (cf. Gonda 1962: 184). This rite is the prototype of every purchase: 'because one bargains over the king [Soma], everything is for sale in this world'.<sup>64</sup> And if the *soma* is absorbed raw, it can only take its full effect when the consumer himself has already been cooked: 'he whose body has not been heated, the raw creature, does not attain to this [effect of the *soma* drink]; only creatures cooked to a turn . . .'.<sup>65</sup>

*Soma* is an oblation that is absorbed raw, a case which holds only because *soma* /Soma is something more than a mere oblation.

What follows is the treatment of cooked oblations that, inasmuch as they are not destroyed, are not consumed. This we find in the grandiose rite called the *agnicayana*. In addition to those three fires which, though indispensable to the performance of ceremonial rites, burn at ground level in the sacrificial space, the *Brāhmanas* and *Śrauta Sūtras* also introduce a 'piled up' fire; that is, a fire that burns atop a brick altar. Each of the five superimposed layers stands for a season, and the entire edifice for the year as a whole: more exactly, it is through the edification of the altar that one orders the chaotic mass of pre-sacrificial time into a regulated succession of distinct and recurring moments. Without expanding on the symbolism of the continuous and the discontinuous that is at play here (cf. Eggeling 1897: xviii–xix; and Silburn 1955: 64f.), or addressing the question of the final destination of the fire that is ignited and placed on this altar, let us simply note that the construction of the edifice is a sacrifice in itself, one in which the sacrificial substance consists of bricks, and whose recipient is the fire itself. The rite celebrated by humans today reproduces that which the gods celebrated in the beginning. Prajāpati has scattered himself in his creation, and the problem now is of healing him—that is, of reassembling him by means of oblations. 'Now, every oblation the gods offered him [while he was damaged] in the fire was transformed into a cooked brick and penetrated into him. And it is because they were made out of that which was offered as an oblation [*ista*], that these are bricks [*istakās*]. This is why one cooks bricks in the fire, because these are thus oblations that we offer'.<sup>66</sup> (It is the sacrificer who cooks these bricks; however, the first, called the *aśādḥā*, 'invincible', which is of the same length as the sacrificer's foot, is prepared by his principal wife, his *mahiṣī*—just as in the domestic ritual, it is the sacrificer's *patnī* who prepares the oblatory mass of food in the morning).

The heads of five sacrificial victims—of a man, horse, bull, ram and a goat—are to be placed at the base of the altar. What happens to these victims' lower bodies? They are thrown into the same water that is combined with earth in order to make the bricks. The animals are thus cooked by extension, in the water of their dissolution.<sup>67</sup> Use is also made of clods of raw clay. Since this constitutes an offering, the theologians find themselves obliged to account for this anomaly: 'How can they be heaped up, as if they were cooked



to a turn? These clods are the vital fluid. Now, the vital fluid is naturally cooked. Moreover, all that comes into contact with Agni Vaiśvānara becomes by that very fact cooked, well cooked, [fit for being] heaped up'.<sup>68</sup> Even if it does not enlighten us on those special qualities by virtue of which these clods are considered cooked even as they remain raw, this text at least reinforces the operative principle according to which all that is oblatory must be cooked. Likewise, as we have seen, that which is cooked belongs to the gods: this is why, in the *pravargya* rite, one cooks the various sacrificial vessels.<sup>69</sup> This cooking process may be repeated. Such is the case with the pan called the *ukhā*, which is at the same time a utensil and an offering: the clay with which it is fashioned is first obtained by mixing earth together with water in which the sap of the *palāśa* tree has been boiled.<sup>70</sup> One cooks this clay by placing it in a hole in the ground: this oven is the womb and the *ukhā* the embryo. If it is true that gestation is identified with the cooking process, it is also true—as we will discuss in due course—that cooking is reciprocally described as an instance of gestation.<sup>71</sup>

We must count, among the substances qualified as offerings, the body that is offered on the funeral pyre. The corpse is *āhuta*, given in oblation, to Agni.<sup>72</sup> For sure, the cremation is also, in a certain sense, a sacrifice. The crematory fire is placed between the deceased's three sacrificial fires (or, according to other sources, between three fires taken from his sacrificial fires: see Oldenberg 1903: 491). This new fire is itself transformed into a sacrificial fire by the *pretāgnihotra*, the mortuary *agnihotra*, a rite observed by the family of the deceased (cf. Caland 1896: 86): at this point, it is fit to receive offerings. But the sacrifice, that is, the cremation calls for a special strategy. The sacrificer is not, as a matter of fact, represented by the victim here: he is himself the victim. And the function of the rite is not, in this context, to effect the victim's assimilation by the god, as is the case in the other sacrifices. This is rather a matter of both feeding the god (Agni)—a process quite compatible with the consumption by fire of the corpse-offering—and of preserving the integrity of the dead person, who is not to be devoured, but rather to be prepared for the world beyond, that world to which the crematory fire will

convey him. These questions are raised—and resolved—in the hymn of *RS* 10.16 (cf. Renou 1965): because a single sacrificial body will be subjected to two treatments and promised to two incompatible fates, the request (this hymn is a prayer) is made to Agni to double himself into the fires called *kravyāda* ('devourer of raw flesh') and *Jātavedas*<sup>73</sup>—this latter being the 'knower of or known by whatever is born', cooking and transporting his oblations. In order that the cremation be an oblation, and not a destruction, it is necessary that the body, apparently consumed on the spot, be cooked by that fire and be conveyed, as such, to the other world. The regulation of this cooking and this transfer are to be effected by *Jātavedas* alone, whose task it is thereby to bar the way to the voracious impetuosity of the crematory fire.<sup>74</sup>

The *Jātavedas* fire is nothing other than the sacrificial fire, the counter-fire opposed to the crematory fire: 'O Agni, ward off the fire that devours raw flesh, drive away the fire that eats corpses, convey [here] the fire that sacrifices for the gods'.<sup>75</sup> In order to blunt the devouring fire's attack, and to keep it from destroying that portion from the person of the deceased which is to be preserved, one offers it a male goat which is put to death at the time of the funeral ceremonies.<sup>76</sup> More importantly, one must feed it with the fat and the marrow of a cow called the *anustaraṇī*, which envelops the corpse like a second skin.<sup>77</sup> Saved by the sacrificial fire, cooked and maintained intact, the body made oblation undergoes a complex transformation at the end of which it is at once offered to the ancestors, scattered throughout the universe, conveyed to the abode of 'beings whose acts are good', and lastly, reconstituted and continued through its progeny.<sup>78</sup> The success of this procedure is the hallmark of a happy final passage from life. We see a prefiguration of this in the cooking of the *brahmaudana*, the rice porridge which constitutes a part of the payment received by brahmins in the *soma* sacrifices: well-cooked, *pakva* rice is the image of the body cooked by the *Jātavedas* fire at the time of the cremation. The hymn in *Atharva Samhitā* 12.3 goes so far as to say that the bodies of the sacrificer and his wife shall—even as the crematory fire consumes their corpses—rise up from this porridge to attain the kingdom of Yama, when they follow the rivers of clarified butter that flow up to heaven.<sup>79</sup>

The funerary ritual is the *samskāra par excellence*. This is the

meaning of the term when it is not further qualified. This term which has the proper sense of 'perfecting' designates, in the brahmanic tradition, those rites that chart out an individual's religious life history, and which thereby transform him, so as to render him capable of acceding to a new phase of existence. So it is with the initiation ceremony (*upanayana*), a second birth which renders he who has passed through it, fit to undertake the study of the Veda; another example is marriage, which must be defined as that rite by which the husband and wife become qualified (*adhikṛta*) to offer sacrifices. What then does the *samskāra* of the funerary rites—that is, in basic terms, the transformation, through cooking, of the corpse into an oblatory substance—prepare one for? For the future life, in the varied forms mentioned in the hymn of *Rk Samhitā* 10.16. But even if we limit our attention to what occurs in this world, we cannot help but note that cremation is a *samskāra* in the sense that it is an act that is preliminary and preparatory to a sacrifice. The bones that remain, once the flesh has been reduced to ashes, are spread over a spot consecrated for a *haviryajña* (official sacrifice), by virtue of which this dispersion is precisely termed *haviryajñanivāpa*: these are spread out because it is 'an unlimited space' that one desires for the dead (cf. Renou 1954: 174f.).

Cooked in the sense that it constitutes an offering on the funeral pyre, the body of the sacrificer undergoes metaphorical cooking processes throughout his entire life.

In order that he might be fit to perform a sacrifice, the sacrificer must strip himself of his profane body and give himself a sacrificial body. This operation is effected through *dikṣā*, 'consecration'. We know that *dikṣā*, in its most elaborate form, simulates a period of gestation: the man who undergoes it adopts the posture of a foetus; the hut in which he is enclosed, in darkness and silence, is like a womb to him. And, throughout the period of *dikṣā*, he eats as little as possible, reducing his activity and even movement to a bare minimum, abstaining from all that would identify him as an adult, social being. This consists, most appreciably, in the avoidance of any sexual relations with his wife, even when she is, as is often the case, seated by his side, and undergoing the same ordeal as he. The twofold transformation which consists, for the sacrificer, of disengaging himself from his normal body and generating a new body would not be possible without the effects of heat: in

fact, *dikṣā* is constantly associated, if not identified, with *tapas*, a polysemic term designating both the painful burning of violent asceticism (or desire) and the warmth so propitious to the growth of an embryo.<sup>80</sup>

As for the term *dikṣā* itself, the most satisfactory etymological analysis is one that takes it to be a desiderative derivative of *DAH*, 'burn' (cf. Mayrhofer 1957: s.v. *dikṣate*). Such an interpretation, of the maturation of the sacrificial foetus as the result of an incineration, or more exactly, of a cooking process, may be found in texts such as the following: 'The womb of the sacrifice is, in truth, the fire, and the *dikṣita* [the man who undergoes *dikṣā*] is the embryo'.<sup>81</sup> 'When one undergoes *dikṣā*, one verily casts his being like a seed into the womb that is this fire-pot. Once consecrated, one prepares this space for himself and one is born into a world one has made by oneself. This is why it is said: "the man is born into a world that is made [by himself]".<sup>82</sup>

The sacrificial body thus arises from a new space created by its own presence, by the work that is that presence. What is the reason for this metaphorical cooking of the sacrificer, which precedes the actual cooking of the offering? The fact is that the sacrificer's body is the genuine oblation, and that the animal or vegetal offering, whose cooking and destruction constitute the sacrifice in the strict sense of the word, is but a substitute for the real oblation. The entire sacrificial strategy consists of making the sole offering that really counts—that of one's own person—and then of taking that body back again after having produced a substitute for it.<sup>83</sup> In a certain sense, then, *dikṣā* is a preparatory phase of the sacrifice. In another sense, it is its most essential phase: properly speaking, the sacrifice consists of carrying through, to its final conclusion, the offering of a surrogate victim, whereas *dikṣā* consists of a rough outline (but only a rough one) of the offering of the real victim. Moreover, it is also possible for the sacrificer to be represented, alone or together with his wife, as an effigy having the form of a bundle of *darbha* grass, an effigy which itself figures among the substances, cooked or about to be cooked, that are to be offered.<sup>84</sup>

In its role as a preparation for the sacrificial act, *dikṣā*, the (quasi-) metaphorical cooking of the sacrificer, serves as an explanatory point of reference for all other preparations. So it is with marriage: the marriage (*vivāha*) ceremony is counted among the

*samskāras*, the 'perfectings' or rites of initiation, but it may also be interpreted as a *yajña*, a sacrifice in which the sacrificer is the father of the girl, and the bride the victim, the *paśu*, while the groom, the *vara*, plays the role of the divinity.<sup>85</sup>

According to whether one considers marriage to be a *samskāra* or a *yajña*, the bride is either its subject or its object. In both cases, she can only have access to the rite that will render her *samskṛtā*, 'brought to perfection'—a term that might also be translated by 'well-cooked'—through a preparation that is explicitly designated as a *dīkṣā*: the entire premarital life of a girl is a long *dīkṣā*.<sup>86</sup>

Here, we must take note of a remarkable complementarity: throughout the period in which one is undergoing *dīkṣā*, that is, the period in which one is oneself the object of a cooking process, one is prohibited from cooking, and especially from cooking any sacrificial food other than one's own person. This is true in the case of *dīkṣā* proper, but may also be seen in those features which characterize the different stages (*āśramas*) that theoretically constitute the life history of a 'twice born' individual.

After having lived a life consecrated to such social activities as the acquisition of wealth, sacrifice and procreation, we know that the 'twice born' 'leaves for the forest': he turns himself into a *vānaprastha*, a hermit. Without making a complete break from the social life, he nevertheless lives away from the village and, by the simple fact that he has separated himself from its material products, consecrates himself to a much more internalized form of religion. In truth, the *vānaprastha* stage is a kind of pale image of the final stage (which is, of course, optional, and reserved for a very limited elite), that of 'renunciation'. The *vānaprasthas* are divided into two categories: those who are closer to the householder status they have just left behind, and those who are closer to the renunciant status towards which they are tending. Now it happens that among the former, we may distinguish five classes of 'cookers', and among the latter, five classes of 'non-cookers'.<sup>87</sup>

The contrast drawn between cooks and non-cooks is moreover applied to all 'twice-born' persons:<sup>88</sup> among the cooks are householders and those hermits who cook; among the non-

cooks are students and ascetics—that is, 'twice-born' persons in the initial and final phases of life. (We should recall that brahmanic pupils, who are obliged to observe absolute chastity, do not have any fire of their own: in cooking as well as sacrifice, they live, in a sense, by proxy, and are dependent on their teacher's fire).

The significance of this line of demarcation becomes clear when we consider the way of life and status of 'total renunciants', *sannyāsins*. Whereas the hermit may continue to lead a family life, one that allows him to enjoy a limited social life and that, consequently, enables him, if he would so desire, to perform certain sacrifices, the *sannyāsīn* on the other hand is a loner, and quite often, a wanderer. What is it that he renounces? From what does he detach himself in his dispassion (*vairāgya*)? He leaves the world of men to free himself from activity, and from sacrifice which is activity *par excellence*. His goal, as we know, is not to receive heaven or a good reincarnation as a reward for his good acts. His goal is liberation, *mokṣa*, the definitive exhaustion of the consequences of past acts, and an escape from the cycle of rebirths. But it is impossible to truly escape from sacrifice: the best one can do is to reorient oneself in relation to it, to reverse (or subvert?) the relational orientation established by it. The complex ceremony which marks one's entry into 'renunciation' consists of allowing one's sacrificial fires to extinguish after having incinerated one's sacrificial utensils, as an ultimate fuel source, in a final oblation.<sup>89</sup> One's fires are not abolished for all this: they are rather internalized, inhaled; they are made to 'mount back' into oneself (*samāropanā*), such that the renouncer's own person thenceforth becomes at once the seat of, and the raw material for, a burning up, a permanent oblation, offered upon that internal flame that is the Veda.<sup>90</sup> We can see that the renouncer settles down at the *dīkṣā* stage of sacrifice: his non-sacrifice is an endless *dīkṣā*. For the *dīkṣita* proper, the internal sacrificial cooking process is separate from the act of cooking. As for the renunciant, who is often designated as a *tapasvin*, as 'one who heats himself up', he eschews cooking, since by definition, he has in a sense done away with his external fires. Constantly performing the essential sacrifice, the cooking of the self, he renders useless and impossible the cooking of any substitute.

Furthermore, because he is cooked from the inside while still alive, the *samnyāsin* has no need of being cooked after his death: he is therefore not burned, but buried.<sup>91</sup> The funerary arrangements for 'men of the world' are different from those reserved for 'renouncers'. They have given their lives a different orientation; therefore, their *post mortem* fates carry them in different directions. But, more than this and most especially, they are not made of the same oblatory stuff: ordinary men, like animal victims, are first put to death and then offered into the flames that cook them and carry them up to the world of the gods. As for the renunciants, they begin by cooking themselves. But by internalizing their fires, they have also abolished the possibility of being borne upwards to a divinity located outside of themselves. By establishing themselves as offerings from the outset, and by adhering to this role down to the very end, they have transformed their own persons, their *ātman*s identified with the universal Self, into their divinity: they are *ātma-yajins*. To 'renounce', therefore, is to raise one's *tapas* to that temperature at which a fusion occurs between the divinity, sacrificer and victim—and this is both the climax and final death of a sacrifice.

This then, is 'cooking the world'. This world, cooked by the brahmin, is the 'created' world which he generates and organizes around himself in the sacrifice. But we should not contrast the world cooked by sacrificial activity to some raw and natural world that might have preceded it. For in the final analysis, everything is already cooked such that all that remains is to re-cook it. The sacrificial fire fed by the brahmin does nothing other than to redouble the activity of the sun, the visible image of the *brahman*: "That [sun] cooks everything in this world, by means of the days and the nights, the fortnights, months, seasons and years. And this [Agni] cooks what has been cooked by that [sun]: "he is the cooker of that which has been cooked," said Bhāradvāja of Agni, for he cooks what has been cooked."<sup>92</sup>

## APPENDIX I

If we take the *yajña* to be a mode for work, and if we suggest that the sacrifice be studied as a form of work and as the organization of matter and energy, what then becomes of the specificity of the rite? How are we to continue to distinguish the sacred from the profane, or, more exactly, the sacrificial from the non-sacrificial?

We will begin by stating that the specificity of the work that is the sacrifice turns on the fact that it takes place on the sacrificial ground, and that the words that are pronounced (or that are suppressed) in it are Vedic *mantras*.

In addition, we must note the following:

1. It is quite true, by all accounts, that the difference between sacrificial activity and *laukika* activity—which is very real, since in order to enter and leave a sacrifice, it is necessary that one observe rites of passage—is not of such an order as to impede the tendency to relate every aspect of life to the sacrifice. As with the act of creation, so the acts that prolong its existence—love, war, productive work, hunting, and the distribution of economic activities—are modelled after the sacrifice, are valorized to the extent that they constitute sacrifices. The ideal of making a sacrifice of one's life, of establishing between oneself and others relationships as regulated and, at the same time, as charged with symbols as those which are founded on the sacrifice, is a brahmanic *leitmotiv*. When the potter shapes a lump of clay, he does so not only in order to make a living by selling the pot he makes; it is also to remain faithful to his potter's *dharma* and to strengthen, in so doing, the *dharma* of the world.
2. Alongside the explicit symbolism of the sacrificial act (of giving the gods food to eat, of supporting them in their battle against the *Asuras* and *rakṣas*, of enabling them to bestow upon the sacrificer the benefits he desires), there exists another more immediate and less perceptible symbolism. The comings and goings, the cooking processes, the dismemberments, the filterings and pressings, the stackings, the adjustments, the divisions and reintegrations, all of these elementary acts into which the sacrifice may be decomposed are—independent of the particular 'translation' the texts accord to them—a reflection of *ṛta* itself. The *ṛta* they represent, from the very start, and

which they thereby promote, is nothing other than the *ṛta* which links together, in a very detailed way, each and every part of the universe.

3. In the rite, there is neither any common measure for, nor any immediate relationship between, the acts one performs and the consequences these acts are expected to produce. It is rather the contrary, since to perform a sacrifice is also to put it to death. It is therefore a power 'without precedent', *apūrva*, which brings about the ripening of the fruits of that act, even when the latter has been exhausted. Because there is no visible interface between an endeavour and the result to which one aspires in making that endeavour, there need be no verification of it in the real world. One, thus, never finds the need to adapt oneself, to take impromptu decisions, or to entertain the idea of a compromise. If there exists a strategy for the sacrifice as a whole, the individual procedures offer no leeway for innovative tactics. The schema is thus a pre-established one: one has only to conform to it with an optimal exactitude. If one commits an error in the procedure, it suffices to perform compensatory rites, which are also provided for in advance. The question is never posed, as in possession rites, for example, whether or not the god will come. It is true, in rites of possession, that a god's failure to appear is ascribed to errors that must have been committed by the men who invoked it. But in this case, the success or failure of the undertaking are immediately manifested. In Vedic sacrifice, when all the conditions for the rite have been fulfilled, the god cannot help but accept one's offering, and the rite cannot help but produce its intended effects. On the other hand, however, these effects are never felt in an immediate way. The distance between the sacrificial act and its consequence prohibits and renders useless all feedback; and it is by virtue of this very quality that the sacrifice is an autonomous machine, a closed system. The acts that constitute it are so many schemata of acts; and in this way, while they are radically different from profane acts, which are prone to failure, ambiguity, and meanings that change even as they are being performed, they nevertheless stand as models for profane acts.

Of course, the model is not simpler than its applications. The ideal and artificial conditions under which it functions allow for it

to be, contrariwise, more complex than its various 'realizations'. The difference between profane work and the work of the rite appears to us to be of the same order as that obtaining between purely discursive language and rhetorical 'figures of speech'. The principle that stands as the foundation for figures of poetic discourse, according to theorists, is *vaicitrya*, 'diversity-strangeness', *bhāṅgi*, a 'break', or *vakrokti*, 'bent speech' (cf. Renou 1947: 138f.). In the same way that a figure of speech is a case of deferred discourse, in the sense that the effects of this discourse are not exhausted in the account which semantic analysis might make of it, so it is that the rite is a case of deferred work in the sense that there is a break, or at least an interval, which cannot be overcome unless one has recourse to some tortuous path that allows passage between an act and its result.

## APPENDIX II

The 'modern' contrast between *pakkā* and *kaccā* only partially covers the ancient contrast of *pakva* (*śṛta*), and *āma*. First of all, regarding the formation of the former pair, if it is the case that the Hindi term *pakkā* is an extension of the Sanskrit *pakva*, it must nevertheless be noted that *kaccā* has no etymology (it is in this light that one must interpret the silence of Turner [1963: 2:129, no. 2613], who cites, under the heading of *kaccā*, a series of modern Indo-Aryan forms corresponding to the Hindi *kaccā* but nothing belonging to an earlier stage of the language which might allow one to glimpse the term's origin).

From a semantic perspective, the Sanskrit *āma* purely and simply means 'raw' and 'non-ripe' in all the direct and metaphorical senses these terms can bear, in the same way as *pakva* means 'cooked', 'ripe', 'digested' (*śṛta* only means 'cooked'). The Hindi *kaccā*, on the other hand, while it means 'raw', also means 'rough, crude' (so, for example, a dirt road is called *kaccā* in contrast to a paved or cobbled street), and may even be used to qualify food that is cooked, but only in a minimal fashion. Rice that has merely been cooked in water, while *pakva* in Sanskrit India, is *kaccā* in Hindi-speaking India. In contrast to brahmanic India's binary opposition between raw and cooked, we find in Hinduism the threefold series of raw/*kaccā* cooked/*pakkā* cooked, of which the first two members of the series may be qualified by the single term of *kaccā*. This is a series that

should be presented in the order *raw-pakkā-kaccā* when we consider it, not in terms of an increasing degree of complexity in food preparation, but rather in terms of fragility—that is, in the tendency for food to become tainted by, and then to transmit the pollution arising from, those who manipulate or eat it. To the differentiations existing in the linguistic division of reality there correspond differences in attitudes and in doctrinal justifications for rules. In brahmanic India, sacrificial food is contrasted to non-sacrificial food. What we are attempting to show here is that all sacrificial food is cooked, and by extension, all that is implied in the sacrifice is also cooked. Furthermore, it is our hypothesis that, reciprocally, all that is raw falls short of, or extends beyond, the sacrifice. Of course, in India's perennial religious perspective (and even, as we suggest at the end of this study, in its renunciant perspective), that which is sacrificial, 'worthy of sacrifice' (*yajñiya*), has a higher value and requires greater precaution and reverence in its manipulation, than that which is not sacrificial. In Hinduism as we know it today, on the other hand, the criteria have been revised: that which is *pakkā* is more elaborately prepared than that which is *kaccā*. What is *pakkā* is therefore more precious, or 'better' than that what is *kaccā*. But *pakkā* food, being protected, even sanctified by the (clarified) butter with which it is cooked, or by other bovine products contained in it, is less fragile than *kaccā* food, less exposed to pollution and less apt to pollute. The precautions entailed in its preparation are thereby less strict, and the selection of table-companions and donors less severe, when the food served is 'perfected' rather than 'crudely cooked'. (See on this point the data assembled by Dumont 1966: 182f.). It appears then, that in Hindu India, food becomes disclosive of 'social' relationships—relationships founded upon the purity of donors and eaters—from the moment in which it receives a minimal modicum of socialization, one that is effected by its simple transformation through direct or indirect contact with fire. It is thus exonerated from this role as soon as (more than merely being socialized) it is in fact ritualized, with milk products. Is it then possible to produce an exact reckoning of the historical moment in which the threefold Hindu series replaced the brahmanical binary opposition. The *dharma sūtras* (cf. especially *Baudhāyana* 1.6.1ff.) are characterized by a disconcerting complexity in their alimentary prescriptions (this complexity may be especially attributed to the fact that the rules of *āpaddharma*, of mitigated *dharma* for crisis situations, as well as local

rules, are jumbled together with the strict rules of foundational *dharma*, with the boundaries between them being fuzzily defined). It is clear, nevertheless, on the point that concerns us, that the *dharma sūtras* place themselves squarely on the brahmanical side of the question: 'Honey, uncooked grain, game, land, roots, fruit, the promise of safekeeping, a pasture, a house, forage for a draft-ox: all of these things may be accepted [by a brahmin], even from the hands of an *ugra* (the son of a *ṣatriya* and a *śūdra* woman)'. And, in perfect contrast to the *kaccā* status of Hinduism, we find the passage: 'Brahmin householders may accept raw food or a small quantity of unspiced boiled food from an *ugra*' (*BaudhDhS* 1.6.1, 3). *Manu* 4.223 speaks in similar terms: 'The brahmin who knows the law ought not to eat the cooked food offered him by a *śūdra* who does not perform *śrāddha* rites. But if he has nothing else to subsist on, he may accept raw food to hold out for a day and a night'.

*nādyāc chūdrasya pakvānam vidvān āśrāddhino dvijah  
ādādītāmam evāsmād avrttāv ekarātrikam.*

Kullūka, in his commentary, emphasizes the fact that, that which is tolerated for *āma* food is prohibited for *pakva* food.

## The Pierced Brick: On the Play between Fullness and Emptiness in Brahmanic India

It is proper . . . to fill up the tank . . . looking is free, for the time being and until the rules change, and one never knows. The theologians ask one another: what do the hidden meanings of the sacred texts conceal?

Julio Cortazar, *The Book of Manuel*.

### Annapūrṇā

Full of food: before becoming the name of a Himalayan peak, Annapūrṇā was the name of a goddess, the terrible Durgā. It is nevertheless a happy circumstance<sup>1</sup> that toponymy should have chosen a word that at once proclaims and acclaims plenitude to evoke the body of such a formidable mass of earth. Earth and fullness are two ways by which a being can be represented. In Vedic Sanskrit, one of the names for the earth is *bhūman*, a neuter form with the accent on the first syllable; however, this same word, when it is in its masculine form with the accent on the final syllable, takes on the sense of 'multiplicity' and, especially, of 'limitless abundance'. This homonymy is not a fortuitous one: *bhūman*, 'earth', and *bhūmán*, 'abundance', are both derived from the root *bhū*, 'to be'.

To be is to be like the earth: compact. Accumulation, culmination, completion, satisfaction—such are the constant themes of the Vedic hymns, taken up over and again in the *Brāhmanas*. In a world that is full of holes, we must plug up every hole, feeding the gods, the manes, the indeterminate beings that prowl the

grounds around our houses, and whoever appears at the door as our guest; we must feed the fire before it devours us, and so stave off a hunger that is nothing less than death itself. One of the most common among the many terms used to signify 'gift' in Vedic Sanskrit is *pūr̥ti*, which literally means 'filling'. May the earth therefore be filled, 'she upon whom are found food, rice and barley . . . and who is fattened by the rains';<sup>2</sup> may there be 'an abundance of food, an abundance of humans, an abundance of cattle';<sup>3</sup> may villages touch one another, and roads converge.<sup>4</sup> May the generations follow on each other, 'in a line, without a break';<sup>5</sup> and may the earth be without holes: 'That which I dig out of you, O earth, may that, indeed, promptly grow back'.<sup>6</sup> And, in order that this might be the case, may my sacrifice, above all else, be continuous and without a tear. One unfolds and spreads out a sacrifice, and when the sacrificial fabric rips, then one must mend it—and thus follow the example of the gods who instituted the *dhāyās*, the 'inserted verses' they recite whenever they discover a hole, a *chidra*, in the sacrifice they are celebrating. These interpolated verses are the stitches, the *syūmans*, the mends in this canvas.<sup>7</sup> One must bind the ceremony that constitutes the introduction to the sacrifice together with that which closes it; and to this end, one keeps the leftovers of the first oblation and mixes these together with those of the last, while repeating, in the conclusion of the sacrifice, the verses recited in its opening phase.<sup>8</sup>

The continuity of the sacrifice is necessary to the fullness of the world. A sacrifice without interruptions, a world without faults—such are the constituents of *ṛta*, of the 'exact ordering'. Proper procedure in the sacrifice is at once, the image of and the motor for, the harmonious alternation between days and nights, the succession of the seasons, the timely arrival of the rains, and an ordered encounter between the eaters and the eaten.<sup>9</sup> As a system composed of interlocking systems, *ṛta* has for its principal components the cosmic order, ritual efficacy and truth-conceived as adequation.<sup>10</sup> Now, as the governing principle of Vedic ideology, *ṛta* is moreover defined as an absence of deficiency: the term derives from the same root as the adverb *aram*, 'sufficiency'.

The quest for continuity must not, however, degenerate into a state of confusion, and it is true that *ṛta* is as much threatened by the elements or humans (or gods) of one sphere overstepping their

bounds into a neighbouring sphere, as it is by some break in the cycle or the failure to fulfil one's duties. Whenever such boundaries are in danger of becoming blurred, a break of sorts may be in order. The demarcating function of empty space is clearly brought to the fore in the role accorded to the *antarikṣa*, the intermediate space that separates heaven from earth. Just as the coherency of the cosmos requires that heaven be set apart from earth, so too, on the sacrificial ground, it is important that the 'domestic' *gārhapatya* fire be placed at a certain distance from the 'offertory' *āhavanīya* fire. But it does not follow from this that such a delimiting space, once it has been so set in place, need come to constitute some inviolable threshold. So it is that this space comes to be bridged, in turn, in the sacrificial layout, by the *dhiṣṇyas*, that is, those secondary fires that blaze the way between the 'domestic' fire representing the earth and the 'offertory' fire representing heaven, fires that are so placed in order 'to impede the discontinuity of the sacrifice', *kārmaṇa evānantarayāya*.<sup>11</sup>

Of such an order, then, is *ṛta*, this differentiated plenitude. The opposite of *ṛta* is *nirṛti*, 'disorder', 'disorganization'.<sup>12</sup> *Nirṛti* finds its place in the empty spaces, the gaps and chasms, the filling in of which, the ritual work takes as its eternal task. It is also evil which is to be fought or, better yet, to be wanded off. At the same time, it is a feminine divinity who must be propitiated, first by recognizing her in the places in which she is found, in hollow spaces and cracks, and then by worshipping her with oblations poured into those orifices: 'O Terrible One, you into whose mouth I pour my oblation . . . I recognize you everywhere as *Nirṛti* . . . come, eat this food.'<sup>13</sup> When one wishes to attain prominence among one's own people, one should set one's offering upon a hump in the ground. But when one wishes to employ black magic to bring ill fortune down upon another, one should offer one's oblation into a hole, into some natural cavity in the earth. Naturally occurring hollows and cracks, the dwellings of *Nirṛti*, are the sign, the 'colour' (*varṇa*) of an evil taken on by the earth: in the beginning, the god Indra was guilty of the theoretically inexpiable crime of having murdered a brahmin, Viśvarūpa, the 'omni-formed' chaplain of the gods. He succeeds in discharging a third of his sin from himself on to the earth, and the holes, the *irina*, that mar her surface stand as so many testimonies to

this transfer.<sup>14</sup> Where else should one beware of *Nirṛti*? In the abysses constituted by dice-play, women and sleep. So it is that when one undergoes *dikṣā*, preparatory sacrificial consecration, one must abstain from both dice-play and lovemaking. Furthermore, one is strictly bound to keep a vigil on the first night, and thus separate oneself from sleep. In this way, one may keep *Nirṛti* away from the sacrifice one is about to undertake.<sup>15</sup>

*Nirṛti* is thus a break and a gulf to be skirted and avoided, even as she is to be neutralized or won over; or, she may be used in the upside-down sacrifices that are the mark of black magic.

Beyond these practices, ritual further discloses human attitudes towards emptiness or the void in ways which are harder to grasp; this is because they are acted out through such purely elementary gestures of the ritual work as filling in, emptying out, and finding a place—and if possible, a use—for displaced matter. It is to Brahmanism's credit that its liturgical texts conscientiously highlight these fundamental constraints, even as they integrate them into their sacrificial symbolism. Under such conditions, emptiness becomes more than something to be constantly avoided: it can also become that which is to be retrieved out of a state of fullness in such a way that nothing of what emerges from the sacrificial work, neither the full nor the empty, may escape from the sacrifice's grasp. One must also allow for empty spaces, in order that there be room for breathing.<sup>16</sup>

A prime example of this may be found in sacrifices that include a *soma* offering. These sacrifices are prefaced by a ceremony in the course of which one mimics the purchase of the plant whose juice will later be extracted.<sup>17</sup> The sacrificial officiant addresses himself to a 'seller', haggles violently over the price, examining and handling the plant's stalks. At a certain point, he measures these with his fingers. This he first does to the accompaniment of formulas, *yajus*; later, he does so silently, *tūṣṇīm*. The formulas, we are told, ensure the sacrificer's mastery over the past; with his silence, he masters the future. To the void, constituted by that which has not yet come to pass, there thus corresponds an absence of words.<sup>18</sup> When he has finished measuring the stalks, the officiant ties them together in a bundle which he wraps tightly in a piece of cloth, tied at the corners. He is careful, however, to leave a gap, a finger's breadth in size, in the knot he ties. Again, according to other



versions, he makes a hole in the cloth and invites the sacrificer to look into the hole. 'While doing this he recites, "May your descendants breathe after you". Because when he tightens the cloth, it is the *soma* that he strangles, in a sense, and that he deprives of breath' (and the strangling of the offering is at once the strangling of the sacrificer himself).<sup>19</sup> The difficulty that one wishes to avoid here is that of *amhas*, tightness. This term, derived from the same Indo-European root as the Latin *angor*, *angustus* and the German *eng*, *Angst*, evokes one of the most dreaded forms of evil—that of anguish, of the slip-knot (*pāśa*). Curiously, *amhas*, constriction and choking, is associated with *Nirṛti*, which is itself disconnection. This association is made in an ambiguous manner: *amhas* belongs to the sphere of *Nirṛti*, because it is evil; at the same time *nirṛti* is, by its very nature, the antidote for *amhas*—and it is thus this goddess whom one calls upon to be freed from an *amhas* that she herself inflicts and which she alone can loosen. 'Loosen this iron bond, *Nirṛti*. . . the noose that *Nirṛti* has strung around your neck and which cannot be undone, I unbind you from it'.<sup>20</sup> A way must be held open for the *prāṇa*, the vital breath; and for this to appear or to continue to exist, there must be an opening, somewhere in the fullness of the rite.

The rite of constructing the fire altar (*agnicayana*, literally, the 'piling of the fire') provides us with another example, this time more complex, of the interplay between fullness and emptiness.

Here one is to build, in the honour of fire, a pedestal of sorts upon which the flame, placed atop it, will be based: this pedestal is a brick structure whose shape is that of a bird with outspread wings.<sup>21</sup> The theologians of the *Brāhmanas* enriched the edification of this altar, in itself an extremely complex ceremony,<sup>22</sup> with a plentiful and dense symbolism, a veritable labyrinth of intersecting and superimposed interpretations of the altar's construction materials. Of much greater importance than this, however, is the incisive and subtle—even obsessional—meditation, undertaken in these texts, on all that is numerable and measurable.<sup>23</sup> Certain modern interpreters have gone so far as to suppose that the rite was only invented in order that it might serve as a material ground for and the concrete illustration of such speculation.<sup>24</sup> The theory

and practice of this sacrifice—for this is a sacrifice, in which the altar's bricks are the oblatory matter, and of which Agni, fire, is the recipient—are most fully developed in books six to ten of the *Śatapatha Brāhmana*.

The outline of this sacrifice is as follows: Prajāpati, the lord of creatures, the primal being, creates the world. More exactly, he emits it, through a sacrificial act<sup>25</sup> that provides both the gods and humans, to whom he has just given rise, the model for the sacrifices which will thenceforth be their duty to perform. In this primordial sacrifice the oblatory matter cannot be anything other than the body of the sacrificer, since this is all that exists at the time. Here, we come to a point which the theological texts never tire of teaching: to wit, that the same case holds for the human sacrificer, and that even if the situation has somewhat changed since Prajāpati's time, the true oblatory matter remains the person of the sacrificer himself. It is therefore quite fitting to interpret the sacrifice as that series of strategies by means of which the sacrificer starts by giving himself away, then gives but a part of himself, and lastly takes himself back, providing some animal or vegetable substitutes for him. It is not so much to save himself that he takes himself back; rather, it is in order that he be able to sacrifice another day.

In the case of Prajāpati, these substitutes are non-existent, and the sacrificer finds himself obliged to give himself up completely, to the very end. 'Prajāpati created the living beings: from his inbreaths and outbreaths he emitted the gods, and from his lower breaths the mortals. And over the mortals he created Death to devour them'.<sup>26</sup> Here the aetiological account splits into two versions, both of which are presented in the (*Śatapatha Brāhmana*. 1) When he had emitted the creatures, Prajāpati found himself emptied and scattered. He said to the fire, 'Agni, put me back together'. Or again, he said to the gods, 'Restore me'. And the gods turned to Agni, saying, 'It is in you that we will heal our father Prajāpati'. 'So be it', said Agni, 'but only on the condition that once he is complete, I shall be able to penetrate into him'. This is why, the text adds, Prajāpati, even as he is himself, is once he has been reconstituted, Agni. Thus it is that he is simultaneously the father of Agni and the gods because he created them, and their son too because he was recreated by them.<sup>27</sup> Now, in order

to reconstitute Prajāpati in Agni, the gods placed their oblations into the fire: these oblations (*iṣṭā*) were immediately cooked by the fire, which thus transformed them, for the welfare (*ka*) of all interested parties, into bricks, *iṣṭakās*. Prajāpati is restored when the edifice of all these bricks, heaped one upon the other, is made complete. This edifice, which constitutes the fire altar, is to be crowned by the flame that the gods will come to install upon it. Men repeat these divine acts when, in the course of the *agnicayana* rite, they in turn install the bricks, layer upon layer, on the fire altar. 2) According to another version, Prajāpati is, at the time of his sacrifice, composed of two halves, one mortal and the other immortal. When he created Death, the devourer of mortals, his perishable half became afraid, and divided itself in half, yet again, to become clay and water. This clay and water blended themselves together into the earth, to escape from the devouring death. Death said to the gods, 'What has happened to him who created us?' 'He became afraid of you and has burrowed down into the earth'. 'Let us search for him then', said Death. 'Let us put him back together; I will do him no harm'. The gods drew water and clay up out of the earth, mixed them together and made a brick. This is why (since that time) a brick is made with clay and water.<sup>28</sup>

The fire altar is comprised of five layers of bricks, separated by four layers of loose earth. A fifth layer of loose soil is spread over the entire edifice. Upon this are scattered gold filings, which serve as a base of the flame that will ultimately crown the altar. Here too, the texts diverge on certain points. Not all give the same symbolic value to the different strata. For some, the layers of loose soil are Prajāpati's mortal parts (his body hair, skin, flesh, bones and marrow) whereas the layers of bricks represent his immortal parts (his mind, hearing, sight, voice, and breaths). When one builds the brick altar, one presses the mortal parts between the immortal parts, which thus serve to protect them, thus rendering the entire body immortal.<sup>29</sup> According to others—and this interpretation is an explication of the former inasmuch as it takes account of the number five—Prajāpati is the year. The five parts of his body that were scattered in the creation process are the five seasons. The five layers of bricks reconstitute the five seasons.<sup>30</sup> But Prajāpati is also the whole of space: the five layers are the five cardinal directions—east, south, west, north and the zenith.<sup>31</sup>

One places a golden statuette at the center of the first layer. This is an image of *Puruṣa*, the 'man'—that is, of Prajāpati, the brahmanic version of the primordial man, the *Puruṣa* of the *RS* 10.90 hymn. It is however, also an image of the human sacrificer for whose benefit the ceremony is taking place (this statuette is furthermore the image of Agni, since it is placed upon a lotus, and the lotus is Agni's place of birth). The altar and the human sacrificer are thus consubstantial: the entire edifice, with its bricks and statue, is an offering, and the rite unfolds and is interpreted in such a way as to highlight the identity of the sacrificer with the offering. This is indeed the case whether the offering be an animal victim, rice, or some milk product. But above all else, the texts remind us, at every stage of their description, of the following point, a point which is, in fact, of capital importance: the brick edifice is an offering to the fire. Because fire penetrated Prajāpati, it is identified with him. To put Prajāpati together again is to at the same time build a fire, and set in place, in the same motion, the offering and the divinity to whom the offering is addressed.

The omnipresence of Agni throughout the body of the altar (and not merely at its summit where the flame will ceremoniously be installed) is further emphasized in the animal sacrifice which is one of the essential preliminary steps to this undertaking. At the base of the altar, one places the heads of five sacrificed animals: these are the heads of a man, a bull, a horse, ram and goat.<sup>32</sup> These heads are so many 'animal bricks', or rather, 'animal victims having the function of bricks'.<sup>33</sup> There exists a myth which justifies this foundation sacrifice: Prajāpati, when he is disjointed and emptied, longs for Agni. The latter runs away, and in his flight sees (the verb *paśi*) the animals (*paśu*). He hides in them. Prajāpati keeps looking for him. He in turn sees the animals and recognizes Agni in them. In fact, he says to himself, these animals' eyes shine just as Agni shines when he is lit; their breath rises like Agni's smoke; Agni consumes and the animals devour; and Agni leaves behind the cinders of that which he has just devoured, the animals refuse to eat excrements that have fallen to the ground.<sup>34</sup> These animals who resembled Agni in so many of their characteristics are in fact Agni. Thus, in order to propitiate Agni, Prajāpati sacrifices to him these animals—who are thus homogeneous with the divinity to whom he is offering them—just as the altar is an

offering to fire that is made of fire. For sure, humans imitate Prajāpati, and thus when they begin putting back together the creator who fell apart while creating them, they must, of necessity, perform the same foundation sacrifice, with the victims, before they begin to pile up the bricks.

From where should one take the earth from which the altar materials are to be made?

### The excrements at the heart of the man

One begins by digging out and levelling a shallow depression in the ground as a means to clearing the surface upon which the altar will be built. The soil so excavated is collected into a pile called *purīṣa*. It is from this *purīṣa* that one takes the earth which, mixed together with water, will provide the necessary clay. The water is not untreated: in it have been soaked, and perhaps even dissolved, the trunks of the victims whose heads will serve as the foundational bricks. Since these animals are offerings to Agni—and, it will be recalled, are Agni—it then follows that this water itself embodies fire. The word *purīṣa* has two main accepted meanings, both of which are taken into account by the treatises which commentate or describe this ceremony: on the one hand, this term means, precisely, excavated earth, or any earth that is excessive. On the other, it means ‘excrement’, ‘human and animal droppings’, with the twofold connotation that one might expect to find: while it is a form of waste matter and refuse, it can also be—in the case of animal excrements, and especially of cow dung—a highly beneficial form of manure and fuel (and even one of the constituent parts of the purificatory blend known as the *pañcagavya*, a mixture of milk, curd, butter, urine and cow dung). In this second sense of the term, *purīṣa* is, by synecdoche, the livestock itself, *paśāvo vai purīṣam*.<sup>35</sup> Now, livestock is, as we have seen, Agni, because Agni hid himself away inside the animals. The heap of earth is also Agni, inasmuch as it is a manure pile, and inasmuch as it bears the same name as a manure pile. Agni = livestock = manure = excavated earth. Etymologically, *purīṣa* derives from the root *pūr*, ‘fill’: this waste product, this sacrificial overflow, this excrement of the act *par excellence* that is the sacrifice (and the relationship between acting and excreting is well-known to anyone who

has read Aragon’s *Traité du style*) is first and foremost that which fills the belly of an animal. It is for this reason that the earthen *purīṣa*, apart from providing the clay for making bricks, is also used to fill in or plug up the spaces between the layers of bricks. As such, the *purīṣa*, in its loose, untreated form, makes up the layers of loose earth which correspond to the mortal parts of Prajāpati. One places this raw *purīṣa* in the midst, in the betwixt and between this body of Agni constituted by the brick altar: this is of course the case because ‘in the midst of a person are his droppings’.<sup>36</sup>

### Bricks

There are several kinds of bricks and, as is always the case in ancient India, the differences between them are arrayed hierarchically, starting with the brick called *aśādhā*, ‘invincible’, which is the first to be set in place. Shaped by the sacrificer’s first wife, it represents the terrestrial world in its entirety, and is of the same length as the sacrificer’s foot. Next come the ‘special’ bricks, over each of which a particular formula is pronounced upon its installation. In contrast, the bricks used to plug up holes (called *lokamprṇā*, literally, ‘fillers of space’), or the bricks employed to fill in the gaps between the special bricks, have an all-purpose formula pronounced over them when they are set in place: *lokam prṇa chidrām prṇa*. ‘The special bricks are the nobility, the warrior class (*kṣatṛā*); the space-filling bricks are the plebians (*viś*). Now then, the nobility is the eater, the plebians the eaten. When there is a wealth of food to eat for the eater, the kingdom prospers. One must therefore pile up many space-filling bricks’.<sup>37</sup>

The formulaic expression ‘filling space’ appears in yet another context, in the hymn to the glory of the brahmanic student, found in *Atharva Veda* 11.5. The brahmanic student, the *brahmacārin*, is exalted here in grandiose terms that lead one to suppose that it is in fact the sun, the motor of the cosmic mechanism, that is being described here. In truth, there are not two, but three levels of interpretation: those of the brahmanic student, the sun, and of the homology between them—that is, that which shows how each one of the two terms in fact corresponds to the other. (It is *śleṣa*, ‘coalescence’, one of the essential procedures of Sanskrit rhetoric,

that enables one to undertake multiple simultaneous readings of a single text). This hymn proclaims then, that the brahmanic student 'fills, by means of his *tapas*, his ascetic heat, the person of his teacher'<sup>38</sup> just as the sun fills the universe with its heat.<sup>39</sup> And 'the teacher, when he initiates his pupil, places him, like a foetus, inside his body. And during the three nights (of the initiation) he carries him in his belly . . .'<sup>40</sup> The sun-student is changed into a foetus during the rite of passage which will transform him into a 'twice-born', his second birth being that conferred upon him by the Vedic revelation he receives. The pupil develops within his teacher's uterus in the expectation of later coming to fill yet another cavity, that of his teacher's stomach, since one of the student's duties will be to beg alms and to place these offerings of food he has so gathered in the sacrificial fire constituted, for him, by his teacher's digestive tract. Now, another duty of the brahmanic student, who is both the servant and the disciple of his teacher, is to gather wood for burning the latter's fire. The sacrificial fire is first lit by rubbing two sticks against each other: the lower of these stands for the earth and woman, while the upper stands for heaven and man. The student holds in his hand the two sticks of heaven and earth. But the hymn adds that the student has yet a third stick (and one may well wonder whether this third stick were not his own body), by means of which he fills the intermediate space, *antarikṣa*, that separates the surface of the earth from the vault of heaven. So it is that 'with his stick, his belt, his toil, his ascetic heat, the brahmanic student fills the (three) worlds (to wit: earth, midspace and heaven)'.<sup>41</sup>

To fill in, then, is to compress, to drive out empty space. But there exists yet another class of bricks, whose function is in fact directly contrasted to this: in the middle of the first, third and fifth layers are to be placed bricks that are 'naturally pierced', *svayamātrṇṇā*, which are in fact porous or perforated stones or pebbles, actually. The first of these is placed directly over the 'golden man'. These openings, these pockets of empty space in the midst of such fullness, are there in order that the golden man, the replica of the sacrificer and anthropomorphic image of Prajāpati, might breathe and elevate himself, by degrees, up to and beyond the world of heaven. Here is the myth showing the origin of and justification for these 'naturally pierced' *iṣṭakās*.

When the gods had put the disjointed Prajāpati back together, they drew back; and Prajāpati was able to establish himself in the space that had thus been opened up. The disjointed Prajāpati is this same (altar of) fire that is being built, and that space is the place where the naturally pierced brick has been laid'.<sup>42</sup>

Yet another facet of this rite allows us to glimpse the irruption of the empty into full, of the radically other into the homogeneous whole.

Once they have built up their pile of excavated earth, and before they begin to shape the bricks, the group of sacrificial priests carry out processions to this mound in order to remove that clod of earth which will be moulded into a basin called the *ukhā*. This basin or pot will serve as a vessel for the flame throughout the period devoted to the baking and piling of the bricks. The symbolic importance of this pot derives from the fact that the fire it will contain is supposed to have arisen out of the *purīṣa*: this is a fire that is *purīṣya*, excremental. The pot, the *ukhā*, is thus a container composed of the same stuff as that which it contains, and thus of the same stuff as the altar that is to be constructed. The procession that goes to seek out this clod includes in its number, animals—a horse, he-goat and ass, whose affinity with the fire is thus once more reaffirmed. Here, the horse plays a decisive divinatory role: the clod to be extracted is that part of the excavated earth upon which it first places its hoof. One must next remove this mass of earth with the aid of a spade or an *abhri* (curiously referred to as a woman here. 'You are a spade, you are a woman . . .')<sup>43</sup>

### The Good for Nothing

There is another creature who comes into play in this phase of the rite—this is a man, or rather the facsimile of a man, called the *anaddhāpuruṣa*, the good for nothing or literally, the 'man in vain'. In concrete terms, it would appear that this is an effigy (made of an unknown material) placed on the path of the procession. While passing before this 'good for nothing' on the way to the pile of earth, one looks at it and says 'we are going to carry the excremental fire, we are going to carry the cattle-giving fire'. It is thus, comments the *ŚB*, that one goes after the fire with this 'good for

nothing'. On the way back, one again looks at the man, this time with the words 'we are carrying the excremental fire, we are carrying the cattle-giving fire'.<sup>44</sup> In this work of filling in and emptying out, in which so much effort is expended to extract a plenitude out of a 'super-plenitude', it thus becomes necessary that one considers for a moment something that is null and void, and calls on it to bear witness to one's acts, and thus, as it were, implicate it in the affair. (The void comes into play yet again as a necessary intermediary in the following bizarre prescription: once the heap of excavated earth has been piled up, one of the officiants is to look at it through a hole that has been bored through an anthill).<sup>45</sup>

What exactly is this 'man in vain'? It is the image of an empty space that does not want to be filled in. Texts about him are rare and elliptical. It is, in fact, only in this rite that he is designated as a concrete image.<sup>46</sup> However, we also find the following definition: 'One calls *anaddhāpuruṣa*, a man in vain, he who is neither useful to the gods, nor to the manes, nor to humans'.<sup>47</sup> (For example, a man who, having become a widower, is tempted to forego his daily performance of the *agnihotra* sacrifice, should overcome this temptation; for if he were to stop sacrificing, he would become an *anaddhāpuruṣa*). Whereas the pierced bricks at the heart of the altar constitute a material void, the act of placing oneself before this individual constitutes a gestural void. Such is in fact the vacuity which he symbolizes: the shirking of (sacrificial) activity, and the refusal to satisfy the expectations of the sacrifice's natural recipients. What is paradoxical here is the stipulation that one should stop to consider this evasion of duty, and thereby ratify this non-compliance. Also paradoxical is the fact that the contemplation of this inactive and empty being should constitute a necessary moment in a particularly laborious sacrificial process, a process which is otherwise obsessed with filling in all that is empty.

Yet, in spite of this, it remains the case that this definition of the *anaddhāpuruṣa* is precisely that of a man who does not pay off his inherited debts.

As far as the brahmanic doctrine of the debt—as a constituent and definitive part of a man—is concerned,<sup>48</sup> the rites as well as each and every social relationship have their *raison d'être* in the obligation one has to fill in the twofold hole constituted by the

expectations of his creditors and the gaps in his own self. It must be understood here that one does not, by freeing oneself from one's inherited debts, relieve himself of a burden, but rather plugs up a hole and thus fills himself and increases in mass. To act is to build oneself up through an accumulation of acts.

### The Surplus Nature of the Act

We now leave the sphere of Vedic ritual and take up the question of Upaniṣadic speculation, as well as those ideas that carry us forward into the realm of classical brahmanism. Just as digging up the sacrificial ground produces a waste product in the form of excavated soil, and just as fire excretes the ashes of that which it consumes, so too does every act not only produce consequences here and now, but also deposits in a person a precipitate of sorts, a trace which persists in the world beyond, a remainder which determines the nature of the existence that will befall the individual in his future existence which will consequently serve as the starting point for a new series of acts, the most meritorious of which will have the function of regulating a new configuration of remains.

The Indian attitude (in the context of classical brahmanism) towards the surplus nature of the act derives from the judgement that they bring to bear upon the act *per se*, since that which constitutes an act's surplus is simply the obligation to act yet again.

The same people who model lives after *dharma* (*dharma* plays more or less the same role in post-Vedic India as does *ṛta* in the Veda)—that is, the coherence and continuity of the world, which are ensured when the rites are performed and when each individual fulfills his proper duty that is itself based on his social status—also wish to be able to prolong and renew their past acts. Far from being overwhelmed by such an accumulation of remains of acts, they constantly strive to effect the appearance of—or at least account for—a surplus that must always be recycled, as a seed for future fruits. This way of looking at things is essentially that of the brahmin engaged in sacrifice, in a life whose every act has the sacrifice for its model. (This is because the sacrifice typifies those acts which have consequences). The surplus is the inevitable consequence of—as well as the guarantor of and a necessary condition

for—fullness. A single passage defines the attitude of he who is fullness's friend: this is an account of a villager who believes in the *iṣṭāpūrta*, in sacrifices and works of 'filling'.<sup>49</sup> (The second term of this compound, *pūrta*, designates any kind of donation—the support of religious foundations, the construction of roads, boring of wells, and especially the payment of honoraria to officiating priests, all of these being acts which complement the sacrifice. *Pūrta* literally means 'achievement, fulfillment'. This word is derived, like *pūrti*, from the root *PŪR*, 'fill'). By fulfilling the expectations of every recipient of offerings and honoraria, one plugs the holes hollowed out in his being by his inherited debts: he fills himself with acts and produces a surplus of acts.

If, on the contrary, the perspective of never finishing, and of taking constant rebirth is perceived as an unhappy one, then one must condemn all acts, inasmuch as acts are bearers of consequences that always overflow themselves. So it is that we may glimpse, in the shadows behind the 'village' brahmin, the silhouettes of the many varieties of forest-dwelling 'renouncers' who seek, through diverse techniques, to break the ties that bind them to acts. This they do by abstaining from activity (especially sacrificial activity); or by striving to extract from their acts the most dangerously fruitful component of *kāma*, the desire that impels them; or lastly, by relegating their acts, through a theoretical decision of sorts, to the sphere of illusion. This latter group no longer accommodates itself to *dharmā*: its goal is not to go on living as well as one might hope to or, if possible, better than one has. The goal here is rather to disengage oneself from the process of the accumulation and maturation of acts (*karman*), to elude acts and thereby break out of the cycle of rebirths (*samsāra*). Such persons view birth as a catastrophe, or at least as a mistake. It was probably in this renunciant milieu, and certainly under the influence of its ideas, that the theory of the *sūtimāruta*, or the 'winds of birth', was developed. During the ninth or tenth month of pregnancy, the foetus, in great pain, is violently thrust out of the bodily fissure, like an arrow, by the powerful 'winds of birth'.<sup>50</sup> The role these play is a necessary one since, in fact, the infant recalls (the faculty of memory comes to it at a clearly determined moment in its embryonic development) its succession of past lives and deaths. It therefore holds back from crossing over the threshold of involvement

in yet another cycle. The 'winds of birth' need barely touch him in order to drive from his mind all such memory. So it is that the person who has become conscious of the chain of rebirths thinks with horror of the womb that only sheltered him in order to eject him and throw him once more into the world of actions: 'May I never return to the membrane'.<sup>51</sup> Life is thus a passage, passed in a state of forgetfulness, that one is to fill in, through an accumulation of traces (of one's acts). It is from this that the renouncer, the forest-dweller, wishes to extract himself, to liberate himself: here, then, the goal is *mukti*, 'liberation' (*mokṣa* being the desire for *mukti*, in the proper sense of the word).

Doctrines vary on the positive content of *mukti*, and are as numerous as are the methods propounded for the attainment of this state. Certain points remain constant, nevertheless: *mukti* is perfect happiness, permanence, homogeneity, the absence of duality or the realization of the non-duality of the individual soul, the *ātman*, and the cosmic Absolute, the *brahman*. In a general sense, the texts in which this new outlook first appears draw a contrast between an end to plenitude, and the means to that end, which involve a variety of techniques of emptying and detachment. In fact, the goal is—as the *Upaniṣads* teach in a thousand different ways—to attain, or to realize, a merging with the *brahman*, which is 'being-consciousness-bliss' (*sat-cit-ānanda*). Fullness, self-sufficiency, non-differentiation: 'The great *ātman*, in truth, is without beginning, without aging, without death, immortal, fearless—it is the *brahman*. He himself becomes the *brahman*, free from fear, who knows this'.<sup>52</sup> What exactly is this absence of fear? 'Just as a man in the arms of his beloved no longer knows either outside or inside, so this person, embraced by the knowing *ātman*, no longer knows either outside or inside: this is for him, the happy state in which every desire is fulfilled, in which there is no desire but for the *ātman*, in which there is no more desire'.<sup>53</sup> The individual *ātman* is fullness. The universal *brahman* from which it emanates is fullness. And the fact that the *ātman* arises out of the *brahman* does not take away from the fullness of either: 'This full, that full, the full is drawn out of the full'.<sup>54</sup> Already in the *AS* 10.8 hymn, the *brahman* 'dwells far away, together with the full, as far away it is exempt from deficiency'.<sup>55</sup> The fullness that is the homologue of *brahman-ātman* is thus quite different from the articulated and

differentiated fullness proper to the sacrifice and to the many acts related to *ṛta*.<sup>56</sup>

But the Upaniṣadic authors, once they have given these descriptions of the state aspired to by persons seeking deliverance, have nothing more to say on the matter. Anything one might say about the *ātman-brahman* would, in fact, constitute a limitation upon it, and thus betray it, since, in its supreme form, *ātman-brahman* is without attributes. The best way for one to gain an idea of this is, once again, to take a negative path. The *ātman-brahman* is not thus, not so—such is the celebrated apophatic statement of the *Upaniṣads*.<sup>57</sup> In order to speak of the full, one must resort to an emptying of speech, but this time not through silence, but rather through the repeated affirmation of the emptiness of words.

And, when we look at the places in which the Absolute reveals itself and the paths that lead to it, it becomes apparent that it is nothing other than a void: the signs of this plenitude that is the Absolute are the break, the hole, the cavity, the cope of heaven, the space between the earth and the celestial vault, so many empty spaces through which the *ātman* blazes its path. Every fissure is an abyss, and the abyss, even if it always retains a certain element of its demarcating function as a break, is the vessel of the Absolute. And when one strives to attain the Absolute—that is, deliverance—there is invariably the implication, in the method one follows, that one is emptying the space within oneself and, even before this, around oneself.

### The Void at the Heart of the Heart

Faithful on this point to the tradition of the *Brāhmaṇas*, the *Upaniṣads* take up discussions of anatomy and physiology as necessary foundations for the play of correspondences, which is their *raison d'être*, between microcosm and macrocosm. Where, in the human body, should one look for the *ātman*? Because the *ātman* is immaterial, omnipresent, etc. the question is an absurd one. Yes, but what then? Now then, one must understand that 'in this fortress of the *brahman*, that is, the body, there is a tiny lotus (at the site of the heart) which constitutes an abode of sorts within which a secret space opens up. One need only seek to find what is it that

occupies this space . . . As vast as the space that opens up before our gaze is this space within the heart. In both spaces are united heaven and earth, fire and air, sun and moon, lightning and the constellations, and that which belongs to everyone in this world and that which does not'.<sup>58</sup> Again, 'That which one calls *brahman* is this space that lies outside of a person; but this space that lies outside of a person . . . is the same as that within the person; and this space within the person is the very same as that which is within the heart. It is plenitude and immutability'.<sup>59</sup> The *brahman-ātman* is thus a space, *ākāśa*, a hole, *kha*. The plenitude of the soul, the soul as fullness, reveals and unfolds itself in an empty space that is an epitome of infinite space. It is this space; or, more exactly, the identity of *ātman* and *brahman*—that is, that the truth of the former and the latter, of the former by the latter—is grounded in the identity of these two spaces. At the heart of man, then, is a hole. Starting from this cavity in the heart, the *ātman*, or again, 'the *puruṣa*, immortal and golden, consisting of thought', goes forth, and following an itinerary that prefigures the complex journeys described in the yogic and tantric treatises, this *puruṣa* 'passes between the two (halves of the palate), into that which hangs like a teat (the uvula?), and arrives at the place where the hair-roots divide, forming a gap between the two cranial bones'.<sup>60</sup>

The Absolute is a friend of empty spaces. 'The hole, open space', the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (3.5.31) simply states, 'is the characteristic mark of the *ātman*': *kham liṅgam ātmanah*. The Upaniṣad puts the matter even more succinctly: *kham brahma*, 'the *brahman* is space'.<sup>61</sup> Is this simply a manner of speaking, a bizarre and simplistic artifice by which to refer to fullness by speaking of its opposite? No. It is certainly the absolute plenitude that is designated, even if it is the void that is evoked, and even, in a certain sense, described. More than this, the void so described is an interstitial void: 'It is in this space that is within the heart that he (the *ātman*) dwells, master of all, prince of all, lord of all . . . He is the barrier that separates the worlds in order that they not be confounded with one another'.<sup>62</sup>

The little hole in the heart, as a mark of the microcosm in the infinite abyss of space, maintains its demarcating function. But do we truly have the right to treat these notions—of interstitial space, cavity, void—as an ensemble, and to assume that each of

these terms refers to the others? Is it truly legitimate for us to move from a geometry of the concave to a physics of emptiness? Even taken independently of the various explicit systems of correspondences, the words we have been using, and the definitions given for them, themselves invite us to make such associations. *Kha*, for example, indifferently signifies 'heaven', 'cavern', 'hole', and 'space' (whereas heaven as the abode of the gods is called *svarga*). In the same way, *ākāśa* can mean both 'heaven' and 'empty space'. Lastly, the following are the characteristics of space (*ākāśa*) in Indian theory: sound (*śabda*), the capacity to spread everywhere (*vyāpitva*) and the fact that it is a hole (*chidratā*).<sup>63</sup>

The void cannot merely be reduced to an absence: it is, first and foremost, a lump or swelling—and an adjective related to *śūnya* 'empty' is *śūna*, 'swollen', with both deriving from the same root as the verb *śvayāti*, 'to swell up'. The void, as may be seen, is a disjunction of fullness, an insertion into plenitude.<sup>64</sup>

If the human representative of fullness is the villager, the friend of the void must naturally depart for the forest. The forest, *aranya*, is not a place of dense vegetation, a compact milieu in which it is necessary to open up clearings. It is, on the contrary, perceived as a deserted space, a lacuna between populated areas. The synonyms of the term *aranya* are terms that designate both unoccupied land and an interval: these are *irina*, which elsewhere signifies 'hole', the *prāntara*, 'in between'. When the 'renouncer' decides to leave the village, the world of human relationships, of acts, and the sacrifice—and thus a portion of *samsāra*—he betakes himself to the forest, divesting himself of all that he owns, most especially of his sacrificial fires. His departure is not merely a quest for solitude. This is because the forest, a vast tear in the fabric of the village, is the image of the void that is the Absolute to which he aspires. But does he, for all this, in fact escape his village? It would appear that the opposition, between village and forest, is absolute, since only village animals may be used as sacrificial victims. But the reach of the village can extend into the forest: there are (royal) sacrifices in which village animals, tied to posts, are put to death, but in which the presence of forest animals, *in the spaces* in between these posts, is required. They are set free at the last moment, but they nevertheless had to first have been present; and so it is that the sacrifice extends its power over them,

even if it scorns and fears them. The same holds for the renouncer: at the outset, his quest for deliverance is the antithesis of the village *dharma*. But this opposition is an intolerable one, and the entire thrust of Brahmanism consists in an attempt to reintegrate this friend of the void into its system; in other words, to give him a place all his own (even if this entails submitting to his influence and partially adopting his language) in the network of duties and rules that are woven into the *dharma*, the all-encompassing order. With the doctrine of the *āśramas*, the two lifestyles and sorts of aspirations cease to be antithetical, and come to juxtapose themselves within a single human life span. And so the striving for deliverance becomes but one form of the honourable life, and the forest comes to fall within the horizon of the village, and the empty firmly held within the grasp of the full.



## Village and Forest in the Ideology of Brahmanic India

'Where is the forest?' asked Luzhin, and when the question remained unanswered, he asked again, resorting to a synonym: 'A wood? Wald?' he murmured. 'A park?' he added, with condescension.

V. Nabokov, *The Luzhin Defense*.

The royal *āsvamedha*<sup>1</sup> sacrifice comprises, according to the Vedic texts, of the following incongruous ceremony: the horse who is about to be put to death is tied, as is the rule in any blood sacrifice, to a sacrificial post (*yūpa*); here, however, the horse is not the sole sacrificial victim. On either side of the sacrificial post, other posts are erected, to which are attached other animals whose fate is also to be sacrificed. The list of these supplementary victims varies; but, in every case, these are animals 'proper to the village' (*grāmya*). Now, in addition to these 'village' victims who are in fact put to death, there is also a group of quasi-victims who are distinguished from the true victims on three counts: 1) these are animals that are 'proper to the forest' (*āranya*); 2) who are placed in the intervals (*ārōkas*) between the posts, and 3) who in the end, are not put to death, but set free. A ritual text states, by way of explanation, that they are released in order that they not be subjected to violence (*ahimsāyai*). The list of quasi-victims, while it varies, also includes, of necessity, man.<sup>2</sup>

The instructions given for this phase of the rite regroup, in a highly condensed dynamically choreographed form—and in a way that highlights their inter-combinations and mutual implications—certain fundamental themes of Vedic ideology. These include

the opposition between village and forest; the dual nature of the sacrifice (or at least of royal sacrifice) which, while it essentially remains a village affair, attempts to encompass the forest as well; the link between wholeness and the village, and an absence of wholeness and the forest, and between violence and the village and non-violence and the forest; and, lastly, the place reserved for humans in the succession of animal species.

What follow are a number of details on each of these points.

### Village and Forest

In Vedic India, and more generally in brahmanic India,<sup>3</sup> this dichotomy is omnipresent. The entirety of the inhabitable world is divided between *grāma* and *āranya*. And although both arid deserts and mountains appear in the landscape of Āryāvarta,<sup>4</sup> these are but so many variants on the theme of the forest. The animal kingdom, or at least the mammals, and the vegetable kingdom are also divided across this same line. 'There are seven village, and seven forest plants, says the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* (5.4.9.1),<sup>5</sup> seven village and seven forest animals (*ibid.* 6.1.8.1; 7.2.2.1). To be sure, these lists are not to be read as exhaustive enumerations of fauna and flora: because these figure in ritual texts (even if all of Vedic literature consists of religious texts), only those plants and animals used in the rites are mentioned.

One should note that the two zones of forest and village are generally distinguished from one another, less on the basis of their material features than on that of the religious and social significance attributed to each of them. Just what are these features?

The term *grāma*, generally translated as 'village', more often designates a concentration of people or a network of institutions than it does a set territory. Contrary to the Latin *pagus*, which evokes territorial implantation, the special meaning of the Vedic *grāma* is—if we are to follow its etymology—a troop, and perhaps, originally, a troop on the move: this would explain how *sc̥m̐grāma*, literally a 'reunion of the *grāma*', could originally have meant 'army in combat'<sup>6</sup> and later 'battle'. The stability of the *grāma* depends more upon the cohesion of its constitutive group than it does upon the space that it occupies. And, while we should be careful not to attach too great an importance to *ex silentio*

arguments, we must nevertheless note a paucity of data, in the Vedic texts, concerning the spatial organization of the *grāma*.<sup>7</sup> This lack is all the more startling when it is contrasted with the Vedic authors' prolixity and exactitude whenever they speak of the relationships that obtain between people or groups of people. The notion of limits is nevertheless closely associated with that of the village: however, it is not the limit that defines the village, but rather the village that generates the (notion of) limit, as illustrated in the adage 'no village, no limit'.<sup>8</sup>

Facing the village is the *aranya*. The word, traditionally translated as 'forest', designates, in reality, the village's other. Here again, etymology allows us to glimpse the present linguistic usage of a term in its true light: *aranya*, 'forest', is derived from *arāṇa*, 'strange', which is itself connected to the Indo-European radical *al-*, *\*ol-*, the very same radical that is the source of the Latin words *alius*, *alter*, and *ille*.<sup>9</sup> The village is here, the forest over there. Similarly, the forest is that towards which one heads when one leaves the village.<sup>10</sup> Might we not, then, define this *aranya* as that which is external to the village? Its constant feature is that it is an empty, interstitial space. The synonyms of *aranya* are words that have for their primary meaning the sense of 'hole', *irina*, 'desert', or 'in-between', *prāntara*. The *Arthasāstra* groups all of these uncultivated lands, regardless of their natural vegetation, under the heading of *bhūmichidra*, 'hole in the ground'.<sup>11</sup> What is, in fact, most curious here, and that which warrants the accepted translation of 'forest' for *aranya*, is that this term is also—and from a very early time—a synonym of *vana*, 'territory covered by trees', and even 'wood' in the sense of woody matter.<sup>12</sup> More exactly, the *vana* is a particular case of *aranya*, and however great the differences between desert and forest may appear to us, it is nonetheless certain that, as far as their religious values are concerned, *aranya* and *vana* are overlapping terms.<sup>13</sup>

Juxtaposing village and forest is tantamount to evoking every possible setting in which human activity can occur in this world. So it is that in the rite of reparation called the *varuṇapraghāsa* (one among a great number of possible examples), the adulterous pronounce the following formula: 'Any sin that we may have committed, in the village or in the forest, as a group or through

our sensory organs, we put aside through the present sacrifice [...]'.<sup>14</sup>

This division is, for sure, not an absolute one. There exist composite beings, or rather animals, which (although they are mammals) because they belong both to the village and the forest, are defined as obtaining to neither. We learn in *TS* 2.1.10.2 that the *gayal*<sup>15</sup> (*gomyga*, the 'bovine wild animal', in Sanskrit) is an animal that is neither of the village nor of the forest. So it is that one must offer a *gayal* to the god *Vāyu* (the 'wind') when one has been libelled as a murderer: charged with guilt while innocent, one is, in this circumstance, like the *gayal*, outside of both of these two worlds.<sup>16</sup>

### Village and Sacrifice

The *grāma* is maintained and sustained by institutions that define the relationships of each individual with everyone else, with the cosmos, and with oneself. This norm, which is at once a system of rules and the world order, is *dharma*.<sup>17</sup>

To say that the *dharma* that regulates village life is entirely contained within the village—and the forest the locus of non-dharmic events and activities—would be jumping to conclusions. The notion of *dharma* is flexible enough to be applied to a wide array of meanings, such that any lifestyle may be called dharmic if it conforms to an individual's nature; that is, if it designates him as a member of the (social) group to which he belongs: it is the *dharma* of the thief to steal, and his particular *dharma* is a component of *dharma* in general. It nevertheless remains that to steal is a sin, and in no uncertain terms, an affront to *dharma*.<sup>18</sup> How to reconcile partial and total *dharma* is a question which does not come to be clearly posed—and which does not receive a theological answer—until well after the Vedic period, where its most extended discussion is contained in the *Bhagavad Gītā*.<sup>19</sup> In ancient brahmanism, on the contrary, the world order is grounded in the sacrifice (*yajña*), and, in a more general sense, on those rites for which the sacrifice was the highest form and model. It is, in fact, the sacrifice, offered by humans, that ratifies the divine status of the gods and thus ensures a harmonious implementation of those forces which allow for the regular

succession of the seasons and the production of foods proper to every class of beings.<sup>20</sup> It is also the sacrifice that bestows upon brahmins the status of 'visible gods',<sup>21</sup> and, thereby, the organization of society as a whole. Lastly, it is the sacrifice that gives humans (or at least those who are capable of performing it) the means by which to pay off the constitutive debts (*ṛṇas*) with which they are burdened from birth.<sup>22</sup> In this way, the sacrifice gives meaning to all human activity—and even the permission to survive, since the sole food that one is allowed to consume without sin is food that in some way consists of the remains of a meal one has offered, sacrificially, to the gods, to other humans, or to the manes.<sup>23</sup> That which is external to the sacrifice, that which cannot be linked, in the final analysis, to the sacrifice, is thus outside of *dharma*—itself understood in the sense of a mode of conduct proper to an upright life.

Now, in brahmanic India, the sacrifice is essentially a 'village' affair. We hasten to specify, however, that the normative brahmanic texts never allow for the performance of any sacrifice that might be qualified as 'civic', in which the participants or beneficiaries would all belong to a single given political group. On the contrary, the very structure of the sacrifice requires that the sacrificer be, of necessity, an individual—just as the primordial sacrificer was himself, and with good reason, an individual, when he performed the sacrifice that constituted the creation of the world.<sup>24</sup> To be sure, it is indispensable that the sacrificer's wife be beside him when he sacrifices; however, the ritual fates of the two spouses are themselves inextricably connected.<sup>25</sup> And, while there undoubtedly exist *sattras* in which several sacrificers are grouped together, this is in order that each one of them may take a turn at being the officiating priest for his companions.<sup>26</sup> The village nature of the sacrifice is of a different order, an order that involves the sacrificial fires, and the plants and animals which constitute the offertory materials.

The sacrificial fires can only be established (whether it be the solitary fire of the domestic ritual or the three fires of the ceremonial ritual) by a married man or a man 'who stands in the house', a *gṛhastha*. Now, the condition of *gṛhastha* implies membership in the *grāma*, a necessarily social activity that allows for the accumulation of the wealth which one must possess if one is

to acquire those oblatory materials and (often considerable) goods which will later be given to the officiating priests in the form of a fee. Several texts present the householder as the pivot of *dharma*,<sup>27</sup> he is the most active of all individuals, amassing wealth in order to redistribute it, feeding the gods and manes, fathering children and giving the means of subsistence, through his alms, to those who have not yet become—or who have ceased to be—*gṛhasthas*. Only the man who is active in the world is fully capable of performing the supreme act that is the sacrifice. Furthermore, the fires 'love the village'<sup>28</sup> and are not to be carried outside the village.<sup>29</sup>

One may at times resort to trickery: when a 'householder' is ill, it may be recommended that he leaves the village (via a northeasterly bearing, this being the most auspicious of all directions), carrying his fires with him. Longing for their home village, these fires will make the sick man well, such that he might carry them back as quickly as possible.<sup>30</sup>

On the matter of oblatory materials, it is the texts' inconsistency that is most instructive. On the one hand, they maintain that village animals alone may be used as sacrificial offerings.<sup>31</sup> Yet, on the other, their lists of offerings for some particular sacrifice will often include both a group of village-based and a group of forest-based materials, with each group being explicitly designated as such.<sup>32</sup> The function of sacrifice is not to definitively separate village from all that is not village; it is, rather, to first set apart and give preference to that which is proper to the village, and to thence prove its superiority over its forest surroundings, as well as its capacity (precisely by virtue of the sacrifice) to draw the forest into its orbit, and so encompass it. A good example of this highly efficient and most disingenuous incoherency is provided by the *ŚB* 13.2.4.1f. account of the original sacrifice, 'invented' and performed by Prajāpati, the creator: 'Prajāpati wished, "Would that I might win the two worlds, the world of the gods and the world of men". He had a vision of these animals, those of the village and those of the forest. He sacrificed them. Through them he came to possess these worlds: through the village animals he came to possess this world; through the forest animals, the other world. This world is verily the world of men, the other world the world of the gods. When he sacrifices the village animals, it is this

world that, through them, the (present human) sacrificer comes to possess; when he sacrifices the forest animals, it is the other world that, through them, he comes to possess. If he were to carry the sacrifice through to its very end, using village animals alone, then all roads would converge, and villages border upon one another; there would be no ogres, no tiger-men, nor would there be thieves, robber gangs nor brigands in the forests. On the other hand, if he were to do this using only forest animals, then would all roads diverge, and villages be set far apart from one another; there would be ogres and tiger-men, and there would be thieves, robber gangs and brigands in the forests. On this matter it is said, "Verily, that which is of the forest is not *paśu*, and is not to be offered. If one were to offer it, these victims would lose no time in carrying the sacrificer, dead, out into the forest, because the forest animals share the forest among themselves [ . . . ]".<sup>33</sup>

The human sacrificer wishes, after the fashion of Prajāpati, to win the twofold world. But to win the other world by sacrificing that which is homologous to it is, in fact, tantamount to allowing oneself to be drawn into it. We have seen the solution offered by the horse sacrifice: the sacrifice of the forest creatures is merely simulated, with the spaces between the posts standing for the yawning gap that is the forest—a forest to which, when all is said and done, they return, without any harm having been done to either themselves or the sacrificer. The case of plants presents a different solution, for, whereas the vegetable substances which make up the offering are, in theory, cultivated plants, there nevertheless exist certain rites (such as the *sautrāmaṇī*<sup>34</sup>) which prescribe the actual, and not merely simulated, use of wild plants. The sense of such a coexistence is nevertheless quite clear: in the ceremony of the *agnicayana*, the 'construction of the fire altar', one begins by plowing the land upon which this multi-levelled brick structure will be erected, and by planting seven village and seven forest grains:<sup>35</sup> in this way, agriculture opens itself onto wilderness, and so absorbs it into itself.

One thus protects oneself from the forest by drawing it in towards oneself; but this is also a form of propitiation, since in so doing, one gives the forest a place within the village enterprise that is the sacrifice. The post to which the victim is tied is not placed within, but rather on the edge of the sacrificial ground.<sup>36</sup>

It is made from the wood of a tree found in the forest, which one addresses by a term meaning 'lord of the forest'.<sup>37</sup> When it is cut down, ritual precautions are taken such that the blows of the axe do not constitute an act of violence against it: similarly, the animal victim of the sacrifice is strangled in such a way that it neither cries out nor moves,<sup>38</sup> and that it consents to the 'pacification' that is its ritual killing.<sup>39</sup>

### Forest and Renunciation

Outside the village, the world of the *aranya* is at once within and without the *dharmic* norm, as shown in the *ŚB* passage cited above. Within, because it is in the forest that dwell and move the 'thieving and brigand' creatures which, were they in the village, would be punished according to *dharmic* law. Also within, because the *aranya* is not defined in any positive way, but rather as something that is missing: it is the absence of a village, the empty space delineated by two divergent paths, an undifferentiated and unexplicated break in continuity.<sup>40</sup> Lastly, within, because the forest is populated with animals inferior to those found in the village, smaller, weaker and as if hobbled in their movements.<sup>41</sup> Agni, the god of fire, and also the sacrificial and village god *par excellence*, devours the forest and takes hold of the wilderness<sup>42</sup> such that even when it is necessary to protect the sacrifice from the (counter-) attacks of the wild, there is never any doubt concerning the result of their combat: the sacrifice is a machine which, while complex and delicate, proves itself in the final analysis to be infallible.<sup>43</sup>

Yet, for all this, the forest is also that which lies outside of the village. For Prajāpati, as we have seen, as well as for his human imitators, the forest is (the image of) the other world, the world of the gods. But it is especially the wilderness of the *aranya* that is the image of the Absolute, or at least the place inhabited by those in search of the Absolute, those whom Indian tradition in its entirety presents as the antitheses of the *gṛhasthas*: these are the 'renouncers' (*saṃnyāsins*).

The emergence of this ascetic type, his ideal of solitary existence, the ceremony that marks his break with the world of the village,

the doctrine that undergirds his practices, and his body of values that arise from the desire to rid himself of the burden of his acts and to be 'liberated' from the necessity of rebirth—the normative Indian texts, well explicated by modern interpreters, abound in instruction on all these matters.<sup>44</sup> Let it suffice here to mention, among recent works, the research of Madeleine Biardeau<sup>45</sup> who shows how the passage from ancient brahmanism to Hinduism implies a complete re-evaluation of the primal opposition between the worldly man and the renouncer, or more exactly, between *dharmic* sacrifice and renunciation. One in fact finds, on the one hand, men of the world (or at least brahmins) adopting certain values and doctrinal themes of the renouncers, most notably that of non-violence, and thus bringing about profound transformations in sacrificial practice.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, there emerges a cosmology based upon the recurrence of cycles, together with a theology grounded in the personal relationship obtaining between devotee and his God, a god who intercedes regularly in order that the cataclysm that marks the end of each cosmic period might be followed by a new creation. With the combination of these two elements, deliverance, no longer a personal matter, ceases to be a prerogative of the renouncer alone and rather becomes a perspective open to all humanity.

Since we are concerned here with the brahmanic origins of these themes, we will go into some detail in discussing how and on what terms the *grhastha* / *samnyāsin* opposition has, since the beginnings of Indian speculation on the subject, adapted itself to the opposition between village and forest. To simply say that the renouncer lives in the forest is not enough. The renouncer lives in a way that is consonant with the forest, and those features of his lifestyle which are related to that which lies within *dharma* combine with those which guide his ambition to go beyond *dharma*. To do away with every form of conditioning is, first and foremost, to do away with the rites; and the farther a renouncer has advanced on the path he has taken (and while renouncement is absolute in theory, there remain, to be sure, gradations in the stages of its realization<sup>47</sup>), the less rites he performs. He eschews the repetitions inherent to the rites in order that he might lose himself in the non-definition of the wilderness.<sup>48</sup> He wishes to escape from the endless repetition of

rebirths, in order that he might render himself capable of gaining from the outset, and through a heroic effort, absolute bliss, or—it may be preferable to say—absolute nothingness.

Village ritual, however, is acutely aware of the analogy between repetition and the village, and between unexpectedness and the forest. One finds, in the rites, two kinds of bowls, those which are to be used several times over, and those one is to throw away after they have been used a single time: the former stand for village animals and the latter the animals of the forest.<sup>49</sup> Some ascetics endeavour to never use any eating vessel other than the hollow of their hands, while others eat 'in animal fashion', by grazing directly with their mouths.<sup>50</sup> All of these endeavour to reduce as much as possible the distance between themselves and nature, and attempt, to varying degrees, to rid themselves of all man-made objects.

Yet another affinity appears (or so it would seem, even if this is hypothetical on our part) between renouncers and wild animals, between that which lies without and that which lies within. The renouncer's professed goal is to identify himself with his *ātman* (a term we may translate, for the sake of brevity, by 'soul'<sup>51</sup>). Now, the primary meaning of this term is vital 'breath'; and while the renouncer's thoughts are concentrated upon his *ātman*, a great number of his techniques concern his breaths. But there is another word for breath: this is *vāyu* ('wind'), and the god Vāyu is the forest god *par excellence*, a protector and guide of forest creatures and the forest counterpart to the god Agni.<sup>52</sup>

While the forest is the locus of violence in its most elementary form, that violence symbolized by the gods Rudra and Vāyu, it is also that locus within which the ideal of non-violence (*ahimsā*) is most fully developed. And, while the village may have no qualms about inflicting the violence of the hunt upon the forest populations, it strives at the same time to draw it, as little as possible, into the violence of the sacrifice. For the sacrifice, that supreme form of village activity, is, once again, fundamentally violent; and while this is a regulated violence which sacrificers and sacrificial priests seek, through their practical knowledge, to channel, dissimulate and compensate, it is a violence they can never do away with completely.<sup>53</sup>

### Man

The sacrificial post, a piece of the forest carried to the fringe of the sacrifice, is normally cut so to be equal in measure to a man.<sup>54</sup> Instructions of this order, found as they are in the liturgical texts, can never be a matter of chance. When we learn, for example, that the length of such and such a portion of the sacrificial ground is to be a given multiple of the sacrificer's height or girth, we also learn the symbolism behind this homology. The human sacrificer is an image of the primordial Man, of whom sacrificial layout is itself a reproduction.<sup>55</sup> Concerning the equivalence between sacrificer and post, however, any conclusions we may draw are conjectural at best. What is it that the sacrificer and the post have in common, that should so be brought to the fore? It is the fact, in our opinion, that both at once participate in the village and the forest. This we have already seen for the post. As for the man, that is, as for the place that the human race occupies within the animal kingdom, the following fragmentary data may be gleaned from the Vedic texts:<sup>56</sup> man is the '*paśu*' par excellence, and stands at the forefront of the village animals who may be sacrificed. In a certain sense, he may even be said to be the sole authentic sacrificial victim, with the true sacrifice being that in which the sacrificer is himself the offering; here, the other animals are nothing more than surrogates for the man who sacrifices.<sup>57</sup> What distinguishes man from the other *paśus* are those features which further underline his 'village' character. Of all the *paśus*, he is the only one who is bare-skinned; the fact is, he had the hair that covers the bodies of cows.<sup>58</sup> Above all else, man is the sole sacrificial victim who can also be a sacrificer.<sup>59</sup> The Vedic definition of man as the doubly sacrificial animal is thus the counterpart to the Aristotelian definition of man as the political animal.<sup>60</sup> The fact nevertheless remains that several lists, found in Vedic texts, which contrast village and forest animals, explicitly place humans in the latter camp: we have already seen this in the context of the quasi-victims of the *āsvamedha*. More than this, it is their resemblance to humans that stands as a criterion by which certain animals are ranked among the forest creatures. Such is the case of the elephant, no doubt by virtue of its trunk which it uses like a hand,<sup>61</sup> and of the monkey.<sup>62</sup> By no means should one take this

classificatory anomaly to be a strategy of sorts for the suppression of human sacrifice: there is no lack of sacrifices, real or imagined, in the Vedic descriptions, that enjoin man to fully embody his role as *paśu*.<sup>63</sup> It is in an entirely different perspective, in our opinion, that one must look to account for the simultaneous presence of man on both lists: here, it is a matter of pointing to man's twofold nature, or rather his twofold propensity, drawn as he is to both the full and the empty, society and solitude, the village and the forest.

### Utopia

Must one make a choice, then, between village and forest? A fortunate discovery on the part of brahmanic ideology was the establishment, from the end of the Vedic period onwards, of the system of *āśramas* or stages of life. A man's life (or at least that of a 'twice-born' man who belongs to one of the three higher social classes) is normally divided into several periods. At the end of his childhood, the young boy receives Vedic initiation from a teacher who thus confers a 'second birth' upon him; he is thenceforth a brahmanic student, and spends several years in his teacher's house, serving and studying the Veda. This first stage is followed by that of the 'householder': after his many years of study, of chastity and of service, the young man returns to his village and marries. He is now a *gṛhastha*, devoting himself to economic and procreative activities, complementary to his religious activities: taken as a whole, these may be grouped under the heading of *iṣṭāpūrta*, 'sacrifice and gratification'.<sup>64</sup> This village period need not be the ultimate stage in a man's life: when a householder's hair has turned grey, and when he 'has seen the sons of his sons', he may, legitimately (that is, in a way that conforms to the very *dharma* he will henceforth attempt to transcend), leave the village, rid himself of his possessions and his social markings, and take up the life of a renouncer. By virtue of this repartition of the human life span, renunciation appears as a perspective offered to (but not imposed upon) every 'man of the world'.<sup>65</sup> In this light, the figures of the *gṛhastha* and the *saṃnyāsin* are not strictly antithetical: the forest lies on the village's horizon and is, in a certain sense, integrated into village life.

On the other hand, village ritual itself calls for a number of excursions in the direction of the forest (apart from the procedures we have already mentioned, which concern themselves with bringing the forest into the village). There are texts which may only be studied or recited in the forest, and which belong to that body of Vedic literature quite aptly called the 'Forest Books' (*Āraṇyaka*s);<sup>66</sup> as well as the daily *brahmayajña* rite, which consists of the individual recitation of a brief Vedic text, outside of the village—this recitation (which may be made in silence) is itself considered to constitute a sacrifice to the Veda.<sup>67</sup>

But these different ways of combining village with forest imply compartmentalizations in time and movement through space: both spheres remain distinct from one another, even if it is possible for a person to experience both in the course of his lifetime. Indian ideology, or fantasy, wishing to go even further, came to imagine a place where one could simultaneously be both in the village and in the forest, and lead a life whose village and forest aspects were unseparable. This ideal place, for all intents and purposes the Indian utopia, is the hermitage of the *vānaprastha* stage of life.<sup>68</sup> In an effort to make this locus a credible one, the normative texts make residence in a hermitage one of the four stages of life, the intermediate stage between the householder and *saṃnyāsīn*<sup>69</sup> *āśramas*. The texts, however, find it necessary to go to great lengths to clearly differentiate this phase from that which follows or precedes it, doing so by multiplying the number of gradations within what is, as a whole, described as a state of transition.<sup>70</sup> Yet, this fusion of village and forest is so beautiful in the eyes of the Indian authors, and fundamentally so unrealistic, that they exclude it, at times, from the realm of the possible in our present age of iron, declaring that it can only be found in a distant past, in the wondrous age of the *ṛṣi*s, of those inspired seers who received the Vedic revelation.<sup>71</sup>

What then are the components of this happy synthesis? While the normative texts abound in definitions, with sometimes incoherent prolixity, the literary texts provide much more instructive poetic descriptions of the same. This is especially the case with the most celebrated of all Indian texts, Kālidāsa's drama *Śakuntalā*<sup>72</sup> (the heroine who bears this name is the Sacontale of Apollinaire's *Chanson du mal-aimé*).

Here we learn that the *vānaprastha* settles in the forest, taking with him his fires and, if he so desires, his wife. He is capable of, and therefore obliged to, sacrifice, but this is a sacrifice that involves no toil, since it prohibits both the eating and the offering of any cultivated food: here, the favoured foodstuff and preferred oblatory material is *nīvāra*, which is (wild) rice. While there is an organized social life, this in no way entails any alteration of the natural environment. The hermitage is a *dharmāranya*. This name is worthy of note: *dharmāranya* is a solitude ruled over by *dharma*. While this fusion of terms does not explicitly constitute a paradox, it nevertheless juxtaposes an essentially social order with a forest or wilderness, which we have already seen as standing both inside and outside of society.

What strikes the visitor to Śakuntalā's hermitage are, first of all, the grains of wild rice lying at the base of its trees, grains which parrots, nesting in the hollows of these trees, have caused to fall to the ground. He sees fawns who, knowing no fear, run in straight lines, and thus do not confound their pursuers by dashing off in different directions. They have no fear of human voices, since these voices are generally occupied with the recitation of the Veda. They graze peacefully on grassy meadows from which the hermits have carefully removed every blade of *darbha* grass, since this latter is a vital ingredient of the sacrifice.<sup>73</sup> All the while, rivulets of water lap at the roots of the trees in this forest hermitage, while the brilliant colours of their buds is muted, or rather softened, by the smoke that rises from sacrificial fires into which clarified butter has been poured.<sup>74</sup>

Such then is this paradise in which the incompatible elements of village and forest, once purified, melt together. This is undoubtedly a most delicate marriage, and one exposed to thousands of dangers, since, in Kālidāsa's fictional account at least, the political order finds itself obliged to dispatch an inspector, a 'Commissioner of Religious Affairs', to ensure that all is well, and 'that the rites are celebrated without obstacle'.<sup>75</sup>

While the hermit lives at a distance from the village, in the non-social locus of the forest, this is, more often than not, in order that he might take part, together with other hermits or hermit couples, in a pure and peaceful society, a society that is homogeneous, with no true division of labour, and even, one

might say, without distinction between those who hold power and those who are subject to that power. At best, we may state that these 'ashrams', in the idealized image that poetry and theatre give of them, are organized around a particularly venerated spiritual master, a *ṛṣi*, one of the inspired 'seers' who received the revelation of the Veda and transmitted it to humanity.

A traveller lost in the forest may come to realize he is in the neighbourhood of a 'forest of austerities' by the following signs:

'Here the gazelles are trusting, coming and going without fear . . . The trees, their boughs heavy with flowers and fruits, are lovingly tended. No tilled land nearby. There can be no doubt, this is a hermitage. Smoke rises over a multitude of fires'.<sup>76</sup>

It is ever so gently that these hermits press themselves to the bosom of wild nature and join themselves to it, without ever fully renouncing their social being. They overcome this contradiction when they devote themselves to rites and perform sacrifices, managing all the while to leave nature inviolate by not rending the earth with their plows. The forest, of itself, not only provides them with all their basic needs, but also gives them the means by which to make offerings, a most wondrous thing, when one considers that all vegetable oblatory matter must consist, by definition, of cultivated cereals. It is these hermits' very presence that gives rise to such goodwill on the part of nature.

Other texts, while of similar inspiration, go even further, when the friendship between man and nature is transformed into a kind of osmosis. This 'naturalization' of man is not, for all this—as in the case of the 'renouncer'—the result of an abandonment of the rites, but is, rather, effected through his will to give himself over to them, entirely. Let us take, for example, a passage from Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhava*.<sup>77</sup> In reality, the character described in this vast mythological poem is not a mortal man, but the divine princess Pārvaṭī, whose fate it is to become the wife of the god Śiva. Little matter—the emotions, ascetic prowess, and the whole of Pārvaṭī's behaviour are in perfect conformity with the habits of 'those who depart into the forest'. The fact that the protagonist here is a woman only accentuates the marvellous character of this lifestyle. In her retreat, Pārvaṭī does not content herself with harmonizing ritual and nature; like so many other Indian heroines, she offers to our scrutiny the contrast between her tender and delicate body,

accustomed to the luxury of the royal palace, and the very harsh austerities to which she has henceforth consecrated herself.

Impossible to strip her of her resolve. But she stripped away her necklace,<sup>78</sup> that necklace whose strings, when they moved, rubbed away the sandal paste (that perfumed her breast). She put on a rough bark tunic, rosy like the new dawn, which tore with the heaving of her breasts. Her hand no longer rose to touch her lips, now without their rouge of her past life. Nor would she ever again touch the ball that [until now] had reddened with the color of the unguents she applied to her breasts. [Now] were her fingers cut by sharp blades of *kuśa* grass, and worn from the beads of her rosary. Established in her austerities, she placed, as if on deposit and with an eye to taking them back [at a later time], these two things in these two [vessels]: in the delicate lianas did she consign the grace of her movement, and in the gazelles, her trembling glance. Ever steadfast, she herself caused young trees to grow with the flow from her jar—from her breast (or so it seemed)—that poured over them. Guha<sup>79</sup> himself could not deprive them of their rightful maternal preference, they being her eldest [children]. Charmed by the forest seeds that Pārvaṭī fed them out of her hands, the gazelles around her were so trusting that she could measure her own eyes by comparing them with theirs, out of curiosity, in the presence of her companions.<sup>80</sup> She performed her ritual ablutions, and made her offerings into the *Jātavedas* fire; she clad her upper body in [the] skins [of trees], and recited the sacred texts. In their desire to behold Parvati, the *ṛṣis* came to her: youthfulness is no matter for those who have matured through religious observance. Animals hostile (to one another) lost their primal selfishness; the trees honoured their guests with their most precious fruits; fires burned inside huts built of leaves: such was her hermitage, and it was [the] purification [of the world]. [But] when she came to understand that the asceticism and concentration she had first practiced were insufficient for her to attain the object of her desires, she began to undertake, without care for the tenderness of her body, a most extreme self-mortification. She who would previously have tired from a simple game of ball, see her as she now plunges herself into the practices of the *munis*! Her body is like a golden lotus, delicate, yet solid and full of strength. In the pure summer season, this woman of pure smile,<sup>81</sup> in the midst of four blazing fires<sup>82</sup> did she of slender-waisted body<sup>83</sup> come to place herself. Triumphant and of blinding brilliance she stared at the sun, unflinching . . . Her only food, and this not by request, was water and the rays of he whose essence is ambrosia and who is the lord of the constellations;<sup>84</sup> her way of life was verily no different from the means



by which trees survive. Terribly burnt by many fires, the fire that moves through the sky and those piled up with wood, Pārvatī, once the hot season had passed, was showered with new waters, and there arose from her, just as it did from the earth, a dewy breath that [mounted] straight [up to heaven] . . . And while she lay on a bed of stone, having for her dwelling that which is not a house, in the wind-sheeted rain, the nights, with their eyes of flashing lightning, looked down upon her, witness, one would have thought, of her extreme asceticism.

Here we have an account of a complex transformation which begins with a transposition: the red colour of her worldly ornaments, which is also the redness of passion, comes to be replaced by the red of the tree bark and that of the wounds caused by the blades of *kuśa* grass. It is with this grass that one strews the sacrificial ground, transfers a burning flame from one fire to another, and fashions bouquets of purificatory virtues. The rosary, made of wild seeds, replaces the necklace, the work of a craftsman. Metaphor becomes reality: Pārvatī's body (most especially her arms) is compared, as is the case with all young women, with lianas; but here we find Pārvatī siphoning a portion of her being into the forest vines themselves, and an affinity, first grounded in analogy, takes on the character of a continuity of substance. Caring for young trees would be too much akin to gardening and overly disclose the heterogeneity of humans and plants, were this feeding not immediately assimilated to suckling. In the first phase of her forest life, Pārvatī puts on a garment of bark, but bark, that which clothes trees, is also their skin; and so it is that the poet, by way of noting the progress of Pārvatī's 'naturalization', tells us at a later point that she is clad in tree skins, and not tree bark, the intended meaning being that, just as with trees, this superimposed element is a part of her organism. Symmetrically, the nature around her becomes pacified, making itself a welcoming place for humans—and, we might even say, ritualizing itself.<sup>85</sup> It is out of this give and take that the hermitage is born, a hermitage which purifies the world by the simple fact of its existence. The *ṛsis* of the region, without a care for that rule of etiquette which holds that the young are to visit their elders, and not the other way around, come to admire the hermit princess.<sup>86</sup> Far from being scandalized, they marvel at the sight of her offering sacrifices and studying the Veda, activities which her female condition would

normally prohibit: with Pārvatī, a surplus of ritual and a surplus of nature go hand in hand. She carries her discipline yet one step further when she undertakes that extreme practice, proper to forest hermits, which is most notably prescribed in Manu: 'In the summer, he shall place himself in the midst of the five fires; in the rainy season, he shall remain outside, with the clouds as his only shelter; in the winter, he shall only wear wet clothing. Thus he progressively increases his self-mortifications'.<sup>87</sup> What is remarkable, in the case of Pārvatī, is that she does not, in her affrontment of nature, seek to assert herself over and against it: she suffers the same fate as do trees and the earth, dehydrates, is nourished and is reinvigorated together with them; she follows their rhythm and obeys their principles of existence.

## The Theology of Debt in Brahmanism

On the frontispiece of his book entitled *Dawn*, Nietzsche placed this exclamation from the *Rg-Veda*: 'So many dawns have yet to dawn!' These words form the third line of a stanza addressed to the god of punishment, to the god who sees that oaths are kept and accounts settled. It has been translated as follows, in deliberately literal fashion, by Louis Renou: 'Abolish therefore the debts contracted by me! Let me not pay for the (debt) contracted by another, O king! There are in truth many dawns that have yet to dawn: assign us, O Varuṇa, (to be) living in them!'<sup>2</sup>

The term translated here as 'debt' is *ṛṇá*, the very same term that subsequently became established in classical Sanskrit, and which has been conserved, or taken over unaltered, in modern Indo-Aryan languages with—still—the technical meaning of 'debt'.<sup>3</sup> But given that we are dealing here with *Rg-Veda*, a text that is fundamentally and almost exclusively religious, the product of a society in which the notions of economy, society and law are still tethered to the sphere of religious representation, can we be sure that the word *ṛṇá* already had the meaning of goods received in return for the promise to hand back either the goods themselves or something of equivalent value (at the least)? Is it not more a matter of obligation *per se*, of undertakings of all kinds, of duty in general—of which the returning of borrowed goods is simply a special case?

In the hymns of the *Rg-Veda* there are at least two passages in which the word *ṛṇá* can only be taken in its narrowest sense: *RS* 8.47.17, where it is said: 'just as we settle a *ṛṇá*, first one sixteenth, then an eighth, then the *ṛṇá* (in its entirety) . . .'<sup>4</sup>; and *RS* 10.34.10 where the unlucky gambler is described as *ṛṇāvān*, 'affected by *ṛṇá*'.<sup>5</sup> Mention can be made of several other texts in this context, though they are not as clear-cut: the Maruts

swoop down on mortals in the same way that one chases after a *ṛṇāvān*, a 'debtor', according to Renou (*RS* 1.169.7).<sup>6</sup> Moreover the epithet *ṛṇayávan* can be applied to the Maruts: they are 'those who chase after *ṛṇá*', (1.87.4),<sup>7</sup> while the *Āditya* are *cáyamānā ṛṇāni*, 'they see that *ṛṇá* are paid', (2.27.4).<sup>8</sup> The god *Bṛhaspati* has the privilege of being *ānu vása ṛṇám ādadīh*, he 'who gathers in *ṛṇá* at will' (2.24.13).<sup>9</sup> Bergaigne has shown that in these passages the term *ṛṇá*, while undoubtedly meaning 'debt', is not unambiguous for all that: the word can also be interpreted in the sense of 'crime' or 'fault'.<sup>10</sup> But of these two sometimes unseparable renderings, it seems that the more precise one, and which carries the greater social charge, is also the one that must be considered primordial. This at least is the conclusion to be drawn from the indications provided by Bergaigne and Renou.<sup>11</sup>

It is not particularly extraordinary for the same word to mean at once 'debt' and 'fault', the same duality is to be found in the German *Schuld*. But in German the two acceptations occur as two aspects, two developments, of the same initially very broad notion, that expressed by the verb 'to owe'; the same Germanic root accounts for *Schuld* as well as for the verb *sollen* and the forms which, in several languages including English, are used to express the future.<sup>12</sup> French has similar relationships—semantically between 'il faut' and 'je dois', and etymologically between 'il faut' and 'la faute'.<sup>13</sup>

Sanskrit is quite different. The notion of 'debt', lexicographically, has nothing in common with that of 'duty': the verb which corresponds the least poorly to 'to be obliged' is *ARH-*, which has no etymological link with *ṛṇá*.<sup>14</sup> But what is most striking is that *ṛṇá* does not in fact have an etymology. The word cannot be attached to any verbal root inside Sanskrit, nor can any equivalent be found for it outside India that would allow an etymology to be constructed on a comparative basis. Attempts have been made, of course, but they cannot be said to have given convincing results. Pāṇini makes it the past participle of a verb *ṛ-* 'to go',<sup>15</sup> and Lanman has tried to put this suggestion to use by imagining that the participle 'who went' is used here in the sense of 'who went against', whence 'guilty', and that this participle, made into a substantive, therefore came to mean 'guilt', whence 'fault' and finally 'debt'.<sup>16</sup> In an extremely obscure note, Renou too seems

prepared to accept an etymological root for *ṛṇá* in the verb *ṛ-*, but—if we understand him correctly—he sees in *ṛṇá* a form of evil ‘which has come’ and struck the guilty person.<sup>17</sup> These hypothetical constructions are not backed up by anything solid. As for the comparatists, they have to content themselves with forays that are both chancy and hesitant. The only extra-Indian piece of evidence that can be made to correspond to the Sanskrit *ṛṇá*, or more exactly to the Vedic compound *ṛṇá-cit* ‘who punishes faults’ or ‘who sees that debts are paid’ is the Avestic form *arna-čaiša* applied to Mithra and which, it is thought, describes this divine figure as ‘avenger of wrongs’.<sup>18</sup> But all that can be deduced from such narrow parallelism is that the word *ṛṇá* is the Sanskrit representative of a common Indo-Iranian word; no further progress can be made by semantic analysis and any attempt to widen the field of comparison, and identify a verbal root around which an etymological family might be seen to form, results only in a whirlpool of contradictory conjectures.<sup>19</sup> Particularly instructive is the confrontation between the names for ‘debt’ in Sanskrit and in Old Iranian: the Avestic name for ‘debt’, *pāra*, derives from the root *par-* ‘to condemn’. Benveniste has shown that this verb is the same as *par-* ‘to make equal’, from which it is usually distinguished.<sup>20</sup> The notion rendered by the substantive *pāra* includes ‘all that is owed as reparation by he who has been guilty of an offence. There is, in the end, only one root *par-* “to compensate by something taken from oneself, either from one’s person or one’s effects”’. In addition to *pāra*, a *-ti-* suffixed derivative can be traced to this root, meaning ‘compensation actually made’, whence ‘punishment, expiation’, and also a *-tu-* suffixed derivative, recognizable in the borrowings made by armenian and meaning ‘requiring compensation’, whence ‘debt to be settled’ and ‘duty, in general’.<sup>21</sup> This well-articulated *ensemble* in Iranian stands in contrast to the isolation of *ṛṇá* in Sanskrit.

Similar considerations apply to the word *kūsīda*, the semantic field of which is close to that of *ṛṇá*. The neuter noun *kūsīda* appears first in the later Veda, with the meaning of ‘borrowed goods’, or ‘goods held in deposit’; it then comes to mean ‘loan with interest’, ‘usury’. From the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* onwards, the meaning of the secondary derivative *kusīdin* becomes established as ‘usurer’.<sup>22</sup> The compilers of the main dictionaries consider that

this *kūsīda* was first an adjective ‘slow’, ‘indolent’, ‘inert’,<sup>23</sup> (such is indeed the meaning of *kusīta* in Pali).<sup>24</sup> They break the adjective down into *ku-sīda* ‘who stays sitting, in a prejudicial way’. A loan thus becomes an item which is deposited in the borrower’s house, and then weighs on him by its inertia and paralyzes him. Such an etymology is indeed surprising, since what makes loans special (and even scandalous), particularly when they are usurious, is that far from being inert, the transferred wealth, by the very fact of the transfer and the passing of time, develops and multiplies like a living being, to the torment of the borrower and the profit of the lender. At least this etymology is put forward with thought and shows evidence of a method at work. Bṛhaspati’s explanation, on the other hand, is a pure and simple pun: ‘*kūsīda* is the name given to the profit made on a base (*kusīta*) or wretched (*sidat*) man by people who do not hesitate and multiply by four or by eight (the sum they have lent)’.<sup>25</sup>

Such then is the situation: the words meaning debt or loan are borne out in the Veda. These terms do not lend themselves to analysis. Nothing in the form or the usage of these words gives any indication as to the way in which these notions came into being, nothing points to anything other than the notions themselves. The only elements to be found in Sanskrit that might help us outline a genealogy of debt are, on the one hand, the probable but not unequivocal link with the notion of ‘fault’, and on the other hand, the fact that the object of the debt is as much the debtor’s own person as any wealth that might be in his possession. In Sanskrit therefore, the notion of debt is primary and autonomous, and does not allow a further analysis.

Now it so happens that the *Brāhmaṇas* present a theory of debt as constitutive of human nature that is in a way the image, on the level of religious speculation, of the names for debt on the linguistic level. Just as the words *ṛṇá* and *kūsīda* have no etymology, strictly speaking, so man’s congenital debt, while it explains everything, is not itself explained by anything, and has no origin. In the same way as the notion of debt is already there, fully formed, in the oldest texts, so does fundamental debt affect man and define him from the moment he is born.<sup>26</sup>

Here are the main passages where this doctrine is expressed. First of all, *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*, 6.3.10.5: ‘In being born, the

brahmin is born burdened with three debts: (a debt) of Vedic study to the *ṛṣis*, of sacrifice to the gods, and of offspring to the Fathers. He is free from debt who has a son, who offers sacrifices, and who leads the life of a brahmin student. It is by partitions that he satisfies the demands (of his creditors). That is how partitions get their name'. 'Vedic study' translates the Sanskrit term *brahmacarya*, literally 'frequentation of the Veda'. After initiation (*upanayana*), the young brahmin must, for a variable number of years, serve the master with whom he resides, and devote his life to the study of the Veda. At the same time he must adhere to a number of strict observances, the most important being sexual continence (to such an extent that the word *brahmacarya* means as much in this period in the life of the young man, and the manner of life he leads, as chastity or celibacy); the *brahmacārin* is the 'brahmin student', he who devotes himself to the *brahmacarya*. The *ṛṣis*, a term that S. Lévi translates as 'saint' and Renou as 'seer', or 'prophet', are the men who have had the revelation of the Veda, or of a particular part or 'branch' of the Veda, and have transmitted it to other men.<sup>27</sup> The last two sentences of this passage deal with 'carvings' or 'cuts', the *avadānas*: they follow a discussion of the dismemberment of the sacrificial victim, and of the symbolic value to be attached to the viscera and more generally to the portions thus cut off or detached. But why these *avadānas*? The reason is that dividing up the victim is in a way the culmination of the sacrifice, the moment in which the meaning of the sacrificial operations is revealed (as well as the correspondence between the parts of the victim's body with those of the sacrificer's body).<sup>28</sup> But why the sacrifice? It is the means by which one settles the debt that one owes the gods from birth. Now the word *avadāna* derives from the verb *ava-do* 'to cut up' (present *avadayati*). But the author of this text is out to over determine the term etymologically: thus he also links it to the verb *ava-day* (present *avadayate*) meaning 'to pay in order to satisfy the demands of a creditor, or to silence the demands a man is making'. It is by virtue of its relationship with this verb 'to pay' that the 'cutting into pieces' or 'dividing-up' is an 'appeasement': *tād avadānair evāva dayate tād avadānānām avadānatvām*.<sup>29</sup>

The account differs slightly in *ŚB* 1.7.2.1-6. The passage from it that follows is taken from the translation of S. Lévi:<sup>30</sup>

In being born every being is born as a debt owed to the gods, the saints, the Fathers and to men. If one makes a sacrifice, it is because of a debt owing to the gods from birth; it is for them that one does it, when a sacrifice is made, or a libation offered. And if one recites sacred texts, it is because it is a debt owed to the saints: it is for them that one does it, and he who recites sacred texts is called 'the guardian of the treasure of the saints'. And if one wishes for offspring, it is because it is a debt due to the Fathers from birth; it is for them that one does it, so that their offspring should be continuous and uninterrupted. And if one gives hospitality, it is because it is a debt owing to men from birth; it is for them that one does it when one gives hospitality, when one gives them food. The man who does all this has done all that he needs to do; he has achieved everything, conquered everything. And because from birth he is a debt owed to the gods, he satisfies them in so far as he makes sacrifices.

In these two parallel texts, the theology is primarily a justification of the rites.<sup>31</sup> Between these two formulations, however, several important differences are to be noted: the *ŚB* account is at once fuller, more vigorous and more surprising.

1. While the subject in the *TS* is the brahmin, that referred to by the *ŚB* is 'whoever is'. The cruel paradox here is that if all men are born as debtors, only some of them, the 'twice-born' (*dvija*), have the means to settle their debt with the gods and the *ṛṣi*: only the second birth, conferred by the *upanayana*, gives access to the Veda text: it is by reciting the Veda that one frees oneself from the debt owed to the *ṛṣi*, and it is by offering sacrifices accompanied by the recitation of *mantra* taken from the Veda that one frees oneself from the debt owed to the gods. This gap between 'whoever is' and the group of the three first *varṇas*, that is, the men destined to receive second birth, appears either as a lack of coherence or else as the sign that for brahmanism the precepts of social and religious life apply only to a humanity made up exclusively of the 'twice-born' (although the fourth *varṇa*, that of the *śūdra*, is also produced by sacrifice of the primordial *Puruṣa*).<sup>32</sup> But what causes us surprise does not seem, as it happens, to pose any problem for Indian commentators. The *Mīmāṃsakas* actually discuss an opposite problem, raised by the *TS* formulation: why does this text talk only of the brahmin, when all the *dvija*, that is, the *ksatriyas* as well as the *vaiśyas*, are bound and authorized to receive the *upanayana*, recite the Veda and offer

sacrifices? This question is dealt with in *Śābara Bhāṣya ad Jaimini-Sūtra* 6.2.31 (11th *adhikarāna*). The answer is that the doctrine of debts and the means by which they are settled does indeed concern the three first *varṇas* and not the brahmins alone: the use of the word 'brahmin' does not imply the exclusion of the other two *varṇas*, it is simply a manner of speaking. Included in the group of beings who are debtors from birth are all those who are bound to keep these three observances: the offering of sacrifices, the study of the Veda and the engendering of sons.<sup>33</sup>

2. Whereas the *TS* says that the brahmin bears three debts (he is born *ṛṇavān*), *ŚB* says more forcefully that whoever exists is born (as) debt. Man is not simply affected by debt, he is defined by debt.<sup>34</sup> The same construction that consists in making the noun 'debt' into the attribute of the subject occurs, as will be seen, in *ŚB* 3.6.2.16.

3. Whereas *TS* lists three debts, *ŚB* states four. With the hospitality rites that are the means of paying the debt owed to men, the *ŚB* completes the programme of duties that form the framework of a man's life, or at least of the life of the 'twice-born' man. The four-debt system accounts for the relationships between generations, between contemporaries, between men and the gods.<sup>35</sup> As presented in *ŚB*, the group of debts establishes a partition of religious space closely resembling the one put in place by the list of the five daily *mahāyajñas*, 'great sacrifices': sacrifices to the gods, to the Fathers, to the Veda, to men, and also to the *bhūtas*, the indistinct beings that prowl around the home. But it is remarkable that while the *Mahābhārata* also enumerates four debts,<sup>36</sup> *smṛti* literature and the *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā* generally list only the three debts mentioned in *TS*. The debt owed to men appears less constitutive than the other three, probably because it is easier to understand it as a moment in a system of exchange, since the two partners in the debt owing to men can easily find themselves swapping roles.

4. Unlike *TS*, the *ŚB* list ends on a new mention of the debt owed to the gods. More exactly, the *avadānas*, the 'carvings' discussed in the two accounts, are explicitly related in *ŚB* to the debt owed to the gods.

These divergences, of unequal import, do not take away from the unity of the doctrine. In both the *TS* version and that of *ŚB*,

nothing is said about the nature of the goods borrowed, or about the process which has made man into a 'borrowed' being. Nothing in these texts harkens back to the original fall—neither crime, nor oversight, nor contract—in fact, no event explains or even precedes the debtor situation in which he who comes into the world finds himself immediately ensnared. There is no mythology of the process by which one becomes a debtor.<sup>37</sup> Myths only appear as a means of providing a model for the steps that allow a man to divest himself of his debt. It is worth recalling that the authors of the *Brāhmaṇas* want to show the *raison d'être* behind the rites (and of that rite, among others, called procreation): they find this *raison d'être* in debt, without there being any need for them to say of what it consists; all that is necessary is to show how it can be settled. This doctrine is the exact opposite of the theory of the *karman*, which teaches that each birth has its own characteristics, entirely determined and justified by the sequences or accumulations of acts that preceded it.

Another striking feature of this doctrine is that it leaves a time interval between the moment at which man's debtor state begins—immediately—and the moment at which he is allowed to start acting to divest himself of it. It is not, of course, a matter of physical or intellectual maturity, but of ritual qualification. One can only begin learning the Veda, thus paying one's debt to the *ṛṣis*, after receiving the *upanayana*; as a general rule, one cannot offer sacrifices and procreate, and thus settle one's debt with the gods and Fathers, unless one has provided oneself with a wife. (The *Naiyāyikas*, later, use this time-interval to argue that the word *ṛṇā*, in these texts from the *Brāhmaṇas*, should only be taken figuratively. If the doctrine of congenital debt had to be taken literally, they say, then newborn babies would have to be urged to offer sacrifices, study and observe chastity! As it is, one does not dance for the blind, nor sing to the deaf, and one teaches only those able to understand the meaning of what is taught. Thus, when the Veda talks of 'debt', it wishes simply to talk of duty, to show how good it is to offer sacrifices, and how bad it is to neglect them. Thus, common sense—or rather the determination to grant the Veda common sense—blurs the theory of debt, by blunting the cutting edge of the paradox. But we shall also

see that the *Naiyāyikas* aim was to reconcile —the teachings of the Veda with the prospect of deliverance, *mokṣa*.<sup>38</sup>

In the series of debts, those owed to the gods are special in that the gods are but the substitutes or intermediaries of another creditor, which is death, or else Yama, the god of death. 'As soon as a man is born, he is born in person as a debt owing to death. When he makes a sacrifice, he is buying back his person from death.'<sup>39</sup> Thus, there is no specific means, founded on direct relationship between debtor and creditor, of 'paying death off'. 'Of that which in me is borrowed, and not yet returned, of the tribute due to Yama that I carry with me hither and thither—of this debt, O Agni, would that I could free myself. Thou, knowest the art of untying all knots'.<sup>40</sup> 'The loan I have not returned, the tribute due to Yama that I carry with me hither and thither, all the time that I am here, I am settling it. Of this debt, O Agni, would that I could free myself'.<sup>41</sup>

The ultimate creditor is a much more complex character than the other gods, for Yama is also the sovereign of the dead and the ancestor or prototype of mankind insofar as mankind is mortal. Whereas the debt owed to the gods is always associated with two or three other congenital debts, the debt owed to Yama suffices unto itself, it dominates and explains all the others. If man is a borrowed being, if he holds in his possession goods that belong to death, he can only free himself by dying: buying back and disappearing become one and the same. To free himself without at the same time being destroyed, he must get Yama to accept a substitute of what he owes him: this he does by sacrifice. One of the ways of describing sacrifice is to represent it as a journey which takes the sacrificer to heaven and then brings him back to earth. During his ascension, the sacrificer reserves a place in heaven that he will occupy for good after his death.<sup>42</sup> Dying he will return the principal of his debt to Yama; this death does not mean total disappearance however, since a form of his person will live on and settle in the heavenly place he went to visit and mark out for himself. What he gives so as to return his person, but also to get it back, is the sacrificial offering—this is addressed to the gods of course, but is in fact meant to appease Yama. Yama's image is so strongly associated with his creditor role that it appears whenever any debt situation arises during the course of the rite: a promise

unkept, an expectation unmet, or simply ritual prescription unfulfilled. 'The sacrificer takes on a debt to Yama when he spreads plants on the altar. If he were to leave without burning them, these plants would drag him by a rope round his neck into the other world. If he burns them while reciting the *mantra* "that which is in me that I have not given back . . .", he pays his debt to Yama in this world already, and goes to the heavenly world free of debt'.<sup>43</sup> All debt is the presence of death.

In his effort to buy back his person from Yama, man calls upon Agni for help. As has already been pointed out, the liberating *mantra* is addressed to Agni; it takes Agni as witness. The following declaration occurs in the *Atharva Veda*: 'I let Agni Vaiśvānara know if there is a debt, a mutual commitment (*saṃgara*) entered into with the gods. He knows how to untie all these bonds. Let us then be joined to what is cooked'.<sup>44</sup> The transformation that occurs during sacrifice is through cooking:<sup>45</sup> cooking of the material used for sacrifice, but also cooking of the sacrificer himself in the heat or internal combustion of the *dikṣā*, the preliminary consecration which is the moment at which the sacrificer abandons his secular body to the gods and acquires the divine body that will allow him to journey to heaven and back. Once past the *dikṣā*, man, the sacrificer, thus prepares to carry out a two part operation: to pay his debt to the gods, and to buy himself back from death. In doing so, 'he is born into a world which he has made himself. That is why it is said: man is born into a world made (by himself)'.<sup>46</sup>

In fact, this alliance with Agni by which man can swap the given world of original debt for a world re-made through the work of sacrifice, can only be entered into if the sacrificer has Yama's consent. As creditor, Yama bestows on his mortal debtor the conditions by which the latter can settle his debt. Actually, Yama is he who gives man a place in which to live on this earth. 'In truth it is Yama who determines the points of settlement (*avasāna*)'.<sup>47</sup> Here below, as in the world beyond, it is Yama who brings wanderings to an end. The piece of terrestrial space assigned to mortals by Yama is the place where they can light the sacrificial fire called the *gārhapatya*. It should be noted that Yama is acting here as the wielder of royal power (*ksatra*) *par excellence*, with the Fathers' consent—their main characteristic being that they are a

group, a multitude, *viś*, and by the very fact an image of the *vaiśyas*. Power, death, the group (of the dead): these are the forces that join together to make of man a being who resides and sacrifices. This procedure applies to any form of occupation of the ground, or marking out of a *kṣetra*: 'Any man who, with the Fathers' approval, receives a place to settle from the *kṣatriya*, receives it in the proper manner'.<sup>48</sup> It is *sudatta* for him, 'duly given', since the *kṣatriya* is a replica of Yama, and the Fathers are the model of the collectivity.

Another way of 'making a world' for oneself is procreation. As has been seen, the production of sons is the way of paying off one's debt to one's ancestors. Liberation is immediate: a man only has to have glimpsed the face of his newborn son for him to be freed of his debt to the Fathers and guaranteed immortality.<sup>49</sup> The pre-eminence of the eldest son is founded on this basis. 'His oldest son only has to come into the world for a man to be a possessor of sons (*putrin*), and freed of his debt to the Fathers. That is why the eldest son deserves (to inherit his father's wealth) in its entirety'.<sup>50</sup> It is the eldest son alone, who is engendered to obey the injunctions of *dharma*. The younger sons are *kāmaja*, conceived 'for the sake of desire'.<sup>51</sup> Just as one only has to be born to discover that one is in debt, so the biological birth of the son is all that is needed to free the father, even before the new arrival has received the first *samskāra* qualifying him to celebrate a rite: this gap between the ritual situation, the ritual effects produced by the biological event of birth, and the moment at which the subject is actually able to take on ritual responsibilities, is underlined in the commentaries.<sup>52</sup> So long as he has no son, a man has no world.<sup>53</sup> Just like the 'made world' that becomes accessible through sacrificial consecration, so the world that the newborn son procures for his father is a world where debt is absent: in such a world, man becomes equal to himself, and ceasing to be a piece of property being demanded by creditors, he really and truly is. While the traditional etymology of *putra* explains the name of the son as being 'he who saves (*tra-*) from the hell called *put-*'<sup>54</sup> and who consequently makes possible a happy life for his father in the world beyond, there is another less frequently mentioned etymology, but which is more vigorous still, found in a commentary on *BAU* 1.5.17: 'he saves (*trāyate*) his father through plenitude (*pūraṇena*)'.<sup>55</sup> But the most

radical formulation is given by the Śruti itself: 'When a man wants to have an offspring, he must make an offering of a sterile cow to the plants . . . The plants give him the offspring that comes to him from himself. He obtains an offspring. The plants are the waters; man is that which is not. It is the waters that give him being from that which is not'.<sup>56</sup>

In the debt owed to the Fathers and the means by which it can be settled, there is an element of pathos, in that this body of notions relates to fundamental and visible processes of life. As a result, the debt owed to the Fathers gives rise in strictly religious literature, but also in literature proper, to a more extended and diversified treatment, with more interwoven narrative elements, than the other debts on the list. The idea of being able to buy back one's person by giving the creditor a substitute, which is essential for settling the debt owed to the gods and to death, is itself based on the authority of an example of a son who succeeded in capturing the being that was to be his parents' ransom. This is the legend of *Suparṇi* and *Kadrū*, which relates how, in the beginning of time, the gods took possession of the celestial *soma*. In the *TS* version,<sup>57</sup> *Kadrū*, who has had to forfeit her person to the gods, manages to win the *soma* and uses it as a ransom. In fact, it is with the help of her son that she is able to capture it. Thus it is to her son that she owes her salvation. She draws the lesson from the story herself: 'that is why (to obtain their own deliverance) parents have children'.<sup>58</sup>

It is still possible to see in this legend the series of voluntary acts by which sons bring about the salvation of their parents. In contrast, in the speech by the ṛṣi *Nārada* that opens the story of *Hariścandra* and *Sunaḥśepa*<sup>59</sup> in the *AitB*, it is said that the son is a saviour by the simple fact that he exists. This voluble and impassioned declaration enumerates the reasons for having sons. A ten-verse answer to a one-verse question, as the narrator notes: 'In him he pays off his debt and wins immortality, the father who sees the face of his newborn living son . . . Fathers have always crossed dark depths, through their sons. He himself is born through himself. A son is a boat stocked with victuals, good for the crossing . . . The husband penetrates the wife: after he becomes an embryo, he penetrates his mother. Renewed in her, he is born in the tenth month. Here is why a woman is a woman:

because he is born again in her . . . <sup>60</sup> For him who has no son, there is no world. All creatures know it. That is why a son mounts his mother and his sister. Such is the wide and blessed path followed, free of sorrow, by those men who have sons. Birds and animals watch it. That is why men cleave even unto their mothers'. In his speech, Nārada thus shows how a man becomes fully himself in and through his son, but refines or further extends this game of difference and identity: I am (re) born in my son and, better still, it is I who am born from myself when my son comes into the world. One problem is to know whether the father's debt is purely and simply cancelled or whether it is transferred to the son: the problem is mainly a linguistic one, as it depends on how we are meant to understand the exact meaning of the verb in the expression *ṛnam asmin samnayati*.<sup>61</sup> But whatever the correct solution to the meaning of this term in its oldest usages, the Smṛti commentators and authors clearly see it as a way of naming the process by which a father discharges himself of his debt by transferring it to his son: if man is in debt to the manes from birth, it is because he has received this debt from his father. But the son's debtor situation is reiterated and confirmed up on the death of his father. He inherits his father's wealth because he also inherits his debts, his 'Vedic' debts, as the commentators say, in other words, his congenital debts, as well as his profane debts, that is, the obligation to return the material goods owed to his human creditors.<sup>62</sup> The survivor is not only bound to pay off the debt owed to the dead, he must also take on the debts left unpaid by those now dead. The link between these two sorts of debt is powerful. The *dharma* treatises justify the son's obligation to pay his dead father's debts by making it part of his strictly religious duty to offer him the *pindas* meant for the manes: and once a man, the dead father joins that group of creditors towards whom one is indebted from birth and by definition.<sup>63</sup>

Thus, the debt owed to the manes is central to brahmin ideology. It is an essential element in the religious definition of man. But further, it is made to account for the fundamental drive that is the desire to reproduce. It also justifies some of the principal mechanisms of social order. Perhaps because so many functions and modes of functioning are assigned to it, the debt due to the Fathers is sometimes presented in such a manner that its payment

may appear to be a payment of all one's debts; thus, in the verse that forms the moral of a tale, we read: 'The debts mentioned, due to the Fathers, gods and men, these debts in truth are paid off by a son' . . . <sup>64</sup> Having a son is payment off the supreme debt (*antyaṃ ṛnam*)<sup>65</sup> and can be symbol of every kind of liberation: the perfect king in the third hymn of the *Raghuvamśa*<sup>66</sup> wants to celebrate the birth of his son with a general amnesty; but there is no prisoner in his kingdom, and the only liberation he can proclaim is that of his own person; he is freed hence forth of the debt that ties him to the Fathers.

With the birth of a son, man stops being a debtor and is transformed into a potential creditor: with offspring, he can be sure after his death of receiving the *samskāra* that will make him a man. Similarly, with the debt due to the gods: having offered sacrifice in the proper fashion, a man has the right to expect, as his due, the bounty he wished for when he made his offering: 'The deity is told (that an offering is to be made). This is why, whoever these deities are, they consider it a debt for them to have to grant the wish expressed by the sacrificer as he makes his offering'.<sup>67</sup> Such anyway is the significance of *śraddhā*: man's confidence and belief rest on the idea that the rite he is celebrating gives him the power of credit against the gods.<sup>68</sup>

Is it not possible to imagine a neutral state in which one would be neither a debtor nor a creditor, but truly freed from the whole system of debt? Such a situation is obviously that of the person who has obtained absolute deliverance (*mokṣa*) and who, united with the supreme *Brahman*, aspires neither to rebirth nor even to the endless enjoyment of the delights of *svarga*. The world of the absolute is the world of the absence of debt. To describe the place where *param brahma* shines, the *Brahma Upaniṣad* tells us that there 'reign neither gods, nor *ṛṣi*, nor Fathers'.<sup>69</sup> In this life already, man (in fact *dvijas*, in orthodox brahmanism) can prepare himself for the world that knows neither debtors nor creditors, and he can live it in anticipation. To do so, he must embrace the state of a 'renouncer'. The renunciation of life in society, the renunciation of rites (by interiorizing them), and the achievement of autonomy through asceticism: such is the prospect opened by the *āśrama* theory to those who desire to break out of the circle of debt. But the *dharma* treatises that explain what the four stages



of life are, insist that only he who has already settled his 'Vedic' debts can set out along the path of *saṃnyāsa*. Thus we read in Manu—to take just one example among many: 'His three debts once settled, he (the *dvija*) can put his mind to liberation. But he who seeks liberation without prior settlement falls headlong downwards'.<sup>70</sup> 'The *dvija* who seeks liberation without having studied the Veda, without having sired a son, without having offered sacrifice, rushes headlong to his fall'.<sup>71</sup> A true man is he who recognizes himself as a debt and does what he has to do to settle it. Failing this, he is only an indefinite, ersatz man, an *anaddhāpuruṣa*.<sup>72</sup> The *dharma* treatises quite readily admit that man need not spend his whole life settling his debt to the gods, and that a time does come when he can stop offering sacrifices, so long as at the same time he stops leading a life in society and feeding his passions. For brahmin orthodoxy the problem seems to be of knowing how to contain within the framework of *dharma* the movements that bear man towards *mokṣa*; the renouncer hopes for a liberation different from that obtained by buying back one's own person and swapping the role of debtor for that of creditor. How can this different path also be the prolongation of the same path?<sup>73</sup> The means that are brought to bear are, on the one hand, a 'sacrificial' interpretation of renunciation (the *saṃnyāsa* initiation ceremony and even the *saṃnyāsin* lifestyle are analysed as a sort of transposition of sacrifice to the interior of the person), and on the other, a rearranging of human life into distinct periods succeeding one another in a definite order, renunciation only being possible after man has passed through the other stages.

Such a solution does not suit everyone, of course. The oldest commentators of the *dharma* texts recognize the objections. For instance, the *Mitākṣarā* teaches that the obligation to sire sons applies only to the man in a position to do so, that is, to the man who is married.<sup>74</sup> But a man can pass directly from the state of being a brahmin student to that of the *saṃnyāsin*; if he does not marry, then he is freed of his debt to the Fathers. This view implies a very bold interpretation of the Vedic text, and one that is in fact explicitly stated; man is born as debt, but this does not mean his biological birth; it means his birth as an *adhikārin*, that is, as a fit and authorized person (by virtue of his capabilities, his own desire

and his ritual qualifications): there is no problem for the man who does not have, and does not wish to have, the means to solve it.<sup>75</sup>

The *Mitākṣarā*'s concern is basically a practical one: to establish the notion that there is a place in dharmic society for the man who, in his life's plan, wishes to skirt the 'householder' (*gṛhastha*) state. The *Naiyāyikas* take a different tack. Their aim is more ambitious: they are out to show that the Vedic theory of debt is not incompatible with the idea of *mokṣa*. We have already seen that an element of this demonstration is a commentary on the word *ṛṇa*, which takes an approach that is similar to the *Mitākṣarā*'s reasoning on *adhikāra*: *ṛṇa* is used figuratively, and when we read that man is born laden with debts (*ṛṇaiḥ*), it should be understood that he is born laden with debts so to speak (*ṛṇair iva*). The same holds for birth: it is not birth strictly speaking, but entry into the state of being a brahmin student or householder.<sup>76</sup> To take a further step in the argument, there are Vedic texts in prose or in verse that mention deliverance, and present the renouncer's asceticism as a means to achieving it.<sup>77</sup> Further still, the doctrine of the four stages of life (including, therefore, the state of *saṃnyāsin* that only has meaning if deliverance is conceivable and possible) is set out at length in the *Itihāsas*, *Purāṇas* and *Dharma Śāstras*; all these texts are authoritative, and are based on Vedic revelation; besides, if the validity of the *Dharma Śāstras* were to be doubted, there would be general disorder, a state of unending agitation.<sup>78</sup> Lastly, all the *kleśas*, all the afflictions that torment man and make him wretched, do not prevent him from enjoying deep sleep; the state of deliverance is very close to that of deep sleep. The latter is not made impossible by the *kleśas*; inherited debt is not a definitive obstacle to deliverance.<sup>79</sup>

The texts just mentioned, thus seek to interpret the doctrine of debt in such a way as to make it compatible with the prospect of *mokṣa* and a renunciation that could stretch the length of an entire life.

An inscription brought to light by J.D.M. Derrett<sup>80</sup> presents an argument that follows the same lines, but in the opposite direction: it tries to adapt the quest for deliverance and the commitment to a form of *saṃnyāsa* in order to make them compatible with the doctrine of debt. This fourteenth century text deals with the oaths to be sworn by the members of the Pāśupata sect. The issue is to

establish that the life led by the sect, which is ascetic in some ways and is directed towards deliverance, excludes permanent celibacy; and the reason invoked, at such a late date and in a milieu so removed from orthodoxy, is that the Vedic commands must be obeyed—the sect members must continuously pay off their debt to the gods and therefore offer sacrifices; and, in order to settle their debt to the Fathers, they must marry and have children.<sup>81</sup>

Though often diluted or shorn of its meaning, the brahmanic doctrine of inherited debts remains astonishingly alive in Indian thought, at least in Hinduism. It is given pride of place in the religious trends based on *bhakti*: the believer is delivered of his triple debt by the god's sudden and sovereign grace. Thus, the *Vāyu Purāna* teaches that by undertaking the Gayā pilgrimage and bathing in the *tīrtha*, the believer is freed of the three debts, wins *mokṣa* for himself, and above all, causes his Fathers to be led by the god along the path of heaven or *brahmaloka*.<sup>82</sup>

But most remarkable is the strength of the ties that bind religious to material debt. There is a constant passage from the one register to the other. As we have seen, the 'Vedic' debt to the Fathers is, in the final analysis, what establishes and justifies the transferability of 'profane' debts from one generation to another.<sup>83</sup>

The *Gobhila Gṛhya Sūtras* teaches us too that the unfortunate debtor who recognizes his debt but is incapable of paying it must make an offering of a *golaka* (?) leaf, at the same time reciting one of the Vedic *mantras* that bear on congenital debt: 'That which I have borrowed and not returned, the treasure of Yama with which I come and go, of this debt, O Agni, would that I were freed! Even in my own lifetime, shall I return it to you' . . .<sup>84</sup> Material debt is an image, a particular manifestation of congenital debt, that is, in the final analysis, of the fact that man is mortal.

Mortal, inhabited by desire and invested with speech, man is thereby obliged to point to the future and promise.<sup>85</sup> The Vedic texts that define man as debt are elucidated by other passages of the Veda that, in different words, say what amounts to the same thing: 'Man knows the world and the non-world; through that which is mortal, he desires to achieve immortality . . . (Among living creatures, only) man says what he has learned . . . he knows tomorrow'.<sup>86</sup>

## Semantics and Rhetoric in the Hindu Hierarchy of the 'Aims of Man'

### Four Equals Three Plus One

**I**f I knew of something useful to me, and harmful to my family, I would put it out of my mind. If I knew of something useful to my family, and not to my country, I would try to forget it. If I knew of something useful to my country, and harmful to Europe, or useful to Europe and harmful to Mankind, I would look upon it as a crime' (Montesquieu 1949: 980).<sup>1</sup> These thoughts of Montesquieu first seem like the echo, and then the antithesis, of a verse of the *Mahābhārata* 5.128.49: 'for (the preservation of) a family one must (be prepared to) abandon a man; for a village, a family; for a country, a village; and for the *ātman*, the (entire) earth'.<sup>2</sup>

It would be unjust to draw an abstract opposition between Montesquieu's lesson of abnegation and universalism, on the one hand, and the essential egoism of the Indian text, on the other. But as answers to the same type of question, there is sufficient similarity between the two formulas for a comparison to show up some pertinent differences between them. As far as the content goes, the fundamental difference is this: Montesquieu is out to found a political morality on a critique of individuals and groups who have no other horizon than themselves. Thus, it is his own person, family, country and Europe that a man must be ready to forfeit in favour of the next higher group or entity on the scale, the ultimate beneficiary being the universal group, the one that every man can claim as his own: humankind in its entirety. As for the Indian author, he is spelling out a political maxim intended for a king: a sovereign must be prepared to give up a part in order to save (what remains of) the whole, and to give up what is

accessory, if need be, to preserve what is essential—the essential, in a kingdom, being the king's own person, that is, that for which the king is his own self.<sup>3</sup>

A comparison must also be drawn between the form of the two texts: in both cases we find a sequence of four propositions repeating the same structure: the slightest variation in vocabulary takes us from one level to the next. But an essential difference appears: Montesquieu's development is linear, continuous and somehow predictable; there is the same relationship between proposition 1 and 2, as between 2 and 3, or 3 and 4; the characteristic element of 2 is a term designating a whole that quantitatively encompasses the element characteristic of 1, and so on. In contrast, the *śloka* is constructed in such a way that the fourth and final *pāda* produces an effect of surprise: the movement changes direction and finishes in what appears to be a sudden turnabout but which is, in fact, a passage to another level; some human group or a territorial unit more general than the *deśa* is expected in the fourth place, whereas in fact it is the interiority of a person that is revealed, the *ātman* (of the king). Thus, while Montesquieu's sentence can be broken down into 1 + 1 + 1 + 1, the *śloka* must be divided into 3 + 1; the gap between the first three *pādas* and the fourth is all the clearer in that it is not only the *deśa* that must be sacrificed to the *ātman*, but a new unit, the entire earth (Table 1).<sup>4</sup>

Table 1

Montesquieu	Mahābhārata
1. myself < my family	1. individual < family
2. my family < my country	2. family < village
3. my country < Europe	3. village < country
4. Europe < the human race	4. the world < <i>ātman</i>

In organizing the *śloka* into 3 + 1 *pādas*<sup>5</sup> the poet is reproducing a fundamental stereotype of Indian discourse. When a Sanskrit text<sup>6</sup> sets out to enumerate the parts of a whole, or to narrate a series of events,<sup>7</sup> it can proceed in two different ways: (1) the totality being considered is made up of homogeneous elements placed on the same level. The exhaustive enumeration of these elements obviously results in different numbers, but there is a very

strong tendency for the whole to be seen as made up of five parts: The sacrifice is fivefold. The sacrificial animal is fivefold. Man is fivefold. The whole world, whatever there is, is fivefold' (BĀU, 1.4.17).<sup>8</sup> The number sixteen is also frequently to be found symbolizing totality: it is common practice in India to express 100 per cent as 'sixteen sixteenths'. (2) A marked difference appears in numbering between the final term and all those preceding it. The difference is of quite another order than that which separates the elements up to and including the last but one. This second type of numbering (concerning lists of notions that are extremely important for brahmin culture and thought) usually gives a total of 4: X is formed from A, B, C, and, in addition, there is D. The fact has been recognized many times, though not systematically studied. Let it suffice to mention the work of Syrkin (1967) to which we will again refer later in this study.<sup>9</sup>

There are traces in the Sanskrit language itself (and not simply in Sanskrit texts) of these two ways of conceiving the 'fourth': thus, Vedic Sanskrit has two expressions for the number, *caturtha* and *turiya*. The history of two forms, and the demarcation of the boundaries between their respective zones of usage deserve detailed philological study, which cannot be undertaken here. However, it is worthwhile mentioning that in the later Vedic texts, where the two forms can be found coexisting, *caturtha* is preferred for the fourth (note necessarily the last) in a linear-type series, while *turiya* (or its variant *turya*) is used for the 'fourth' insofar as it is the + 1 that completes a series of three in a two-level type of numbering.<sup>10</sup> It can also be pointed out that the ordinal adjective *turiya*, made into a substantive, is from the Upaniṣads onwards, one way of naming the Absolute: wakefulness (*jāgarita-sthāna*), sleep with dream (*svapna*), and dreamless sleep (*susupti*), are followed and opposed by a radically different state of consciousness—identification with the *brahman*, an inexpressible state which has no other name than this number (*Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* 3–7, cf. Falk 1986: 274).

Among the innumerable examples of this 3 + 1 framework, there are several groups to be distinguished, according to the nature and function of the gap separating the first three terms from the fourth.

(1) The least frequent case is that in which the + 1 is a residue defined negatively by the absence of a characteristic common to the first three terms; for instance, the list of *varṇas*. The first three

*varṇas* comprise the 'twice-born' (*dvija*), while the fourth, that of the *śūdras*, is made up of men who have had no birth other than the biological birth. In the same way, in the four Vedas, the group of the first three forms the *trayī vidyā*, while *Atharva* remains apart: often considered as inferior and rather troublesome, it is also exalted above the other three by those who specially venerate it (Bloomfield 1897: xl ff.).

(2) The fourth term designates a visible reality, in contrast to the first three, which lie in an inaccessible nether world: speech, *vāk*, is made up of three parts that are beyond man's reach, and of a fourth, human speech (*RS* 1.164.45. Cf. Renou 1941: 161 ff.). The same holds true for cosmic *Puruṣa*: only one of his four parts is manifest in beings (*RS* 10.90.4). In the beginning there were four fires: the fire that men know now is only one of them, the sole survivor (*TS* 2.6.6.1; *ŚB* 1.2.3.1). A girl is first the wife of Agni, then of Soma, then of the Gandharvas; only fourthly does she become the wife of her human husband, who thus receives her as a leftover of the gods (*PārGS*. 1.4.16).

(3) Conversely, after the three perceptible and finite parts, follows a fourth that symbolizes an opening onto infinity: the Vedic verse known as *gāyatrī* is made up of three *pādas*, but a fourth *pāda* is evoked, 'resplendent beyond the atmosphere' (*BĀU*, 5.14.5). There are three worlds, plus the non-world (*TS* 2.6.4.2); three sacred forms of speech, plus silence (cf. Renou 1978: 73). The mystic syllable 'om' breaks down in the rules of Sanskrit phonetics into three phonemes *a*, *u*, *m*, all three loaded with symbolic meanings; but in addition the syllable is prolonged by a vibration that can last indefinitely and which of course has a symbolism of its own (*Atharvaśira Upaniṣad* 5). The tail of the dragon *Śiṣumāra* is made up of four segments: the first three correspond to deities, Agni, Indra, Prajāpati; but the fourth represents *abhaya*, 'the absence of fear', and this is another term that designates the Absolute (*TĀ* 2.19).

The list of *āśramas* can be included in this group: the fourth *āśrama* differs from the first three in not being an obligatory part of the course (in fact the path of renunciation is open only to a small number of people); a most spectacular ceremony marks the entry into the state of *saṃnyāsa* and the break with all that has gone before; in addition, in the first three *āśramas*, funeral is by

incineration whereas *saṃnyāsins* are as a general rule buried: these facts of ritual give material sanction to the ideas developed in the theoretical texts, on the radical break represented by the *saṃnyāsa*; by contrast, the traits characterizing the state of *vānaprastha* as a transition between the state of householder and that of renouncer, and which could invalidate the analysis of the list of *āśramas* into 3 + 1, are much less important.

(4) Finally, the fourth element completes, encompasses and transcends the first three, at the same time as it discloses their quintessence. Thus, the syllable 'om' is the *praṇava* that forms the + 1 of a series of three mystic exclamations (the *vyāhṛtis*): *bhūr bhuvah svah*. These terms are usually translated as 'Earth! Space! Heaven!' (But their function as elements of the rite and as a medium for meditation is much more important than their meaning.) Speculation by the grammarian-theologians is the opportunity for a play (on words and numbers) that consists in attributing to speech features that in fact belong to the words naming it: speech is made up of three parts, because the word that means 'syllable', *akṣara*, is itself trisyllabic; but speech comprises in addition a fourth part, corresponding to the single syllable of the word *vāk* that itself means 'speech' (*ŚB* 6.3.1.43).

### The Aims of Man

These few illustrations do not all carry the same value, far from it, some are fleeting creations, or else are limited to extremely small areas of ritual or speculation. Their main interest for us is to demonstrate how easily enumerative discourse fit this framework, no matter what its object. But we must now deal with a much more complex example, concerning an essential aspect of brahmanic ideology: the system of the *puruṣārthas*. In the series of man's four aims, *mokṣa* is obviously the + 1. The structure shows through first of all in the formal indications of the terminology: the first three *puruṣārthas* (in the order in which they are generally numbered) together make up the *trivarga*; this 'triple group' becomes transformed into *caturvarga*, when there is added a fourth term, which is invariably *mokṣa*.<sup>11</sup> In other words, Order (*dharma*), Interest (*artha*), and Desire (*kāma*), make up a self-sufficient whole with its own coherence; *mokṣa* on the contrary can only

appear in the background as it were, and has meaning only in terms of the functioning of the *trivarga*. It is also common to enumerate the terms of the *trivarga* in descending hierarchical order, as we have just done; with the mention of the fourth aim of man, the movement becomes reversed, since *mokṣa* is superior to *dharma*. That is the stereotype, at any rate. (Patañjali *ad* Pāṇini 2.2.34 teaches, however, that, in *dvandva* compounds made up of names of two *puruṣārthas*, word order is of no importance). Philosophical reflection can sometimes alter the framework and propose a different breakdown: the Vedānta effects a 2 + 2 grouping, since on one side it puts *kāma* and *artha*, which together belong to *preyas*, or 'what is pleasant', and on the other *dharma* and *mokṣa*, which together belong to the sphere of *śreyas* or, the 'sovereign good' (cf. Ramachandran 1980: 20). But the usual way of counting and apportioning the *puruṣārthas* is recognized and even superbly justified by this same school in this statement by Śaṅkara: 'for he who desires *mokṣa*, even *dharma* is bad, since it produces bonds' (commentary *ad* *Bhagavad Gītā* 4.21).

Another way of marking the break between the *trivarga* and *mokṣa* is by ordering the aims of man according to the criterion of the relationship between the aim and the man who pursues that aim. To enumerate the terms of the *trivarga* in ascending hierarchical order is to go from the most subjective to the most objective, and simultaneously, from the individual to the social.

Thus, *kāma* is the desire for pleasure and, just as desire is felt by the subject, so the pleasure towards which this desire tends is nothing other than that which the subject feels as such: this has been noted by the theoreticians of aesthetics, when they show the difference between what is socially recognized as pleasurable and that which is the *kāma* of any one person; the latter can include the most disconcerting fantasies and perversions (cf. Raghavan 1978: 36). On the other hand, *artha* has a subjective and an objective side that are quite distinct from each other: it is both the need, the '*visée*' (aiming at)—according to Dumont's apt rendering (1966: 365)—that is, a certain disposition of the psyche, and the objects pursued, namely wealth and power, which the subject seeks to possess precisely because they are exterior to him. Besides, it is the social consensus that designates what is *artha*, and there is no room in this connection for individual deviation.

With *dharma* we take one step further towards what is objective and social; *dharma* is at once the universal order, the system of norms that expresses it and the totality of observances to be performed by individuals and groups, according to their status, in order for this system of norms to be maintained. But *mokṣa* brings us back to the subject, and even to pure interiority, since this good that is pursued by those who devote themselves to deliverance is none other than coincidence with the *ātman*, the Self. That the *ātman* should be radically distinct from the empirical individual, the subject of *kāma*, and that deliverance should consist not in liberating the individual but in liberating the Self from him (cf. Ramachandran 1980: 20), does not prevent the path leading to this deliverance from being open to the individual exclusively. More exactly, as Dumont has shown, it is by setting out on this path that the individual finds his autonomy and becomes a 'value' or an instance. In this respect too we can see a break in hierarchical order, an abrupt reversal of perspective that takes us from the highest of the first three *puruṣārthas* to the fourth that transcends the whole of the *trivarga*.

There is a distinction to be made between the formulations that diverge from the 3 + 1 framework (by opposing the two domains of the *śreyas* to the two domains of the *preyas*, as we have seen) and the analyses bearing formally on the *trivarga* only, but which incorporate into *dharma* features characteristic of *mokṣa* (they come under what Biardeau [1972: 86f.] has called the assumption by the man-in-the-world of the renouncer's values). An example is the speech by Kāmamañjarī, in Daṇḍin's *Daśakumāracarita*.<sup>12</sup> The superiority of *dharma* over *kāma* and *artha*, she says, lies in the fact that (1) *kāma* and *artha* cannot exist without *dharma*, whereas *dharma* is independent; and (2) *kāma* and *artha* are supported by exterior elements, that is, they concern objects in the world or else sensations that only the appropriation of exterior objects can provide, whereas *dharma* can be achieved through itself. But if Kāmamañjarī makes a perfect seductress, her ironic theology is specious: man in fact would be incapable of carrying out his *dharmic* duties if separated from material objects and society;<sup>13</sup> to find the autonomy attributed to *dharma*, we in fact have to look at *mokṣa*.

Leaving *mokṣa* aside now and concentrating on the internal

structure of the *trivarga*, we find a fourth term added to the three on the list: the totality, or whole, which they form. This is made clear in the texts dealing with the respective value of the *puruṣārthas*.<sup>14</sup> The highest aim of man is said to be the combination of the three. Necessary as a group, they are, however, ordered into a hierarchy according to the following criterion: if one cannot aim for the whole, if in order to obtain *artha* and *kāma* there is a risk of offence to *dharma* then it is *dharma* that must be chosen. This doctrine is not constant: it is formulated in a fair number of smṛti texts (*Manu* 4.176; *Yājñavalkya*, 2.21; *Bṛhaspati* 1.1.11 and 113; also see Kane 1973: 3.8–10; Derrett 1968: 201). But curiously Medhātithi *ad Manu* 8.26 teaches that if a gain in *dharma* can only be obtained by greater loss of *artha*, then the king must put *artha* first, but on condition that he performs a rite of reparation to compensate for the harm caused to *dharma* (must it therefore be supposed that there is a common measure between *artha* and *dharma*?: it is a matter of distribution and arrangement over-time).

It is true that there are passages to be found in Kālidāsa that propound a *dharmic* extremism, to the detriment of the *trivarga*: the ideal proposed by the poet is that of the king of the *Raghu-vamśa*, so wise and virtuous that among the acts that come under *artha* and *kāma* he chooses only those that relate directly to *dharma* and which appear as simple instruments of *dharma*: the intention in any case must be purely *dharmic*. The worth of the two inferior *puruṣārthas* does not come from the fact that together with *dharma* they help to form the hierarchized whole of the *trivarga*, but from their being opportunities to serve *dharma*.<sup>15</sup> *Dharma* is not only the essence of the *trivarga*; it is also capable of so occupying a man's mind that *artha* and *kāma* have no part for him. Symmetrical with this *dharmic* exclusivism that exalts a part above the whole is the idea that even the most precious part of the *trivarga* takes second place to the elementary demands of human life.<sup>16</sup>

It may also be asked in parenthesis if the *trivarga* or *caturvarga* does not make an inventory of all the possible acts in a human life, or if it simply does not establish the framework for good acts—on various grounds, and to varying degrees. The answer is not easy. If the *puruṣārthas* are regarded as juxtaposed wholes, then

any act is necessarily motivated by one or other of these aims of man. This much is shown by the correspondence between the three terms of the *trivarga* and the three *guṇas*.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, taking the *trivarga* or the *caturvarga* as a system, *kāma* and *artha* are only *puruṣārthas* insofar as they are compatible with *dharma* and under its domination: the system thus makes a selection among possible acts.<sup>18</sup>

If the hierarchy of the *puruṣārthas* is defined as the system that orders them according to their value, then only one interpretation of the facts is possible: on the one hand, there is the *trivarga* and the +1 that is *mokṣa*; on the other hand, there is the canonical list *dharma, artha, kāma* (in descending hierarchical order), which is the object of a difference of opinion: some texts teach that *artha* and *kāma* must take second place to *dharma*, but must be preserved nonetheless, the ultimate value being the *trivarga* in its totality; and some other texts try to reduce the inferior *puruṣārthas* further still, do away with their specificity and relative autonomy, and have them absorbed in *dharma*.

### Revolving Hierarchy

But if like Dumont we take 'the hierarchical opposition . . . in the sense of a relationship between the encompassing and the encompassed, or between the whole and the element' (1979: 401), then the concept of the *puruṣārtha* becomes more complicated. The problem encountered is that according to the point of view adopted (and the multiplicity of points of view is not only a theoretical possibility, but is actually to be found, as we hope to show, in the Indian authors themselves), each term of the *trivarga* can be conceived in turn as that which provides explanatory framework for understanding not only its two partners, but *mokṣa* just as well. Thus, one comes up against a revolving hierarchy.

This notion of 'point of view' also needs to be made clearer. It is best dealt with at three levels.

(1) The concrete situation of the person being considered when reasoning on the *puruṣārthas*. According to whether one is a man or woman, whether one belongs to one *varṇa* or *āśrama* or another, a different *puruṣārtha* will be placed in the foreground. These preferences and varying gradations in practice

are not the result of individual fantasy, but of each person's *svadharma*.<sup>19</sup> Thus it is the *svadharma* of a courtesan to devote herself mainly to *kāma*, and the *svadharma* of a king to adjust his conduct to *artha*. But the very existence of the code that determines these specializations and the use of the term *svadharma* to name them are indications that at this level, the encompassing concept is *dharma*, even for those individuals and groups whose speciality is not *dharma*. The confusion between the different *svadharmas*, just like that between the different *varṇas* and the *āśramas*, operates to the detriment of *dharma* in general (cf. Appendix).

(2) The doctrine being propounded. Virtually none but the Cārvakas 'materialists' (according to Medhātithi) openly contest the pre-eminence of *dharma*; and in doing so they put its very existence in doubt<sup>20</sup> (indeed, it is hard to see how, once one takes the notion of *dharma* seriously, one can put it anywhere but at the summit of the moral hierarchy). But *kāma* and *artha* are both subjects of didactic treatises and, as always, the authors are at pains to justify their undertaking by underlining the essential role of their discipline. The same obviously applies to the texts teaching *dharma*. But what is the foundation for declaring that a particular *puruṣārtha* is logically (and no longer morally) more important than the others? It is the fact of its being the ultimate aim or, on the contrary, the indispensable means.

Louis Dumont is right to criticise the tendency he has noted among certain modern Indian authors to interpret the notions of *dharma* and *artha* 'in the Western language of rational action, corresponding to ends (*dharma*) and means (*artha*)' (1966: 92, n. 31c).<sup>21</sup> By definition, each *puruṣārtha* is a sphere of activity and an end in itself. But if one examines the relationship of the *puruṣārthas* between themselves, and the way in which they form a system, one notices that the vocabulary which is constantly used is that of ends and means, or that of root and fruit. Thus, one finds in the *Mahābhārata*, *dharma* glorified as follows: 'It is *dharma*, it is said, that is the means (*upāya*) of the *trivarga*; annointed with *dharma*, the *trivarga* grows rapidly, like fire in dry grass' (5.124.38). 'He who wishes to achieve *kāma* and *artha* must first concentrate on *dharma*, for *kāma* and *artha* are never separate from *dharma*' (5.124.37). Rather than the instrument

for achieving it, *dharma* is a condition of the possibility of the *trivarga*: *dharma* is superior to the other *puruṣārthas* 'because everything has its root in *dharma*' (Medhātithi *ad Manu* 2.224). And 'he who wishes to achieve *kāma* and *artha* by means which are not really means (*anupāya* i.e. means other than *dharma*) perishes' (*Mbh* 5.124.36).

Kaṭilya follows the same line of reasoning, but on the subject of *artha*: '*artha* is the main (*puruṣārtha*). For the root of *dharma* and *kāma* is *artha*' (*Arthaśāstra* 1.7.7).<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, *kāma* is exalted by its partisans not because it is the origin of the others (as one might have thought), but because it is the aim towards which the others converge. This doctrine is less that of the author of the *Kāmasūtra* than of the specialists of poetics. Thus, Bhoja writes: 'The passions of *dharma* and *artha* are causes; in contrast, the passion of *kāma* has the character of a fruit. That is why the main passion is *kāma*' (*Sṛṅgāraprakāśa* 3.350, quoted in Raghavan 1978: 464).

(3) The semantic level. When it is stated in the *Arthaśāstra* that *artha* is the root of *dharma* and *kāma*, this can be understood as a pragmatic and even cynical truth: to make love and, in the same way, to think of religion, one needs at one's disposal a minimum of wealth and power over living beings and things; or else, in the same manner, for his subjects to be able to devote themselves to *kāma* and *dharma*, a king must see to their security and prosperity, by appropriate political means. Similarly, the treatises on *dharma* state that the most important *āśrama* is that of the householder: it is not that he has more dignity than the others, but without the *gṛhastha* the life of the brahmin student and of the ascetic would be impossible, since only a *gṛhastha* may have wealth and thus distribute alms (and only he may legitimately procreate). Much the same sort of argument may be applied to the other *puruṣārthas*, and the revolving hierarchy that we are discussing can be founded on the following reciprocal causality: each *puruṣārtha* is presented by its specialists as the foundation for the other two. But there is another way here of approaching the notion of point of view: the words *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma* in fact have two meanings: a narrow technical meaning belonging to *puruṣārtha* terminology and a wider meaning

belonging to the general vocabulary. It sometimes happens that in the same text the same term is used in its two meanings, that is, both as the whole and as a part of that whole.

The most clear-cut example is that of the word *artha*: all the *puruṣārthas* are by definition *artha*, 'motive' in its wider meaning; but in the list of *puruṣārthas*, there is one that is more *artha* than the others, and which is called *artha* in precisely this technical sense, of an 'interest for material goods'.<sup>23</sup>

A similar usage is made of *dharma* in these gnomic lines of the *Hitopadeśa* (*Prastāvikā* 25): 'Food, sleep, security and copulation: man has all that in common with animals. What sets men apart above all is *dharma*. Without *dharma* they are like animals. *Dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, *mokṣa*: for anyone who should lack a single one of these elements, life is without object (*nirarthaka*), like the lump that can be seen growing on the necks of goats'.<sup>24</sup> All the *puruṣārthas* are by definition still aims of a *puruṣa*, man; but among these aims there is one that is characteristic of mankind, which is *dharma*, and the presence of *dharma* is necessary and sufficient for all the *puruṣārthas* to be made truly human.

Not all contexts allow this immediate confrontation between the broad and the narrow meanings; but if the doctrine of the *puruṣārthas* is so frequently called upon every time acts and feelings have to be classified and assigned values, and if it lends itself to so much speculation, the reason most probably lies in the elasticity of the notions with which it deals, and in the fact that in the terms designating each *trivarga* element, the wider of the two meanings is always connoted by the narrower. In sliding from the narrow to the wide meaning, it is always possible to make *dharma*, *artha* or *kāma* into the +1 that encompasses the two other terms in the list, and the *mokṣa* to boot.

In its narrow meaning, *dharma* is the system of observances taught by the Veda and the texts stemming from it: he who carries them out accumulates merit for the world beyond. But in its wider meaning, *dharma* is the order of the world and of society; concretely, it is the network of relationships that hold the *varṇas* and the four *āśramas* at once united and apart; it is also the sum of individual *svadharmas* (including those that are mainly *artha* and *kāma*, and the one that is exclusively a quest for *mokṣa*). Thus *dharma* is both an element of the *trivarga* and *caturvarga*, and the

point of view allowing perception of the whole as a system organized into a hierarchy.

*Artha* is a most elastic notion, even in its technical rendering: it means (interest for) material goods, motives for economic or political action, wealth and power. But as we have already seen, the general meaning of the word *artha* is 'aim' and it is in this sense that all the *puruṣārthas* are *arthas*.<sup>25</sup> Indeed this is the original meaning of the word in Vedic Sanskrit, as shown by Renou, who provides the following gloss: '*artha*, aim (of a journey, in the first instance, of any other activity, secondarily)' (1962: 61; cf. also Renou 1967: 81). It is in the context of this meaning of *artha* that Jaimini defines *dharma*: '*dharma* is a good one must set oneself as an aim (*artha*) and that is made special by being the object of a Vedic injunction' (*Pūrva Mīmāṃsā Sūtra* 1.1.2). *Dharma* is thus a part of the possible *arthas*.

As for *kāma*, there is no point in re-emphasizing its universal presence after Biardeau's analysis of what she calls an anthropology of desire (1972: 96ff). In its narrow meaning, which is the one used in *puruṣārtha* terminology, *kāma* is (desire for) sensual pleasure, more precisely sexual pleasure. But the wider meaning of *kāma* is any kind of desire, and even the faculty of desiring itself: one cannot make the effort of trying for an aim without in some way another being driven by desire. It is the very substance of man.<sup>26</sup> The brahmanical doctrine of sacrifice transformed this inevitable element of action into an element that was indispensable, by obliging anyone setting out to celebrate a ritual to desire the fruit of that ritual. Evidence of this may be gained from a number of texts that play on this double meaning and attribute the whole semantic field of 'desire' to the individual *puruṣārtha* that is *kāma*, in such a way that *kāma* in its turn becomes an element of a whole and, simultaneously, the encompassing 'instance' of that whole. For example, we read in the *Jayamaṅgalā* commentary on *Kāmasūtra*: 'Homage to *dharma*, *artha* and *kāma*; homage to the *kāmas* (which are desire) of the *trivarga* and *mokṣa*.<sup>27</sup> The *dharma* treatises state the same truth in the form of a paradox or problem: 'To act solely from a desire for rewards is not laudable (the desire in question being that of sensual enjoyment, *kāma*), yet an exemption from that desire is not (to be found) in this (world): for on that desire is grounded the study



of the Veda and the performance of the actions prescribed by the Veda' (*Manu* 2.2). And more forcefully still: 'Not a single act here (below) appears ever to be done by a man free from desire; for whatever (man) does, it is the result of the impulse of desire' (*Manu* 2.4). *Kāma* is thus the origin and condition of the possibility of the entire *trivarga*, and particularly of *dharma*.

The right the authors grant themselves to slide from one semantic level to another explains the extraordinary ideological variety of the theme of the *puruṣārthas*, and it can be linked to their technique of using this concept as a kind of decoding key allowing them to go on endlessly refining their analyses. Since each term of the *trivarga*, taken in its wider meaning, can be considered alternately as that which accounts for the entire whole and as that which gives a viewpoint on the whole (*mokṣa* included), it is also possible to start from a single *puruṣārtha*, taken in its narrow meaning and subdivide it in its turn according to the categories of the *trivarga*. Thus after the *Kāmasūtra* sets out the general system of *puruṣārthas* and emphasises the special place occupied by the desire for sexual pleasure, it then turns to discuss *artha*, under three headings (*Kāmasūtra* 6.6.5): the *artha* of wealth (i.e. the *artha* of *artha*), the *artha* of religious merit (the *artha* of *dharma*), and the *artha* of pleasure (the *artha* of *kāma*).

Another illustration of this same way of going about things can be found in the *Arthasāstra*—but in this case the approach is less clear-cut and systematic, and also less artificial. The book talks of *artha*. Now, among the exclusively *artha*-motivated measures a king has to take, there is the selection of his ministers, through a series of trials. The victors of these trials are those who have shown that for them, attachment to the king comes before *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, plus a fourth term, fear, *bhaya* (*Arthasāstra* 1.10.16). A further instance in the same text is the typology of the *vijayin*, the conqueror on the opposing side: among the enemies threatening him, a king has to distinguish the *dharmavijayin*, who respects the laws of war and is content with political subjugation of his unfortunate rival; the *lobhavijayin*, or greedy conqueror, who seizes hold of land and wealth; and finally the *asuravijayin*, or demon conqueror, who does not simply want land and wealth, but also the sons, wives and the very life of his vanquished adversary (*Arthasāstra* 12.1.10–16). Only *dharma* is actually named in

this classification; but *artha* is clearly the dominant feature of the *lobhavijayin* and *kāma* is just as clearly what sets apart the *asuravijayin*. And, as has already been said, the *vijayin* is by definition a man of *artha*.

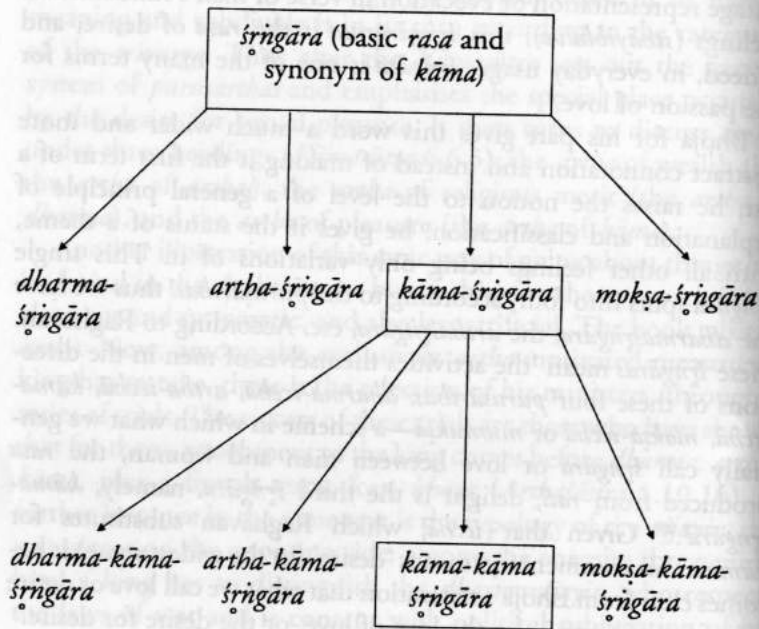
The most elaborate and daring construction produced by this technique of fragmenting each part according to the categories fragmenting the whole can be found in the treatise on poetics by Bhoja (Raghavan 1978: 444 and 461 ff.). Bhoja gives the name *śṛṅgāra* to man's faculty of experiencing desires and interests, and of making plans. This term, synonymous (in his terminology) with *ahaṅkāra* and *abhimāna*, is borrowed from the founder of this *sāstra*, Bharata. In the latter's writings, *śṛṅgāra* is one *rasa* among others, in fact the first in a list of eight or nine (*Nāṭya-sāstra* 18)<sup>28</sup> enumerating the types of aesthetic emotions set-off by a stage representation or evocation in verse of man's fundamental feelings (*sthāyibhāva*); this *śṛṅgārarasa* is the *rasa* of desire, and indeed, in everyday usage, *śṛṅgāra* is one of the many terms for the passion of love.

Bhoja for his part gives this word a much wider and more abstract connotation and instead of making it the first term of a list, he raises the notion to the level of a general principle of explanation and classification: he gives it the status of a theme, with all other feelings being only variations of it. This single *śṛṅgāra* splits into four, according to the *puruṣārthas*: thus we have the *dharmasṛṅgāra*, the *arthasṛṅgāra*, etc. According to Raghavan, these *śṛṅgāras* mean 'the activities themselves of men in the directions of these four *puruṣārthas*: *dharma-icchā*, *artha-icchā*, *kāma-icchā*, *mokṣa-icchā* or *mumukṣā*—a scheme in which what we generally call *śṛṅgāra* or love between man and woman, the *rasa* produced from *rati*, delight is the third *śṛṅgāra*, namely, *kāma-śṛṅgāra*'.<sup>29</sup> Given that *icchā*, which Raghavan substitutes for *kāma* in his commentary, means 'desire' (in the widest sense) it becomes clear from Bhoja's reiteration that what we call love or desire is in fact, as *puruṣārtha*, the love of love, or the desire for desire.

This is not all, for there can be ramifications to this *kāma-śṛṅgāra* (or *kāma-kāma*, or *kāma-icchā*) in turn, resulting in four kinds of *kāma-kāma*, each one characterized by the prefixed mark of one of the four *puruṣārthas* giving the particular complexion this love of love is going to have: *dharmā-kāma-śṛṅgāra* (that is,

*dharma-kāma-kāma*) is 'the sublime love of a *grhastha* who is an *ekapatnī-vrata*, a householder who has vowed to have only one wife'. *Artha-kāma-śṛṅgāra* will be the love of a man for material consideration, like Udayana's marriage to Padmāvatī, or one's love of one's own wife or another's because one is governed by considerations of wealth, etc. *Mokṣa-kāma-śṛṅgāra* is a higher aspect of *dharma-kāma-śṛṅgāra* in which a *grhastha* with his *pativrata* (faithful wife) is striving for liberation. As for *kāma-kāma-śṛṅgāra*, or *kāma-kāma-kāma*, which is thus 'the *kāma* sub-variety of *kāma-śṛṅgāra*, (it) will be that of a lover like Udayana, or that of a libertine like Agnivarna' (Raghavan 1978: 461f)<sup>30</sup> (Figure 1 illustrates this procedure).

Figure 1



That the list of *puruṣārthas* should reappear at each switch-point in the ramification is testimony on the one hand to the power of this stereotype and its position in Indian culture; and on the other, to the ability of the stable hierarchy of values to preserve itself

Figure A1

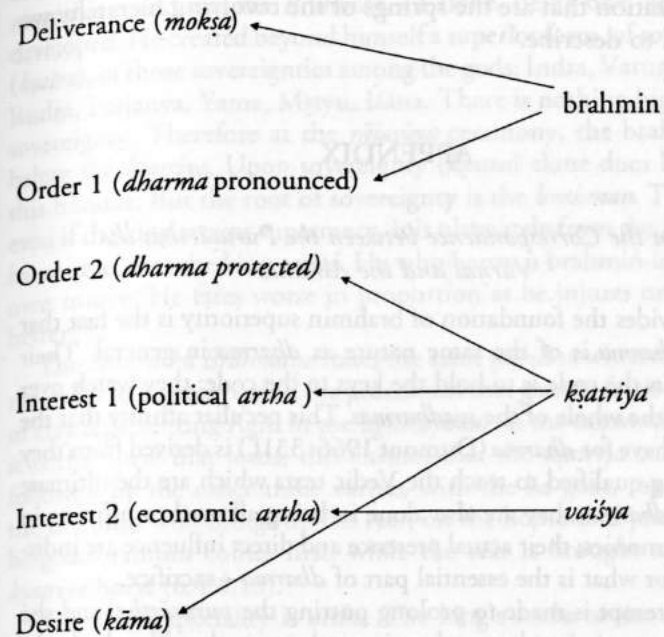
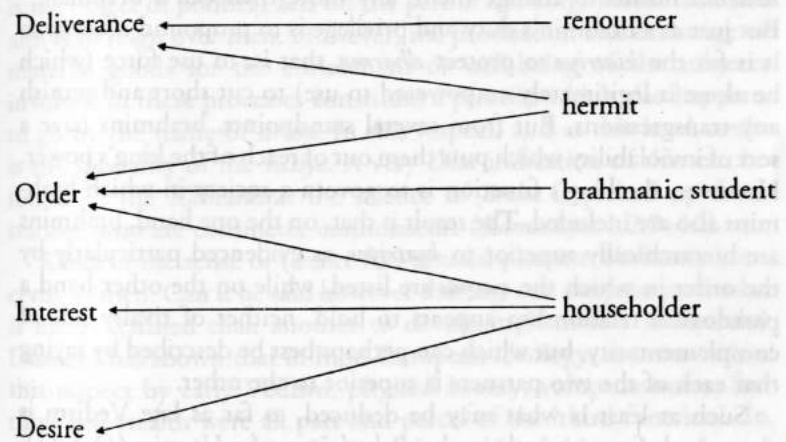


Figure A2



intact when being combined and confronted with the mechanisms of relativization that are the springs of the revolving hierarchy we have tried to describe.<sup>31</sup>

## APPENDIX

### *On the Correspondence between the Puruṣārthas the Varnas and the Āśramas*

What provides the foundation of brahmin superiority is the fact that their *svadharma* is of the same nature as *dharma* in general. Their speciality in the code is to hold the keys to the code; they watch over and judge the whole of the *svadharmanas*. This peculiar affinity that the brahmins have for *dharma* (Dumont 1966: 331f.) is derived from they alone being qualified to teach the Vedic texts which are the ultimate source of *dharma*; they are also alone in being allowed to officiate in *śrauta* ceremonies; their actual presence and direct influence are indispensable for what is the essential part of *dharma*—sacrifice.

If an attempt is made to prolong putting the *puruṣārthas* and the *varnas* into correspondence, then it can be seen that like the brahmins, but via another route, the *ksatriyas* are also concerned with *dharma* in general (and not only their particular *svadharma's* duties to look after *dharma* in general). A king cannot act on the system of *dharmaic* norms to change them, any more than can a brahman.<sup>32</sup> But just as a brahmin's duty and privilege is to propound *dharma* so it is for the *ksatriya* to protect *dharma*, that is, to use force (which he alone is legitimately empowered to use) to cut short and punish any transgressions. But from several standpoints, brahmins have a sort of inviolability which puts them out of reach of the king's power. However, the king's function is to govern a society in which brahmins also are included. The result is that, on the one hand, brahmins are hierarchically superior to *ksatriyas*, as evidenced particularly by the order in which the *varnas* are listed, while on the other hand a paradoxical relationship appears to hold, neither of rivalry nor of complementarity, but which can perhaps best be described by saying that each of the two partners is superior to the other.

Such at least is what may be deduced, as far as late Vedism is concerned, from a myth in the *Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (1.4.11),

confirmed by a feature in the *agnicayana* ritual: 'Verily, in the beginning this world was the *Brahman*, all alone. Being one, he was not developed. He created beyond himself a superior form, of sovereignty (*ksatra*), of those sovereignties among the gods: Indra, Varuṇa, Soma, Rudra, Parjanya, Yama, Mṛtyu, Īśāna. There is nothing higher than sovereignty. Therefore at the *rājasūya* ceremony, the brahmin sits below the *ksatriya*. Upon sovereignty (*ksatra*) alone does he confer this honour. But the root of sovereignty is the *brahman*. Therefore, even if the king attains supremacy, it is ultimately from the *brahman*, his source, that the king arises. He who harms a brahmin injures his own source. He fares worse in proportion as he injures one who is better.<sup>33</sup>

The *Śatapatha Brahmana* states the same paradox when describing the order to be observed in the procession that goes to fetch the lump of clay representing Agni in the *agnicayana*: on the outward journey, it is the horse that leads; this ensures that the *ksatriya* comes first, followed by the other three *varnas*, with the he-goat, representing the brahmin who brings up the rear; on the homeward journey, the he-goat-brahmin comes first, while the rear is brought up by the *ksatriya*-horse (6.4.4.13).

The king's speciality is *artha*. The king's *artha* covers a field in which things political and economic are intermingled: more exactly, the field is politics insofar as it encompasses economic activities (Dumont 1966: 211, 368ff.; 1977: 44). Economics is a science, a *śāstra*, insofar as the production and circulation of material wealth is the object of political acts on the part of the king, whose ultimate aim is to reign over men. However, the production and exchange of material goods for the enrichment or well-being of the subjects involved in these processes constitute a practice which also happens to go by the name of *artha*. In this respect, and at this level, *artha* is the speciality of the *vaiśya*. A very clear indication of this can be found in the *Kāmasūtra*: the science of *artha* is picked up from traders, who are commerce connoisseurs (*Kāmasūtra* 1.2.9–10).

*Kāma* in the sense of (desire for) sensual pleasure obviously concerns all men. Can it be said however that any one *varna* in particular is more destined than another to devote itself to this *puruṣārtha*? Dumézil has shown that in Indo-European ideology, as instanced in this respect by early Vedism, physical beauty, voluptuousness, fertility and wealth were all part and parcel of the 'third function'. In classical brahmanism, the fertility of man, his fields and cattle and

the production of wealth come under the *vaiśya*. But these notions are no longer associated with *kāma*, or more exactly an autonomous area of *kāma* is set up. It is not possible to establish a one-to-one correspondence between the three Indo-European functions and the specific activity of the first three *varṇas* (especially because of the reworking of the function of sovereignty); nor is a term-to-term correspondence possible between the three functions and the *trivarga*.

As a *puruṣārtha*, linked to *dharma* and integrated to it, without losing its identity in it, *kāma* is altogether different from the desire for wealth and the desire to procreate. The *Kāmasūtra*, which is this *puruṣārtha*'s own *śāstra*, is in no sense a treatise on the art or necessity of having children: it is an exposition of the mental and bodily techniques that must be used so as to experience, and above all to make one's partner experience, the most intense pleasure (this basically being the *dharma* of *kāma*). Procreation and even the techniques of procreation in fact come under *dharma*, *stricto sensu*. This agrees with the judicious critique made by Dumont (1966: 92, n. 31c) of Kapadia's argument concerning the hierarchy of marriage motives.

*Kāma* is thus not the speciality of the *vaiśya*: it is much more that of the courtesans and refined city men to whom the *Kāmasūtra* is addressed and also that of the *kṣatriya*. It is above all the *kṣatriyas* who are able and allowed to have pleasures (love, arts, hunting), and so it is the *kṣatriya* whom the texts warn against an excessive attachment to *kāma*. Among the eight forms of brahmin marriage that Dumézil (1979: 31–45, Cf. Malamoud 1980: 443–450) has managed to distribute into three groups corresponding to the three Indo-European functions, the only one whose main complexion is *kāma* (the sensual attraction that the two partners feel for one another and their freedom of choice) is the marriage called *gāndharva*, which is reserved for the *kṣatriya*<sup>34</sup> (see Figure A1).

The correspondence between the *puruṣārthas* and the *āśramas* is less involved. On the basis of the entire *trivarga*, with the hierarchy giving the first place to *dharma*, being valid for the first three stages of life, a specific blend of *puruṣārthas* can be assigned to each one of the four periods. If *mokṣa* is the sole preoccupation of the *saṃnyāsins*, and of them alone, it is clear that *kāma* and *artha* are practically forbidden to brahmin students, who must concentrate on *dharma*. The same may be said for *vānaprastha*, with however the caveat that this third stage is sometimes considered as the antechamber, as it were, of the fourth. It is thus the householder, *gr̥hastha*, who must

learn how to combine and balance the three *puruṣārthas* of the *trivarga*, since only at this stage is it *dharmic* to devote oneself to *artha* and *kāma* (see Figure A2).

The fine article by Syrkin, mentioned earlier in this essay, is an extremely penetrating semiotic study of the place of the *puruṣārthas* in the totality of representations forming the lattice-work of ancient Indian culture (Buddhist and Jaina as well as Hindu). Syrkin reaches a point where, just as we have been trying to do, he places the list of the *puruṣārthas* in correspondence with other canonical enumerations. But at several points the equivalences he puts forward seem artificial or dubious; for instance, when Syrkin makes *artha* a legitimate *puruṣārtha* (1967: 152, table 2), as much as *dharma*, for a *brahmacārin*; or again, when he leaves *kāma* outside the householder's domain. It is even more difficult to understand how *artha*, and *artha* alone, can be made to correspond only to the *brahmacārin*, as is done in table 4 (p. 161), and how this same exclusive relationship can be established here between *kāma* and *gr̥hastha*. Both tables seem faulty, and mutually incompatible. In the same way Syrkin appears to stumble again in the way he makes the layers of text that constitute the *śruti* correspond to the sequence of *āśramas* and the list of *puruṣārthas*: it is hard to see his basis of relating the *Samhitās* to the *brahmacārin* and *artha* and the *Brāhmaṇas* to the *gr̥hastha* and *kāma*. (For that is how table 4, p. 161, must be read; in the text on p. 154, which gives a brief description of the different parts of the *śruti*, the link between *brahmacārin* and *artha* is not formulated). In fact the *brahmacārin*'s study schedule includes the *Brāhmaṇas* as much as the *Samhitās*. Taken in themselves, the *Samhitās* cannot be integrated into the brahmanical system in such a way as to be attached to any other element of the *trivarga* than *dharma*: as texts to be learned, they concern the *brahmacārin*, just like the other parts of the *śruti*; a collection of texts to be recited during rituals, they are part of any sacrifice, and so concern the *gr̥hastha*; it is a matter of *dharmic* duty in both cases.

## Seduction in an Indian Light

'You'll see. A bit of conversation, and my powers of seduction go into action'.

Raymond Queneau, *Zazie dans le métro*

**W**ould you like people to think well of you? Then do not speak well of yourself. Such is the advice of Pascal. Taking things a step further, we might recall that one ceases to be modest as soon as one proclaims one's modesty, with the same holding true for one's good humour and purity.<sup>1</sup> But what of seduction, which is not a virtue, but rather an art (the art of making others think that one possesses the art of being appealing to others)? Supported by any number of literary examples, the wisdom of the world rather holds that he who is most appealing is one who has no doubts concerning his seductiveness, and does not hesitate to bring this to the attention of the person he wishes to seduce. A compliment that is not enhanced by any indication that the person who has offered it is not all that bad either, and that he or she knows it, is a bland compliment. Furthermore, accounts of past conquests—or at least their evocation, with just the right blend of vagueness and detail—may well serve the seducer in adding to his collection: by letting it be known that his other partners have already done well by their trust in him, he awakens the desire to confide in his 'promises of future happiness'. One of the seducer's strategies—possibly the boldest, and certainly the crudest—is to come out and 'tell it like it is': here, words speak louder than actions, or rather reinforce and even give life to one's acts.

This ingeniousness is nonetheless only possible if the seducer and his game allow, of one accord, that the formula of seduction

is: 'It is my wish that I might appeal to you and so lead you to offer me the pleasure I seek'. In doing so, they agree to eliminate a number of the principal components of the semantic field of 'seduction'. If we attend to the etymology, and indeed to a time-honoured custom which has long been and remains in great vogue, we may note that to seduce is to lead astray, most especially to lead away from the right path, to turn the being whom one wishes to use for one's own pleasure away from his or her own path, either by confusing the mental processes or altering the will of one's prey. Understood in this way, seduction necessarily entails a certain element of deception. Thus, while it is very easy to imagine a situation in which the seducer might say 'I want to pervert you', it is, on the contrary, inconceivable that he could declare 'In order to make myself your master, I will now lie to you'. At times, however, the following contrivance comes to reveal itself; the seducer holds a discourse that is honest, from beginning to end, on his own nature, a discourse he may even embellish with an honest appraisal of seduction in general; what he hides, however, from his interlocutor is that it is precisely he or she who is the present object of his seduction. He has only lied inasmuch as he has led his prey to believe that he or she is the executioner's witness or confidant[e].

We find in the Sanskrit literature an account which I believe to be illustrative of this kind of gambit. It is the adventure, related by Daṇḍin (seventh c. AD?) in his novel entitled *The Tale of the Ten Princes*,<sup>2</sup> of the courtesan Kāmamañjarī and the ascetic Marīci. Here is a translation of the passage:

'A courtesan named Kāmamañjarī,<sup>3</sup> who was verily the jewel of the capital of Aṅga,<sup>4</sup> one day went to see Marīci (in his hermitage). She was in despair, and the tears that spangled her breast were like so many stars. When she bowed in salutation before him, her hair, undone, swept the ground.<sup>5</sup> But at the same moment, there suddenly burst in a mob of friends and relatives who, led by her mother, hurried after her uttering cries of despair. One after the other, and without a stop, they threw themselves face down upon the ground before the ascetic. And he, full of compassion, after softly spoking a few words of comfort to them, questioned the courtesan as to the cause of her distress. She answered, with what

appeared to be a mixture of modesty, dejection and respect, "O Blessed One!<sup>6</sup> This world holds no joy for me. It is in order that I might gain happiness in the world beyond that I have come to take refuge at your feet, these feet that are famous as a refuge for the afflicted." But her mother, raising her folded hands up to her forehead, and bowing repeatedly such that her graying locks touched the ground again and again, said to him, "O Blessed One, I am your slave. Know that the fault here is entirely my own. My fault in this is that I was insistent that my daughter here should fulfil the duties proper to her station. And it is the duty of the mother of a courtesan, from the moment of her birth, to massage her;<sup>7</sup> to cultivate her strength, beauty, the glow of her complexion, as well as her mind; to insure a balance in her humours, digestion and all her bodily constituents;<sup>8</sup> to feed her, in moderation; and, after her fifth year, to keep her body hidden from the view of others, even from her father.<sup>9</sup> On her birthdays and other holidays, to perform the rites that bring happiness and all the joys that go with them. To teach her the science of love, with all of its corollary disciplines; to train her to be skilled in the arts of dance, song, instrumental music, acting, and painting; to school her in cuisine, perfumes and flowers, as well as calligraphy, rhetoric, and so on. It was also necessary that she have an understanding of grammar, logic and astrology, and that I initiate her into those graces and skills with which she could earn a living, as well as into the arts of wagering and of gambling.<sup>10</sup> I also had to take care that her practical education, on the subject of the esoteric arts,<sup>11</sup> be given to her by trustworthy people; that in processions and festivals, she be seen only in the finest attire and surrounded by a brilliant escort; that at concerts and on other such occasions, she always be a success (with the help of a specially hired clapper); that throughout the land, connoisseurs in all the varied arts sing her praises; that astrologers celebrate the auspicious signs marking her destiny; and that she be praised at municipal gatherings by satellites, gay blades, buffoons and nuns, for her beauty, character, talents, grace and sweetness.

And, now that she has become the cynosure of every young man, I have had to see to it that an extremely high price be set for her, and that she be given to men of independent means who are liable to be blinded by passion or driven wild with desire at

but a glance from her; and these have always had to be men of good birth, young, handsome, rich, intelligent, honest, generous, clever, courteous, lovers of the arts, and of good training and character. To give her to a minor is a possibility, but for this he must be possessed of outstanding qualities and extreme intelligence. And, even if she were to be let go for a low price, it would have to be made known that she had brought in a great sum. Or else, we might arrange a *gāndharva*<sup>12</sup> marriage for her with a young minor as a means of getting a marriage price out of his parents (if they give nothing, we take them to court and win the case by putting the judge on her side by bribing him with a present of love).

The courtesan's mother must also take care that the man who has become enamoured of her daughter remain faithful, and see to it that which remains of her lover's fortune, after all the ritual presents he has given her as a show of love<sup>13</sup>—the everyday gifts and those offered on special occasions—then, be squeezed out of him by a variety of procedures. Dumping a man after a quarrel, even though he be won over quite entirely, is of no profit. The man who is truly smitten but who does not loosen his purse must be pestered, through some go-between, in such a way as to awaken in him a spirit of generosity. As for he who is without money, must be driven out with all manner of sarcasm; and keeping the girl carefully away from him, one must ridicule him in public such that he be reckoned a laughing-stock by others and despicable by himself. By no means should one, on the contrary, hesitate to place one's daughter in relation with gentlemen who are generous and capable of helping her if she has worries, men who are irreproachable and rich; but one must, for every situation, carefully weigh the advantages against the inconveniences. The girl, for her part, should be kind to her lover, but never become attached to him. And even if she should come to truly love him, she should not disobey her grandmother's or mother's instructions.

Well, then! After all this, my daughter here has strayed from the duties of her station, such as they were laid down for her by Prajāpati;<sup>14</sup> she has wasted a whole month playing around, at her own expense, with a young brahmin just arrived in town, whose only wealth is his own pretty face. She has rebuffed and annoyed more than one lover possessed of more than enough to pay her,

and driven her family to ruin. And every time I have tried to warn her, to tell her she was crazy and that nothing good would come of it, she has flown into a rage—and now she wants to withdraw into the forest. If we cannot rid her of this idea, there will be nothing left for all of us here to do but to die of hunger on the spot.” And she burst into tears.

Then the ascetic, filled with pity, said to the courtesan: “My child, the life of a forest ascetic is exceedingly difficult. The fruit one hopes to gain from it is deliverance or heaven. Now, deliverance is, as a rule, quite difficult to attain; one must be possessed of the highest wisdom in order to reach it. As for heaven, it is accessible to all who, while alive, perform their duties towards their family.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, you must give up this impossible enterprise, and follow your mother’s advice.” She however, answered with great agitation, “If the earth beneath your feet, O Blessed One, cannot be my sanctuary, then may the god of fire<sup>16</sup> be my refuge, I who am so ill-fated.”

The sage thought for a moment and then, turning towards the courtesan’s mother said, “Go home now, and wait a few days. Your daughter is delicate and accustomed to pleasure. She will take fright by the harshness of forest life. I will work to teach her, and she will come back to her senses.”

The courtesan’s family consented, and returned to their home.

The courtesan, for her part, was full of devotion. Having only brought a pair of freshly washed *saris* as her wardrobe, and caring little for cosmetics or finery, she was able to quickly steal the sage’s heart. She watered the rivulets that ran over the feet of the young plants, took great pains in gathering flowers for the worship of the gods, and made numerous votive offerings. When it was time to worship Śiva,<sup>17</sup> she took care of the perfumes, flower garlands, incense and lamps, and danced, sang, and played music. She also had private conversations with the sage concerning the three aims of man,<sup>18</sup> and made sensible remarks<sup>19</sup> on the supreme *ātman*.

One day when they were alone, realizing that he had fallen in love with her, she said with a smile, “People who put *artha* and *kāma* before *dharma*<sup>20</sup> are truly mad!” Pressed by Marīci, when he asked her “Tell me then, my child, how much higher is *dharma* than *artha* and *kāma*?” she attempted to answer, her timidity

making her tongue-tied, “O Blessed One, it is indeed proper that you learn from me the strengths and weaknesses of the three aims of man! But this, after all, is but yet another example of your goodness towards your slave. But listen then, it is certain, is it not, that *artha* and *kāma* cannot exist without *dharma*,<sup>21</sup> yet *dharma*, which is the root of happiness and liberation and which can be attained by simply concentrating on oneself, is independent of *kāma* and *artha*. And, in contrast with *kāma* and *artha*, *dharma* has no need of support from elements foreign to it. Therefore, *dharma* is not hampered in the least by the practice of *artha* and *kāma*. And even if it is affected, it only takes a bit of effort to set it back aright, and the happiness to which the mere elimination of this fault leads is certainly not insignificant. Take, for example the passion of the Sovereign Father<sup>22</sup> for Tīlottamā. And the hermits’ thousand wives, raped by Śiva! And Kṛṣṇa’s love play with the sixteen thousand women of his harem! Prajāpati even fell in love with his own daughter! Ahalyā was ravished by Indra; the Moon god defiled the bed of his teacher Bṛhaspati;<sup>23</sup> the Sun coupled with a mare and the Wind violated Keśarin’s wife; Bṛhaspati made love with his brother Utathya’s wife; Parāśara seduced a fisherman’s daughter, while his son made love to his brother’s wives; and Atri made love to a doe. Why then did the many wiles the gods used against the *Asuras* have no effect whatsoever on their *dharma*? Because such was the power of their knowledge. Truly, when the mind is purified by *dharma*, passion can no more cling to it than dust to the clouds.<sup>24</sup> This is why I maintain that *artha* and *kāma* are not even worth the hundredth part of *dharma*.”

Listening to her talk, the sage could feel the passion mounting in him. “Oh charming lady”, said he, “you speak rightly when you say that for those beings who have a perception of ultimate reality, *dharma* is not affected adversely by the possession of wealth in this world. But as for me, I have, since birth, lived in total ignorance of all that concerns *artha* and *kāma*, and I must learn their nature, the conditions in which they are gained, and their fruits.”

She answered, “The nature of *artha* is quite simply to acquire, increase and conserve that which one has acquired. The means for its realization are agriculture, herding, commerce, peace treaties, war, etc. And its fruit is that it permits us to make

donations to worthy persons.<sup>25</sup> As concerns *kāma*, this is a kind of contact between a man and a woman in which the mind is wholly absorbed in the objects of the senses. This contact yields unsurpassable bliss. The circumstances which favour it are everything that is splendid and delicious in this world. As for its fruit, it is the supreme sensual pleasure that is born of caresses given and received; sweet even in its recollection, it is a matter of pride for us. This, the highest pleasure that can be given to the senses, can only be apprehended through itself. In order that they might take pleasure in *kāma*, the most distinguished of men will subject themselves to the harshest of austerities, offer costly gifts, wage terrible wars, and fling themselves into perilous sea journeys.”

Are we to blame fate, or the courtesan's skill, or the ascetic's weak resolve? Whatever the case, he found himself, as he listened to her talk—and without giving any thought at all to the rule he had followed theretofore—wholly overcome by passion. It was as if he were dazed. She got him into a palanquin, and having brought him into the city via the king's road, had him carried into her house. A proclamation was sent out: “Tomorrow the feast of love will be celebrated”. The next day, then, the ascetic took a bath, put on perfume, and put a lovely flower garland around his neck. He had completely adopted the lifestyle of a suitor, because he was totally bereft of desire . . . for his prior way of life. Separation from his beloved, even for a moment, was painful for him. She led him down the sumptuously decorated king's road to a garden outside the city, where they found a great assembly of people celebrating the feast of love. She introduced him to the king, who was present, surrounded by hundreds of young ladies. He looked at the courtesan and said with a smile, “Sit down, my dear, with this holy man.” She bowed graciously and sat down, smiling all the while. It was at this moment that a high-born lady rose up, curtsied and said, “Sire, she has defeated me. From this day onwards, I am her slave.” And she bowed before the king.

A clamour rose from the stupefied and amazed crowd. The king, who appeared to be under a spell, plied Kāmamañjarī with jewels, finery and an entire troop of attendants. “Go now”, he said to her. And while the leading personalities of the court and city congratulated her on all sides, she turned to the sage and—

without even waiting to return to her home—said to him, “O Blessed One, I offer you my highest respect. Your servant has long been most obliged to you. It is now time that you return to your affairs.” But he, bewildered by passion, was as if thunder-struck. “What is it, my dear? Whence this chill? What has become of the peerless love you felt for me?” She answered smiling, “O Blessed One, you should now know that this woman, who today has declared herself defeated by me before the court, once reproached me, while we were quarreling, in the following way: “Aren't you proud?” she said to me. “It's as if you've conquered Marīci.” So we made a wager, such that she who lost the bet would become the slave of the other. I took up this challenge and, thanks to your kindness, I have won”.

We can see how well Kāmamañjarī's speech fits together with that of her mother's. The latter seems to be describing the duties inherent to her daughter's condition, and of her obligations towards a family that has taken such care to train her; in doing so, directs the ascetic's thoughts towards the fruits of that education—that is, Kāmamañjarī's skills in lovemaking. The courtesan herself, by way of demonstrating the superiority of *dharma*, especially speaks of that in comparison to which *dharma* is superior—that is, *kāma*. In both cases, that which ‘goes without saying’, but that which is, quite precisely, the point upon which the lie necessary to seduction is brought to bear, is the idea that Marīci is a disembodied judge, a pure listener. Kāmamañjarī, nonetheless, does not limit herself to merely speaking to him. Or rather, she can only make her very wise and orthodox demonstration—which will end in firing the ascetic's passions—because she has succeeded in gaining his confidence by consecrating herself entirely to the trifling details of daily worship. Daṇḍin's description of his heroine's daily routine and attitudes is not merely the fruit of a concern for psychological or literary ‘authenticity’; rather, it is only in the context of certain very definite features of ancient Indian culture that they take on their full meaning.

In the first place, Kāmamañjarī's new lifestyle is not the result of a conversion (which would imply disgust for her prior lifestyle), but rather of a kind of shift in emphasis. The amusements in which she had previously indulged in order to give pleasure to



men, now serve to charm the god whom Marīci serves in his hermitage. It is as if Kāmamañjarī had extended, over time, the two activities that the *devadāsī*, the temple prostitute (literally, 'slave of god'), carries out conjointly: to make love to men—for a price—and to sing and dance for the god.

Elsewhere, we should understand that the courtesan's speech and acts are presented as so many humble imitations—adapted to her humble capacities—of the things the ascetic says and does.<sup>26</sup> Now then, imitation of the creature one desire is—in the treatises on erotic love as well as in Sanskrit dramaturgy<sup>27</sup>—counted as one of the strategies of seduction. More exactly, these treatises provide lists, which vary quite widely, of *hāvas* (literally, 'calls').<sup>28</sup> These are stereotyped attitudes, sometimes signs, sometimes matters of style, whose purpose it is to manifest and ultimately enjoy the results of one's intention to please someone. For whom is one to manifest such an intention? Most often, for the person one loves; but at times for a third person, who, in the case of dance or theatrical mime, is none other than the spectator. Even when they correspond to a wholly sincere passion, these attitudes are just so much play-acting; examples of this are striking a languishing pose, or miming the rejection of an attempted embrace.<sup>29</sup> Highly placed in lists of the *hāvas* is the 'play' (*līlā*) by which a woman imitates the apparel, gait, look, laugh, and words of the man she loves. Without a doubt, this *hāva* is proper to the female lover who, 'unable to unite with her beloved, imitates him to distract thoughts of him'.<sup>30</sup> But this play, if it is truly to be a 'call', must in some way be communicated to him who is absent. Here we might add that as far as the courtesan's strategy is concerned, the ascetic is both present and absent; she kindles in him the desire to be present, even as she gives him the comforting impression that he is absent.

As a means to proving that a knowledge of ultimate truths renders the knower's *dharma* invulnerable as it were—thereby giving a license to be carried away by his passions and even to commit the gravest of sins with impunity—Kāmamañjarī invokes examples from mythology: the violent and sometimes criminal passions of the principal gods of the Hindu pantheon. But these allusions are yet another clever strategy, a means of diverting Marīci's attention. Not that these stories are inauthentic—but

they are proffered here in order to mask other stories, of which Marīci ought naturally to have thought, had his mind not already been confused, had he not already been seduced. The story of the ascetic and the courtesan is in fact, a romanesque adaptation of myths and legends that tell how celestial nymphs (*apsaras*) seduced the great 'seers' (*ṛṣis*) of yore. The structure of these accounts is always the same: the gods are troubled by the supernatural and truly irresistible power the *ṛṣis* acquire through their austerities: the asceticism they undertake is a heating up (*tapas*), which builds up within them such that they become capable of seeing, piercing and pulverizing everything in the universe. The gods do not regard them as enemies *per se*, but rather as rivals, and especially as beings who, by virtue of their tremendous inner concentration, render the world—and the gods with it—useless and without meaning.<sup>31</sup> In order to draw the *ṛṣis* out of their meditative state and terrifying chastity, the gods send *apsaras* their way, and these enchantingly beautiful and supremely seductive nymphs, the divine models of the courtesan, awaken their desire, and thus succeed in waylaying them.<sup>32</sup> Most often, these legends, in the form they take in the great Epics, speak of a union, of the nymph and the ascetic, that remains unconsummated: it suffices that the nymph merely show herself for the ascetic, now unable to control himself, to shed his seed. The seductress slips away and therefore—as regards the desire of him whom she has come to trouble—remains an illusion and a delusion. Her only substantiality lies in the loss (of semen and thereby of power) she has inflicted upon him. Such a debacle nevertheless does not bar this encounter, fleeting and limited though it is to the *ṛṣi*'s sense of sight, from being fruitful in some bizarre way. The *ṛṣi*'s sperm falls onto a tuft of reeds, into a pail, onto a cluster of leaves, into an urn, the waters of stream, the mouth of a gazelle, or onto one of the two sticks one twirls against each other to produce fire. The progeniture of these waylaid ascetics comes to incubate inside such a vessel; and in fact, a number of the heroes of the *Mahābhārata* are born in just this way.<sup>33</sup> Their very names clearly indicate these persons symbolize either sacrificial practice or Vedic knowledge:<sup>34</sup> in order to personify the institutions through which man, in the words of the Veda, 'makes a world for himself', it seems that there must exist beings whose birth thwarts the laws of nature.<sup>35</sup>

To be sure, this doubling—of premature ejaculation followed by the miracle of a purely paternal procreation—is limited to mythical accounts, and has no place in the novel. After the night he has passed with the courtesan, the ascetic Marīci is depicted as a man who is gratified and passionate. Lost in a daze, he wishes for nothing other than a continuation of his happiness.

In the textual genres we have evoked to this point (the novel, technical treatises, and the Epic), seduction is a properly feminine art. To be sure, the *Kāmasūtra* offers males the instructions on the art of making love; that is, of giving pleasure to his partner (and thus, of causing her to become attached to him). But seduction as a long-term undertaking, as a series of manoeuvres and feints (the goal being to capture the other rather than produce a shared experience of sensual pleasure) and, generally speaking, of all the preliminaries which precede the moment of *sparsā*, 'touching,'<sup>36</sup>—all these constitute the woman's field of operations. The man does not concern himself with true seduction, but rather asserts himself by force, through presents, or by means of his captivating, compelling, and dazzling charm.

The picture changes when we go back to an earlier body of texts, of an entirely different character, called the Veda ('Knowledge') or *Śruti* ('Revelation').

This corpus is comprised of two very distinct parts. The first of these are collections of hymns and prayers,<sup>37</sup> the most ancient of which are datable to about the fifteenth century BC. Later are the prose treatises known as the *Brāhmaṇas*<sup>38</sup> (tenth to sixth century BC), instructions on ritual practice, interspersed with speculative expansions on ritual symbolism and mythological accounts<sup>39</sup> intended to demonstrate their origin or their *raison d'être*. In spite of their limitless diversity, these brahmanic myths are fundamentally nothing more than a catalogue of answers to two sorts of questions: How and why was the sacrifice founded? How did the gods manage to take over and control the sacrifice for themselves, and make it work to their benefit? We must bear in mind here that the gods, before they became the recipients of sacrifices offered by humans, were only able to ensure their power over the cosmos because

they were themselves able to discover the proper way of performing the rites. This discovery, or even conquest, of the sacrificial ingredients and procedures is one of the principal themes of the *Brāhmaṇas*.

Among the most highly valued of all oblatory materials is the plant called *soma*. In the beginning, *soma*, coveted by the gods, fell into the hands of the Gandharvas, the celestial musicians. The gods, in order to take it away from them, sent a seductress, a divinity who was none other than the Word itself.

They said, 'The Gandharvas like women; let us send them (the) 'Word'. She will return with the *soma*.' They sent them (the) 'Word', and she came back to them with the *soma*. But the Gandharvas were so taken with her that they could not bear to see her depart. They therefore followed her to where the gods were and made them the following offer: 'You get the *soma*, but we get (the) 'Word'.' 'So be it' said the gods. 'But since she has come here, do not take her away by force. Let us both court her.' And so they courted her. The Gandharvas recited her the Vedas and said, 'See how we know them, see how we know them!' But the gods created the lute and sat down to sing to the accompaniment (of that instrument). 'That' they said, 'is how we will sing for you and how we will entertain you.' She came to them frivolously, preferring song and dance to those who recited and chanted the hymns, and for this reason women are, even to this day, full of frivolity . . . And hence it is to him who dances and sings that they most readily take a fancy'.<sup>40</sup>

Herself a seductress, (the) Word must thus in turn be seduced, and the gods, in order to hold her, employ what would come to play a secondary role for the courtesan, as their primary strategy. What is strange here is this comedy of errors, this reversal of roles between the Gandharvas and the gods, with each group striving to shine in that field which is its opponent's speciality. Of her own free will, (the) Word chooses to give herself up to the gods' seductions. Has she been deceived? The remainder of the account remains silent on the matter. But the entire theology of the *Brāhmaṇas* is based on the idea that (the) Word whom the gods desired is the Word that gives voice to the Vedas—and that in doing so, provides the sacrifice with a fullness of meaning. It is, therefore, not because they wish to further amuse her that the gods wish to keep (the) Word (as well as the *soma*) close by, but rather, in order that they might cause her to give voice to those

same texts which she had found unamusing in the mouths of the Gandharvas.

We find the gods seeking to tap into the Word in yet another passage. Here, Prajāpati, the Creator, has shared out his wealth among his creatures: the gods receive the Sacrifice as their share, while the *Asuras* (the 'demons'), their adversaries, receive the Word.

The gods said to the Sacrifice, 'The Word is a woman. Call out to her, and she shall surely invite you to come.' Or else the Sacrifice spontaneously said to itself, 'The Word is a woman. I will call out to her. Surely she shall invite me to come.' He called out to her. But she at first refused him. And this is why a woman, when a man calls out to her, begins by refusing him. The Sacrifice said, 'She refused me'. The gods said, 'Call out to her, Lord. She shall surely invite you to come.' He called out to her. But she only nodded her head at him. And this is why a woman, when a man calls out to her, only answers with a nod of the head [ . . . ]. He called out to her, and she invited him to come. This is why a woman, in the end, invites a man to come. He said to the gods, 'She has invited me to come'. The gods thought, 'The Word is a woman. Let us take care that she does not lead him away.' [They said to the Sacrifice]: 'Tell her, "I am staying here; you come to me", and when she has come there, let us know.' She came to the place where he was staying. This is why a woman comes to a man who has a good place [to live]. He told them she had arrived [ . . . ]. The gods then stole her from the *Asuras*, and took her for themselves [ . . . ].<sup>41</sup>

The Sacrifice is thus used as bait here. But he himself becomes enamoured with her whom he was to have seduced on the behalf of the gods. 'Sacrifice desired (the) Word, "Oh, how I wish to make love with her!" And they were joined in love'.<sup>42</sup> Nothing could be more dangerous for the gods than this love between the sacrificial Act and Word; pressed against one another, enclosed within one another, they no longer exist for the gods, but for themselves. As is always the case when the gods' supremacy is threatened, it is Indra who reacts. He foresees that a being more powerful than himself could arise from the union of the Sacrifice and the Word. He thus slips in between the two lovers' embrace, and transforming himself into an embryo, enters into and fills up the womb of (the) Word. After a year, he takes birth, and takes care, as he emerges, to tear away the womb that had enveloped

him; following this, he places this severed organ on (the) Sacrifice's head.

The Word, then, if we have understood correctly, and if we may be so bold as to gloss this account, must remain sterile. Her only child is the divine embryo who has surreptitiously violated her, and whose only reason for taking rebirth in her was to effect her mutilation. But, unable as she is to provide (the) Sacrifice with progeny, (the) Word finds other ways to serve him. This she does in a number of ways: the sacrificial rituals performed by the gods—and following their example, by humans—can only be fully realized when they are accompanied by the recitation of Vedic *mantras*. Elsewhere, it is also a form of the Vedic word—the very word that manifests itself in the prose of the *Brāhmanas*—that has taught generation upon generation of men what the sacrificial rites truly are. But beyond this, what is the function, within the structure of the *Brāhmanas*, of these bizarre legends, of these rough sketches or scraps of myths? An entire school of Indian exegetes<sup>43</sup>—the most orthodox of all schools—suggests that these narrations are ornaments. They exist in order that they might encourage (by appealing to the imagination) the people who hear them, to take seriously and to perform properly, that which is promulgated in the fundamental, prescriptive portion of these texts; that is, the *injunctions* concerning the Sacrifice and the way it is to be performed. When she describes the way in which she was seduced by (the) Sacrifice, for the sake of the gods, (the) Word has no other aim than to seduce humans, for the sake of (the) Sacrifice.

## The Vedic God of Wrath

Among the substantive innovations that accompanied those formal ones which made the tenth *maṇḍala* of the *Ṛg Veda* a more 'modern' collection than the nine that preceded it, it is fitting that we note the emergence of several divine figures.<sup>1</sup> As has often been noted, these are abstract divinities,<sup>2</sup> in the sense that they have no life histories, that their mythology is most often only roughly developed, and especially in that their names are also appellatives—unless they be compounds whose etymology is transparent. Such is the case with Prajāpati, Śraddhā, Vāc, Aramati and Viśvakarman. Such is also the case with Manyu. Two hymns (10.83 and 10.84) consecrated to this divinity are referred to conjointly, in the commentaries, by the denomination of *manyu-sūkta* (in the dual), and are reproduced, nearly word for word,<sup>3</sup> in the *Atharva Veda*, in which they appear as hymns 4.32 and 31 (the order of the *Atharva* reversing that of the *Ṛg*). The unity of these two hymns appears, yet again, in their practical intent, as such is defined in *Kauśika Sūtra* 14.26. These are *samrambhanas*, 'incitations to wrath', recited in order to kindle, in warriors the fighting rage with which they might vanquish their enemies. The two hymns play an important role in a divinatory rite that precedes the battle, a rite described in *Kauśika Sūtra* 14.27f.; placed between the two armies, the diviner (*samīksamāna*), muttering invocations, fashions bundles of *bhāṅga* and *mauñja* grass, which he knots with the plant called *ingida* before setting fire to them (with the fire known as *āṅgirasa*). That camp into which its smoke blows is designated as the vanquished army, says Keśava's *Paddhati ad Kauś* 14.31: *yatra dhūmo gacchati tatra na jayah*.<sup>4</sup>

Georges Dumézil studies the first of these two hymns, the richer of the two, in a lively and dense chapter of his *JMQ IV*.<sup>5</sup> Here he demonstrates that the invocations addressed to the god Manyu

are, in a fair number of cases, made up of threefold formulas of which each element refers to one of the three functional levels of the social and religious ideology of the Indo-Europeans. So it is that 10.83.1 proclaims: 'He who has honoured you, O Manyu, O Vajra, O dart, gain in power (*sahas*), physical strength (*ojas*), everything (*viśvam*), in the order of succession'. Dumézil shows here, as well as in other works, that *sahas* obtains to the realm of the first (the magico-religious) function, *ojas* the warrior function—and that *viśvam*, which refers to *viś*, 'the clans', mentioned indirectly in the adjective *viśvācarsani*<sup>6</sup> of 10.83.4 and directly in 10.84.4, is a reference to the world of economic goods. In these poems, which explicitly address the warrior, the affinities between Manyu and Indra appear in high relief, and are a dominant theme. But, just as the benefits one requests from the god—or the forms of greatness attributed to him—concern each of the three functional levels, so Manyu is successively identified with Varuṇa and Agni (*manyūr hotā*, 10.83.2; Sāyaṇa: *manyur eva hotā homani-spādako 'gnih*). It is even said (10.83.2) that *manyūr evāsa devāḥ*, which we understand, along with Geldner (whose translation differs from Dumézil's) as 'Manyu selbst war [jeder] Gott'. (Sāyaṇa *ad TB* 2.4.1.11 is even more explicit: *yo bhago devāḥ so 'pi manyuḥ svarūpaḥ yaś cānyo deva indrādīḥ so 'pi manyur evāsa*). So it is that this circumstantial deification of the warrior's 'Fury' is also made out to be a universal god. While his career is not a particularly long or brilliant one, his mention nevertheless extends beyond the *Ṛg Vedic mantras*. We mainly find him in a number of *Atharva* hymns; and, given the fact that hymns 10.83 and 10.84 belong to the most recent—and visibly atharvanic—layer of the *Ṛg*, we feel it altogether legitimate to consider as homogeneous the data the two *samhitās* have to offer on his subject.

Basing ourselves in part on Dumézil's conclusions as well as on a number of precious insights scattered throughout Louis Renou's *Études védiques et pāninéennes*, we propose here to examine the forms and motifs proper to the god Manyu's universal nature. At the same time, we will consider the values of, as well as those conditions under which, the appellative *manyū* came to be employed. We will thus proceed by moving back and forth between these two problematics, treating each in the light of the other, and which may be formulated, more exactly, in the following terms:

- 1) what exactly is the composition of the notion we find objectivized and divinized in the tenth *mandala*? Can we break this notion down into constituent parts which might explain the two faces—the warlike and the universal—of the resulting divinity?
- 2) Which features, proper to the divine person extolled in our two hymns (and especially the first of the two), might we take as guidelines in our interpretation of the appellative *manyú*?

The translations of *manyú* as a common noun are fuzzy at best. They vary from one author to another, and a given author may adopt a variety of translations, according to which passage he is presently considering. We indicate but a few of such vacillations here. The St Petersburg dictionary of Böhtlingk-Roth recognizes on the one hand a group of usages in which *manyú* may be translated as 'Muth, als Seelenbestimmung, Sinn' (a reading only retained for the Vedic texts), and on the other the meaning 'heftiger Muth, Eifer, Unmuth, Zorn, Wut', which remains constant throughout the classical sources. Grassmann, looking only at the *Rk Samhitā*, gives a more detailed and systematic, and better reasoned account: 'erregter Sinn, Gemuthsbewegung, daher 1) Eifer der Menschen; 2) Eifer, Muth, Thatendrang der Götter; 3) brünstiges Verlangen; 4) Unmuth, Zorn, Wuth; 5) Ungestüm, heftiger Andrang; 6) Eifer, Zorn als Gottheit personificirt'. As for Geldner, he indicates, in his *Glossar*: 1) 'Sinn, Absicht, Verlangen; 2) Eifer, Ingrimm, Grimm, Zorn', a division which coincides, in principle as well as in its application, with that of Böhtlingk-Roth. Sāyaṇa, more concerned with the specificity of each particular context than with a unified overarching meaning, most often glosses the term with *kopa* or *krodha* (influenced here, undoubtedly, by the connotations *manyú* takes on in post-Vedic Sanskrit), but adds the following highly illuminating remarks: *manyum krodham jñānam vā* (on 2.23.12); *mananasādhanam mantrah krodho vā* (on 2.24.14); *stotram* (on 7.60.11); *mananasādhanam stotram* (on 5.7.10); and *manyavaḥ stutayaḥ* (on 4.31.6). We can see that the modern interpreters oscillate, in their translations, between two poles: the first, clearly delineated, is 'anger'; while the second, more difficult to encompass, is covered either by blanket term of 'desire', or that of 'mind'. Such is precisely the case of Bergaigne who translates the term as 'anger' in one place (1883, 3: 176 *ad RS* 7.86.6), and as 'intelligence' in another (*ibid.*, 1.153 *ad RS*

8.48.8). We encounter the same hesitation—but in a formulation indicative of definite progress—with L. Silburn, who translates the term as 'wrath',<sup>7</sup> together with the glosses 'burning intent', 'intense, uninterrupted, cautious and normative mental activity',<sup>8</sup> and with L. Renou, whose translations include 'furore',<sup>9</sup> 'anger',<sup>10</sup> 'fury',<sup>11</sup> but also 'zeal',<sup>12</sup> 'intentional thought',<sup>13</sup> 'active and fruitful thought',<sup>14</sup> 'passion'<sup>15</sup> and 'power of inspiration'.<sup>16</sup>

We do not contest the validity of offering multiple translations for a single Vedic term. What we intend to show is that *manyú* is a unitary concept; therefore, while it is difficult to convey its meaning through a single term in a modern western language, we must nonetheless take care to use words whose referents are coherent, words that point to one another. We further mean to show that one cannot justify the translation of *manyú* as 'anger' in any *Rk Samhitā* passage, except for simplicity's sake<sup>17</sup> in an abridged and symbolic translation.

There is one fact that becomes immediately apparent when we look at the series in which the word *manyú* is embedded: *manyú* never designates a passion or passing mood, or even such a personality trait as 'aggressivity' or 'irritability'. *Manyú* is a permanent quality, or better yet, an essential faculty. In 1.24.6, *manyú* figures in an enumeration of Varuṇa's eminent powers, following and on an equal footing with *ksatrá* and *sáhas*.<sup>18</sup> In 2.24.2,<sup>19</sup> *manyú* is equated with *ójas* (cf. 10.84.2); so too, in 8.4.5, *manyú* appears as a stylistic variant of *ójas*.<sup>20</sup> The affinity of *manyú* with derivatives of the root *uj-* is also manifest in 1.37.7<sup>21</sup> and 10.34.8,<sup>22</sup> and *AS* 1.10.1 and 2,<sup>23</sup> where the god whose *manyú* is evoked is called *ugrá* (see also *RS* 10.113.6). This is echoed, in 10.83, by the mention of *ójas*<sup>24</sup> (alongside *sáhas* and *vísuvam*) as one of the gifts one should expect to receive from Manyu (v. 1), since these are faculties he possesses most eminently (v. 4).<sup>25</sup>

In 5.7.10, *manyú* takes on a clearly deprecatory sense, becoming as it does the *manyú* of the *adhrij-*; that is, as Renou translates it, 'la pensée-mauvaise du riche'.<sup>26</sup> But Oldenberg (1909: 317) quite rightly notes that the expression *manyúm . . . á dade*, followed, in the same verse, by *ád . . . átriḥ sāsahyād | dásyūn* ('may Atri stamp out the *dásyus*'), is parallel to *dásyubhyaḥ pári nṛmṇám á dade* ('I carried off the demons' *nṛmṇá*) in 10.48.2, suggesting a synonymy between *manyú*, and *nṛmṇá* (like *manyú nṛmṇá* is often associated

with *ójas*). *Ṇṁṁá*<sup>27</sup> is however, in no way a pejorative term. It designates virile activity, and sometimes, in a narrower sense, virility itself. Oldenberg adds the following gloss: it is by taking hold of his enemy's *manyú* that the hero of 5.7.10 can hope to defeat him. Here, the specific function of *manyú* stands out just as sharply as it does in the hymns consecrated to the divinized Manyu. We shall have the occasion to return to this connotation of 'triumphant virility', so essential to *ṁṁṁá* and undoubtedly present in *manyú*. Let it suffice for the moment to evoke this passage in support of our argument that *manyú* ought naturally to figure in a list of abstract nouns designating the powers, or even the primary data, of mental activity—rather than mere psychological states. Such a complete listing exists, moreover, in the hymn of AS 15.14, upon which we would dwell for a moment.

The *paryāyasūktas* that make up the entire fifteenth *mandala* of the *Atharva Veda* describe a kind of reordering of the world around the *vrātya*. It is not our intention here to study the status of this enigmatic—and by all accounts marginal and aberrant—individual,<sup>28</sup> nor do we intend to examine in detail the speculative hymns which mark the stages of the *vrātya*'s recuperation by the brahmanic order.<sup>29</sup> Let us simply recall that on the occasion of this 'enthronement', hymn 15.14 offers an account of creation which unfolds on a three-tiered register. Every time the *vrātya* (or *Vrātya*?) appropriates a given part of the Universe (the cardinal directions, the whole of humanity, the assembled gods, etc.) for himself, a god comes into being and (the) *Vrātya* finds himself endowed with a certain attribute which he makes into his *annādā*,<sup>30</sup> his 'organ for eating food'. We thus arrive at a listing, in three columns, that places each of the twelve regions of the universe in parallel with a divinity and an *annādā*. The list of the twelve *annādās* includes *manyú* (whose corresponding terms, in the other columns, are *Íśāna*, 'the sovereign' and *devāḥ*, 'the assembled gods'). Not a single one of the eleven other members of the series of *annādās* ever designates a feeling or a mood, but rather always refers to some function or power, or some being, act or formula in which such a power is embodied. These are *mānas*, *bāla*, the waters, *virāj*, *ābuti*, the plants, the exclamations *svadhā*, *svāhā* and *vāṣat*, vital breath (*prāṇā*) and

lastly *brāhman*. We see here that *manyú* is placed on the same level as the essential cosmic life forces.<sup>31</sup>

Generally speaking, the *manyú* evoked in the *Rg* and *Atharva* Vedic hymns is not an abstract and objectivized *manyú*, but rather the *manyú* of beings who are mentioned by name, beings who are most often hostile or bad, by definition. These include the foreigner (*dāsa*,<sup>32</sup> *arṣ*),<sup>33</sup> the enemy (*amitra*),<sup>34</sup> the being who is malevolent (*dūḍh*),<sup>35</sup> maleficent (*duréva*,<sup>36</sup> *durvidātra*),<sup>37</sup> insolent (*śārdhant*),<sup>38</sup> or who is bent on destruction (*ririkṣant*),<sup>39</sup> the competitor (*adhrij*),<sup>40</sup> or simply, the other (*pāra*).<sup>41</sup> This can also be someone who presses the *soma* in such a way as to incur litigation (?), and who has (evil) ulterior motives.<sup>42</sup> All men are, however, possessed of *manyú*. Thus, it is possible to speak of the *manyú* of mortals,<sup>43</sup> which does not escape the gaze of *Varuṇa*; and of the human (*paūruṣeya*)<sup>44</sup> *manyú*, which has no power over the gods. Individuals or groups come to assert themselves in such a way as to enter into conflict with their neighbours; but *manyú* is only evil when it animates beings who are defined, by nature or by position, as noxious. One may, moreover, bend the *manyú* of others, or the *pitṛs*,<sup>45</sup> for example, in a favourable direction. This relativism emerges clearly in 7.18.16: *Indra* has 'rendered inane'<sup>46</sup> the *manyú* of he who (himself) wished to render inane the *manyú* (of *Indra*).

For there also exists a *manyú* of the gods, especially of *Indra* and his 'helpers',<sup>47</sup> but also of *Mitra-Varuṇa*, *Brahmaṇaspati* and *Agni*. In AS 7.22.2, it is said that the lights of dawn are without blemish (*arepāsaḥ*), united in spirit (*sācetasah*), and very rich in *manyú* (*manyumāttamāḥ*). *Renou* (EVP 3.11) indicates that this final epithet is the only one of the three that is original and that it 'is connected to the *Rg* Vedic *jīrā* or analogous terms'. Here too, we must beware of partial translations, such as 'bellicose fury' in the case of *Indra*, or 'wrath' on the subject of *Varuṇa*, which are adequate for a fair number of passages taken out of context, but which are insufficient whenever we consider the entire body of texts. In fact, the *manyú* of a god is the impulse that moves him to accomplish those acts by which his divinity affirms itself. When *Indra* slays *Vṛtra*, and causes the thunder to rumble, Heaven and Earth shudder in recognition of his *manyú*.<sup>48</sup> It is through his *manyú* that *Indra* has, since his birth, manifested himself.<sup>49</sup> That

Indra's *manyú* is, in the final analysis, nothing other than Indra himself (just as a sovereign cannot be distinguished from the majesty that characterizes him and which is used in his name) is proven by the paratactic construction of *AS* 7.93.1:

*indreṇa manyúnā vayám  
abhí syāma pṛtanyatāḥ*

'With Indra, with (his) *manyú* [or, with Indra as *manyú* ?] may we triumph over the enemy!'

Now, while it is the case that Indra's *manyú* is more often than not violence and fury and warlike intoxication (just as is the *manyú* which the Maruts show in their terrifying course,<sup>50</sup> or the *manyú* of Brahmanaspati<sup>51</sup>), the case of Mitra-Varuṇa and Agni is an entirely different one. It is by their proper (*svéna*<sup>52</sup>) *manyú* that Mitra-Varuṇa separate disorder from order.<sup>53</sup> Agni's *manyú*<sup>54</sup> is simply his desire, or rather his anticipatory thought, and the poet wonders to himself what praise he might offer the god that would be to his liking and fulfil his expectations.

Here we touch on an important point. The word *manyú* is frequently coupled, in nearly synonymous syntagmata, with words meaning 'desire' or 'design'. This is a fact that has long been recognized. What we wish to highlight here is that *manyú* does not so much designate a desire or a design so much as it does the ability to desire or to conceive. Verse 8.48.8 is, in our opinion, very clear on this matter:

*álarti dáksa utá manyúr indo  
mā no aryó anukāmám pára dāḥ*<sup>55</sup>

It would appear that, in the pair *dáksa* / *manyú*, the first term is more concerned with the intellect, while the second has more to do with the emotions;<sup>56</sup> the relationships are reversed in formulas that pair *manyú* together with *vára*<sup>57</sup> or with *vása*.<sup>58</sup> The association of *manyú* with a term meaning 'desire' or 'design', an association which tends in the direction of a pure and simple identification, appears in its most complete form in *AS* 9.2.23, where the two vocatives of the series *kāma manyo* both refer to the sole subject of the singular verb *asi*.<sup>59</sup> Bloomfield (1987: 594) saw clearly that the *manyú* invoked in this hymn was a personification ('courage personified') and that it was no longer a case

of a simple appellative, but of the god himself who was being praised in *RS* 10.83 and 84. An allegorical mythology emerges around this figure, a mythology whose main themes are sketched out in the hymn of *AS* 11.8:<sup>60</sup> Manyu takes a wife in the house of Invention (*samkalpá*); Action (*kárman*) and Ardor (*tápas*) play the role of groomsmen, and the *bráhmaṇ* that of 'chief wooer'.<sup>61</sup> This union is the starting point for a complex cosmogony, which culminates in the constitution of a human body, or rather in the penetration of the human body by the *bráhmaṇ*.

This grouping of Manyu together with Karman, Tapas and Brahman is not unique, and is by no means limited to the mythology of Manyu. What we find here is a transposition, onto a mythological level, of the appellative *manyú*'s capacity to associate itself with determining factors. We will now examine this phenomenon. One of the rare qualifiers we find associated with *manyú* is *satyá* an adjective whose value was very well defined by Bergaigne:<sup>62</sup> in the Vedic hymns, *satyá* means 'accomplished or accomplishing', to which we might add 'destined to be accomplished, promised with realization'. The *manyú* possessed by Brahmanaspati in *RS* 2.24.14, as well as by Indra in *RS* 4.17.10, is *satyá*. The fact is that *manyú* is not only the propensity to desire or to conceive an idea, it is moreover the impulse that moves a being to realize his desires, to bring his designs to their appointed end, to translate his thought into action. This is explicated clearly in *RS* 2.24.14, a verse which evokes Brahmanaspati and his *satyó manyúr máhi kármā karisyatāḥ*. In 10.112.8, the poet hymns the ancient and primordial (*pūrvyāni . . . prathamā*) exploits (*vīryā . . . kṛtāni*) of Indra *satināmanyuh* 'dessen Eifer echt ist' (Geldner). Debrunner (1957: 2:2, p. 432) renders *satinā* with 'wirklich'. Verse 1.10.1 of the *AS* is also rich in teachings on this matter.<sup>63</sup> Varuṇa's *manyú* is dreadful, to be avoided if possible. But this *manyú* is nothing other than the god's basic activity inasmuch as it consists of plans carried to their conclusion, plans that are *vásāḥ satyāḥ* (and it is moreover herein that his royal essence resides). The reciter undertakes, by means of the magical prestige of his *bráhmaṇ*,<sup>64</sup> to deflect the *ugrá* god's *manyú* away from his protégé. In the same way, Indra is king, 'autocrator',<sup>65</sup> because he is *satyásuṣma*, 'he whose energy becomes a reality';<sup>66</sup>

the *manyú* of brahmins are arrows that never miss their mark and that are never thrown in vain.<sup>67</sup>

More than intention, *manyú* is the original *tension* that moves one to desire and to act. This is illustrated, in a magical context, by the imagery of *AS* 6.42.1:

*áva jyām iva dhánvano*  
*manyúm tanomi te hrdáh*

which we gloss in the following manner: 'I remove *manyú* from your heart, just as one looses a bow of its tension when one releases its string'. The same idea is suggested by *AS* 6.65.1, which touches on an analogous image:

*áva manyúr áváyatā*  
*áva bāhú manoyújā*

'[cause to] decrease the *manyú*, the [arrow] pointed [at us], the two arms which intention yokes together [in a single tension]'. While *manyú* is, as a predisposition, the absolute origin of desires and acts, it is itself without origin. It is primal, as the *RS* 10.147.1 emphasizes:

*śrāt te dadhāmi prathamāya manyāve*

'I place my trust in your initial *manyú*'. It is quite true, as Renou has shown,<sup>68</sup> that by a phenomenon of 'contamination', 'this expression not only condenses formulas that use the term *prathamā*—but also those in which *manyú* is given as a determining factor in the death of *Vṛtra*'. But this conflation is only possible because *manyú* is, precisely, a determining factor, a necessary condition, a prior instruction,<sup>69</sup> a fact perhaps confirmed by a ritual instruction found at the end of *RS* 10.83:

*ubhā upāśśú prathamā pibāva*

'Both of us, silently, let us be the first to drink [the *soma*]'. But what strikes us as most convincing of all is the qualifier *svayambhú* applied to *manyú* in the fourth verse of the same hymn. This compound is a *hapax legomon* in the *Ṛk Saṃhitā*: in the hymns of the collection in which each and every divinity is celebrated, in turn, as the supreme divinity, Manyu alone has the right to this unusual title. With this mention of *svayambhú*, we

are not only in the presence of the introduction of a neologism to the Vedic lexicon, but also of a new concept that comes to enrich the system of religious imagery. Once qualified as *svayambhú*, Manyu is clearly distinct from Indra, who as Bergaigne noted, is essentially a god who is born, a son-god.<sup>70</sup> Post-*Ṛg* Vedic contexts allow us to measure the import of this qualifier. It is found twice in the *Atharva Veda*—in 10.8.44, where it is related to the being who is infinitely wise, immortal, whole, superior to all, and who knows the *ātmán*; and in 19.10.53, in a cosmogony that depicts Time, *kālā*, as the origin of all things, the principle out of which arise Prajāpati, *tāpas*, and Kaśyapa, who is called *svayambhú*. Even more illuminating, even if it speaks from a later phase of Vedic religion, is the passage of *VS* 2.20. This last text describes the circumambulation by which the king, in the course of the *rājasūya* ceremonies, imitates the circular path taken by the sun: the king symbolically creates space and time, organizes the universe around himself and reproduces the cosmic process of creation and maturation. Under such circumstances, he may only use instruments and ingredients that he himself has manufactured; and he is himself referred to as *svayambhú*. This ceremony, with its attendant symbolism, has been studied by Heesterman,<sup>71</sup> whom we have paraphrased here. The motif that emerges from this text is clear: it is that creation is the work of a creator who is himself his own source; and that the environment which allows for the creative process to bear fruit is one of heat (here, solar heat), of *tāpas*. The cosmogonic function of *tāpas* (which manifests itself on a number of levels and has been the subject, in Indian thought, of increasingly complex speculation<sup>72</sup>), is a datum too trivial for us to emphasize (see, among a hundred other Vedic texts, *RS* 10.90 and 129). What is worthy of mention here is that *tāpas* is sometimes assimilated to and sometimes allied with the uncreated creator, a connection highlighted, with all the clarity one could hope for, by *TB* 3.12.3.1:

*svayambhú bráhman paramám tápo yát*

'The *bráhman*, self-born, supreme ardor!' (Let us note in passing that the simple fact that both the *bráhman* here and the god Manyu in *RS* 10.83 are called *svayambhú* indicates a kind of equivalence between the two notions, or at least a relationship of



sorts. This is supported in the variant term *brāhmaṇā* which the TB 2.4.2.3 offers in place of *manyūnā*, found in AS 7.70.5).<sup>73</sup> Now, from the time of the *Rg Veda*, the god Manyu Svayambhu is also known by the title (given him in the *Anukramanī*) of Manyu Tāpasa.<sup>74</sup> In 10.83.2, he is united with *tāpas*:

*pāhi no manyo tāpasā sajośāh*

'Protect us, Manyu, in keeping with *tāpas*!' He has *tāpas* for his ally in verse 3:

*tāpasā yujā vi jahi śātrūm*

'With *tāpas*, scatter out enemies!' Similarly, it is with *tāpas* and *manyú* that brahmins simultaneously strike the enemy in AS 5.18.9.

There corresponds, to the basic intentionality designated by the appellative term *manyú*, a primal, universal and uncreated divinity who is endowed, through his association with *tāpas*, with the principal attribute used to characterize a creator god. In this regard, it is fitting that the two hymns consecrated to him follow directly upon the two hymns to Viśvakarman, the *svadhāvant* ('self-regulating') demiurge. What is paradoxical is that Manyu's cosmogonic role is never articulated explicitly, or at least never on a term for term basis. We can only acknowledge and reconstitute this role by making constant reference to the appellative *manyú*, and by taking the qualifiers which describe Manyu Tāpasa in these two poems whose tonality and ritual destination are, we repeat, unquestionably martial in character, as so many allusions or veiled references to this role. The simple mention of the *vájra* orients us towards a reading on two simultaneous levels. The *vájra* is Indra's bolt or club, the offensive weapon, and the god Manyu is directly invoked by the name of *vájra* (and of *śāyaka*, 'shaft') in 10.83.1. But we know from other sources that the *vájra* is at the height of its efficiency when it liberates the powers of creation and fertility: this has been judiciously noted by J. Gonda;<sup>75</sup> while G. Liebert<sup>76</sup> has found it possible to give a 'phallic' interpretation to the term *vájra*.

All of these elements lead us to the conclusion that the two *manyú-sūktas* are to be read, by a kind of *śleṣa*, on two simultaneous levels. The first of these levels would provide us with its explicit

content, whose validity, supported as it is by the rite, should by no means be placed in question: Manyu is (divinized martial) Furor; *tāpas*, its ally, or its synonym, is the bellicose agitation, the polemic ardour that seethes within the being to which it gives life, and which destroys, by its scorching touch, the being against whom it is directed. The *vájra* is Indra's bolt, with the key words being *sáhas*, *sáhuri*, and all the terms that designate combat, victory, and the spoils of war. The second level, for which the key word is *svayambhú*, opens onto a latent significance, constituted by resonances on these same terms: *vájra* may perhaps mean 'membrum virile', *tāpas*, certainly means 'creative heat', and *manyú* here designates the intentional tension that we have attempted to define.<sup>77</sup>

The *śleṣa* that permits us to posit two such simultaneous readings is not based, as in the *kāvya*, on homonymy, nor on the coexistence, for a single *signifiant*, of two *signifiés* which are to be considered separately even if they refer back, diachronically, to a single meaning. It is, rather, founded on the fact that, in the poetic language of these hymns, all of the many meanings of a single term are simultaneously present and compounded together: words, formulas, and thoughts are brought together in a closely knit network of cross-references such that, for the most recent portions of the collection, it is the Veda in its entirety that is evoked in each hymn.

## Return Action in the Sacrificial Mechanics of Brahmanic India

When a man has repaid with evil the evil done him by another when he was in distress, by one who mocked him in hard times, it is, I think, as if he were born again.<sup>1</sup>

The *Mahābhārata* shows us, in a thousand different ways, that the desire for vengeance is a vital ambition, an essential passion that needs no justification outside of itself, being that which gives meaning to human action.<sup>2</sup> The narrative fabric of the Epic is, indeed, a network of tales of vengeance.<sup>3</sup>

As we know, the central theme of the *Mahābhārata* is the confrontation between two groups of heroes, the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas. Lying at the root of their conflict are a series of reciprocal offences that issue in a situation in which Kaurava resentment dominates. Henceforth, it is the Kauravas who seem to take the initiative of hatred; they persecute their adversaries incessantly, heaping treachery and humiliation upon them. The conflict reaches its point of no return when the Kauravas attack Draupadī, the wife of the five Pāṇḍavas. Having bested her husbands in a game of dice, and having stripped them of all their possessions—including their wife—the Kauravas treat Draupadī like a slave and outrage her with unforgivable acts: Duḥśāsana drags her by her hair as he abuses her; and when he attempts to undress her, it is only through Kṛṣṇa's miraculous intercession that he does not succeed in stripping her naked. Duryodhana invites her to sit on his thigh. At the request of their father, the aged Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the Kauravas loosen their stranglehold, and allow the Pāṇḍavas to go free, returning Draupadī to them as they sentence them to exile—or more exactly, to disappearance—for a

period of thirteen years. It is Bhīma, the most impetuous of her husbands, who takes it upon himself to avenge Draupadī. And so it is that thirteen years later during the final battle of this grandiose struggle for vengeance that would end with the victory, at an extremely high cost, of the forces of good, the Pāṇḍava, Bhīma comes to kill Duḥśāsana and give Draupadī his blood to drink, and to shatter Duryodhana's thigh and trample his head. In the intervening period between the dicing scene and this battle, Draupadī is forced to suffer a number of other humiliations, as she wanders clandestinely, sharing the burden of exile with her husbands. On each of these occasions, it is Bhīma who avenges her. Avenging Draupadī is Bhīma's speciality. The war itself may be broken down into a series of combats that involve but a small number of opponents, combats which are presented as so many links in a chain of vengeance, as either the final redress of a former wrong or the reaction, in the heat of battle, to the slaying of one's father or ally. Droṇa, a warrior in the Kaurava camp, slays his former friend and eternal enemy Drupada, who is in the Pāṇḍava camp. Drupada is avenged by his son Dhṛṣṭadyumna, who slays Droṇa, whose son Aśvatthāman avenges him by slaying Dhṛṣṭadyumna. The forms these murders take (since the majority of them are committed through treachery) clearly show that these are not mere instances of doing away with one's enemy; they are nothing other than acts of vengeance, of committing an act of violence that is the equivalent of—and, when possible, of the same order as—the violence one has suffered.

The core account, of the battle of the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas, is but a portion of the Epic's narrative whole. We would do well then to examine its other components, that is the frame, narrative and various episodes.

Here, too, the theme of vengeance appears with great clarity. The frame narrative consists of the tale of king Janamejaya, the descendant of the Pāṇḍava heroes, who has his ancestors' deeds recounted to him.<sup>4</sup> Now, this recitation takes place in the course of a 'snake sacrifice'<sup>5</sup> the king is performing. Why is he sacrificing? Because his father Parikṣit died of snake bite.<sup>6</sup> We are thus in the presence of a mortuary sacrifice, of redress that the sacrificer affords his father by putting to death every member of his murderer's race. This is revenge in the form of sacrifice, or more

exactly a sacrifice within which revenge is implicit, following Mauss's schema.<sup>7</sup> (Even closer to this schema is the ceremony Vapuṣmant performs in honour of his father:<sup>8</sup> the offering of water is replaced in this Purāṇic account by an offering of his murderer's blood; and it is with the flesh of his murderer, and not with flour as is normally the case, that the ritual pellets [*pindas*] are made).

As for the Epic's episodes, these are edifying narratives placed in the mouth of one or another of the core narrative's main characters, in support of a didactic teaching it has fallen on him to make. These episodes, even though they interrupt the continuity of the main story, are generally more than mere tangential asides. They too, on the contrary, have a place in the poem's general organization, either because they give information concerning the heroes' ancestors, or because the events they relate are precursors or replications of analogous elements from the main story. A fair number of these expansions are themselves tales of vengeance. An example is the story of Paraśurāma who, in order to avenge his father Jamadagni who has been killed by the sons of Arjuna Kārtavīrya (this murder is itself the culmination of a complex prehistory of offences, reprisals and curses), undertakes to slay every member of the murderer's race—that is, the entire *ksatriya* class (*varṇa*).<sup>9</sup> This massacre, committed twenty-one times over, would have resulted in their total annihilation, had the Earth, who could not live without a king (and the king is a *ksatriya* by definition) not begged him to spare a few of the survivors. These would give birth to a new and purified race of *ksatriyas*.

It would not be difficult, and only slightly artificial, to arrange all the events related in the *Mahābhārata* along the lines of a repertory of its tales of vengeance.

But the *Mahābhārata* is something more than a mere series or nesting set of tales. It also contains, on the one hand, a number of purely didactic portions which, placed in the mouth of some divine or human hero, give a doctrinal account of *dharma*—that is, of the social order and the cosmic order. On the other hand, we can distinguish several levels—or, to borrow G. Dumézil's<sup>10</sup> expression, several causalities—within the narrative itself.

Superimposed upon the 'romanesque causality' that makes the

story of the Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas an intelligible one there is also a 'mythico-epic causality'. This latter concerns the gods and *Asuras* and the ways in which they, in order to accomplish their plans, engender the human character in whom they incarnate themselves. The hero is at once himself and the emanation of a divinity, and a number of his personality traits are transpositions of the divine nature of him from whom he arises.

This mythico-epic causality is in turn subordinated to a cosmic causality, by virtue of which the *Mahābhārata* becomes the description of a global crisis, of the way in which the universe must come to pass into a night side of its existence, and of the cataclysm that marks the end of this age and the beginning of a new one. Human passions, vicious or simply inadequate behaviour are so many symptoms—and at the same time, causes—of a dissolution of *dharma*, a dissolution that is at the same time the symptom and cause of a *yugānta*, of the end of an age.<sup>11</sup> It is this final causality, as well as the sacrificial symbolism<sup>12</sup> recognizable in the poem as a whole and in each of its parts, that makes the specific feature of the Indian Epic. The *Iliad* may also be described as a chain of acts of revenge, a convenient starting point being Achilles' resentment announced by Homer in the first verse. But what is special in the Indian Epic is that the acts of the humans as well as the gods reveal their full meaning only when they are examined in the light of a general doctrine of cosmic and social *dharma*, a doctrine that is expressed throughout the text, both directly and through mediating symbols.

What place then, in the perspective of *dharma*, does vengeance occupy? Its place is a non-existent or, at least, indeterminate one. The desire for revenge is omnipresent and in one of the motors for human<sup>13</sup> (and divine) activity; but, taken in isolation, vengeance is neither a thing of value, nor an institution, nor even a socially regulated practice.

Furthermore, there exists no topical term for this notion in the Sanskrit language. That which we translate as 'vengeance' are terms that signify 'reaction' or 'compensation' (*pratīkāra*, *pratikriyā*), terms that can just as well be applied to the idea of 'reward'. Alternatively, one finds such periphrastic compounds as *vairāsuddhi*, the 'elimination of hostility', or nouns like *vairitā* or *jighāmsā*, which refer to hatred or murderous intentions.<sup>14</sup>

How are we to explain this fact—that vengeance has no formal status in an Epic in which it is constantly brought into play?

The answer lies in the fact that the Epic is describing the evolution of a crisis situation. On the level of 'romanesque causality', of human motivation, this crisis grows out of an irregularity in the royal family. Because the princes are lacking in the proper qualifications or strength to rule, or because they lack the will to rule, there is no truly legitimate king. Bhīṣma, the son of Śāntanu (the common great-grandfather of the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas), draws away from his younger brothers and renounces the throne as well as the procreative act. In the next generation, king Paṇḍu prefers forest life to the throne. Furthermore, a curse has condemned him to die the moment he has intercourse with a woman; and because he has been so deprived of any direct descent, his sons, the five Pāṇḍavas are in fact the sons of gods who have taken his place in uniting with his two wives. By yielding to the temptation of ascetic renunciation, these kings are disloyal to their own *dharma* and provoke a general social disorganization, a mingling of duties and lines of conduct. The opposition of the Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas only exacerbates this failure and state of confusion. Revenge is taken and one's people are avenged not as a means to obeying a positive ideal of honour and solidarity, but due to the absence of any king who might impede or punish the crime. This crisis situation is perceived and lived as such, and does not issue in any new norm. When a norm is invoked, it is always that of *dharma*; and it is a basic principle of *dharma* to reserve, for the king, the privilege of inflicting punishment.

This principle is stated in the clearest possible terms in the *dharma sūtras*, collections of rules upon which the entirety of ancient Indian legal literature based itself.<sup>15</sup>

Let us note here that the king normally belongs to the warrior or *ksatriya* class, and that every *ksatriya*, being of royal essence, is a king in some sense. But the system which maintains that the function of the king, and the king alone, is to punish, is not the product of an aristocratic code of conduct proper to the warrior class. For the king's highest purpose is not, in fact, the glorification of his race; what moves him to act before all else, is the desire to gain in those merits by which he may come to deserve a happy

future in the next world. The king moreover, can only be certain that he is following *dharma* when he has at his disposal the advice and surety of his brahmin counsellors.<sup>16</sup>

In truth, a king, when he acts under the guidance of brahmins, is like an incarnation of *dharma*.<sup>17</sup> *Dharma* is powerless, or rather non-existent, if the king is not there to give it life, armed with the rod of punishment to see that it is respected.<sup>18</sup> It would even be inexact to consider the king and punishment as the means to the end of *dharma*. It is a bond of consubstantiality that obtains between *dharma*, the king and punishment. *Dharma* and punishment are combined in the figure of the god Yama: the king of the dead and god of death, the prototype of the human king, ancestor of the human race and personification of *dharma*, his name means 'control', 'repression', and his weapon is, for sure, the rod of punishment.<sup>19</sup>

It is for the sake of the king, says Manu, that (in the beginning) the creator produced his son punishment (*danda*), which is nothing other than *dharma*, and which consists of the flame of the *brahman*.<sup>20</sup>

It is punishment that is truly the king, it is he who is the male, the leader, he who ordains, who is the guarantor of *dharma* for the four stages of life. It is punishment alone that governs all the creatures, who alone protects them, who alone watches over them while they sleep. The sages declare: punishment is *dharma* [ . . . ].<sup>21</sup>

If the king did not punish, without cease, those who deserve to be punished, the strong would fry the weak like fishes on a skewer; the mob would eat the sacrificial cake, the dog would come and lick the offerings, no one would be able to hold on to his possessions, inferiors would take the place of their superiors . . . Every class would be corrupted and every barrier broken; every man would be enraged at every other man were punishment to go astray. But there where black punishment keeps watch with red eyes, there where he annihilates the evil ones, the people do not go astray, so long as he who inflicts punishment has the right perspective.<sup>22</sup>

If punishment is to be administered by the king, if it can only be administered by him and no one else, then vengeance must of necessity be relegated among those passions or forms of action that threaten *dharma*; or rather, be encompassed by anger which, together with desire and cupidity, is one of the causes of differences

between people. These quarrels are set straight by legal procedures that the king organizes by virtue of his being the (sole) custodian of punishment. It is to this end, says Nārada, that the royal function was created when it became apparent that humans had ceased to observe *dharma* spontaneously.<sup>23</sup>

The king can make *dharma* and punishment reign because he is himself *adandya*: the consecration ceremony includes a rite of passage in which the king is beaten by a brahmin, and so placed beyond the reach of the *danda*'s power.<sup>24</sup> To the king's legal immunity may be added the certitude, for the king, that in spite of the acts he may be led to commit in inflicting punishment, his purity always remains intact.<sup>25</sup> This is because the king, when he holds the *danda*—that is, when he reigns—is comparable to 'those who are bounded by a vow or who are performing a long sacrifice'.<sup>26</sup> A frequent, nearly automatic, analogy found in the Brahmanism of ancient India maintains that any activity, whether human or divine, possessed of a measure of complexity and directed towards a goal compatible with *dharma* or some form of *dharma*, ought to be analysed as a sacrifice—that is, one ought to recognize in it the same persons, ingredients, interplay of forces, arrangements, and the superimpositions of meanings that characterize the sacrificial scenario. Such is the case with cosmogony and with the majority of rites of passage, most especially the marriage and funerary rites; but married life, study, love and war are also so many sacrifices. In describing the king's dharmic and repressive activities (it is the king's special *dharma* to see to it that each of his subjects also follow his or her own *dharma*), the authors adapt the structure of sacrifice in at least two ways.

Bṛhaspati tells us that it is Viṣṇu who, in the sacrifice, is the sacrificial recipient, whereas in a legal proceeding, this role is played by the king. The litigant who wins the trial is the same as the sacrificer (*yajamāna*), while he who loses is like the victim (*paśu*). The plaintiff and the defence are comparable to melted butter, and the grounds for lawsuit (*pratiñā*) to the vegetable offering (*havis*). Here, the Vedas are the treatises on *dharma*, the judges the officiating priests (*ṛtvij*) and the fine to be paid the ritual fee (*dakṣiṇā*).<sup>27</sup>

Other texts (more naturally) compare the king to the sacrificer, rather than to the divinity, since it is the sacrificer who defrays

the expenses of the sacrifice, and who reaps its fruits.<sup>28</sup> To what, then, ought one to compare the divinity to whom the offerings are given? While it is not so stated explicitly, all evidence leads one to think that this is nothing other than *dharma* itself.

We must note here that the king's justice and the sacrifice have more in common than formal analogy. One also finds a resemblance in their content. Both are in fact instances of an act of violence which does not taint the person who commits it or causes it to be committed. In both cases, the good one hopes to realize, in this world or in a future life, is accompanied by a reaffirmation of the general *dharma*.

It is, on the contrary, impossible to draw a correspondence between vengeance and sacrifice: not only are they dissimilar in content, but also in structure, since vengeance brings only two parties together: the victim who has become a killer, and the killer who has become a victim (the fact that a son may avenge his father, or a man take revenge on the sons of his enemy, changes nothing: sons are but substitutes for or extensions of their fathers). Contrariwise, the sacrifice necessarily implies no less than three partners—the sacrificer, the victim and the divinity—with a fourth element, that of the team of sacrificial officiants, also often coming into play. Therefore, when we encounter, in the Epic's frame narrative and episodes, acts of vengeance in the form of a mortuary sacrifice, we should take care to note that this is not a case of revenge interpreted in sacrificial terms, but rather of revenge enclosed, or enfolded and hidden away, within a sacrifice. Vengeance then, does not enter into the sacrificial pattern. We further observe, when we look at the relationship between killer and victim, that vengeance is the opposite of sacrifice; for whereas the avenger hates his victim and wishes to make him suffer, the attitude the sacrificer bears towards his victim is one of gratitude. He recognizes in his victim an *alter ego* who allows him to preserve his own self: it is his wish to spare him of any pain, and he promises him the same heaven that he himself desires. So great is this sympathy, this will for identification that carries him towards his victim, that he seeks to find in its attitude some sign of consent before putting it to death.

May we say, for all this, that vengeance is absent from the

sacrifice? The sacrificer's own projections bring it ceaselessly into play. These projections are of two orders. Examples of the simpler of the two are the most common, and may be formulated as such: I am afraid of the victim I have just killed, because I have hurt it and it will certainly want to take revenge. The second, a less common and more complex order of projection, may be formulated: I am afraid that my partner may be afraid of me and that he may believe that I wish to avenge myself of the hurt I suffered because of him.

Simple projections have immediate effects which are clearly circumscribed by the rite. The precautions one takes in the course of sacrifice to gain the victim's consent and collaboration are insufficient. One must also neutralize the desire for vengeance felt by members of the animal's family. A propitiatory formula is provided to this effect: 'May his mother consent to this killing, as well as his father, his uterine brother, and companion from the same herd'.<sup>29</sup>

So it is, the text adds, that one verily puts the victim to death with the assent of his own family and friends.<sup>30</sup>

But one cannot be sure of the meekness of the victim itself: the desire to retaliate seems so natural, and so in line with the mechanics of the compensation of good and evil that grounds the system of dharmic equity, that the sacrificer cannot help but dread the effects of the violence he has committed. While the texts may well proclaim that sacrificial murder is not a sin it is not such an easy thing to rid oneself of guilty feelings, and so the power of the rite is a welcome thing when, compounded with persuasion, it works to imprison the victim in its condition of victim.

Here is an example of this concern and of the way in which ritual is employed to remedy it: one phase of the *soma* sacrifice, called the *prātaranuvāka* or 'morning litany', consists of the recitation of Vedic formulas, in verses of varying meters. In Vedic speculation, there are fixed correspondences between a given metric schema and a given element of the cosmos. So, for example, the *br̥hatī* (8 + 8 + 12 + 8 syllables) and *uṣṇih* (8 + 8 + 12 syllables) meters correspond to the cow and horse, and the he-goat and ram, respectively. Now, it is held that one should, while reciting this morning litany, arrange these formulas in such a way that the texts

in *br̥hatī* and *uṣṇih* meter fall in the middle, framed as it were by texts whose meters symbolize strength and vigour.

In the middle then, is the livestock, in relationship to the *br̥hatī* and the *uṣṇih*. Indeed, it is in this way that the reciter encloses the livestock on both sides, with strength and vigour, and gives them to the sacrificer. Thus, the livestock cannot stray from the sacrificer. Just as men in this world eat animals, and just as they possess them, in the same way, in the other world, do animals eat men. He subdues them here with the morning litany. Subdued, the animals do not eat him in the other world, nor do they possess him in order to do the same unto him. Just as he eats them in this world, and possesses them in this world, in the same way does he eat them and possess them in the other world.<sup>31</sup>

Here we can see how the *lex talionis*—he who has eaten will be eaten—has been replaced by another law that only has teeth by virtue of the rite's efficacy: he who has eaten will eat.

Sacrificial violence is a borderline case of mundane violence. We are not certain that the victim, in spite of our promise to send him to heaven, will spare us his resentment. Should we not then dread all the more the wrath of those beings, both animal and vegetable, that we destroy in the food we eat every day? Animals, trees, plants, the waters themselves cry out for vengeance against humans who, in this world, ceaselessly torture them and put them to death. The setting of these victims' reprisals is the other world, where the eaters and eaten of this world change roles. It is curious, however, that whereas humans retain their human appearance here, the animals, trees, plants and waters who are now the executioners leave their original natures behind to also become humans. Such, at least, is the vision beheld by the sage Bhṛgu, son of Varuṇa, in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* account whose intention it is to provide the *raison d'être* for the *agnihotra* rite, a daily sacrifice, performed at dawn and dusk, of pouring cow's milk into one of the householder's sacrificial fires. We thus learn that the object of this rite is to prevent the reversal witnessed by Bhṛgu from ever happening to him who faithfully performs it, and who knows why he performs it.<sup>32</sup>

Bhṛgu, the son of Varuṇa, thought he knew more than his father. Varuṇa noticed this and said, 'Go my son, towards the east. When you have seen what you will have seen, go towards the south; then towards the

west; then towards the north; then towards the northeast. And then come and tell me what you have seen.

Bhṛgu, then, went to the east, and saw, O horror! men who were dismembering men, tearing them limb from limb as they said: 'Here's one for you and one for me!' He said, 'What a horrible thing! Woe is me! These men here who dismember men, who tear them limb from limb!' They replied, 'This is how they treated us (*asacanta*) in the other world, now we are returning them the favour (*pratisacāmahe*)'. Bhṛgu said, 'Is there no expiation (*prāyāścitti*) for this? 'There is one'. 'What is it?' 'Your father knows what it is'.

To the south, he saw men who cut men into pieces.

To the west, it was men who, sitting silently, were devoured by other men sitting silently.

To the north, men who screamed, and were eaten by men who screamed.

To the south, west and north, Bhṛgu asked the same questions and received the same answers.

To the north-east, he saw two women, the one beautiful and the other surpassingly beautiful.<sup>33</sup> Between these two women is a black man, with yellow eyes, who holds a stick in his hand. Seeing him, Bhṛgu is seized with terror. He returns to his father and sits down. His father says to him, 'Learn, then your Vedic lesson. How is it that you have not learned your lesson?' Bhṛgu answers, 'What is it that I should learn? There is nothing to learn anyway'. Then Varuṇa knows: 'Indeed, he has seen'. And he says to his son, 'The men you saw to the east were trees. When one throws onto the fire logs one has taken from trees, one becomes the lord of trees, and conquers the world of trees. The men you saw to the south were animals. When one makes an offering of milk, one becomes the lord of animals and conquers the world of animals. The men you saw to the west were plants. When one lights up the milk of the *agnihotra* with a flaming piece of straw, one becomes the lord of plants and conquers the world of plants. The men you saw to the north were the waters. When one pours water into the milk of the *agnihotra*, one becomes lord of the waters and conquers the world of the waters. Of those two women, the beautiful and the surpassingly beautiful, the beautiful one is Belief; when one offers the first libation of the *agnihotra*, one becomes master of Belief, one conquers Belief. The surpassingly beautiful woman is Non-Belief; when one offers the second libation, one becomes lord of Non-Belief and conquers Non-Belief. As for the black man with the yellow eyes, he is Wrath. When, after having poured water into the spoon, one pours the libation into the fire, one becomes the lord of Wrath and conquers Wrath. And, in truth, anyone

who, knowing this, offers the *agnihotra*, becomes the lord of all things and conquers everything'.

Here now is an example of a complex projection.

In order that he may provide himself with a sacrificial body, necessary for him to enter into contact with the gods in the sacrifice proper, the sacrificer performs a certain number of preliminary rites which, taken as a whole, constitute his consecration (*dikṣā*). Counted among these rites are a purificatory bath, following which the sacrificer puts on a linen garment: this he does, says the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, 'to be complete'.<sup>34</sup> For in doing this,

It is verily his own skin that he puts on. For this same skin that is presently on the body of the cow was originally on man. The gods had said, 'Everything on earth rests upon the cow; let us give it the skin that is presently on man: in this way, it will be able to bear the rain and the cold and the heat'. Man was thus skinned. It is for this reason that when a piece of straw or some other thing scrapes him, he begins to bleed. One thus places this skin upon him, which is his clothing. And for this reason none but man wears clothing: clothing is a skin for him. And for this reason as well, one should be attentive to dressing suitably, so as to be completely clad in one's own skin. And for this reason again, it is pleasure to see a man, even if he be ugly, suitably dressed, for thus is he clad in his own skin. And thus, a man should not go naked in the presence of a cow. For the cow knows that it is wearing the man's skin, and it flees for fear that man will take his skin back. This is also why cows affectionately approach the man who is suitably dressed.

This text offers us an example of a particularly refined form of non-violence, the will to not cause fright. But it also shows us, as is stated elsewhere in this same *Brāhmaṇa*, how the man who undertakes *dikṣā* prior to a sacrifice lives in 'a made world', a world that he has made for himself, and how, in this situation, he makes a body for himself, thus completing with a cultural skin the body to which the gods had done harm. By clearly indicating that it is not his will to avenge himself, or even to seek redress, man shows himself to be unique. He cannot hope for the same self-abnegation on the part of other creatures. And so it is that he devotes himself to various—and at times contradictory—proceedings and reasonings to fend off the vengeance of the beings who surround him.

We have seen that the rite is the somewhat mechanistic means by which humans are enabled to perpetuate, in the next world, the domination that they enjoy in this world, and to blunt or nullify all retaliation. One may also proceed by defining the present state of affairs not as a starting point—and thus, one which would call for castigation and compensation, and thereby vengeance—but rather as an end-point: castigation has already occurred, and present violence is redress for a past offence. Trees are felled by humans with axes whose handles are made of wood, and thus provide men with the instruments of their own destruction! But this is not a primal injustice, but is, rather, the result of a punishment: one day the Word fled from the world of the gods, hiding herself among the trees who refused to give her up to her pursuers. The gods thus cursed the trees, condemning them to suffer the violence that we inflict upon them today.<sup>35</sup> And if fishes allow themselves to be killed without putting up any resistance, they do not do so in order to pave the way for their revenge in some future life. Their behaviour is once again the result of a curse, this time by Agni who, when fleeing the gods, had sought refuge in the waters, where he was betrayed by the fishes.<sup>36</sup>

Brahmanic India is thus obsessed with violence. We should understand however, that it is blocked, by this very obsession, from transforming it into a clearly circumscribed social practice. That which the religious texts evoke, much more than the immediate desire to avenge oneself, is the fear of provoking another creature's desire for vengeance; and this is a desire that may be awakened not only in humans and gods, but also in all that has life (a boundless sphere, including not only the waters, as we have seen, but the earth as well). This metaphysical propensity drives man to search out, from within the vast system of *dharma*, and later in the cycles of infinite recurrence, the causes and consequences of his acts, and turns him away, in his thought of vengeance, from concentrating on the irreversible history of singular events.<sup>37</sup>

## Paths of the Knife: Carving up the Victim in Vedic Sacrifice\*

The term most frequently used in Vedic prose to denote cutting a sacrificial victim into pieces is *vibhakti*.<sup>1</sup> It designates fragmentation of the body for the purposes of distribution: each portion is defined by the recipient (human or divine) to whom it is allotted.

The striking feature about Vedic teaching on 'division of the victim' (*paśor vibhaktih*) is the contrast between the wealth and detail of the strictly technical instructions (*vidhi*) on the procedure and circumstances of the operation, and the poverty and tenuousness of the speculative commentary (*arthavāda*) on the correspondence between each portion and its eater. In the *Brāhmaṇas*, we should expect to find elaborate considerations on the cosmic and social symbolism of dividing an animal into pieces, of the same order as those concerning the bricks of the fire altar<sup>2</sup> (which we know to be offerings) or, most of all, the prototype victim, the primordial *Puruṣa*,<sup>3</sup> whose every part and organ is presented as the origin of a particular element in the universe. Our expectations remain unfulfilled: when it comes to the particular stage in animal sacrifice (*paśubandha*<sup>4</sup>) of dividing up the body and the allotment of its parts, the impetus which at other times propels the authors of the *Brāhmaṇas* into endless discussion on the 'meaning' and efficacy of a rite and tireless justifications

\* This text was first presented at the conference 'Divisione delle carni: dinamica sociale et organizzazione del cosmo', Sienna, September 20-3, 1983 (see *L'Uomo* 9:1-2 [1985]). I dedicate this article to Jean-Pierre Vernant, the historian and philosopher who taught us that to emphasize a culture's internal coherency is not to close it in on itself, but rather to create the conditions for, and bring to the fore, the criteria of comparison.



of the sequence or combination of various phases in a rite, flags very quickly. Why such unaccustomed restraint?

What we wish to emphasize in this paper is that the authors of the Vedic treatises on sacrifice appear especially preoccupied with how best to proceed so that the parts resulting from the division of the body might reconstitute themselves so as to form a living whole. It is this recomposition, much more than the fate and *raison d'être* of each fragment, that is addressed in the hermeneutics and apologetics of the *Brāhmaṇas*.

However, before discussing these speculations, a brief account of the practical instructions must be given. They are conveniently summarized by Schwab.<sup>5</sup> The main stages in *paśor vibhaktiḥ* are the following: 1) the victim is strangled or suffocated by the officiant known as the *śāmitṛ*, the 'carver';<sup>6</sup> 2) the body is then washed by the *patnī*, the sacrificer's wife; 3) a cake, made of flour, called the *paśupurodāśa*, literally the 'victim's cake', has been prepared and offered up in advance to the same divinities as those to whom the victim itself is being sacrificed; 4) the 'carver' makes an incision above the umbilicus and withdraws the omentum (*vapā*); 5) he then skewers the omentum and grills it over the 'carver's fire' (the *śāmitra* fire) set up outside the *mahāvedi*, to the north-east; 6) fragments of gold are inserted into the omentum, which is offered up to the principal divinity, that is thrown into the fire; the skewer itself is burned; 7) the officiants are given their fees (*dakṣiṇā*); 8) the victim is divided up; the blood, excrement and stomach are offered up to the demons, *rakṣas*, in a hole dug to the west of the *śāmitra* fire; 9) the heart is put to one side and grilled separately on a skewer; 10) the other pieces are put on to cook together in a pot; 11) from each joint or portion produced by division of the body, a small piece is removed for one of the divinities to whom the sacrifice is being offered; the remainder of each portion is allocated and distributed to men. In the *Brāhmaṇas*, particularly the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* 7.1, the human recipients are listed: they consist of the entire sacrificial team, plus a number of other figures—both men and women—who, without being officiants in the true sense of the term, have some involvement or other in the sacrifice; 12) a remainder of flesh known as the *idā*, is left (how it is defined is not really clear) which the sacrificer and the officiants must eat together; 13) finally, pieces

of the animal's tail are offered up to the wives of the gods, in the ceremony known as *patnīsamīyāja* (literally: 'offerings in which the wives are made to take part').

It can be seen that the *Brāhmaṇas* pay only a vague and fleeting attention to the question of the recipients of these sacrificial portions. Similarly, they have very little to say about the consumption of the *idā*. There is of course a copious mythology around *Idā*,<sup>7</sup> the daughter of Manu, who personifies the sacrificial ingredient denoted by the common noun *idā*. But the *Brāhmaṇas* say nothing about the communal character that sharing the same dish among several eaters ought in principle to have. There are no teachings telling us that the circle of table-companions forms a society; nor anything to suggest that the status and social function of the eater are signified by the quality or quantity of the share he is allocated.

However, there are some questions to be asked about the number of pieces resulting from the division of the victim's body. These pieces can in fact be counted in several different ways, particularly in the following two reckonings, which are interesting because justifications are given for each.

1. In *ŚB* 3.8.4.1 ff., what is counted is not the number of pieces, but the number of the offerings that have the dismembered body of the victim as their oblatory material. These consist of three series of elevens, amounting to thirty-three in all. The reason given is not, as one would expect, that there are thirty-three gods in the Vedic pantheon; there are thirty-three offerings because this is the figure peculiar to man, who is supreme in the animal order: he has ten fingers, ten toes, ten secondary vital breaths plus three principal vital breaths. The body is therefore divided up in a way that shows a homology with the living man. This is one example among many of the identification between sacrificer and victim, or, more precisely, it is an instance of the animal victim being represented as a substitute for the sacrificer: 'The sacrificer offers himself up to the divinities when he submits to (the pre-sacrificial ascesis of) consecration (*dikṣā*) . . . when (after *dikṣā*) he offers up a victim to the divinities, he buys himself back from the divinities . . .'<sup>8</sup> Rather, the sacrificer seeks to show that he is at once identical to, and different from, the victim. By offering up the victim, it is himself that he wishes both to offer and avoid

offering. Victim and sacrificer are united *nidānena*, 'by esoteric identification'. It is by virtue of their affinity that the torch borne before the victim as it is led to the sacrificial post also lights up the path that will lead the sacrificer, after his death, to the celestial world:<sup>9</sup> the animal victim is simply preceding him along this future path. However, identification must not be total, otherwise the sacrificer would die at the same time as the victim. That is why it is said in ŚB 3.7.4.11 that the *mantra* must be recited to bring together the blessings called down upon the sacrificer with those called down upon the victim, but not to unite their bodies; otherwise Agni would burn the sacrificer too. If we remember that these considerations on the oscillation between sacrificer and victim were provoked by the thirty-three offerings into which the body is divided it can be seen that even in its most explosive phase, namely the division of the victim into pieces, sacrifice is directed to the person of the sacrificer, considered in his context as an organic unity.

2. Another answer to the question 'how many portions?' can be found in *AitB* 7.1. The figure here is thirty-six. Its meaning is this: 'these thirty-six portions are each made up of an element'. It so happens that the Vedic *br̥hatī* verse is also composed of thirty-six feet, divided into (8 + 8 + 12 + 8). Also, the celestial worlds are of the same nature as the *br̥hatī*: the division of the body into thirty-six portions is a reference to the celestial worlds. 'Dividing the body in this way makes the victim into a celestial being, whereas those who proceed differently hack it to pieces like thieves or brigands'. The number of portions resulting from division of the victim is exactly the same as the number defining a Vedic metre (a *chandas*), that is it is a given, or an articulated whole, whose unity is pre-positated and made up of elements that are at once discontinuous (discrete) and coherent. This is an equal and opposite situation to the Greek tradition presented in the work of Jesper Svenbro: on his arrival in Delphi, Pindar offers up a paean in place of an animal; the poet cuts into verbal material like a sacrificer into flesh, with articulations in the verse mirroring the limbs of a body, caesuras standing for incisions, etc.; the poem can be an offering, because it is a victim analogue. In India, the victim can be an offering because the divider's knife makes it into a poem analogue.<sup>10</sup>

Thus, when a victim is divided into thirty-three offerings, or thirty-six pieces, what is being considered is not the plurality involved, but the unitary wholes that such numbers call to mind (the human body, the *br̥hatī* verse).

There is a further example to show that when the authors of the *Brāhmaṇas* teach how a victim's body should be divided up, they are not concerned with the fate of each circumscribed part so much as with the unification or identification to be achieved by the sacrificer. The example is the royal sacrifice called the *āsvamedha*.<sup>11</sup> In this case the sacrificial victim is a horse, and after suffocation and mock or attempted sexual union (*mithuna*) between the principal queen and the freshly killed animal, the horse is cut into pieces. The preparatory work is carried out by the king's wives who trace out the paths of the knife (*asipathān kalpayanti*)<sup>12</sup> on the horse's body with gold, silver and copper needles. The many needles symbolize the multitude of men, the plebians, and since the horse itself symbolizes the kingdom, the needles securely fixed in its body are the sign that the mass of subjects and the power of the king are well suited to one another. In addition, copper needles stand for the point of the compass, silver needles for intermediate points of the compass, and gold needles for the zenith. The needles draw out horizontal and vertical lines; they are therefore multiform (*bahurūpa*); and it is for this reason that the points of the compass are themselves multiform, that is in fact many and diverse, or distinct (*nānārūpa*).<sup>13</sup> But here again, multiplicity and diversity are pushed into the background, and a wholly different function is assigned to the paths of the knife: only from the empirically material point of view do they prepare the way for dividing up the victim; on the symbolic level they trace out a bridge (*setu*) or passage (*samkramaṇa*) that will enable the sacrificer to reach the celestial world (*svargāsya lokāsya sāmasyai*).<sup>14</sup>

In the examples examined so far, the divided body of the victim is indirectly reunified by making it into an analogue of another body which is itself undivided (the body of man or the body of a verse). Elsewhere, the dividing lines are transformed metaphorically into lines of linkage (between sacrificer and heaven).

But the main concern of the authors of the *Brāhmaṇas* is to show that it is in the very being of the sacrificial animal that the fragmentation resulting from its death be erased. Let us put to

one side all the euphemisms that present suffocation or strangulation as a pacification,<sup>15</sup> and all the gestures and words which posit that the victim consents to being sacrificed,<sup>16</sup> that it will go to heaven, that its relatives and friends will be happy to welcome it in the world beyond and will not take revenge on the knife-wielding officiant or the sacrificer.<sup>17</sup> Let us consider the actual body and how it is treated.

As soon as the *paśu* has been sacrificed, and before the carver's knife has pierced it, the sacrificer's wife busies herself round it, pouring water on the orifices of the body, as well as the legs. Why the orifices? Because, as we learn from the ŚB 3.8.2.1–6, it is via the orifices that the vital breaths circulate. Now water is identical or equivalent to the vital breaths. Breaths repenetrate the body when water is placed in its orifices. The text recalls that the *paśu* was killed through 'pacification' and division. Yet it is destined to be the living and immortal food of the gods. Life is restored to the *paśu* by the reintroduction of vital breaths. Why must the legs be sprinkled? Because it is on its legs that the living animal stands upright. Why is it the business of the sacrificer's wife? Because she is a woman, and it is from females that creatures are born: the *paśu* is reborn from this woman; its resurrection is a new birth.

The washings and sprinklings take place before division begins. Now let us see how this death-dealing fragmentation is erased after it has been carried out.

A small quantity of gold is placed on each piece cut away by the divider's knife,<sup>18</sup> for 'when the *paśu* is sacrificed, it is killed',<sup>19</sup> and gold is immortality. Contact with gold makes the *paśu* immortal. In addition, the omentum is sprinkled with mottled melted butter (*pr̥sadājya*) of two different colours,<sup>20</sup> a duality reflecting that between the breaths of inspiration and expiration. This time, it is not an inanimate yet still intact victim's body that is reinfused with vital breaths, but fragments which are restored to life one by one. But it is precisely in order that the breaths animating the separated parts be reunited (for the *membra disjecta* to be re-fashioned into a living whole), that the victim must have its *manas* returned to it, that is the mental organ that coordinates its breaths and senses. To this end, the verse known as *manotā* is recited, which is so called because it contains the word *manotā* 'inspirer', which is one of the names of Agni.<sup>21</sup>

Reunification and reintegration of the divided animal is also the function assigned to the 'victim's cake' (*paśu puroḍāśa*);<sup>22</sup> But the strictly spatial filling role assigned to the cake is elucidated and transformed by the myth relating the origin of this phase in the rite. In earliest times, the essence of sacrifice (*medhā*) was in man; it then flowed into horses, then into cattle, then into he-goats, and finally ended up in rice and barley. It is nowadays concentrated in the *puroḍāśa*. Thus the cake is the sacrificial whole that substitutes for the missing part of the victim.

In the actual tracing out of the division there is no attempt to follow anatomical configurations with maximal economy and elegance. The purpose is to give an image of quadruped motion: the cut must be diagonal, so that the right forequarter and left hindquarter are on the same side of the incision.<sup>23</sup> It is life in its movement and continuity that is being restored at the very moment at which division into pieces begins.

At a particular stage in the division, *mantras* must be recited to the 'fashioner' god Tvaṣṭṛ, —who gives each animal its species: 'O Tvaṣṭṛ, let your shapes unite! Let that which differs in shape become uniform'. Through the utterance of these words, all the openings made in the *paśu* are closed.<sup>24</sup> 'O you who differ in shape, you have the same characteristic feature' (*sālakṣmāṇo bhavatha*).<sup>25</sup>

The will to give life and unity to a creature that at the very same moment is being rendered asunder does not occur only with respect to the sacrificial animal. It can also be recognized in the way the *soma* is treated. The texts constantly refer to the officiants killing and destroying the *soma* when they crush its stems. In order that the *soma* may be reborn at the very same time as it is being killed, the officiants press out the juice with stones, *grāvan*, known as *āsmamaya*, made from the stony material that forms the vault of the firmament. The mythological justification for the procedure is that the *soma* plant is identical to the celestial god Soma, whose body, originally, consisted of stone mountains.<sup>26</sup> By crushing it between stones that are the body of the god Soma, one places the *soma* plant in contact with itself, or rather its divine double; the instrument that destroys it is the same as that which makes it perfect and complete (*kr̥tsnā*): 'then it stands up and lives'.

Is there any justification for seeing, in such attempts to deny, mask or reverse the death and fragmentation of living organisms

(whether vegetable or animal victim), a prefiguration of what India was to celebrate from the end of the Vedic period onwards under the name *ahimsā*, the will not to kill? This would be a hasty and simplistic supposition. For the same concern to remake a whole with parts that are simultaneously being kept separate can be seen in sacrifice as a whole, conceived of as a succession of distinct acts and moments which must nonetheless be shown to as form a continuum. This obviously brings us onto a more abstract level. It is no longer a matter of seeking to restore life (new and metaphorical life, of course, but with the promise of immortality) to living beings after they have been killed and torn asunder. The concern at this level is with partial or individual events, that have to interlock, provoke their effects, and, in the final analysis, unite to constitute the 'totality' of the sacrifice. But how is unity that can be achieved only at the end of a process, to embrace all these parts in advance? How can each fragment be distinct from the others without there being an insuperable distance between them? This is the problem for which a solution is sought, in highly explicit fashion, in the passages in those *Brāhmaṇas* and later *Samhitās* that discuss the *āgrayana*.<sup>27</sup>

The *āgrayana* is the annual rite of first fruits. But the term is also used to denote a type of initial offering in *soma* sacrifice. As we have seen, the heart of *soma* sacrifice is the officiants' crushing of the *soma* stalks with stones: the resulting liquid is collected in vats after being filtered through woollen sieves. It is then drawn off from these vats with smaller containers, for use as offerings, libations, or more exactly 'drawings' *graha*. Forced pressing (*savana*) takes place three times daily: at dawn, in the middle of the day and in the evening. There are two outflows (*dhārā*) of *soma* from the morning pressing, three from the midday pressing and four from the evening pressing. The figures obviously have a symbolic value: 2 + 3 + 4 makes nine,<sup>28</sup> and nine, in one way of counting, is the number of vital breaths animating man. In both systems, the number of elements counted is the same; and since nine breaths characterize the unitary being of the human organism, the sequence of nine *dhārās* also constitutes a whole, in this case one day's *soma* sacrifice.

There is undoubtedly something troubling and worrying about the multiplicity of *dhārās* (and *a fortiori grahas*). Indeed it actually

heightens the fragmentation undergone by the *soma* plant itself during forced pressing. Moreover, it is the sacrifice itself that is rent asunder (*vichidyate*) when pressing takes place (*saṃtiṣṭhanti*). But the fact that there are nine *dhārās* in a day—evidence of similarity with the human body—is not enough to prevent or repair the rent in the substance of the *soma* and the break in temporal continuity. The nine breaths of man form a whole because they are under the dominance of a unificatory principle, the *ātman*. They are the partial realizations of the *ātman*. What is the analogue of *ātman* in the *soma* sacrifice? The answer is: the *āgrayana*.<sup>29</sup> Now it will be remembered that the *āgrayana* is a *graha*, one 'drawing' among others from the morning pressing; but because it is the first drawing, it is able to embrace all later *grahas* in advance. At the same time as it is identified with the *ātman*, the first drawing is also identified with the god Prajāpati: at the first spurt of the *āgrayana*, it is Prajāpati's sperm that flows forth.<sup>30</sup> The drawings that follow are engendered by this first creative drawing.

However, the fact of being first does not entirely account for the virtues of the *āgrayana* drawing. Its structure must also be examined. What characterizes this offering is that it is a combination of silence and speech. In fact, the *āgrayana* is not necessarily the first drawing: but if any come before it, they must be performed in silence, unless they are intended to serve a magical function (in which case a Ṛg Vedic verse on the bitch Saramā is recited).<sup>31</sup> But those without such ill intent first accumulate silence, by 'holding speech in'. Then one of the officiants lets out an exclamation: '*hin!*' and 'speech is released', that is one begins to recite the *mantra* in a low, loud or very loud voice.<sup>32</sup> Thanks to this practice, the sacrificer finds speech joined together (*yujyate*) for him, instead of being dispersed.<sup>33</sup>

A myth relating the origins of the practice explains the matter in a different set of metaphors:<sup>34</sup> one day, Speech moved away from Sacrifice. So the gods performed a sacrifice (literally: they spread it) in silence (*tūṣṇīm*) and in mind (*manasā*). They performed the first drawing. Speech took fright, saying to herself: they are excluding me from Sacrifice. Speech ran to be with the *āgrayana*. Thus, the first drawing attracted Speech by its very silence (implying that silence had become something other than

plain non-speech: a positive force). As for the *āgrayana*, with Speech joined to it, it succeeded in becoming the master of the entire sacrifice. For sacrifice is like a wild animal. It is timid, it runs away, and the *āgrayana* (that is the *ātman* of sacrifice) is its catcher (*abhitsāra*).<sup>35</sup>

But the authors of the *Brāhmaṇas* are so anxious to assert, over and over again, the unity behind each successive part in the rite, that they recommend repeating the *āgrayana* at each pressing, even though it is the drawing by definition.<sup>36</sup> The *āgrayana* is the father, the other *graha* are the sons. With the *āgrayana* present at each pressing, it is like a father being constantly at his son's side to give him whatever he might lack. If a drawing is badly performed or incomplete, the *āgrayana* is on hand all ready to make good mistakes and fill in gaps.<sup>37</sup> Contact with the *āgrayana* keeps the verse *gāyatrī*, the verbal vehicle of the offering, ever fresh and ever able to return there from whence it came to deliver each pressing (to its celestial recipient).<sup>38</sup> Thus, the *ātman* of the sacrifice manages to penetrate all its parts.

The *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* contains a famous assertion, almost an adage—which other texts repeat or reproduce in slightly different forms: 'Now, in performing that sacrifice, they slay it; and in pressing out the king (*soma*), they slay him; and in quietening and immolating the victim, they slay it. The oblation they slay with the mortar and pestle, and with the two millstones'.<sup>39</sup> 'Thus it is no surprise', comments Sylvain Lévi, 'if the sacrifice is apprehensive and tries to escape'.<sup>40</sup> It should be understood that sacrifice, a structure in which acts, agents and substances combine and interlock in what modern European theoreticians would call a 'device' or 'mechanism' is assimilated in these texts to a living organism. Carrying out a sacrifice (moving from a sacrificial plan, or potential sacrifice, to an actually performed sacrifice) means unfolding it: it means giving sacrifice its full extension by preserving its continuity. But, at the same time, it means killing it: not only because the life of sacrifice has become merged with that of the animal victim or vegetable (or dairy offering), but also because the series of partial acts, and the fragmentation of the sacrificial corpus in time and space, amount to the execution of sacrifice as a simultaneous unity. A sacrifice is therefore 'executed', in both senses of the word; when all the procedures which it comprises

are over, a sacrifice is complete; it is both finished—and finished off. Beginning a sacrifice is equivalent to striking a first blow. To begin a performance of a work such as a piece of music, amounts to an attack upon it. The first cut into the victim may be thought of as an image of the aggression inevitably involved in 'taking a first strike at' or 'attacking' the 'execution' of a particular task or work, with sacrifice being the ultimate *karman*, or 'act'. Therefore, to show the full violence of the opening cut, and to concentrate in it all the violence of the sacrificial process, myths were forged and rituals provided in Vedic India. Before the *idā* (the part of the offering allotted to men) can be eaten, one of the officiants (whose name is *brahman* and who is the 'doctor of the sacrifice') has to eat the *prāśitra*, the first slice of cake symbolizing the wound made in Prajāpati's body by the arrow with which Rudra pierced the sacrifice-god to halt him in his incestuous pursuit of his daughter Dawn. 'When the *prāśitra* is cut, that which was wounded in the sacrifice is being cut. Rudra's portion'.<sup>41</sup>

The *prāśitra* rite deprives the sacrifice of 'the cutting edge' of its beginning. In the *soma* offering, the first 'drawing' serves the same end, but by the reverse process: the beginning is not amputated from all subsequent acts but, on the contrary, as we have seen, it is made contemporary with them.<sup>42</sup>

The treatises on sacrifice are like a laboratory of discursive thought. With rites as their working material, the authors of the *Brāhmaṇas* and the more technical manuals of the *Śrauta Sūtras* provide an outline and, in some cases, even a precise formulation of some of the essential categories in Grammar.<sup>43</sup> In a more general sense, the texts are an update of the elementary and fundamental questions suggested to, or rather imposed upon, the authors by their self-attributed task of providing an explanation for ritual acts:<sup>44</sup> What does it mean to begin? What does it mean to proceed to the next step? How is one to understand that the same act can be both single and multiple? What is meant by 'too much' and 'not enough'? What is the relationship between parts and wholes? What does it mean to measure?<sup>45</sup> How are repetition and difference to be understood? How does one tell creative reiteration apart from harmful redundancy? It is true that such questions are only rarely raised in their own right and formulated as such. However the terminology is all there and the way in which the

rites are expounded provides the clearest indication that such were their true concerns. It is tempting to think that Vedic theoreticians considered rites to be the systems of acts where such concepts operated with the greatest clarity and purity and that it was for this reason that they devoted so much ingenuity and pertinacity to their analysis and glorification.

## The Contractual Body of the Gods: Remarks on the Vedic Rite of *tānūnaptra*

'I seek in you that which is dearest in me'

Maurice Scève

In the political theory of ancient India, peace (*śama*) means something quite different from the absence of war: it is a positive agreement, expressed in a treaty (*samdhī*) and guaranteed by hostages (*samādhi*). 'Peace, treaty, hostage are one and the same thing. The creation of confidence among kings is (the purpose of) peace, treaty, hostage' (Kauṭilya, *Arthaśāstra*, Book VII<sup>1</sup>). Curiously, after making this close association between treaty and hostage, Kauṭilya, in a kind of digression, makes favourable mention of another type of treaty, founded on oath. In some teachers' eyes, he says, invoking the truth and taking an oath makes for an unstable treaty; what gives a pact solidity, in such teachers' views, are pledges and hostages. Is this not an extension of his own definition of peace? Kauṭilya, in fact, begins by rejecting this doctrine, only to return to it a little further on, but having relativized it, as it were. He argues as follows: such teachers are mistaken, for 'pledges or hostages only have meaning for the world here below, and (the value of) taking (pledges or hostages) depends on force (the respective force of the partners)'. Swearing on the truth (*satya*), on the other hand, establishes a pact which is valid for the other world as much as for this one. But instead of the conclusion one expects—that swearing is therefore the preferable procedure—Kauṭilya returns to the question of hostages,

not to question whether a conquering king should take or give any such hostages, but to examine in detail how he should do so and how he should take advantage of having to hand over hostages to rid himself of unreliable princes and ministers. How is such inconsistency to be explained? What purpose is there in dwelling on these games of ruse and force, once the overriding efficacy of oaths has been posited? The answer, says Kautilya, is that the excellence of swearing on the truth was recognized by kings in earlier times, which would seem to imply that it is no longer recognized by kings today. 'We have made a pact.' This was how the truth-constituted (*satyasamstha*) kings of earlier times made pacts; by pledging the truth (*satyena*). In the event of transgression (*atikrama*) of such a pact, they touched fire, water, a furrow in the field, a clump of earth in a wall, the shoulder of an elephant, the side of a chariot, a weapon, a precious stone, grains, an odoriferous substance, a liquid, gold, a coin, with the curse: Let the beings here present kill or abandon him who would transgress this oath. (In our own day), in the event of transgression, important men, ascetics, persons of the highest rank (must be provided as) pledge or guarantee'.<sup>2</sup>

Between swearing 'on the truth'<sup>3</sup> and exchanging hostages, there are two obvious differences: in an oath, it is the swearer's person itself that is involved, whereas hostage exchange depends on each party's ability to be represented by someone other than himself, a person who takes the risks of the situation upon himself. Additionally, the swearer of an oath renders himself liable, in the event of transgression, to punishments that ultimately are inflicted by supernatural forces, of a quite different order from those the injured party could call into play by his own means; the hostage, for his part, is in the hands of beings of the same nature as himself, and the same nature as the person for whom he acts as a substitute.

Now in the Veda, several centuries before the *Arthaśāstra*, there are texts that in their own special terms also discuss pacts, oaths and hostages, but which mention situations—both human and divine—in which the two huge differences we have just mentioned are abolished: the being who is given as a hostage is at the same time himself and someone else; punishment, should a pact be transgressed, comes from an agency which is the same as the partner and yet which transcends him.

The Vedic texts in question are those dealing with the myth relating the origins of the rite known as *tānūnaptra*. Before analysing the myth, we must briefly describe the rite itself and first discuss the sacrificial unit of which it is a part.

This unit revolves round the offering made to the gods of the plant known as *soma*, or, more exactly, the juice extract, which is the gods' liqueur of immortality (*amṛta*). The offering is truly sacrificial, in that the culminating point of the ceremony is the moment when the liquid is made to spurt from between stone-crushed stalks of *soma*: the forcible expulsion of the juice is explicitly assimilated to the execution of an animal victim.<sup>4</sup> But this climax is preceded and followed by a great number of interconnecting, interlocking ritual sequences that are the subject of abundant and refined speculation in the *Brāhmaṇas*.

The offering of *soma* is a ceremonial sacrifice (*śrauta*). On the sacrificial site, beside the sacrificer (*yajamāna*), that is the man for whose benefit and at whose expense the ceremony is taking place, the presence is required of an entire team of specialist officiants (*ṛtvij*) who place their *savoir-faire* at the service of the sacrificer (and of the sacrifice), in return for remuneration (*dakṣiṇā*).<sup>5</sup>

The texts consider the sacrificer-officiant relationship as a fundamental problem: it is not just a matter of laying down the technical modalities of collaboration between the two partners, but also of providing their collaboration with a theological basis. Officiant remuneration in particular, is governed by strict rulings, but is also the pretext for considerable symbolic justification, making clear that payment of the *dakṣiṇā* is an essential piece in the structure of the sacrifice, or rather, a decisive moment in its dynamics. Briefly: during sacrifice, the sacrificer commits his person to the officiants, whose duty—and hopefully, ability—it is to guide him in a journey to heaven, and to bring him back down to earth afterwards. Now the sacrificer does not undertake this journey with his profane body, but with a sacrificial body that he manages to acquire, by dint of harsh ascetic effort, in an initial phase of the ceremony. However, his profane body is put on one side, in reserve, at the disposal of the officiants who will only return it at the end of the journey if the sacrificer pays their fees. The sacrificer thus has (at least) two bodies: by the fees he undertakes to pay, and which he effectively pays during the ceremony,

the sacrificer ensures that his sacrificial body will be properly piloted (the risk here is great: if he strays off course, the sacrificer can become mad); while through the *dakṣiṇā*, he retakes possession of his profane body on completion of the ceremony.

The question of the fees is discussed at varying lengths in all texts dealing with solemn sacrifice. What is peculiar to the offering of *soma*, however, and more exactly to its archetypal form known as *agnistoma*, is that it makes the sacrificer-officiant relationship even more explicit, through the performance of an introductory rite to the actual sacrifice itself called the rite of *tānūnaptra*.<sup>6</sup>

The *raison d'être* of the rite is to affirm that the sacrificer and officiants who are getting ready to embark on their sacrificial adventure together are determined to be loyal to one other and to do each other no harm. An oath on its own is not enough. There must also be gestures to symbolize their understanding and make it binding.<sup>7</sup>

Before the *tānūnaptra* starts, the rite of receiving the *soma* takes place: lying in cloth-wrapped bundles across a cart, the stalks are brought onto the sacrificial ground. The *soma*—king Soma—is welcomed like a guest by an entire and highly complex ceremonial of hospitality (*ātithya*),<sup>8</sup> ending with an offering of clarified butter. A residue is left over from the mass of butter and it is in the treatment of this residue that the *tānūnaptra* consists. Its principal stages are as follows. 1) The officiant, known as the *adhvaryu*,<sup>9</sup> has a brass basin or wooden goblet brought to him, which he places on the altar (*vedi*). All the butter from the hospitality offering left on the spoon (*dhruvā*) is transferred by the *adhvaryu* into the basin or goblet, in five 'drawings'. The transfer is accompanied by the reciting of the formulae: 'For the lord of here, I draw thee; for the lord of around us, I draw thee; for Tanūnapāt, I draw thee; in skilfulness, for the most robust, I draw thee'. 2) Once the butter has been collected in the basin or goblet, all officiants and the sacrificer touch it together, reciting: 'Thou art the unattacked, unattackable object, the vigour of the gods; the object which safeguards from curses; the object that curses cannot touch'. 3) The sacrificer asks each officiant to invite him: '*Adhvaryu*, invite me . . . ' etc. Each officiant replies in turn: 'Thou art invited . . . ' Then the sacrificer puts his nostrils three times to the butter that has just been touched by all, and recites:

'In Prajāpati, in the spirit, I pour thee . . . ' Alternatively the *adhvaryu* pours this butter into the 'fast milk' which will be the sacrificer's sole nourishment during the period of fasting and consecration (*dikṣā*)<sup>10</sup> that is about to begin for him. 4) The *adhvaryu* then calls for boiling water (*madantī*)<sup>11</sup> which all the participants touch, together. The water is later sprinkled on the stalks of *soma*, so as to make them swell.

Such, in summary, are the instructions given on the *tānūnaptra* by the '(collections of) aphorisms on the solemn rite': the *Srauta Sūtras*, considered by tradition to be appendices to the Veda, teach the rules for performing the sacrifice in great detail, but without accompanying them with justification or interpretation. However, these manuals help us understand the function of the rite by stating that towards the end of the *soma* sacrifice, just before the final bath (*avabhṛtha*), 'those who have taken part in the *tānūnaptra* dissolve their alliance by reciting this verse: ". . . master of the law, master of the truth, we dissolve our alliance".<sup>12</sup> Thus we learn that what comes to an end at this point, and what had been established by the *tānūnaptra*, is indeed an alliance, an instituted friendship (*sakhya*).

It will have been noticed that by drinking or ingesting the butter that bears the trace of everyone's touch, the sacrificer incorporates what may be considered as the material embodiment of their agreement.<sup>13</sup> The alliance is therefore slanted, or asymmetrical: it serves the purposes of the sacrifice's real subject, that is the sacrificer. But when the latter invites the officiants to invite him, he creates a sort of reversal in fundamental roles, since it was the sacrificer, master of the sacrifice (*yajñapati*), who summoned the officiants and took them on to officiate for him, when he decided to offer the sacrifice. The *tānūnaptra* ceremony thus includes aspects or moments of equality: the employer asks to be taken on in the team of workers, and a friendship pact is concluded between partners who for the time being occupy identical positions. However, even before the alliance ceremony ends, the allocation of duties and status is re-established, between officiants on the one hand and sacrificer on the other.

Among the formulas uttered by the *adhvaryu* while he transfers the melted butter, there is one which contains an invocation to Tanūnapāt. Mention of the god during the actual performance



of the rite makes the connection (*nidāna*)<sup>14</sup> between the ceremony of *tānūnaptra* and the figure of Tanūnapāt possible and even inevitable, that is it allows the rite to be related to a myth recounting its origins. The connection is not of course explicit in the *Śrauta Sūtras* since, as we have seen, the texts contain virtually nothing other than practical instructions; but it is very well illustrated in the *Brāhmaṇas*, where the purpose of the Vedic scholars was not to describe the rites, but to draw out their full symbolic significance.

The connection between the *tānūnaptra* and Tanūnapāt is to begin with a fact of language: *tānūnaptra* means 'that which relates to, or derives from, Tanūnapāt'. Tanūnapāt, in turn, is one of the names, or one of the aspects, of Agni. But he is also sometimes identified with Vāyu, god of the wind, a term which strictly means 'son (or more generally: descendant) of the body', commonly taken in the sense 'son of one's own body', whence: 'son of oneself'.<sup>15</sup> Self-formed, issued from his own person, Tanūnapāt thus foreshadows the *svayambhū* 'born of oneself' of late Vedism. Various divinities are known to have been similarly described, especially the cosmogonic god Prajāpati, but also Manu, or personified 'anger'.<sup>16</sup> In fact, the term *tanū* generally means 'one's own body' in Vedic, so that at the same time as it contrasts with *ātman*, as 'body' with 'soul', *tanū* may also have the same meaning, since both terms are used for the central part of a person, as opposed to the limbs, the whole as opposed to the parts, and both function as the reflexive pronoun 'oneself'.<sup>17</sup>

[Thus, Agni, who is so often presented as the son god *par excellence*, born of the two sticks that are rubbed together to make fire or, in another instance, issued from the mass of waters (he is *apām napāt*) that are like a mother or womb for him, is also, paradoxically, a self-begetting god.

The doctrine that makes Tanūnapāt an aspect of the god Vāyu is less easy to justify, but the texts where it can be found exploit the amalgam to the full: the wind is homogeneous with individual breath (*prāṇa*); the projects a man forms in his mind (*manas*) pass into his breath, which mingles with the wind, and that is how the god of the wind knows what is in the mind of man.<sup>18</sup>

But whether Tanūnapāt is Agni or Vāyu, what matters for us is to know why he should be the eponymous god of the

*tānūnaptra* rite. The answer lies in the myth of the rite's origins, as it is related in the *Brāhmaṇas*: when men carry out sacrificial *tānūnaptra*, they are imitating the gods, who, in earliest times, concluded an alliance between themselves. Furthermore, the gods entered into this alliance to save their own *tanū*, the person, or body.<sup>19</sup>

In fact, however, *tanū*'s involvement in the myth is much more insistent and complex than is explicitly stated in the *Brāhmaṇas* and commentaries.

The following is a summary of the various versions of the myth.<sup>20</sup>

#### *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* 3.4.2.1f.

Unable to reach an understanding between themselves, the gods separated into four groups. Taking advantage of their dissension, their enemies, *Asuras* and *Rākṣasas*, slipped in between them. The gods decided to enter into an agreement, which said 'Let us yield to the pre-eminence of one amongst us'. It was Indra whom they named as their leader. To make the pact last for ever, the gods cut out and put together (*sam-ava-DO*) their favourite *tanūs*, their beloved 'powers' (*dhāman*)<sup>21</sup>, with the following imprecation: 'Let him amongst us who should transgress this pact be removed far from our midst, let him be scattered (*viṣvañ*)'. Their witness was Tanūnapāt. In his capacity as the wind, Tanūnapāt penetrates the breath and spirit of living creatures the *prajās*, which include the gods. This is a pact that the gods do not transgress. For what would they be, if they were to transgress it? They would be speakers of falsehood (*anṛta*). Now if there is one observance which the gods practise, it is truth (*satya*). That is why their victory is invincible, as is their glory. Similarly, victory and glory are invincible for anyone who, knowing this, speaks the truth. Now this *tānūnaptra* (that men are now celebrating) is, by connection (*nidānena*), that (that is: this agreement between the gods). The gods removed from themselves their favourite bodies, their beloved powers, and put them together. That is why one must not enter into an agreement with just anybody, for fear that one's favourite bodies, one's beloved powers, might be mixed. But he with whom one enters into an agreement is someone who is not

to be deceived . . . These favourite bodies, these beloved powers that the gods removed from themselves and put together, were deposited (*sam-ni-DHĀ*) with Indra. Indra verily, is he who burns on high. In earliest times he indeed did not burn; but just as now all the rest is obscure, so then was he (obscure himself too). And it is with this energy (derived from the divine bodies deposited with him) that he burns. That is why if several men receive consecration (*dikṣā*) (to undertake as sacrificers the same sacrifice), the *tānūnaptra* butter, mixed with the fast milk (the future nourishment of the consecrated person), must be given to the master of the house, as it is he, among these men, who represents Indra . . . Now, after the gods had cut out these favourite bodies and beloved powers and put them together, they worked upon them together and that became the agreement (*sāman*).<sup>22</sup>

*Taittirīya-Saṃhitā* 6.2.2.1f.

'Gods and *Asuras* were in conflict. The gods were divided. Not wishing to accept the superiority of one over another, they separated into five groups . . . They thought: "Our enemies, the *Asuras*, are taking advantage of our division. Let us remove from ourselves and place in deposit together these bodies that we hold dear. Let him who should be the first amongst us to show hostility to another be separated from these bodies".'

*Maitrāyaṇī-Saṃhitā* 3.7.10

Refusing to submit to one another's authority, the gods separated into four groups. They then constituted a common block of the beloved bodies that each had removed from himself and deposited in the sun on high. 'That is why the sun burns very brightly. That is why it is with the sun as divinity that all drawings of *soma* are made' . . . 'A *tānūnaptra* companion must not be deceived . . . that would be using deceit against one's own beloved body'.

*Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* 1.24

The gods had just won a victory over the *Asuras*. They had ousted them from all their fortresses in succession. But they were afraid

lest their adversaries take advantage of the dissension reigning amongst them. By affinities, they met together to deliberate, and formed into four groups. They all decided to place their most precious bodies (*priyatamās tanvāḥ*) in deposit in the abode of Varuṇa: any who might transgress their agreement, or seek to bring discord amongst them, would be unable to rejoin (*sam-GAM*) these beloved bodies.

As can be seen, the differences between these versions are many and great: before uniting amongst themselves, the gods were divided into five groups according to the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā*, into four groups according to the other texts. Only the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* teaches that the gods' pact was witnessed by Tanūnapāt. The beloved bodies of the gods were deposited with Indra and were responsible for his splendour, according to the same *Brāhmaṇa*. The other texts say that the mass of beloved bodies constitutes the brightness of the sun, or else affirm (like *Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā* 24.9) that Indra and sun are one and the same, or state that it was in Varuṇa's abode that the bodies were deposited. The motive behind the union of the gods—to gather strength so as to prevent an *Asura* victory—is not explicit in all the texts, and union does not necessarily take the form of submission to a single leader. Common to all versions is the following simple design: the gods were divided; they decide to unite; to make their union effective, they decided that each would remove—from the mass of bodies belonging to each—those most dear to them, and that the bodies thus detached would be put together somewhere as a kind of deposit. If we now refer to elements from some versions only, this design may be added to by stating that the pact is governed by sanctions: should any god happen to deceive the others, he would not only be excluded by his partners, he would be scattered, and deprived of the possibility of rejoining those dearly beloved bodies he had deposited, with the dearly beloved bodies of the other gods. How are we to understand the expression *priyās tanvāḥ*, 'beloved bodies' and *priyatamās tanvāḥ*, 'most-beloved bodies'? 'These bodies which are dear to us', is the translation by Keith (*ad TS*). Delbrück translates the superlative by 'unsere liebsten Personen' (*ad AitB*).<sup>23</sup> Are these *tanūs* part of the person of the god himself, or are they *tanūs* of beings beloved by, but distinct from him? In his commentary on

*Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, Sāyana favours the second interpretation: the bodies are those of the children and wives of the gods; they become captives, hostages. But Sylvain Lévi translates (or rather glosses the superlative by): '*nos corps sont ce que nous avons de plus cher*',<sup>24</sup> which would seem to imply that having placed their bodies in deposit, the gods became incorporeal. In fact, it should be noted that *priya*, in Vedic, does not only mean 'dear'. Just as when *philos*, in Homer, used with reference to parts of the body or objects intimately related to the body, takes on a reflexive possessive function, so *priya* can have the meaning of 'personal', 'that which is one's proper possession'<sup>25</sup> As a noun, the neuter plural *priyāni* is used to designate the body's private parts. The expression *priyās tanvaḥ* refers to 'own bodies'<sup>26</sup> of each god, and the superlative, in the formula *yā eva na imāḥ priyatamās tanvaḥ* in *AitB* 1.24, should be understood as follows: 'our bodies herewith which are the most ourselves'. If this is in fact the meaning of *priya*, the plural on the one hand and the superlative on the other both suggest that each god is made up of several bodies.<sup>27</sup> This fact has been given much emphasis, by Oldenberg<sup>28</sup> in particular, and it is an essential feature of Indian polytheism: there may well be many (or an infinite number) of gods, but, most importantly, each one of them is multiple. The different bodies of the same god can separate and re-form, as can best be seen in the mythology relating to Agni, but also in that relating to Indra and Prajāpati.<sup>29</sup> Coexistence between the different bodies is sometimes a problem and a sort of friendship contract is required to govern it. That is how we are tempted to interpret the following difficult lines from the *Rk Samhitā*, 10.8.4 cd, even though in this case the name of the body (of Agni) is in the singular:

*ṛtāya saptā dadhīse padāni  
janāyan mitrām tanvè svāyai*

translated by Thieme as: 'Thou, [Fire] hast put down [= established] the seven steps for truth [cf. Lüders' explanation], generating Contract for thy own body'.<sup>30</sup> Renou: '*Pour [le bénéfice de] l'Ordre, tu as assumé les sept pas [de l'amitié] engendrant [ainsi] un pacte [avec les humains] pour toi-même*'.<sup>31</sup> In contrast to Geldner, who translates *mitrām* by 'Freund' (Agni makes *ṛta* his friend), Renou and Thieme agree in making *mitra* 'Contract'. But by

introducing men as Agni's partners in this contract, Renou makes an arbitrary addition to the text, while Thieme, for his part, offers no explanations about a contract engendered by Agni involving his own body. Our own view is that the contract is for the body of Agni, that is to provide him with a coherent body, or again to give cohesion to his corporeal multiplicity.<sup>32</sup>

As for the divine *tānūnaptra* (if we may use such a term to denote the pact which the gods enter into between themselves and which serves as a model for sacrificial friendship between men), a condition of the contract between the gods is the distance that each god establishes between himself and his bodies, or rather between his different bodies, those which he maintains in activity within himself and those which he separates from himself. To associate myself with others, I dissociate myself from myself: I have something, materially, in common with others—that part of myself which I deprive myself of and which I mix with those parts of themselves which my partners have dispossessed themselves of, just as I have done. But these disjoined bodies then become objects of desire; a god is drawn to becoming reunited with (*sam GAM*) his *tanūs* and it is the hope of rejoining them, and of reunifying himself, that determines him to respect the pact binding him to the others. His hope must surely have a meaning, since should he transgress the pact, the threat facing him, by the pact's very terms, is precisely that of being excluded for ever from the possibility of being reunited with himself.

Thus, individuals form a group not by the virtue of any link binding them directly to one another, nor even by obedience to a common leader, but by the tension drawing each of them to reunite with that part of themselves which they removed and deposited in the common fund.

A modern reader cannot help asking: on what conditions and with what consequences will the god become reunited with his beloved bodies? What threatens him, should he transgress the pact, is that his separation from his *tanū* will become definitive, which is also his fate for so long as he remains faithful to the alliance. Are we to imagine that there will come a time when, with a coalition against the *Asuras* no longer being needed, the gods will take back the possessions they had pledged? The group would

cease to exist at the same time as each partner achieved fusional unity with himself. The political link would be dissolved.

A situation of this kind is mentioned in *Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa*, 1, pp. 138 ff. (cf. W. Caland, *Das Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa in Auswahl*, Amsterdam, 1919; repr. Wiesbaden, 1970, pp. 39 ff): 'Preparing for battle with the *Asuras*, the gods said: . . . "Let us put aside (*apa-ni-DHĀ*) the possessions that are dear to us (*vāmam vasu*)" . . . Now, that was their cattle . . . On their victorious return, they went towards their possessions, which had become one . . . they were confused; they could not tell which belonged to each. They said: "Let us share", but could not reach agreement over how it was to be shared out . . . "Let us ask Prajāpati [to decide]". Prajāpati said to them: "That which you hold dear is common to you all . . . do not share it out".<sup>33</sup>

The terms employed in these texts afford us an insight, if we pay attention, into the group structure of the gods: there is a centre which is inert, dense and resplendent, consisting of the conglomerate of divine bodies placed in common deposit, worked upon and mixed together to form a harmonious sun, and a periphery of coordinated but distinct elements which are active, in so far as they are gods fighting *Asuras*, but obscure in so far as their individual brightness has merged into the brightness of them all.

The divine *tānūnaptra* has been compared many times to a social contract.<sup>34</sup> The comparison is legitimate if by social contract one means the decision that individuals take to form a group. But if we think of society, and particularly Indian society, in terms of division of labour, complementarity, status systems and hierarchy, the pact between the gods is clearly not the myth of society's origin. What the *tānūnaptra* teaches, in its splendid abstraction, is the manner in which political bonds are constituted as such: How are groups formed? How can they be made to last? These are the supreme questions.

It will be noted that though the *tānūnaptra* treats of the body (*tanū*) of the gods, that is of the contractual parties, it does not slip into what Judith Schlanger calls the metaphor of the organism<sup>35</sup> and describe the group thus formed as a body of which the individuals, or groups of individuals, are members.

Vedic myths on the formation of society, with its hierarchies

and institutions, usually reflect quite a different vision of things. Society is contemporary with the cosmos: both were produced by the sacrificial dismemberment of an immense primordial body, that of the *Puruṣa*:<sup>36</sup> the mouth of the *Puruṣa* gave birth to the class of brahmins, just as its eyes gave birth to the sun.

However, some texts present the setting up of society, at least of divine society, as an event distinct from genesis and as the work of the very same people who were destined to be part of it. But in this case, the final structure is one resulting not from a pact but from a competition to decide who was to be the master of sacrifice. An example of these accounts is the myth recounting the origin of the royal sacrifice known as *vājapeya*, as related in *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 5.1.1.1 ff.<sup>37</sup>

Here are the main stages in the story: rivalry reigns between the gods and the *Asuras*; each seeks to lay hold of the techniques of sacrifice. Out of utter presumptuousness (*atimāna*), because they can see no one other than themselves to whom they could possibly offer sacrifice, the *Asuras* each make offerings in their own mouths; they fail. The gods, on the other hand, make offerings amongst themselves, each in the mouth of another. The reciprocity is well-received and successful and the god of sacrifice, Prajāpati, gives himself to them. But this marks the end of reciprocity: each god claims the possession of sacrifice for himself. To resolve the situation, the gods organize a race: the winner's prize will be mastery of Prajāpati's body. The winner is Bṛhaspati, master of the sacred word and brahmin *par excellence*, thanks to the help of Savitṛ, the 'incitatory' god. Having won Prajāpati, he wins all things, 'since Prajāpati is all things', and he offers a sacrifice which will prove to be the *vājapeya*. Indra, the *ṣatriya* god, imitates him: he also offers the *vājapeya*, and by this sacrifice he too becomes a possessor of Prajāpati and, just like Bṛhaspati, he ascends, as a sign of his sovereignty, to the region on high, the zenith. That is why, among men, when brahmin and *ṣatriya* wish to attain a certain form of pre-eminence, they have to perform the *vājapeya*, a ceremony, moreover, which, to commemorate the competition organized by the gods, comprises a chariot race (in which it is clearly understood that the winner can only be the sacrificer himself).<sup>38</sup> 'Verily, the *vājapeya* is the sacrifice that belongs specifically to brahmins, since it was performed by Bṛhaspati:

for Bṛhaspati is the *brahman* (the essence, the specific nature of the brāhmin order), and similarly the (human) brāhmin is the *brahman*. But the *vājapeya* is also the sacrifice that belongs specifically to the order of kings (*rājanya*), since it was performed by Indra: for Indra is the *ḥṣatra* (the essence, specific nature of the order of *ḥṣatriyas*) and similarly, the man of royal order is the *ḥṣatra*.

Are brahmins and *ḥṣatriyas* equals for all this? Indeed not, since the only real winner, in the race instituted by the gods, is Bṛhaspati. It is because Bṛhaspati came first and conquered Prajāpati that he was then able to perform the sacrifice that would become the *vājapeya*. Indra, on the other hand, achieved sovereignty because he performed the *vājapeya* afterwards and in imitation of Bṛhaspati.<sup>39</sup> Equality in the *vājapeya* is only secondary; Bṛhaspati always retained the superiority of having been first. It is from the brāhmins or at least from the *brahman*, that the *ḥṣatriyas* derive their fitness for achieving sovereignty and reigning over society. Such is the principle of social organization: a hierarchy that is continuously reaffirmed, and which is at work even when its manifestations seem ambiguous. In contradistinction to this stands the pure political grouping whose structure can be found in the divine *tānūnaptra*: in order to unite with one another, equals detach themselves from themselves, and form into a whole by placing fragments of their divided beings together.

## The Gods Have No Shadows: Reflections on the Secret Language of the Gods in Ancient India

Princess Damayantī and King Nala<sup>1</sup> are in love with one another. Yet, they have never met. Theirs is a love by proxy: so many are the praises that Nala has heard of Damayantī's beauty and charms that he feels he cannot live without her by his side. Similarly, it is because a wonderful swan has enumerated Nala's perfect qualities to her that Damayantī has become 'outside of herself, and totally in Nala'. The princess languishes, and it is clear to her father the king that she is lovesick and must therefore be married. And, to ensure that Damayantī's wishes be most completely fulfilled, the king chooses (from among the eight canonical forms of human marriage) the procedure called 'personal choice' (*svayamvara*): an invitation is sent out to her suitors, and the girl chooses, from those assembled, the man she wishes to be her husband.

But, an unexpected difficulty arises in Damayantī's case: four of the greatest gods of the Indian pantheon—Indra, Agni, Yama and Varuṇa—are also in love with the princess. Whether by chance, naïvety or a cruel will to test his love, these gods burden Nala with the task of serving as their intermediary, even before the ceremony begins. They bestow upon him magical powers by which he is able to enter into the women's apartments and announce to Damayantī the honour she has of being the cynosure for four immortals—four immortals from among which, she must choose her mate in her *svayamvara*. However, even as he faithfully executes his duty as go-between, Nala gives Damayantī further reason for loving him—for is not the man she sees before her the prince charming of her dreams, the man she wants and the man

she decidedly prefers before any other, be he divine or mortal? As far as Nala is concerned, he cannot, in spite of his obligation to cede to the gods for whom he is the messenger, give up his own conquest of Damayantī. The gods thus come to realize that they have but one means at their disposal for seducing Damayantī: they must take on Nala's appearance. And so it happens, on the day of the ceremony, that Damayantī sees before her five copies of her beloved. How might she be able to distinguish, from among these five, the genuine Nala, the Nala whose garment she must touch so as to designate him as her chosen husband?

She invokes the quasi-magical procedure known as an 'act of truth', a recourse that consists of endowing one's words with a power so great that even the gods must bow before it:<sup>2</sup> 'If it is true that, having heard the swan's word, I chose Nala for my husband, if it is true that I have committed no sin, in either heart or mind, and if it is true that I have taken a vow to adore Nala, then let the gods show him to me.' The gods are obliged to grant Damayantī's wish immediately, because she has spoken the truth. So it is that they reveal to her that which distinguishes the original mortal from his divine facsimiles: Nala appears to her as a man who, tired from the long journey he has just taken is covered with sweat and the dust of the road. His garlands and flowers have wilted, his eyes squint in the sun's glare and most especially, his body is doubled by the shadow it projects: The gods, on the contrary, float effortlessly above the ground, with fresh garlands, garments free of dust, eyes opened wide in spite of the sun's light, and with no shadows.<sup>3</sup>

Such is, in this particular case, the weakness of the gods: they are limpid, through and through. When they cannot help but reveal their nature, that which they manifest is their affinity for the light of the sun, a light which neither alters nor burns them. They need not shelter themselves from its light because their corporeal matter does not block it: thereby, neither does it throw (nor is it betrayed by) a shadow.

Clarity is also a distinguishing feature of the language of the gods. They are truthful<sup>4</sup> (even if there is no shortage of myths in which they are shown to lie). This is less a characteristic of their moral nature than it is one of the language they use: the Sanskrit

language is a perfect language, and the sign of this perfection is its transparency. On the one hand, the words of this language are perfectly adequate to their referents; on the other, its word construction is without mystery: adjectives and nouns derive, in a constant and regular fashion, from the verbal roots to which they are attached. A word's form thus has a twofold justification; first, through its manifest relationship to the object that it names and second, through its obvious etymology.<sup>5</sup> This then, is the Sanskrit language of the gods, a language that is shot through with light.

One cannot help but imagine this absolute transparency to be a cause of pain and anguish. In fact, the image we have of the limpid beginnings of the immortals' Sanskrit language is one that we may deduce from the great pains taken to obscure it. A great number of passages from the *Brāhmaṇas* explain that the original form of a given word has been slightly modified, and so taken on an occult form, 'because the gods love what is cryptic' (*parō kṣā-kāmā hi devāḥ*) and hate that which allows itself to be seen clearly (they are *pratyakṣadvīṣaḥ*) . . .<sup>6</sup> So we learn that the god Indra's real name is Indha, the 'igniter', a name that is indirectly derived from the verbal radical *INDH*, 'ignite, burn' and warranted by the function of combustion attributed to this divinity.<sup>7</sup> But the gods wished to create darkened zones in their language, and to formulate a kind of obscure and secret tongue whose mysteries would be known to them alone. And so it was that they masked the simple and regular mechanism which allowed for the derivation of Indra from *INDH*, and through scrambling of phonemes, brought about the name Indra. They thereby rendered a transparent word opaque by injecting into it an element proper to their own privileged sphere,<sup>8</sup> a language not to be confused with the universal Sanskrit language that is also that spoken by humans. The gods are chronically subject to a lack of obscurity, and so they wish to render themselves obscure as a means to acquiring a certain consistency. This at least, is what they do in order that their words become consistent, thick or substantial instilling and thereby deforming them with the cryptic element. The texts of the *Brāhmaṇas*, rather than seeking to find the true relationship that obtains between the pure and altered form of a word, take as their watchword the gods' desire to create mysteries. This is shown, it seems to me, by the indifferent ease with which these texts move,

according to the demands of the narrative, from one etymon to another. Thus, the name Indra, explained in the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa* as an esoteric deformation of Indha, is elsewhere presented as a compressed form of the term *idamdra*, 'he who saw that'. In fact, as the aetiological narrative explains, 'as soon as he was born, Indra looked around and saw a man who was none other than the *brahman* (that is, the Absolute) in all its fullness. He then said, 'I saw that'. This is why his name is *idamdra*, 'he who saw that'. That is his name. And so it is that we refer to *Idamdra*, in a secret way, as Indra, because the gods love what is cryptic.<sup>9</sup> The etymological analysis of a word is justified by its origin myths; these myths may, however, vary so as to be incompatible with one another. The form Indra is part and parcel of the god's cryptic slang; it is the transposition of at least two forms proper to straightforward language.

In the same way, Agni's real name is Agri,<sup>10</sup> which is derived from the adverbial form *agram* ('ahead') or *agre* ('in the first place'). Agni is, in fact, the first born of the gods; he is also that god who runs ahead of all the others. In this function, he is the explorer and scout of the gods and of the brahmanic pantheon, and therefore of the civilization of which they are so many expressions. He is the all-consuming fire who carved out cleanings in the jungle and blazed those paths by which the conquering Aryans, entering via the north-west, were able to push eastward and southward, ever deeper into the Indian subcontinent. The progressive stages of this millenary penetration are burned into the land by the places in which Agni—that is, Agri who became Agni through the gods' will to obscure—stood.<sup>11</sup>

But this procedure does not restrict itself to proper names. Let us take the example of the quasi-myth that relates the formation of the name of 'sweat', *sveda*. 'In truth, in the beginning was only the *brahman*, born of itself and alone. He looked around: 'I am a great and wondrous creature, I who am alone. So, I must create a second god, as great as I am, from myself.' He exerted himself, heated himself with ascetic ardour and with austerities . . . and a fluid, a wetness appeared on his forehead. Overjoyed at this, he said: 'I have found (*avidam*) a great and wondrous being, a being easy (or good) to find (*suveda*).' So it is that, because he said: 'I have found a great and wondrous being, *suveda*', it became *suveda*.

And that which is *suveda* is called, after an occult fashion, *sveda*, because the gods love what is cryptic and hate what is manifest.<sup>12</sup>

Another example is found in the names attributed to the bricks used in the edification of the fire altar. One of these is called *ati chandas*, the 'hyper-meter' because it is installed in conjunction with the recitation of a hyper-metric verse. But this name is in fact a cryptic one, meant to satisfy the gods' taste for the esoteric. Its original name was *atti-chandas*, the 'meter eater' (*atti* means 'he eats'), which explains how, in the same text, it can be compared to a stomach.<sup>13</sup>

Yet another example is that of that preliminary phase of the sacrifice in the course of which the consecration of the sacrificer, called *dikṣā*, takes place. The man who undergoes this ordeal thereby becomes a 'consecrated' or 'initiated' one, a *dikṣita*. Originally, the mythic account tells us, the term was *dhikṣita*, which is to be broken down into *dhi*, 'thought' and *ṣita*, 'he who has made his abode': the initiate is thus 'he who has taken his abode in thought', because the man who thus prepares himself for the sacrifice 'abides in the best of thoughts' (*śreṣṭhām dhiyam kṣiyati*). But the gods love the cryptic, and 'this man, although he is *dhikṣita*, is cryptically designated by the term *dikṣita*.<sup>14</sup>

It can happen that a word, by changing its form, may also change its meaning. Here, a more complex process comes into play, as may be seen in the origin myth of one of the names for 'man', *mānuṣa*. The cosmogonic god Prajāpati is smitten with desire for his daughter, Dawn. She flees from him, taking the form of a doe, but he, in the form of a buck, continues to pursue her. The gods, indignant, try to find one of their number who might stop and punish him, but finding no one, they create, by fusing together the most terrible portion of each of their forms, a new god named Rudra. Rudra takes up the task and shoots a three-pointed arrow at Prajāpati. Wounded, Prajāpati allows his seed to flow out of himself, and a lake of sperm is formed. 'And the gods then exclaimed, 'It is the sperm of Prajāpati, it must not spoil! (*mā duṣat*)'. Because the gods said *mā duṣat*, this lake of sperm received the name *māduṣa*. But, 'the gods love what is cryptic', and *māduṣa* was transformed into *mānuṣa*, the word which has come to signify 'human, man'.<sup>15</sup> That which the lake formed by Prajāpati's sperm and the bodies of men have in common is the

fact that neither should be spoiled or ruined. The commentator Sāyaṇa explains that the humans who are to be honoured as the equals of the gods (that is brahmins) are precisely those who, like the gods themselves, are lovers of the cryptic. They do not wish to be called by their original names, by the names they received from their parents: they rather prefer that they be called by an esoteric name, one that is not an original, but a secondarily adoptive one, 'Master', or 'Professor', for example.<sup>16</sup>

Sāyaṇa's remarks here highlight the paradox of the process of alteration that is so pleasing to the gods. The word that results from a deformation inspired by the desire for the covert is not secret in the sense that it belongs to the language of a closed group of individuals. On the contrary, it is the word which has become skewed in such a process that comes to be a part of ordinary language. Everyone says Indra, rather than Indha; Agni, and not Agri; *dikṣita* instead of *dhikṣita* (and everyone says Professor, with only a few close friends knowing that the name this man received at birth was Devadatta); and, in fact, it is rather the transparent form of the term that comes to bear the stamp of truth, a truth which must be (re-)discovered, a piece of knowledge possessed by a limited number of persons. What was once jargon has now become everyday language, whereas the pure and unsullied words have become so many secrets.<sup>17</sup>

The cryptic element in these words, words that have become familiar, need not be sought in the conditions of their enunciation, but, rather, in their internal structure. There exists a certain unintelligibility, a certain superfluous element, in the relationship obtaining between the form and the meaning of a word that has been so constituted. But this obscuration is but the result of a persistent will to conceal. The *paro'kṣa* that is the delight of the gods does not lie in the fact that they are the only ones who know the jargon; it is, rather, the case that they are the only ones who know that this *is* a case of jargon, and who know how to decode the distortion which allowed for the derivation of a murky, unfocused term from a clear one. The gods' secret is that of the formation and deformation of a product in common use. But what do the gods really get out of this, and how can they be satisfied with a secret that they so keep to themselves? From the divine viewpoint, is there anything more to this than making the

most of a bad situation, or of accommodating oneself to failure? Given the fact that humans use the gods' esoteric terminology in their everyday exchanges as well as in the discourse they address to the divinities, it would appear that the gods are incapable of maintaining a secret society among themselves, a society set apart by the use of a secret language. The gods do not converse together, and their dialogues are not dense enough to allow them the pleasure of esoteric complicity: they are only able to enjoy their secret word when they hear them pronounced by humans. But for this to be possible, these words cannot be kept totally secret—rather, the secret must be shunted to some other level.

The Indian doctrine of sacrifice brings an analogous system to notice, in a much clearer light.

Between the humans and god in brahmanic India stands the sacrifice. This is a cumbersome third party, because it prohibits the intimacy of mystic union; yet it is indispensable and unavoidable, because it is the sacrificial mechanism which establishes a channel of communication between men and the gods, even as it keeps them apart and at a good distance from one another. In this way, the sacrifice is very much like the cosmic pole, the *skambha*, which insures the cohesion of the world because it holds together heaven and earth, even as it keeps them apart. Now, this device by which humans as a group and the gods as a group are at the same time united and disunited through the sacrifice, is not one that goes back to the original creation. Before such an ordering came into existence, the sacrifice was a bone of contention between men and the gods. The gods, having conquered or discovered the science of sacrificial operations, wished to bar humans from attaining this knowledge, knowing this to be the only way by which they might maintain their monopoly on that particular source of happiness obtained through the sacrifice—that is, the celestial world. But they failed in this because there existed, on the human side, beings endowed with a supernatural vision. These were the *ṛṣis* who received, in addition to the Vedic revelation, the sacrificial rites which the recitation of the Vedas renders effective.

The story of the gods' failure to remain the sole lords of the sacrifice is recounted in several myths in the *Brāhmaṇas*.

By means of the sacrifice, the gods went straight up to the world of heaven. They were afraid: 'Once they have seen this heaven of ours,



men and *ṛsis* will track us'. They obstructed (*ayopayan*) with the sacrificial post; it is for this reason that the post is called the *yūpa*. They [went back down], planted its point downwards, and [then] went straight back [to heaven] again. Men and *ṛsis* came to the place where the gods had sacrificed. 'Let us seek something which might indicate the [path of the] sacrifice.' All they found was the post, with its tip planted downwards. They perceived that it was with this post that the gods had blocked the (path of the) sacrifice. They dug to unearth it, and fixed it with the tip pointing upwards: then they could see (where) the world of heaven (lay). So it is that (in the sacrifice now offered by men) the post stands with its tip pointing upwards, in order to indicate (the path of) the sacrifice, to reveal (the direction of) the celestial world.<sup>18</sup>

Here, the etymological play on words turns on the name of the post, the *yūpa*: it is explicitly derived from the verb *YUP*, understood in the sense of 'obstruct' (*ayopayan*, 'they obstructed' is in its imperfect causative form). However, one can discern in the background two other radicals which, while homophonic, have opposite meanings. *YU*, 'unite' and *YU* 'separate'<sup>19</sup> illustrate well the functions of this post, which serves as a channel from earth towards the celestial world when its tip is pointed upwards, and which obstructs this conjunction when it is planted in the ground and pointing downwards. In truth, the proper meaning of the causative of *YUP* is not 'impede', but 'disperse', 'cause the traces to disappear', and it is this valence which is highlighted in a parallel version of the same aetiological account:

It is by the sacrifice that the gods conquered the conquest that is their conquest. They said to one another, 'How might we make it impossible for men to ascend to that which is ours alone?' They sipped the sap of the sacrifice as bees would suck out honey; and having drained the sacrifice of all its milk, they took the sacrificial post and used it to erase all traces of the sacrifice. Then they disappeared.<sup>20</sup>

The gods' will to turn the instruments of their sacrifice upside down (in order to disorient humans?) also serves to explain the very strange appearance of the *banyan* tree, for which the Sanskrit term is *nyagrodha*, 'that which grows downwards'. This is a tree that is upside-down, or rather circular, a tree in which the distinction between up and down is abolished, because its upper branches grow out of boughs that run downwards into the ground, where they take root (in such a way that the central trunk becomes

surrounded by secondary trunks that come to constitute so many thin supporting columns). The gods offered a sacrifice, and before leaving their sacrificial ground to go back to their celestial world, they overturned the cups that had contained each officiant's *soma*. These overturned cups became *nyagrodha* trees, and from that time hence, the cup used in sacrifices conducted by humans are to be made from *nyagrodha* wood. In fact, the correct word is *nyagroha*, for the expression 'grow downwards' is *nyag rohati*. But because the gods love the cryptic, the occult form of *nyagroha*—that is, *nyagrodha*—was attributed to it.<sup>21</sup> It is the banyan's shoots and fruits that are to be eaten by the king and other members of the warrior (*ksatriya*) class in the sacrifice: *soma* itself is reserved for the brahmins alone. For *ksatriyas*, the banyan is the esoteric (*parō kṣam*) equivalent of *soma*.<sup>22</sup>

The gods' attempts to block humans from reaching the celestial world through the sacrifice does no more than to postpone the inevitable. In the end, the gods find themselves obliged to come to some arrangement with humans. This they do without grace, since they are still not above attempting to ruin sacrifices performed by humans, either by upsetting them, by causing them to miscarry, or even by sending demons to weaken the sacrificer.<sup>23</sup> Such tactics are, however, but vestiges of a bygone order. Having penetrated the secrets of the sacrifice, humans have entered into partnership with the gods. It now falls to humans to offer the oblation, and to the gods the consumption thereof, whereas in the beginning, the gods, as masters of the whole of the sacrifice, played both roles simultaneously.<sup>24</sup> For gods and men alike, the fruit of the sacrificial process is theoretically the same: immortality and residence in the celestial world. However, the modalities of their respective tenures are not identical. This is the result of a protest on the part of Death: 'Death said to the Gods, "Now shall all men, in this same manner, become immortal—and what share will then be mine?" The Gods said, "May no one but us become immortal with his body! You shall take that (body) as your share and only then may one, divested of his body, become immortal!"'<sup>25</sup> During the sacrifice, sometimes described as a round trip journey,<sup>26</sup> the mortal rises up to heaven and comes to know a fleeting moment of immortality before descending back to earth; he does not return, however, before he has staked out in that celestial

world the place he will occupy after he has paid Death its share. It is, thus, a deferred immortality that is enjoyed by humans. As for the gods, they are—in a system which makes them partners with and not the rivals of men—incapable of surviving as gods without the medium of the sacrifice. More than this, their only meaning in and reason for existence lies in the fact that they are the recipients of the oblation; that is, in the fact that they are one of the poles in the sacrificial relationship. All one can say about the gods, the ritual philosophers point out, is that the sacrificial act would be incomplete without them, and that the phrase with which the sacrifice is formulated would be incomplete if that complement, constituted by the name of that individual to whom the oblation was directed, were lacking.<sup>27</sup>

The secret of the sacrifice thus simply slipped away from the gods. By allowing their knowledge to be shared, they accepted a profound transformation to occur in the reality it was supposed to have established. As with language, so with sacrifice: the gods are incapable of keeping their secret to themselves, and unable to make it play the role they have assigned to it. To be sure, the mystery is not done away with; rather, it has now come to reside on different grounds than those on which the gods would have preferred to have it. Such is, at least, the feeling we get when we read the texts and attempt to draw together and make sense of the scattered—and at times repetitive or heterogeneous—accounts of the gods' passion for the cryptic.

So it is that the exaltation of the great Mystery is set forth, in the Vedic texts, in a way that is independent of any relationship to the gods. This is an exaltation which—as is always the case in the Vedas—goes to great lengths, since it culminates here with the formation of a being who is at once abstract and mythical. This is Concealment (*Tirodhā*), whom a hymn of the *Atharva Veda* (8.10) describes as a form of that divine power mysteriously known as *Virāj*. This *Virāj*, possessed of an ascensional motion, moves from world to world, stopping first in the world of the demons, and then successively, in those of the Fathers (human ancestors), men, gods, and Gandharvas. It at last arrives in the world of 'the others' (*itara-jana*), who call to it, 'O thou, Concealment, come!' One of these 'others' begins to milk it (for this Concealment-*Virāj* is a cow, in a certain sense), and this is the

occasion for the hymn to pronounce a formula, of which we should note the great exactitude—for this is a truism, and not mere gibberish: 'Upon that Concealment, the others subsist'<sup>28</sup> The others would in effect cease to be others if their Concealment were brought to an end.

In putting together their secret lexicon, the gods (and following them, men) acted in such a way that the manifest might give rise to the hidden. The hidden becoming common and familiar, also became immediate, while the clear, masked and protected by the hidden, became foreign and distant. The foundation upon which rests the new relationship between the transparent original and the dark glass of the present meaning is the distortion which gods or humans have wrought upon what was once clear: they have skewed it, altered it, and introduced falsehood into it. The primal transparent form, as well as the darkened image one ends up with, are both true, each in its own way—but both derive, along with their consequent status, from his primordial falsification. In this sense, falsehood is the root of all truth.

We are accustomed to thinking that the object of a secret is either something that is true, or else nothingness.<sup>29</sup> What possible meaning could one in fact attribute to a lie that has neither been pronounced nor formulated, to a lie that one is prohibited from announcing for fear of violating a secret by its mere utterance? An answer may be found in a Vedic text which, by associating the ideas of the falsehood and of lie in such a way as to render them indistinguishable (the Sanskrit term *anṛta* signifies both), succeeds in articulating this paradox through a well-tempered comparison—that the word is a tree. 'The word flowers and bears fruit when one speaks the truth (*satya*) . . . The root of the word is falsehood, and lie . . . Just as a tree with roots exposed (to light, to air) dries up and perishes, so a man who speaks falsely causes the roots of his being to become exposed and visible: he dries up and perishes.'<sup>30</sup> Truth flowers when exposed to light, on the condition that the lie which nourishes it remain buried away in the darkness of the earth.

We should quite naturally seek to find, in this love of the cryptic which the Indians attribute to their gods, a reflection of the energetic and multifaceted speculation on the enigmatic that lay at the heart of Vedic thought.<sup>31</sup> Yet, we are especially struck by

the distinctions India teaches us to make between a secret and an enigma. The gods' secret (at least when it claims to be grounded in language) is an artificial one: it proceeds, not from a will to protect a mystery, but rather, that of creating one. It operates in a strange manner, creating bizarre situations that lie beyond the control of the very individuals who 'secreted' them. The enigma, on the contrary, exists from the beginning and for all time, and is intrinsically true. Moreover, it draws its strength from the tension of the question to which it gives rise. Rather than acting upon the form and history of words (or rites), it acts upon their capacity to deploy themselves simultaneously, on several equally valid levels of meaning. The space opened by the question, the difference existing between superimposed meanings, the enigma is a suspended between-ness; and one has the feeling that this is a space that will never be filled. There is no clue for the enigma. We see the ordinary gods of the brahmanic tradition in the role of clumsy keepers of their secrets. But Prajāpati, whom the speculations of the *Brāhmaṇas* identify with the *brahman*, the essence of the word and of silence, is a different sort of god. He is the bearer of the enigmatic because he is the enigma: the last of his names is *kaḥ*, the interrogative pronoun 'who?'. And so the enigma is further perpetuated, for when we ask about his name, the answer we receive is but an echo of the question.

## Bricks and Words: Observations on the Bodies of the Gods in Vedic India

'Gods and men, and the Fathers<sup>1</sup> as well, drank together (at the sacrifice): it was their communal feast. Formerly, they could be seen when they came to the feast; today they still attend, but now they are invisible.'<sup>2</sup> Such is the teaching of the *Brāhmaṇas*, those 'Treatises on the Sacrifice' which constitute the essence of late Vedic literature. As is nearly always the case in the Vedic tradition, this evocation of bygone days stops short, and, in the end, teaches us very little about the relations that may have obtained between gods and men prior to the narrative present of the *Brāhmaṇas*, or the reasons for and the stages of subsequent changes.<sup>3</sup> At best, we find working drafts of stories, more or less compatible with one another, which describe the gods' great dread of being seen. The gods were already possessed of such fears in the earliest times, when there lived on earth the *ṛṣis*,<sup>4</sup> men of supernatural powers who, having had a vision of the Veda, transposed it into words and made it known to other humans. 'The *ṛṣis* did not see Indra<sup>5</sup> with their own eyes. Only Vasiṣṭha had this power. Indra became afraid: "He is going to teach the other *ṛṣis* the means by which to see me". He said, "I will teach you a form of knowledge by which generations will succeed one another and always choose you as chaplain.<sup>6</sup> But do not teach the other *ṛṣis* the means by which to know me".<sup>7</sup> For all this, the Ancients never gave up hope: 'When they wished to see Indra, they offered him the (sacrifice known as the) *vanīṣṭhusava*, thinking, "When he becomes satisfied, Indra will present himself before our eyes, and we will tell him our desire".<sup>8</sup> Whatever the case may have been in the past, the authors of the

*Brāhmanas* were certain that in their own time, it was impossible for humans to see the gods with their physical eyes. '(The God) Rudra,<sup>9</sup> he who is called the Loner, is not seen by us, but only recalled through meditation.'<sup>10</sup> Elsewhere, one of the perennial personality traits of the gods is that they are fond of the cryptic. So great is their taste for mystery that they even attempt to render language obscure, to substitute—for words whose meaning is transparent and whose etymology is clear—a kind of jargon composed of words rendered opaque by the alteration of given phoneme.<sup>11</sup>

Because they are present at it, there is no need for the gods to be represented at the sacrifice. And because it is their will to be 'out of sight', or 'otherwise than present to sight' (*para'kṣa*), there is no reason to manufacture objects which, by occupying a piece of space, might play the role of adding an element of artificial visibility to these divine beings who are there in person, at the time of the oblation, once they have been addressed with the proper formula of invitation.<sup>12</sup>

The India of the Vedas is therefore 'aniconic'. To be sure, there exists neither any rule nor any account condemning the manufacture of divine images. It remains the case, however, that Vedic India has left us no vestige whatsoever that might bear witness to the prior existence of sculpted or painted effigies. We need not attribute this absence to either chance or to the fragility of the artists' media; its full significance may rather be found in the texts' silence on this subject. In truth, the Vedic corpus, augmented by that '(auxiliary) limb of the Veda' which constitutes the body of 'aphorisms on ritual',<sup>13</sup> leaves nothing to the imagination in its descriptions of the procedures and symbolism of various forms of sacrifice. And, for all intents and purposes, there is no mention whatsoever—in this enormous agglomeration of hymns, prayers, aetiological narratives and prescription, bearing on the most minute details of worship—of objects depicting the gods.

It is necessary that we qualify this assertion with a number of nuances and details, as we attempt to show how aniconism was part and parcel of a general theory of divine corporeality that was proper to Vedic mythology, ritual and theology. Before we do this however, we should first throw some light on the contrast existing between the absence of effigies (as well as of temples and fixed

shrines) that we find in Vedic religion, and the extravagant profusion of idols that characterize that form of religion which—without any sharp break or explicit reform—followed the Vedic period. This latter case is that of Hinduism, a religion that was roughed out in the Epics<sup>14</sup> and fleshed out in the Purāṇas,<sup>15</sup> a Hinduism which has maintained, down to the present day in India, all of its original vitality and principal feature. Hindu worship in fact is, above all else, a matter of *pūjā*, of service and adoration towards a divine image, an image that is in actual fact present before the eyes of the devotee. It would appear that *pūjā*, taken in this sense, would first have had a place in domestic ceremonies, and would then have come, from the seventh century of the common era onwards at least, to constitute the central pivot of public ceremonies, in temples.<sup>16</sup> Hindu theology may thus be defined as an extended reflection on *pūjā*: what is the nature of a god who can be both represented by and contained in a material, man-made object? How can the gestures, glances, words and offerings that the devotee addresses to one of the many statues or paintings reach the god himself?

The Sanskrit language has at its disposal two words with which to designate the idol as such. These are *pratimā*, the image as replica, portrait or reflection;<sup>17</sup> and *mūrti*, a corporeal form enclosed or frozen within a set limit, a condensed presence, an arrested movement.<sup>18</sup> Each of these two terms, taken alone, indicates in its own way a certain distance between the idol and the god: the *pratimā* is but the copy of an inaccessible original, whereas the *mūrti* serves as a matrix for the concretization of a divine fluidity that cannot be grasped. In fact, the theoreticians teach that the image can only provide an 'inferior knowledge' of the gods. But it is not so much the means to knowledge that is the problem here: it is, rather, the case that the gods are themselves possessed of both an inferior form of reality—that which manifests itself in the image—and a higher form which cannot be represented and which is, in fact, indefinable and limitless. The images are themselves hierarchized,<sup>19</sup> in such a way as to at least suggest, if not assume by conventions, the presence of that very element that transcends them. In the Vaiṣṇavite Vaikhānasa sect,<sup>20</sup> for example, one speaks on the one hand of images that are *sakala* ('consisting of parts')—that is, composite or, in other words, material and analysable. Such

an image may be carried in procession to represent (and contain) the god Viṣṇu in the variety of his manifestations. On the other hand, one speaks of images that are *niskala* ('without parts') which are immobile and forever fixed in the temple's most sacred sanctuary. The worship offered to these respective images differs; and, therefore, the expected qualifications of the worshipper are different. Worship is also accompanied by prayer formulas appropriate to either of these two aspects, or rather, these two levels of divine reality. Whereas the god resides permanently in the fixed image that is 'without parts', invocations and special rites are necessary, whenever there is a *pūjā*, for the god to be induced to enter into its portable image that is 'with parts'. Once the *pūjā* has, in fact, reached its end, the god is invited to leave the portable image and rejoin his absolute Self in the fixed image that is his vessel and his concretization. But whatever his hierarchical status, the divine image is treated—under one or another form—as being the very person (or one of the persons . . .) of the god: this feature is especially salient to the process of the image's fabrication, as well as the process of worship.

After the image has been fashioned (according to highly rigorous prescriptions fixing the measurements of each part of its body), one performs the rite of 'opening the eyes' (*akṣy-unmeṣana*), a rite which has the effect of animating the statue and infusing it with the life of the god itself:<sup>21</sup> henceforth, this is a divine body, endowed with the sensory organs of audition, touch, taste, and smell—but especially that of a radiating gaze or vision—that faces out upon its devotees. From this time forward, worship will not only consist of bringing the god food to eat; it will also entail bathing it, putting it to bed, and bringing it to unite—in certain cases—with the statue of a divinity of the opposite sex, in a ritual copulation that is both ceremonial and discreet. More than this, the divine image may be endowed with a kind of legal identity: treatises on Hindu law go to great ends to define the clauses according to which the statue of a god may be considered as the owner of the objects of worth which accumulate or circulate in the temple.<sup>22</sup>

Whether it be permanent or portable, the image is, of necessity, forever frozen in a single posture. Hindu theoreticians and artists do not however, resign themselves to the strictures of this

immobility. They teach that it is necessary, for he who would be a sculptor or painter, to first become a student of song, then of instrumental music, and finally to familiarize himself with the techniques of dance.<sup>23</sup> It would appear these exigencies are tantamount to saying that movement and rhythm are features common to all the arts. Once he sets to work, the painter or sculptor endeavours, in fixing an image, to restore movement to it (except, of course, in cases in which one is to render the image of an immobile and impassive god, such as the sleeping Viṣṇu or Śiva in yogic meditation) and, at the same time, to suggest the ubiquity and the multiplicity of the god's 'aspects'. He endows the image with several pairs of arms and, sometimes, several heads. But the desire to produce a dynamic effect is at once channelled and maintained by the static didacticism of its symbolism: to each pair of arms and to each head, there corresponds a very specific 'power', which figures in the enumerations furnished by the texts.<sup>24</sup> These observations hold especially for anthropomorphic images which constitute, moreover, the general rule: the measurements set forth in the texts are those of a perfect human body, with the features and attributes given to the gods and goddesses very frequently human ones. We should nevertheless note that several of Viṣṇu's *avatārs* (the Tortoise, Fish, Boar, and Horse) are of animal, or mixed character (the Man-Lion); and that one of the most popular gods of Hinduism, Gaṇeśa, has the head of an elephant placed atop the body of an obese man. It is not rare that the god be given several pairs of arms, several heads, and several trunks on a single head.<sup>25</sup>

In order that it be perceived by the worshipper, the body of a god must always be graven into a concrete medium. If the devotee has attained a certain degree of perfection, if he has mastered the proper techniques of withdrawal and meditation, he may become capable of bringing an image of the god to consciousness. This image will be one he has previously chosen from among all possible or known *mūrtis*; and he must bid the god that he allow himself to flow into this mental *mūrti*. Hereafter, the devotee gradually constructs the image, by reciting aloud or in silence, in proper sequence, the formulas and prayers corresponding to the different parts of the divine body, utterances which have the power to make these appear. At the same time, he will himself be transfigured, in

such a way as to become a vessel worthy of the god. More than this, the devotee's body becomes a *mūrti* into which the god breathes his own life: this divine 'installation of the breaths' (*prāṇa-pratiṣṭhā*) into a living statue is the culmination of this process of mental construction and corresponds to the moment of 'opening the eyes' in the construction of a material statue.<sup>26</sup> The body of the god thereby enters into the body of the devotee. This is the counterpart of *bhakti*, of that fusionary impetus which moves the devotee to love a god (conceived as a person who is her-or himself capable of love) to the point of 'taking part' in this god, even of becoming a part of the god, of giving to the god, even to the point of losing him-or herself in godhead.<sup>27</sup>

Let us now return to the Veda. Its aniconism is, in fact, not absolute. The texts bring to our notice a ceremony that is the subject of an esoteric teaching (imparted 'in the forest'), a ceremony which consists in the construction, the worship (together with an offering of warm milk), and the destruction of an offering called the Great Man (*mahā-vīra*). This individual, invoked as a supreme god, assimilated to the sun, and portrayed as a sovereign, is represented by three superimposed earthen vessels. These roughly depict a man seated in the so-called 'lotus' position; and an important feature of the rite involves heating these bowls to such a point that they become too incandescent (whence the name of this ceremony, *pravargya*, which means 'that which is to be heated') to be looked at fixedly. The anthropomorphism of this icon is explicitly emphasized.<sup>28</sup> The final destruction of the image is preceded by a bizarre rearrangement: the utensils and ingredients of worship (spoons, vessels, broom, straw, and clotted milk) are placed on the altar in such a way as to resemble a human body,<sup>29</sup> with the Great Man's three constitutive pots thus reduced to the level of pieces in this puzzle of sorts.<sup>30</sup> This reabsorption of a divine image into a schematic rendering of the human body leads us to evoke another instance of iconism in the Vedas: this is that of the golden statuette placed at the base of the brick structure called the 'Piling of the Fire Altar'. This is the image, *par excellence*, of man: first, it is an image of the sacrificer, the master craftsman of this sacrifice which consists, as we will see shortly, of the edification of an altar of this particular form.<sup>31</sup> As the sacrificer is secondarily identified with the gods

Agni and Prajāpati, the statuette is also said to represent these two divinities (who are furthermore identified with one another within the ceremony itself). Another kind of image, a rather crude one in this case, is the *prastara*. This is a tuft of grass which also represents the sacrificer and which, after having been manipulated by the priestly officiants—like a doll of sorts—throughout the sacrificial operations, is at last thrown into the fire. Here we are in the presence of a progressive transformation of sacrificer into sacrificial oblation, in a rite that demonstrates how this tuft of grass—which is the 'other person' (*itara ātmā*) of the sacrificer—will, like the oblation which is poured onto the fire and is so borne upwards to the gods, come to precede the sacrificer, after his death, along the path he will follow up to heaven.<sup>32</sup> These two examples show that the model for these constructed simulacra in the Vedic cult is none other than that of the human sacrificer who is, moreover, visibly present, in the flesh, on the sacrificial ground. The gods, on the contrary, do not allow themselves to be represented through material media. This is the teaching of the Vaikhānasa sect, a group which, in practicing both Vedic and Hindu forms of worship, stated that the ancient cultus was *amūrta*, without images, and the new cultus *samūrta*, possessed of images.<sup>33</sup>

Under such conditions, how possible is it for us to know anything about the bodies of the Vedic gods? It behoves us here to draw a distinction, from within this pantheon, between two sorts of divinities. The former are gods who are the subject of a certain mythology, to whom powers or specific spheres of activity are attributed, and to whom prayers and offerings are made, but who do not play an active part in the Vedic cultus. The latter are those gods possessed of the particular character of serving as vehicles for the oblation (as is the case of Agni, the god of fire), of being commingled with one of the oblatory materials (as is the case with *soma*), or of being none other than lord god Sacrifice, the divinized sacrifice (which is the case of Prajāpati).<sup>34</sup> So it is that these three gods (in the same way as do the other gods of the pantheon) have bodies which the texts encourage us to imagine; however, they also have a substantiality that is all their own. Agni's material body consists of the sum total of the various fires ignited on the sacrificial ground; and *agni* is also a common noun meaning

'fire'.<sup>35</sup> The material body of the god Soma is the plant that bears the same name. The stalks of this plant are pressed so as to extract a juice which, once filtered or 'clarified', is a drink of intoxicating and perhaps hallucinating properties, an oblation favoured by the gods for whom it constitutes the drink of immortality. Lastly, the material body of Prajāpati is, on the one hand, the sum of all the acts, words and substances that constitute the sacrifice, and on the other, in a narrower and more concrete sense, the five superimposed layers of bricks, of the 'piling of the fire altar', which we have already mentioned and to which we will return. It can even happen, in the case of the plant *soma* as the god Soma, that the plant be described as the god's *śarīra*. Now, this term designates one's wholly material body, inasmuch as such is distinct from the spirit or soul (Vedic Sanskrit more often employs the term *tanū*—which, in fact, refers to the person as a whole—to designate the bodies of gods and of living humans).<sup>36</sup> However, when the stones pound the *soma* stalks, it is only *śarīra* of the god Soma that is crushed: as for his animated and truly divine body, that body which is inaccessible as such to human sight (here, we are tempted to say his mythological, as distinct from his ritual, body) it is to be understood as 'a terrifying falcon'.<sup>37</sup> The *soma* plant is thus the visible body of a god who, because he is a god, is hidden from view. It is in order to concretize this invisibility, say the theologians, that the prescription is made to envelop the *soma* stalks with a piece of cloth. To be sure, Soma is an embryo which must be protected with an envelope, but he is also wrapped in cloth for the simple reason that 'the gods are hidden from men'. So the texts tell us that 'that which is enveloped is hidden. This is why one envelops (the *soma* stalks)'.<sup>38</sup>

Prajāpati's case is a more difficult one. That which constitutes his body on the sacrificial ground is not a substance designated by a common noun identical to the god's own proper name. In order to understand the relationship between Prajāpati and the body of bricks that humans construct for him, it is necessary that we look at his mythology. Prajāpati the 'Lord of Creatures', appears in the second period of Vedism—that of treatises on sacrificial theology—as the great cosmogonic god. This is a god who has a marked tendency to reduce the other gods to so many variations on a single theme—that of his own person.<sup>39</sup> The

creation of the world by Prajāpati, while not the subject of a connected and coherent narrative, provides the background for innumerable fragmentary accounts, accounts which are always oriented towards a well-defined end—the justification for a rite, a habit, or some feature of the organization of the cosmos, of society, or of the human body. Yet, when the Veda attempts an explanation for the existence of the very long and complex rite of the 'piling of the fire altar', the discourse becomes richer and more sustained.<sup>40</sup> The ceremony as a whole, as well as each of its details, are described and commentated in such a way as to demonstrate that this brick structure is at once the symbol and the confirmation of an act of genesis. The central and essential event of this genesis is the construction of a time that is possessed of divisions, of a succession of discrete units capable of being grouped into regular sequences. This is an occasion, for deep reflection, on the part of the Vedic theologians, upon the continuous and the discontinuous,<sup>41</sup> a reflection stimulated in part by the interlocks that exist between various segments in the series of sacrificial acts.

The mythic motif may be reduced to the following. Prajāpati is possessed of desire, 'may I become manifold!' He exerts himself, heats himself and finally gives rises to the creatures, starting with the gods. But the effort has exhausted him. He is laid out, emptied and broken, threatened by death and thereby threatening with death the beings that have just emerged from him: the time that rules here is a homogeneous 'year' of sorts, which simply draws all living beings towards their destruction.<sup>42</sup> Prajāpati wishes to reconstitute himself by reabsorbing all creatures. He desires that all multiplicity be within, rather than outside of himself. 'How can I make all these creatures return to my body? How may I again become the body of all these creatures?'<sup>43</sup> He says to Agni: 'Put me back together'. And the reward he promises Agni—if the Fire god will agree to reconstitute his creator by reintroducing himself into him and by leading the other gods to do the same—is that the gods and men will recognize Prajāpati as the son of Agni, and that they will call him Agni. The 'piling of the fire altar' is this work accomplished by Agni as a means to fulfilling Prajāpati's desire: condensed and fragmented into clay bricks, he gives new consistence and structure to the body of Prajāpati. This is why this brick edifice, which is Prajāpati, bears in its name a reference to Fire.<sup>44</sup>

'Here then, the father is also the son; because he created Agni, he is the father of Agni; because Agni put him back together, Agni is the father of Prajāpati'.<sup>45</sup> The bricks are divided into five strata, which are superimposed but also separated by layers of loose earth: the five levels of bricks are those parts (the Sanskrit says: the corporeal persons, the *tanūs*) of Prajāpati which became immortal, his spirit, word, breath, eye and ear; whereas the layers of loose earth are the parts of his *tanū* which remained mortal, his hair, skin, flesh, bones, and marrow.<sup>46</sup> The layers of bricks are also the four cardinal directions plus the zenith; and they are, above all else, the five seasons of the Indian year.<sup>47</sup> There is a brick for every 'moment' of the year: five 'moments' per day, and as many each night. Other bricks correspond to individual days and nights, and these are grouped into twenty-four sets of thirty (24 half-months in the year, with each consisting of fifteen diurnal and fifteen nocturnal periods); each of these half-months is also a 'body' of Prajāpati.<sup>48</sup> This year, which is coextensive with the body—or, more properly speaking, with the series of bodies of a creator so reconstituted—is no longer a death-laden time; it is, rather, a cycle ritualized by its own rhythm, a cycle that generates an immortality that is immediate for the gods and deferred for humans (or at least for humans who know, in turn, how to construct the fire altar, and who know the significance of their ritual acts).<sup>49</sup>

We have given but a very summary overview of the symbolism involved in the 'piling of the fire altar'. The texts elaborate *ad infinitum* the interpretive reasons for the numbers of layers and of bricks, weaving a vast network of cross references to explain the shape and size of the bricks, the names given to them, the order in which they are laid, the difference between those whose positioning is accompanied by the recitation of formulas and those manipulated in silence and which are but 'fillers of empty space'. Let us at least retain, from among these references, a certain number of forcefully asserted principles which serve to enlighten us on the conception that emerged, in Vedic India, of the bodies of the gods. Each brick is an oblation;<sup>50</sup> to edify this brick structure is to perform a sacrificial rite whose oblatory substance is fire. Whereas the original body of the god is a body that is fated to dispersion, a body that is a victim, and is, as such, the creator of the sacrifice,<sup>51</sup> his reconstituted body is, on the other hand, created

by the sacrifice, because it is composed of the oblations introduced into it. In other words, the body of Prajāpati, the sacrifice, is composed of the gods who, if they did not go so far as to abolish themselves in him, at least allowed themselves to be 'eaten' by him.<sup>52</sup> The rite performed by humans is not simply a means to producing a more or less authentic version of what happened among the gods. The altar of bricks is more than the mere copy of that altar which would originally have constituted Prajāpati's real body. Already in the myth, we find an account of the transmutation by which Fire on the one hand, and the elements of time on the other, were first materialized into bricks.<sup>53</sup> We should also point out that this layering of bricks whose structure is Prajāpati and whose substance is solidified fire in the shape of a bird with wings outspread, is also conceived to be none other than Soma. In this way, the immaterial body of this god—that body which, in contrast to its vegetable body, does not allow itself to be seen by humans—nevertheless reveals itself, at level of the constructed body of Prajāpati.<sup>54</sup>

Our texts address another system of interpretation, according to which each of the different parts of the body of this Prajāpati—Agni—Soma (his head, neck, spinal column, wings, knees, etc.) is the seat of a divinity in the pantheon, but also—and this is fundamental—of an element of the Veda. More exactly, it is a matrix for one of the metric schemata operative in Vedic poetry. So, for example, the abdomen is the place reserved for the god Indra, and the place of the meter known as *tristubh* (a stanza of four verses of eleven syllables each). It is a fact that there exists, in Hinduism, an extremely elaborate and frequently cited symbolism of metric schemata.<sup>55</sup> The authors of our texts go so far as to reveal the site, within the body of bricks, in which the irregular verses have come to lodge themselves. These verses, rendered imperfect by the excess or lack of a single syllable, constitute imperfection in the edifice itself, imperfections which are the result of errors of excess or lack that may have been committed in counting or measuring the bricks while piling them up.<sup>56</sup>

Elsewhere, and precisely for the reason that the altar is not a proper effigy, we encounter, not unexpectedly, the following question: how could Agni, a polymorphous and mobile divinity, be contained in an inert construction? What do we know of the god's



'true' dimensions? The response, or rather the refusal to respond takes the following form: 'You alone, O Agni, know yourself. You are who you are. It is you yourself who edify yourself (while we pile up the bricks)'.<sup>57</sup>

The motifs we have just brought to light in this study of the rite of the 'piling of the fire altar'—that is that the body of the god is composite, that it is constructed by the rites, and that, in a certain sense, it consists of rites; and that the words of the Vedas and, more abstractly, the rhythms of Vedic poetry, are themselves also the substance of the divine body—are themes that may be encountered in a wide array of similar accounts concerning the gods we have qualified as sacrificial—Prajāpati, Soma and Agni. Furthermore, these motifs are not absent from myths concerning other gods, as the following examples will show. Vedic ritual knows of a group of quadrimestrial sacrifices, a series of festivals which, taken as a whole, encompass an entire year, but which are hallmarked by their initial phases, which coincide with the beginning of spring, the rainy season and winter, respectively.<sup>58</sup> These sacrifices consist of a wide variety of oblations, addressed to a great number of gods. But Prajāpati consumes all of these, and uses them to successively fashion the different parts of his own body: his right arm, the thumb and other fingers of his right hand, his wrist, elbow, right leg, toes, etc. The texts sometimes emphasize the analogy between a given offering (or rather, the name it bears) and the part of the body which it serves to constitute. Thus, the *kraidina* oblation, offered to the gods of the wind who make up Indra's escort, becomes Prajāpati's penis. This is because we are here in the presence of a derivate of the root *krīd*, 'play'—and it is with his penis that a man enjoys ludic pleasure.<sup>59</sup> We should note in passing that such a *modus operandi* implies that Prajāpati must pre-exist—either in the form of energy or of desire—his own body (since it is he who undertakes to create himself), and that the rite, the ritual institution, also precedes (because it determines it) the formation of the divine body.

Prajāpati has yet another means by which to constitute himself, again in a time that must also be situated prior to the creation itself. The *ṝ̥s* (those seers whose fate it is to receive the Vedic revelation) first create seven discrete 'men' (*puruṣas*), and then decide to combine them in such a way as to make a single 'man':

but this 'man' is also a bird, because two of the initial *puruṣas* are used to make two wings for him.<sup>60</sup> In the final analysis, the text containing this account brings us back to the 'piling of the fire altar'. Here, the question is one of explaining why the central portion of the altar has the form of a square each of whose sides is seven times as long as is that 'man' *par excellence* who is the sacrificer':<sup>61</sup> the brick body of Prajāpati thus bears the trace of that which was the god's first birth: a conglomerate of seven 'men'.

The god Rudra's original consolidation was of a similar sort. Indignant at the incestuous passion that drove Prajāpati to pursue his daughter Dawn, the other gods looked for one of their own who might be capable of punishing him. None was great enough to take on such a task. They thus each took, from their own selves, that particular body which was the most terrifying; and from these they made a single heap which became Rudra.<sup>62</sup> This god had the strength and cruelty necessary for piercing Prajāpati, and so became the god who specializes in the violent portion of the sacrifice, most notably in the wound inflicted on the victim's body by the sacrificial dismemberer.<sup>63</sup>

Here, several bodies are juxtaposed in such a way as to form a single body, and this without erasing the markings of its composite origin. Symmetrically, a single god can give himself several distinct bodies and play off of his multiplicity.<sup>64</sup> In a general sense, it is well understood in late Vedic religion that 'all of the divinities and likewise all the oblations brought to them are bodies of Prajāpati'.<sup>65</sup> More specifically, however, we find Soma distributing himself into three bodies, bodies he places separately in each of the three worlds (heaven, midspace and earth) in order that his entire person not be subject to becoming the sacrificial food of the gods—an endeavour in which, moreover, he fails.<sup>66</sup>

The gods who present the clearest and most numerous examples of this multiplicity of bodies are Agni and Indra. Of course, it is not a fixed number of bodies that is attributed to each of these two divinities: numbers vary according to which ritual prescription the text is attempting to establish or illustrate.

Agni has two bodies: that which conveys the oblations intended for the gods, and that which transports the oblations intended for the Fathers.<sup>67</sup> But he already has three bodies in the following stanza of the *R̥g Veda*, in which all of the god's threefold aspects

are celebrated; 'o Agni, three are your victorious forms, three your dwelling-places, three your tongues, many are your tongues, o god from the sacred order, three also your bodies enjoyed by the gods . . .'<sup>68</sup> In the light of Sāyaṇa's commentary, and especially that of texts posterior to the *R̥g Veda* which repeat the same expression in much clearer contexts, it becomes possible for us to discern the threefold ritual facts to which the various forms of Agni's triplicity refer in this passage. His three bodies are enumerated in a canonical list, which is highlighted in the context of the rite of installation of the sacrificial fires.<sup>69</sup> here one is instructed to proceed with the *tanūhavis*, 'oblations to the bodies (of Agni)', which are his 'purified body', his 'purifying body', and his 'shining body'. The Vedic theologians do not fail to connect this rite with a myth: 'When Agni passed from the world of the gods to the world of men, he said to himself: "I ought not to pass through the world of men in my entirety". He distributed these three bodies into the three worlds . . . The *ṛ̥ṣis* perceived this and offered these (three) oblations . . .'. Thus, men are reassured when they ceremoniously establish their sacrificial fires, that it is a complete and un mutilated Agni they are installing.<sup>70</sup> But if—returning to the *R̥g Vedic* text—we reconnect the stanza concerning Agni's three bodies to that which follows, it takes on another sense: 'Numerous are the changing forms of the (god who are) makers of the changing forms they gathered into you . . .'<sup>71</sup> These changing forms are so many instances of *māyā*, a term which would indeed come to know a brilliant future in Indian speculation and culture, but which here does not necessarily or solely signify 'illusion'. It rather refers to the gods' capacity for creating multiple identities for themselves and others, and to their power to structure reality,<sup>72</sup> which is, in any case, tantamount to producing manifold forms. In fact, Agni's three bodies can reveal themselves as being six, or seven times seven, etc.<sup>73</sup>

We would be mistaken to regard these discussions on the manifold as nothing more than an imagic way of talking about a single god's various specialties, his spheres of activity, the various ways in which he manifests his power, etc. The Vedic authors, in their collections of hymns as well as in their theologico-ritual treatises, bring to our attention situations in which the relationship obtaining between Agni's bodies (or those of another god) directly

implies their autonomy. Taken in his entirety, Agni is the sum of his bodies; but each of these bodies is a person in its own right. The texts evoke quarrels between the two Agnis, and teach the formulas which must be recited in order to reconcile and reunite them: 'May you two be united, harmonize yourselves, be lovers; beaming and benevolent, dwell together to eat and drink. I have placed your minds together, your rites together, and your thoughts together'.<sup>74</sup> This exhortation which evokes the words pronounced in addressing a newly wed couple, concerns two Agnis who are both perceived as being male. Even as one effects their conciliation, it is necessary to take care that they remain distinct from one another, because their good feeling at once symbolizes and guarantees the mutual respect which ought to reign between brahmins and *ḷṣatriyas* (warriors): united, to be sure, but by no means confounded.<sup>75</sup> Another text shows us an Agni Jātavedas who is jealous of Agni Vaiśvānara, which is the sole Agni (in the form of a fire) who is maintained by brahmins and who, for this reason, participates (in the form of a god) in the continuous creation of the world. Agni Jātavedas inflates himself and grows, such that he comes to be noticed by a brahmin's wife, who persuades her husband to change Agnis. In the end, the two Agnis come to an agreement.<sup>76</sup>

As for Indra, when the gods approached him, asking that he become their leader in order to defeat the *Asura* demons with the words, 'You are the most valiant of all of us', he retorted, 'I possess the following three bodies. They are valiant. You must satisfy them (the three of them). Then will you bring an end to the *Asuras*'.<sup>77</sup> And, of course, the enumeration which follows gives instructions concerning a sequence of the three offerings which constitute the sacrifice called 'the victorious one'. Elsewhere, Indra is one of those gods most endowed with *māyā*. 'With form after form he intensifies his being. He creates *māyās* all around his body'.<sup>78</sup> Lastly, the origin myth of, or rather the myth which stands as the model for the rite called *tānūnaptra* (intended to found an alliance between the sacrificer and the officiating priests at the moment in which they set out on the risky adventure that is the sacrifice), only makes sense if the person of each god is composed of several bodies. In order to combat the *Asuras*, the gods—who had confronted them in a scattered fashion up to that time—decided to

unite. In order that their alliance be a solid one, each placed on deposit, or pawned, in the keeping of one of their own number, a god who had been established as the keeper of their promises, 'those of their bodies which were the dearest to them'. He who would subsequently fall short of holding up his end of the alliance so established would thus run the risk of never being reunited with 'his very dear bodies'. The adjective 'dear' has the same value here, and in a great number of other analogous passages, as does the *philos* of Homer. It is a possessive adjective: the very dear bodies of a god are those bodies which are most himself.<sup>79</sup> So it is that the gods give their 'very dear bodies' to one of their number—in this case, one of the Agnis—when they are preparing themselves to launch their campaign against the *Asuras*. 'If we are victorious,' they say, 'we will come and taken them back. If we are defeated, we will seek refuge with them.'<sup>80</sup>

What can we hope to know of the physical appearance of these bodies, which were on the one hand multiple and separable, the fragments of a single divine person, and on the other, composite, the products of a collage?<sup>81</sup> The details we are able to grasp, on the basis of the texts, lead us to believe (as has been the case in post-Vedic Hinduism, as we have seen above) that the norm, or at least the predominant tendency, was towards anthropomorphism. When Indra is qualified as a bull, this is a means of placing his strength and virility in highest relief; but the elements of his complete description give him the body of a man, with mention being made of his right arm which is stronger than his left, his belly, his beard and his thighs. Elsewhere, his son Kutsa binds him by the testicles.<sup>82</sup> We gain a fleeting image of Viṣṇu's silhouette, as he stands with his head propped against his strung bow.<sup>83</sup> A litany of sorts, addressed to the various components of the sacrifice and especially to the bunches of grass with which the ground is strewn, evokes the lap and skin of the goddess Aditi, the golden hands of Savitṛ and Viṣṇu's topknot.<sup>84</sup> When Rudra, having pierced Prajāpati, shows the other gods the wounded portion of this divine body, the prototype of that of the sacrificial victim, the god Bhaga's eyes are burned and Pūṣan, who tries to eat it, has his teeth broken.<sup>85</sup> In the eyes of Prajāpati, nonetheless, the gods, his creatures, are of a perfect beauty, since in contemplating them he becomes so agitated that he sheds his seed.<sup>86</sup> In

another passage, he has a similar reaction when he sees his own image reflected in the waters.<sup>87</sup>

But when humans want to exalt the beauty of the gods (and especially that of Dawn, one of the rare female divinities in the Vedic tradition), the most they have at their disposal are formulas that are obscure, if not enigmatic, from the Veda itself. Whether it is invoking the gods, causing them to speak, or speaking about them, the Veda does not say enough about them to bring coherent images of the gods' corporeal forms to mind. Attention shifts constantly between the representation of objects that are, on the sacrificial ground, the material bodies of the gods; and the moving forms of their properly divine bodies which are only sketched out by the words of the text.

The gods, who have no fixed residence, also have no corporeal envelope. That which truly contains them is that which is called their *dhāman*, their 'very dear *dhāmans*': the term signifies placement (in the sense of 'to place' and 'to be placed'), situation, status; and, secondarily, abode. Such are the meanings of this term which Louis Renou further renders as '*lieu géométrique d'interférences*'.<sup>88</sup> The god is situated in the institutions he himself founds. His strength, his nature, his proper place, his essence, his structure (all possible translations for this term) need not be sought anywhere outside of his law—that is, outside of the way in which he manifests the cosmic order (*ṛta*).<sup>89</sup>

In this way, that which is the most consistent, the most concrete and the most individualized, in the bodies of the gods, are the words of the Veda. The Veda itself never tires of repeating this theme: 'the very dear body' of Agni consists of the metric schemata of sacred poetry.<sup>90</sup> After his victory over Vṛtra, Indra disappears, and all that remains of him is a certain Vedic meter.<sup>91</sup> Where are the gods? 'In the highest firmament', the *Rg Veda* tells us; that is, 'in the indestructible syllable of the verse'.<sup>92</sup> In spite of the origin myths that ascribe the discovery of certain rites and the use of certain Vedic words to pre-existing gods, the doctrinal portions of the Veda unambiguously assert that 'it is the sacrifice, which in unfolding itself (while we perform it) continuously becomes these gods'.<sup>93</sup> The Vedic word, on the contrary, is uncreated: while it has been the object of many kinds of revelation, and has its concentrated and its expanded forms, it has never had, in and of

itself, a beginning. The primary way of thinking about the Absolute in India is to perceive it as the quintessence of the Vedic word: and this is the primary sense of the word *brahman*.

One of India's philosophical schools assigned itself the task of systematizing all of the Vedic convention on the bodies of the gods. This was the doctrine known as *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā*, or 'primary exegesis', which was embraced by persons one might call extremists of Indian orthodoxy. It is founded on an interpretation of the Veda which postulates as a founding principle that the uncreated Veda is entirely true; but which distinguishes, within the Veda itself, between an essential portion (composed of the sum total of its injunctions concerning the rites), and a secondary portion (made up of discourses designed to stimulate man's imagination and ardour, and so incite him to perform the rites). It is in this second portion that we find all that the Vedas have to say regarding the gods. In fact, the gods only exist as a function of the sacrifice, within the sacrificial context. The divinity is, in relation to the sacrifice, a subordinate factor, a kind of means to an end: in order that the sacrifice might be complete, there must also be a divinity, one who receives the oblation. But it is not the divinity who produces the results of the sacrifice; rather it is a force that emanates from the sacrifice itself. What counts in a god is its name: the offertory formula must include the exact name of the divinity. The sacrifice would be completely null and void if the divinity were invoked by a name which, even though it were one of its names, was not the name prescribed by the Veda for that specific circumstance. In response to the adversary who objects that the divinity is, in such a case, nothing more than a word, the *Mīmāṃsā* philosopher says: 'Here there is nothing, in fact, for us to refute. This idea does not contradict our doctrine. It confirms what we say: one must not use one name in the place of another'.<sup>94</sup>

In describing the way in which the gods compound and fragment their persons, and in demonstrating that it is the sacrifice that shapes them and the Vedic word that gives them their being, the Veda, that sacred text which speaks of nothing but rites and gods, paradoxically orients Indian speculation towards the sort of atheism taught in the *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā*.<sup>95</sup> In reaction to this theology of the explosion and extenuation of the gods, a theology which abolishes the gods' transcendence *vis-à-vis* rites and words, classical

Hinduism, in its grandiose project of remythologization, gives life to these idols, to these divinities who show their love to humans, and who allow themselves to be seen, nurtured and loved.<sup>96</sup> Or, put another way—and this other way complements the aforementioned one most admirably—Hinduism would, in its formulation of the theory of *māyā* as illusion effect the disappearance, or rather the absorption, of all discussion concerning the lack of divine consistency into a broader discourse on the irreality of all that is manifold.

## Exegesis of Rites, Exegesis of Texts

'Counting is funny.'

Gertrude Stein, *Look at Me Now and Here I Am*

### The Structure of the Twelve-Day Sacrifice

In classifying those sacrifices in which *soma* is the oblatory substance, the method of predilection—or at least that method best suited to the speculative bent of the authors of the *Brāhmanas*—is to consider their duration. The Vedic treatises on ceremonial ritual (*Śrauta Sūtras*)<sup>1</sup> divide the *soma* ceremonies (*somasamsthā*) into those lasting but a single day (*ekāha*); those 'consisting in days' (*ahīna*)—that is sacrifices two to twelve days in length; and lastly, 'sacrificial sittings, sessions' (*sattras*), twelve days to one year in duration.<sup>2</sup>

This does not mean that the sum total of the procedures in the *ekāha* sacrifice are the work of a single day: it is only by factoring out the many sacrificial preparations and prolongations that one can arrive at one day as the period consecrated to the essential act of the sacrifice; that is, to the pressing (*savana*) of the *soma* stalks, which is effected in three sittings, in the morning, at noon and in the evening. There are several kinds of *ekāhas*, but all are derived from a single prototype (*prakṛti*), the sacrifice known as the *agniṣṭoma*.<sup>3</sup>

The various *ahīnas* and *sattras* are differentiated from one another by the way in which their constitutive days are distributed, in both serial and interlocking fashion. But the *sattras* are of quite a different structure than the shorter *soma* ceremonies, inasmuch as in a session of long duration, the distinction between sacrificer and officiants is abolished. In such cases, each of the human participants has to fulfil two roles, which thereby implies that all

are obliged to undergo the consecration (*dīkṣā*) normally reserved for the sacrificer alone. Also, none but brahmins may be present, since it is a rule that brahmins alone may officiate at such sacrifices (whereas, in other sacrifices, anyone belonging to one of the first three *varṇas* may stand as sacrificer).<sup>4</sup>

The *dvādaśāha* or the twelve-day sacrifice has the peculiarity of being the longest of the *ahīnas* and the shortest of the *sattras*, by virtue of which fact it may be executed according to either one of the two formulas. Here, then, is the organization of these twelve days, according to *AitB* 4.23–5.22 (in which the *dvādaśāha* is treated as a *sattra* sacrifice):<sup>5</sup> the first and twelfth days are *atirātras*, that is, ceremonies which 'spill over into the night' and which include a night vigil consecrated to the recitation of hymns, the more or less orgiastic imbibing (according to Eggeling<sup>6</sup>) of the *soma* drink, and the sacrifice of a goat to Sarasvatī, the goddess of the Word. These two end-points of the rite are like the wings of a bird whose two eyes are the second and eleventh days and whose body is the other days (in other words, the series of the eight remaining days) taken as a whole (see *AitB* 4.23, in which a schematic rendering of this rite's origin myth is also presented). These 'two eyes' are the days identified with one of the *agniṣṭomas*, while the eight medial days (with the exception of the third of these, or the fifth in the entire series, which is given over to a ritual of the *śodaśin* type) are characterized by a ritual variant known as the *ukthya*.

An alternative distribution leaves the two *atirātras* aside and considers the ten other days to be a *daśarātra* rite (literally, a 'group of ten nights': it is by design that durations are counted in nights, even if these, in fact, encompass diurnal periods), in which one recognizes a) three series of three days (three *trirātras*); and b) the tenth day, which is set apart not only positionally, but also on the basis of its content. The three *trirātras* are in turn distributed into a two plus one configuration: the first two constitute, in tandem, the *pr̥sthya-śadaha*, a group of six days, characterized by a particular kind of recitation called the *pr̥stha-stotra*, while the three days of the third *trirātra* are called *chandomas*.

Images are evoked to illustrate the relationship between the six days of the *pr̥sthya-śadaha*, the three *chandomas*, and the tenth day. The *pr̥sthya-śadaha*, the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (5.22) tells us, is

like a mouth, of which the *chandomas* are the tongue, palate and teeth, and the tenth day that by virtue of which what is said can be pronounced, and also by virtue of which the sweet may be distinguished from the non-sweet. Or, the *pr̥ṣṭhya-śadaha* are the nostrils, the *chandomas* that which is inside the nostrils and the tenth day that which allows one to distinguish between odours. Or, again the *pr̥ṣṭhya-śadaha* is the eye, the *chandomas* the dark portion of the eye, and the tenth day that with which one sees, the pupil. A possibly disconcerting note in these comparisons is the fact that the first six days are presented as encompassing, and not preceding, the four days that follow: the *pr̥ṣṭhya-śadaha* is at once both part and whole. A more frequently encountered and parallel situation depicts a whole which, having been reached through an accumulation of parts, is in turn reckoned as a supplementary part. So, for example, the year is composed of eighteen elements: twelve months, five seasons, and the year itself;<sup>7</sup> or again, the Word, *vāc*, is composed of four parts—that is, of four syllables, the three syllables of the word *akṣara* which itself means 'syllable', plus the syllable of the word *vāc*.<sup>8</sup>

In the case of the twelve day *soma* sacrifice, or rather of the ten days which constitute its central portion, this configuration of [(3 + 3) + 3] + 1, together with a gloss which emphasizes the fact that the 3 + 1 final days are both supplementary and inherent to the (3 + 3) of the beginning, combine to account for the play of similarities and dissimilarities between these sequences of days. The rite, taken as a whole, is one; it is composed, to be sure, of distinct and diverse elements,<sup>9</sup> but these are elements which, through their capacity to enter into manifold partial combinations, pave the way for the final unity of the whole. Each of the three days of the second *trirātra* repeat—although they fall short of reproducing it in every respect—each of the corresponding three days of the first *trirātra*. The third *trirātra* repeats—in its structure, but with marked differences in its content—that which is common to the first two. Finally, the tenth day, through a long series of features, of which the first is its very oneness, is set entirely apart, even if it is also the culmination of the entire process. To begin, the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*'s sole mention of the first nine days takes the form of a series of indications or descriptions of the textual recitations proper to them. It says nothing regarding the acts which are to accompany

these recitations, whereas on the subject of the tenth day, it is the sacrificial acts that are placed in high relief.

### Numbers and their Notations

To this point, our analysis has been based upon repetitions and differences for the simple reason that the terminology of ritual calls our attention to them. We would make but little headway on this basis, however, were we not to rely on the exegetical work of the *Brāhmaṇas* themselves. Their presentation of these *soma* festivals is striking, inasmuch as it consists of an analysis which they bring to bear, simultaneously, upon ritual sequences (or more precisely, the connections obtaining between the days of the rite), and upon those texts of the *Ṛk Samhitā* whose recitation they prescribe. In matters of elucidating the texture of the rite, as a means to articulating and justifying those injections which must be obeyed by the sacrificer and the officiants if the sacrifice is to be accomplished, the *Brāhmaṇas* constitute their own proper authority, and are their own guarantors of the validity of the origin myths and revelations of the rites that they set forth. The structure of the rite is constituted and laid out in the brahmanic texts themselves: yet, for all this, the *Brāhmaṇas* have no qualms about looking at the rite as a prefabricated, pre-existing text, and a text open to their commentaries. It happens nonetheless that, with the exception of the tenth day, the rite of the *dvādaśāha* itself—at least in the form in which it is found in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (and in such parallel passages as *PB* 10–15)—is nothing other than a recitation of passages taken from the *Ṛg Veda*. Each day is characterized by the group of Vedic texts considered proper to it, and by other features bearing on the way in which these are grouped and recited. These *Ṛk Samhitā* texts are plainly inserted into this *Brāhmaṇa* in the form of citations; at times, they are simply mentioned in the form of an incipit (*pratīka*), which functions as a reference. In either case, it is clear, in the discourse of the *Brāhmaṇas*, that the *Ṛg Vedic mantras* are anterior and exterior to the text which cites and glosses them, anterior and exterior to the rite of which they are a constitutive element.

The exegesis of this *Brāhmaṇa* consists in displaying and justifying the connection<sup>10</sup> which exists between those portions of the

rite that are textual and those portions that are gestual. What they are saying is: here is why this text is recited to the accompaniment of this particular act. This is the invariable exegetical method of the *Brāhmaṇas*, and we would not be exaggerating if we were to say that the establishment of such a connection in fact constituted the *raison d'être* of these treatises. In the case that concerns us here, the situation is nevertheless, a peculiar one, inasmuch as the 'gestual', extra-textual portion of the rite is reduced to zero. Or, put more exactly, it is solely concerned with the ordinal number of the ritual day in question. The question that is constantly posed, and that question which unifies all speculation on both *ahīna* and *sattra soma* rites—and most notably on the twelve-day rite as it is developed in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa's* exegesis—is the following: what is it, in the hymns or hymn fragments recited on a given day, and in the particular way in which they are recited on that day, that is placed in correspondence with that day's number in the ritual order? Why is it, for example, that verses 8.89.3–4 of the *Ṛk Samhitā* find their proper place in the rite of the first day (in which they constitute the text of the sung recitation known as the *marutvatīya pragātha*)? This is because these stanzas contain the word *pra-*, 'in front', which is one of the indices of the 'first' day, in this case a specific concretization of the notion of 'first'.

The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, by way of explaining the rite, constructs a kind of grid which it applies to each of the medial days of the *dvādaśāha*. A single grid is used for the first six days, while another, applied to the next three, is identical to the first principle, but somewhat different in the number of squares it contains and the headings under which they are placed. The upshot of this decoding operation, proper to this *Brāhmaṇa*, is that each day unfolds in such a way as to ideal with a specific body of constraints, and to conform to a common schema; however, each day lies in its combination of a given number of features this *Brāhmaṇa* calls *rūpas*, a term which Keith translates as 'symbol', and Caland as 'characteristic' in his discussion of the parallel passage of the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa* (10.6.1, for example). In his commentary on the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, Sāyaṇa glosses *rūpa* with both *lakṣaṇa* and *liṅga*, without stating his motives for such an alternation. What is it, in fact, that is being characterized, indicated, or symbolized? It is, we repeat, the day, inasmuch

as it stands as the first, the second, etc. And what are the criteria for arriving at such a formulation? These we find in those special features or elements that come to our notice on these days, features which stand as markings of sorts, as both notations and representations of that which the *Brāhmaṇa* wishes to emphasize—that is, the number associated with that day. Here we must bear in mind that this *Brāhmaṇa* does nothing more than to present us with a list of these markings, without ever informing us of the general relation that obtains between the *rūpa* detected in the *mantra* and the number it is supposed to indicate. Although it is often the case that the relationship is immediately intelligible—because it refers to an elementary analogy (for example, a *rūpa* of the first day is the fact that the divinity invoked in one of the stanzas happens to be named in the first verse)—it can also often happen that the correspondence escapes us, and that the *rūpa* is but an arbitrary sign for us. What is it about the presence of the verbal root *YUJ* in a stanza, for example, that makes it—as the *Brāhmaṇa* says it does—a *rūpa* for the first day, and thus singled out for recitation on the first day? We must, moreover, acknowledge that there is more to this process of 'significance' (to borrow a term from Benveniste) than mere code, since two *Brāhmaṇas*, in their treatments of one and the same rite, use the same portion of a single *mantra* as their *rūpas* for two different days (that is, two different numbers). In the case in point, the presence of the verbal prefix *ud*, 'upwards' (considered here to be a synonym of *ūrdhva*, 'raised') is a *rūpa* of the second day in the *Aitareya*, and of the third day in the *Pañcaviṃśa*.<sup>11</sup> As for *Aitareya*, it does not claim that those features recognized as the *rūpas* of a given number need be intrinsic or permanent qualities. The aptitude of an utterance to be a *rūpa* turns on the time of its enunciation: (because it is) pronounced on the first day, the verbal prefix *pra*, 'in front' (for example) is a *rūpa* of this first day.<sup>12</sup> (We cannot reject the idea that the simple fact of being recited on the first day, beyond being just a necessary condition, might also constitute a sufficient condition for rendering it a symbol of the first day: in sum, the first day symbolizes itself. The same is the case, to be sure, for each of the other days. But what is altogether remarkable is this perceived need to symbolize, through so many cumulative measures,

something that is a given in the real world, an inevitable objective fact: that is, the place of a given day in a series of days, and the ranking of a given number in a series of numbers. When one performs the ceremonies of the first day, that which makes it the first day is not only the fact that there are no other days preceding it, and that others follow it, but also that on this day *mantras* are recited which bear the [widely variant] markings of the *one*, which bear the *rūpas* of this day, inasmuch as it is the first day. Objective facts are supplemented here by the reality of the image that reflect them and the signs that point to them).

### Ritual and Representations

Having said this, we would maintain that the reader's task now becomes one of reducing out, as much as possible, the role of the arbitrary in the relationship obtaining between the *rūpa* and the number to which it is said to refer. A correspondence between a word and the number it is supposed to symbolize can only be made meaningful when one has brought to light those mediations and associations that the text has not mentioned, mediations and associations which must be sought in other contexts. So it is with the word *vṛṣan*, 'bull', which is a mark of the second day. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* passage that provides this information does not give its reason for doing so. It suffices, however, to recall that *vṛṣan* is a frequently used epithet for Indra. Now, Indra is explicitly designated as the divinity who presides over the second day. The parallel *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*<sup>13</sup> passage indicates this clearly, when it recognizes among the *rūpas* of the second day the word *vṛtra*, a term which means 'enemy' when it is connected to forms of the root *HAN*, 'kill', the compound *vṛtrahan* itself being one of Indra's names.

It is now time for us to examine these *rūpas* more closely (even if we cannot make an exhaustive study of them here).

Each day, defined by its number, is first characterized by 1) the divinity which 'vehiculates' (*vahati*) it; 2) its *stoma*; that is, the number and the ordering of the verses contained in the *stotra*, the cantata in trio, proper to that day; 3) its *sāman* that is, the melody to which the *stotra* is sung; and 4) its *chandas*, the metrical form that serves as its emblem. (According to Sāyaṇa, the *stoma*,

*sāman* and *chandas* are the 'vehicles' of the day, and have the same status as the divinity).

We should not conclude, on the basis of this description placed at the beginning of the discussion of each day's activities, that on that day none but the 'vehicle' divinity can be invoked, nor that all of the hymns and hymn fragments recited have the *chandas* so indicated for their meter. It simply means that the day is placed under the sign of that god and of that meter. The three days of the third triad (the *chandoma*) have no 'vehicle'-divinity, with each of these possessed of not one, but three, *chandas* (which are the same for all three).

Following this, the text begins an enumeration of the *rūpas* proper to the day, in the form in which they appear in the hymns recited on that day. These *rūpas* are of several sorts. They are: 1) words, or verbal roots (any form derived from the conjugation of this verb counts as a *rūpa*); 2) verbal tenses: a verb in the future tense is a *rūpa* of the first day; a verb in the present a *rūpa* of the second,<sup>14</sup> in the past, a *rūpa* of the third; 3) some feature of the word order: as we have seen, the name of a divinity mentioned in the first verse of a stanza is a *rūpa* of the first day; in the final verse, it is a *rūpa* of the third day; 4) the evocation of one of the three worlds: mentioned in a first day hymn, the world of men is a *rūpa* of the first day, etc.

'Vehicles' and *rūpas* can thus be easily arranged, as shown in the table that follows.

The analysis which the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* makes (a mixture of descriptions, injunctions, and explanations of symbolism) is followed by an enumeration of the hymns, hymn fragments, and combinations of hymns or fragments that are to be recited. It presents a list of genres of ritual composition, which are fixed and constant for the whole of the first six days (*śadahas*), as well as another somewhat different list for the three days of the final triad. On each day, there are some twenty spaces to be filled through the use of suitable textual matter, matter specific to that day and possessed of that day's *rūpa*. Thus the prescription is that one perform, each day at the time of the *soma*-pressing, four compositions of the *ājya*<sup>15</sup> genre. For the *ājyas* of the first day, the text provided is *RS* 1.74; for the *ājyas* of the second day, *RS* 1.12; for the third day, *RS* 8.75, and so on. And, if it is the case that *RS* 1.74



is the text provided for the *ājyas* of the first day, this is because the hymn contains (in stanza 1) the verbal prefix *pra*, and this verbal prefix, as we have seen, is one of the indexical words for the first day. Another example may be found in the hymns that are recited, to the *Ṛbhū*s, on each of the days of the ritual: on the first day, it is *RS 3.60* that is chosen, because this hymn begins with the word *iha*, 'here', which may be understood (or rather used) as a designation for the world of men, itself is a *rūpa* for the first day.

In truth, however, the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, in proceeding with its 'notational reading' of the rite and the texts, uncovers a great many more *rūpas* than those we have so far mentioned, or indicated in our table. These *rūpas*, of another type, are no longer based on words (together with their concomitant synonyms) as such, nor are they based on morphemes, or on the place of words in verses, but, rather, on turns of phrases of speech, on 'impression' related in sum to a formal analysis of literary texts.

We begin by noting the various kinds of repetitions found in these *rūpas*. 1) The name of Agni, pronounced twice in *Ṛk Samhitā* 7.3, and which is recited as the *ājya* of the eighth day,<sup>16</sup> is a *rūpa* of the eighth day, inasmuch as the eighth constitutes the second member of the third triad; in other words, it is 2<sup>c</sup> that is the second member, repeated for the third time. (This *Brāhmaṇa* goes on to remind us that the fourth is the same as 1<sup>b</sup>, and the seventh the same as 1<sup>c</sup>,<sup>17</sup> that the fifth the same as 2<sup>b</sup>, and so on.) 2) The fact that the stanzas of a hymn have the same ending (*samānodarka*),<sup>18</sup> a kind of refrain then, is a *rūpa* of the third day: the same holds for those stanzas which combine to create the third day composition called *praiṅga*, as well as the sixth day (or 3<sup>b</sup>) hymn to Heaven and Earth (*RS 1.185*), and the hymn to the Maruts (1.101), recited on the ninth day (or 3<sup>c</sup>). 3) The reiteration (more than twice) of a word or a group of words in a single stanza is also a *rūpa* of the third day. The word or group of words are, according to the terms employed in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, *punar āvṛtta*. 4) Cases of alliteration are called *punar nirṛtta*.<sup>19</sup> Repetition, alliteration and the presence of the word *tri* ('three') combine to form a triple *rūpa* in *RS 8.2.6f.*, a text recited as the *marutvatīya* of the third day: *trāya indrasya sōmāḥ sutāsah santu devāsya | svē kṣāye sutapāvnaḥ || trāyah kōśāsa ścotanti tistrās camvāḥ sūpūrṇāḥ . . .* 'may three *somas* be pressed for Indra, the

Day	Divinity	Stoma	Sāman	Chandas	Index words	Name of God	World Evoked	Verbal Tense
PRṢTHYA SADAHA								
1.	Agni	3 × 3 verses	Rathantara	Gāyatrī	<i>ā, pra, YUJ, ratha, āsu, PĀ</i>	In the 1st <i>pāda</i>	World of Men	Future
2.	Indra	15	Bṛhat	Tristubh	Absence of <i>ā, pra; STHĀ, ūrdhva, prati, antar, vṛsan, VRDH</i>	In the central <i>pāda</i>	Mid-space	Present
3.	Viśve Devāḥ	17	Vairūpa	Jagatī	<i>āsva, anta, RAM, pary-ĀS, tri</i>	In the final <i>pāda</i>	The other World	Past
4.	Vāc	21	Vairāja	Anuṣṭubh	Same as for the 1st day*	In the 1st <i>pāda</i>	World of Men	Future
5.	Go	27	Śakvara	Pañkti	Same as for the 2d day*	In the central <i>pāda</i>	Mid-space	Present
6.	Dyu	33	Raivata	Atri-chandas	Same as for the 3d day*	In the final <i>pāda</i>	The other World	Past

Day	Divinity	Stoma	Sāman	Chandas	Index words	Name of God	World Evoked	Verbal Tense
CHANDOMA								
7.		24	Br̥hat	Trisṛubh, Jagatī, Gayatri	Same as for the 1st day*	In the 1st pāda	World of Men	Future
8.		44	Rathantara	Same as for the 7th day	Same as for the 2d day*	In the central pāda	Mid-space	Present
9.		48	Br̥hat	Same as for the 7th and 8th day	Same as for the 3d day*	In the final pāda	The other World	Past

\* Starting on the 4th day, the days are assigned supplementary indices which are specific to each of them. These are too numerous and complex to mention in this table. We discuss these below. There is no tutelary god proper to each of the three days of the *chandoma*.

god, in the house of the drinker of *soma*. Three buckets are overflowing, three vats are well-filled . . .'

Also counted among the *rūpas* are diversion, through excess or lack, from the norms of verse or stanza length. Let us take the fifth day as an example. Besides the *rūpas* which obtain to it, inasmuch as it is day 2<sup>b</sup>, it is also referred to by a group of indices that are all its own.<sup>20</sup> These consist of words bearing some relationship to the cow (whom we know to be the divinity of this day): *dugdha*, 'milked'; *ūdhan*, 'udder'; *dhenu*, 'milch cow'; and *pr̥ṣni*, 'mottled.' One then passes from cows to domesticated animals in general (*paśus*): anything which may be said of *paśus* and which one might encounter in the texts assigned to the fifth day may thus be designated as a *rūpa* of this day. Now, the addition (*adhyāsa*) of a supplementary verse is thus related to the realm of the *paśu*. Why is this? The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* itself does not explain this connection between a datum of a literary or textual order and the attributes of domestic animals. But Sāyaṇa, in his commentary, helps us out of this difficulty: *paśus* are quadrupeds, but when one enumerates (*pariganyate*) their constitutive parts, one must *add* to these four that *fifth* part which is the head. So it is that the 'addition' as well as the cow are *rūpas* of five. (The *ājya* of the fifth day has *RS* 6.15 for its text, a passage that contains a supplementary verse in its third stanza). We find a similar feature in the context of the fourth day which counts, among its *rūpas*, that which is characterized by a deficiency (*ūna*) or by a surplus (*atirikta*). The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* contents itself with making this stipulation without even citing (or so it would appear) a single passage set apart by such a characteristic. Here again, Sāyaṇa, who does not in this case attempt to restore the missing links of this symbolic chain, points us towards problems of a formal nature: the shortening of a (normally long) syllable is to be considered *ūna*, and the lengthening of a (normally short) syllable *atirikta*.<sup>21</sup>

All of the *rūpas* we have discussed heretofore are explicitly designated as such in our text. It now remains for us to take into account a device, of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* itself, (but this text does not provide us with a formula for interpreting it): the connection of two *rūpas* to one another; let us try to understand how they evoke and imply one other. The verb *STHĀ* and the noun *anta* ('end') are the *rūpas* of the ninth day (=day 3<sup>c</sup>): in hymn 3.35

of the *RS*, whose recitation is prescribed for this day, there figures, in the first stanza, the verb *STHĀ* in the sense of 'stand up (in a chariot)'. Now, to stand up in a chariot implies that one has brought to an end the act of walking. The *rūpa* 'end' is thus implicitly brought into play by the *rūpa STHĀ*; for, as the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* says, 'stopping is an end' (*anto vai sthitam*). But this same *rūpa* which evokes the 'end' may also be represented by a word which is semantically associated with it, even if it does not figure in the list of *rūpas* (is this not a *rūpa* of *rūpa* itself?). Again, on the ninth day, *RS* 1.103 is recited. Its *rūpa*, in the first stanza, is the word *anta*, which does not itself appear in the passage, but which turns out to be represented by the word *parama*, 'supreme' (because that which is supreme is an end: *anto vai paramam*)

### The Third Day: Multiplicity and Conclusion

On p. 80 of the Introduction which he prefaced to his translation of the *Aitareya* and *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇas*, Keith brings to notice the fact that the word *bahu* ('much, many') is employed by *AitB* 5.2 in the grammatical sense of 'plural'. This passage treats of the third day and bears on the *RS* (2.34) hymn to the Maruts: 'Pouring out streams of *soma*, the Maruts of aggressive power'. This is the hymn to the Maruts. Much should be recited. Now, much means the end; the third day is the end. On the third day, this is a *rūpa* of the third day.' Sāyaṇa comments: 'There are fifteen stanzas. It is in this that there is multitude. This multitude is born of the fact that there are many gods to be celebrated in it. This multitude, with regard to unity and duality, is an ending. This is why there is the marking which consists of an end (*antaval liṅgam asti*).'

It is not certain that we ought to follow Keith, even if Sāyaṇa's gloss invites us to do so.<sup>22</sup> But the *bahu* of this *brāhmaṇa*, whether or not it necessarily refers to the grammatical markings of the plural, is in any case a means by which to summarize all of the features of plurality contained in the hymn (in its structure as well as its content), of which Sāyaṇa gives but a sampling. The idea of plurality thus stands out in high relief. Why then, is it associated with the notion of ending? This is because it is connected to three, and because the third day is also the final day of a triad (in the sense that the day that follows the final day of

each triad is a new first day). But we must examine the *rūpas* of the third day as a group. If they are simply juxtaposed, is their conjunction merely a fortuitous convergence of a number of fragmentary traditions? Or might we hope to find some coherence in their association?

Let us note, from the outset, that the third is the only day that allows for the use, among its *rūpas*, of the name of the number which corresponds to it (this alternation between ordinal and cardinal numbers recurs constantly in brahmanic speculation on the symbolism of numbers): it is as if this *Brāhmaṇa* wished to indicate that it is three which 'makes a (great) number', and that to be three is to be numerous. The fact that 'three' is the essence of plurality, and that it may be illustrated by all that is designated as numerous, is confirmed by the presence, among the 'stylistic' *rūpas*, of the refrain (*samānodarkā*), of repetition (*punar āvṛtti*), and of alliteration (*punar niṅṛtti*): all are multiples obtained through the recurrence of an original element. It is therefore, not surprising to note that the third day has, for its tutelary divinity, the *Viśve Devāḥ*, the 'All-Gods', who are not a totality of the gods in the pantheon, but a group of gods who are always presented *en masse*. As distinct from all of the individual gods, the *Viśve Devāḥ* themselves constitute an indistinct mass which is manifold, but of indeterminate number: the *Viśve Devāḥ* are to the gods what the *viś*, the *vaiśyas* are among men.<sup>23</sup> It is true that the *vaiśyas* do not appear in the list of *rūpas* of the third day; however, it should be noted that nowhere in this text is a *varṇa* ever given to mark a day or a number. We would, in fact, expect to find brahmins symbolizing the first day, both because they are chronologically and hierarchically the first *varṇa*, and because the texts constantly associate them with Agni and the *gāyatrī*. In a similar sense, the *ksatriyas*, the second *varṇa* ought to figure alongside Indra, their god, and the *triṣṭubh*, their meter, to illustrate the second day (as, for example, in *ŚB* 5.4.1.3, on the subject of the royal consecration). In fact, this rite of *dvādaśāha* is an extraordinarily hermetic one—especially in its *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* version—and the texts that describe it do not bring together the totality of the cosmos, of society and of the human body, in their series of correspondences. (The *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* version describes, in a more habitual way, the ways in which one progresses

in the mastery of the season and the cardinal points, insofar as one advances in the series of the days in the rite).

Is it possible for us to say, for all of this, that the *vaiśyas* as such are absent from the *rūpas* of the third day? The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* make an indirect reference to them, we believe, when it includes in these *rūpas* the verb *RAM*, which means 'establish oneself so as to enjoy an asset or a place'. On the days counted as 3<sup>b</sup> and 3<sup>c</sup>, *RAM* has *STHĀ* for its substitute.

Now in contrast to the *kṣatriyas*, who are unstable, the *vaiśyas* are established: they are, to borrow Minard's expression who uses the term in its etymological sense, 'manants', churls.<sup>24</sup>

The fact that the individuals who constitute the masses are numerous—but of indeterminate number—and that they are indistinguishable from one another, does not, however, mean that they are uniform. If the effect of plurality is attained by a repetition of an original element, as in the case of the refrain and of alliteration, it can also be subject to variation and dispersion: and this is what the name *vairūpa*, 'formless' or 'multiform', proper to the third day, suggests. Elsewhere, the *viś*, which is the standard term for the masses, also has both diversity and multiplicity for its hallmark. At the time of the 'piling of the fire altar' (*agnicayana*), the many bricks which represent the *vaiśyas*, the eaten *par excellence* in opposition to the single bricks representing the *kṣatriyas*, the eaters (several 'eaten' for each 'eater'), are set in place with a *mantra* unique to each. This is in order that the *vaiśyas* while different from one another, might be weaker than the *kṣatriyas* as we are told in *ŚB* 7.7.2.2–4.

The third and last day thus corresponds to the third and last of the *varṇas* possessed of the ability to sacrifice: this is the *varṇa* of the many, a *varṇa* that is at the same time undefined and diverse, and attached to a particular place. These same qualifiers apply—dare we say it—to the host of ancestors: death transforms them into beings of the end, of the other world, of the past. They are a multitude, a *viś*. And even if we cannot positively confirm that they are themselves attached to a particular place, we should, nevertheless, point out that their approval is necessary for the living to be able to define a *kṣetra* in which to establish themselves, according to the teachings of *ŚB* 7.1.1.4.<sup>25</sup>

#### The Fourth Day: Residue, Recommencement, Transcendence

The fourth day is defined by the place it occupies in the series of ten days which constitute the body of the *dvādaśāha*: it is the place between the third and the fifth days. This is a mechanistic definition of sorts. When we consider the *rūpas* of this fourth day, we can state that there are two other means for describing it: 1) it is the first 'b' day. The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* text itself emphasizes this with insistence; 2) it is also the 'one more' which comes to be added to the group of three days which precede it, both to gather up its remains and to carry it towards something greater than itself. It is this latter aspect of the 'fourth' which we wish to place in relief here.

The divinity who 'vehiculates' the fourth day is *Vāc*. This divine individual, even if she is also language itself, is always beyond the elements that constitute her. However much one accumulates phonemes, syllables, words, verses, stanzas, metric forms and different types of composition, the Word always remains an unfulfilled quest. This is what the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* (5.3) teaches, in its own words, at the beginning of the discussion it devotes to the fourth day, in which it introduces the divinity and justifies her presence (an apparently unnecessary procedure for the divinities of the preceding days). Once the rites of the third day have been completed, the 'arrangements of the verses (*stomas*) and meter (*chandas*) are fully secured: the only remainder left behind (*ucchisyate*) is the Word'—and this is why it is made the divinity of the fourth day. Whereas the parts are three in number, the whole is at once a part that is a remainder and that is greater than its parts. This is illustrated by the name of the word itself; that is, the single syllable *vāc*, in contradistinction to the syllables, the *akṣaras*, since it is the case that *akṣara* is a trisyllabic word. 'The 'syllable' is trisyllabic (*akṣaram iti tryakṣaram*), the 'word', *vāc*, is monosyllabic (*vāg ity akṣaram*).' The fourth day is to the three preceding days what the Word is to syllables.

Whereas the word, as the 'vehicle-divinity' of the fourth day, is a standard example of the whole that must still be gained after one has secured the parts, then the *anustubh*, inasmuch as it is the meter of the same day, is an image of another reading of the remainder—the residue.

We have the good fortune of having at our disposal an origin myth which accounts for the connection, through the intermediary of the notion of refuse, between the *anuṣṭubh* and the 'fourth'. This aetiological narrative, recounted in *TS* 7.1.1.4–6, clarifies the ensemble of *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* speculations on the *dvādaśāha* rite and shows clearly that what counts in the consideration of the days of the rite is not a question of days, but rather, one of a sequence that is nothing other than a particular case of numbers in a series. 'Prajāpati desired: "May I procreate". From his mouth, he brought the measured emission of the composition in three times three verses, which resulted in the creation of Agni; the *gāyatrī* meter; the *rathantara* melody; the brahmin among men; and the male goat among domestic animals. This is why these come at the head, because they were produced from his mouth. From his chest and arms he brought the measured emission of the composition in fifteen verses, which resulted in the creation of the god Indra; the *triṣṭubh* meter; the *byhat* melody; the *rājanya* among men; and the ram among domestic animals. This is why they are strong, because they were created from strength. From his middle, he brought the measured emission of the composition in seventeen verses, which resulted in the creation of the *Viśve Devāḥ* gods; the *jagatī* meter; the *vairūpa* melody; the *vaiśya* among men; and cows among the domesticated animals. Therefore are they to be eaten, for they were created from the receptacle of food. This is why they are numerous, because these were created after the [creation of the] most numerous of the gods. From his feet, he brought the measured emission of the composition in twenty-one verses, which resulted in the creation of the *anuṣṭubh* meter, the *vairāja* melody; the *śūdra* among men; and the horse among domesticated animals. This is why these two, the horse and the *śūdra*, are subordinate to others, and why the *śūdra* is incapable of sacrificing, for he was not created subsequent to [the creation of] any god. This is why they are dependent upon their feet.' Here the fourth stage of creation is differentiated from the three that precede it through negative features: the model-divinity is absent and *śūdras* are non-autonomous and incapable of sacrificing. What is most astonishing is that the horse should be the animal associated with all of these deficiencies. The *anuṣṭubh* is thus associated with this inauspicious remainder, whereas in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* it accompanies the

glorious remainder towards which all things must tend: the Word. These two interpretations are brought together in the notion of the *vāstu*, such as it is presented to us in *SB* 1.7.3.18.<sup>26</sup>

This term, *vāstu*, of which the primary meaning is 'site', takes on the sense of 'refuse' (that which is left behind) and particularly designates the 'refusing' of the substances offered in the sacrifice. Now, this waste matter is used in the oblation called *sviṣṭakṛt*, the oblation to Agni *Sviṣṭakṛt*—'he who renders well offered' (that which was offered in the main sacrifice). This offering is a 'refuse of the sacrifice' (*vāstu vā etād yajñāsya yāt sviṣṭakṛt*), but without it the sacrifice could not be completed. Now, the meter which is associated with the *sviṣṭakṛt* rite is the *anuṣṭubh*. And says a passage in the *SB*, 'the *anuṣṭubh* is refuse,' also *sviṣṭakṛt*. This is also much the case that, in conjoining the *anuṣṭubh* meter to the *sviṣṭakṛt* oblation, 'one places refuse upon refuse' (*vāstāv evaitād vāstu dadhāti*). But this waste, as we can see, is not intended to be thrown out: it is necessary to a final operation which renders the sacrifice a completed whole.

The tenth day is not designated as '4<sup>c</sup>' in our text, since its structure is wholly different from that of the other days. It does not inaugurate a new triad, and is moreover a day that is added, not to three days, but to three triads. It nevertheless exhibits certain features of the 'remainder' which thus relate it to the fourth day: this tenth day, described as triumphal celebration of Śrī, bears the name of *avivākya*, 'the blameless'. This is to say that the participants are obliged to not correct (and thereby to not notice) errors that might be committed in the course of the rite. On the other hand, a prayer is recited which is meant to transfer upon Prajāpati, in a single lump, all of the imperfections one might be guilty of having committed: 'that which we have done here which is lacking, and that which we have done that is excessive, may that go to our father Prajāpati'.<sup>27</sup> There is every reason to believe here that the errors so erased are those which may have been committed, by excess or by default, throughout the course of the entire rite: and that which is *ūna* or *atirikta*, as we have seen, is an index of the fourth day.

But the ordering of the texts to be recited on this day follows an entirely different schema, and our *Brāhmaṇa* does not proceed, as it had for the preceding days, with an enumeration of 'vehicles'

and *rūpas*. Up to this point the *Brāhmaṇa* has only been considered with the texts to be recited on a given day. Here in the description devoted to the tenth day, we find mention of various acts, of the comings and goings of the officiants around the *āhavanīya* fire, of the movements they make while bearing together an *udumbara* branch by way of showing their intention to conquer together the energy and essence of the sacrifice, and of the slithering motion that accompanies their recitation of the stanzas in honour of the queen of snakes, etc. Acts highlight words here: the hour, or rather the day, belongs either to the restrained, the retained word, or to the directly explicit word (the hymns and *mantras*, here, are not simply mentioned by their *incipit*, but given in their complete text), the act becomes nothing more than a means to miming what the words say. The connection between the two levels of the rite is an immediate one: they signify one another. In the case of the first nine days, on the contrary, the *mantras*, rather than explaining the meaning of an act or being illustrated by a series of gestures, were those elements which bore the trace of a number or (most often) of the representations connected to that number.

The first nine days on the one hand, and the tenth day on the other, bring to our notice two contrasting typologies in the relations obtaining between the textual and extra-textual portions of a rite. These are two extreme forms: one most often finds oneself somewhere between the two. This notwithstanding, what is most clear, in every case, is that the *raison d'être* of the *Brāhmaṇas* is not to explain *mantras*, but rather, to interpret rites. The commentaries they are induced to make on the *mantras* are so many means to throwing light on the relationship that these bear to the rite in which they are included; in the final analysis, however, they are meant to throw even greater light on the rite itself. Hymns are fragmented into *mantras*, and it is often the case that *mantras* only hold one's attention because they contain, regardless of the general meaning of the utterance, a certain word, morpheme or syllable. Thus, the *mantra* of *RS* 7.32.10 is used for the third day because it contains a form of the verb *pary-ĀS*, which is one of the *rūpas* of this day; it happens, however, that in this hymn, this form in fact only appears accompanied by a negation! Disjointed

and dispersed, the *mantras* cited by the *Brāhmaṇas* are much more a collection of divisible and mobile elements than they are a textual continuum whose meaning is grounded in sequences of words and phrases. The contrast is made complete with the structure of the rite, whose segments are joined together and arranged in time according to a fixed order.

Louis Renou saw in this treatment, forced by the ritual upon the hymns of the Vedic *Samhitā*, one of the causes for the strange fate that has befallen the Veda in India: to be venerated and poorly known. 'The breakup of the old hymns into formulae and even fragments in turn impaled, as so many inert bodies, within the texture of the liturgy . . . '28 goes hand in hand with 'the rarity and insufficiency of commentaries'. But the damage caused by the absence of a veritable interpretive work bearing on the meaning of the Vedic texts is in part compensated by the attention paid to their form: that is, not only the attention paid to words as forms of phonic material, but also that given to the *rūpas*, which the ritualists' analyses uncovered in words and in the arrangements of words. The violence done to the text by the rite, favoured and incited the birth of certain of the disciplines that were the glory of ancient India: these include, in our opinion, that of Poetics.

#### APPENDIX

According to Oldenberg (1919:47), the salutary formulas addressed to the sequence of numbers in the Horse Sacrifice (*ékasmai svāhā . . .* 'salutation to one . . .', etc., *VS* 22.34, readapted and developed in *ŚB* 13.2.1–5) should not lead one to suppose that these numbers were 'hypostasized' or that they were objects of speculation as such. These exclamations, he says, are not directed towards a 'one' or a 'two' taken in isolation, but rather, 'all of the entities having the property of being represented in the number one or the number two' ('*alle die Wesenheiten, welche die Eigenschaft haben in der Einzahl oder Zweizahl da zusein*'). The version given in *TS* 7.2.11–20 does not agree with this interpretation. In contrast to the *VS* and the *ŚB*, which, in fact, do no more than to prescribe this formula for the sequence of numbers from one to one hundred and one (and the *ŚB* insists on the necessity of progressing by one unit at a time, and

of stopping at 101, 'for hundred is the number of years in the life of a man, and one is his own self'), the *TS* gives several lists in succession: a) the sequence of integers up to nineteen; then by tens up to ninety-nine, and ending with hundred and two hundred; b) the series of odd numbers up to nineteen, followed by the same operations as in the preceding set; c) the series of even numbers up to twenty, then ninety-eight and hundred; d) the odd numbers from three to seven; e) from four to 4 up to twenty, then ninety-eight and hundred; f) tens up to hundred; g) twenties up to hundred; h) fifty, hundred, and then hundreds up to thousand; and i) powers of ten, up to  $10^{12}$ . It is difficult to not see here a kind of wonder with regard to numbers as such and to their enumeration. In the context of the *dvādasāha*, the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* offers an example of this tendency to consider and celebrate the number in its own right, an example which stands out in highest relief when we contrast the procedure of the *Aitareya* to that of the *Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa*. For the latter, the period of six days, in the rite, is a symbol of the six seasons of the year. For the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, the number is not the symbol of something else; it is the number itself, on the contrary, which is symbolized, and thereby glorified. So it is that we find, in this particular case of the *dvādasāha* as is treated in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*, a construction that differs from that which one finds almost everywhere else in the *Brāhmaṇas*: This is the practice of generating *sampads*, 'numerical congruences', to borrow Minard's (1949: §§ 201–3) expression: two objects are analogous and may symbolize and stand for one another, because both are composed of the same number of parts.

## By Heart: Notes on the Interplay between Love and Memory in Ancient Indian Poetry

The Eros of Hindu mythology bears the name, as we know, of Kāma. In literary texts, however, he is also very frequently called Smara. These two terms are not exact equivalents in Sanskrit: taken as a common noun, *kāma* in fact designates every sort of desire, whereas *smara* is only applied to amorous desire. The celebrated *Kāma Sūtra* ('Collection of) Aphorisms on *kāma*'), is an exposition of the science of love, *kāmasāstra*. Because, however, it deals specifically with amorous desire, *kāmasāstra* might very well have been named *smarasāstra*. A few examples of compound nouns beginning in *smara-* will give an idea of the nature of the erotic and affected vocabulary of learned Sanskrit poetry, as well as of the word-play in which these collections of words indulged. *Smara-kūpaka*, 'love's little well', is a means by which to name the female sexual organ, as are *smara-gṛha*, 'house of love', and *smara-mandira*, 'temple of love'. *Smara-chattra*, 'umbrella of love', designates the clitoris, while *smara-dhvaja*, the 'banner of love', is a word which, when declined in the neuter gender, signifies the female organ; in the masculine, it stands for the male organ (*smara-stambha*, 'pillar of love', is also a poetic name for the phallus). Lastly, *smara-āṅkuśa*, 'the elephant goad of love', is the fingernail, for when the pleasure of two lovers' mutual embrace reaches its height, they scratch one another.

It happens however, that the common noun *smara* has a meaning that is, at first blush, a wholly different one: *smara* is also memory. More to the point, *smara* already clearly bears the two-fold meaning of 'love' and 'memory' in the Vedic texts, which form the most ancient body of Sanskrit literature.<sup>1</sup> In the classical

language, *smara* in the sense of 'memory' yields two other derivatives of the same radical, *smṛti* and *smaraṇa*. Yet, throughout the history of the Sanskrit language, a lively tradition maintains that *smara*, 'love, desire', is inseparable from *smara*, 'memory', even if the latter usage has fallen nearly entirely out of vogue (it nevertheless remains in the compound *jāti-smara*, 'recollection of past lives'). The Indian lexicographers do not hesitate to interpret *smara*, 'love', as a derivative of the verbal root *SMAR*, 'to remember', and modern linguists have no grounds on which to reject this analysis. The poets, as we shall see, make this phonic similarity between *smara* and the derivatives of the verb *SMAR* the stuff of every sort of play on words,<sup>2</sup> double entendre, and alliteration, such that Love and Memory come to be treated as mutually evocative themes which combine in such a way as to be variations on each other.

It is nevertheless possible here for us to evoke a 'psychological' problem, a problem linked to matters of etymology. How ought we to interpret this two-pronged meaning of *smara*? If it is impossible for us to distribute these two *signifiés* diachronically (since both senses of *smara* are found in the Vedic language), should we not at least attempt to arrange them hierarchically?

Two approaches are possible *a priori*. Let us attempt to trace these, as we take note of shifts in meaning: 1) The first approach would hold that the original semantic content is 'memory'. Love is a particular form or a secondary effect of memory. I remember X in a loving mode. My way of remembering X is to love her. If I love X, it is because I remember her. In other words, in order for me to love X, it is necessary that the thought that her presence or absence awakens in me now be accompanied by the recollection of her past proximity to me, and that I be prepossessed of the feeling that X has a place in my past. If X were not a recollection from the outset, if her nearness to me were entirely a thing of the present, I could not love her. Love is a consequence of memory, and has memory for its necessary condition. To be sure, this is not a matter of familiarization, of the necessity of getting to know someone. It is not a case of 'I have known X for a long time, and that is why I love her', but rather, 'I once knew X, and it is this recollection I have that makes me love her.'

2) One may work in the opposite direction. The starting point

here would be *smara*, 'love', or, in a more general sense, 'attachment'. The formula here is: I love X, I think of her all the time, and now that X is not near me, I turn to the past to feel the feelings I felt when X was here. I have X in my memory. Memory is determined by love. A being or an object could not occupy my memory were I not bound to it by some form of attachment.

In those rare cases in which the Indian lexicographers take it upon themselves to elucidate the way in which these meanings fit together, they of course lean towards the former of the two lines of reasoning we have sketched out here. It is the verbal root that bears the primary meaning, which is also the broadest meaning. From *SMAR*, 'to remember', is derived *smara*, which is 'recollection', with a nuance of 'love'—which nuance, we must imagine, comes to wholly mask the primal tonality. *Smara* is that which awakens in us the remembrance of things . . . desired. We may see that this nuance only works when the verb itself signifies—more than simply 'to remember'—something of the order of 'to concentrate one's thoughts upon an object (which is not materially present), with intensity'. And so we find ourselves drawn, surreptitiously, towards the second of our two hypotheses. An example of such a gloss may be found in the play entitled *Mudrārākṣasa*,<sup>3</sup> in which a minister who has helped the new king to take the throne after a violent palace coup, now wishes to gain a sampling of public opinion. He asks a resident of the capital: 'Do the people still remember the fallen king?' The commentator explains, referring, moreover, to a well-known treatise on grammar, that the import of the verb *SMAR* here is 'to be wedded in spirit'. Here, 'remembrance' is recollection mingled with nostalgic expectation, and the question means: 'Do the people think lovingly of their past king?' It is often the case that the verb *SMAR* is to be translated, in a general sense, as 'to contemplate an object or a being'; this is especially the case in mystic or devotional texts which enjoin the devotee to 'remember' the divinity—that is, in fact, to concentrate his or her thought on it.<sup>4</sup> Already in the Veda, we find the statement that one does not see a god, but, rather, remembers him; one evokes him mentally and has an inner vision of him. On the other hand, however, it is necessary, if this image is to emerge or commend itself to a mental construction, that one have a pre-existing model in mind, the memory of a perception,



or at least a recollection of the rules to be followed for the realization of such a construction. In fact, the Veda teaches that in days of yore the gods let men see them when they came to the sacrifice.<sup>5</sup> In this perspective, then, love is a particular application of memory (*smara* is 'derived' from *SMAR*), but such a process can only be possible when memory itself implies, at all time, a desire for that which is remembered.

Poets have never had to answer questions of the simplistic order of those asked by historians of words, and have thus been able to avoid entrapment in the latter's circles of reason. We should nevertheless note that they have always had a penchant for the notion that love draws its power of seduction from the fact that it is, at the same time, a recollection of love. *Smarasi Smara . . .* 'You Remember, Love . . .', the alliterative construction which opens a passage of Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhava*, is a symbol of sorts for all poetic reflection on the subject of love as remembrance. Love is itself called upon to recall that which it once was, in a formula that leads one to understand that it only is when it has been. It is under the heading of *smaraṇa*, 'recollection', that the theoreticians place one of the 'ornaments' of lyric and dramatic poetry:<sup>6</sup> there is *smaraṇa*, in the technical sense of the word, when I am led to recall, through my present perception of a similar object, an object belonging to my past experience (such is the general opinion: according to certain authors, however, such a recollection may constitute an 'ornament' even when it is not triggered by a present perception). In fact, this poetic figure of speech is most often applied to nostalgic evocations of past loves. Are we to understand, then, that the budding of love, love at first sight, the wonder of discovering another person, or the delight of sensual pleasure here and now are themes the Sanskrit poets disdain? Certainly not—but these moments without a past can only be most fully savoured when one's thoughts hearken back to them. Let us take the example of Kālidāsa's *Sakuntalā*, a drama brilliantly analysed by Barbara Stoler Miller in her *Theater of Memory*.<sup>7</sup> The opening scene describes the first encounter of king Duśyanta with the play's eponymous heroine. Duśyanta and Śakuntalā are immediately smitten with love for one another, and do not delay in celebrating a marriage 'in the Gandharva style' (that is, a union whose sole motive and bond is mutual consent). Their love, therefore, has not yet reached

the stage of reawakening past memories. But this scene is little more than a prologue of sorts. The true dramatic subject is Duśyanta's amnesia. Abruptly obliged to take leave of his beloved, he entrusts her with a ring which she is to show him in order that he might recognize her when the time comes for her to rejoin him at his palace. As the result of a curse, the king loses his memory of their brief encounter and Śakuntalā, as luck would have it, loses the ring. Confused, humiliated, and indignant at not being recognized, she disappears. The play concludes with a forceful depiction of the return of the power of memory: the curse becomes inactive, a fisherman finds the ring, and the king becomes obsessed with love, a love that is a gift of memory. A hallucinatory memory is this, with the past being experienced as if it were the present; and with this confusion propagating, by contagion as it were, the perception of an image of reality as reality itself. Indeed, thinking back to the moment in which he first beheld his beloved, Duśyanta calms his nostalgia by painting a picture of the scene: he sees, in the hermitage into which a hunting expedition had led him, a frightened Śakuntalā attempting to ward off an angry bee. As he paints the bee, the king becomes so infuriated at the insect that, wishing to crush it, he destroys the painting itself.

Love as the recollection of love is a notion that the poets also glean from mythology. Reduced to its essential structure, the myth of Kāma-Srama can be summed up in a few words. The god Śiva, distracted from his yogic meditation, disturbed in his ascetic concentration by the shafts of Love, turns the terrifying fire of his gaze against Love, reducing him to ashes. Thenceforth, Love is bodiless, *ān-āṅga*. The Purāṇic tradition adds to this core myth a happy ending that is not without reason. Śiva pardons Smara, who then becomes endowed with an immaterial body, a body that is all the more efficacious for the fact that it is imperceptible. Love will go on being Love, and will go on piercing the hearts of gods and mortals with his flowered shafts. But the high tradition of erudite poetry (*kāvya*), even as it endeavoured to put the polysemia of Smara to effective use, also explored, tirelessly, the paradoxes embedded in the core myth, from which it drew the following erotic dialectic: that which is present in Love is the memory, as well as the consequences, of its destruction—and thereby its absence. Deprived of a body, it is reduced to nought other than the

very flame that consumed it. An archer transformed into his own burning arrow, he inflames the bodies of lovers and draws them into the burning void that is now his very substance.

This theme is developed with a virtuosity which combines pedantry with vibrant enthusiasm in Harṣa's vast poem entitled the *Naiṣadhacarita*, an expansion of the renowned and touching story, found in the *Mahābhārata*, of the loves of Nala and Damayantī. At two points in his narrative does Harṣa seize the moment to wax eloquent on Love as a recollection of the absence of Love. The first of these is Damayantī's sorrow when she is separated from her beloved. She bemoans her fate, but does not blame fate itself or the events that have distanced Nala from her, but rather blames Love itself, the structure of Love, and the negation contained within it. Having become feverish in the pain of separation, she now inveighs against Smara who has become a part of her own heart. 'Alas,' she says to him, 'it is now in my very heart that you dwell, O thou who have no body! Why then, do you set it afire? Once you have yourself burned—it will take but a moment—the fuel that is you, that is me, where will you be then, O hopeless one, you who behave like he who eats the offerings?'<sup>8</sup>

Since it is impossible for me to render these verses and those I will cite below with a translation that is at the same time exact and readable, one which takes account of both literary allusions and double meanings, I resign myself here to giving a gloss of them. 'You dwell in my heart' does not mean that you are placed on my heart like this or that object, but that your spatial substance is found in my heart. If you are capable of inhabiting space, even though you have no body, you owe that possibility to the existence of my heart. This idea is taken up again in a later passage: Once you have consumed my heart, which is your place, I will not ask you 'Where will you go?' but rather, 'Where will you find a place for yourself?' (A rhetorical question—as if Damayantī were the sole woman capable of burning with love! But Smara's case is the same as that of other gods: although they are omnipresent, mortals invoke them as if they were standing before them with their whole person). Elsewhere, the passage plays on the words *hatāśa* and *butāśa*, translated as 'hopeless one' and 'he who eats offerings', respectively. *Hatāśa*, composed of *hata*, 'slain' and *āśā*, 'hope', means 'he whose hope has been slain', but may also be understood

as 'he who slays hope': thus, 'hopeless/destroyer of hope'. *Hutāśa*, composed of *huta*, 'offering' and *āśa*, 'devourer', is an epithet of Fire, Agni. One must constantly feed the sacrificial fire with firewood, as well as with oblations (clarified butter, etc.). And, it is with the fire of his angry gaze that Śiva destroys Smara's body. Love thus behaves in the same way as did the god who was the instrument of his destruction.

The other passage describes their reunion. Never, during the time Nala has been away from her, has Damayantī ceased thinking of her beloved: in other words, her heart has been filled with Love. She has wrought a mental image of this consuming parasite, an image that has, to be sure, all of Nala's features, but she seems to do so unawares. So it is that when Nala finally does return in the flesh, she feels a thrill, but does not know whether it is Love or her own true love who is standing before her. The poet addresses Nala, explaining Damayantī's mental state as he comforts him: 'Your friend is wondering to herself: which one is Smara, and which one is you? It is you she wants, it is you her heart chooses; either that or she chooses both of you.'<sup>9</sup> And so the commentator explains: Damayantī holds both of you in her heart, but you are indistinguishable from one another. If she knew how to choose, it is you she would choose. But it is like when you have a pearl and a glass bead before you: you don't choose, but hold onto them both. It is for you, in order to have you, that she also holds onto Love; don't think she is holding you in order to have Love. Here, says the poet, addressing Nala, is what has happened: Love has become, in your friend's mind, nothing other than the reflection of the reality that is you. How else could there be a resemblance between you and him, since he is bodiless? To which the commentator adds: the image of Love that is in Damayantī's mind is the vision of a reflection (*praticchāyā*, *pratibimba*). It is not an image (*bimba*) of the object itself. Incorporeal, Love cannot produce an image; if there is an image (which is the case), this can only be the image of a corporeal being. And if there is a resemblance between this image and yourself, it is wrong to conclude that this is due to some resemblance between two different originals; rather, this image of Love has you yourself as its source.

In order to diminish Damayantī's doubts, in order to say to her 'I am not Love, I am your own true love', in order to make her

recognize him, Nala evokes the past they share in common, the tender secrets of their passion, their own special way of loving, the words they have spoken—words whose significance is ultimately erotic, and which Damayantī blushes over when she grasps their hidden sense . . . Nala expresses himself in a series of verses, every one of which includes the words ‘remember when . . .’ or ‘you can’t have forgotten . . .’ In each case it is, of course, a form of the root *SMAR* that appears, playing on the noun *smara* which itself appears in the same or a contiguous verse.<sup>10</sup>

There is nevertheless one verse which constitutes an interesting exception in that while it neither contains the word *smara* nor any form of the verb *SMAR*, it does include the expression *jāgarti saṃskārah*, ‘the latent impression awakens . . .’ The term *saṃskāra*<sup>11</sup> designates the trace left behind by a received impression, an ineffable trace which contributes to structuring of the person, and which only manifests itself in the effects it has upon the psyche and the destiny of the individual. Remembrance consists of returning through a sequence of causes and effects, and of bringing these traces to consciousness. But the theoreticians of poetics, if no one else, distinguish between a recollection that is still accessible and prepared to become present to consciousness (such is the case when something I perceive reminds me of something perceived in a prior time), and a *saṃskāra* which must be awakened through an effort of concentration and a return to oneself.<sup>12</sup> This effort is not a purely cognitive one, nor does it issue in pristine knowledge: by reactualizing a first impression, one is brought not only to see the past, but also to live it as if it were the present. When Nala asks Damayantī if his evocation of the past has awakened the *saṃskāra* that will trigger her memory, he invites her to relive the impressions he has been describing. What is amazing here is that this attempt to retrieve a past that is, after all, quite recent and capable of being put into words (Nala’s eloquence is proof of this) seems to necessitate the same kind of exploratory work and require the same vocabulary as would an effort to reach the deepest levels of the psyche. Which leads us to state, as well, that the past, so evoked, is a timeless one.

The primary reason for which Indian interpretation of memory does not preoccupy itself with the consecutiveness or layering of memories is that it considers each memory to be an autonomous

whole. In other words, there is a faculty of remembrance (*smṛti*), and there are individual recollections (*smaraṇas*), but it is in vain that one seeks to find any notion of recollections linking up with one another, or of their being distributed chronologically so as to form constellations which, while shifting, remain coherent and integral—in short, any notion of the existence of a world of memory. To sum up the maturation times of the infinity of received impressions is out of the question here. Far from delineating the contours of a person’s life, recollections transform the boundaries of personhood into a nebulous region, into a circle without closure. Popular wisdom<sup>13</sup> is correct, to be sure, when it maintains that I cannot remember the things another person has seen; and in this sense, my memories belong to me alone. But who am I? If I have mastered the proper techniques, and especially if I have gained the necessary merits, I can, as we know, recall my past lives. It is only exceptional beings who can accede to such a *jātismara*, but it is legitimately possible for all humans to take up one or another of the paths that lead to it, and texts of such limited mystic bent as the *Laws of Manu* or the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* discuss these paths in exact terms. Once I can recall them, these former lives belong to me. They are me, so long as I do not possess them (even though they possess me), so long as they are outside my field of consciousness.<sup>14</sup> How, under these conditions, can a life be circumscribed or become the subject of a story?

Let us cite Barbara Stoler Miller once again, in her discussion of the role of memory in Kālidāsa’s dramaturgy: ‘Memory has the power to shatter the logic of mundane life. It makes the invisible visible, abolishes distances, and *reverses chronologies* . . . Abhinavagupta explains what Kālidāsa means by memory. It is not a discursive recollection of past events, but, rather, an intuiting of the past which transcends personal experience and introduces us into the universe of imagination that beauty evokes.’ Thus conceived, memory is not our capacity to grasp the past as the past, but rather, that which comes to superimpose a vision of the past upon our perception of the present: memory is the forgetting of the present. It is upon the obscure interactions between recollection and desire that an aesthetics of memory is thus founded; and what an attractive image this is, of a man who remembers love and who lives love as a perpetual past in which the temporal limits of his being

are dissolved! It creates, for those who contemplate it, an emotion whose value lies in the fact that it allows everyone (in communion with everyone else) to experience, in the deepest part of himself, an escape from the trammels of time which is also an escape from the trammels of self.

It would appear that an analogous process—of the deconstruction of time—comes into play in a form of memory that is found at the opposite end of the spectrum from this memory-love. This is the memorization of texts as such has been practiced and imagined in India. For Indians, one does not know a text unless one knows it by heart, or, to use the Sanskrit expression, unless 'one has it in his throat' (and knowledge is only knowledge if it is condensed into a body of texts). A famous saying puts the matter clearly: 'That knowledge (one thinks one possesses and) which is contained in a book, and that money (one thinks one has and) which is in another person's hand, when the time comes to use it, is not knowledge, and is not money.'<sup>15</sup> Although the notion of prohibiting the written word is nowhere broached, opening a book always constitutes a next-best strategy, or last resort. A number of refined techniques are taught for the learning of the sacred texts (the Vedas), which one must know to perfection down to the most minute rules of accentuation, rules that vary widely from those employed in classical Sanskrit. One trains at dismantling the text by reciting it backwards, by shattering its verse sequences or verse elements and then reconstituting them, weaving them together, in a thousand different ways, a thousand different weaves. In this way, one avoids being influenced by the text's meaning, and thus guards against the temptation to replace a word by its synonym. So it is that the text becomes truly incorporated into the person, and all the more so for the fact that the teacher, in order that he may 'get the text into his student's head', moves that head forwards, backward, and, sideways, with violent movements that follow the rhythm of recitation. In this sense, having a text 'in one's throat' is to be contrasted with the German expression of knowing 'externally' (*auswendig*), even if both designate knowing 'by heart'. But let it be noted here that a text, once learned by heart, becomes timeless. It cannot be consulted, leafed through, put aside and taken up again like a book. It asserts its unmoving presence and ripens in the mind that welcomes it

without that mind being aware of the stages of its maturation. Knowledge incorporated in this way, moreover, erases the perception of that which connects the text to the world of extra-textual data out of which it originally arose. Such is, at least, the situation in India where the very contents of texts are generally devoid of any reference to the actual conditions of their production. In the same way that recollection-desire and reminiscence-recognition are the exact opposites of a biographical memory, so the pre-eminence of knowledge by heart bars tradition from being transformed into history.

Looking at the Indian way of contemplating the relationship between memory and the sacred text in this way, we cannot help but contrast it with the Jewish concept. In both cases we are told that one must learn, one must remember, and one must not allow for the slightest omission or error; the good and the true are to be found in these words. But what the Torah demands is that we also recall the nature of the event of the revelation itself; and the account of this event, and its interconnections with that which has preceded and that which follows are part of the revealed text itself. It goes without saying that one must remember the law and learn the text in which it was formulated. But that which the Torah stresses most, that which is more than simply the meta-rule for every rule, and that on the subject of which it pronounces its call to memory, is the 'historical' form which the relationship—between god, the text, and the people—took at the moment in which revelation occurred: do not forget how this occurred; do not forget what, and do not forget whom, it concerns.

What then, of Vedic revelation? The Veda itself is silent on the circumstances under which this or that 'seer' had a vision of this or that portion or version of the text. Most often, when they wish to explain the origin of a rite or a prayer formula, such as these are taught in the Vedas, the Vedic texts of the following period (that of the *Brāhmanas*) refer to the endless battle waged, in the timeless past of myth, between the gods and the demons. When the battle was yet indecisive, and the gods were even in danger of being defeated, they discovered a certain form of sacrifice or series of *mantras* through which they could win the day. This war does indeed have a beginning, which is nothing other than Creation (at this stage in Indian thought, the cosmos, with all the beings

who populate it, are the product of a genesis, even if the Veda itself is uncreated), but it is without issue or ending. Whenever some phenomenon needs to be explained, it is this same schematic account that is evoked, without there ever being a chronology or cumulative effect to its occurrences. The same is the case with the way in which humans come to know the Veda. According to brahmanic tradition, the Veda revealed itself to the *ṛsis*, who were men; they 'saw' it, and transmitted it in the form of words. But is this revelation an event, in the proper sense of the term? It consists of a juxtaposition of partial 'visions'. Their concatenation is not a temporal sequence and is without any true starting point. People live in time, the *ṛsis* were mortals, but the Vedic revelation given to them explodes the strictures of human time. None of this is the stuff of narrative. And if it were the case that humanity had to discover the Veda, this in no way implies that a humanity existed prior to the Veda whose memory it is bound to recall.

## Notes

### Notes to Introduction

1. J.-P. Vernant 1987: 85f.
2. *Subhāṣitaratnaśoḥa*, no. 1713:  
*kavayah kālīdāsādyāḥ kavayo vāyam api amī*  
*parvate paramāṇau ca vastutvam ubhāyor api.*

### Notes to Chapter 1

1. Cf. Dumont 1966: 63f. and 168f.
2. *BhG* 17.10: *yāṭayāmaṃ gatarasam pūti paryuṣitam ca yat / ucchiṣṭam api cāmedhyam bhojanam tāmasapriyam.* 'Spoiled food, food that has lost its flavour, that smells bad or that is rancid, leftovers, that which is improper to the sacrifice—such are the foods that appeal to the being characterized by *tamas*'.
3. *yad ucchiṣṭam abhojyam yad vā duṣcaritam mama / sarvam punantu mām apo 'satām ca pratigrahaṇam.*
4. *madhumānsāñjanocchiṣṭasuktastriprāṇihimsanam / bhāskarālokanāṣṭiparivādādi varjayet.*  
The *Mitākṣarā* specifies that it is at the moment that the sun rises or sets that one must not look at it.
5. *pretaviṇmūtrocchiṣṭagrahaṇam āhitasya . . .*
6. *nānumānena bhāikṣam ucchiṣṭam dr̥ṣṭasrutābhyām tu.*
7. *vidyayā ca vidyānām (parivādākrośān varjayet).* Commentary: *taittirīyakam ucchiṣṭasākhā.* (On the manner in which the YV was 'emitted', cf. *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 3.5.1f.).
8. *ĀpDhŚ* 1.15.23: *mūtram kṛtvā puriṣam vā mūtrapuriṣalepān annalepān ucchiṣṭalepān retasā ca ye lepās tām prakṣālyā pādau cācamya prayato bhavati.* (See also *Manu* 5.138).
9. *Manu* 4.151: *dūrād āvasathān mūtram dūrāt pādāvasecanam / ucchiṣṭānnaniṣekam ca dūrād eva samācāret.*
10. (36) *bhuktvā svayam amatram prakṣālayita*; (37) *na cocchiṣṭam kuryāt*; (38) *asaktau bhīmau nikhanet*; (39) *apsu vā praveṣayet*; (40) *āryāya vā paryavadadhyāt* (comm: *āryas traivarnikas tasmā anupanitāya . . . sarvam*

*ekasmin pātre vadhāya tatsamīpe bhūmau sthāpayet*; (41) *antardhine vā śūdrāya*.

11. *nocchiṣṭam kasya cid dadyāt*.
12. *anena sāmānyanīśedhena śūdrasyāpy ucchiṣṭadānanīśedhe siddhe . . .* In spite of this, the case is not a clear one. It may be that this prohibition is made with regard to a *śūdra* not in the service of the eater. Such is the interpretation given by Haradatta on *Āpastamba* 1.31.22: *nābrāhmaṇa-yocchiṣṭam prayacchet*, 'one should not give leftovers to one who is not a brahmin'. This applies, he says, to *anāśrita śūdra*. It is permissible for leftovers to be given to *śūdras* in the service of the eater (*āśrita*), but only on the condition that they be polluted to a superlative degree, by mixing them together with food stuck between one's teeth and pried out with one's fingernail: *ĀpDhS* 1.31.22: *yadi prayacched dantān skuptvā, tasminn ādhāya prayacchet*. It is Haradatta who adds the stipulation *nakhena*. (The same reasoning is made by Kullūka, on the subject of *Manu* 10.125). On this matter, see the summary and rather confused discussions of Kane 2:2, 769. The eater, it would seem, hesitates between the fear of polluting and the fear of creating a dangerous intimacy between himself and the person to whom he would give his scraps to eat. Should we consider this to be an echo of the Vedic idea that one is at the mercy of one's enemy if he has eaten the leftovers from one's meal? Cf. Caland 1900: 164, cited in Minard 1949: § 226b.

The *Kāṭikāvṛtti* ad Pāṇini 4.2.14 distinguishes between three sorts of leftovers (*bhuktocchiṣṭa*), classified according to the vessels in which they are found: 1) *śārāva* leftovers, which remain in the receptacle in which the meal was eaten; 2) *māllaka* leftovers, in the vessels in which rice was served; and 3) *kārpara*, leftovers in the pots in which the meal was cooked. V.S. Agrawala, who cites this passage (1963: 115f.) adds that *śārāva* leftovers could be eaten by sweepers ('as it is up to this day'), *māllaka* leftovers by the family barber, and *kārpara* leftovers by cooks.

13. *VāsDhS* 14.21.
14. *udake madhyarātre ca viṅmūtrasya visarjane | ucchiṣṭaḥ śrāddhabhuk caiva manasāpi na cintayet*.
15. *na spr̥ṣet pāṇinocchiṣṭo vipro gobrāhmaṇānalān*.  
On the uses of the term *ucchiṣṭa*—'remains of food', 'eating vessel that has not been cleaned after one has eaten from it', 'a person who has not done his ablutions after having eaten (or urinated or defecated)', cf. Kane 2:1, 332, n. 805, glossing Medhātithi ad *Manu* 6.80. Yājñavalkya states in even more explicit terms (1.155): *gobrāhmaṇānalānnāni nocchiṣṭo na padā spr̥ṣet*. 'One should neither touch a cow, a brahmin, fire or food, when one is *ucchiṣṭa*, nor with the foot'. As for foods, this especially concerns *pakva*, 'cooked food, says the *Mitākṣarā*, which adds: even if one is not *ucchiṣṭa*, one must not touch a cow, etc. with one's foot.
16. *ĀpDhS* 1.16.11: *na śmaśrubhir ucchiṣṭo bhavaty antarāsyē sadbhīr yāvan na hastenopaspr̥ṣāti*. To which Haradatta gives the highly pertinent

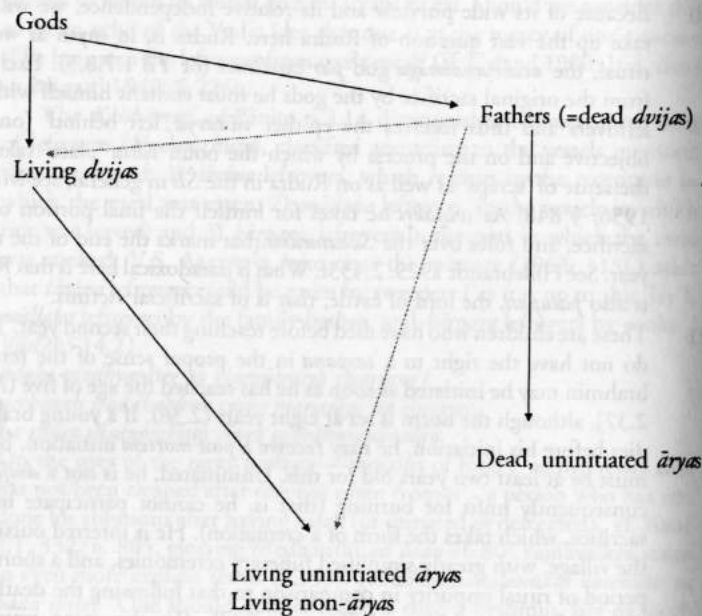
commentary: the *sūtra* shows that any other foreign substance introduced into the mouth at the same time as some foodstuff transforms the latter into a leftover and renders the eater impure.

17. *Manu* 5.142. *sp̥ṣānti bindavah pādau yā ācāmayataḥ parān | bhaumikais te samā jñeyā na tair aprayato bhavet*.
18. Cf. for example, the Bengali Bibhuti Bhusan Banerji's novel, *Pather Panchali*, p. 63 of the French translation: 'Sebajou pushed his son Sunil forward by the shoulders, saying: "Go, go eat on the porch. There are offerings to the gods here. If anything were to fall out of your mouth on them, everything would be made impure".'
19. *ŚB* 2.6.1.48. *tād dhatke havirucchiṣṭam anusāmasyanti tād u tāthā nā kuryād dhutocchiṣṭam vā etān nēd dhutocchiṣṭam agnau juhavāmēti tāsmād apō vaivābhya vahareyuh pr̥śnīyur vā*. 'And here some people throw the remains of the oblation (into the fire). But one should not do this, because these are the leftovers of what was offered. And in order to avoid making an offering into the fire of the leftovers of an oblation, one should rather carry them off to throw them into the water, or else one should eat them'.
20. Because of its wide purview and its relative independence, we will not take up the vast question of Rudra here. Rudra is, in myth as well as ritual, the *ucchēṣaṇabhāga* god *par excellence* (of *TB* 1.7.8.5). Excluded from the original sacrifice by the gods he must content himself with the leftovers and thus receives the epithet *vāstavyā* 'left behind' (on this objective and on the process by which the noun *vāstu* 'place' takes on the sense of 'scraps' as well as on Rudra in the *ŚB* in general, see Minard 1956: § 848. As *sviṣṭakṛt* he takes for himself the final portion of the sacrifice, and rules over the *Sākamedha* that marks the end of the ritual year. See Hillebrandt 1929: 2.433f. What is paradoxical here is that Rudra is also *paśupati*, the lord of cattle, that is of sacrificial victims.
21. These are children who have died before reaching their second year. These do not have the right to a *tarpaṇa* in the proper sense of the term. A brahmin may be initiated as soon as he has reached the age of five (*Manu* 2.37), although the norm is set at eight years (2.36). If a young brahmin dies before his initiation, he may receive a *post mortem* initiation, but he must be at least two years old for this. Uninitiated, he is not a *dvija* and consequently unfit for burning (that is, he cannot participate in this sacrifice, which takes the form of a cremation). He is interred outside of the village, with greatly simplified funerary ceremonies, and a shortened period of ritual impurity in comparison to that following the death of a *dvija* (cf. *Manu* 5.69 and Kane 4: 227). (In the same way, the *samnyāsin* who, in the course of the ceremonies marking his initiation into a life of solitude, solemnly gives up his sacrificial fire, excludes himself, in a certain sense, from the society of *dvijas* and must himself also be interred: cf. Kane 4: 231). It is thus to these uninitiated *āryas* that

the remains of the *śrāddha* meal belong: the fool who gives them to a *śūdra* is pitched headlong into hell (*Manu* 3.249).

22. In the Smṛti literature, the subject is generally the brahmin, or at least the *dvija*. So it is that we are taught the ways in which the *dvija* is to behave with uninitiated persons; but it is most often only by inference, in a way, that we are able to know the proper comportment of uninitiated persons with regard to *dvijas* (as for the relationships that should obtain between the various categories of the uninitiated, the Smṛti texts say, for all intents and purposes, nothing at all). *Āpastamba* (2.9.7) clearly indicates that an uninitiated person may not eat a woman's or an uninitiated man's leftovers, but this is but a slight indication of the possibility of an uninitiated person's possible obligation to eat an initiated person's leftovers. Combined with the (rather imprecise) rules we discussed above, concerning a *brahmacārin's* leftovers, this *sūtra* permits us to present a complete configuration of such rules (figure 1):

Figure 1



(The arrows indicate the transfer of remains, that is, the transformation of that which is a remainder for an original group into edible food for the receiving group. The dotted lines indicate an occasional or problematical

procedure. We use a dotted line to connect the Fathers with living *dvijas* in order to account for the fact that while the brahmins who are invited to *śrāddha* meals take part in these as representatives of the Fathers, they are also there as agents of the sacrifice, permitting the sacrificer to retain, for personal use, a portion of the food prepared on this occasion. See below, note 43). This sequence, as it is set forth in *Manu*, combines two distinct rites, which may in fact be connected to one another: the first is a *śrauta* ceremony called *pinḍapitryajña*, and consists in the offering of rice balls to the Fathers on the afternoon of the day on which the new moon sacrifice has been performed. The second is the *pārvaṇaśrāddha*, a *grhya* rite also performed on the day of the new moon, following the *pinḍapitryajña*. This is principally a meal offered to brahmins (an odd number of at least three are invited) who represent the sacrificer's direct ancestors, ancestors who, here as well, further receive *pinḍas*. Cf. Gonda 1962: 165f. Even if we look at them separately, the two rites bring to the fore the role played by leftovers in the logic of the sacrifice. In the *śrauta* rite, the portion that the Fathers eat of the burning hot *pinḍas* they are served is the hot air (*ūsmān*) that arises from these; the cooled balls are their leftovers (*śeṣam annam*). Next, it is the turn of the sacrificer to breathe these in: as such, he imitates the Fathers, transforming himself into an *ūsmāpa* and an *ūsmabhakṣa*. Cf. Caland 1983: 190f., who cites the argumentation of the *TB* (1.3.10.6): *brahmavādīno vadanti / prāśyām nā prāśyām itil yāt prāśnīyāt jānyam ānnam ādyat pramāyukāḥ syāt yān nā prāśnīyāt dhaviḥ syāt pitrbhya āvrīcetaḥ avaghrēyam evā / tān nēva prāśitam nēvāprāśitam*. "The theologians say: "(he wonders) will I eat or will I not eat?" If he were to eat (them), he would be eating impure food. He would be destined to die. If he were to not eat (them), then this would not be a *havis*, and he would deprive the Fathers. One must merely sniff at them. So will that neither be eaten nor uneaten'. This text confirms that the Fathers' leftovers are inedible for living *dvijas*, and otherwise informs us to another matter, most worthy of note: in order that oblatory matter be truly a *havis*, and reach its intended recipient, there has to be some portion left over, which the sacrificer himself might eat. In sum, it is the remainder that determines the nature of the principle. As for the *pārvaṇaśrāddha*, the three *pinḍas* offered to the ancestors 'are put together with a portion of what the brahmins left behind' (Gonda 1962: 167).

23. *tat samāhṛtyopanidhāyācāryāya prabrūyāt*.  
 24. *yad ucchiṣṭam prāśnāti*. (Sic! Palatalization of the nasal after *ś*, cf. Renou 1961: 11).  
 25. *bhāikṣam haviṣā samstutam tatrācārya devatārthe*.  
 26. *āhavanīyārthe ca*.  
 27. *vipravāse guror ācāryakulāya (prabrūyāt)*.  
 28. *proṣito bhāikṣād agnau kṛtvā bhūñjīta*.  
 29. *havirucchiṣṭam eva tat*. (Modern Judaism, in its Hassidic variety, knows of a similar relationship between a master and his disciples: to eat the

scraps of a master's meal insures a 'beneficial communion with him': cf. Gutwirth 1970: 32).

30. *na cāsmāi śrutivipratīṣiddham ucchiṣṭam dadyāt.*  
 31. *ucchiṣṭāsanavarjam ācāryavad ācāryaputre vṛttiḥ.*  
 32. *ucchiṣṭavarjam tatputre 'nūcane vā.*  
 33. *guruṇā śiṣyaś chattravac chādyah śiṣyena ca guruś chattravat paripālyah.* The *Vāmana Purāna* (34.77) compares the role of the disciple to that of a son, even as it connects *śiṣya* with *śeṣa!* *punnāmno narakāt trāti putras teneha gīyate | śeṣapāpaharah śiṣya itīyam vaidikī śrutih.*

'A son saves us from the hell known as *put*. This is why he is called *putra* in this world. Because he frees us from the sin that remains (*śeṣa*), the disciple is called *śiṣya*. Such is the Vedic revelation.'

34. On the *bhūtayajña*, which intersects (but only partially) the notion of *baliharana*, cf. Kane 2:1, 745f.  
 35. The fifth *mahāyajña* is sacrifice to the *brāhman*, that is, to the Veda. It consists of the solitary recitation of Vedic texts (*svādhyāya*), and its obligatory oblatory matter is the Veda itself. The theory of the *svādhyāya*, is set forth in Book II of the *TĀ*. Cf. Malamoud 1977.  
 36. *yajñāśiṣṭāśinah santo mucyante sarvakilbiṣaiḥ*  
*bhuñjate te tv agham pāpā ye pacanty ātmakaraṇāt.*  
 37. *agham sa kevalam bhunkte yah pacaty ātmakaraṇāt*  
*yajñāśiṣṭāsanam hy etat satām annam vidhīyate.*

This text, together with the *Gītā* passage cited in the preceding note, clearly shows that sacrificial food, and consequently that food on the subject of which the question of remains takes on its full importance, is cooked food. Rules concerning the consumption and transmission of uncooked foods, *a fortiori* when these are uncultivated foods, are much less strict. For the guiding principles, on this subject, in contemporary Hinduism, cf. Dumont 1966: 182f.

38. *sāyam prātar agnihotraṁ hutvā yatyatithivatibhyaś ca dattuāthetarac chesabhakṣāḥ . . .*  
 39. *kṛtvaitad balikarmaivam atithim pūrvam āsayet*  
*bhikṣām ca bhikṣave dadyād vidhivad brahmacāriṇe.*  
 40. *devatārhiṣeṣena kurute dehayāpanam.*  
 41. [11] *atithin evāgre bhojayet* [12] *balān vṛddhān rogasāmbandhān strīś cāntarvatnīḥ.*  
 42. *bhuktavatsu atha vipreṣu sveṣu bhṛtyeṣu caiva hi |*  
*bhuñjīyātām tataḥ paścād avāśiṣṭām tu dampati.*

An analogous teaching is found in Yājñavalkya (1.105):

*bālasuvāsinīvṛddhagarbhinyāturakanyakāḥ |*  
*sambhojyātithibhṛtyāṁś ca dampatyoh śeṣabhōjanam.*

'Once he has fed the children, the married women who have not yet left

the household, the elderly, the pregnant women, the sick, the girls, the guests, and the servants, the householder and his wife eat the remains'.

43. *vighasāśi bhaven nityam nityam vāmṛtabhōjanaḥ |*  
*vighaso bhuktaśeṣam tu yajñāśeṣam tathāmṛtam.*

'May he always be an eater of the *vighasa*, or else may he always have *amṛta* for his food. The *vighasa* is the remains of the meal, and *amṛta* is the remains of the sacrifice'. The *bhukta* in question here is the meal given to the brahmins convened at a *śrāddha*. A portion of the food prepared on this occasion is served to the invited guests, another portion mixed together with their leftovers, and a third part held in reserve. When the brahmins have finished eating, the sacrificer asks them what he should do with this last portion and, with their permission and in accordance with their instructions, he conserves this remainder, which he will eat together with his family. The brahmins invited here represent the ancestors: nonetheless, they do not identify themselves with them, and they function, in the ceremony, as agents of the sacrifice. This is borne out by the fact that they receive payment, *dakṣiṇā*, once they have completed their meal, that is, their work. Cf. *Yāj* 1.244 and the other texts cited in Kane 4:446, n. 996.

44. We may well wonder, especially, how the injunction made to the student to eat his master's table scraps might be accommodated with the right given him to eat his fill (in distinction from members of the other *āśramas*). Cf. for example, *ĀpDhS* 2.4.9.13: *aṣṭau grāsā muner bhakṣyāḥ* *śodaśāranyacāriṇaḥ | dvātrīṁsatam grhasthasyāparimitam brahmacāriṇaḥ.* 'The ascetic may eat eight mouthfuls (each day); the forest hermit sixteen; the householder thirty-two; no limit for the brahmanic student'. This is because the student, like the draught-ox, must have the energy to carry out his work.  
 45. *kevalāgho bhavati kevalādīl mogham annam vindate.* 'He who only eats (to appease his hunger) has only sin. He receives worthless food . . .' This formula is a condensation of *RV* 10.117.6:

*mogham ānnam vindate apracetāḥ*  
*satyām bravīmi vadhā it sā tāsyā |*  
*nāryamānam pūsyati nō sākḥāyam*  
*kevalāgho bhavati kevalādī.*

'The man without wisdom receives food worthlessly: / I swear that it is a death sentence for him. / He cultivates neither a benefactor nor a friend. / He who eats alone incurs his fault alone'. (The English here is based on the French translation of Renou 1956: 114).

46. It would be wrong to assume that the *ucchiṣṭa* is a remains by simple virtue of being tainted (by its contact with the first eater), or that the *śeṣa* is its edible remainder. The noun *śeṣa* means 'remainder' in a general sense, with one of its significations being the remains of food, in both



senses of the term. The verbal adjective *ucchiṣṭa* designates food remains alone, but pertains to both polluted and pure remains. Elsewhere, but by extension, *ucchiṣṭa* is employed for either the being or the object that has been sullied by an impure remains. The set formed by the intersection of the accepted meanings of both *śeṣa* and *ucchiṣṭa* would thus signify 'good or bad remainder of food'.

47. *bhūtebhyo dayāpūrvam samvibhajya śeṣam adbhīs samsprīyausadhavat prāśnīyāt*. 'Compassionately giving a portion (of his food) to (living) beings, he should sprinkle the remainder with water and eat it like a medical preparation'. We can see that the *śeṣa* in question here is not the remains of a *yajña*; the ascetic gives out of compassion. The *bhūtas* in question here, if we are to believe the commentary of Govindasvāmin, are birds and reptiles. This is therefore not a case of those *bhūtas* for the benefit of whom the householder is expected to perform one of his five daily *mahāyajñas*.
48. [9] *pañca vā ete 'gnaya ātmasthāh*; [10] *āmany eva juhōti*. 'These five fires are, in truth, placed in the self (of the *sannyāsīn*); it is into the self that he makes the oblation'. Just as with the sacrifice, in the proper sense of the term, other ritual situations are transposed and interiorized by the *sannyāsīn*. Like the student who presents his teacher with the food he has gathered in his begging circuit, the *sannyāsīn* presents his food to the *brahman* (neuter). Cf. *BaudhShS* 2.18.7: *atha bhaikṣād upāvṛttaḥ . . . brahmaṇe nivedayate*.
49. Cf. Lévi 1966: 62f.
50. Cf. Dandekar 1958: 1:16f.
51. *yād ājyam ucchiṣyate tēna samīdho 'bhayajyādadhātī ucchēṣaṇād vā āditi réto 'dhatta* |.
52. *tasmād ādhīsur brahmaudanam pacet | tēna putrotpādakam réta eva dadhāti*.
53. *RS* 7.4.7.
54. *śeṣa ity apatyanāmal śisyate prayataḥ*.
55. *agnihōtrōcchēṣaṇam abhy ā tanakti yajñāsya śamtatyai*.
56. . . . *eteṣām me dehīti hovācal tām asmai pradadau | hantānupānam iti | ucchiṣṭam vāi me pītam syād iti hovācal na svīd ete 'py ucchiṣṭā iti | na vā ajīvīsyam imān akhadann iti hovāca kāmō ma udapānam iti . . .*
57. This is what Śāṅkara's commentary, a commentary that does no more than paraphrase the rest of the passage—refers to: the same is the case in his commentary on the *Vedāntasūtra* 3.4.28, *in fine*.
58. Regarding oblatory matter, there is, we believe, a distinction to be made between the remainder *per se*, which remains once has accomplished (a given phase of) the principal offering, and that which might manifest itself as an unforeseen excess in the preparation of that matter. Thus, when in the rite described in *TB* 3.7.2.1, the milk boiled in the preparation of the *Agnihotra* 'overflows' (*vi-syand*), it becomes unfit for sacrifice and the sacrificer must recover it and pour it over an anthill (*valmikavapā*).

Heesterman (1957: 19) is no doubt correct in seeing this as a procedure intended to channel the sacrificial energy that has been so liberated. Through the conduit of the anthill (which is the ear, the prime orifice of the earth) that has been so forced open, the sacrificer directs this energy back into its sources of fecundity and fertility. But we must take care to note here that this is a case of a rite of repairing something that has gone awry: the oblatory matter that has been diverted, and which the *yajamāna* attempts to gain control over, is a remains that has resulted from an accident, an accident that has rendered unusable the entire amount, and not only the overflow (*visyanna*). The *ucchiṣṭa* or *śeṣa* we have been studying is that which normally appears in the regular process of a sacrifice.

59. *mānur ekah pāriśīṣe*.
60. On the relationship between Śeṣa and Viṣṇu, see the references in Hopkins 1979: 24f; and Gonda 1954: 151f.
61. *sarvavarṇānām svadharmānuṣṭhāne param aparimitam sukham | tataḥ parivṛttau karmaphalāśeṣeṇa jātim rūpam varṇam balam medhām prajñām dravyāṇi dharmānuṣṭhānam iti pratipadyate tac cakravād ubhayaḥ lokayoḥ sukha eva vartate . . . letena doṣaphalavṛddhir uktā steno 'bhiṣasto brāhmaṇo rājanyo vaiśyo vā parasmiṃ lōke 'parimite niraye vṛtte jāyate cāṇḍālo brāhmaṇaḥ paṭkaso rājanyo vaino vaiśyaḥ*. A similar presentation is found in *GauDhS* 11.29–30. This doctrine is evoked in *Meghadūta* 1.30, in which the poet attempts to evoke the beauty of the city of Ujjayinī:

*svalpibhūte sucaritaphale svarginām gām gatānām  
śeṣaḥ puṇyair hṛtam iva divaḥ kāntimat khaṇḍam ekam*

'When the fruits of their good acts had been whittled away, the inhabitants of paradise brought with them, by virtue of the residue of their merits, a wonderful piece of heaven, as it were . . .'

62. Cf. Renou-Filliozat 1947: 558.
63. *kṛtātyaye 'nuśayavān dr̥stasmṛtibhyām yathetaṃ anevaṃ ca*. 'When that which had been made is abolished (the soul returns into this world) with a residue, according to Revelation and Tradition, in the same way as it had in departing and not in the former manner. Śāṅkara defines *anuśaya* as: *ānuśmikaphale karmajāte upabhukte 'vaśīṣṭam aīhikaphalam karmāntarajātam anuśayas tadvanto 'varohantīti*. 'When the fruit, proper to the other world, produced by *karma*, has been consumed, that which remains as the product of other *karmans*, and which is destined to bear fruit in this world, is the *anuśaya*. It is with the *anuśaya* that one descends'.
64. Cf. especially Patañjali, *Yogas* 2, 12–13.
65. Cf. Biardeau 1964: 221, n.1. The author brings to notice, quite appropriately (p. 91f.) that the *apūrvā* is the sole element of the sacrifice that is truly created: heaven pre-exists the rite, as well as does the *dravya*

- which is, moreover, destroyed in the rite. The very name *apūrva*, 'that which did not previously exist' [ . . . ] 'signifies the apparition of a radically novel element, which nothing, either in the act that produces it or the substances used in that act, could have led one to predict—were it not for the teachings of *śruti* on the subject'. As the sole created elements of the sacrifice, this sacrificial remains that is the *apūrva* is also its creative element.
66. These six 'remainders', respectively called *āya*, *vyaya*, *r̥kṣa*, *yoni*, *tithi*, and *vāra*, make up the *ṣaḍvarga*. Two others may be added to this list: *āyu* and *jāti*. Cf. Acharya 1946, s.v. See also Volwahn 1968: 49– the data found in this work generally correspond to those found in Kramrisch 1946: 37f, but there are numerous divergencies in detail, which moreover correspond to those one finds among the original Indian authors. See also Dagens 1970: 112f.
67. Numerous manuscripts of the *Atharva Veda* give the *sandhi ucchiṣṭa* for *ut-ṣiṣṭa*, instead of the regular form of *ucchiṣṭa*. Cf. Renou 1952: 96f.
68. Keith 1925: 445.
69. Deussen 1894: 305f.
70. Cf. Renou *EVP* 2 (1955): 100f. which we cite here. Renou notes well (*EVP* 2, *ibid.*) that the *ucchiṣṭa* is, in the refrain of this hymn, 'more than an inert place of rest. It is a starting point . . .' See also, on the subject of this hymn, Ruegg (1969: 336), who connects it to the stanza to plenitude (*BAU* 5.1.1). Finally see the vast and detailed analysis of Gonda 1968: 300–36.

### Notes to Chapter 2

1. *āthātah svādhyāyaprasamsā priyē svādhyāyapracanē bhavato yuktāmanā bhavaty āparadhīnō, 'bar abar ārbhānt sādhyate sukhām svapiti paramacikitsakā ātmāno bhavatīndriyasamyamās caikārāmātā ca prajñā-vrddhīr yāso lokapaktih prajñā vārdhamānā catūro dhārmān brāhmaṇām abhinīspādayati brāhmanyam pratirūpacaryām yāso lokapaktim lokāh pācyamānās catūrbhir dhārmair brāhmaṇām bhunakty arcāyā ca dānena cājyeyātayā cāvadhātayā ca ||*  
*Svādhyāya* is the individual recitation, 'to oneself', of the Vedic text. This recitation constitutes the essential portion of one of the mandatory daily rites, the *brahmajayāna*.  
 This reciter of the *svādhyāya* is his own physician, says the commentary of Sāyaṇa, because medications such as plants, etc. only take care of ailments of the stomach, head and so on, whereas the wise man wards off, by means of the *svādhyāya*, that suffering of the *ātman* that is re-death, *punarmṛtyu*.
2. The commentary of Sāyaṇa supports, or is, at least, not opposed to this

interpretation. *Pakti* is glossed by *paripāka*: the two terms are synonymous and allow for the same play of possible meanings—'cooking, maturation, perfecting'.

3. See Chapter 2, appendix II, p. 51.
4. Burden and privilege, duty and right: these are the two faces of status; that is, of *dharmā*.
5. In practice, it appears that even *śūdras* have access to certain rudimentary forms of Vedic sacrifice. Cf. Sharma (1958: 122, 211, 268), who cites *GauDhS* 10.65; Kullūka *ad Manu* 10.126; and *Mahābhārata* 10.60.36.
6. Exceptions must be made for certain *samskāras* ('sacraments'), such as Vedic initiation (*upanayana*) and marriage, which, although grouped among the domestic rites, require the presence and the intercession, in accordance with various rulings, of brahmin officiants.
7. *ŚB* 13.4.1.3: *yā u vai kās ca yājate brāhmaṇibhīyevaivā yajate*. 'Verily, whoever sacrifices, sacrifices after he has become a brahmin' (an affirmation made in the context of the horse sacrifice, in which the sacrificer is, of necessity, a *ksatriya*).
8. Cf. *Manu*, 1.88f.

*adhyāpānam adhyayanam yajanam yājanam tathā  
dānam pratigrahaṃ caiva brāhmaṇānām akalpayat*

*prajānām rakṣaṇam dānam ijjādhyayanam eva ca  
viśayeshv aprasaktiś ca ksatriyasya samāsatah*

*pāśūnām rakṣaṇam dānam ijjādhyayanam eva ca  
vanikpatham kuśīdam ca vaiśyasya kṣim eva ca.*

'[The Creator] assigned the brahmins [the following functions]: to teach [the Veda] and study [the Veda]; offer sacrifices and officiate at the sacrifices of others; and to give and accept alms. To the *ksatriya*, in sum: to protect his subjects, give alms, offer sacrifices, and study—all the while avoiding addiction to mundane pleasures. To the *vaiśya*: to maintain livestock, give alms, offer sacrifices, study, engage in commerce, **lend at interest**, and cultivate the soil'.

There is, therefore, a *dharmā* common to all of the *dvijas*, to which is added a *dharmā* specific to each *varṇa*. The specific *dharmā* of brahmins consists of the 'causative' counterpart of this common *dharmā*: to teach, officiate (=permit others to sacrifice), and to accept alms (=allow others to give).

9. Cf. *Āpastamba Yajña Paribhāṣā Sūtra* 30.
10. On the *Mīmāṃsā*, cf. Kane (5.2: 1152–1351). On the sorts of questions that make up the themes of *Mīmāṃsaka* hermeneutics, questions already addressed in the *Brāhmaṇas*, cf. Oldenberg 1919: 224).
11. Cf. *KausBr* 2.1.
12. *ŚB* 1.2.4.3: *sā yāt sphyām ādattēl yāthaiivā tād indro vr̥trāya vājram udāyacchad evām evaśā . . .*

13. ŚB 4.1.2.4–5: *átha yásmāt sómam pavitreṇa pāváyatil yátra vai sómah svám puróhitam br̥haspátim jiyau tásmāi púnar dadau téna sámśasāma tásmín púnar dadusy ásaivātíṣṭam énah . . . tám devāḥ pavitreṇa pāvayanī sá médhyaḥ pūto devānām havir abhavat . . .*
14. ŚB 6.1.3.9: *tám prajāpatir abravīd kúmāra kim rodīsi yac chrāmāt tāpasó 'dhi jāto 'sīri sò 'bravīd ánapahatapāpmā vá asmy áhitaṇāmā náma me dhehīti tásmāt putrásyā jātásya náma kuryāt pāpmānam evāsya tád ápahanti ápi duitiyam ápi tritīyam abhipūrvām evāsya tát pāpmānam ápahanti ||.*
15. Ibid., See the entire development of this theme, from 6.1.1.5 to 6.1.2.12.
16. ŚB 1.1.2.1.
17. RS 6.1.9: *só agna tje śasámé ca márto.*
18. AS 11.1.30: *śrámyataḥ pácato viddhi sunvatāḥ pánthām svargám ádhi rohayainam.*
19. RS 6.3.2: *tjé yajñébhīḥ śasame śámibhir.*  
Cf. Renou 1964: 38.
20. RS 5.42.10: *yó vah śámīm śasamānāsya nindāt tuchyān kāmān karate siṣvidānāḥ.*
21. TB 3.6.6.4.
22. The *śamitr* is, according to Indian tradition, the 'pacifier': the victim, in fact, cannot be sacrificed unless it is perfectly calm—that is, it is believed, until it consents to its death. Minard (1956: § 209a) has shown that the etymology rather obliges one to see in the *śamitr* 'he who toils ritually, he who devotes himself to *śamī*, to religious toil'. The root ŚAM means both 'work' and 'exhaust oneself (with work)', and thereby, 'pacify oneself'.
23. On *adhvan*, *adhvara*, and *adhvaryu*, cf. Minard (1956: § 350b, with bibliography); in our opinion, *adhvan* is the 'coursing', the course or path inasmuch as it is followed, rather than the course as a material, trodden path.
24. ŚB 6.1.1.1: *ṛṣayas té yāt purāsmāt sárvasmād idām icchāntaḥ śrámeṇa tāpasārīṣams tásmād ṛṣayaḥ.* 'Before the universe existed they desired it. They exhausted themselves [RIS] with toil and ascetic fervour, which is why they are called *ṛṣi*'. This etymology of *ṛṣi* may thus be added to that which derives this word from the root DRŚ, 'see'.
25. RS 1.86.8: *śasamānāsya vā naraḥ svédasya satyaśavasah vidā kāmasya vénataḥ.*
- Here the English is based on Renou's (1962: 19) French translation. Bergaigne (1878: I:139, n. 1) very rightly notes the 'relationship between the idea of "heat", in the primitive sense of a word that would later designate the ascetic's austerities, and the "sweat" of the priests occupied in the work of the sacrifice'.
26. RS 5.7.5: *áva sma yásya véṣaṇe svédaṃ pathīṣu júhvati*

*abhīm áha svājanyam  
bhúmā prsthéva ruruhuḥ.*

Renou's (1964: 23) translation is: 'Lui au service duquel [les auxiliaires du culte] versent-en-offrande leur sueur sur les chemins [de l'aire sacrée],—ils ont gravi [pour lui] la terre familière comme les cavaliers gravissant les dos [de leurs chevaux]'. See also Geldner (1951: 2:10).

Renou and Geldner consider that it is the exertion of the officiants which is described here, the same officiants who are exhorted collectively in the first verse of the hymn: 'O amis, [apportez] ensemble [votre] puissance-rituelle et corps-de-louange conjoints à Agni . . .' (Renou). It is quite true that the Vedic hymns are often presented as exaltations, by the priestly 'sodalities', of their own techniques. The 'connection' here is that even as they busy themselves, as technicians, in the service of another; even as they exhaust themselves with carrying the fires and the offerings that will accrue to the benefit of the sacrificial patron, the *yajamāna*, they offer a sacrifice on their own behalf, a sacrifice in which their sweat plays the role of oblatory substance.

27. TB 2.1.2.1f: *prajāpatir agnīm asrjataltám prajā ánvāsryjantatám abhāgá úpāstal sò 'sya prajābhīr ápākrāmatl tám avarúutsamāno 'nvait / tám avarúadhan náśaknotl sá tāpo 'tapyata / sò 'gnīr úpāramatātāpi vai syā prajāpatir itil sá rarātad úd amr̥stal tád ghr̥tām abhavat . . . tád agnaú praḡrhnātl . . . (4) tásyā áhutyaí púrusam asrjata.*

'Prajapati emitted fire. The creatures were next created. And because the fire had nothing for his portion, after having maintained a respectful attitude towards him, he distanced himself from him, together with the creatures. Prajapati followed him, wishing to keep him. He could not restrain him. He heated himself with the production of heat. Agni stopped, saying "Prajapati has verily heated himself". Prajapati mopped his brow: this became clarified butter . . . He grasped it so as to pour it as an oblation in the fire . . . [4] From this oblation he emitted man.'

28. On the creative function of *tapas*, secondary sources are as abundant as the original texts from which they take their inspiration. (See, among others, Blair 1961).
29. Cf. *Āpastamba Yajña Paribhāṣā Sūtra* 1 and *KātŚS* 1.2.1: *yajñam vyākhyāsyāmahī dravyaṃ devatā tyāgaḥ.*
30. The gods, properly speaking, are the *devas*. In sacrifices to the ancestors, to humans, and the 'beings', and in every metaphorical sacrifice, the recipients of the oblation are designated as *devatās*, 'divinities', a category which encompasses but extends well beyond the gods. In sum, the term *devatā* refers to a function: such and such a person, whether or not he is divine by nature, is the *devatā* of a sacrifice.
31. MS 4.1.9.
32. ŚB 3.8.3.6.
33. MS 1.1.3: *supācā devébhyo hávyam paca.* Sharma (1959: 309) sees in

- supacā* an instrumental singular used in an adverbial sense, even though the *Padapātha* restores *supacāḥ* in its reading.
34. Opinions vary on the relationship between *śrapayati* 'cook', and *śrīṇāti* 'mix'. Oldenberg (1918: 40f.) takes these to be two separate radicals. Mayrhofer, on the contrary, treats the present *śrapayati* under the heading of *śrīṇāti*, and considers from an etymological viewpoint that 'well-cooked' constitutes a particular case of 'well-prepared'. As far as usage is concerned, this etymology is of minor importance: *śrapayati*, in the Vedic texts, designates, very precisely and in a highly technical sense, the operation of 'cooking'. What is at stake in this discussion is in any case noteworthy: if the two radicals did turn out to be derivatives of one and the same root, then the noun *śrī*—which means 'beauty, glory, prosperity, harmony, splendour', and which is one of the names of 'the' goddess—would have for its basic meaning 'the perfection of that which is well-mixed', and would be enriched by all the connotations suggested by the idea of cooking, at least for 'he who knows this (etymology)'.
35. *ŚB* 3.8.3.7: *tād dhī devānām yac chrtām.*
36. *ŚB* 1.2.5.26: *yād vai śuśrumā devānām pariśūtām tād eṣā yajñō bhavati yac chrtāni havīmṣi kṛtā vēdih.*
37. *Viṣṇu Smṛti* 67.43: *aghaṃ sa kevalam bhunkte yah pacaty ātmakaraṇāt.* Cf. Kane 2:2.786.
38. *HGS* 1.7.23.
39. Cf. *GobbGS* 1.3.13f. and *KhādīraGS* 1.5.6f. On the practice observed by orthodox Hindus in modern times, a practice which apparently continued, in the preceding century, to very faithfully follow the prescriptions of *smṛti*, cf. Stevenson 1920: 225f, and 235f.
40. *KhādīraGS* 1.1.16: *pākayajña ity ākhya yah kaś caikāgnau.*
41. Cf. *VaiGS* 1.1.
42. The five *mahāyajñas* are the *devayajña* (to the gods), the *pitryajña* (to the ancestors), the *bhūtayajña* (to the 'beings'), the *manusyayajña* (to men), and finally the *brahmayajña* (to the Vedas). These daily rites bring very small, symbolic quantities of substance into play, but constitute the essential texture of the daily ritual. The *brahmayajña* consists of the individual recitation of a—sometimes minuscule—portion of the Vedic text. Cf. *supra*, n. 1. The opinion according to which the *pākayajñas* are the five *mahāyajñas* less the *brahmayajña* is expressed by Kullūka and Manu 2.86, and others.
43. *KāthakaGS* 13.1f. Cf. on this question Hillebrandt (1897: 71) and Jolly (1880: 183f.). The *śruti* texts mention the *pākayajña* in order to state that the *idā*—that is, the part of the victim eaten by the human participants in the sacrifice, corresponds to that which is *pākayajña* in the domestic ritual. (In both cases, one eats the gods leftovers). Cf. *TS* 1.7.1.1: *idā khālu vai pākayajñāḥ*, and *ŚB* 1.7.4.19: *vivṛhanti vā ete yajñām kṣaṇvanti ye mādhye yajñāsya pākayajñīyayedāyā cāranti*: 'those who, in

- the course of the sacrifice, perform the *idā*, the *idā* which represents the *pākayajña*, destroy the sacrifice; indeed, they injure it'.
44. *Kāt.ŚS* 1.8.43: *āhavanīye homāḥ śrutisamākhyānābhīyām*: 'the offerings [are to be poured] over the offertory fire: [this follows] from *śruti* [which prescribes it as such], and from the name [of the fire itself]'.
45. *Kāt.ŚS* 1.8.34: *gārhapatye samskārah*: 'in the domestic fire, the perfecting processes [such as the cooking of substances and of utensils]'.
46. *Āp.ŚS* 3.3.1: *dakṣiṇāgnāv anvāhāryam mahāntam aparimitam odanam pacati*: 'on the *dakṣiṇa* fire one cooks, as a gratuity to be brought to the officiants, a great, undetermined quantity of rice porridge'.
47. *ŚB* 1.7.3.26f.: *atō yatarāthā kāmāyeta tāthā kuryāt.*
48. *Baudh.ŚS* 24.1.
49. In the *āsvamedha*, the royal horse sacrifice, the blood is offered, once it has been cooked, to Agni *Sviṣṭakṛt*.
50. *Āpastamba Yajña Paribhāṣā Sūtra* 143, commentary.
51. *RS* 1.62.9: *āmāsu cid dadhiṣe pakvām antāḥ! pāyah kṣṇāsu rūṣad rōhiṇīṣul!*

'Dedans les [vaches] crues tu as mis le lait cuit, le [lait] blanc dans les [vaches] noires [ou] rouges'. (Translation by Renou 1969: 26). See also *TS* 6.5.6.4: *tāsmād āmā pakvām duhe*: 'That is why the raw gives the cooked [when one milks it]'. (On the use of the middle form of the verb *DUH* in the sense of 'give milk', cf. Delbrück 1888: 243).

52. *ŚB* 2.2.4.15: *tām ū hāgnīr abhīdadhyaul mithunyo ānāyā syām iti tām sambabhūva tāsyām rétaḥ práśīncat tát páyo bhavat tāsmād etād āmāyām gāvi satyām śrtām agnér hí rétas tāsmād yádi kṣṇāyām yádi rōhiṇyām śuklām evā bhavaty agnisamkāsam agnér hí rétas tāsmāt prathamadugdhām uṣṇām bhavaty agnér hí rétaḥ.*

The manner in which milk is produced in the organism is an exemplary instance—and one possessed of a mythological justification—of the cooking process which lies at the source of every component of the living body. *Yājñavalkya* 3.84 (among others) in fact teaches that blood is the product of the cooking, by the abdominal fire, of the juices contained in food, the *annarasa*. The blood, after cooking, in turn produces flesh; flesh produces fat; fat, bone; bone, marrow; and marrow that ultimate element which is sperm. Each of these cooking processes occurs in a compartment, a *koṣa*, and over a fire, *agni*, specially reserved for it. These cooking processes do not, however, render the transformed substances apt for immediate sacrifice. The direct intercession of flaming Agni, and thereby the adjunction of human labour, is still necessary. The primal cooking that is milk's special prerogative makes it into something that is in fact neither an excretion nor even a secretion, and which is not impure like the other humours which emanate from the body. N. Yalman has demonstrated, concerning the people of Sri Lanka and south India he studied, that milk is cooked blood, by virtue of which it is pure,

whereas blood is polluting. What is noteworthy is that this quality also pertains to vegetal 'milk', coconut milk, and the exudation of trees (see Yalman 1963).

Yājñavalkya's schema of series of cooking processes is clearly applicable to warm-blooded vertebrates. What of the other classes of animals?

53. *KātŚS* 6.5.2: *āhavanīyolmukam ādāyāgnit triḥ samantam paryeti paśvājyaśāmitradēśayūpacātvālāhavanīyān*. 'The igniter takes the firebrands to the offertory fire and walks, three times, around the victim, the *ājya*, the *śāmitra* fire, the sacrificial post, the pit and the offertory fire'. See also *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra* 1.11.5f. Is this motion not a prefiguration of *ārati*, which, in Hindu *pūjā*, indeed consists of tracing circles, with a perfumed torch or the flame of a lamp, around the divine image; however, is it not also waved around the victim who is, in the marriage ceremony, the young wife? L. Silburn (1955: 68, n. 2) cites texts which invite the reader to see, in the circles of fire traced around the victim, protective enclosures against *rakṣas* demons, against the external evil that always haunts the sacrifice. This is certainly true. But it would be mistaken, in our opinion, to dismiss the effect which the flame, directed against the outside exercises upon that which it encircles. We find, when we examine the expressions employed to describe the manner in which the fire acts to ward off impurity, that its role is not so much one of destroying miasmata as it is of creating a crust, a cooked skin, around the object to be preserved. So it is, on the subject of the consecration called *āvantarā dikṣā*, that the *ŚB* (3.4.3.3) says: *sò 'gnīnaivā tvācam vipālyāṅgayate*. 'With the fire itself, he causes him to be clothed in a skin'. To be sure, fire is called *pāvaka*, the 'purifier', but this is a qualification which it shares with other divinities. The *pavana par excellence* is the wind and, in the ritual, the agents of purification are first and foremost water and the *pavitra*s—vegetal filters and a woollen sieve.
54. *TS* 6.3.10: *paśum ālābhya puroḍāsam nirvapati . . . ātho paśor evā chidrām āpi dadhāti . . . triḥ pṛcchati śṛtām havih śamitar iti*.
55. *RS* 1.162.10: *yād ūvadhyaṃ udārasypāvāti yā āmāsya kraviṣo gandhó āsti | sukṛtā tāt chamitārah kṛṇvantu utā mēdham śṛtapākam pacantu ||* (Cf. Renou 1967: 84f.).
56. *TS* 5.7.23.1.
57. *ŚB* 4.5.2.16: *paśusrāpana evainam marúdbhyo juhuyāt | abutādo vai devānām marúto vid ābutam ivaitād yād ārto gārbha āhavanīyād vā eṣā āhro bhavati paśusrāpanas tāthāha ná bahirdhā yajñād bhāvati ná pratyāksam ivāhavanīye devānām vai marútas tād enam marúts eva prātiṣṭhāpayati*.
- The text of the Kāṇva recension adds: 'There is Heaven and there is Earth . . . This foetus is over-much. One places it in the in-between, and, thenceforth, even when it is superfluous, it ceases to be superfluous'.
58. *GobhGS* 1.9.16f.

59. *TS* 6.5.9.1f: *indro vrtrām ahan tāsyā śṛṣakapalām úd aubjat sá dronakalaśò 'bhavat tasmāt sómah sámasravat . . . sò 'manyata yád dhosyāmy āmām hosyāmi yān ná hosyāmi yajñaveśasām karisyāmīti tām adbriyata hótum sò 'gnir abravān ná máyā āmām hosyasīti tām dhānābhīr asrīnāt tām śṛtām bhūtām ajuhod yád dhānābhīr hāriyojanām śrīnāti śṛtatvāya śṛtām evainam bhūtām juhōti*.
- Here, we should note the play on the words *śṛta*, 'mixed', and *śṛta*, 'cooked'.
60. Cf. Kojève (1947: 247): 'In the divine world there is no place for a new divinity: one must, thus, suppress a part of the divine in order to sanctify man. This is the sense of sacrifice, in which the sacrificed object is identified with a God'.
61. On the relationship between terrestrial *soma* and celestial Soma, cf. Renou 1961: 1f.
62. The human king is only a king for the *ksatriyas*, *vaiśyas* and *śūdras*. This, at least, is what brahmins proclaim during a new king anointment ceremony: 'This man is your king; as for us, our king is Soma': *eṣā vo 'mī rājā sómo 'smākam brāhmanānām rājēti* (*ŚB* 5.4.2.3). This is why, the texts adds, the king may prey on all of his subjects, but not the brahmins, who are, in fact, the subjects of king Soma).
63. *ŚB* 3.4.1.2: *ātithir vā eṣā etāsyaḡacchati yāt sómah krūtās tasmā etād yāthā rājñe vā brāhmanāya vā mahokṣām vā mahājām vā pācet tād āha mānuṣām havir devānām evām asmā etād ātiṭhyām karoti*.
- 'Once bought, the *soma*, in truth, arrives as [the sacrificer]' guest. One [thus offers] him this [welcoming rite]. Just as one would cook, for [the welcoming of] a king or a brahmin, a great ox or a great he-goat—because this is the human [welcome offering], while the obligatory matter is [properly speaking] for the gods—so one offers this welcoming rite to him'.
64. *ŚB* 3.3.3.1: *sā vai rājānam paṇate | sā yād rājānam paṇate tasmād idām sakṛt sārvaṃ paṇyam |*
65. *RS* 9.83.1: *ātaptatanūr ná tād āmó āsnute śṛtāsa id vāhantas tāt sām āsata*.
- Cf. Renou 1967: 29. It is *tapas*, ascetic heat, which transforms the raw creature, *āma*, into a being cooked to a turn, into a *śṛta* creature.
66. *ŚB* 6.1.2.22: *tē yāmyām āhutim ājuhavuh sá sainam pakvēṣṭakā bhūtvāpy apadyata tād yād iṣṭāt samābhavams tasmād iṣṭakās tasmād agnīneṣṭakāh pacanty āhutir evainās tāt kurvanti*.
67. *KātŚS* 16.1.19: *caturṇām apsu kāyaprāsanam | tato mrdistakārthapaś ca ||*. 'One throws into the water the bodies of the four [victims]. From this [body of water] one draws [what is necessary for making] bricks of clay and water'.
68. *ŚB* 7.3.1.26: *tād āhuh kathām asyaitāh pakvāh śṛtā ūpahitā bhavanīti raso vā etāh svayam śṛtā u vai rasó 'ho yād vai kim caitām agnīm vaiśvānarām upanigācchati tāta evā tāt pakvām śṛtām ūpahitam bhavati*.

69. ŚB 14.1.2.21: *āthaitān chrapayati | śrtām hi devānām||*. 'At the time of the *pravargya* one cooks [the various vessels]. For that which is cooked belongs to the gods'.
70. ŚB 6.5.1.1: *parnakasāyānispakvā etā āpo bhavanti.*
71. ŚB 6.5.4.6.
72. RS 10.16.5: *āva sṛja pūnar agne pitṛbhyol  
yās ta āhutaś cārati svadhābhiḥ||  
āyur vāsāna ūpa vetu śeśaḥ||  
sām gachatām tanvā jātavedaḥ||*

Renou's (1965: 37) translation is: 'Libère [pour qu'il aille] de nouveau vers les Pères, ô Agni, [cet homme] qui, offert-oblatoirement à toi, se meut selon ses dispositions-naturelles. Que vêtu de durée-de-vie, il accède à [sa] descendance! Qu'il se retrouve avec un corps, ô Jātavedas!'

This same hymn, RS 10.16, is translated *in extenso* by Kane (4: 196f.) in a long discussion of funerary rites, pp. 176–266.

73. The epithet *jātavedas* is interpreted, in the *Veda* itself, with a phrase that appears to be an expansion of the formula: *viśvā veda jānimā jātavedāḥ*. 'Jātavedas knows all the generations' (RS 6.15.13; cf. Renou 1964: 135).
74. The carnivorous crematory fire is, in essence, a deadly fire, and thus, a fire which transforms the fire of the deceased into a baneful fire. It is therefore necessary that this fire be extinguished, and that the son of the deceased light a new one: cf. Caland 1896: 113.
75. TS 1.1.1.7: *āpāgne 'gnim āmādam jahi niś kravyādāṃ sedhā devayājāṃ vaha.*
76. Cf. Caland 1896: 19f. and Oldenberg 1977: 492f.
77. Cf. Caland 1896: 10f. Here is the text of RS 10.6.7:

*agnér vārma pāri gōbhir vyayasva |  
sām prōmṣva pīvasā mēdasā ca ||  
nēt tvā dhṛsnūr hārasā jāhrṣāṇol  
dadhṛg vidhaksyān paryāṅkhāyātē!*

'Avec [les membres de] la vache, ceins-toi [ô mort] d'une cuirasse contre Agni, recouvre-toi entièrement de graisse et de moelle, de peur que l'agressif [Agni], s'excitant [dans son élan] d'emportement, ne t'emprisonne, [ce dieu] effronté, dans son désir de brûler' (translation by Renou 1965: 38).

78. Cf. supra, n. 72, RS 10.16.5.
79. AS 12.3.2: *tāvad vām caksus tāti vīryāṅil  
tāvāt tejās tatidhā vājīnāṅil  
agnih śārīram sacate yadaidhōl  
ādihā pakvān mithunā sām bhavāthah||*

'Your sight will be [of] the same [sharpness as before], your strength as abundant, your brilliance as great, your vital forces as numerous. When Agni, the funerary fire, comes to feed on your body, you will arise, as a couple, from the well-cooked [sacrificial rice porridge]'.  
 80. On the relationship between *dīkṣā* and *tapas*, see especially Gonda 1965: 340f.

AS 12.3.5: *yām vām pitā pācāti yām ca mātāl  
riprān nīrmuktyai sāmālāc ca vācāḥ||  
sā odanāḥ śatādihārah svargā |  
ubhē vyāpa nābhasī mahitvāl||*

'The rice porridge that your father as well as your mother had you two cook, in order to liberate themselves from impurity, from that which stains the world, [this porridge], together with a hundred streams of clarified butter [which flow] up to the sky, powerfully penetrates the two halves of the world'. On this hymn, see the commentary of Bloomfield 1987: 645f.

81. ŚB 3.1.3.28: *agnir vai yōnir yajñāsya gārbho dīkṣitō 'ntareṇa vai yōniṃ garbhāḥ sāmcarati.*
82. ŚB 6.2.2.27: *rēto vā etād-bhūtām ātmānam siñcaty ukhāyām yōnau yād dīkṣate tasmā etām purastāl lokām karoti yād dīkṣitō bhāvati tām kṛtam lokām abhi jāyate tasmād āhuh kṛtam lokām pūruṣo 'bhi jāyata iti.*
83. On the mechanics of this substitution which allows the sacrificer to retrieve himself—that is, to 'redeem' himself, from that ransom constituted by the victim, see, among many other texts, TS 6.1.11.6: *yād agnīsomīyam pāsūm ālābhata ātmanīkrāyāna evāsya sā . . . puruṣanīkrāyāna iva hi.* 'By putting to death a victim fit to be offered to Agni and Soma, he [= the consecrated sacrificer] effects his own redemption . . . It is, so to speak, the redemption of a man'.
84. This is especially the case in the new moon and full moon sacrifices. The *darbha* effigy is called *prastara*. TB 3.3.6.8 makes the following identification: *yājamāno vai prastarāḥ*. The TS (6.2.5.5) explains: *brahma-vādīno vadanti kiṃ yajñāsya yājamāna iti prastarā iti tāsyā kvā suvargō lokā ity āhavanīya iti brūyād yāt prastarām āhavanīye prahāratī yajamānam evā suvargām lokām gamayati.*  
 'The theologians say: what is it that, in the sacrifice, is the sacrificer? It is the *prastara*. In the sacrifice, where is heaven? In the offertory fire. This is what one must answer. When one casts the *prastara* into the offertory fire, one acts such that the sacrificer may go to heaven'.  
*Dīkṣā* consecrates the sacrificer as sacrificial victim. But the sacrificer-victim identity may be read in two ways. The great royal *āsvamedha* sacrifice submits the horse, the victim who will in the end be put to death, to a year of preparations. In certain of its essential features, this 'conditioning' is a reminder of the sacrificer's *dīkṣā* the horse must neither bathe nor couple. Cf. Kane 2:2: 1231.
85. The groom, as recipient of the offering that is the bride, occupies, in this sacrifice, the position of a divinity. For all this, he retains his human nature and, as such, may only eat the remains of what the gods have already eaten beforehand. It is in this way, we believe, that one must

explain the fact that the human husband comes fourth and last in the series of beings who have enjoyed the bride: she is first the wife of Soma, then that of the Gandharva, and then of Agni. Cf. *RS* 10.85.40f. and *PārGS* 1.5.16.

86. Thus *TS* 14.2.52: *uśatīḥ kanyālā imāḥ pītrlokāt pātīm yatīḥ āva dīkṣām asrṣata svāhā*.  
 'Burning, these girls left the world of their father to seek their husband. They have abandoned the *dīkṣā*. Cf. Gonda 1962: 324.
87. *BaudhDhS* 3.3.1f. The five classes of cookers are:  
 1) those who eat all that is found in the forest (*sarvāraṇyaka*). These are in turn divided into two groups, those who eat what the rain causes to grow, and those who eat the flesh of animals killed by carnivores; 2) those who eat unhusked rice; 3) those who only eat roots and bulbs; 4) those who only eat fruits; and 5) those who only eat pot-herbs. All of these cookers perform the *Agnihotra* in the morning and evening, because they have a fire; and they are obliged, as householders, to give food to eat to students, ascetics, and to whoever presents himself as a guest, such that they themselves only eat leftovers (sacrificial food). As for non-cookers, it is difficult to determine what separates them from renouncers in the proper sense of the word. These are: 1) those who avoid the use of iron or stone tools; 2) those who take food in their hands; 3) those who eat directly with their mouths, like animals; 4) those who nourish themselves with water alone; and 5) those who only eat air.
88. *Manu* 4.32: *śaktito 'pacamānebhyo dātavyam grhamedhinā*. 'The householder should give, according to his capacities, to those who do not cook'. The non-cookers, says Kullūka, *ad. loc.*, are brahmanic students and wandering ascetics.
89. The rite of entry into *saṃnyāsa*, the rite of breaking with the ritual life, is the subject of a great number of descriptions and explanations in the *smṛti* texts. See, for example, *Vaiśvānasa Smārta Sūtra* 5.8. and 9.7.  
 The ceremony of entering into a life of renunciation is not the sole occasion in which one is instructed to incorporate one's sacrificial fires. A quite identical operation—if we are to believe the *ŚB* 7.4.1.1—is required of the sacrificer who is about to celebrate the *agnicayana*: 'When he readies himself to construct *Agni*, he takes him into his own *ātman*, for from out of his own self he causes him to be born, and wherefrom one is born, suchlike he becomes. Now were he to build up *Agni* without taking him up into his own self, he would beget man from man, mortal from mortal, one not freed from sin from one not freed from sin; but when he builds up *Agni* he acts such that *Agni* is born from *Agni*, the immortal from the immortal, the being who is freed from evil from the being who is freed from evil' (*ātmānn agnīm grhṇīte cesyān! ātmāno vā etām ādhi janayati yādṛśād dha jāyate tādṛśā evā bhavati sā yād ātmānn āgrhītvaṅnīm cinuyān manūsyād evā manūsyām janāyēn mārtāyān mārtāyām ānapahatapāpmanō 'napahatapāpmanam ātha yād ātmānn agnīm grhītva*

*cinōti tād agnēr evādhy agnīm janayaty amṛtād amṛtam āpahatapāpmanō 'pahatapāpmanam*).

90. The crime—the error—of the demonic *Asuras* is to pour the *Agnihotra* offering into their own mouths, an absurd gesture, since the fire which had originally been inside of them has now been expelled. 'They were defeated for having made an oblation into that which was bereft of fire' (*KausB* 7.3).
91. On the burial of *saṃnyāsins*, see the data collected by Kane 4: 229f.
92. *ŚB* 10.4.2.19: *eśā vā idām sārvaṃ pacati! ahorātrair ardhmāsair māsair rtūbhiḥ saṃvatsarēna tād amūnā pakvām ayām pacati pakvāsya paktēti ha smāha bhāradvājo 'gnīm amūnā hi pakvām ayām pācātīti*.

### Notes to Chapter 3

1. *ŚB* 10.6.5.1.
2. *AS* 12.1.42.
3. *AS* 5.28.3.
4. *ŚB* 13.2.4.1.
5. *AS* 6.122.1.
6. *AS* 12.1.35.
7. *AitB* 3.18. Cf. *TĀ* 1.1.9, in which heavenly space, *vyoman*, which may be viewed through a cleft, is dreaded as the mark of a fault, a *chidra*.
8. Caland 1907: § 255.
9. *AitĀ* 2.1.2.
10. On the notion of *ṛta*, see especially Renou 1978: 55. Lüders 1959: 403–642 develops, at length, the idea that the primary meaning of *ṛta* is not 'order' but 'truth'.
11. *ŚB* 7.1.2.23.
12. On *nirrti*, see Renou 1978: 127–32.
13. *VS* 12.62f.
14. *TS* 2.5.1.1f.
15. *MS* 3.6.3.
16. Intervals may be seen as salutary pauses. In their discussions, the ritualists address the question of whether one should, in the course of a sacrifice of a year's duration, allow oneself days of rest such that the sacrifice itself, as well as the year, might have a moment in which to catch their breath. 'Yes' is the response of one group. Furthermore, the lung is an example of a fruitful lacuna (*ūnā*): from this cavity, from this absence of matter, breathing arises, just as living beings emerge from the cavity of the womb when they are born. 'No' responds another group. The sacrifice is like a hare: if one allows it to go off, it will run away. See *JB* 2.393–7 in Caland 1919: 210f.
17. On this 'purchase of the *somā*', the *somakrayana*, cf. Caland–Henry 1906: § 33f. and Renou 1953: 37.

18. TS 6.1.9.6.
19. ŚB 3.3.2.19.
20. VS 12.65.
21. This is the most common version of the altar. There exist a number of variants, which are differentiated from one another on the basis of their general shape, the total number of bricks used, the number of layers, etc. Cf. P.E. Dumont 1951: 628–75.
22. The *Śrauta Sūtra* instructions concerning this rite are admirably grouped and analysed in Fritz Staal, *Agni* (Staal 1983), a veritable encyclopedia on the question. This is supplemented by a report of sorts on the *agnicayana* performed in Kerala in 1975, a ceremony he was able to observe and film.
23. It is the temporal symbolism that is the most abundant here. The bricks are the days, the layers the five seasons of the Indian year, and the entire edifice the year. The construction of the altar, which is a reconstitution of Prajāpati, replaces an indistinct time, a succession of unarranged moments, with an ordered time, a time punctuated by rites that give meaning to every period and every turning-point. The year is the 'truth' of time, because it is in the course of the year that the complete cycle of rites occurs. On this basic aspect of the *agnicayana*, and on the interplay between continuity and discontinuity operative within it, see Silburn 1955: 64f. 'The insertion of an articulated, defined, time in what had been an amorphous, anarchical duration' (Renou 1978: 59) is effected by the rite. This idea is already the theme of several *Rg Vedic* hymns, notably *RS* 1.152.
24. Eggeling 1897: xiii.
25. Oldenberg 1917: 1–16 (reprinted 1967: 319–34) contests the sacrificial interpretation of this passage.
26. ŚB 10.1.3.1.
27. ŚB 6.1.2.19f.
28. ŚB 10.1.3.1f.
29. ŚB 10.1.3.4f.
30. ŚB 6.1.2.18.
31. ŚB 6.1.2.19.
32. ŚB 6.2.1.1f.; 7.5.2.1f.
33. See Mahīdhara's commentary *ad VS* 27.29 and Eggeling's note *ad ŚB* 6.2.1.1. The human sacrifice presupposed by the presence of a human head is the subject of a highly developed symbolism in the *ŚB*. (On the procedure to be followed in these executions, see *KātŚS* 16.1.7–45. The victims' blood is blended together with the water and clay that will serve in the making of the bricks). The texts are not very explicit about the manner in which the human victim is chosen. All that we know, through *KātŚS* 16.1.17, is that it should be that of a *vaiśya* or of a *ksatriya*, that is, of a free-man who is a non-brahmin member of 'twice-born' group. In the *agnicayana* observed by Staal, all of the victims, and not merely

- the human victim, are represented by clay images (Staal 1983: 303f.). One must not confuse this execution—which was merely a portion of the *agnicayana*, but which, by virtue of its instrumental nature, may very well correspond to an actual practice from ancient times—with the human sacrifice *per se* that was the *puruṣamedha*, which itself appears to have been nothing more than a fictitious expansion on the *śvamedha*, the horse sacrifice (on which, see P.E. Dumont 1963: 177–82). Cf. Oldenberg 1927: 361; Keith 1925: 281; Gonda 1962: 209; Minard 1949: § 192b; 1956: § 862a.
34. ŚB 6.2.1.1f.
35. ŚB 6.3.1.38. On *purīṣa*, see Renou 1939: 386f; Renou 1958 (*EVP* 4): 81; Gonda 1965: 224f.; and Heesterman 1985: 55.
36. *Pūrīṣam vai mādhyaṃ ātmānah*. This scandalous formula, especially if one translates it quite legitimately as 'the heart of the self is shit', is not an extract from a collection of blasphemies. It figures in the most orthodox of all Vedic texts, a text which is, in a certain sense, the highest authority on the subject of brahmanic ritual, the *Taittirīya Saṃhitā* (5.3.5.2). Undoubtedly, the word *ātman*, 'self, soul', here has the sense, as is often the case, of 'body', or more exactly, 'trunk' as opposed to 'limbs'. And, it is of course the 'body' of the altar that is being discussed here, in distinction from its lateral and accessory parts. But one must not lose sight of that which the text reaffirms here—that is, that the body of Agni, constituted by the edifice of bricks, is the proper person, the self, of the sacrificer.
37. ŚB 6.1.2.25. ŚB 8.7.2.2f. reverses these values in its interpretation: it is the 'space-filling' bricks which represent the *ksatriyas*, and the bricks over each of which a particular formula is pronounced that represent the *vaiśyas* (because diversity is the sign of disunity). It is necessary that the *ksatriyas* be united—and similar to one another—if they are to be strong and eaters, and that the *vaiśyas* be dissimilar, and thereby disunited, for them to be weak and eaten. Cf. Malamoud 1987: 175.
38. *AV* 11.5.1: *sā ācāryāṃ tāpasā piparti*.
39. The philosophical school of the *Mīmāṃsakas* takes the following line of reasoning as the starting point for the entirety of its speculation: why should one study the Veda? Because it is said, 'The teacher should teach'. It is thus necessary that there be pupils in order that teachers might accomplish their duty and answer to their definition. This argument could base itself upon the venerable authority of the *Atharvanic* hymn: the student fills his master by allowing him to be himself fully, and not in some hollow fashion. Cf. Malamoud 1977 (a): 307–12.
40. *AS* 11.5.3: *ācāryā upānaya māno brahmacāriṇaṃ kṛṇute gārbham antāh*. Cf. ŚB 11.5.4.12. 'This initiate in the belly of his master' is also a theme of the *Mahābhārata* (in the story of Kaca and Kāvya). See Dumézil 1971: 160–1.
41. *AS* 11.5.4: *brahmacārī samidhā mēkhalayā śrāmeṇa lokāṃs tāpasā piparti*.



42. ŚB 7.4.2.3f. The first of these bricks corresponds to earth, the second to mid-space and the third to heaven (ŚB 6.2.3.1; 3; 5; MS 3.2.6). These allow for the passage of the breaths, because they are breath, *prāna* (TS 5.2.8.1), and even the three varieties of breath (TS 5.5.5.2). They are also the path that opens up to the golden man, in order that he might reach heaven (KS 20.6).

Because they represent the three worlds in this way, and because they are thus an image of the whole, they can also serve, for he who has already offered the *agnicayana* sacrifice once in his life, as substitutes for the entire altar (ŚB 9.5.1.58).

According to texts belonging to the Black *Yajur Veda*, one is to add four bricks, placed on the edges of the fifth layer, to the original three: these symbolize the four cardinal directions (TS 5.5.5.4; TB 3.10.2; ĀpŚS 19.12.16).

In the Hindu temple, Stella Kramrisch (1946: 103, 175, 350) tells us, the *prāsāda* pillar that surmounts the *garbhagrhya* is analogous to the column of empty space opened up by the superimposed pierced bricks of the Vedic fire altar.

43. VS 11.10: *ābhrir asi nāry asi*.  
 44. ŚB 6.3.3.4 and 6.4.4.14.  
 45. ŚB 6.3.3.5. Cf. Keith 1925: 397. On the role of anthills and holes bored into anthills in the course of ceremonies of royal consecration, see Heesterman 1957: 17 and 19, n. 22.  
 46. According to Heesterman (1985: 54 and 218), the *anaddhāpuruṣa* represents an enemy or rival who has been rendered powerless.  
 47. ŚB 6.3.1.24; 4.4.4.14; AitB 7.9; KātŚS 16.2.14.  
 48. See chapter five.  
 49. ChU 5.10.3; MundU 1.2.10. On the form and meaning of *istāpūrta*, cf. Malamoud in Biarreau, Malamoud 1976: 165f.  
 50. Yāj 3.83: *navame daśame vāpi prabalaḥ sūtimarutaiḥ nihsāryate bāṇa iva yantracchidreṇa sajarah*. Vijñāneśvara's commentary takes *yantra* to mean the bodily mechanism.  
 51. ChU 8.14: *lindu mābhigām*. The term *lindu* is a *hapax legomenon*. Our translation is based on that of Senart 1930: 120, n. 3.  
 52. BĀU 4.4.25.  
 53. BĀU 4.3.21. We follow the French translation of Senart 1934: 75.  
 54. BĀU 5.1.1: *pūrnam adah pūrnam idam pūrnat pūrnam udacyate*.

P. Mus analyses this stanza in depth as a means to restoring its ritual implications. This is for him an occasion to show, magnificently, the philosophical implications of the rite, such as it is considered by the authors of the *Brahmaṇas* and *Kalpa Sūtras* (Mus 1947: 591–618).

55. AS 10.8.15: *dūrē pūrṇena vasati dūrā ūnēna hīyate*. Cf. Renou 1956: 168. Also on this hymn, see Renou EVP 2: 84f.

56. Cf. Silburn 1955: 112.  
 57. Especially BĀU 2.3.6; 3.9.26; 4.2.4; 5.5.15. The formula *neti neti* has been the subject of a great number of divergent interpretations. A history of these, followed by a definitive restatement, is found in Minard 1949: § 316–21.  
 58. ChU 8.1.1f. Our reading is based on Senart's French translation.  
 59. ChU 3.12.7.  
 60. TU 1.6.1: *sa ya eṣo 'ntarhṛdaya ākāśaḥ tasminn ayam puruṣo manomayah amṛto hiraṇmayah antareṇa tālukel ya eṣa stana ivāvalambate . . . yatrāsau keśānto vivartate / vyapohya śiṣṣakapāle*. On the concept of space in the *Upaniṣads*, Cf. Oldenberg 1923: 63; on the *ākāśa* as symbol of the *brāhman*, Deussen 1906: 111, 118 and Silburn 1955: 110–15.  
 61. BĀU 5.1.1.  
 62. BĀU 4.4.22: *eṣa setur vidharāṇa eṣāṃ lokānām asambhedāya*.  
 63. Mbh 12.255.8.  
 64. When Prajāpati is emptied of all of his strength, he begins to swell up: ŚB 10.6.5.6. Another Sanskrit word for the void is *ābhu*, a neuter term. In its masculine form, however, this word means 'capacity for development'. Verse 10.129.3 of the *RS* does not fail to make use of this relationship, in a context in which the gender of *ābhu* is undiscernable: *tuchyēnābhu āpīhitam*, '(the principle of the) void is overlaid with vacuity', according to the translation of Renou (1956: 125), who adds in a footnote, 'void' (*ābhu*), or contrariwise 'potential' (*ābhū*). See also Renou EVP 16: 169.

#### Notes to Chapter 4

1. The *śuvamedha*, the 'horse sacrifice', is performed by the victorious king who wishes to confirm and proclaim his sovereignty. This highly complex rite lasts an entire year: before being put to death, the horse, who at once 'represents' Prajāpati the creator, the sacrificer (in this case, the king) himself, and the sun, wanders at will over the land, protected by an escort, one of whose duties it is to prevent him from any contact with mares. And while the horse wanders, a great number of preliminary ceremonies are carried out, rites whose object it is to magnify the royal function and to commentate or orchestrate the horse's movements. See the detailed study of P.E. Dumont 1927 as well as Oldenberg 1923: 471f; Keith 1925: 342f.; Renou-Filliozat 1947: 358f; and Gonda 1962: 203f.
2. TS 5.5.11f; TB 3.9.3.3f; VS 24.1f; ĀpŚS 20.17.1f.
3. The terminology is fluid here. We call 'brahmanism' the religion that bases itself in the Vedas, which are considered to be the 'Revelation' or *Śruti*, to which are added the texts which make up the 'Tradition', or *Smṛti*. The later Hindu tradition, which first appears in the Epics, does not break away from these authoritative sources, but forgets them to a

- certain extent and, basing itself on other texts, notably the *Purānas*, bends ritual and theology in a new direction. 'Brahmanism' nevertheless constitutes the core of orthodox Hinduism.
4. *Āryāvarta*, 'the sphere within which the Āryas turn', is the religious heart of brahmanic India. It more or less corresponds to the Indo-Gangetic plain. Cf. *Manu* 2.22f.
  5. There are ten plants of the village, according to *ŚB* 14.9.3.22.
  6. Cf. Renou *EVP* 2: 65, n. 4.
  7. Lewis (1965) is struck by the contrast between the very distinct plan of the Mexican village, whose streets, which meet at right angles, are ordered around the central square, market, or church; and the tangle of dead ends, and absence of any centre, that the Indian village seems to offer (p. 308). The weak 'territoriality' of the Indian village is also marked by the fact that the ancestors in India have no terrestrial habitat.
  8. The complete text of the adage is: 'Whence comes the limit, if not from the village? Whence fame, if not from knowledge? Whence deliverance, if not from gnosis? Whence intelligence, if not from faith?' Böhrling 1873: 3, no. 7575.
  9. Cf. Mayrhofer 1953: s.v.; Minard 1956: § 374a.
  10. Thus *Manu* 2.2 and 4. The word *aranya*, 'in the forest', is also the antonym of *amā*, 'at home', in the Vedic texts. The adjective *arāṇa*, 'foreign, external', from which *aranya* is derived, is placed in opposition to *sva*, 'one's own'.
  11. *Artha Śāstra* 1.1.4 and 2.2.1. For an analysis of the place occupied by the forest and fallow lands in the economy of ancient India, see Kher 1973: 180f.
  12. Mayrhofer 1956-76: s.v.
  13. Cf. Macdonell-Keith 1912: 2: 241. On the different kinds of forests, and on the notion of 'jungle' in the Indian (especially medical) texts, one may now refer to the excellent work of Zimmermann 1982.
  14. *VS* 3.45. The rite is described most fully in *ŚB* 2.5.2.20f. Cf. Keith 1924: 265 and 321f.
  15. This is the *Bos gavaeus*, called *gavaya* in Sanskrit. Cf. Macdonell-Keith 1912: 1: 222.
  16. Cf. again *ĀpŚS* 10.20.8f. On the *gomrga*, cf. Eggeling 1900: 338n; Keith 1924: 477 and n. 7.
  17. On the notion of *dharma*, see for example Kane 1:1; Renou (-Filliozat) 1947: 561; and Biarreau 1981: 57f.
  18. Thou shalt not steal is a prescription that applies to all men (as are also the commandments to avoid violence, to tell the truth, keep oneself clean, control one's sensory organs, and to be generous, patient and compassionate). Cf. *Yāj* 1.122.
  19. Especially chapter 3.
  20. Cf. Lévi 1966: 81f.
  21. *ŚB* 2.2.2.6. Cf. Minard 1949: § 473.

22. These are debts to the gods, to the *ṛsis* who received the Vedic revelation, to the Manes, and to humans: the fundamental debt one owes to Death breaks down into these four debts. *ŚB* 1.7.2.1f; 3.6.2.16; *TS* 6.3.10.5. Cf. Lévi 1966: 131. See below, chapter 5, 'The Theology of the Debt'.
23. See above, chapter 1, 'Remarks on the Brahmanic Concept of "Remains".'
24. On the primal sacrifice, cf. especially *RV* 10.90, translated into French by Renou 1956: 97f; and for the data of the *Brāhmanas*, Lévi 1966: 15f, and *passim*. On the necessarily individual character of the Vedic sacrifice, see Oldenberg 1977: 370f. Let us add here that the *grāmayājīn*, the officiant who attempts to offer his services to a group, or who performs 'for a village' is held in scorn: *Manu* 3.151; 4.205; *GauDhS* 15.16, etc. Cf. Bloomfield 1897: 42, n. 1.
25. Winternitz 1920: 8f; Malamoud 1983-4: 165-8; 1984-5: 155f.
26. Keith 1925: 349f; Renou 1954: 156.
27. *Manu* 3.77f.
28. *ĀvGS* 4.1.2.
29. *BhŚSPair* 2.11.3.
30. *ĀvGS* 4.1.3. Cf. Keith 1925: 259.
31. For example *ŚB* 13.2.4.3.
32. One must distinguish between plants and animals. The forest plants are more frequently and more easily included in the sacrifice (alongside cultivated plants) than are forest animals. This is the case in the rite called *saurāmaṇī*, an offering of *surā*, of fermented liquor that is at once the substitute for and the counterpart of *soma*. *Soma* is itself extracted from what is essentially a forest plant. One should not, however, consider *soma* to be a simple offering; rather, it is present at the sacrifice as a royal and divine guest, and not merely as a substance to be consumed. Cf. our study, 'Cooking the World', above, chap. 2.
33. The text of the *ŚB* concludes its argument in the following terms: '[but] if one did not offer these [forest] animals at all, something would be lacking in the sacrifice. One [thus] releases them after having surrounded them with fire [by waving around them, in a circle, a burning firebrand, such that they become consecrated, in accordance with general sacrificial practice]. This is, thereby, neither a sacrifice nor a non-sacrifice: these animals do not carry the sacrificer, dead, out into the forest, [yet] at the same time, the sacrifice lacks for nothing. One carries the sacrifice through to its very end by putting the village animals to death [ . . . ]' See also *ĀpŚS* 20.17.1f. and *TB* 3.9.3.1f.
34. See above, note 31. Sesame seeds are considered to be at once wild and cultivated: *ŚB* 9.1.1.3.
35. *ĀpŚS* 16.19.11-13. Cf. Kane 2: 2, p. 1250.
36. On the edge here means partly within and partly without. Cf. Keith 1925: 325. 'The divine substance is composed of that which the sacred site encloses, and also of an ascendancy over that which lies without . . . ' says Mus 1947: 612.

37. *TS* 1.3.5.8; *ŚB* 3.6.4.7. The symbolism of the sacrificial post is extremely rich: it is the axis that unites heaven and earth, which the sacrificer may only mount by using a ladder. The wood of which it is composed, called *udumbura* (*Ficus glomerata*) concentrates in itself the essence of every other tree. Cf. Minard 1949: § 233a; 1956: § 146a.
38. For an analysis of and a bibliography on this euphemism, see Minard 1949: § 221 and 2 § 470a. See also Hubert and Mauss, 'Essai sur la nature et la fonction du sacrifice', *Année sociologique* 1899: 69 (= Mauss 1968: 2, p. 235). The rites of propitiation of the tree which one is about to fell are set forth in *ŚB* 3.6.4.1–27. See below, chap. 9.
39. *ŚB* 3.8.1.15f.
40. See above, note 10.
41. *TS* 5.2.94; *JUB* 1.3.1.10.
42. Cf. Keith 1925: 154. Three themes are conjoined here: the forest is driven back by the fire, upon whose ashes the land is cultivated; the god Agni is the forerunner and pathfinder in the *ārya* invaders' south- and eastward penetration; and he is prototype of the sacrificer and the officiating priest, and thereby a god who is doubly sacrificial.
43. When it is orchestrated properly, the sacrifice voids itself of every danger to which it may give rise, and every impurity it may produce.
44. For an enumeration and presentation of the Sanskrit sources, see Kane 2: 2, pp. 930–75. Among the many modern exegeses of these texts, one must mention, apart from Abbé J.A. Dubois (1825: 260–87) and the chapters devoted to this question in the majority of general works, the following studies: Max Weber 1920: 146f; Dumont 1966: 324–50; Heesterman 1964, revised 1985: 25–44. One should in no wise omit the impeccable formulations of Al-Biruni which go straight to the heart of the matter and which present, in a single movement, the forest way of life and the renunciant ideology. See *Al Biruni* (Sachau 1910: 2, p. 132f.). See also *Abhbār as-Sin wa l-Hind, Relation de la Chine et de l'Inde* (Sauvaget 1948: 122f.).
45. 1981: 43f., and especially her contribution to Biardeau and Malamoud 1976.
46. The most noteworthy effect of this development is the marginalization, into peripheral or more or less clandestine spheres of worship, of all blood sacrifice. The great gods of Hinduism, at least in the form in which they are honoured in temples by brahmins, are vegetarian.
47. Cf. Kane 2.1, chap. 8.
48. A feature of the renouncer's *ethos* is to avoid adopting new habits, to not take note of the differences between the foods he eats, and to never lay up stores. To go without provisions seems to go hand in hand with having no plans for the future, and with the desire to not accumulate *karman*.
49. *TS* 6.5.11.2.

50. Such is the practice of the *saṃnyāsins* called *turīyānta*, who thus eat 'in cow-like fashion'. Others imitate the *ajagara*, the boa constrictor, and swallow any food that is within reach of their mouths. In 1975, I saw in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, a *saṃnyāsin* who refused to make the slightest motion in order to eat: he ate only that which was forced into his mouth. On the other hand, it was with great effort that he distributed to nearby dogs the alms that people had placed close to him. He had visibly attained that extreme state in which his detachment and his will to independence had rendered other peoples' help indispensable. The wild *sādhus* one sees thronging to the great pilgrimage centres may at times push the imitation of animals in other directions, with some endeavouring to only move by leaps and bounds, 'in monkey fashion'. Orthodox Hindus react to such displays of prowess with a mixture of disdain and fear. They consider these *sādhus* to be a perverted and degraded form of *saṃnyāsin*, and offer the following criterion for distinguishing between these two kinds of men, who are outsiders with regard to the village: the *sādhus*, they say, are those who make themselves seen and even put on a show, whereas *saṃnyāsins* must be sought after in their retreats. On the various styles and varying sects of *sādhus* in contemporary India, see Oman 1905. We should nevertheless recall, in spite of the apparent gulf between the *saṃnyāsin* and the *sādhu*, that it is the same ascetic impulse, the same will to independence, the same decision to disengage oneself from village structures, that guides them both.
51. This word, also used as a reflexive pronoun, is often translated as 'the Self'.
52. Cf. *TĀ* 3.11.12.
53. Every sacrificial gesture is understood to be a form of violence: this includes the putting to death of the victim, to be sure, but also the pressing of the *soma*, the pouring of the vegetable or dairy offering into the fire, and even the ground-breaking involved in preparing the sacrificial area. These violent and necessary acts are immediately compensated by propitiatory formulas and repertory ceremonies. This is not to say that the forest life is wholly without violence, nor that the renouncer escapes such violence. But the renouncer directs his violence against himself, since he has 'placed his sacrificial fires within himself', and so internalized his rites. Let us, however, repeat once more that it was among the renouncers, in other words, among the forest hermits, that the ideal of non-violence was developed.
54. *ĀpŚS* 7.2.13.
55. *ŚB* 1.2.5.14; 1.3.2.1.
56. The Vedic texts do not offer a definition for man, but rather a compendium of references. One might attempt to place these side by side in order to draw up a general description. It is not always easy, however, to distinguish between what is said concerning man as a zoological species,

- and man as the image of the primordial *Puruṣa*. Cf. Eggeling's (1900: 548f.) *SB* index.
57. On the mechanics of this substitution, for which Prajāpati himself stands as the model, see Lévi 1966: 130.
  58. *SB* 3.1.2.10f.
  59. *SB* 7.5.2.23: *puruṣa eva paśūnām yajate*, the key formula of brahmanic anthropology.
  60. Cf. Oldenberg 1919: 43.
  61. One of the words for elephant is *hastin*, literally, 'he who has a hand (*hastā*)'. On the affinity of human and elephantine origins, see *SB* 3.1.3.4.
  62. The elephant and the monkey, animals having hands, are ranked alongside humans, among the forest animals: *TS* 6.4.5.7.
  63. Man is the first of the *paśus*; he stands at the head of the sacrificial victims: *SB* 6.2.1.18.
  64. This compound is generally understood as offerings to the gods and works intended to benefit humans. The ensemble of these activities and the religious attitude designated by this term are explicitly identified with the village, the *grāma*; *ChU* 5.10.1–10. On the other hand, it is in the forest, the *aranya*, that dwell those men who put their faith (*śraddhā*) in *tapas*, in their ascetic ardour. A parallel passage is *BĀU* 6.2.15. Cf. Renou *EVP* 1:98. The forest path followed by the adherents of *tapas* carries over into the next world, since this *aranyāyana*, forest way, leads them to a heaven in which the oceans called *ara* and *nya* meet: *ChU* 8.5.3.
  65. According to brahmanic orthodoxy, this path is only open to the *dvija*, the 'twice born', or even to brahmins alone.
  66. The function of these so-called 'Forest Books' and the nature of the tie that binds them to the forest have been the subject of great discussion among Indologists. For some of these, the *Āraṇyakas*, as well as the rites and speculations these texts contain, are works which concern none other than forest-dwellers, that is, men who have definitively left the village behind. Such is the thesis, notably, of Deussen (1922: 4f.), following that of A. Weber (1882: 48, in the English translation) who maintained that it was the *hulōbioi* described by Megasthenes who had access to this category of texts. This opinion was shared by Masson-Oursel (1923: 51f.) and by Senart (1930: ix). Oldenberg (1967: 1, p. 419f.), on the contrary, maintained that, while it is no doubt true that these texts were to be recited and studied outside of the village, they were not necessarily restricted to those who made the forest their permanent place of residence. The study of the *Āraṇyakas* was, rather, part of the brahmanic student's general curriculum of studies. This thesis, which we find to be quite judicious, is shared by Keith 1925: 489f. On those parts of the Vedic literature which bear both the internal and external features, but not the title of [the] *Āraṇyakas*, cf. Renou 1947: 83f. Two features may be necessary for a text to be called a 'Forest Book': 1) it should be esoteric (*rahasya*; that is, the truths it contains should be too powerful, and its

- expressions oriented too much towards a symbolic interpretation of the rites, for the village to bear; and 2) it should make mention of the horrible, *ghora*, divinities. In a general sense, the *Āraṇyakas* place emphasis on the value of truly knowing the rites' ultimate meaning, rather than on the necessity of actually performing them. In this regard, the *Āraṇyakas* comprise, together with the Upanisads, that portion of the Vedic Revelation called *jñānakāṇḍa*, the 'division treating of knowledge', in contrast to *karmakāṇḍa*, the 'division treating of acts', constituted by the *Brāhmaṇa* part of the Vedas.
67. The principal data on the *brahmayajña* are brought together in Kane 2: 1, p. 704. See also Malamoud 1977: 11–24.
  68. On the *vānaprastha*, cf. Kane 2: 2, pp. 917–29, and Eggers 1929: *passim*.
  69. One does not internalize one's fires during this intermediate stage, but rather contents oneself with carrying them out into the forest. The *vānaprasthā's* dwelling is the model for present-day 'ashrams'. For an application of the notion of utopia to a romanesque work representative of the Gandhian ideology, see Thomas 1975: 205–52.
  70. The ordered 'stages of life', especially as concerns that of the *vānaprastha*, is obviously a theoretical schema difficult to accommodate with modern reality. We nevertheless had the occasion to observe, in 1975 at Jodhpur, an example of the relationship between this division in the periods of human life and changing lifestyles. Our example is an outstanding one, inasmuch as it makes use of the vertical dimension: halfway up one of the hills that rise above the city there lives a man who calls himself a *vānaprastha*. A retired petty bureaucrat, he spends his days in meditation, with his vocation, his *raison d'être*, being one of giving water to drink to passers-by. Once or twice a week, he comes down into the city to spend the night with his family, but it is much more often the case that people from the city climb up to his hut to converse with him. 'Spiritual' problems are closely intertwined with questions of money in these sessions, but the tone of conversation is always peaceful, in harmony with the soft light of falling dusk. This *vānaprastha*, a lively and refined man, looks forward to becoming a *saṃnyāsīn*, yet wonders if he is capable of crossing over to that state. At the very summit of the hill there dwells, in solitude and silence, a total *saṃnyāsīn*: every day, people from the city, most especially the *vānaprastha*, clamber up the rocks to bring him food to eat and to contemplate the sunset in his presence. Both the *vānaprastha* and the *saṃnyāsīn* are devotees of the goddess Durgā. Atop the next hill, and towering over the city, the plain and the main road, there rises up the imposing walled palace (*durga*, 'inaccessible', in Sanskrit!) of the ancient *rājas* of Jodhpur.
  71. Cf. the commentary of Govindasvāmī *ad BaudhDhS* 3.1.14–17.
  72. This dramatic work of Kālidāsa (4th c. AD) was translated into French by Chézy (Paris: 1930), and later by A. Bergaigne and P. Lehugueur (Paris: 1884); into English by William Jones (London: 1789) and

- Monier-Williams (London: 1876); and into German by O. Böhtlingk (Bonn: 1842).
73. *Śakuntalā* 1.15.
  74. Ibid.
  75. Ibid., 1.25-6.
  76. Bhāsa, *Svapnavāsavadatta*, Act I, v. 25. A much more detailed and flowery enumeration of the same sort is found in the first canto of Kālidāsa's *Raghuvamśa*.
  77. Canto 5, vv. 8 and 11-25.
  78. Here we attempt to give a rendering of a Sanskrit play on words: the word for 'necklace' is *hara*, and *āharya* means 'impossible to remove or strip away'.
  79. Guha is one of the names of the son whom Pārvatī wishes to bear from her union with Śiva. Another name for this god is Kumāra (and it is this name that appears in the poem's title).
  80. Some Indian commentators are shocked that Pārvatī should indulge in such frivolous occupations. They therefore suggest that one understand that Pārvatī measured, in comparing them to those of the gazelles, the eyes of the companions standing before her, and not her own eyes. Cf. the commentary of Mallinātha in the (2nd) Nirṇaya Sāgara Press edition (Bombay: 1886, p. 79).
  81. Here too, we reproduce a repetition which, in Sanskrit, is also a play on words: the word for 'pure' is *śuci*; but *Śuci* is also the name of a summer month, and by extension, a poetic term for the entire season.
  82. The four fires are those placed at each of the four cardinal points, with the sun constituting a fifth fire.
  83. Pārvatī's slender waist is, in the Sanskrit, 'a fair middle': she is *su-madhyamā*. And, she has 'gone into the middle' of the fires: she is *madhya-gatā*.
  84. This is the moon, styled as masculine in India.
  85. By offering its guests its fruits and flowers, the forest formally performs the rite of hospitality towards them.
  86. According to certain commentators (cf. the 1913 Trivandrum ed., 2: 178), the beholding of this princess-ascetic suffices in itself to destroy evil. One can be 'mature' in a great number of ways, the enumeration of which vary according to the texts. For example, one may be 'mature' by virtue of one's age, by one's absence of passion, or by one's conduct and knowledge. Pārvatī is 'mature' by virtue of her conduct.
  87. *Manu* 6.23.

### Notes to Chapter 5

1. F. Nietzsche, *Morgenröte, Gedanken über die moralischen Vorurteile* (Leipzig 1881, vol. 4 of the *Gesammelte Werke* (Leipzig 1899-1913). 'Es gibt

- so viele Morgenröten, die noch nicht geleuchtet haben'. On the meaning attributed by Nietzsche to this epigraph, cf. Ch. Andler, *Nietzsche, sa vie et sa pensée* (Paris, 1920), vol. 2: 388 (republished Paris, 1958).
2. L. Renou *EVP* 5: 69 (Paris, 1959). Cf. also 7 (Paris, 1960), p. 18. This is *RS* 2.28.9.
 

*pāra ṛṇā sāvīr ādha mātkṛtāni*  
*māhām rājann anyākṛtena bhojam*  
*avyustā in nū bhūyasir uśāsa*  
*ā no jīvan varuṇa tāsu śādhi.*
  3. Ch. 16 of P.V. Kane's *History of Dharma Śāstra* 3 (Poona, 1946; 2nd ed., 1973) is entirely devoted to a study of the judicial system of debt in ancient India; pp. 411-17 set out the Vedic origins of Indian ideas of debt and quote a good number of the texts that are discussed in the present article. The mass of data gathered by Kane makes his book indispensable for anyone working on the question of debt, or indeed on any of the other numerous and diverse subjects dealt with in the five volumes of this monumental work.
 

Heramba Chatterjee's dissertation, *The Law of Debt in Ancient India* (Calcutta, 1971) summarizes and puts in useful order the main texts of the *Dharma Śāstra* dealing with the judicial aspects of debt; pp. 83-91 discuss 'the religious background' and thus also refer to the main Vedic texts.
  4. Cf. L. Renou *EVP* 5: 108; 7: 95.
  5. French translation of the 'hymn to the gambler', *RS* 10 34, by L. Renou 1956: 67-9. See also commentary and bibliography, *EVP* 16: 131f.
  6. Translation of this hymn by Renou, *EVP* 17: 48f.
  7. Translation of this hymn by Renou, *EVP* 10: 20.
  8. Renou, *EVP* 5: 103: 'demanding the repayment of debts'. But in *EVP* 7: 89, Renou tells us that *ṛṇa* is mixed between 'debt' (that is gathered in) and 'fault' (that is punished). The problem concerns not only *ṛṇa* but also the verb *cayate*. There are at least two homophonous *ci-* roots to be considered here, one meaning 'punish', the other 'stack up, gather together'. It is not our purpose to present a detailed table here of the solutions proposed by Indian commentators and modern authors of dictionaries and translations. The problem is dealt with in Neisser 1924: 188f.
  9. Renou *EVP* 15: 59.
  10. Bergaigne 1878-83, 3: 163-5.
  11. Renou *EVP* 15: 179: 'with *ṛṇa* meaning "fault" as well as "debt", we pass from "putting debts in order" to "repressing faults (by punishment)".' In classical Sanskrit in any case the two notions are quite distinct and a maxim in the form of a *śloka* confronts and opposes them:
 

*ṛṇapāpasamuddhārād ṛṇoddhāro varah smṛtaḥ*  
*paraloke dahet pāpam ṛṇāgnir iha tatra ca*

- 'Better, it is said, to wipe out a debt than a sin. Sin burns you in the other world; the fire of debt burns here below and in the world beyond. Cf. O. Böhtlingk 1870-73, no. 7487, vol. 3, p. 594.
12. Cf. E. Benveniste 1969, 1: 109f. This book contains an admirable analysis of the formation of the notion of debt in several Indo-European languages. See vol. 1, all of Ch. 16. Sanskrit is not dealt with at all, however.
  13. In Russian, the same word *dolg* means 'debt' and 'duty' and there is no discernible limit between the two acceptations. The commonest rendering of the verb 'must' is a periphrase containing an adjective formed from *dolg*. But in Old Slav, the original meaning is 'debt'. Cf. Sadnik, Aitzetmüller 1955: 20 and 228; Vaillant 1948: 93.
  14. Sanskrit has another means at its disposal in its verbal system for expressing the idea of 'must': the verbal adjective of obligation.
  15. Pāṇini, 8.2.60.
  16. Lanman 1888: 2: 135. This etymology is reproduced by Monier Williams 1899: 225, col. 3. The comparison with the Latin *reus*, valueless as far as form is concerned, was already suggested by Böhtlingk, Roth 1855-75: 1, col. 1045.
  17. Renou 1939a: 174, n. 1.
  18. Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 76. Cf. also Wackernagel-Debrunner 1954: 733, and Mayrhofer, *Kurzgefasstes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen* (Heidelberg 1956), Nachträge to vol. 1, p. 560.
  19. Mayrhofer 1956: 121, suggests, without much conviction, an etymology via the Indo-European root *lē-* 'to leave'. As for Debrunner, *loc. cit.*, he proposes a comparison between *ṛṇa* and the Greek verb *arḗomai* 'to refuse', or else *arḗnumai* 'to obtain'!
  20. Cf. Bartholomae 1904: col. 849 and 850.
  21. Benveniste 1969: 1: 183.
  22. *ŚB* 13.4.3.11. In the stories, theatrical representations of legends and enigmas—*pāriplava*, cf. Renou 1954: 99—included in the celebration of the *aśvamedha*, to illustrate the assertion that in the eyes of the Asura demons the Veda is only illusion, *māyā*, a group of usurers, *kusīdin*, are invited to perform tricks of magic. This idea of a special affinity between usury and the art of conjuring is unfortunately not set out elsewhere in Sanskrit literature. Hypotheses on the origins of usury in Indian society can be found in Rau 1957: 29 and especially in Mylius 1965: 41-3.
  23. Cf. Böhtlingk-Roth 1855-75: 2, col. 372, who bases himself on *TS* 7.3.11.1. Also Monier-Williams 1899: 298. Mayrhofer 1956: 247f. is sceptical. See also Sharma 1966: 117.
  24. Rhys Davids, Stede 1921-5: 244. *Kusita* is probably an hypersanskritic form.
  25. *Bṛhaspati Smṛti*, 11.2.
  26. An essential component of the *ṛṇa* is the notion of 'lack'. In arithmetic, *ṛṇa* is used for 'minus' (while *sva* 'that which rightfully belongs' and *dhana* 'wealth' are used for 'plus'). Cf. Jolly 1928: 211f. Renou outlines

- the following hypothesis: 'debt—*ṛṇa*—was originally fault understood as entailing a "lack to make up"'. Cf. Renou 1978: 183.
27. For a study of debt owed to the *ṛṣis*, and of apprenticeship to the Veda as a means of settling it, see Malamoud 1977: 24-44.
  28. A more detailed analysis of this phase of the sacrifice will be found in *ŚB* 3.8.3.1-19.
  29. *ava-do-* is an article in the dictionary of Monier-Williams, p. 99, col. 2. Whitney 1885: 70 and 72, considers that the present tense *dayate* and *dyati* derive respectively from the roots *day-* and *dā-*, which, he says, are not truly distinct. The same opinion may be found in Mayrhofer *op. cit.*: 2: 20 and 31.
  30. Lévi 1966: 131.
  31. Cf. Minard 1949: § 257b.
  32. On the forms and stages of the process which finally excludes the *śūdra* from double birth and the community of men authorized to celebrate Vedic sacrifices, see Sharma 1958: 66-70, 119-23 and *passim*. Cf. Garge 1952: 186.
  33. On this construction that makes the neuter noun *ṛṇa* into the attribute of the subject, cf. Minard 1949: § c, with the bibliography. Also Renou *EVP* 13: 133.
  35. Cf. Malamoud 1977: 30.
  36. *Mbh* 1.120. 17-20. Slip by Kane, 3: 416: 'the *Mahābhārata*, he says, adds the debt to men to the list of the three Vedic debts'. As we have just seen, these four debts are in fact those listed by the *ŚB*.
  37. Conversely there is a myth that shows how the gods give up their bodies ('that which they hold dearest to them') and deposit them with Varuṇa, as proof of the understanding that reigns between them, and of their loyalty to the alliance they have formed against the *Asuras*: it is the original myth of the *tānūnaptra*. Cf. Lévi 1966: 73. The myth relates how the gods organized themselves into a group—it is the account of a form of social contract, according to the expression of S. Lévi. It is typical of Brahmanical thought that this myth is not used in justification of a contract by which men might have decided to join together and establish human society. The myth functions only as a model for the solidarity between persons performing the same sacrifice. On the other hand, the theory of congenital debts maps the whole net of relations which shape man's existence, but one does not find in this theory any reference to a contract. See below, chapter 11.
  38. Commentary by Vātsyāyana on *Nyāya Sūtra* 4.1.60 in the *Bhāratīyavidyā* edition (Vārāṇasī, 1966); 4.56 in the edition (with translation and commentary) of W. Ruben 1928.
  39. *ŚB* 3.6.2.16. Cf. Lévi 1966: 131.
  40. *AS* 6.117.1. List of the parallel passages, with their variants, in the translation by Whitney.
  41. *TS* 3.3.8.1. See also *TB* 3.7.9.8.

42. Lévi 1966: 131.  
 43. *TS* 3.3.8.3–4.  
 44. *AS* 6.119.2.  
 45. See above, chapter 2.  
 46. *ŚB* 6.2.2.27.  
 47. *ŚB* 7.1.1.3.  
 48. *ŚB* 7.1.1.4.  
 49. *AitB* 7.13. Cf. *Viṣṇu Smṛti* 15.45.  
 50. *Manu* 9.106.  
 51. *Manu* 9.107.  
 52. Thus Kullūka *ad Manu*, 9.106.  
 53. *AitB*, *loc. cit.*, quoted by Kullūka, *ibid.*  
 54. *Manu* 9.138; cf. *Nirukta* 2.11; *Viṣṇu Smṛti* 15.44. Cf. Wackernagel 1896, 1: 113.  
 55. Commentary by Śaṅkara. The same idea is expressed in the *Nirukta*, *loc. cit.*: *putra* is taken from the root *pr-* 'to fill', on account of the *niparaṇa*, the 'filling' constituted by the offering of rice to the Fathers. Cf. Sköld 1926: 282.  
 56. *TS* 2.1.5.3–4.  
 57. *TS* 6.1.6.1.  
 58. For a fuller version, along the same lines, see *ŚB* 3.6.2.1–12.  
 59. *AitB* 7.13.  
 60. Pun on the name of 'woman', *jāyā*, and the verb 'he is born', *jāyate*.  
 61. See the arguments for 'to end' in Geldner *ad RS* 8.47.17. Renou hesitates: *EVP* 7:95. The subject of the verse is ridding oneself of a debt as one does of a bad dream, by throwing it onto Āptya. Though a single character here, Āptya becomes threefold in the *ŚB*: the myth in *ŚB* 1.2.3. 1–5, relates how Indra throws onto Trita, one of the Āptyas, the sin of having killed Viśvarūpa; Trita gets rid of it in turn, onto a man offering sacrifice without paying *dakṣiṇā*. Cf. G. Dumézil 1956: 37. If the authors of the Vedic hymn were already acquainted with the *ŚB* myth, then the throwing of the nightmare onto Āptya is probably not a pure and simple cancellation, but a transfer destined to be transferred further still.  
 62. Cf. *Nārada-Smṛti* 4.6 and 9. See Kane 3: 416f.  
 63. For a detailed discussion of the relationship between the number of generations of ancestors to whom *piṇḍas* are offered, and whose debts one is obliged to pay, see Kane 3: 443f.  
 64. Böhtlingk, 2: 380f. no. 4071. *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, 3.40.  
 65. Kālidāsa, *Raghuvamśa*, 1.71.  
 66. *Ibid.*, 3.20.  
 67. *ŚB* 1.1.2.19.  
 68. *RS* 8.32.16 provides perhaps the actual formula of this reversal: 'There is no further debt (*ṛṇā*) now for the *Brahmān* priests who squeezed the *soma* without delay. The *soma* was not drunk without compensation (*apratā*)'. Geldner 1951: 344 explains this passage as follows: the celebrants have

- paid off their debt to Indra. He now owes them something in exchange. It is his turn to be a debtor. On belief ('croyance') and credit/credence ('créance') and particularly Vedic *śraddhā*, see Benveniste 1969, 1: 171–9.  
 As a debtor in this world, man can—if he settles his debt here below—claim credit, in the world beyond. Though it is clear what entitles man to credit, nothing whatsoever tells us upon what basis the gods, *ṛsis* and the Fathers make their demands on man. In fact, *Brahmanic* reasoning runs in the opposite direction; if I offer sacrifice, then I must be in debt to the gods.  
 69. *Brahma Upaniṣad* 3. *Samnyāsa Upaniṣads* (Adyar: Madras, 1966), p. 184. On this text, cf. Sprockhoff 1976, 1: 110–15.  
 70. *Manu* 6.35.  
 71. *Manu* 6.37.  
 72. The *anaddhāpuruṣa*, 'indefinite' man, owes his lack of definition to the fact that, by refusing to carry out rites, he is 'of no use to the gods, the Fathers or to men', according to what is said in *AitB* 7.9. Cf. also the commentary of Mahīdhara *ad VS* 11.16. An *anaddhāpuruṣa* (a live man or an effigy) has to be present, curiously, in the ceremony of *agnicayana*: the procession (men and beasts) whose duty is to fetch the clay for the fire altar bricks must look upon an *anaddhāpuruṣa*, both on the way out and on the way back. Cf. *ŚB* 6.3.3.4 and 14. See above, chapter 3.  
 73. On the relationship between *mokṣa* and *dharma*, see among the many studies that Madeleine Biardeau has devoted to the subject, the chapter entitled 'Renoncement et intériorisation du sacrifice' in Biardeau, Malamoud 1976: 57–80. See also Biardeau 1972: 35–56, 80–94.  
 74. *Mitākṣarā ad Yājñavalkya* 3.57.  
 75. The *Mitākṣarā* refers to *Jābāla Upaniṣad* 4. On the latter, see now Sprockhoff 1976: 95–105. See also Malamoud 1977: 36f.  
 76. *Vātsyāvana ad Nyāya Sūtra* 4.60. Cf. above n. 37.  
 77. *Ibid.*, 4.1.61.  
 78. *Ibid.*, 4.1.62.  
 79. *Ibid.*, 4.1.63.  
 80. Derrett 1977, 1: 117.  
 81. Nārada's speech at the beginning of the story of Hariścandra and Śunaḥśepa, *AitB* 7.33, contains a criticism of asceticism: 'What good are filth, goatskins, long hair and ascetic burns (*tapas*)? Better to have a son' . . .  
 82. *Vāyu Purāṇa* 77.106; 108.89; 110.60; 111.29; 31.  
 Outside the system of the three Vedic debts, there are any number of edifying, 'bhakti'-inspired stories that show a man pledging an essential part of his person for a sum of money: in the case of a musician, it may be his favourite *rāga*, which he deposits, so to speak, in the hands of his creditor and forbids himself to sing so long as his debt remains unpaid. One example is the adventure of Narasiṃha Mehta, related by M.R. Majumdar 1965: 301. In fact, it is the god Dāmodara who imposes this

trial on his believer, and it is the god, of course, who gets him out of trouble.

This readiness to deposit non-material goods that are intimately linked to the person of the borrower, without such constituting the total alienation that is slavery, recalls what Herodotus relates in book 2, no. 136, of his *History*: that, in the reign of the king Asychis, the Egyptians were authorized to contract debts by giving their father's mummy in deposit (with the risk, in the event of non-repayment, of their forfeiting the right to be buried themselves). As Saul Bellow says, 'I think the dead owe us a living' (*Humboldt's Gift*).

83. The theory of *karman* allows for a sort of general accountancy encompassing material wealth and spiritual merit. If an ascetic or an *agnihotrin* brahman dies, leaving profane debts (and should he have no sons to take them over), he loses all the merit earned from his observances, and transfers it to his creditors. *Nārada Smṛti* 4.5. Cf. Kane 3: 417.

84. *Gobhila Grhya Sūtra* 4.4.26. Similarly, the debtor who, having failed to pay off his creditor within the latter's lifetime and settles with his son or another of his inheritors, must recite the hymns *AS* 6.117, 118 and 119 which are prayers and acknowledgments of debt to Yama. These instructions are thus aimed at placing the material debts owed to the dead under the aegis of the congenital debt owing to death itself. They are given in the *Paddhati* of Keśava *ad Kauśika Sūtra* 46.36. Cf. Henry 1904: 216; Chatterjee 1971: 83.

In a matching passage of the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* (1.205.91f.) there is eloquent praise of usury (*kuśīda*) as a means of subsistence that is even permitted to brahmins in time of distress; *pūjā* to the gods, Fathers and brahmins, that is in fact to the three creditors of congenital debt, wipes away all the sin inherent to this activity! (As trustees of Vedic knowledge, it seems that brahmins can be considered as the representatives of the *ṛṣis*).

85. Cf. Tricaud 1977: 107.

Gernet 1968: 274f. shows that debts and credit as expectation, anticipation of the future—and thus playing with time—make a late appearance in Greek law. In India, on the other hand, in the *dharma* works that are, it is true, considerably later than the Greek documents referred to by Gernet, the perverse use of time by the creditor is foreseen and condemned. Cf. Kane 3: 423. It was moreover, in order to prevent the creditor from letting the amount of interest increase indefinitely with the passage of time that the *dvaigunya* (modern *dāmdupāt*) ruling was introduced (on this, see Kane 3: 423–7; Derrett 1968: 113, 294 (Bibliography)). That this ruling over the ages should have been constantly avoided or unenforced, and that creditors should commonly have waited till the interest grew greater than the sum originally borrowed does not preclude the fact that the law treatises clearly saw this relationship between debt and time. On the other hand, the debtor's thoughts, especially those

of man as debtor-by-definition, were clearly turned in fear to the moment in which his debt would fall due, and in hope to the moment of liberation from debt.

86. *AitĀ* 2.3.2. *veda lokālokau martyenāmṛtam ipsati vijñātaṃ vadati . . . veda śvastanam.*

### Notes to Chapter 6

1. His *Thoughts* was written between 1725 and 1755 and first published in 1899.
2. The Poona critical edition of the *Mahābhārata* has been used here. The same idea is formulated in 5.37.17: 'in a situation of distress, a man must preserve his wealth; he must preserve his wife, even if he has to lose his wealth; and he must always preserve himself, even if it means losing both his wealth and his wife'. This text occurs also in *Manu* 7.213, and the thought behind it is made clearer in 212. A variant to the text cited here is found in Sternbach 1963: 128. Here, there are five terms in the gradation: individual, family, village, province—and the person of the king.
3. The *Artha Śāstra* 6.1.1 lists the fundamental elements (*prakṛti*) making up the State: (1) the sovereign (*svāmin*), (2) the ministers (*amātya*), (3) the population and territory (*janapada*), (4) the fortress (*durga*), (5) the treasury (*kośa*), (6) the army (*daṇḍa*), (7) the allies (*mitra*). The elements are listed in descending order of importance. Cf. Kangle 1965: 127f.; Dumont 1966: 371f.
4. A king is in a position to give up land because theoretically he is the master of it. The territory over which a king actually rules is the image, or reduced form, of the entire earth, as shown by the names most commonly given him: *bhūpati*, 'master of the earth', *prthivīpāla*, 'protector of the earth', etc.
5. Formally, the *śloka* is made up of two hemistichs, each consisting of two *pādas*. But as far as meaning is concerned, it is frequent to find the 3 + 1 structure we are discussing superimposed on the 2 + 2 arrangement of the form: the final *pāda*, especially in gnomic verses, commonly comes as the 'twist' that allows the text to end on a note of surprise.
6. These remarks apply to brahmanic India, such as we know it through Sanskrit texts.
7. The easiest texts to analyse in terms of sequences or lists of events are tales, like the story of the girl and her four pretenders, in the *Tales of the Vetāla*, or else the texts describing the stages of a ritual or of part of a ritual, such as 'the three steps of Viṣṇu' (*viṣṇukrama*), and the +1 step (*atikrama*) that the sacrificer has to carry out at the end of vedic sacrifice. Cf. *ĀpŚS* 13.18.9. Also cf. Renou 1954: 141; Gonda 1970: 146.
8. Translation by Hume 1931: 86.



9. Syrkin's bibliography (1967: 163f.) in the main bears on works studying this structure as a universal feature. For Vedic and brahmanic India, in addition to Bergaigne 1883, 2: 123–8, see: Minard 1956: § 303a; Renou 1978: 51, 61, 64, 70f.; Gonda 1965: 115f.; 1970: 57f.; 1976: 115f.; Dumézil 1956: 59; Syrkin and Toporov 1968: 27–32. See also Dubuisson 1985.
10. Comparative etymological analysis shows that *turiya* is constructed from a contracted form of the root *catur*, 'four'. Working only from the Sanskrit, Indian grammarians showed remarkable perspicacity in being able to recognise the formal kinship between *caturtha* and *turiya* (Vārtt. ad Pāṇini 5.2.51). But philosophical speculation turned in a quite different direction: it made *turiya* derive from the verbal root TR, TUR, 'to cross', and interpreted this adjective as 'that which is beyond'. Cf. Renou 1978: 86.
11. *Amarakoṣa* 2.7.57: "The *trivarga* is (the whole made up of) *dharma*, *kāma*, *artha*; the *caturvarga* (are all these elements) with the addition of *mokṣa*'.
12. The opening of *Daśakumāracarita* 2, pp. 77–90 of the Nirmayasāgar Press edition (5th ed., Bombay: 1958).
13. The term *puruṣārtha*, as a possessive compound, is used in the *Pūrvamīmāṃsā* to mean 'that which is aimed at man, that which is intended for him' (and not 'that which is an aim for man'). As such *puruṣārtha* complements *kratvartha* 'that which has sacrifice as its aim'. Human activities, including those involved in sacrifice, are divided into these two categories, the second of which is higher placed in the hierarchy than the first. But *kratvartha* activities would be impossible if they were not preceded by *puruṣārtha*-type activities. For a man to offer sacrifice, he must first of all have something he can give up (*tyāga*), goods which had in the first instance been acquired for their owner's enjoyment, thus, *puruṣārtha*. If the purity rules governing directly *kratvartha* activities were applied to the acquisition of goods, sacrifice would in practice be impossible. Cf. Derrett's treatment of the problem (1968: 130–4).
14. E.g. *Manu* 2.176; *Mahābhārata* 5.124.34–38; *Arthaśāstra* 1.7.3–5. The latter states that a *puruṣārtha* to which one has devoted oneself exclusively is detrimental to the other *puruṣārthas* and to itself.
15. *Raghuvamśa* 1.25: 'Even *artha* and *kāma* were only *dharma* for this man imbued with wisdom, who punished the guilty for the stability (of his kingdom) and lived as a husband in order to beget sons'. See also *Kumārasambhava* 5.38.
16. *Manu* 4.176 to end. 'Even *dharma* must be given up if it causes suffering or offends men'. According to Kullūka, this condemns the temptation that a man might feel to give away all his wealth, even that which he needs to feed his son. Cf. also *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* 3.11.7; *Hitopadeśa* 1.43.
17. *Manu* 12.38: "The sign of *tamas* is *kāma*; that of *rajas*, so it is said, is *artha*; the sign of *sattva* is *dharma*; and so, up the scale, in ascending

- order of value'. Since the *guṇas* and their combinations account for all possible 'qualities' of *prakṛti*, it can be assumed that the three *puruṣārthas* are an exhaustive list of all possible 'motives'.
18. Such is the general conception of the *Puruṣārtha-sudhānidhi*, an anthology, attributed to Sāyaṇa, of *Purāṇic* texts with the 'aims of man'. On the problem raised here see Dumont 1966: 332, n. 14.
  19. The *svadharma* theme makes an earlier appearance in *Maitri Upaniṣad* 4.3. The idea of distributing the *puruṣārthas* in time according to the ages of life finds its clearest expression in the *Kāmasūtra* 1.2.1–41.
  20. Medhātithi ad *Manu* 2.224: "The Cārvakas say: *kāma* is man's sole aim; *artha* is how to achieve it, and so is *dharma*, if however it exists'.
  21. It would also be odd for *artha*, whose main meaning is 'aim', to simply denote the sphere of means.
  22. *arthamūlāu hi dharmakāmāv iti*. Cf. also 9.7.80.
  23. *Artha Śāstra* 9.7.80, provides an example of this multiple meaning: *dharmamūlatvāt kāmaphalatvāc cārthasya dharmārthakāmānubandhā yārthasya siddhiḥ sā sarvārthasiddhiḥ*: 'given that *artha* is the root of *dharma*, and that its fruit is *kāma*, the achievement of *artha*, which always results in *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma*, is the achievement of all *arthas*'. The word *artha* is used here (1) in a technical sense as the complementary term to *dharma* and *kāma*, the first two times it appears; it is used the same way the third time in *yārthasya siddhiḥ*? No doubt: once having obtained *artha*, one has obtained the complete *trivarga*, including *artha* itself. (2) In a wider sense the fourth time it appears, *sarvārthasiddhiḥ*: achievement of all *arthas*, of all aims. *Artha* here has the same meaning as in the expression *puruṣārtha*. (Note that *dharmamūla* is a *tatpuruṣa* compound whereas the complementary term *kāmaphala* should be taken as a *bahuvrīhi*). There is the same multiple meaning in 9.7, 60f.: *artho dharmah kāma ity arthatrivargah*, '*artha*, *dharma*, *kāma*, such is the triple series of *arthas*'.
- In legal vocabulary, the word *vyavahāra* provides us with another example of the use of the same word for both the part and the whole: according to Nārada, a court-case, *vyavahāra* stands on four feet: *dharma* (i.e. authoritative texts), *vyavahāra* (procedure), *caritra* (custom, precedent) and *rājasāsana* (the king's decision). Cf. Derrett 1968: 154f. for a detailed study of this passage of the *Nāradiya Dharma Śāstra* 1.10. Cf. also *Artha Śāstra* 3.1.39–45, and Scharfe 1968: 226.
24. The specifically human character of *kāma* comes out clearly in the *Kāmasūtra*: we are told in 1.2.22 that human love can be the object of a *śāstra* because it is at once both freer and less free than animal sexuality. Freer, insofar as animals come together only during the brief mating seasons that nature sets aside for them, whereas man is always ready. Less free, in that man's *kāma* must adjust to his other aims. Thus at the same time as sexual enjoyment may be refined and heightened, it must also be disciplined in such a way as to make social life possible: with this principle

understood, the *Kāmasūtra's* purpose is to help us carry out the first part of the programme.

The concern to make a distinction between animal spontaneity and the human norm also occurs in the *Artha Śāstra* 1.8.17f. in the passage in which Kauṭilya studies the problem of a king's entourage: whom can a ruler entrust with posts of responsibility? According to some, he can be certain of the loyalty of those who, coming from the same family as himself, are *sagandha*: they have the same smell. But Kauṭilya rejects this criterion, on the ground of it being an instinctual solidarity that can be found elsewhere than in man, *amānuṣevapi*, in cattle, for example.

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### Notes to Chapter 7

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4. The land of Aṅga corresponds to present-day Bengal.
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7. These are massages in which the body is anointed with perfumed oils and sandal paste.
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7. These are massages in which the body is anointed with perfumed oils and sandal paste.
8. Here, the seven constitutive elements (*dhātus*) of the body are chyle,

- blood, muscle, fat, bone, marrow and seminal fluid. The humours (*doṣas*) are phlegm, wind and bile.
9. Up to the age of five, a girl is a *nagnikā*, a little girl 'who goes naked'. After this age she begins to learn modesty.
  10. Gaming is of two sorts here: there are games that require living beings (*sajīva*), such as cockfighting; and those which operate with inanimate objects (*nirjīva*) and are based on chance as well as on the players' skills, such as dice play.
  11. The art of embracing.
  12. Among the eight forms of marriage known to Indian tradition and described in treatises on law, the *gāndharva* form alone is a love marriage; 'The voluntary union with a girl and her lover, its grounds being desire and its object sexual pleasure' (*Manu* 3.32).
  13. Presents are classified here after the manner of rites, since one in fact differentiates between daily and obligatory rites, between rites performed on a well-defined occasion (the birth of a son, for example) and optional or votive rites, which are thus not obligatory and which one only performs when one wishes to obtain some special grace. This last sort is called *kāmya*, an adjective derived from *kāma*, understood in its broadest sense as 'desire'. The courtesan's mother permits herself the luxury of being extremely delicate here, replacing *kāmya* with *prītidāya*, 'show of love', which thus reverses the state of affairs.
  14. In the brahmanic mythology, Prajāpati ('Lord of Creatures') is the cosmogonic god *par excellence*. From him emanate not only both animate and inanimate beings, but also institutions. All of the courtesan's rules of conduct, expounded by her mother here, are also formulated, in more or less the same terms, in Vātsyāyana's *Kāmasūtra* (1.3).
  15. Winning heaven (*svarga*) after death is a modest ambition, which one may realize by simply leading an upright and virtuous life, mainly through the performance of the rites. But heavenly existence is a temporary matter, and does not free one from the prison of the cycle of rebirths. Contrariwise, deliverance (here called *apavarga*, thus establishing a play on words, without etymological foundation, with *svarga*) yields total and definitive bliss. But the only beings who can succeed in this quest are those who have been relieved of the burden of their acts and who, thus purified, have perceived ultimate reality. This perspective is, therefore, only open to extreme ascetics; and thus unattainable, to be sure (at least in the orthodox perspective that Marīci expounds here) for a woman.
  16. Among the many names possessed by Agni, the god of fire, the courtesan (innocently?) chooses that which means 'golden semen' (*hiranyaretas*).
  17. Here too the choice of names is worth noting: Śiva is here called *Kāmaśāsana*, 'he who chastises Love'. This is an allusion to the myth in which Śiva, with a glance from his third eye, reduces Kāma, the god of Love, to ashes, when the latter attempts to disrupt his yogic meditation.
  18. The three aims of man (*puruṣārthas*) are *dharma*, that is (for the sake of

- brevity) religion, or rather the socio-religious norm; *artha*, 'interest', that which moves us to desire wealth and power; and *kāma*, 'desire', more properly *eros*, the desire for pleasure. See below for the definitions given by Kāmamañjarī herself. To these three 'aims' a transcendent fourth is added: this is *mokṣa* '(the desire for) deliverance'. The most penetrating exposition of this fundamental structure of Indian culture is that of Madeleine Biardeau 1981: 57.
19. Proper to her female condition. Without a doubt, her comments take the form of intelligent questions.
  20. Such considerations on the respective values of the aims of man (and on the necessity of not giving up any one of them, even while remaining especially attentive to one of the three, according to one's place in life and in society) are a commonplace in Sanskrit literature. One finds them developed, for example, in the beginning of the *Kāmasūtra* (1.2).
  21. Indeed, *dharma*, inasmuch as it constitutes the religious and social norm, founds the structure and creates the conditions for the possible range of activities related to *artha* and *kāma*.
  22. Or, the 'Grandfather' (*pitāmaha*). This is a name of the god Brahmā.
  23. The moon god is Soma. Bṛhaspati is the preceptor of the gods. There is no more heinous sin, unless it be the murder of a brahmin, than that mentioned here.
  24. Play on words: *rajas* means both 'passion' and 'dust'.
  25. *Artha* thus has no other *raison d'être* than to enable us to better serve *dharma*.
  26. In the same way, Pārvaṭī, in order to win the love of her husband Śiva, renounces the display of her seductive charms and rather imitates her husband's *tapas*. Only then does she realize her goal. Cf. Radhakrishnan's introduction to the Sūryakānta edition of Kālidāsa's *Kumārasambhāva*, p. xxf.
  27. Common to both categories of texts is the fact that they analyse roles people play; and the leading young female role (*nāyikā*) in the treatises on dramaturgy bears the same title as the female lover in the sources on eroticism. The same holds for the leading young male role and the male lover (*nāyaka*).
  28. Cf. especially *Śabdakalpadruma* 5, p. 533, s.v.; and *Amarakoṣa* 1.7.32.
  29. Other gestures or mimings of seduction are designated by the term *bhāva*. It seems that these are more straightforward and heavy-handed than are those of the *hāvas*. Cf. *Mahābhārata* 5.9.11; *Amarakoṣa* 1.7.21. See also Ingalls 1965: 504f.
  30. Cf. *Śabdakalpadruma* 4, p. 224 s.v. On *hāva* see Bansat-Boudon 1992: 122f.
  31. The *ṛsis* are not the only individuals who trouble the gods. The asceticism of Śiva, the model of the *yogin*, is also perceived as dangerous.
  32. Among the *Apsaras*, there is a group of eleven called the Vaidikīs who specialize in such operations. Cf. Hopkins 1879: 159.

33. References in Hopkins 1879: 161f., and Meyer 1952: 280f.
34. Thus, Droṇa (whose name means 'soma-trough', and thereby designates a sacrificial apparatus) is born from the sperm of Bharadvāja, who ejaculated at the mere sight of the nymph Ghṛtācī. The same holds for his daughter, Śrutāvati, 'she who is possessed of Vedic knowledge'. The name of Ghṛtācī may itself be interpreted as an allusion to an essential ingredient of the sacrifice. It, in fact, signifies 'she whose face is anointed with clarified butter'.
35. For a systematic analysis of sacrificial symbolism in the *Mahābhārata* (the Epic events being understood as moments in or aspects of a sacrifice or series of sacrifices), see the résumés of the courses taught by Madeleine Biarreau, from 1968 down to the present, in the *Annuaire de l'École pratique des hautes études, Ve section*.
36. We would do well at this point to recall that such considerations on the strategy and tactics of the amorous conquest are but a small part of that which India has to say about *kāma*: the wonders of awakening love, love at first sight, the delights of melting together in love's embrace, and the pains of separation are also powerful themes for poetry and the plastic arts. The divine equality of lovers finds its expression in the figure of *ardhanarīśvara*, the androgyne composed of Śiva and Pārvatī. Conversely, seduction is not limited to the sphere of love relations alone. India offers, with the notion of *māyā*—at least as it appears in the doctrine according to which the empirical world of distinctions and relative values is a mirage produced by the Absolute, through a form of play (*līlā*)—the idea of cosmic seduction. On *māyā*, see especially Renou 1978: 132–40.
37. See Renou's anthology (1956) for the gist of these.
38. Cf. Lévi 1966.
39. Some of these accounts are translated in Varenne 1967.
40. *ŚB* 3.2.4.3–6. This passage is translated into French by Lévi 1966: 32f, and by Varenne 1967: 146.
41. *Ibid.*, 3.2.1.18–23. Cf. Lévi 1966: 31.
42. *Ibid.*, 3.2.1.25.
43. On the theory of the *arthavāda*, see Jha 1964: 177–84.

### Notes to Chapter 8

1. Renou *EVP* 2: 22.
2. Hillebrandt 1899: 403; Macdonell 1987: 119f.
3. For those points in which the *Atharva* texts are at variance with those of the *Rg*, cf. Whitney 1905: 201f.
4. Oldenberg 1923: 509.
5. Dumézil 1948: 101f. The hymn of *RS* 10.83 has also been translated by Hillebrandt 1913: 111f. and by Güntert 1924: 104. See also Otto 1948:

- 26f.; and Renou *EVP* 15: 172, a translation of and commentary on 10.83 and 84.
6. One finds in Schlerath (1960: 45f.) an enumeration of the names attributed to the spheres subject to the royal sovereignty of the gods. These are *kr̥ṣṭī*, *car̥ṣaṇī*, *ks̥itī*, *viś*, and *jāna*. It would appear that the adjective *viśvacar̥ṣaṇī*, as well, moreover, as the god Manu, escaped the attention of this author.
  7. Silburn 1955: 26. The French term is 'courroux'.
  8. *Ibid.*, 24 and 32. The French terms are 'intention ardente' and 'activité mentale intense, soutenue, prévoyante et normative'.
  9. *EVP* 5: 41, 50, 66, 94. The French term is 'fureur'.
  10. *Ibid.*, p. 70. The French term is 'colère'.
  11. *EVP* 10: 42. The French term is 'furie'.
  12. *EVP* 5: 8. The French term is 'zèle'.
  13. *Ibid.*, p. 86. The French term is 'pensée intentionnelle'.
  14. *EVP* 4: 31. The French term is 'pensée active et féconde'.
  15. *EVP* 10: 13.
  16. *EVP* 1: 3, n. 1. The French term is 'force d'inspiration'.
  17. Edgerton (1965: index) adopts the translation 'passion' to this pragmatic end.
  18. *nahī te kṣatṛām nā sāho nā manyūm vāyāś ca nāmī patāyanta āpūḥ*  
'Neither your temporal power, nor (your) aggressive strength, nor your furor—never have these birds who fly attained them'. The English here is based on Renou's French translation: *EVP* 5: 94.
  19. *yó nāntvāny ānāman ny ójasā utādarā manyūnā sāmbarāṇī vī*  
'He who, by virtue of his *ójas*, caused to bend the (beings)—destined-to-bend-, has shattered, by virtue of his *manyú*, the *sāmbaras*'. On *nāntvāni*, see Oldenberg 1909: 207.
  20. *prā cakre sāhasā sāho babhāñja manyūm ójasā*  
'He treated *sahas* with *sahas*, he shattered (the adversary) *manyu* with *manyú*. The proportion *sāhasā: sāha-ójasā: manyūm* shows that *ójas* and *manyú* are equivalent here.
  21. *nī vo yāmāya mānuṣo dadhrā ugrāya manyāve*  
'Before your course, before (your) fearsome passion, the son-of-man remained prostrated'. (The English here is based on Renou's French translation: *EVP* 10: 13).
  22. *ugrāya cin manyāve nā namante*  
'They do not bow before the *manyú* of the *ugrá* (of the man endowed with that force which is *ójas*)'.

23. AS 1.10.1: *ugrāsya manyór úd imám nayāmi*  
'I lead it far from the *manyú* of the *ugrá* (Varuṇa).'  
AS 1.10.2: *nāmas te rājan varuṇāstu manyāve*  
*viśvam hy ugra ni cikéṣi drugdhām*  
'Homage to your *manyu*, O king Varuṇa!  
For you perceive all hostility, O *ugra*!'
24. *Ójas*, *manyú* and *sáhas* are associated in the rite called *sautrāmaṇī*. We know that this sacrifice to Indra the 'good protector' (Renou 1954: 167) consists of an offering of alcohol, *surā*—a substitute for *soma*—whose function it is to regenerate the *yajamāna* and make another man of him by building a new body for him (cf. Gonda 1962: 209). In the aetiological myth, it is Indra himself who is reconstituted with the *surā*. The hairs of a wolf, tiger and lion, mixed into this brew, represent *ójas*, *manyú*, and *sáhas*, respectively.
25. RS 10.83.1: *yás te manyó vidhad vajra sāyaka*  
*sáha ójah puyati viśvam ānuśák*  
'(The man) who has served you, O Manyu, O thunderbolt, O arrow, he makes his dominating strength flourish, his fearsome strength that is whole and unbroken'. The English here is based on the French translation of Renou (EVP 15: 172), who treats *viśvam* adjectivally, and thus sees no evocation of the *viś* here.  
RS 10.83.4: *tvám hí manyo abhíbhūtyojāḥ*  
'Yes, it is you, O Manyu, who is a fearsome strength (formative of superiority . . .'
26. *iti cin manyúm adhríjas*  
*tvádātam ā paśúm dade*  
'Thus I (at once) took the evil thought of the wealthy (competitor) and the cattle given by you . . .' The English here is based on Renou's French translation: EVP 13: 24.
27. On *nrmná*, see Minard 1956: § 870a.
28. See (apart from the already dated works of Winternitz 1924–1925: 48f., 311f.; and Hauer 1927), Eliade 1954: 114f. and Kosambi 1956: 128 and 135.
29. See Renou EVP 2: 100f.
30. On *annādá*, see Minard 1949: § 375d, who translates this compound as 'well-fed', in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (10.3.5.8) passage in which it figures adjectivally, or at least as a descriptive term. On the formation of this word, *ibid.*, 2 § 112a.
31. Even when it appears as a psychological element, *manyú* can at times be presented as an autonomous force, external to man over whom it can assert itself and whom it can set in motion. Cf. RS 7.86.6, in which the devotee pleads his innocence before Varuṇa: he is not responsible for his

crime, which he did not commit of his own free will (*ná sá svó dáksa*). One must rather incriminate alcohol (*súrā*), the dice (*vibhídaka*) or else *manyú*. This text is a direct precursor of the much more explicit MNU 428:

*manyuh karoti nāham karomi*  
*manyuh kartā nāham kartā*  
*manyuh kārayitā nāham kārayitā*

'It is *manyú* that does, not me; *manyú* is the doer, and not me; *manyú* that causer of doing, and not me'.

Cf. TĀ 10.24.1: *ágniś ca mā manyús ca manyúpatayaś ca manyú-kerdebhyaḥ pāpébhyo raksantāml yád áhnā pāpām ákārṣam mānasā vācā hástābhyām padbhyām udāreṇa śiśnā áhas tād ávalumpatu*.

'May Agni and Manyu and the masters of *manyú* protect me from the evils by *manyú*. The evil I have committed by day by my mind, by my speech, by my hands, by my feet, by my stomach, by my penis, may the day destroy it'. The instrumental singular *śiśnā* implies the stem *śiśān*—(along with *śiśna*), which is not found elsewhere in the Vedic language. Cf. Wackernagel-Debrunner 1954: 179.

32. RS 1.104.2.  
33. RS 7.60.11.  
34. RS 6.25.2; 10.152.5.  
35. RS 8.19.15.  
36. RS 2.23.12.  
37. RS 10.35.4.  
38. RS 2.23.12; on *sárdhant*, see Renou EVP 4: 93 and Minard 1964: 53.  
39. RS 7.36.4.  
40. RS 5.6.10.  
41. RS 10.128.6.  
42. RS 8.32.21: *átíhi manyuśāvīnam*  
*susuvāmsam upārāṇe*

'Go beyond (without stopping) him who presses the *soma* in with *manyú*, who has prepared the *soma* a litigious fashion'.

On the meaning of *upārāṇe*, which is a hapax, and which Geldner translates (1951: 344) as 'in a shocking place' ('an einem anstössigen Orte'), see Oldenberg 1912: 103 ('fault', but perhaps also 'collision'). It is clear that the sense of the *manyú* evoked here, even if it designates something evil or dreadful, could not be rendered by 'anger': it is hostile intent or ulterior motives.

43. RS 7.61.1; 8.78.6.  
44. RS 8.71.2.  
45. AS 7.116.3.  
46. *Indro manyúm manyumyó mimāya*. Cf. 7.36.4, where Indra is defined as *prá yó manyúm ririkṣato mināti* (translated by Renou EVP 5: 42).

47. On Indra's 'helpers', cf. (Benveniste-) Renou 1934: 150f.
48. *RV* 1.80.11 and 14; cf. 8.6.13.
49. *RS* 4.17.2.
50. *RV* 1.37.7.
51. On the paradoxically Indraic character of Brhaspati (Brahmaṇaspati), see Oldenberg 1923: 65f.; Gonda 1962: 93; Schmidt 1968: 179, 234f; and Renou *EVP* 15: 59 (*ad RS* 2.24.14).
52. The word *manyú* is determined by the reflexive possessive *svá* in 1.139.2; 4.17.2 and 6.17.9. In the two latter passages, the poet, addressing himself to Indra, uses second person forms to designate the god's *vájra* (*te . . . vājraṭ*) or *tvíṣ* (*táva tvíṣáh*), but uses *svá* for his *manyú* (*svásya manyóh*). Are we to conclude from this that *manyú* refers to the very substance of the divinity, whereas his *tvíṣ* and *vájra* are simply his attributes?
53. *RS* 1.139.2: *rtád ádhy ádadáṣhe*  
*ánrtam svéna manyúnā*  
*dákṣasya svéna manyúnā.*
- Louis Renou's (*EVP* 5: 8) translation is: 'Vous avez placé . . . le désordre hors de l'ordre, grâce au zèle propre de l'Efficace, grâce à son zèle propre' [You have placed . . . disorder outside of order, by virtue of the the Efficacious One's own zeal, by virtue of his own zeal].
54. *RS* 8.84.4: *káyā te agne āngira*  
*úrjo napád úpastutim*  
*várāya deva manyáve.*
- Renou's (*EVP* 13: 80) translation is: 'De quelle [manière], ô Agni, ô Angiras, ô fils de la vigueur-nourricière [allons-nous] te présenter la louange [en sorte qu'elle soit] à [ton] gré, ô dieu, [conforme] à [ta] pensée?' [In what [way], O Agni, O Angiras, O son of nutritive vigour [are we to] offer you praise [such that it be] to [your] taste, O god, [consonant] with [your] thought?].
55. Our interpretation is similar to that of Bergaigne (1883: 153): 'Our intelligence, are excited by you; O Soma, do not deliver us over to the enemy!' Thieme's (1938: 49) translation '*Es erhebt sich der Wille und auch die Wut, o Indu*', while more literal, remains somewhat obscure. As for Geldner, ('*Es regt sich der gute Wille und der Eifer*') he introduces—without explaining why—an opposition between the good *dákṣa* ('our own') and the ('evil') *manyú* ('of our enemies?'): this appears to us to be arbitrary on his part. Renou (*EVP* 9: 69) translates with '*se tient en alerte la pensée agissante et la passion, ô suc-de-soma: ne nous livre pas au bon plaisir de l'ennemi*' [Keep your active thought and your passion alert, O essence of *soma*: do not let the enemy have its way with us].
56. The word *dákṣa* has been the subject of a great number of studies. A bibliography on these may be found in Minard 1949: 596b; § 1956:

- § 809b. Let us also add here Renou *EVP* 4: 18 and 88; 7: 21 and 35; 8: 90, 99 and 103; 12: 84 and 120; and 13: 134f.
57. *RS* 8.82.3; 8.84.4.
58. *RS* 2.24.14; *AS* 6.42.3.
59. *jyáyān samudrād asi kāma manyo.*
- In *TA* 10.64.1, *manyú* is located between *kāma* and *tápas* in a list of parts of the body or personal possessions of the *yajamāna* which corresponds, term for term, with a list of all of the ingredients—material, spiritual and human—of the sacrifice.
60. Translated by Renou 1956: 181f. In his commentary (p. 266), Renou translates Manyu with 'Zeal' or 'Active Thought', and recalls that in verse 17, the same character is designated by the name of *vása*, 'Will, Desire'.
61. Verse 2.
62. Bergaigne 1883: 3: 182f. and notes. Let us furthermore note, along with Gonda (1957: 94), that the god Manyu is associated with *ábhūti*, 'a concept which, though difficult of interpretation, may have been something like "success"'. The meaning of *satyá* has given rise to endless controversy, the details of which we feel it useless to enter into here. The value of this word in the Vedic *mantras* is indeed that attributed to it by Sāyaṇa *ad RS* 2.24.14 (and *TB* 2.8.5.2): *satyáḥ avitathah*. See also Renou *EVP* 13: 86.
63. *ayám devānām ásuvo ví rájati*  
*vásā hí satyá várūnasya rájñah*  
*tátas pári bráhmaṇā śásadāna*  
*ugrásya manyór úd imám nayāmi.*
- 'This *Asura* here reigns over the gods. For the desires of king Varuṇa are realized. Beyond his reach, far from him, rendering myself effective through my *bráhmaṇ*, I lead this man'.
64. On the meaning of the verb *śAD*, which Lüders (1959: 647) rendered, following Whitney, with 'triumph, win over', see Renou (*EVP* 3: 60 *ad RS* 1.123.10): 'exercise a magical attraction'. This translation appears to us to be particularly well adapted to the *Atharva Vedic* passage we gloss here: only a magical power, even when it is exerted through such orthodox means as the *bráhmaṇ*, can evade the vigilance of Varuṇa and render his *manyú* inoperative.
65. Indra's *svarájya* is evoked in *RS* 1.80.1.
66. *RS* 1.51.15 etc. The words *śúsma* and *manyú* are made out to be nearly synonymous in the Paippalāda version of *AS* 1.92.4 (Calcutta edition, p. 65).
67. *AS* 5.18.9: *tíkṣṇésavo bráhmaṇā hetimānto*  
*yám ásyanti śaravyám ná sá mṛṣā*  
*anuhāya tápasā manyúnā ca*  
*utá dūrād áva bbindanty enam.*

- 'The brahmins have keen shafts and projectiles. The darts they throw [they do] not [throw] in vain'.
68. (Benveniste-) Renou 1934: 108f.
69. If our interpretation of the formula *prathamó manyúh* is correct, it should consequently somewhat reduce the distance separating Vedic religion from that of Zoroaster. We know (for an overview of the matter, see Duchesne-Guillemin 1962: 179, 182-3 and 199) that the Avestan *mainyu* took over the original and originating divine status that had previously belonged to the Indo-Iranian \*Vayu, and that still pertains to the Vedic Vāyu. But we have just seen that this role is neither foreign to the Vedic *manyú*, as far as an analysis of psychic powers is concerned, nor is it foreign to the god Manyu, as far as the cosmic and ritual spheres are concerned. In a more general sense, if it is the case that *manyú*, in the Veda, only means 'wrath' by virtue of an equivocation or a reduction of the more basic sense we have attempted to delineate, then we are not far from the Avestan *mainyu*, this latter being so bereft of any intrinsic pejorative taint that it is, of necessity, specified as being either *spōnta* or *aṅra*.
70. Bergaigne 1883: 163. In *RS* 8.70.3, the question is one of who made (*cakāra*) Indra, and in 4.17.4, it is taught that heaven is the creator (*kartā*) of Indra. We should nevertheless note that compounds in *sva-*, which highlight a god's autonomy, are most often used to qualify Indra and his companions: cf. Dumézil, *Eranos*, no. 52, p. 112, n. 2. The notion of 'autonomy' in the Vedic texts could lend itself to detailed study, bearing not only on compounds in *sva-*, but also on the uses of the (semi-) adverbs *svayám*, and *tmánā*. On this subject, see Gonda 1966: 119f.
71. Heesterman 1957: 62.
72. On cosmic *tāpas* in the hymns of the *Rg* and *Atharva Vedas*, let it suffice us here to cite a few pages from Renou (*EVP* 2: 27; 76, n. 1; and 98). This last page is particularly rich in information on its relationship to ascetic *tāpas*.
73. *AS* 7.70.5c: *agnér ghorásya manyúnā* 'by the *manyú* of the terrible Agni'. *TB* 1.4.2.3: *agnér devásya bráhmanā* 'by the *brahman* of the god Agni'.
74. On Manyu *Tāpasa*, see Macdonell's statement on the matter *ad Brhaddevatā* 2.53. Macdonell demonstrates that this designation, presented in the *Ārsānukramaṇī* and the *Sarvānukramaṇī* as that of the *ṛṣi* who authored hymns 10.83 and 84, applies in fact to the divinity to whom these hymns are consecrated.
75. Gonda 1954: 42f. See also, *idem*. 1957: 94.
76. Liebert 1962: 126-54.
77. It is indeed surprising that the Vedic language would have had a name for such a general notion as this, and we can understand that the Vedic hymns show a tendency to reduce the semantic field of *manyú* to the point of making the sense 'passion' and, even more narrowly 'wrath',

prevail. But this was not the only instance in which India developed a concept of a unifying mental power that coordinates specific thoughts and desires like the hub of a wheel does for its spokes (to borrow a Vedic image). We are thinking here of another derivative of the root *MAN*: this is *mānas*, the 'sensus communis', that internal and central organ which grounds the activities of the various *indriyāni*, and which insures their cohesion. The schema of this evolution (intentionality passion furour, wrath) is provided by *TB* 1.3.10.8: *nāmo vaḥ pitarah śusmāya nāmo vaḥ pitaro jīvāya* (Sāyaṇa: *jīvo debhādhyakṣah*) *nāmo vaḥ pitarah svadhāyāi nāmo vaḥ pitaro manyāve nāmo vaḥ pitaro ghorāya* (Sāyaṇa: *manyuh kopah ghorā māranādi vyāpārah*). We can see that *manyú* occupies an intermediary place in the very sequence of the passage, between the terms which designate essential vital principles and that which signifies 'anger'. In the language of the *mantras*, *manyú* belongs to the series of terms that precedes it here; in later language, it goes with the word that follows it.

### Notes to Chapter 9

1. *āpadi yenāpakṛtam yena ca hasitam daśāsu viṣamāsu apakṛtya tayor ubhayoh punar api jātam naram manye*.  
This verse (cf. Böhtlingk 1870: no. 962), placed twice in the mouth of a person seeking vengeance, in the *Pañcatantra* (1. 381 and 4.17, ed. Kosegarten), is obviously not a precept of dharmic morality. It, rather, belongs to the order of worldly wisdom which finds its place, in a theoretical form, in the *Artha Śāstra*, and in a more familiar form in animal stories.
2. 'He alone is a man who does not allow for the destruction within himself of the act (directed against him). That which another has done, may he do it to him, many times over': (Böhtlingk 1870: no. 1453).  
*etāvān eva puruṣaḥ kṛtam yasmin na naśyati  
yāvac ca kuryād anyo 'sya kuryād bahugunam tatah*
3. Since 1968, Madeleine Biardeau has been putting together an admirable work devoted to the analysis of the Indian Epic and, through its texts, of the whole of Hindu religion and thought. This research has renewed



- and enriched, in a definitive way, this field of Indian studies. The results of her work are recorded in her reports to the *Annuaire* of the École pratique des hautes études, section des sciences religieuses, as well as in the series *Études de mythologie hindoue*; one may also refer to her commentary to the extracts of the *Mahābhārata* translated by J. Peterfalvi.
4. The sage Śaunaka welcomes, into his hermitage, a bard who was present at the sacrifice offered by king Janamejaya. He has the bard repeat the stories he heard on that occasion. In the course of that sacrifice, Vaiśampāyana had been the narrator, and had recited, in the presence of its author, a text composed by Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana, also called Vyāsa. Vyāsa is thus the author of the core narrative of the *Mahābhārata*. He is also a very important character in the Epic story.
  5. This is a *sarpasattra*, a sacrificial 'sitting' in which a great number of snakes are put to death. This wholly mythic rite has no analogue in actual ritual.
  6. The snake who bit him is Takṣaka, the king of snakes. The tale of this murder is also recounted at length in the first book of the *Mahābhārata*. Janamejaya, in order to avenge his father, attempts to slay the entire serpent race, with the help of a magic formula which forces the snakes to throw themselves into his sacrificial fire. But Takṣaka himself escapes this massacre.
  7. M. Mauss, book review of R. Steinmetz, *Ethnologische Studien zur ersten Entwicklung des Strafe* (Leyde: 1892). This review is reproduced in Mauss 1969: vol. 2, pp. 651–98. See especially p. 666.
  8. *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* 136.7.
  9. Various versions of this story, which is related several times over in the *Mahābhārata*, and which is already sketched out in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, are brought together and translated, in accessible form, by Muir 1967: vol. 1, pp. 447–62.
  10. Dumézil 1968: vol. 1, pp. 208–19.
  11. This is the passage from the third to the fourth and final age of the cycle. Viṣṇu, incarnated as Kṛṣṇa, insures the salvation of the world after the catastrophe.
  12. It is Madeleine Biardeau who is to be credited for having discovered this key, of sacrificial symbolism, to the interpretation of the Epic.
  13. Whence the verse (Böhtlingk 1870: no. 4040): 'The dust that, trampled under one's feet, rises up to the head [of he who walks in it] is worth more than the man who remains unmoved even when he is scorned'.  
*pādāhatam yad utthāya mūrdhānam adhirohati  
svasthād evāpamāne 'pi dehinas tad varam rajas.*
  14. The term *niryātana*, whose proper sense is the 'return of a deposit' or 'payment of debt', is also used. Vengeance, thus, would consist of 'returning' an evil just as one would a borrowed object. The compound *vaira-niryātana*, literally 'counterpart of a hostile act', can designate the

expiation expected of one who has done evil just as well as it may the revenge the victim may wish to take. Let us also note here that the term *niṣkṛti* signifies both 'remedy', 'reparation'.

The term *apaciti* poses a number of difficult problems. In the sole *Rg Vedic* passage in which it is found (*RS* 4.28.4), it is translated as 'Vergeltung' by Geldner, and signifies 'vengeance' according to Renou (*EVP* 9: 74), who nevertheless adds (*ibid.*, 127) that according to the *Rg Veda*, *apaciti* is always used in the sense of 'homage'. In the Epic (*Mbh* 1.179.11 of the Bombay edition), the expression *ichann apacitiṃ kartuṃ bhṛgūnām*, 'wishing to do *apaciti* for the Bhṛguṣ' is translated 'wishing to bring honour to the Bhṛguṣ' by J.A.B. van Buitenen 1973: 341, while Goldman (1977: 14) understands the phrase as 'wishing to avenge the Bhṛguṣ' (on the contents of the story of the Bhṛguṣ, cf. below, n. 37). In fact, *apaciti*, a form which coincides with the Greek *apôtisis*, has a primary sense of 'appreciation' and may refer just as well as to a reward or honour as to a punishment. The Vedic adjective *cāyu* means 'respectful'. But the verbal root *CI* (pres. conj. *cayate*) is always used to mean 'punish a fault' or 'cause a debt to be paid'. Are both cases to be traced back to a single root *ci*, whose meaning would have been 'to take into consideration', and which would have served as the starting point for the two distinct derivative meanings of 'punish' and 'honour', as well as such ambiguous derivatives as *apaciti*? Or are we to posit two distinct roots—after the manner of what appears to be the case in Greek, in which *tínō* 'to pay' (to which are attached *tisis* and *apôtisis*) is to be separated, etymologically, from *tíō*, 'to honour' (to which one connects *tímē*, 'honour')? Cf. Benveniste 1969: vol. 2, pp. 50–5. What we wish to emphasize here, on the subject of Sanskrit, is that the verb *cayate* ('punish') never implies those particular value judgments which make vengeance out to be anything other than a punishment. A noteworthy example, nonetheless, is *AitB* 2.7, in which it is said (here it is a matter of *rakṣas* demons who are to be excluded from the sacrifice even though they are not deprived of their sacrificial portion): 'He who deprives a being of the portion to which he has a right, the latter being takes revenge on him (*cayate vainam*) or, if he does not take revenge on him, he will take it on his son or grandson'.

Another term has sometimes been translated as 'vengeance': this is the noun *meni*, the exact cognate, in form, of the Avestan *maēni*, 'Vergeltung', 'Strafe'. But the Sanskrit *meni* is always the name of a weapon endowed with magical powers (Thieme 1966: 155 translates the term with 'Rachekraft' *ad AitB* 7.24; see also Minard 1949: § 529b and 1956: § 869a).

15. The fact that the punishment administered by a king is, on several grounds, a religious act (punishment is homologous with *dharma*: by punishing, a king increases in merit; he is guided by brahmins in his judgments; if he fails to punish, he must himself undergo a rite of

atonement) does not mean that the sentences he pronounces are to be confused with *prāyāścittas*, with the penitences prescribed by brahmins. Such a text as *ApDhS* 1.9.24.1f. shows how these two kinds of punishment combine with one another: 'He who has slain a *kṣatriya* will give a thousand cows, to ward off hostility; one hundred cows for a *vaiśya*; ten cows for the murder of a *śūdra*. In each case, one must also give a bull, as expiation'.

Cows are given by the murderer to the family of the victim, as means of compensation (following the king's judgment and that of his intermediary): the aim is to avoid the vengeance, not of the victim's sons, as one would expect, but of the victim himself. Indeed, as a gloss reported in Haradatta's commentary states, he who has been slain becomes, upon dying, the enemy of his murderer, and thinks, 'May I kill him in another life'. It is to ward off this hostility that the king causes this fine to be paid. The gift of the bull, on the contrary, is an expiation: like any *prāyāścitta*, its effect is one of counterbalancing sin, of eliminating the *karma* that would determine the sinner's fate after death. Every punishment administered by a king is accompanied by rites of atonement which can at times play an important role in the fate of the man who undergoes them. But many rites of atonement are undertaken independent of any judicial procedure—even though it is the king's duty to see that the *prāyāścittas* prescribed by the brahmins be executed fully.

On the king as sole custodian of legal violence, and the only person empowered to administer punishment, see Rau 1957: 93–100.

16. *Manu* 7.58; 8.1; 8f and 11.
17. *Manu* 7.14.
18. *Manu* 7.20f.
19. The etymology which derives the name Yama from the root *YAM*, 'to constrain' is fully accepted by Indian tradition. See, for example, Silburn 1957: 113. One also finds, in *GauDhS* 11.28, an audacious etymology of *daṇḍa*, 'rod', from the verb *DAM*, 'to place under one's control'.
20. *Manu* 7.14.
21. *Manu* 7.17f.
22. *Manu* 7.20f.; 24f. See also the texts cited in Lingat 1967: 372.
23. *Nārada Smṛti* 1.2.
24. *ŚB* 5.4.4.7. Cf. Heesterman 1957: 141, 156. Being placed outside the reach of the rod of punishment, the king is also exempted from being called as a witness: *Manu* 8.65.
25. *Manu* 5.93. For other references see Lingat 1967: 239.
26. Lingat 1967: 239.
27. *Brhaspati Smṛti* 1.5.11; 2.42.
28. *Manu* 8.306; *Yāj* 1.359.
29. *AitB* 2.6.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *KausB* 11.3. Cf. Schmidt 1968: 644.

32. *ŚB* 11.6.1.1f. A parallel version, with important variants, is *JB* 1.42–44, translated in Lévi 1966: 100f. This legend has been studied by Lommel 1978: 211–227 and 292f. Cf. Bodewitz 1976: 164f. Lommel attempts to show that in this belief system, the other world is a reversal of this world; that this is not a case of the punishment of the guilty nor of the vengeance of victims, but, rather of a mechanics of compensation inherent to the balance of the entire cosmōs. See also Schmidt 1968: 645. There can be no doubt that the retaliation described here implies no moral judgment concerning the acts themselves; and we must not interpret this description, of the victims' revenge on their past executioners, as a condemnation of sacrificial violence. It is hard to believe, however, that the feeling of dark pathos felt by the modern reader in the face of this evocation of a chain of sufferings could not be the same as that which inspired the authors of the text itself.

Elias Canetti refers to these texts in a meditative passage of his *Mass and Power* entitled 'The Reversal'.

33. The text is (voluntarily?) mysterious here. That which we translate here as 'surpassingly beautiful' is the word *ati-kalyāṇi*, a term which literally means 'who has surpassed beauty'. Eggeling, surprised at seeing such virtues attributed to Non-Belief, a spiritual state which is generally considered, in the Vedic texts, to be a hindrance to sacrifice, suggests 'one of past beauty, one whose beauty has faded'.
  34. *ŚB* 2.1.2.13f.
  35. *PB* 6.5.2.
  36. *TS* 2.6.6.1.
  37. Within the framework of the doctrine of *karman*, it is not the injured party who takes revenge on his offender; rather, it is the case that the act that, once committed—that is, in fact, emitted—knows to find the way back to its author, 'like the calf who, in the midst of a thousand cows, knows to find the path that leads back to its mother' (Böhlingk 1970: no. 5114). On *karman* as the vehicle of a depersonalized vengeance, see *Manu* 11.48–53.
- The *Mahābhārata* episode mentioned above, n. 14, on the subject of the term *apaciti* is instructive in this regard: starting as an account of personal vengeance, it becomes one of the ways in which this vengeance breaks free from the particular conflict that had originally framed it to become a cosmic force. Here are the main points of this account: the *kṣatriyas*, disoriented and distressed by the death of king Krtavīrya, wish to take hold of the wealth of a family of brahmin scholars, the Bhṛgu, whom they end up exterminating. The only survivor of this massacre is a woman who is pregnant with a child whom she bears in her thigh, and who will become Aurva, 'Thigh-Born'. No sooner is he born than does the effulgent splendour that emanates from his body—a splendour come to him from the concentration, in his person, of the entire Veda—blind all of the *kṣatriyas*. He then hears their prayers and consents to give them

back their sight. But his fury only continues to grow, together with the terrible powers he attains through his asceticism. He vows to destroy the worlds, to honour/avenge the Bhṛgu. It is at this moment that there arise before him the shades of his massacred ancestors. These beseech Aurva to abandon his plan. Besides, they add, they had voluntarily allowed themselves to be slain; they had wished to die and had taken advantage of the *ksatriyas'* murderous rage to avoid having to commit suicide. And now, since Aurva cannot take back his curse, he should direct the fire born of his anger (*manyujo 'gnih*) into the waters of the Ocean, into the realm of Varuṇa (who is, in the Vedas, the god of punishment). Since the worlds lie upon the waters, his fire will flow beneath the worlds. Aurva will thus have kept his vow, and yet the worlds will be saved: his fury will have become integrated into the mechanics of the universe.

### Notes to Chapter 10

For example, *AitB* 7.1. The word *vibhakti* may designate any kind of apportionment. Thus, in the rite of consecration which begins the *soma* sacrifice, the cake called the *purodāsa* is divided into eleven parts, each of which is placed on an earthen vessel (*kapāla*). Two gods, Agni and Viṣṇu, are honoured. How is one to effect the arrangement (*klpti*) and apportionment (*vibhakti*)? The answer, according to *AitB* 1.1, is that eight parts are to be offered to Agni and three to Viṣṇu.

The term *vibhakti* is already employed, in the *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* (1.1.24, 26), to designate 'case ending'. In earlier Vedic texts, it designates the modifications 'a word such as *agni-* undergoes in various *mantras* in which it figures, and which are identical in *yājñā* recitations. It is at once the division of a noun into cases and the distinction that becomes operative, through such a division, between the *mantras* that include its varied forms' (Renou 1941–2: 146). See also Krick 1982: 520 and n. 1413.

Another term for the dismemberment of the victim is *avadāna*, from the verb *ava-DO*, 'cut into pieces by cutting away from a whole'. See especially *TS* 6.3.10.4f., in which the noun *avadāna*, 'cutting', is related, through a play on words, to the verb *ava-DAY*, 'to pay': it is by cutting the victim up that one pays off one's debts to the gods. The dismembered body is *avatta* and the sacrificer for whom this dismembering is performed is an *avattin* (which is preceded, in compound forms, by a numerical noun corresponding to the number of parts into which it is apportioned): cf. *ŚB* 3.8.2.16; *AitB* 2.14.

2. On the construction of the fire altar, see above, chapter 3.
3. *RS* 10.90.

4. The term *paśubandhu* literally means 'the act of binding a victim' (to the sacrificial post). One 'seizes' the victim (*paśum ā-LABH*), yet another way of saying one puts it to death.
5. Schwab 1886: 134–48. See also Kane 2:2, pp. 1109–1132; and P.E. Dumont 1962: 246–63.
6. The name of this dismemberer is interpreted by the Indian authors as a derivative of the verb *śamayati*, 'he pacifies'. One does not kill the victim, but, rather, pacifies it. Modern interpreters offer another etymology, seeing in this word a derivative of another verbal root, *ŚAM-*, 'to toil'. The *śamitr* would thus be 'he who toils ritually'. Cf. Minard 1956: § 209a.
7. On *Idā*, see especially Lévi 1966: 115–19. The notion that sacrifice is a 'group feast' (*sampā*) of gods and humans, on the one hand, and the Fathers on the other, is nonetheless formulated in *ŚB* 3.6.2.26; cf. Lévi 1966: 81. But the fact clearly emerges from the passages cited by Keith (1925: 268–78), that what is intended in those rites in which the common consumption of a single sacrificial material aims at creating or reaffirming a bond between participants, is a communion between two persons (two newly-weds, teacher and student, mother and son), and not the creation of a society or a social group. For the special case of the *tānūnaptra* rite, see below, chapter 11.
8. *AitB* 2.3.
9. *AitB* 2.11.
10. See Svenbro 1984: 925–44. The fragmentation of the oblatory material and segmentation of the word are conjointly attributed to the original poets in *RS* 10.114 (on which see Renou *EVP* 16: 163): 'the inspired ones, the poets divide into ritual arrangements (*kalpayanti*) the Bird(-Word) who is one: (they turn it into) numerous utterances. By putting into place the poetic meters in the sacrificial rites, they apportion into twelve the draughts of *soma*' (v. 5). Is not the passage—from the one potential Word ('principle of sacral formulation', in the words of Renou) to articulated, limited and manifold linguistic formulations—a metaphorical sacrificial dismemberment? Structured into meters (*chandas*), it allowed the poets, after they had thus 'measured the sacrifice' (*yājñāṃ vimāya*), to set the chariot (of the sacrifice) in motion 'with the help of the verses and melodies' (*rksāmābhyām prā rātham vartayanti*). We can carry the analogy a step further: just as the sacrifice consists of the reconstitution and reanimation of the victim who has been killed and fragmented, so, too, the true poet is he who, through his intuition, perceives in heaven the trail left by the Bird (*padām vēh*) and relates this mysterious unity to the multitude of words and phrases in the world.
11. On this phase of the horse sacrifice, see P.E. Dumont 1927: 182f.
12. *ŚB* 13.2.10.1.
13. *ŚB* 13.2.10.3.

14. ŚB 13.2.10.1.
15. See above, note 6.
16. The usual expression for 'put to death' is *saṃjñāp-*, literally 'cause to consent to'. See Minard 1956: § 235a and 470a. Cf. ŚB 3.8.1.15f. Other discussion of these euphemisms, as well as of the task of returning the victim to life are found in Schmidt 1968: 625–55, especially 646–49.
17. Cf. *AitB* 2.6.
18. ŚB 3.8.2.27. On clarified butter as a substitute for gold, see *AitB* 2.14.
19. *Ibid.*
20. *TS* 6.3.9.6. These 'speckles' or 'spots' arise from the fact that the melted butter has been poured into sour milk. Other Vedic texts, especially ŚB 3.8.3.8 (as well as *ĀpSS* 7.23.7) teach that this *pr̥ṣadāṅya* is to be sprinkled over the victim's heart. 'The heart is the *ātman* and the *manas* (of the victim); the speckled butter is his breath. One thus places the breath in the *ātman* (of the victim), in his *manas* . . . ' The victim, once cut up into large pieces (later followed by a finer trimming of its body) and cooked, is carried in such a way as to pass between that post which is planted on the eastern edge of the sacrificial ground and the *āhavanīya* fire, but without crossing over the altar (*vedī*), as is the case with other oblatory materials. Why this difference, 'even though the victim is cooked? It is to avoid placing the sacrifice in contact with that which is dismembered and mutilated' (ŚB 3.8.3.10). On the preeminent place of the heart, which constitutes the first portion, because it is the animal in its entirety, cf. ŚB 3.8.3.15f.: 'It is the animal in its entirety that is cut away as a portion, when the portion that is the heart is cut away'. (According to *TS* 6.3.7.5, it is the omentum that is the victim's *ātman*). This same passage shows that one must take extreme care that all that in some way bears the status of offering be cooked. See above, chapter 2.
21. This is *RS* 6.1.1. For this instruction, cf. *TS* 6.3.10.3 and ŚB 3.8.3.14. which gives an 'etymology' of *manotā*. See also *AitB* 2.10.
22. ŚB 3.8.3.1f.
23. ŚB 3.8.3.27.
24. ŚB 3.8.3.37.
25. *TS* 6.3.11.2.
26. ŚB 3.9.4.2. On the Vedic *asman* and the Avestan *asman*, which mean both 'rock' and 'sky', see Mayrhofer 1956, vol. 1, p. 60f.
27. This is, for the Black *Yajur Veda*, *TS* 6.4.11.1–4; *KS* 27.9; and *MS* 4.6.4. For the White *Yajur Veda*, *SB* 4.2.2.1. This term is spelled *āgrāyana* in the *KS* and the *MS*. On the *śrauta sūtras* see Caland–Henry 1906: §§ 132, 177 and 219.
28. *MS* 4.6.4.
29. *KS* 27.9.
30. *KS* 27.9. The *āgrāyana* is the vessel of Prajāpati's *ātman* according to *TB* 1.5.4.2.

31. This verse is *RS* 3.31.6. Although used in this circumstance 'if one wishes to act magically' (*yady abhicaret*) against a rival, this verse, in and of itself, has no hostile undertones. It may rather be interpreted as a celebration of the Word. See Renou, *EVP* 17:71. On Saramā, Cf. Renou 1941–1942: 152.
32. The scale moves from *śanaih* to *uccaiḥ* to *sūccaiḥ*, *MS* 4.6.4. Contrasted to the audible word are two forms of silence, that spoken or made *upāṃśu* 'with inaudible murmur', and *tūṣṇīm* 'silently'. On the varieties and values of silence in ritual, see Renou 1978: 66–80.
33. *MS*, 4.6.4.
34. *TS* 6.4.11.2f.; *MS* 4.6.4.
35. *KS* 27–9.
36. ŚB 4.2.2.4; *KS* 27.9.
37. *Ibid.* The first drawing thus provides, strictly speaking, a *prāyaścitti*, the necessary materials for an expiatory rite.
38. The verse is therefore *ayātayāmnī*, '(as if) not having travelled any distance'. Cf. *KS*, 27.9.
39. ŚB 2.2.2.1.
40. Lévi 1966: 80.
41. ŚB 1.7.4.9. On the procedure called *prāśitra*, see Renou 1954: 117. (In this work, *Vocabulaire du rituel védique*, all of the technical terms we have treated here are more or less succinctly defined).
42. Out of this interplay between fission and fusion, we have distinguished two orders of events: 1) the oblatory material is cut into pieces, then reunified and revived. This is what we saw in the cases of the animal victim and the *soma* plant; 2) the final sacrificial whole, which cannot be realized prior to an accumulation of partial acts, is ideally affirmed from the very start of the process, and recalled at each stage. Such is, as we have attempted to show, the function that has devolved upon the *āgrāyana*. But such texts as *AitB* 2.40 present us with a third schema: through a series of 'perfectings' which successively transform (to the rhythm of the recitations of the *Ājya Śastra* formulas) his members and organs, the sacrificer acquires an *ātman* made up of Vedic meters, divinities, the *brahman*, nectar (*chandomaya*, *devatāmaya*, *brahmanmaya*, *amṛtamaya*). This construction does not appear to entail any prior deconstruction—although it is possible to regard it as an image of the restructuring of the emptied and scattered body of Prajāpati. This final schema is studied in great detail by Lakṣmī Kapani in her work on the idea of *saṃskāra*.
43. This is true for the notion of grammatical 'case', as we have seen. The same holds for 'gender' and 'number'. See Renou 1941–2. See below, chapter 13.
44. Verpoorten devotes his remarkable essay, entitled 'Unité et distinction dans les spéculations rituelles védiques' (1977: 59–85), to a study of certain of these questions.

45. An origin myth, or rather the ritual prototype of 'measurement' (*mātrā*) is found in *ŚB* 3.9.4.8. It is because one measures out the *soma* that the very act of measuring exists, 'measurement among men, and every other measurement, whatever it be'.

### Notes to Chapter 11

1. *Artha Śāstra*, 7.17.1–8. Cf. Kangle 1965, 1: 198ff.; 2: 434 and 3: 251ff.
2. This reference to a utopian past, to a 'time gone by' when the means of practical efficacy did not constitute a domain distinct from that of socio-religious norms, is absolutely exceptional in Kauṭilya. In treatises on *dharma*, such as the *Laus of Manu* 8.113, the *brahmin* alone is reserved the privilege of swearing 'on his truth'; a *ksatriya* must swear on his chariot, mount or weapons: a *vaiśya* on his cattle, grain or gold; as for a *śūdra*, who possesses nothing, he swears by declaring that he makes himself liable, should he lie, to the punishments meted out for the greatest crimes. Cf. Keith 1925: vol. 2, 395 ff.
3. On the oath in ancient India, see Lüders 1959, vol. 2, pp. 655–74. Abundant data also in Kane 3: 358 ff.
4. References in Lévi 1966: 170.
5. On *dakṣiṇā*, see our study 'Terminer le sacrifice, remarques sur les honoraires rituels dans le brahmanisme', in Biardeau and Malamoud 1976: 155–204.
6. On the *agniṣṭoma* in general, see Caland–Henry 1906. On the *tānūnaptra*, see 1: 61 ff. See also Hillebrandt 1897: 127.
7. In the *uparavāmarāna*, another ritual act symbolizing alliance (*ŚB* 3.5.4.16; references to *śrauta sūtra* citations in Caland–Henry 1906: 101) and one of the innumerable preparatory rites to the *agniṣṭoma*, the *adhvaryu* priest and the sacrificer plunge their right arms into the 'resonating holes' dug into the ground, on the sacrificial site, such that their right hands touch each other through a transversal tunnel between the two holes. During this touching (*āmarāna*), they have the following conversation (speaking through their conduits): "Sacrificer", says the *adhvaryu*, "what is there here?" "Happiness (*bhadram*)", replies the sacrificer. "May it be common to both of us", the *adhvaryu* then says in a low voice'.
8. Caland–Henry 1906: 53–60. See also Lévi 1966: 170.
9. The *adhvaryu* is the officiant whose particular responsibility it is to recite the formulae of the *Yajur Veda* in an undertone, and also to perform the actual gestures of the sacrifice. He is in virtually continuous movement over the sacrificial ground, which accounts for his name deriving from the word *ādhvān* 'movement along a path'. Cf. Minard 1949: § 467.
10. Full monograph on *dikṣā* in Gonda 1965: 314–462.
11. On the role of water in oaths, and more especially in this phase of the *tānūnaptra*: Lüders 1959: 29.

12. Cf. Caland–Henry 1906: 2: 391.
13. Cf. Oldenberg 1923: 322.
14. On the notion of *nidāna*, cf. the study by L. Renou, 'Connexion en védique, cause en bouddhique', reprinted in Renou 1978: 151.
15. On the god Tanūnapāt, Bergaigne 1883: 93 f; Hillebrandt 1927: 1: 121f; Keith 1925: 138 and 166; Gonda 1957: 57f.  
The *Brhaddevatā* (2.26 f.) teaches that Tanūnapāt is the terrestrial Agni, the grandson (such is the strict sense of *napāt*) of the celestial Agni, whose name is *tanū*: the Agni of the intermediate space is thus the father of this Tanūnapāt. According to Bergaigne, *loc. cit.*, Tanūnapāt is Agni in so far as he is 'the (father's) own son', that is, issued directly from the father, as opposed to Agni Mātariśvan 'formed in a mother'. According to this interpretation, the word *tanūnapāt* has the same structure as the compound *ātmaja*, which, in classical Sanskrit, means 'legitimate son', literally 'born of oneself', in fact 'born of the person himself (the father)'. Of the etymologies put forward by Indian authors, those by Yaska, *Nirukta*, 5.2, are flights of the imagination and irrelevant. However, in *AitB* 2.4, an attempt is made to do the word at least some justice in the following gloss: *prāṇo vai tanūnapāt sa hi tanvāḥ pāti*, 'Verily Tanūnapāt is breath, as he protects (*pāti*) bodies (*tanvāḥ*)'.
16. See above, chapter 8.
17. *Tanū* as a reflexive pronoun, cf. Delbrück 1888: 208; Renou 1952: 231.
18. *ŚB* 3.4.2.5.
19. *AitB* 1.24.
20. Cf. Lévi 1898: 73 and n.1; 127 and n. 4.
21. On *dhāman* and the frequent association of this term with *tanū*, Gonda 1967: 63, 68, 72 f.
22. *Sāman* can mean 'agreement, peace', or 'melody', or again 'essence'. There is debate as to whether these are homonyms or different usages of what is fundamentally one word. Cf. A. Minard 1956, § 715a and 807a. 'Agreement' is the obvious meaning in the present context. But the other usages are perhaps also present: in so far as what we are concerned with here is what the gods hold dearest, the mass of bodies makes up what is essential in them, that which is most themselves. Further on, the text states that this *sāman* is *satya*, that it is truth. 'Melody' is also a plausible meaning: it is stated in *AitB* 8.12 that Indra's throne is made up of parts that are *sāmans* and which in fact are known by the names of musical compositions. Though in this instance the *tanūs* of the god do not constitute his throne, they are the mark of his supremacy and the cause of his splendour.
23. Delbrück 1888: 565.
24. Lévi 1966: 73.
25. On *priyā* in the sense of 'belonging specifically', a semantically comparable usage to that of *philos* in Homer, cf. Scheller 1959, and Thieme 1971: vol. 1, 214–26. See also Renou *EVP* 16: 86 (*ad RS* 1.162.16).

26. In *MS* 1.7.2, the gods, prior to their battle with the *Asuras*, leave 'their beloved bodies' with Agni. Hertha Krick (1982: 540) states that the bodies are flocks and village possessions, basing herself on what the text itself affirms a little further on. But she quite rightly remarks in n. 1470, with reference to the *Tānūnaptra*: 'this also means that the "bodies of the gods" have become an indivisible whole, made of fire, or again that Agni shares in the nature of all the gods'. The *ŚB* 2.2.3.2 version of the same story shows her to be correct.
27. The concept of *tanū* 'body' in its relations with *rūpa* 'form' and *nāma* 'name' is the subject of a penetrating study by H. Oldenberg 1919: 99–104.
28. Cf. Oldenberg, *ibid.*, p. 102.
29. Cf. especially Lévi, 1966: p. 37.
30. Thieme 1957: 49. See also Kane 2.1: 534; *Lders* 1951: 39; Thieme 1957: 82n. 58a.
31. Renou *EVP* 14: 7.
32. Renou *EVP* 14: 108 f. *ad RS* 10.16.4. The word *tanū*, in the plural, refers to 'Agni's three favourable bodies', of 3.20.2.
33. *JB* 1.138. Cf. Caland 1919: 39 f.
34. E.g. Lévi 1966: 73.
35. J. Schlanger, 1971. On such metaphors as applied to society in the modern world, cf. pp. 166–74. On the notion of *corpus rei publicae*, see Arendt 1961: 64.
36. *RS* 10.90. From the fact that in the *tānūnaptra* the bodies of the gods do not, by melting together, constitute a society in the form of a body, it should not be concluded that Vedic thought rejects organic metaphor: quite that opposite. What is remarkable about the structure of the *tānūnaptra* is that it is an exception. L. Renou rightly emphasizes 'the frequent tendency to assimilate cosmic, ritual or human elements to "members/limbs" . . . this assimilation implies that in the beginning, the exalted object was considered as a Man, as a cosmic giant'. Renou 1955: 437, n. 2. See also *EVP* 2: 21; Minard 1956: § 918; Mus 1968: 539–63, particularly pp. 543 and 556.
37. *ŚB* 5.1.1.1 f.
38. A careful distinction should be made here between the rite itself, as expounded in the *Śrauta sūtra*, and the way it is presented in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* as a foundation for, and illustration of, its doctrine. The true royal consecration ritual is the *rājasūya*: it is set aside for the *ksatriya*. But because the *vājapeya* can also be performed by *brahmins*, our text makes this rite of much smaller stature into a means of achieving supreme sovereignty. Cf. Eggeling 1894: 23f. Heesterman 1957: 133–9 highlights the symbolism of the circular course of the chariot: renewal of the year, reactivation of cosmic fecundity. Dumézil 1975: 115–60 discusses the *vājapeya* rite in connection with two other rituals of royal consecration: the *rājasūya* and the *āsvamedha*, and the shows that each

- of these rituals is used to confer a particular type of sovereignty on the king; each of these forms of sovereignty is linked to one of the three concentric circles of social belonging.
39. The *brahman* is not only anterior to the *ksatra*, but is also its source and matrix (*yoni*), as is explicitly stated in *TB* 3.7.7.1 and *ŚB* 12.7.3.12 (cf. Gonda 1965: 356). These assertions, embedded here in ritual formulas, are adapted and used argumentatively in *BĀU* 1.4.11 f. to account for the essential paradox of social stratification: the *brāhmaṇa* and *ksatriya varnas* are each superior to the other, and supremacy (*paramatā*) is more or less a *ksatriya* prerogative. But true superiority—and thus priority—belongs fundamentally to the brahmin *varna*.

## Notes to Chapter 12

1. The adventures of Nala and Damayantī form a narrative within the narrative account that is the *Mahābhārata* (3: 52–79 in the Bombay edition). See *La Légende de Nala et Damayantī*, tr. with an introduction, notes and vocabulary by Sylvain Lévi, Les Classiques de l'Orient (Paris: Bossard, 1920).
2. On the 'act of truth', cf. Brown 1973.
3. On the physical characteristics of the epic gods, see Hopkins 1915: 57. The Vedas' hymns already make reference to the fact that the gods never feel the need to close their eyes; this is merely tantamount to saying that they are never troubled by sleep, and are always vigilant. Thus *RS* 2.27.9: *āsvapnajo animiṣā ādabdhāb*, '(you are, o gods) sleepless, you do not blink your eyes, you cannot be deceived' (cf. Renou *EVP* 5: 103).
4. *ŚB* 3.4.2.8: 'The gods observe but one rule, and that is truth': *ekām ha vai devā vratam caranti satyam evā*.
5. The *Nirukta* (1.12–14) of Yāska asks the question of whether the nouns (that is to say, the substantives and adjectives) found in the Vedic language are etymologizable. After presenting various counter-arguments, Yāska responds positively: 'nouns are derivatives of verbs': *nāmāny ākhyātajātāni*. Cf. Ruegg 1959: 24f.
6. On *parokṣa* ('out of sight, hidden') and its antonym *pratyakṣa* ('in full sight, intelligible'), see Keith's note (1909: 232n.14, *ad Ait Ā* 2.4.3); Oldenberg 1919: 220f.; and Minard 1949: § 468f. and 1956: § 864b and 935a. Keith sees a kind of game in this divine obscuration of words: the gods need to have fun now and then.
7. *ŚB* 6.1.1.2. A parallel passage is *BĀU* 4.2.2.
8. Cf. Gonda 1970: 81: 'The gods love what is secret and are the enemies of any straightforward (intelligible) presentation. This assertion implies that the gods, when communicating among themselves, prefer to employ a vocabulary that is unintelligible to the majority of humans. It is their

- wish that the names of important beings and objects be kept secret. A striking characteristic of that which we call their secret language, a language not to be understood by outsiders, is the substitution, the adjunction or alteration of one or of several sounds . . .'
9. Parallel passages are found in *AitĀ* 2.4.3 and *AitU* 3.13f.
  10. *ŚB* 6.1.1.11.
  11. *ŚB* 1.4.1.10–17.
  12. *GopB* 1.1.1.
  13. *ŚB* 8.6.2.13. Cf. Minard 1956: § 864b.
  14. *GopB* 1.3.19.
  15. *AitB* 3.33.
  16. Sāyaṇa's commentary on *TB* 1.5.9.1 employs more or less the same terms, and draws the same general conclusions. This latter text turns on the word *iṣṭi*, 'oblation (of a vegetable substance)'. The *Brāhmaṇa* explains that this word ought to be *eṣṭi*, since it designates that by virtue of which the gods were able to see through, to its final end, their 'research', their *anvesaṇa*: *iṣṭi* is thus, according to the *Brāhmaṇa*, a voluntary deformation effected by the gods. This bothers Sāyaṇa. He remarks that even if one works from the root *Eṣ*, 'search', *iṣṭi* is the correct derivative, and that this form coincides with *iṣṭi* in the sense of 'oblation', derived from *YAJ*, 'sacrifice'.
  17. *PB* 22.10.3: 'That which is clear for humans is mysterious for the gods, that which is mysterious for humans is clear for the gods.'
  18. *AitB* 2.1. The English translation is based, for the most part, on Lévi 1966: 85.
  19. Whitney (1885: 133) places *yūpa* under the verbal root *YUJ*. Following Kuiper, Mayrhofer rejects this traditional etymology, attaching this noun to the root *YU*, 'unite, join'. It should also be noted that in the exchange of riddles (*brahmodya*) included in the Vedic liturgy, the two antagonistic priests are placed on opposite sides of the *yūpa* post, whose precise function it is, in this case, to separate them. Cf. Renou 1978: 95 and 114.
  20. *ŚB* 3.1.4.3. Cf. Lévi 1966: 84.
  21. Cf. *AitB* 7.30. Krick 1982: 177n. 452.
  22. *AitB* 7.31; 8.16. Cf. Hillebrandt 1927: 1:245. For textual and iconographic data on the *nyagrodha*, see Viennot 1954: 32f. On the cosmic symbolism of the upside-down tree in the Vedas, a symbolism that is to be connected to that of downturned celestial vase, see Kuiper 1983: 36–9, 139, 142. In the Vedic hymns, those paradoxical utterances that present objects in an upside-down fashion—one that reverses spatial, temporal and familial relationships—bear the mark of the 'sacred' word, which rival priests employ in their battles: the more mysterious they are, says Geldner *ad RS* 10.32.3, the greater the likelihood of their pleasing the gods.
  23. *JB* 2.419–29, § 168 of Caland's anthology.

24. The gods' most dreaded rivals are not humans, but the demon Asuras. One of the reasons for the gods' victory over the Asuras was the fact that the latter all offered the oblation into their own mouths. The gods, on the contrary, realized that it was necessary that they each offer the oblation to one another. Cf. *ŚB* 5.1.1.1f. and Lévi 1966: 84. See above, chapter 11.
25. Cf. *ŚB* 10.4.3.9. Lévi 1966: 85.
26. Cf. Malamoud, in Biardeau and Malamoud 1976: 191–4. See also Lévi 1966: 88.
27. Cf. *Śābara Bhāṣya ad Jaiminīya Sūtra* 9.1.6–10.
28. *AS* 8.10.28: *tām tirodhām itarajanā ūpa jīvanti*.
29. See, for example, Descombes 1977: 27–31.
30. *AitĀ* 2.3.6.
31. On the enigmatic, on its role in the sacrificial process and the place it occupied in the thought of the Vedic poets, see Renou 1978: 11–20; 44–57; 85–116.

### Notes to Chapter 13

1. The Fathers are the deceased who, having received the funerary rites, have acceded to the status of ancestors, or of Manes. They constitute a class of beings, in the same way as do the gods and men.
2. *ŚB* 3.6.2.26. This passage is cited in Lévi 1966: 81.
3. The *Purāṇas*, which present the myths of post-Vedic Hinduism, teach that the gods were visible in the first age of the cosmic cycle, and that there were at that time neither images of nor temples to them. In the second and third ages, it was possible to see the gods both directly and in their images. In the fourth age, our own times, only the images remain. Cf. *Viṣṇudharmottaramahāpurāna* 3.93.1f.
4. Although human, the *ṛṣis* (the term mean 'seer', according to a traditional Indian etymology) are superior to the gods in certain ways. The Vedas are divided into collections or groups of texts attributed to this or that *ṛṣi* or family of *ṛṣis*.
5. Of all the gods of the Vedic pantheon, Indra is the most anthropomorphic and that god to whom it was most possible to attribute a biography of sorts, composed of a list of his exploits. Among the gods, he is a king and a warrior hero. He is the divine patron of the *ksatriya* class.
6. The 'chaplain' (*purohita*) is a brahmin whom the king 'places before (himself)'.  
7. *KS* 37.17. Cf. Krick 1975: 62.  
8. *BaudhŚS* 18.40f. Cf. Krick 1975.  
9. Rudra is the god who takes upon himself the violence of the sacrifice.  
10. *TĀ* 1.12.1. *yā ēko rūdṛa ūcyate . . . smaryāte na ca dr̥ṣyate*.  
11. See above, chapter 12.

12. The gods are supposed to come to the sacrifice. Yet, the fire is considered to bear oblation up to them. Such are the two ways in which one may imagine that displacement whose effect it is to place humans, or human objects, in contact with the gods.
13. The other 'limbs of the Veda' (*vedāṅgas*) are Phonetics, Grammar, Etymology, Poetics and the Science of Heavenly Bodies. In contrast to the 'body' of the Veda, these are not revealed texts, but human works.
14. The *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*.
15. The *Purāṇas* are the enormous compilations of myths and cosmogonies which constitute the sacred texts of Hinduism. Their composition covers the 4th to 15th centuries of the common era.
16. On the worship of images, see the dense and illuminating pages of Renou 1978: 157–63 (this chapter reproduces an article which appeared in 1951). See also Kane 2:2: 712f.
17. Literally, 'corresponding measure'.
18. The adjective *mūrkha* 'stupid', is derived from the same root as *mūrti*. Linguists suggest, with some hesitation, that one might connect these Sanskrit forms as well as the Greek noun *brōtos*, 'coagulated blood,' to a single Indo-European radical. Cf. Chantraine 1968: 198; and Mayrhofer 1956-1976: s.v. *mūrchatī*.
19. Cf. Gonda 1970: 78f.
20. Cf. Goudriaan 1965: 161f.
21. Goudriaan 1965: 174f.
22. Cf. Kane 2:2, 911. See *Śābara-bhāṣya ad Jaimini-sūtra* 9.1.7, in which *ārthapatya*, the gods' quality of 'lords of riches' are discussed.
23. Cf. *Viṣṇudharmottaramahāpurāṇa* 3.2.1–8, and Stella Kramrisch's (1928) study of this text.
24. *Ibid.*, 3: 85f.
25. The god Śiva is moreover represented by the *liṅga*, the 'phallus', an emblem that is often highly stylized, and sometimes ornamented with faces at its extremity. Cf. Rao 1916: 3:1: 55–102. Hinduism is also acquainted with image that are 'self-generated' (*svayambhū*), stones or rocks which the faithful recognize as the image of a god, and which they thus worship.
26. For the construction and adoration of the mental image in the Śaivite *āgamas*, see chapter 3 of *Mygendrāgama, Section des rites et section du comportement . . .*, ed. by R.N. Bhatt (Pondicherry: 1962); translation, introduction and notes by H. Brunner-Lachaux (Pondicherry: 1985).
27. On *bhakti*, see, among innumerable studies on the subject, A.M. Esnoul in Renou-Filliozat 1947: §1343–1357. See also Biardeau 1981: 98–124.
28. Cf. Van Buitenen 1968: 5, 11. A trifunctional interpretation of these three recipients is found in Dumézil 1971: 352.
29. Cf. Van Buitenen 1968: 130.
30. Cf. *ĀpŚS* 15.15.
31. On this 'golden man', see *ŚB* 8.4.1.14–45. Cf. Staal 1983: 1:65.

32. *ŚB* 1.8.3.11–19.
33. Renou, *EVP* 6:17.
34. *ŚB* 4 4.5.5.1. Cf. Lévi 1966: chapter one.
35. There is a distinction drawn between the element fire and the God of Fire materialized in the sacrificial fire: when one begins a sacrifice, one causes the fire to 'come forward'; when the sacrifice is completed, one causes the god to 'return upward to his place of birth', which is nothing other than the two fire sticks from which he had caused to 'descend'—that is, one extinguishes it. That which will subsequently remain burning is thenceforth nothing more than an ordinary cooking fire. Cf. *ĀpŚS* 24.4.22 (see *SBE* 30: 363f. with Max Müller's note), and *TS* 3.4.10.5. See also Krick 1982: 201f., and n. 504.
36. On the values of the term *tanū* in the Vedic Language, see Oldenberg 1919: 99–102.
37. *ŚB* 3.3.4.15. Offering the substance that is *soma* is thus a means to rendering the body of the god into a state through which it may regain its noncorporeal being. Cf. *PB* 1.1.2: 'May the god go towards the god, may the *soma* go towards (the) *soma* along the path of truth'.
38. *ŚB* 3.3.4.6.
39. One example, among many, is *TB* 1.6.4.1: Prajāpati is the god Savitr (the Impeller) when he emits the creatures; he is Varuṇa when they are to be punished for their arrogance.
40. Books 6 to 10 of the *ŚB*—more than 600 pages in Eggeling's translation—deal entirely with this rite.
41. See all of chapter two of Silburn 1955.
42. *ŚB* 10.4.3.2.
43. *ŚB* 10.4.2.2f.
44. *ŚB* 6.1.2.13.
45. *ŚB* 6.1.2.26.
46. *ŚB* 10.1.3.4.
47. *ŚB* 6.1.2.17f.
48. *ŚB* 10.4.2.3f. It took more than one try for Prajāpati to succeed in dividing himself in the proper fashion. The twenty-four bodies which he ends up establishing for himself are the *vyūhas*, arrangements resulting from the dislocation and reordering of a preexisting datum. In Hinduism, this term designates 'the successive emanations, and, at the same time, the portions, of the essential nature of god' (Gonda 1970: 50). See also Minard 1949: § 238a.
49. *ŚB* 10.4.3.9.
50. The word for 'brick' is *iṣṭakā*. The authors of the *Brāhmaṇas* break the word up into *iṣṭa*, which they interpret as the past participle of the verb meaning 'offer as an oblation', and *ka*, a term to which they attribute the sense of 'happiness'. Cf. *ŚB* 6.1.2.23f.
51. *ŚB* 2.1.8.2f. Prajāpati gives up his body so that the gods he has just created may devour it. 'But after giving himself, he emits from himself an image



- (*pratimā*) of himself: this is the sacrifice. By the sacrifice (that is, by the victim which serves as his substitute), he redeemed himself.' Cf. Lévi 1966: 130.
52. *PB* 21.2.1.
53. *ŚB* 6.1.2.22; 10.4.2.1f.
54. *ŚB* 10.2.1.1–11. The identity Agni-Prajāpati is explicitly reaffirmed time and time again. It is, in fact, the central dogma of this rite. On the other hand, the idea that the Bird (*śyena*) whose form the alter reproduces is itself identical to Soma is a conclusion that may be drawn, as Keith (1914: cxxvi) does, from indications given in the hymns: Soma and the Bird who carries the *soma* are indistinguishable from one another. Cf. Hilbrandt 1927: 1: 35.
55. Analogous ideas recur throughout the Hindu tradition: the bird Garuda has a body composed of the five elements (earth . . .), and his wings are the *chandas*, that is, the Vedic meters taken as a whole. Cf. Goudriaan 1965: 19.
56. *ŚB* 10.3.2.1f.
57. *TB* 3.10.3. *tvām evā tvām vettha yò 'si só 'si tvām evā tvām acaiṣṭh.*
58. *ŚB* 11.5.2.1f.
59. *ŚB* 11.5.2.4.
60. *ŚB* 6.1.1.1f. and 10.2.2.1f.
61. The human sacrificer is the replica of the *Puruṣa*, of the Cosmic Man celebrated in *RV* 10.90. Elsewhere, the sacrifice, as we have seen, is very often compared to a man, as, for example, in *ŚB* 1.3.2.1; 3.5.3.1f. and *TS* 6.2.11.1f. This metaphor is grounded in the fact that the body of the sacrificer is used as the standard measure of length for several sacrificial constructions: for example, the sacrificial pole to which the victim is bound (in cases in which the animal is put to death) has the same height as the sacrificer, when his arms are upraised. Cf. *MS* 3.9.2; *ĀpŚS* 7.3.6.
62. *AitB* 3.33; *ŚB* 1.7.4.1. Because he has 'become' Rudra in this way, this god is also called Bhūta, 'Become'.
63. *ŚB* 1.7.4.9.
64. See Oldenberg 1919: 101f.
65. *ŚB* 12.6.1.1. There is a certain method observed, in the selection and enumeration of oblations, that allows one to arrive at the figure of thirty-three. In Vedic polytheism, this figure is also that which most commonly accounts for the multiplicity of the gods: Prajāpati is thus the thirty-fourth element which, added to the series, encompasses it entirely.
66. *ŚB* 3.9.4.12f.
67. *KS* 36.13.
68. *RS* 3.20.2. [The English here is based on the French translation of Renou *EVP* 12: 64.]
69. Cf. Keith, note *ad KauṣB* 1.1; Krick 1982: 335f.
70. *ŚB* 2.2.1.13f.
71. *RS* 10.20.2.

72. Cf. Renou 1978: 132–40 ('Les origines de la notion de *māyā* dans la spéculation indienne'). See also, from the immense body of literature on *māyā*, J. Gonda's work, *Four Studies in the Language of the Veda* (chapter 4: 'The "original" sense and etymology of skt. *māyā*'), 1959: 119–93.
73. *MS* 1.6.7. See the chapter entitled 'L'arithmétique mythologique' in Bergaigne 1878–1883: 2: 114–56.
74. These formulas are *VS* 12.57–60. The rite is taught and commented in *ŚB* 8.1.1.38.
75. *TS* 5.2.4.1.
76. *GopB* 1.2.20; *ŚB* 1.4.1.10f. Cf. Krick 1982: 338f.
77. *TS* 2.4.2.1.
78. *RS* 3.53.8.
79. See above, chapter 11.
80. *KS* 8.15.
81. Louis Renou (1978: 161) forcefully shows how these 'diffuse protean forms' and the 'dynamic features' which the Vedas assign to their gods 'marvellously prepared the way for the sculptural explosion of later ages'.
82. *PB* 9.2.22.
83. *ŚB* 14.1.1.1.
84. *TS* 1.1.2–11.
85. *ŚB* 1.7.4.9.
86. *ŚB* 6.2.2.6.
87. *GopB* 1.1.3. Cf. Gonda 1969: 15, n. 19.
88. Renou *EVP* 9:11, n. 1. See also, by the same author, 'Les éléments védiques dans le vocabulaire du sanskrit classique,' 1939: 363f; and Gonda 1967.
89. Words also have their 'very dear *dhāmans*'. So it is with the ritual exclamation *vaṣaṭ* which, taken by itself, is devoid of meaning. It is necessary that one 'perfect' and define it by giving it a semantic field which will serve as its *dhāman*. To this end, one must attach to it two words whose meaning are 'strength' and 'power', and which are themselves 'the two very dear bodies' of the *vaṣaṭ* *AitB* 3.8. Cf. Gonda 1967: 68.
90. *TS* 5.2.4.1.
91. *AitB* 3.15. Cf. Krick 1975: 55.
92. *RS* 1.164.39.
93. *ŚB* 4.5.7.3: *sá eṣá yajñás tūyāmāna etá evā devatā bhāvann eti.*
94. Śābara *ad Jaimini-Sūtra* 10.4.23 (end). The doctrine on the nature of the gods is set forth in 9.1.1–10. The English translation of the *Śābara Bhāṣya* is by Ganganatha Jha, 3 vols. (Baroda: 1973–4).
95. Over against the adherents of the *Pūrva Mīmāṃsā*, the Vedāntins (who base their arguments on the *Upaniṣads*, the ultimate portion of the Veda, considered by them to be its point of culmination, the 'end'—*anta*—towards which it tends) recognize a reality proper to the gods, one which is relative, to be sure, but not wholly verbal. The gods, like men, are

- corporeal beings, possessed of desire and especially capable of desiring to know the Absolute. They are personally present at the sacrifice, and possess an infinity of bodies, which explains how a single god can attend all of the sacrifices offered to him in several places at the same time. This capacity for having several bodies should not, say these philosophers, surprise us: we find the same aptitude among men possessed of supernatural powers, such as *yogins* or in the person called Śaumbhari. Cf. *Brahma Sūtra* 1.3.26f, with the commentary of Śankara and Rāmānuja (English translation by Thibaut: 1904).
96. It is out of benevolence towards men, in order to allow them to satisfy their devotional love, that Viṣṇu condescends to incarnate himself in an image. Cf. *Viṣṇudharmottaramahāpurāna* 3.108.

### Notes to Chapter 14

1. Cf. Gonda 1977: 488–545 (bibliography).
2. Cf. Hillebrandt 1897: §§ 68; 75; 79; Kane 1941: 1213f.; Renou 1954: 24, 53, 156. This last work, presented in the form of a lexicon, includes detailed definitions of all of the technical terms (from the ritual sphere) we are using here.
3. The origin myth of the *agniṣṭoma* is in *TS* 7.1.1; and an analysis of this sacrifice in Caland–Henry 1906–7.
4. Cf. Hillebrandt 1897: § 79; Kane 1941: 1133–1203.
5. Keith 1920: 55.
6. Eggeling 1894: xvii.
7. *ŚB* 8.4.1.13. Cf. Oldenberg 1919: 49.
8. *ŚB* 6.3.1.43. See above, chapter 6.
9. On the concepts of unity and distinction in Indian thought, and the role these play in speculations on Vedic ritual, see the very noteworthy article of J. M. Verpoorten 1977.
10. Oldenberg (1919: 4) has admirably illustrated that this bonding (*bandhu*) is more than a simple case of drawing parallels. Its aim is to reveal the deep, if not esoteric, meaning of the whole constituted by the two elements so joined. This *bandhu* is, in sum, a particular case of the *nidāna*, which is the link that makes identifications, between entities belonging to different orders, possible. Thus, *ŚB* 3.2.4.10 affirms that 'the Word, by virtue of the *nidāna*, is the cow which constitutes the price which one pays for *soma*.' On the *nidāna*, cf. Oldenberg 1919: 117f. On the relationship between *nidāna* and *upaniṣad*, cf. Renou 1978: 148–53. *PB* 10.6.3.
11. *AitB* 4.29: *preti* [= *pra iti*] *prathame'hani prathamasyāhno rūpam*.
13. *PB* 10.6.2. Cf. *KausB* 22.2.
14. The parallel text, found in *KausB* 22.2, is more verbose, and explains

- that here the present is that which one has before one's eyes, but which is not tangible.
15. The term *ājya* means 'melted butter', and is a synonym of *ghṛta*. For the word game and the aetiological account given for this word (or of a homonym: Caland 1953:179), cf. *PB* 7.2.
  16. *AitB* 5.18.
  17. *AitB* 5.4: *yad dhy eva prathamam abas tad etat punar yac caturtham*. The seventh day is the same as 1<sup>c</sup>. But it is a more innovative new beginning than the fourth day—that is, than 1<sup>b</sup>—because it inaugurates the series of *chandomas* which follows not only the second triad, but also the ensemble of the two first triads which together constitute the *pr̥sthya-śadaha*. With the triad of the *chandomas*, we have an extension of the *pr̥sthya-śadaha*: moreover, one of the *rūpas* for the seventh day, according to *KausB* 26.7, is the verb 'extend'.
  18. We must distinguish, thus, between repetition which only occurs twice and which thereby refers to the number two, and repetition which consists in an indefinite number of occurrences and which, as a sign of plurality, points to the number three.
  19. The *āvṛtti* repetition, treated here, is, thus, that which corresponds to the *ubhayāvṛtti* variety, in treatises on Poetics: the same word is repeated with the same meaning (whereas the *arthāvṛtti* is the repetition of the same idea through the use of different words, and the *padāvṛtti* the repetition of the same word, but with two or more meanings): cf. Gerow 1971:128. As for the term *ninṛta* ('syllable standing as the object of an alliteration'), it would appear that this is found in Vedic prose alone (the abstract form, *ninṛti*, is found in *KausB* 20.4 and 21.4). The equivalent, in the terminology of poetics, is *anuprāsa* (see Porcher 1978:246–59). Taken literally, *ninṛta* is that which is 'danced', that is, repeated like a dance step. The 'alliteration' *rūpa* is present of necessity whenever the 'repetition' *rūpa* is present. Sāyaṇa duly notes, with regard to *AitB* 5.2, that a single text, *RS* 6.70.4, provides, with the same words, both of these *rūpas*. But in *AitB* 5.1, the text of *RS* 8.68.7 is invoked solely for the alliteration produced by the repetition of *tam* in the fragment *tam-tam id rādhasa*. Sāyaṇa comments that the word *tam*, when repeated, resembles a dance *tāla*. And he adds, by way of introducing, on his own authority, a new *rūpa* which is simultaneously a justification for the *brāhmaṇa*'s use of the term *ninṛta*: at the end of this stanza from 8.68.7, we find the words *kṛṣṭinām nṛtūh*, '(he) the dancer (who is the sovereign) of the peoples'. So it is, he continues, that we have, in this *Śṛuti* text, a word which enunciates (the idea of) the dance: this is the mark of danced-alliteration (*ninṛttavaḥ-lingam*).
  20. Sāyaṇa gives the name *viśeṣalinga* or *nūtanāni lingāni* to those supplementary *rūpas* which, starting with the fourth day, characterize each day as being distinct from the day it repeats: 1<sup>b</sup> and 1<sup>c</sup> are not exactly identical

- to 1<sup>a</sup>. They have certain differentiating features and certain supplementary features.
21. Just as there are two kinds of repetition, so there are two sorts of excess: the first, coupled with insufficiency, belongs to the realm of the number four; the other, a simple case of addition (upon which no value judgments are brought to bear), refers to the number five—that is, to number 2<sup>b</sup>.
  22. We would be more reassured that *bahu* already had its technical meaning of 'plural' if we also had, with regard to the first two numbers, some indication on unity and the singular, and duality and the dual. We should note, at the same time, that the grammatical category of the verbal tense, with its morphological characteristics, is made perfectly clear, and provides a class of obligatory *rūpas* for each of the days of ritual. Keith has elsewhere shown (Keith 1920: 80) that the adjectives *vr̥ṣan* ('male') and *yoṣan* ('female') had the senses of 'masculine' and 'feminine' in *AitB* 6.3. As for the notion of nominal declension (*vibhakti*), we know that it is one which gradually developed out of a general idea of 'modification' or 'fragmentation'; these are first of all the variations 'undergone by a word such as *agni-* in various *mantras* in which it figures, which are themselves otherwise identical: Renou 1945: 146; cf. Krick 1982: 378, 520. See above, chapter 9.
  23. We hold the etymology which makes the adjective *viśva* ('all') a derivative of the radical *viś* to be a valid one. Mayrhofer, in his etymological dictionary, adopts this view (Mayrhofer 1968: 225f.). *Viśva* is a whole composed of a plurality of elements. The idea of a plural mass is so closely connected to that of *viś* that we see this term applied to another group of gods—one which moreover has nothing to do with *vaiśyas*—the Maruts. In relation to Varuṇa, who is the *ksatra*, as well as with regard to Indra, the Maruts—even if they are *ksatriyas* in their role of escorts to Indra—are nevertheless the *viś*, inasmuch as they are a mass of subjects (*ŚB* 2.5.2.6, 27).
  24. Minard 1956: § 603d.
  25. See above, chapter 5.
  26. On *vāstu*, cf. Minard 1956: § § 846–8.
  27. It is with the recitation of this formula that the sacrificers (who are numerous, because this is a *sattra*) 'release their word', that is, cause their voices to be heard: up to this point in this phase of the ceremony, they have withheld all sound. On the retention of one's voice in the sacrifice, which may range from total silence to merely abstaining from profane speech, see Renou 1978: 66–80, especially 74–9.
  28. Renou *EVP* 6: 76f.

### Notes to Chapter 15

1. Of all the Vedic sources, it is in the hymn of *AV* 6.130 that *smara* most clearly bears the special sense of 'love'. Already in this text, the term plays

- on the root *SMAR*. These are the imprecations of a woman who calls upon the gods to inflict *smara* upon the man who has disdained her. 'Hurl *smara* at him, make him suffer the way I have suffered. May he, my beloved, remember me. Hurl *smara* at him, so that he may remember me, and that I may never remember him!'
2. Certain of these plays on words aim at nothing other than broad humour: the ass, an animal famous for its virility, is called *smara-smarya*, 'memorable for love': he impresses Smara himself!
  3. *Mudrārāksasa* of Viśākhadatta, act 1, prose passage following verse 21. See Kale's note, in the edition of the play, Delhi 1965, in Banarsidass (fifth ed.).
  4. Cf. van Buitenen 1956: 248, n. 429.
  5. See above, chapter 12.
  6. Cf. *Kāvyaṣa* of Mammaṭa 10.52: vol. 2, p. 524 of the Mysore edition (Oriental Research Institute Series, no. 122, Mysore: 1977).
  7. Stoler Miller *et al.* 1984: 38f.
  8. *Naiṣadhacarita* 4.75:
 

*hṛdayam āśrayase yadi māmakaṃ  
jvalayasītham anaṅga tad eva kim  
svayam api kṣaṇadagdhanijendhanaḥ  
kva bhavitāsi hatāśa hutāśavat.*
  9. *Naiṣadhacarita* 20.43:
 

*kaḥ smarahaḥ kas tvam atreti saṃdehe śobhayobhayoḥ  
tvayy evārthitayā seyaṃ dhatte citte 'thavā yuvām.*
  10. Here is a minimal translation, or rather a summary, of certain of these verses:
    - 1) 'Remember what a joy it was when, at night, while sleeping, we changed places so as to keep our mouths pressed together even after turning over':
 

*svadigvinimayenaiva niśi pārśvavivartinoh  
svapneṣv apy astavaimukhye sakhye saukhyam smarāvayoh* (20.84)
    - 2) 'Starting at your mouth, I kissed my way down until I reached your navel. But that part of you where you did not let me place my lips, may memory, happier than I, kiss you there!':
 

*mukhād ārabhya nābhyantaṃ cumbam cumbam atṛptavān  
na prūpaṃ cumbitum yat te dhanyā tac cumbatu smṛtiḥ* (20.92)

A truly remarkable strophe is this, in which we see an autonomous memory, disjoined from the rest of his person, take over where desire leaves off, projecting itself into the future.

    - 3) 'Remember how you blushed when, in our love-play, you played the man (placing yourself over me), and I called you "dear Sir":'

*kam api smarakeṣiṃ taṃ smara yatra bhavann iti  
mayā vihitasambuddhir vṛditā smitavaty asi* (20.93)

- 4) 'Remember how you blushed when I said to you, pointing out an *aśvattha* leaf that had fallen to the ground, "Give it to me . . .":'

*vanakelau smarāśvatthadalaṃ bhūpatitaṃ prati  
dehi mahyam udasyeti madgirā vṛditāsi yat* (20.96)

(In the classifications established in the treatises on Love, the female sexual organ, when it is of great size, is compared to the leaf of the *aśvattha* tree).

11. The notion of *saṃskāra*, the multifarious accepted meanings of which are remarkably coordinated, play an enormous role in every period and in every expression of Indian thought. On this subject, see the in-depth study of Lakṣmī Kapani 1987; see also Kapani 1985 and Chenet, Kapani 1986 (this being a critical examination of Kakar 1985).
12. See the *Madhumatī* commentary *ad Kāvyaṣṛakāśa* 10.52.
13. *Sarvadarśanasamgraha*, chap. 7, p. 181 of the BORI edition's (Poona: 1951) commentary on *Nyāya Sūtra* 3.1.12.
14. This is the case in both Vedic and Hindu India. Ancient Buddhism, if we are to judge it by the study L. Silburn has made of *sati* (the Pali equivalent of the Sanskrit *smṛti*), conceives of memory as a kind of vigilance: it falls to memory to detect recollections, to recognize them for what they are, so as to avoid being subjected to them, and also as a means to placing in relief the inanity of the temporal flux. In a word, do not forget to forget. Cf. Silburn 1955: 339f. and 376f.
15. *pustakasthā ca yā vidyā parahaste ca yad dhanam  
kāryakāle samutpanne na sā vidyā na tad dhanam*  
(Böhtlingk 1870: no. 4156).

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